

INFORMATION SHEET

Alcohol and Drug Screening

Driving after drinking alcohol or taking drugs is one of the main causes of road deaths in South Australia. Because of this, South Australian police are able to stop any driver - or any qualified supervising driver if they're with a learner driver - at any time, to check if they've been using alcohol or drugs.

You're breaking the law if you don't comply with a request from a police officer to take an alcohol or drug test.

1. Alcohol screening

You will be asked to blow into a small device. It will immediately show if you've been drinking.

If it's a positive result, you may be asked to do a second test on another breath testing device. This reading will be used as evidence if the test shows you are over the legal limit.

The legal limit depends on the kind of licence you have.

- If you have a learner's permit or a provisional licence (P1 or P2), your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) must be zero. This means no alcohol at all.
- If you have a full licence, with no restrictions, your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) must be less than 0.05. Even if your BAC is less than 0.05, you can still be charged with Driving Under the Influence (DUI) if a police officer thinks you have been impaired by alcohol or drugs.

BAC is a measure of the amount of alcohol in your blood. It is measured by the number of grams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. For example, a BAC of 0.05 means 0.05 grams of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood.

After a second breath test, if you're concerned about the result, you are able to request a blood test.

If you've had a night of heavy drinking, you may be over the BAC limit for much of the next day. Don't drive if there is any doubt about your BAC.

2. Drug screening

You will be asked to provide a sample of saliva by placing a saliva test strip on your tongue. This will show if there is THC (cannabis, marijuana, dope, hash), Methylamphetamine (speed, ice, crystal meth) or MDMA (ecstasy) in your saliva.

If it's a positive result, you will be asked to provide either another saliva sample or blood sample which will be taken to a laboratory for more testing.

It doesn't matter what kind of licence you have - learner's permit, provisional licence or full licence - the presence of any amount of drugs is an offence.

3. Testing after a crash

If you're involved in a crash you may be required by the police to provide a breath, saliva or blood sample. These samples will be used to test for any alcohol or drugs in your system - including prescription and over-the-counter medications - which may have affected your driving ability.

For more information on driving after drinking alcohol or taking drugs go to mylicence.sa.gov.au/safe-driving-tips/alcohol-and-drugs.