



DRINK-DRIVING FACT FILE

September 2021



SPAIN



INTRODUCTION

In 2020, 1,366 people were killed on Spanish roads compared to 2,478 in 2010, a 45% reduction. A significant part of the progress, like for many other countries, can be related to a decrease in traffic due to Covid-19 measures.

However, Spain reached the national target of 37 road deaths per million inhabitants in 2019 – one year before the pandemic and a year earlier than set out in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.

Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2020. *National provisional estimates used for 2020, as final figures for 2020 are not yet available at the time this report went to print.

**UK data for 2020 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2020.

The annual number of deaths in LU and MT are particularly small and, therefore, subject to substantial annual fluctuations. The annual numbers of deaths in CY and EE are also relatively small and may be subject to annual fluctuations.

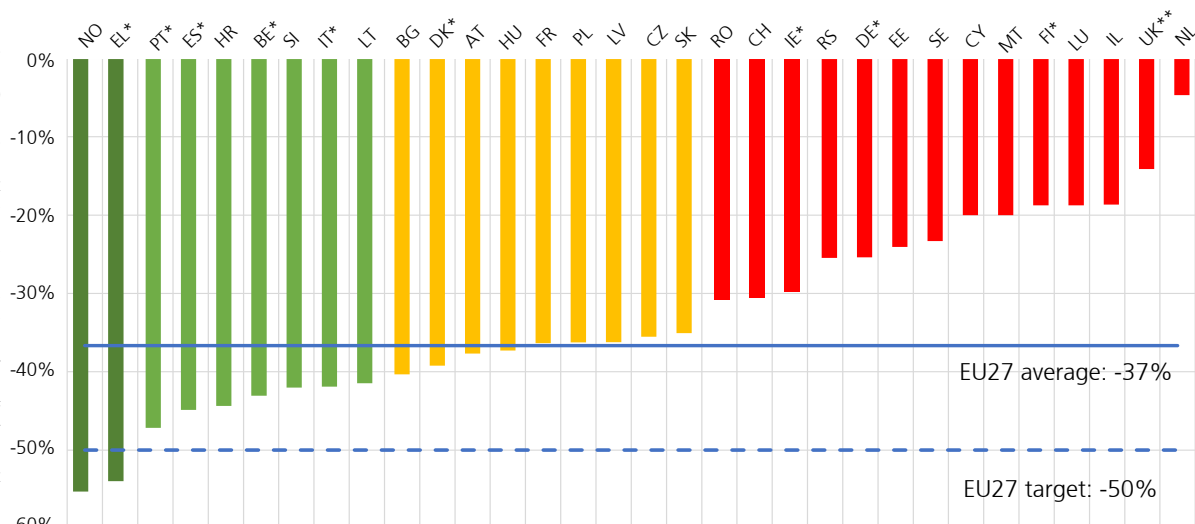
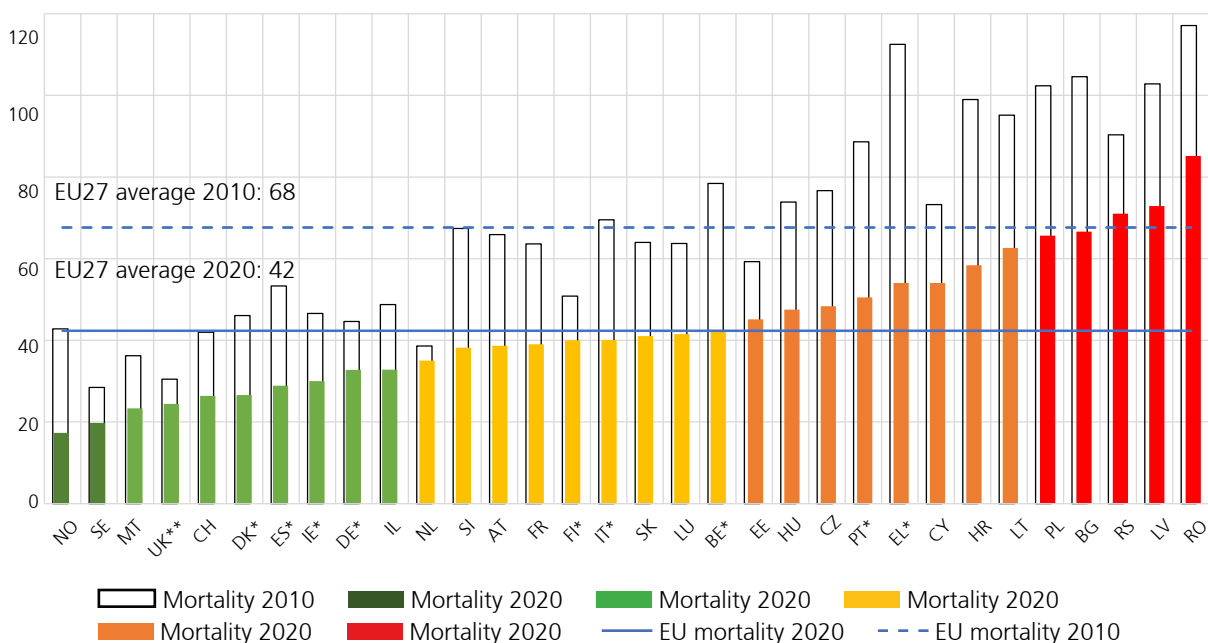


Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2020 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison).

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The overall number of road deaths attributed to alcohol is unknown in Spain. Killed drivers and cyclists are tested during the mandatory autopsy conducted by coroners, but not all of these post-mortem tests are communicated to the National Register for Road Traffic Accident Victims. However, it is possible to report on what percentage of drivers that were tested, were shown to have had alcohol in their blood. The results show that the likelihood of a positive alcohol test increases with injury severity. In 2019, out of those tested, 29% of killed drivers had alcohol in their blood, 15% of injured drivers hospitalised, 9% of injured drivers not hospitalised and 7% of uninjured drivers.

There are also differences across road types. The percentage of positive alcohol tests are higher on urban roads than on the rest of the road network. Out of those tested, 41% of fatally injured drivers on urban roads were shown to have been drinking (compared to 27% on other roads) in 2019 (see tables below).

On average, it is estimated that alcohol was a contributory factor in 25% of fatal collisions and in 13% of all injury collisions in 2019. Data for 2020 are not yet available.

Figure 3. Alcohol tests results on drivers involved in road crashes with fatal injuries in 2019 (all road types)
Figures from 2018 in red for comparison. Source DGT

	Total number of drivers	Drivers tested	% of drivers tested	Drivers tested positive	% drivers tested positive
Total					
Dead	883	598	68% (68%)	175	29% (23%)
Injured in hospital	4.250	1.100	26% (25%)	162	15% (12%)
Injured not in hospital	59.305	21.605	36% (36%)	1.953	9% (8%)
Without healthcare	57.251	23.778	42% (41%)	1.616	7% (7%)
Unclassified	2.268	317	14% (18%)	17	5% (8%)
Total	12.3957	47.398	38% (38%)	3.923	8% (8%)

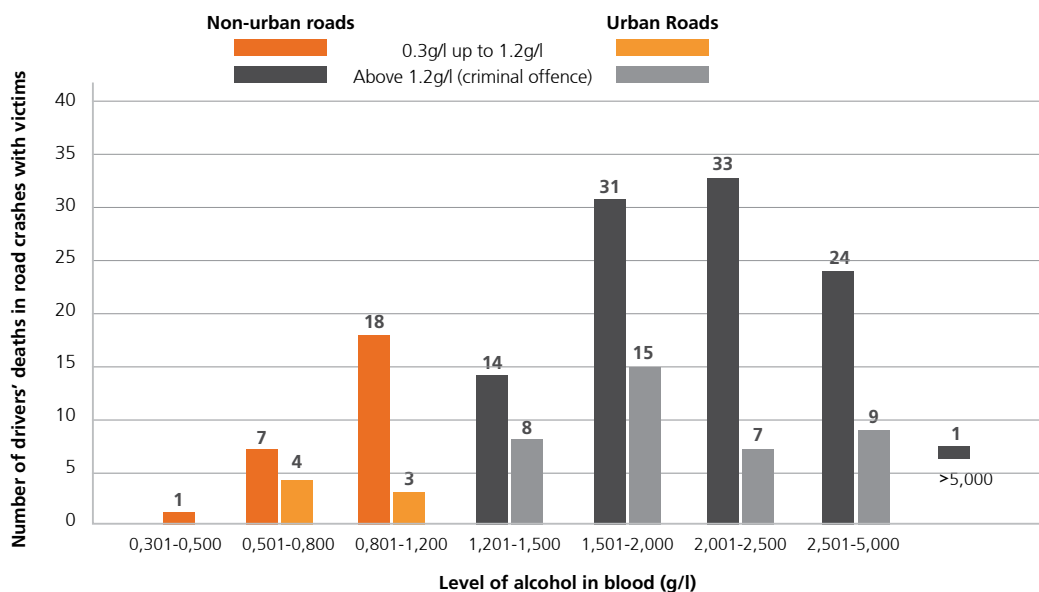
	Total number of drivers	Drivers tested	% of drivers tested	Drivers tested positive	% drivers tested positive
Non-urban roads					
Dead	696	482	69% (70%)	128	27% (23%)
Injured in hospital	2.398	915	38% (38%)	98	11% (9%)
Injured not in hospital	24.265	18.158	75% (71%)	1.275	7% (6%)
Without healthcare	18.311	16.672	91% (89%)	657	4% (4%)
Unclassified	470	197	42% (44%)	4	2% (2%)
Total	46.140	36.424	79% (76%)	2.162	6% (5%)

