

occupational health

Importance of alcohol policy in a transport industry

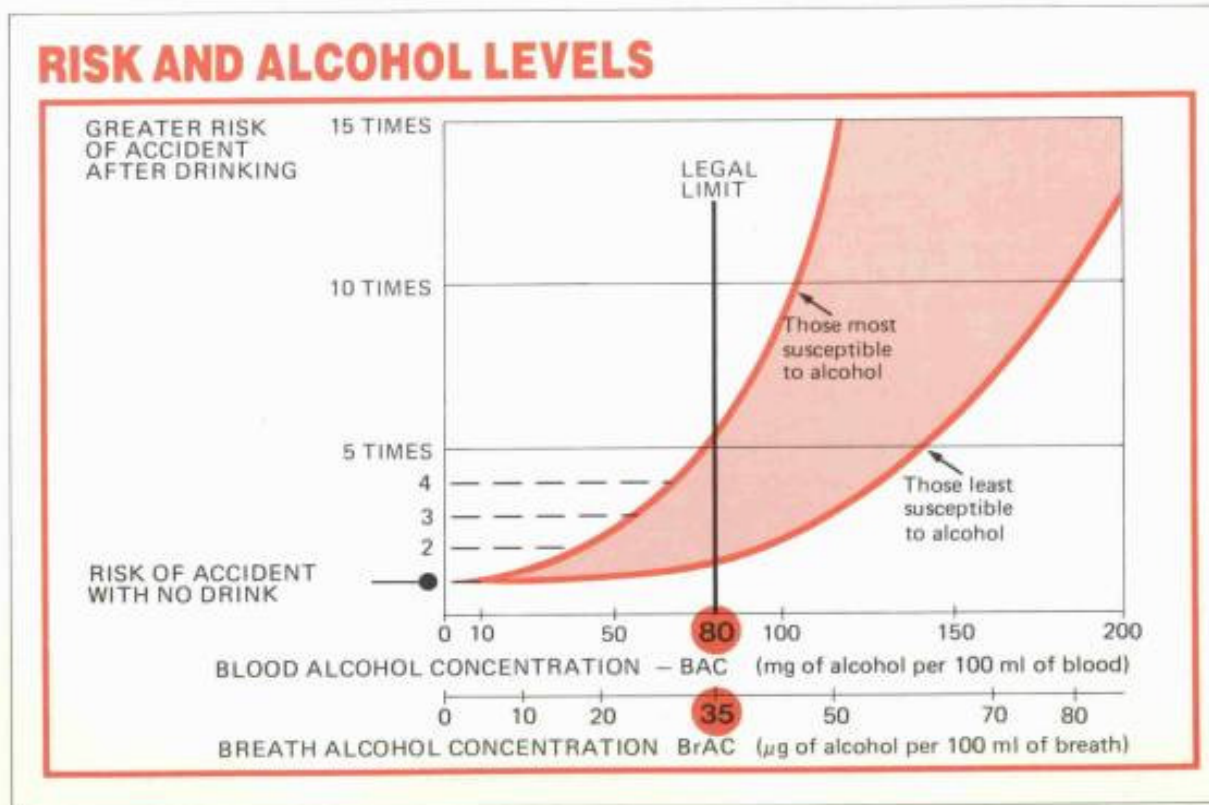
Dr Olivia Carlton 24 April 2009

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- Some information from road statistics
- History of the UK railway approach to alcohol
- LU approach
- LU outcomes for those who sought support
- LU drug and alcohol testing statistics

Risk and alcohol levels



What is the legal limit for driving in France expressed as a blood alcohol concentration?

