

I'm not a bot

























Buying alcohol if you want to buy alcohol in the UK, it's important to know the legal restrictions that cover the places and times it is allowed to be sold, as well as who is allowed to buy it. The most obvious restriction is that it's illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy alcohol, anywhere. But what are the other restrictions, and what could happen if you break the law? Because of the impact it can have on the wider community and the links its misuse has with crime and antisocial behaviour, the sale of alcohol in the UK is restricted. Only certain venues that have obtained a license are allowed to sell it – these can be places like pubs, clubs, restaurants, and some shops. Breaking the law can result in prosecution for both the person selling alcohol and the person buying it – they can each be prosecuted and fined. Licensed premises can also be fined, or even shut down. For under-18s, it is against the law to buy, or attempt to buy, alcohol if you're under 18 for an adult to buy, or attempt to buy, alcohol for someone under 18 to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 18. Retailers can refuse the sale of alcohol to an adult if they're accompanied by a child and the shop worker thinks the alcohol is being bought for the child. And the police have the power to confiscate any alcohol they believe will be drunk by someone under-18 in a public place. There are some limited exceptions that allow under-18s to drink alcohol at home, and for over-16s to consume (but not buy) alcohol with a meal in some licensed premises. It is also against the law to knowingly sell alcohol to someone who is drunk. Knowingly buy or obtain alcohol for a drunk person in a licensed premises (like a bar or club) Drinking alcohol in public places Did you know that, depending on where you are, drinking alcohol in public could mean you're breaking the law? There are different laws and rules covering drinking alcohol in public, on public transport, and to prevent underage drinking in public too. If you're over 18, there aren't any blanket restrictions against drinking in public in the UK. But local councils can put measures in place to stop drinking in certain areas where they believe alcohol could contribute to an social behavior. In England and Wales, councils can use a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to stop drinking in public in defined locations. Drinking alcohol somewhere it's been banned, or refusing to comply with a police officer's request, can lead to a fine or an even being arrested. Being drunk in public Across the UK, it can be an offence to be drunk in a public place – for example if you're causing a disturbance, or unable to look after yourself. Police have powers to issue fines, or make an arrest depending on the severity of the offence. In England and Wales, if you commit an alcohol-related offence, you could also be given a Drinking Banning Order (DBO), which can mean you may not be allowed to drink or possess alcohol in public for a period of up to two years. Underage drinking in public Throughout the UK you can be stopped, fined or arrested by police if you're under 18 and drinking alcohol in any public place (not just places with council restrictions). The police also have powers to confiscate alcohol, or move people on. Drink driving Drink driving limits. Drinking alcohol slows down your reactions and impairs judgement, making your driving unsafe and putting you, and others, at greater risk of accidents. The safest and best advice is to avoid alcohol completely if you have to drive. And remember, if you do drink, there could still be enough alcohol in your system the next morning to mean you're over the limit, and not safe to drive. Many of the functions that we depend on to drive safely are affected when we drink alcohol: The brain takes longer to receive messages from the eye Processing information becomes more difficult Instructions to the body's muscles are delayed resulting in slower reaction times There are strict alcohol limits for drivers in all parts of the UK – and they are different in Scotland than England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The limits are based on the amount of alcohol detected in someone's breath, blood or urine. It isn't possible to work out how many units of alcohol will put you over the limit. That's because it varies from person to person, depending on: Your weight, age, sex and metabolism (the rate your body uses energy) The type and amount of alcohol you're drinking What you've eaten recently Your stress levels at the time What's the drink drive limit in your area? In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the drink driving alcohol limit for drivers is: 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood (the "blood limit") 35 micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath (the "breath limit") 107 milligrammes per 100 millilitres of urine (the "urine limit") Even small amounts of alcohol can affect your ability to drive and there is no reliable way to drink and stay within the limit. The advice from the police is clear: avoid alcohol altogether if you plan to drive. If you need to have transport, try these top tips to enjoy an alcohol-free night out. The police are allowed to stop any vehicle at their discretion and can breathalyse you if they have reason to suspect you have been drinking. They often set