	Total number of drivers	Drivers tested	% of drivers tested	Drivers tested positive	% drivers tested positive
Urban roads					
Dead	187	116	62% (60%)	47	41% (28%)
Injured in hospital	1.852	185	10% (9%)	64	35% (28%)
Injured not in hospital	35.040	3.447	10% (9%)	678	20% (20%)
Without healthcare	38.940	7.106	18% (18%)	959	13% (14%)
Unclassified	1.798	120	7% (8%)	13	11% (24%)
Total	77.817	10.974	79% (76%)	1.761	16% (16%)

Regarding killed drivers, a relevant figure is that 69% of those who tested positive show a BAC rate higher more than three times the maximum legal BAC. Those who were killed and tested with a BAC of over 1.2g/l (committing therefore a crime in the Spanish code) represent 80% (see graph below).

Figure 4. Alcohol level on drivers dead with a positive BAC on all types of roads in 2019.

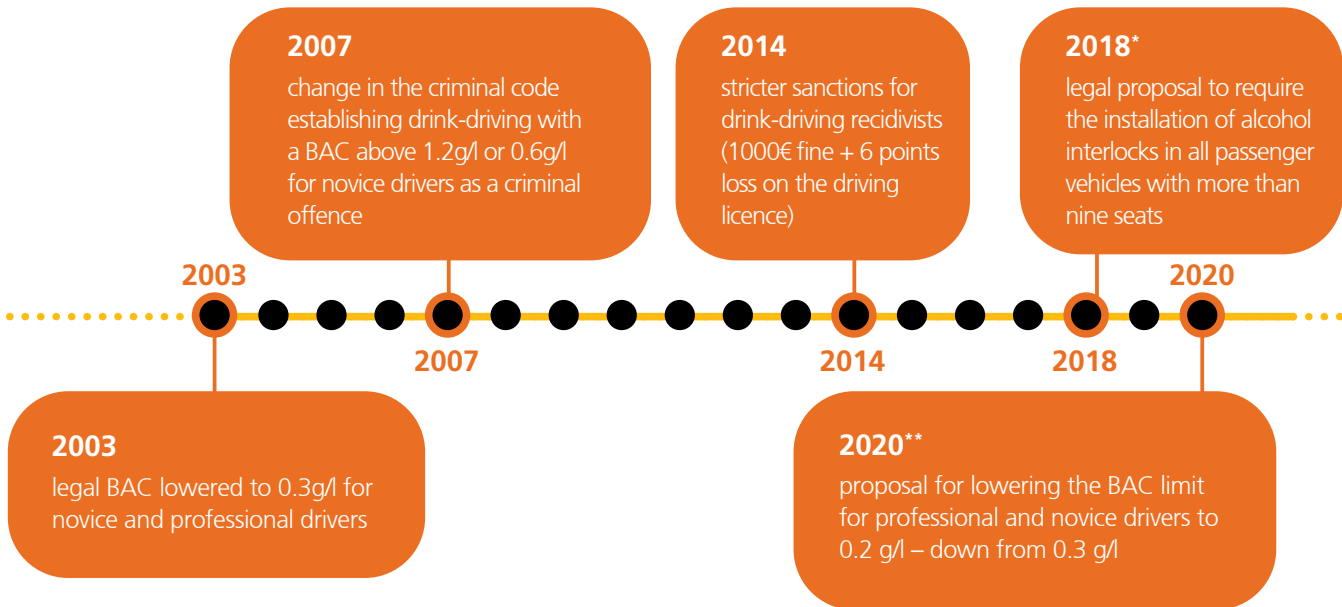
Source DGT





NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of national measures to tackle drink-driving:



* Not yet implemented. This measure will be adopted within the 2021-30 Strategy, focusing on professional drivers (passengers and goods transport) and as an alternative to imprisonment for drink-driving offenders.

