

# Alcohol Quick Facts

## New Zealand's drinking patterns

- 85% of New Zealanders aged 16–64 had an alcoholic drink in the past year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Three in five (61.6%) past-year drinkers consumed more than recommended guidelines for a single drinking occasion at least once during the last year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- One in six (17.7%) adults (aged 15+) have a potentially hazardous drinking pattern (Ministry of Health 2008).

## Health impacts

- Alcohol consumption has been identified as an important risk factor for more than 60 different disorders (WHO 2007).
- An estimated 3.8% of all global deaths and 4.6% of the global burden of disease (measured in disability-adjusted life-years) are attributable to alcohol (Rehm et al 2009).
- In New Zealand, estimates indicate between 600 and 1000 people die each year from alcohol-related causes (Berl 2009; Connor et al 2005).
- More than half of alcohol-related deaths are due to injuries, one-quarter to cancer and one-quarter to other chronic diseases (Connor et al 2005).
- Between 18 and 35% of injury-based emergency department presentations are estimated to be alcohol-related, rising to between 60 and 70% during the weekend (Jones et al 2009; Humphrey et al 2003).
- 14% of the population are predicted to meet criteria for a substance use disorder at some time in their lives (Wells et al 2007).

## Crime and violence

- The New Zealand Police estimate that:
  - approximately one-third of all Police apprehensions involve alcohol
  - half of serious violent crimes are related to alcohol
  - over 300 alcohol-related offences are committed every day
  - each day, 52 individuals or groups of people are either driven home or detained in Police custody because of intoxication (New Zealand Police 2010).

## Drink driving

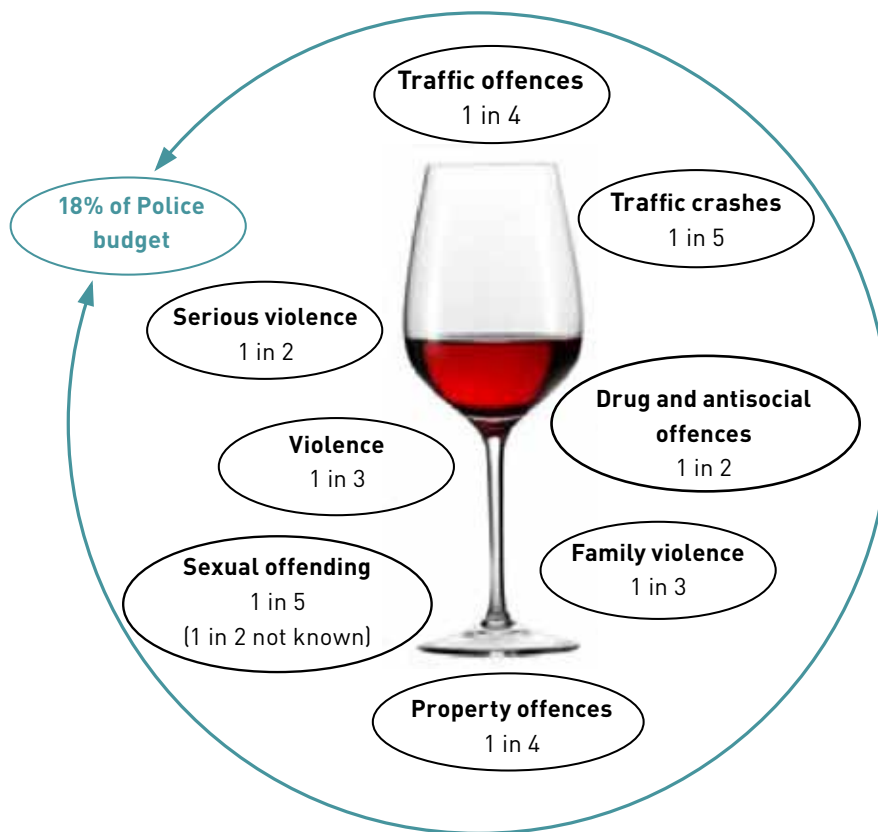
- In 2008, driver alcohol/drugs was a contributing factor in 103 fatal crashes, 441 serious injury crashes and 1156 minor crashes (Ministry of Transport 2009).
- These crashes resulted in 119 deaths, 582 serious injuries and 1726 minor injuries (Ministry of Transport 2009).

## Social costs

- A 2009 study, applying a methodology endorsed by the World Health Organization, estimated harmful alcohol use cost New Zealand \$4.9 billion in 2005/06 (Berl 2009). However, previous estimates have ranged from \$735 million to \$16.1 billion (Law Commission 2009, p168).

