

Stages of Intoxication

Reduced Awareness, Information Processing, and Visual Acuity

(BAC = 0.01 to 0.12 percent)

- More self-confident or daring
- Shortened attention span
- Overconfident
- Poor judgment—may say or do the first thing that comes to mind, rather than an appropriate response or action for the given situation
- Unpredictable, impulsive, careless, distractive

Reduced Muscle Coordination (BAC = 0.09 to 0.25 percent)

- Loss of judgment
- They have trouble understanding or remembering things (even important events)
- Does not react to situations as quickly
- Body movements uncoordinated—small and large muscle coordination loss
- Poor balance
- Blurry vision, side vision impaired, loss of glare recovery
- May have trouble sensing things (hearing, tasting, feeling, seeing)
- Indecisive, unreasonable

Confusion (BAC = 0.18 to 0.30 percent)

- Confused—might not know where they are or what they are saying
- Dizzy and may stagger
- May be highly emotional—aggressive, with drawn or overly happy
- Cannot see clearly
- Sleepy
- Slurred speech
- Uncoordinated movement (trouble catching an object thrown to them)
- May not feel pain as readily as a sober person

Stupor (BAC = 0.25 to 0.49 percent)

- Can barely move
- Cannot respond to stimuli
- Cannot stand or walk
- May vomit
- May lapse in and out of consciousness

Coma (BAC = 0.35 to 0.50 percent)

- Unconscious
- Reflexes are depressed (i.e., pupils do not respond appropriately to changes in light)
- Skin feels cool (lower-than-normal body temperature)
- Breathing is slower and more shallow
- Heart rate may slow
- May die

Death (BAC = 0.50 + percent)

The person's autonomic nervous system shuts down. This system controls those things that a person does not have to think about in order to function (i.e., breathing, heartbeat, circulation, digestion, etc.)

**Increased
Probability of
Causing a Crash**

0.06%–2X

0.08%–3X–4X

0.10%–6X

0.16%–35X

Above information shows the BAC level at which the effect usually is first observed, and in some areas will overlap because of individuals' variables. Information gathered from a variety of sources, including the National Health and Traffic Safety Administration, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the American Medical Association, the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, (www.webMD.com).

"How Alcohol Works," The Effects of Alcohol,. <http://home.howstuffworks.com/alcohol5.htm>. Courtesy of How Stuff Works.com.

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