The Cost and Consequences of Impaired Driving

Although the costs and consequences vary between the different provinces and territories, a single impaired driving incident can trigger a range of sanctions, including administrative licence suspensions and administrative vehicle impoundments. Other sanctions such as the requirement to use an ignition interlock device or the need to attend a comprehensive remedial treatment program may also apply.

Further, the same incident of impaired driving that triggered provincial/territorial sanctions can trigger criminal charges, which might lead to a conviction under the Criminal Code, fines, jail time, and expensive legal fees. In addition, most provinces impose lengthy licence suspensions on drivers convicted of most federal alcohol and drug-related driving offences, failing or refusing to submit to a required test, or driving while prohibited or suspended for a federal impaired driving offence.

The costs and sanctions below are based on an impaired driver who is caught while driving on a public road. This example outlines one province's sanctions. Although these sanctions will generally be similar to those in other jurisdictions, there will be some variation. The driver in this hypothetical has been charged and convicted of the offence commonly referred to as an "80 or Over" (Criminal Code, s. 320.12(b)). This offence is considered to be one of the less serious impaired driving offences. The costs and consequences associated with impaired driving are much more severe if injury or death resulted from the impaired driving incident. Repeat offenders are also subject to more severe costs and consequences.

Total Costs:

- *$45,256-53,765+*

Provincial Sanctions ($4,765+)

- *90-day administrative licence suspension*
- *7-day administrative vehicle impoundment*
- *1-year post-conviction licence suspension (reduced to 3 or 6-months in certain circumstances)*
- *Minimum 45-day post-conviction vehicle impoundment*
- *$1,800+ impoundment fee*
- *$550 administrative penalty*
- *$281 licence reinstatement fee*
- *$634 for remedial program for convicted impaired drivers*
- *$1,500+ for the use of an ignition interlock for one year (less in certain circumstances)*

Criminal Sanctions + Legal Fees ($4,500-7,000+)

- *$1,000 fine*
- *Jail time*
- *1-3-year federal driving prohibition*
- *3,500-$4,000 for a plea or withdrawal or $6,000 for a one or two-day trial (If your case takes longer, the costs will be higher.)*
- *Criminal Record*

Insurance Costs ($36,000-$42,000)

- *$8,000-$10,000+ a year for three years for a facility insurance policy. (In provinces with private insurance 3 years of facility insurance is typically required. Jurisdictions with public insurance do not have facility insurance but will typically raise the insurance rate of drivers with impaired driving convictions.)*
- *$4,000+ a year for three years following the facility insurance policy assuming a normal insurance rate of $2,000 a year. (The insurance rate is typically double the normal rate for a further three years for a total of 6 years of increased insurance cost.)*

Warn Range

Drivers who are below the criminal BAC threshold of 0.08% but above the provincial threshold (typically 0.04% or 0.05%) are also subject to costs and consequences. While these drivers will not face criminal sanctions, in one province these drivers are subject to:

- *3-day administrative licence suspension*
- *$250 penalty*
- *$281 licence reinstatement fee*
- *Insurance consequences*

Some jurisdictions include administrative vehicle impoundments as part of these sanctions. Sanctions and penalties vary between jurisdictions and typically increase for subsequent occurrences.

New and Young Drivers

Young and novice drivers (i.e. drivers in the graduated licencing program and drivers under a certain age, typically 21 or 22) are generally required to maintain a BAC of zero and/or have no detectable level of cannabis or certain other drugs in their body. If these requirements are breached, drivers in one province suffer the following costs and consequences if they blow within the warn range:

- *Immediate 3-day administrative licence suspension*
- *30-day administrative licence suspension if convicted of a provincial offence*
- *$60-500 fine if convicted of a provincial offence*
- *$250 penalty*
- *$281 licence reinstatement fee*
- *Possible licence cancellation if convicted of a provincial offence.*
- *Insurance consequences*

Some jurisdictions include administrative vehicle impoundments as part of these sanctions. Sanctions and penalties vary between jurisdictions and typically increase for subsequent occurrences.

FOLLOW US

Keep up to date on all the latest news from MADD Canada. Follow us on:

maddcanada.ca **@maddcanada** **madd_canada**

DONATE

Support MADD Canada's programs and services with a donation, or become a monthly donor. Visit **madd.ca** or call **1-800-665-6233**

madd.ca

Canadian Charitable Registration No. 13907 2060 RR0001