For assistance or advice on your drinking please call the Alcohol Drug Help line **0800 787 797** or go to [www.likeadrink.org.nz](http://www.likeadrink.org.nz)

# Alcohol and Crime



- At least 33% of all Police-recorded offences in 2008/09 were committed where the offender had consumed alcohol prior to committing the offence.
- At least one-third of recorded violence offences and family violence incidents in 2007/08 were committed where the offender had consumed alcohol prior to committing the offence.
- Approximately half of the homicides recorded from 1999 involved either a suspect or victim being under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident.

## On an average day:

- 52 individuals or groups of people are either driven home or detained in Police custody due to their state of intoxication.
- Police arrest 340 alleged offenders who show signs of having consumed alcohol prior to offending, including:
  - 30 offences for breach of a council's liquor ban
  - 100 offences for drink driving
  - approximately 5923 compulsory breath tests and 2743 mobile breath tests are undertaken
  - 41 licensed premises are visited to monitor compliance with the Sale of Liquor Act.

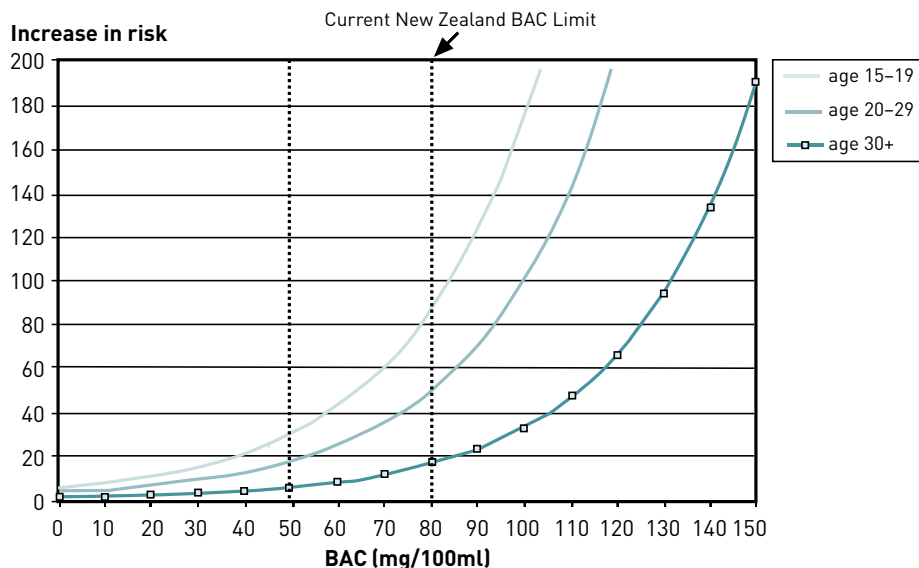
[Source: New Zealand Police 2010]

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# Road Traffic Crashes and Deaths

- Many studies show that the risk of being involved in a crash increases as a driver's blood alcohol level increases.
- At all blood alcohol levels, the relative risk of a crash is higher for young adults.

## Relative risk of fatal crash by blood alcohol level



- Contrary to popular opinion, people with a high blood alcohol level are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash than those who are sober.
- For drivers involved in all fatal crashes in 2006–2008, 26% were recorded as having alcohol only and a further 2% as having both alcohol and drugs.
- As the severity of crashes increases, so does the contribution of driver alcohol/drugs.
- For every 100 alcohol or drug-impaired drivers or riders killed in road crashes, 54 of their passengers and 27 sober road users die with them.
- In 2008, driver alcohol/drugs was a contributing factor in 103 fatal crashes, 441 serious injury crashes and 1156 minor crashes.
- These crashes resulted in 119 deaths, 582 serious injuries and 1726 minor injuries.

For more information refer to the Ministry of Transport's Crash Fact Sheets

<http://www.transport.govt.nz/research/crashfacts/>

(Source: Ministry of Transport 2009)

- Police estimate that each day in New Zealand, approximately 5923 compulsory breath tests and 2743 mobile breath tests are undertaken and 100 people are charged with drink driving (New Zealand Police 2010).

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# New Zealand Drinking Patterns

## Overall

- 85% of New Zealanders aged 16–64 drank alcohol in the past year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Three in five (61.6%) past-year drinkers consumed more than ALAC recommend (a maximum of six standard drinks for males and four for females on a drinking occasion) at least once during the last year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- One in eight (12.6%) past-year drinkers consumed more than the recommended guidelines more than once a week during the last year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- One in six (17.7%) adults (aged 15+) have a potentially hazardous drinking pattern (Ministry of Health 2008).
- One in four (28.7%) women who had been pregnant in the past three years reported that they had consumed alcohol while pregnant (Ministry of Health 2009).
- One in ten (10%) adult drinkers reported planning to get drunk on their last drinking occasion (Research New Zealand 2009).