A. 0.8 mg/ml

B. 0.6mg/ml

C. 0.5 mg/ml

D. 0.3 mg/ml



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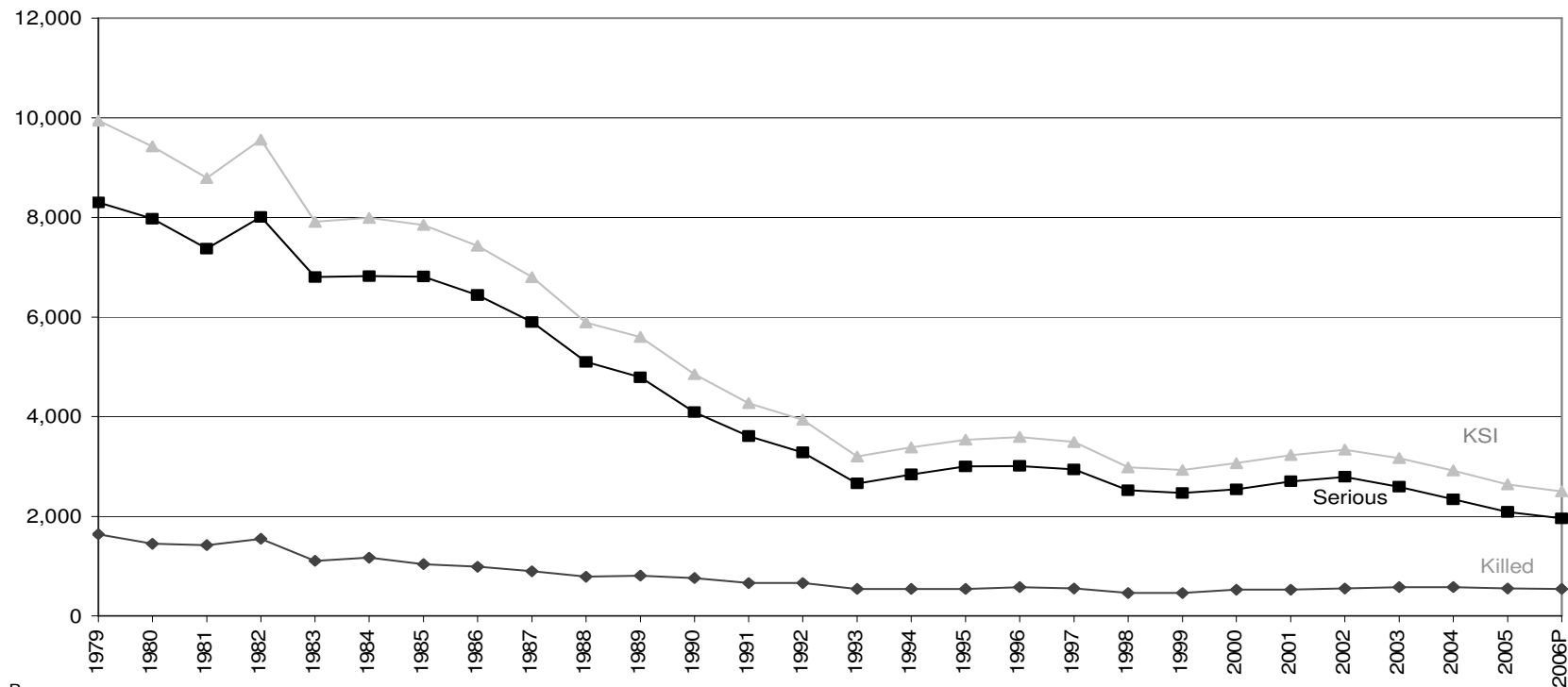
Some blood alcohol concentration levels – legal limits for driving

BAC mg/ml	Some countries
0.8	UK; Ireland; Botswana; Canada; Kenya; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Singapore
0.6	Brazil;
0.5	Australia; Austria; Belgium; China, Finland; France; The Netherlands; Peru; Spain;
0.3	Georgia; India; Japan; Russia
0.2	Estonia; Mongolia; Norway; Sweden
0.0	Czech Republic; Ethiopia; Hungary; Nepal; Romania



Killed and serious casualties resulting from accidents involving illegal alcohol levels: GB 1979 - 2006

Chart 3a: Killed and serious casualties resulting from accidents involving illegal alcohol levels: GB 1979 – 2006



^P Provisional data

Car drivers in drink drive road injury accidents: accidents per license holder and per mile driven: GB 2005

	Car driver drink-drive accidents	Drink-drive accidents per 100 thousand licence holders	Drink-drive accidents per 100 million miles driven
Under 17	60
17 - 19 ¹	1,080	74	25
20 - 24	2,030	71	17
25 - 29	1,410	48	7
30 - 34	1,040	29	4
35 - 39	980	24	3
40 - 49	1,320	18	2
50 - 59	620	10	1
60 or over	330	4	1
All ages ²	9,040	25	4

¹ Figures based on a small NTS sample.