up drink driving check points over periods such as Christmas and New Year's Eve. You could also be required to take a breathalyser test if you've committed a moving traffic offence (such as a banned turn or going through a red light) or been involved in an accident. To investigate whether you are over the drink drive limit, police will carry out a screening breath test at the roadside, using a breathalyser. If you fail this test, or if they have other grounds to believe that your driving was impaired due to alcohol, you'll be taken to a police station and given a final breath test. At the station you will need to provide two more breath specimens into a complex breathalyser. The lower of the two readings is used to decide whether you are above the drink driving limit. If it is needed, the police also have the power to require a sample of urine, or for a blood test to be carried out by a medical professional. Failure to provide a sample is a criminal offence. Being found guilty of driving while above the legal drink-driving alcohol limit will result in punishment that could affect the rest of your life. If you are caught driving while above the legal limit, you will be banned from driving for a least a year and could also face six months in prison, and an unlimited fine. Anyone found to have caused death by careless driving while under the influence of alcohol can be jailed for 14 years, as well as facing an unlimited fine, a minimum two-year driving ban and an extended driving test before being allowed to drive again. Imprisonment, the period of disqualification, size of fine and penalty points depend on the seriousness of the offence. In addition to a criminal record you could also lose your job, face much higher car insurance costs in future, and find it harder to enter other countries, like the USA. London (Parliament Politics Magazine) - According to UK law, there is no general prohibition when it comes to drinking on the street. However, there can be certain offences related to consuming alcohol in public areas. Councils can take an action to use public spaces protection orders. It helps with the restriction on the consumption of alcohol in many public areas. Some areas in the UK consider publicly drinking an anti-social behavior and it can lead to fines or a penalty in some cases. You cannot drink heavily in a controlled drinking area. Moreover, if you misbehave with someone after being drunk it can be a big problem for you. Is It Illegal To Drink Alcohol in Public? If you are in the UK you need to understand the laws of drinking publicly. Everyone has to understand that it is not illegal to drink alcohol in public areas. However, there can be some restrictions and you must follow the right rules regarding that. If your behavior is anti-social it can lead to a penalty. If the Government has declared a few zones where you cannot drink it is best to remain careful. You cannot misbehave with someone or fall on the street after drinking too much. There is a specific age limit set by the Government. If you are below 18 it is not allowed to purchase alcohol or carrying or drinking. If the police find an individual who is engaged in anti-social behavior it can lead to an offense. When you fail to comply with a direction and don't leave the area, it will lead to fines. Other offenses may include getting drunk and making noise in public areas. You cannot get drunk while moving on the highway or any other such area. All these laws are set by England and Wales or Northern Ireland. If you are over 18 there are lesser restrictions on you even if you are drunk in public. When you drink alcohol where it is practically banned it can lead to a fine. If the situation is intense the police may arrest you for misconduct and breaking laws. Alcohol & Public Transport If you are drunk you cannot enter any public transport service in the UK. For example, if you are carrying an open container of alcohol or consuming in public transport it is prohibited. Whether you are taking a bus, tram, tube, or Docklands Light Railway in London, follow the rules properly. The Scotland train services also restrict people from consuming alcohol on public transport. As these areas are crowded you need to make sure that a bad activity doesn't occur. You must maintain silence and peace while riding on public transport or drinking in certain areas. Usually, drunk people lose sense and do inappropriate things. All the Translink trains and buses in Northern Ireland stop people from drinking in public. The same alcohol restrictions apply to many other bus and train services. If you are not sure about the rules check with your operator. You may get a ban if you don't follow the terms and conditions for the passengers set by the operator. In any case, if you refuse to follow rules, get ready for the police to intervene. Many rail services in the UK that go for long-distance routes allow drinking in public. However, everything will depend on the rules set by the operator. If they don't want the passengers to drink it will be their choice. Many operators don't allow you to carry alcohol if the train is going to football matches or any sports event. If you are caught breaking the rules, you may have to leave the public transport. Many times notices are put up to remind and warn the passengers of these rules. What Happens When You Drink in Public? As we have already discussed the UK has set certain laws for drinking