** The proposal will be implemented through the development of the Spanish Road Safety Strategy 2021-30, as part of the proposed measures to reduce alcohol-related crashes and in the future consider adopting a zero tolerance.

In the national Road Safety Strategy for the period 2011 to 2020, specific actions to tackle drink-driving were mentioned:

- Developing preventive actions to deal with alcohol and drug use while driving
- Strengthening enforcement actions
- Reducing drink-driving to a level of less than 1% of alcohol positives in random preventive controls
- Carrying out information and awareness campaigns on the risks of alcoholic beverages and toxic drugs in driving, promoting these campaigns at European level
- Spreading the message on the importance of the designated driver
- Improving the experience and training of police officers and thus increase the effectiveness of alcohol and intoxicating drugs controls
- Creating a rehabilitation programme for repeat drink and drug offenders
- Raising awareness among health professionals so that they are more involved in preventing the effects of alcohol and intoxicating drugs while driving
- Studying the possible implementation of the alcohol interlock for specific groups of offenders.



BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

The legal limit for **standard drivers** is:

0.5g/l



The legal limit for **novice and professional drivers** (bus and coach drivers for public transport) is:

0.3g/l

Below is a table with detailed sanctions in force for drink-driving offences for standard drivers.



BAC level (g/L)



Fines in €



Imprisonment



Driving ban

BAC level (g/L)	Fines in €	Imprisonment	Driving ban
>0.25g/l to 0.5g/l	500 and 4 points loss (out of max. 15)	-	-
>0.5g/l to 1.2g/l	1000 and 6 points loss (out of max. 15)	-	-
>1.2g/l (criminal offence)	Fine from 6 up to 12 months*	Between 3 and 6 months or social works up to 90 days	From 1 up to 4 years
Refusal to get tested	-	Between 6 months and 1 year	From 1 up to 4 years

*Spain adopts a system of day-fine, starting from a minimum of 2€/day to a maximum of 400€/day. It is up to the judge to decide the amount of the day fine, based on the type and severity of the offence.



ENFORCEMENT

According to current law, police officers must conduct an alcohol breath test as long as the driver's condition allows it, i.e. the driver is not injured, sustains minor injuries or is hospitalised but can be submitted to a breath test. Tests must be conducted and recorded in the National Register for Road Traffic Accident Victims, but, in practice, this is not always the case. When the tests are conducted at hospitals, the data are not communicated to the police due to legal constraints and, therefore, are not captured in the national register. Killed drivers and cyclists are always tested during the mandatory autopsy conducted by coroners. Most, but not all, of these post-mortem tests are communicated to the National Register.

In the last ten years, traffic law enforcement was an important contributor to improving road safety in Spain. The number of drink-driving checks by the Civil Guard went from 5.5 million in 2018 to 6.5 million in 2019.

As part of the National Road Safety Strategy to improve the training of police officers and thus increase the effectiveness of alcohol and drug checks, all members of the guardia civil were trained in breathalyser and drug testing.

Training courses have been carried out with the national institute for public administration as support for local police officers and also with the national road safety school of the guardia civil for local police officers.

Year	Alcohol-related crashes	% positive drivers	Traffic offences	% positive drivers	Preventive checks	% positive drivers	Total	% positive drivers
2018	129.687	4,62%	626.537	0,70%	4.752.798	1,30%	5.509.022	1,31%
2019	135.001	4,92%	853.383	0,62%	5.610.291	1,23%	6.598.675	1,23%
2020	91.688	5,96%	576.466	0,89%	2.453.661	1,03%	3.121.815	1,15%

Source: Civil Guard

Spain has carried out prevalence studies on alcohol and drug consumption among drivers on a regular basis, since its contribution to the EU DRUID project in 2008. Based on the DRUID methodology, the aim of these studies has been to analyse the prevalence of alcohol (exhaled air) and of drugs (oral fluid) using a representative sample of drivers (2,944 in 2018) and to analyse the evolution considering the 2008, 2013, 2015 and 2018 studies.