² Includes age not known.



Railway History and culture - alcohol

- Railway Regulation Act 1840
- Offence: “Drunk while employed on the railway”
 - Subjective judgement...

- Alcohol use endemic for 150 years
- Accidents related to alcohol
- e.g Morpeth 1984

- *Slide content courtesy of Dr Howard Watson,*
- *Regional Occupational Physician based at York, BUPA Wellness*

- Aberdeen-KX sleeper - left Edinburgh 23.05
- Derailed on 50mph curve (estimated 90mph)
- No fatalities

- Driver's blood ethanol 4 hours post-incident:
 - 39 mg/dL
 - was he intoxicated at the time?

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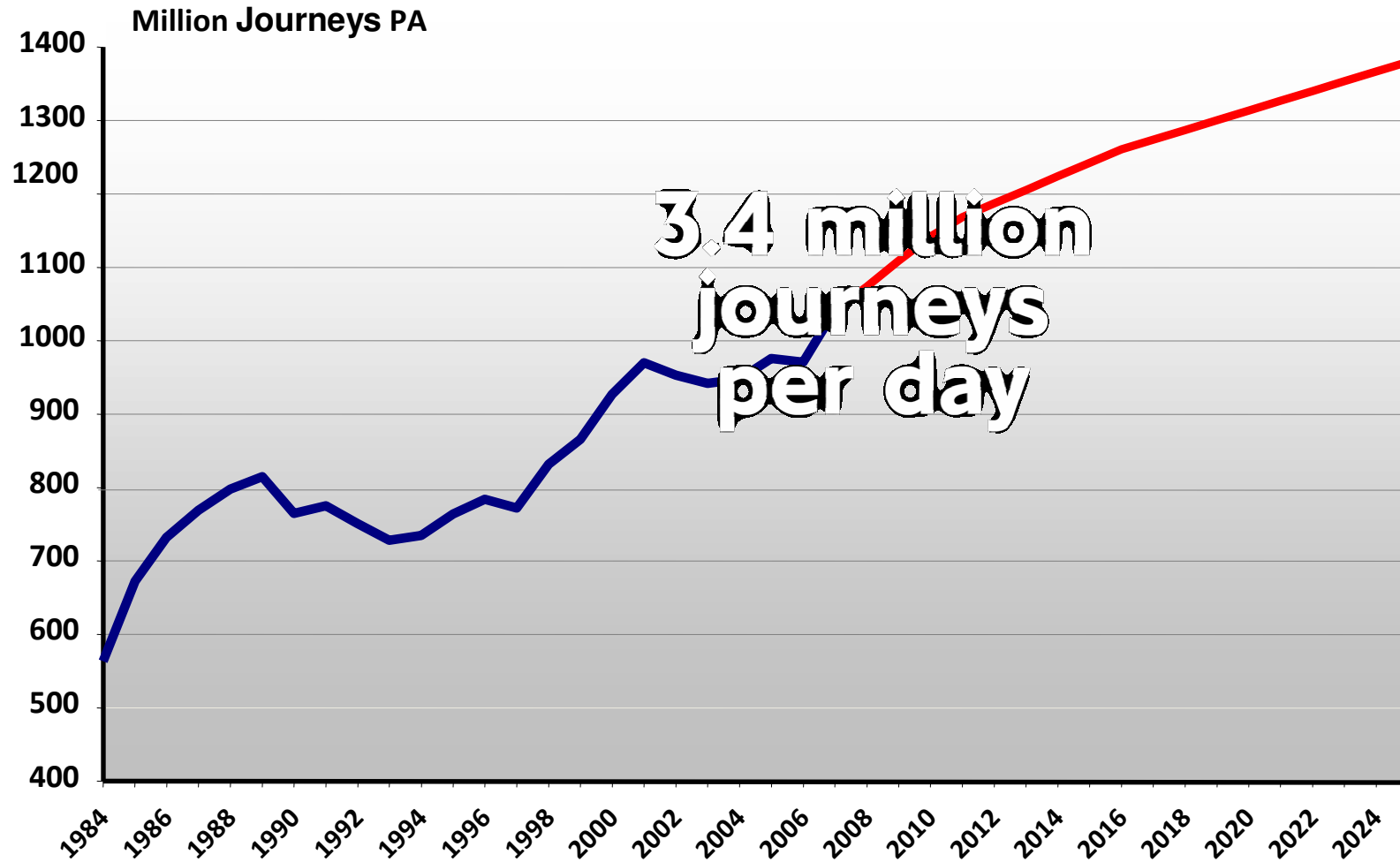
- Free to drink before work:
 - At what point does the employer have a legitimate interest in alcohol use outside work?
- Able to bring alcohol to work
- Able to drink alcohol after starting work
- Fitness not challenged
 - But would a supervisor have felt empowered to challenge sobriety?

