

30th October 2009**IAEM calls on Minister to reduce the Drink Driving limit as soon as possible**

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine warmly welcomes the Minister for Transport, Mr. Noel Dempsey T.D.'s proposed legislative change to reduce the legal blood alcohol limit in drivers from 80 to 50 mg/dl. The reduction in death and injury which would result from this measure outweighs all other concerns which have been raised by groups opposing the change. Reducing the limit offers a clear signal that Ireland will not tolerate drink driving.

While the evidence supporting the lowering of the drink drive limit is substantial and indisputable, the Irish evidence refers only to those who have been killed in alcohol related collisions. There is a further side to this debate that is seen repeatedly in the Emergency Departments (EDs) of hospitals across the country. Ireland has a serious problem with alcohol abuse and drink driving is just one symptom of this wider societal problem. All too often and particularly at weekends, those who staff the country's EDs deal with broken and maimed bodies following 'accidents' in which a driver has consumed alcohol. Many of those injured are innocent victims of such drink drivers. The statistics don't fully represent these forgotten people¹; people whose lives have been changed forever because of the selfish decision of another to drink and drive. By reducing the drink drive limit, we have an opportunity to stop some of this suffering².

Alcohol and driving simply do not mix³. Reducing the drink drive limit will reduce harm and the number of drink driving related deaths and injuries in this country⁴. The

¹ WHO Alcohol and Injuries Study 2003 <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/11227/>

² <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=TRJ20090923.xml&Node=H2&Page=3>

³ [http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/HealthProtection/Public Health /Alcohol in Fatal Road Crashes in Ireland 2003-5.pdf](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/HealthProtection/Public%20Health/Alcohol%20in%20Fatal%20Road%20Crashes%20in%20Ireland%202003-5.pdf)

⁴ <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/10-will-lose-lives-after-drinkdrive-climbdown-1920930.html>

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majority of people in this country recognize this⁵ and support this life saving measure. It must be implemented without further prevarication and delay.

⁵ <http://www.aaireland.ie/publicaffairs/press-centre/drinkdrivelimit2009.aspx>