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DRINKING & DRIVING - HOW THE PROPOSED LAW CHANGES WILL AFFECT YOU!

It is a very typical scenario in New Zealand. You meet some friends after work for a dinner and a quite few drinks. You enjoy a delicious three course Italian banquet, with a couple of shared bottles of red wine over period of about three hours or so. Then panic suddenly sets in. *How much have I had? Will I still be able to drive home? What are the odds of being caught anyway?? Surely I will be alright to drive??*

Well the simple reality is that from 1 December 2014 your chances of "being alright to drive" will decrease. This is due to the Governments' proposed amendments to the Land Transport Amendment Bill 2013 which will come into force on 1 December 2014.

At present the limits are as follows:

- Drivers under the age of 20 years old may not exceed the blood alcohol concentration level of 0
- Drivers over the age of 20 years old may not exceed 400mg per litre of breath and 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood

The new limits

- The limit for drivers under the age of 20 years old remains at 0
- The limit for drivers over the age of 20 years reduced to 250mg of alcohol per litre of breath and 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood

Changes to penalties

- Drivers who fail an evidential breath test between 251 and 400mg of alcohol per litre of breath will receive an infringement notice consisting of a \$200.00 fine and 50 - demerit points. Drivers who fall within this range may not elect to undertake an evidential blood test.
- Drivers who accumulate 100 or more demerit points from driving offences within two years will receive a 3 month drivers licence suspension. An infringement offence will not result in the driver receiving a criminal record.

- Should any driver refuse to undergo an evidential breath test, they must undergo a blood test. A result of between 51 - 80mg of alcohol per litre of blood will attract an infringement notice of a \$500.00 fine and 50 demerit points.

Should any driver have genuine reasons for electing an evidential blood test over a breath test, such as a medical condition, and they produce a result of between 51-80mg of alcohol per litre of blood, they may challenge the higher fine in Court. A successful challenge will result in a \$200.00 infringement fee and 50 demerit points instead of the higher infringement fee of \$500.00.

Any driver who exceeds the 'present' limit commits a criminal offence and will still face the penalties available today.

So just how much is too much?

Science tells us a number of factors effect our capacity to consume alcohol and remain within the legal driving limit. These include body type, gender, ethnicity, weight and food intake. The Institute of Environmental Science and Research advises that "most" people will be able to drink two standard drinks over two hours and remain under the new adult drink-driving limits.

Our recommendations? Avoid the stress, cost, humiliation, and burden of a criminal conviction, period of disqualification or \$500.00/\$200.00 fine and phone a taxi, dial a driver, or pre-arrange a sober driver to take one for the team. Alternatively you could always switch that last "borderline drink" to an orange juice. You will feel better for it in the morning anyway.

20 MINUTE FREE

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