Drivers were randomly selected by traffic police forces. The 2018 study showed that 12% of Spanish drivers had recently taken an illegal drug and/or alcohol; 8% had recently taken drugs and 5% of the drivers showed recent alcohol intake (above 0.1 g/L). By the end of the year 2021 a new prevalence study (former DRUID) on alcohol and drugs consumption will be published.

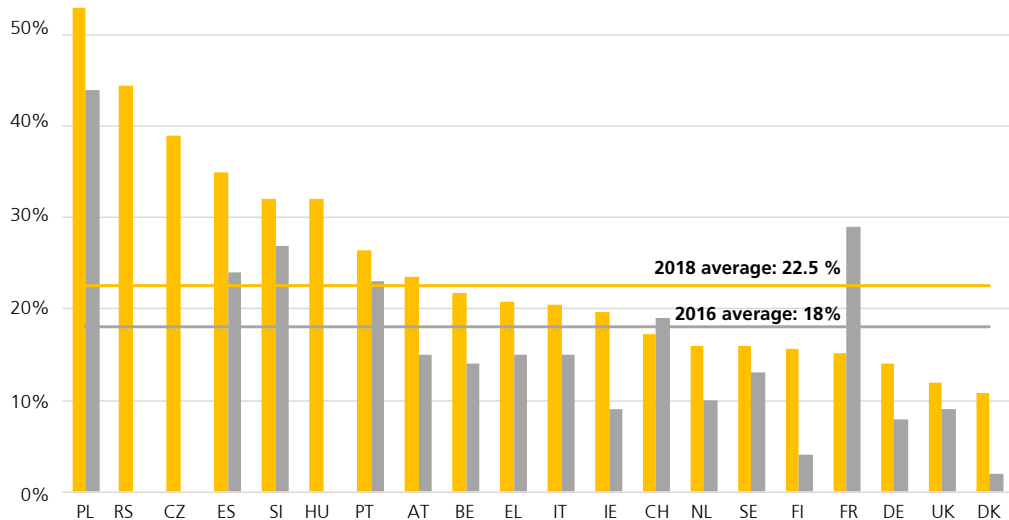


DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

The E-Survey on Road Attitudes published in 2019 showed that the perceived likelihood of a police drink-driving check was quite high, with a 35%, compared to the EU average of 22.5%. This can be attributed to the importance given to traffic enforcement by the Spanish government with high levels of police enforcement in the last decade, more police resources on the roadside, and a high reliability of alcohol tests conducted.

Figure 4. Proportion (%) of car drivers who considered themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving.

Source: ESRA survey (2015 and 2018)



In the same survey, when asked how many times in the last 12 months car drivers have been checked by the police for alcohol, 30% replied at least once, quite high compared to the EU average of 18%.



REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

No alcohol Interlock programme is in place in Spain.

In the strategic Plan for Road Safety 2011-2020, the possibility to implement a programme on alcohol interlocks was mentioned however no specific measures have been taken in this direction so far.

One of the measures suggested in the National Road Safety Strategy was to create a rehabilitation programme for repeat drink and drug offenders. As a first step, a pilot programme was established with the health authorities in two autonomous communities, and it is intended to be extended to the whole of Spain with the aim of rehabilitating repeat offenders who have lost their licence due to alcohol and/or drug dependency.



CAMPAIGNS

At the end of 2017, the Minister of Interior presented the DGT's campaign (#SumaTuLuz) to raise awareness of the risk of consuming alcohol and drugs at the wheel, targeting especially young people who go out at night during Christmas celebrations.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzQ16tZFRU>

'En la carretera, cerveza SIN' (On the road without beer), was an initiative of the Spanish Brewers' Association, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Traffic (DGT). It aimed to raise public awareness in general, and drivers in particular, of the incompatibility between alcohol and driving, reminding beer consumers that they can opt for the non-alcoholic variety if they plan to drive. The campaign started in 2000 and lasted until 2018 with different activities carried out along 18 years. At the end of 2018 more than 5,000 kilometers had been travelled. In total, 24 public institutions in the field of road safety supported the campaign and the online community reached over 45,000 followers.





SOURCES

Figures:

<https://bit.ly/2W34dK9>

National Road Safety Strategy:

<https://bit.ly/2W0Cmul>

ETSC, 15th PIN Annual Report (2021):

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ETSC, Progress in Reducing Drink-Driving and other Alcohol-Related Road Deaths in Europe (2019)

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Drivers' perception:

ESRA survey 2018 <https://www.esranet.eu/en/publications/>

Campaigns:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzQ16tZXFRU>

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