alcohol in public areas. You may be allowed to drink in a few places while in others it may get a restriction. If you are caught drinking in a non-drinking zone it will lead to heavy fines. The police have the authority to arrest you on the spot without saying anything. It is normally an offense to get drunk on any train or public transport in the UK. If you break the rules here, get ready to have a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) and heavy fines. You may be asked to leave the public transport if you are heavily drunk. If you are under 18, the rules will be stricter than what you expect. Throughout the UK there is a strict rule for people who are under 18. When you drink alcohol in public you will be stopped, fined, or even arrested by the Police officers. People above 18 have to take care of places that have council restrictions though. The police have the power to confiscate your bottle or move people away from the public area. Pub and cafe owners are not allowed to serve alcohol to under 18 people. Read More: Is It Illegal To Be Drunk In A Pub (UK Rules Explained) What Are The Consequences of Public Indecency While Drunk? The 1872 Act is outdated now but some parts of it are still fresh. If you are acting indecently in a public area and are heavily drunk it can lead to breaking the law. When your public behavior is considered obscene or disgusting it will create a lot of problems. If other people feel that your behavior is disgusting or shocking they can even complain to the police. In this way, you can be prosecuted with a heavy fine or an arrest. If you feel that you can go hysterical after drinking or indulging in bad activities somewhere in public, it is an offense. You cannot justify your actions in any way. Theft and vandalism are big crimes in the UK. If you are caught drunk and stealing it can land you in bigger trouble. Make sure that you follow all these drinking laws in the UK that saves you from consequences. However, drinking laws can vary depending on the area you are living in. If you are living in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, or England, rules may differ. You need to be sure of the laws in your region and keep yourself safe. Probably it is best if you drink on licensed premises only. We use some essential cookies to make this website work. We'd like to set additional cookies to understand how you use GOV.UK, remember your settings and improve government services. We also use cookies set by other sites to help us deliver content from their services. You have accepted additional cookies. You can change your cookie settings at any time. You have rejected additional cookies. You can change your cookie settings at any time. Alcohol laws regulate just about everything related to buying, selling, drinking, or serving alcoholic beverages like beer, wine, or liquor in the U.S. Some alcohol laws are national, but others vary by state. States also allow some local communities to set or enforce certain rules about who can buy, sell, own, or drink alcohol. According to national law, an alcoholic beverage is one that contains 0.05% or more alcohol, and most states follow that rule too. Current alcohol laws cover: Who can manufacture alcoholic beverages Who can sell alcohol Who's allowed to buy or possess alcohol Selling or giving alcohol to minors or anyone below the legal drinking age How to punish people who break alcohol laws or commit alcohol-related crimes Most state laws regulate who can buy, sell, own, or drink alcohol. In most states, you must be at least 21 to serve alcohol, but some states allow you to serve alcohol at a restaurant if you're 18 or over. Laws about how much alcohol you must have in your system, or the blood alcohol concentration (BAC), to be considered intoxicated also vary by state. The national standard BAC is 0.08% alcohol measured in your breath, blood, or urine. States have different laws about how your BAC may be measured. One important national alcohol law is the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1933. This amendment ended Prohibition, the national legal ban on alcohol that had been the law of the land since 1919. The 21st Amendment allowed states to pass their own laws about sales, distribution, import, and possession of alcohol. Blue laws: Some of America's earliest alcohol laws were "blue laws" that restricted activities on Sundays. In some places, laws to restrict alcohol sales on Sundays were passed for religious, moral, health, or public safety reasons, such as concerns about excessive drinking. Blue laws didn't curb alcohol sales by much: From 1990 to 2004, restrictions on alcohol sales on Sundays only reduced beer sales by 2.4% and liquor sales by 3.5%. In recent years, states began to loosen blue laws. Since 2002, 16 states have changed their alcohol laws to allow some sales on Sundays. Relaxed alcohol laws may contribute to a rise in drinking-related accidents and health problems. After New Mexico repealed its blue law banning Sunday alcohol sales in 1990, the state had 29% more alcohol-related car crashes and 42% more deaths in these crashes over the next 10 years. Since 1984, the national minimum legal drinking age has been 21. Before 1984, each state had its own legal drinking age. States that don't follow the national minimum drinking age law can lose money. The federal government may withhold up to 10% of funds to that state to maintain highways. The