

A DRUG CALLED ALCOHOL

It's No Pick-Me-Up

Drinking can be a deadly driving partner. Studies have shown that alcohol is a factor in about half of all driving fatalities. It's a powerful depressant with dangerous side effects and acts much like an anesthetic.

If you're found operating a heavy vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, you'll probably lose your license -- and your job. But the worst risk of all is that you'll lose your life.

Against The Law

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations state the rules clearly: No driver shall consume an intoxicating beverage regardless of its alcoholic content, or be under the influence of an intoxicating beverage, within four hours before going on duty or operating, or having physical control of, a motor vehicle. In some states, a conviction for drunk driving or substance abuse while driving a commercial vehicle can lead to one-year license suspension. A second conviction may bring suspension for life.

The Dangers

You may think that having one drink will give you a bit of a pick-me-up. Far from it. What it really does is dull your ability to make decisions.

Beyond that, alcohol impairs your coordination, distorts your vision, causes sleepiness, slows your reaction time and gives you a false, overblown sense of competence. It slows your thought processes, numbs your brain cells and affects all of the body's major organs.

On an empty stomach, alcohol is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream because it doesn't need to be digested. Then it's collected and slowly processed by the liver until it's removed.

It's a toxic drug that can create a dangerous tolerance to its effects. After that comes a need to drink more in order to feel the same way. If a drinker needs regular doses in order to function, he has developed a dependence on alcohol.



Sobering Statistics

Studies show that, after three or four drinks, your chances of being in an accident are doubled. Those odds increase 25 times after seven or eight drinks.

You may think you're in perfect control, but you're not. That's one more of alcohol's dangers.

Time Is The Only Cure

Forget about black coffee, cold showers, fresh air or exercise as techniques for sobering up. None of them work. There is only one way to get alcohol out of the bloodstream and that's to give it enough time to be eliminated naturally by the body.

It's estimated that it takes the liver more than an hour to process the alcohol contained in one standard drink of beer, wine or hard liquor. If you drink when you're not on duty, allow at least eight hours from the time you've had your last drink until you start driving.

Keep Your Wits

Driving a heavy vehicle is demanding enough when you're sober. It can be a lethal thing to do if you're drunk. You lose your skills and the judgment you need to do your job safely.

Your job, and even your life, will be in jeopardy if you drink as much as one beer while you're on duty. Don't do it. It's not worth it.