## Young people

- Seven out of ten (71.6%) secondary school students report having ever drunk alcohol, with six out of ten currently drinking alcohol (Adolescent Health Research Group 2008).
- Nearly half (46.1%) of current secondary school drinkers report consuming five or more drinks in a usual drinking session (Adolescent Health Research Group 2008).
- One in five (18%) young drinkers reported they planned to get drunk on the last occasion (Research New Zealand 2009).

## Māori

- Previously Māori were less likely to have consumed alcohol in the past year than non-Māori, however in 2007/08 this difference had decreased and was no longer statistically significant (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Māori past-year drinkers generally consume alcohol less frequently than non-Māori past-year drinkers (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Among past-year drinkers, Māori exceed the recommended guidelines in a drinking occasion more frequently than non-Māori. One in four (23.9%) Māori past-year drinkers consumed more than recommended guidelines at least weekly in the past year (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Māori women are nearly twice as likely, and Māori men 1.5 times as likely, to have a potentially hazardous alcohol drinking pattern, compared to those in the total population (Ministry of Health 2008).
- Between 2002/03 and 2006/07 there was a significant increase in the prevalence of hazardous drinking for Māori men aged 15 and over (Ministry of Health 2008).

## Pacific peoples

- Although Pacific peoples are still more likely to abstain, from 1996/97 to 2007/08 there was a significant increase in the prevalence of past-year drinking for both Pacific men and women (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Among past-year drinkers, Pacific men are significantly more likely to have consumed more than recommended guidelines in the past year than non-Pacific men (Ministry of Health 2009).
- Among past-year drinkers, Pacific men and women had an increased prevalence of hazardous drinking compared to the total population (Ministry of Health 2008).

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# Health and Injury

## Worldwide

- Alcohol consumption is an important risk factor for more than 60 different disorders (WHO 2007).
- Alcohol is causally related to cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colorectum and female breast (Bann et al 2007).
- The beneficial health effects of alcohol are controversial and are far outweighed by the detrimental effects of alcohol on disease and injury (Rehm et al 2009).
- An estimated 3.8% of all global deaths and 4.6% of the global burden of disease are attributable to alcohol (Rehm et al 2009).
- In high-income countries, alcohol is the second leading risk factor for burden of disease (6.7%) (WHO 2009).
- Alcohol is responsible for approximately 20% of deaths due to motor vehicle accidents; 30% of deaths due to oesophageal cancer, liver cancer, epilepsy and homicide; and 50% of deaths due to liver cirrhosis (WHO 2009).
- For healthy adults, drinking more than two standard drinks per day increases the risk of death from alcohol-related disease or injury to over 1 in 100 (National Health & Medical Research Council 2009).
- Drinking four standard drinks on a single occasion more than doubles the relative risk of an injury in the six hours afterwards (National Health & Medical Research Council 2009).

## New Zealand

- In New Zealand, estimates indicate that between 600 and 1000 people die each year from alcohol-related causes (Berl 2009; Connor et al 2005).
- More than half of alcohol-related deaths are due to injuries, one-quarter to cancer and one-quarter to other chronic diseases (Connor et al 2005).
- Nearly one-fifth of all deaths for males and one-tenth of all deaths for females aged between 20 and 24 are attributable to alcohol use (Law Commission 2009, p72).
- Between 18 and 35% of injury-based emergency department presentations are estimated to be alcohol-related, rising to between 60 and 70% during the weekend (Jones et al 2009; Humphrey et al 2003).
- A recent study of falls in working adults (aged 25–60) found that approximately 20% of unintentional falls at home may be attributable to alcohol consumption (Kool et al 2008).
- Alcohol is involved in half of the patients presenting with facial fractures (Lee and Snape 2008).
- Approximately 45% of fire fatalities each year involve alcohol (Millar 2005).
- Approximately one-third of public pool drownings involve alcohol (Water Safety New Zealand 2010).
- In 2008, there were 10,290 primary alcohol diagnosis admissions to New Zealand hospitals.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 23,000 people are treated in the publicly-funded health system each year for alcohol or other drug addictions (NCAT 2008).
- 14% of the population are predicted to meet the criteria for a substance use disorder at some time in their lives (Wells et al 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Data provided by New Zealand Health Information Service July 2009.

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