national minimum drinking age law may help save lives. Since the law was passed: States that raised their legal drinking age had a 16% median drop in auto crashes since then. Underage drinking rates dropped from 58% in 1985 to 40% by 1991. There's evidence that the law helps prevent young people from becoming dependent on alcohol and drugs, and lowers their risk of suicide, homicide, and serious pregnancy problems like premature delivery, birth defects, or miscarriage. Even with this national law, underage drinking is still linked to serious health problems. Heavy drinking is linked to 3,500 deaths among people under 21 every year. Underage drinking may cause brain development lags or poor school performance. Underage drinkers may be more likely to smoke, use drugs, engage in high-risk sex, commit suicide or sexual assault, become alcohol-dependent later in life, or die from alcohol poisoning, car crashes, or other accidents. Some alcohol laws are set by states or local communities. Some state laws set a "legal limit" on the amount of alcohol per drink. Most states have laws that restrict happy hours, such as banning free alcoholic drinks with a food purchase in a restaurant or bar. Blue laws still exist in specific places, including hundreds of "dry" counties where alcohol is banned outright. Some counties in states like Kentucky and Texas are called "moist," because their laws allow beer and wine sales on Sundays, but not liquor sales. Some states have unique alcohol laws: North Carolina has a law that allows counties to sell alcohol on Sundays at 10 a.m., but not before, which is known as a "brunch law." Indiana passed a law that banned sale of cold beer at grocery and convenience stores to discourage underage drinking. Some states only allow beer or wine that contains less than 3.2% alcohol to be sold on Sundays from stores, also called off-premises sales. It's not always illegal for people under 21 to drink. In 45 states, laws allow underage drinking in certain situations. In 29 states, someone under 21 may drink with their parent's permission if it's in a private residence or on private property. Six states allow someone under 21 to drink on private property without their parent's consent. Eight states allow underage people to drink with a parent's consent in public restaurants or bars. In 26 states, people under 21 may drink alcohol as part of religious services, such as a ceremony in your church. In 16 states, underage people can drink alcohol if prescribed by a doctor for medical reasons. In 11 states, you can drink under 21 if it's for educational reasons, like you're in cooking school. Five states allow underage people to drink as part of government work, such as undercover police investigations. Alcohol and the Law It is important to be aware of guidelines, facts and the law about alcohol in the UK. Under 5? It is illegal to give alcohol to under 5s. Under 16? It is at the landlord's discretion as to whether children are allowed anywhere in a pub. They cannot, of course, buy or drink alcohol on the premises. Under 18? If you are under 18, it is illegal to buy alcohol (this includes in any shop or supermarket, off licenses, bars, clubs or restaurants and buying on line). It is illegal to buy alcohol for someone under 18 in a licensed premises, the only exception is for 16 or 17-year-olds who are allowed to drink beer, wine or cider with food if with an adult (but they may not. It is legal for anyone over 15 to drink alcohol. The restrictions apply to purchasing (under 18) and location - in licensed premises, public places or alcohol exclusion zones. Police have powers to confiscate alcohol from under 18s drinking in public spaces (e.g. in the street or in parks). Drinking and driving It's against the law to drive with more than 80mg (milligrams) alcohol per 100ml (millilitres) of blood, or 50mg in Scotland. If you break the law, you face having your licence taken away for at least a year and an unlimited fine or up to six months in prison. Causing death through careless driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs can result in life imprisonment. See our fact sheet on drinking and driving Buying under 18s alcohol Police have the power to charge those over 18 who knowingly buy alcohol for anyone under the legal drinking age (buying by proxy). It is important that other friends and family know that they could be charged for supplying alcohol irresponsibly. As it is increasingly difficult for under 18s to buy alcohol, parents or guardians are now the main providers of alcohol for this age group (75% putting a huge responsibility on you to keep youngsters safe and out of trouble. Can I let my kids drink at home? Some parents allow their children to try a little alcohol with them on special occasions; others prefer not to. There is some evidence that shows drinking at an earlier age increases the possibility of alcohol-related harm later on, but other studies show young people introduced to drinking moderately in the home, with good parental role models are less likely to binge and more likely to develop moderate drinking habits. Remember, there is a world of difference between sipping on special occasions and drinking regularly. Alcohol and the Law It is important to be aware of guidelines, facts and the law about alcohol in the UK. Under 5? It is illegal to give alcohol to under 5s. Under 16? 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