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Drivers for the LU approach

- Need to demonstrate commitment to safety of the travelling public
- Transport and Works Act 1992 requirement for due diligence
- Ethos of commitment to staff welfare

Rising level of demand






All change on the Victoria line.

The Victoria line will start to close from 10pm, Monday to Thursday, from 23 July until 22 November. This is so we can test new trains that will increase capacity on this line. It's all part of our multi-billion pound upgrade programme. For more information visit tfl.gov.uk

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Events



- Developed with Trade Unions
- Employment contracts changed to allow testing
- Policy and guidance widely communicated
- Training provided for managers
- Comprehensive guidelines for managers
- Initially a manager full time overseeing the implementation; now a steering group

Alcohol at work policy statement

- No alcohol
- No drinking or buying of alcohol in uniform
- No storage of alcohol in operational buildings
- Support and job protection if a problem is declared and treatment complied with
- Alcohol testing
- Gross misconduct for breach of policy and for positive test

- Pre employment (safety critical only) – drugs only – NOT ALCOHOL
- Promotion and transfer (safety critical only)
- Unannounced (safety critical only)
- For cause (anyone)
- Post incident (anyone)
- Monitoring on return to work after treatment

What is the breath equivalent of a blood alcohol level of 80mg/100ml

A. 50ug/100ml breath

B. 40ug/100ml breath

C. 35ug/100 ml breath

D. 25ug/100 ml breath



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➤ Alcohol - breathalyser

- Positive at 13 ug/100 ml breath
- legal limit for driving and for prosecution on railways for people doing safety critical tasks is 35 ug/100 ml breath

➤ Assessment

- Degree of chemical dependence
- Extent of risk to public safety

➤ Treatment

➤ Managed return to work

➤ Monitoring

Review of randomly chosen cases treated between 1995 and 1999 (n=40)

- average sickness absence in two years before treatment - 28.5 days per year
- average sickness absence in two years after treatment - 8 days per year

In a review of all the LU safety critical employees assessed as being substance dependent from 1998 to 2003 and who underwent at least four weeks of residential or daycare treatment, 55% were still working in their job of origin or a more senior post in 2008

Testing results

% positive tests (total number of tests undertaken)

	1993	1994	1995	2006/7
recruit	4.1% (800)	3.0% (540)	0.7% (737)	0.9% (1574)
unannounced	3.4% (380)	1.9% (1130)	1.2% (929)	0.7% (700)
for cause	10% (10)	9.2% (76)	4.2% (95)	8.2% (49)

➤ 2006-7

12 positives (not including recruitment):

- 4 alcohol: 3 summarily dismissed; 1 written warning
- 8 drugs: 6 resigned; 2 summarily dismissed

➤ 2007/8

8 positives (not including recruitment):

- 1 alcohol; 7 drugs
- 6 resigned; 1 dismissed; 1 in monitoring

Why we think LU's alcohol at work policy is important

- Driver for behaviour change
- Strong belief that it has led to improved safety (but statistics aren't there)
- LU's strong ethos of supporting people to address their alcohol problems has delivered a cadre of loyal employees
- Reputation enhanced both for safety and employee support

Any questions ?

