

Driving Under the Influence

Alcohol is a major factor in automobile collisions and fatalities throughout the world. In the US, the 1996 National Roadside Survey found that 17 percent of all drivers on the road at night had been drinking.

In Canada, there is one reported traffic-related injury every 2½ minutes, and one death every 1½ hours.* In 2000, of the 3,162 persons who died in motor vehicle accidents, 1,069 died as a result of alcohol-related crashes.

* 2010 Road Safety Vision

An Educational Approach

Enforcement officials play a highly effective role in reducing the number of impaired driver convictions in Prince Edward Island – from a high of more than 1,500 in 1980 to less than 400 in 2002 – however, the police cannot be everywhere at all times.

The Government of Prince Edward Island recognized the requirement to supplement enforcement methods by providing additional information to people who had been convicted of driving while impaired. After several months of planning and consultation with officials in other provinces who had been operating successful driver rehabilitation courses, it was decided to take a positive educational approach to the problem.

The Driver Rehabilitation Course should be approached by participants as an opportunity to explore the causes and assess the risks of operating a motor vehicle while impaired.

Provincial Impaired Driving Strategy

The problems related to drinking and driving are complex. There are no simple solutions. The Government of Prince Edward Island does, however, firmly believe that education and enforcement will reduce the number and severity of highway collisions caused by impaired drivers.

The province has adopted a Provincial Impaired Driving Strategy and formed a Provincial Coordinating Committee on Impaired Driving. Its purpose is to plan and implement a coordinated provincial countermeasures approach including objectives, activities, time lines and evaluation. The committee meets throughout the year to share information and jointly consider activities to achieve a reduction in impaired driving in the province.

For more information about this or other programs offered by the Highway Safety Division contact:

**Transportation and Public Works
Highway Safety Division
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8
Tel: (902) 368-5210**



Driver Rehabilitation Course



Transportation and Public Works
Highway Safety Division

The Driver Rehabilitation Course

The Driver Rehabilitation Course (DRC) is designed as an educational program for individuals convicted of impaired driving. The emphasis of the course is on drinking and driving, not on drinking only. A trained moderator directs the course, using the voluntary involvement of resource people such as justice personnel, police officers, probation officers, highway safety specialists, and addictions counsellors.

Participation

Individuals convicted of an impaired driving offence will be placed in the course in addition to receiving a fine and/or imprisonment, and prohibition from driving.

Course Format

Each course is usually made up of two, three-hour sessions in which participants are shown videos and given specific and detailed facts about the effects of alcohol on the body in relation to driving.

Discussion sessions between the participants and the resource persons form an important part of the program.

Although assistance with alcoholism is not the primary focus of the Driver Rehabilitation Course, some participants may recognize they have a drinking problem and seek professional help.

Attendance

The DRC Coordinator will notify participants concerning where and when to attend the two sessions. Each session is complete in itself, and one session follows the other in a planned sequence for a maximum course effect.

It should be noted that under the authority of the *Highway Traffic Act*, driving privileges may be reinstated by the Registrar when the DRC is completed and the required time of suspension is satisfied.

First offence	- one-year suspension
Second offence	- three-year suspension
Third offence	- five-year suspension

A Typical Driver Rehabilitation Course

Session One:

The course coordinator presents introductory remarks, ground rules and administrative procedures.

- Federal and provincial legislation (Crown Attorneys' office)
- Obligations of the police and general discussion (police officer)
- Impaired driving statistics
- Driver's Licence cancellation, reinstatement, and cost of insurance
- Films - *Victim Impact Panel*, and *What Everyone Should Know About Alcohol* (Panel members are all residents of PEI who have experienced the devastating effects of impaired driving.

Two panelists lost a member of their family due to a fatal motor vehicle collision involving alcohol. The third panelist was paralysed in a motor vehicle collision involving alcohol.)

- Handouts - *Drinking, Driving and the Law; About Drinking and Driving; Your Driver's Licence; and Smashed*
- Each participant's attendance will be noted

Session Two:

- Review of previous session
- Brief review of defensive driving, rules of the road, and the demerit point system (Highway Safety staff)
- Discussion of steps to alcoholism and ways to treat alcoholism (Addictions Services)
- Group work/exercises
- Open discussion
- Discussion about the Denial Syndrome
- Discussion about the Process of Personal Decision-Making and the need for support
- Discussion of reinstatement requirements
- Students are encouraged to ask questions
- Each participant's attendance will be noted