

A person will likely be too impaired to ride before looking—or even feeling—“drunk.”

Keep an eye on your fellow riders, too. If you see that another rider has had too much to drink, do what you can to keep that rider from getting back on their motorcycle. Sure, that’s hard to do—but consider the alternatives. Don’t be afraid to get other friends involved and, if you don’t know the rider, solicit the help of the rider’s friends to help keep that rider safe.

### ***Don’t kid yourself!***

Despite knowing the facts about how alcohol works, you might still be convinced that you can ride as well or better after having a few drinks compared to when you’re sober. That’s just not true—no one is immune to the effects of alcohol.

While you may not be legally impaired after drinking, alcohol robs you of some of the critical skills and judgment you need to ride safely. Remember—a rider can be arrested with a BAC below .08 g/dL when a law enforcement officer has probable cause based on the rider’s behavior.

Don’t become another statistic that proves riding a motorcycle and drinking alcohol do not mix!



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
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# ***It's a fact:***

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Riding a motorcycle takes coordination, balance, and, most important, good judgment. Alcohol, more than any other single factor, can rob you of your ability to think clearly and ride safely.

## **Why take the risk?**

We've all heard about the "dangers" of motorcycling, from family members and well-meaning friends. And it's true—riding a motorcycle does involve a degree of risk. But mixing alcohol and motorcycling is a risk we don't have to take.

Unfortunately, too many riders still choose to drink and ride. Statistics show that nearly a third of all fatally injured motorcycle riders had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 g/dL or greater—the legal limit in all States.

The bottom line? It's your choice—but before you decide, you'd better know the facts.

## **Alcohol works fast!**

Unlike other beverages, alcohol is absorbed directly through the walls of the stomach and the small intestine, goes into the bloodstream, and travels throughout the body and to the brain. Alcohol is absorbed quickly and can be measured within 30 to 70 minutes after a person has had a drink.

## **Does the type of alcohol I drink affect my BAC?**

No! A drink is a drink is a drink. A typical drink equals about half an ounce of alcohol. This is the approximate amount of alcohol found in:

-  one shot of distilled spirits, or
-  one 5-ounce glass of wine, or
-  one 12-ounce beer.



## **What affects my BAC?**

How fast a person's BAC rises varies with a number of factors:

-  **The number of drinks.** The more you drink, the higher the BAC.
-  **How fast you drink.** When alcohol is consumed quickly, you will reach a higher BAC than when it is consumed over a longer period of time.
-  **Your gender.** Women generally have less water and more body fat per pound of body weight than men. Alcohol does not go into fat cells as easily as other cells, so more alcohol remains in the blood of women.
-  **Your weight.** The more you weigh, the more water is present in your body. This water dilutes the alcohol and lowers the BAC.
-  **Food in your stomach.** Absorption will be slowed if you've had something to eat.

## **What can you do?**

The safest and most responsible choice is to not drink and ride. Because once you start, your judgment is affected and your ability to say "no" or "no more" gets weaker.

If you plan on drinking, leave your motorcycle at home and find other transportation so you won't be tempted to ride impaired. Or, call ahead to where you plan on drinking and ask if there is a secure place for you to store your motorcycle overnight so you can find an alternative way home—such as a taxi or a Safe Ride program.

## **How soon after drinking can I ride?**

There are no shortcuts to sobering up fast. None of the "remedies" you may have heard about—cold showers, hot coffee, or physical exercise—will make you sober faster. The only proven remedy to sobering up is time. Remember—your body can process about one drink an hour.

## **Pay attention—to yourself and others.**

Know how much you're drinking. Because judgment can be alcohol's first casualty, make the decision to not drink and ride before you've even had your first drink.

Because of the multitude of factors that affect BAC, it is very difficult to assess your own BAC or impairment. Though small amounts of alcohol affect a person's brain and the ability to ride safely, people often swear they are "fine" after several drinks—but in fact, the failure to recognize alcohol impairment is often a symptom of impairment.

While the lower stages of alcohol impairment may be visually undetectable to others, the drinker knows vaguely when the "buzz" begins.