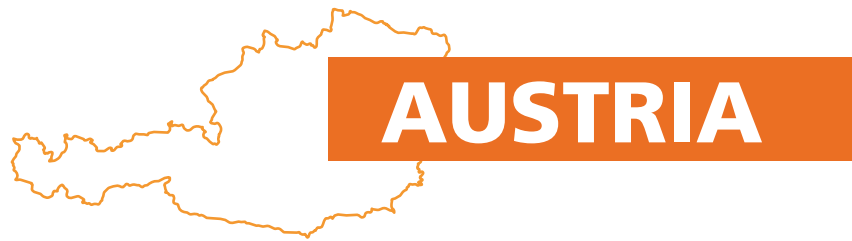




March 2021




INTRODUCTION

In terms of overall road safety, Austria is in line with the EU average in terms of progress in reducing road deaths between 2010 and 2019. Austria cut deaths by 24.6% compared to the EU average of 23.7%. On the measure of road mortality in 2019, Austria is also an average performer, with 47 deaths per million population, compared to the EU figure of 51.

Figure 1. Relative change in road deaths between 2010 and 2019. *National provisional estimates used for 2019, as final figures for 2019 are not yet available at the time of going to print. **UK data for 2019 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2019 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2019.

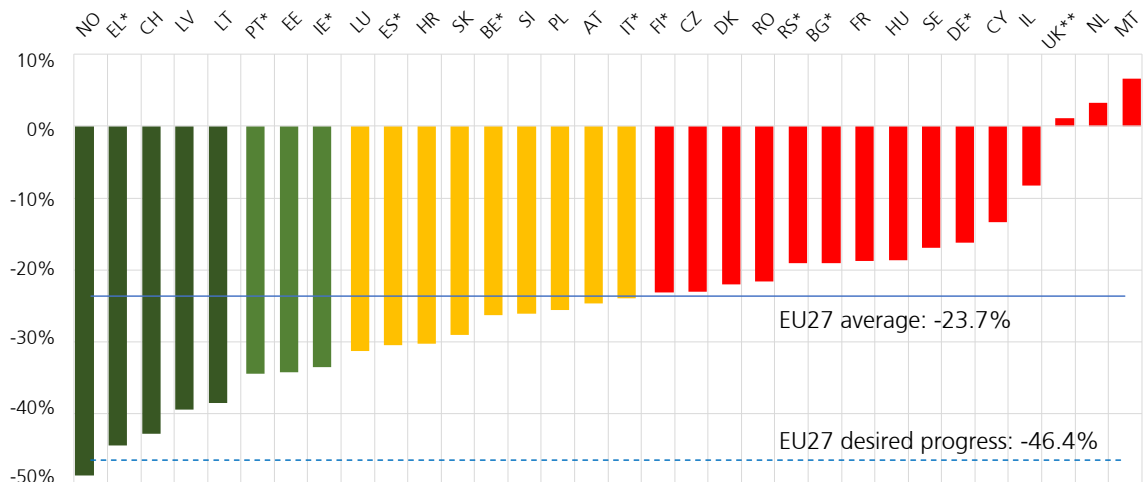
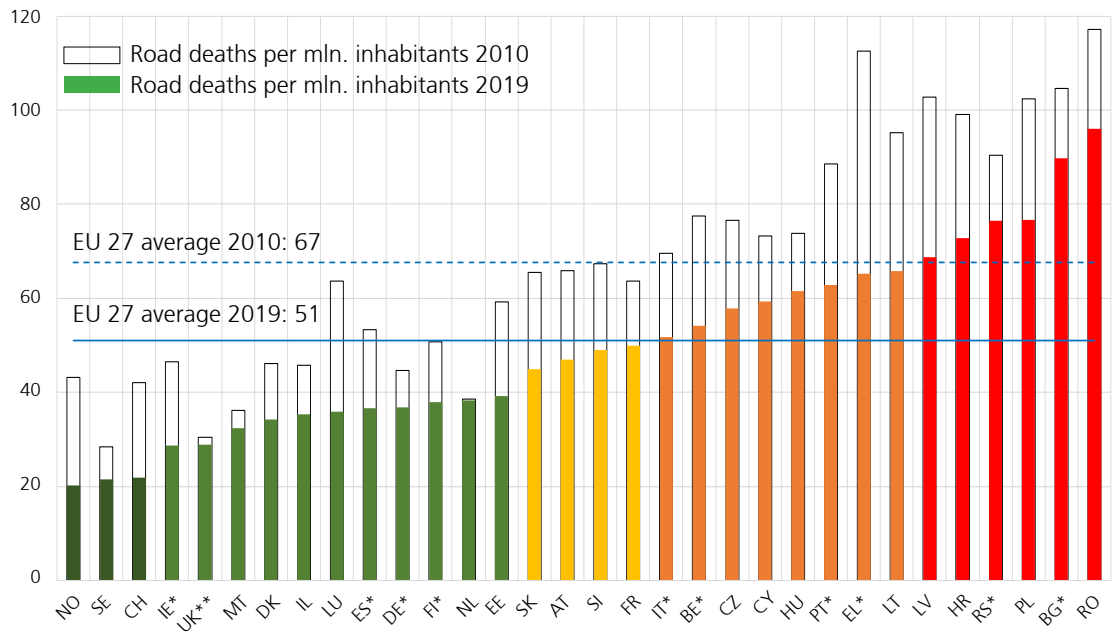


Figure 2. Mortality (road deaths per million inhabitants) in 2019 (with mortality in 2010 for comparison). *National provisional estimates used for 2019, as final figures for 2019 are not yet available at the time of going to print. **UK data for 2019 are the provisional total for Great Britain for the year ending June 2019 combined with the total for Northern Ireland for the calendar year 2019.



According to official statistics, less than 10% of road crashes involving injuries and deaths are due to drink-driving. In 2019, out of the 416 road deaths recorded, only 32 were attributed to alcohol (see table below).

AUSTRIA	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of road deaths attributed to drink driving	28	22	33	33	32

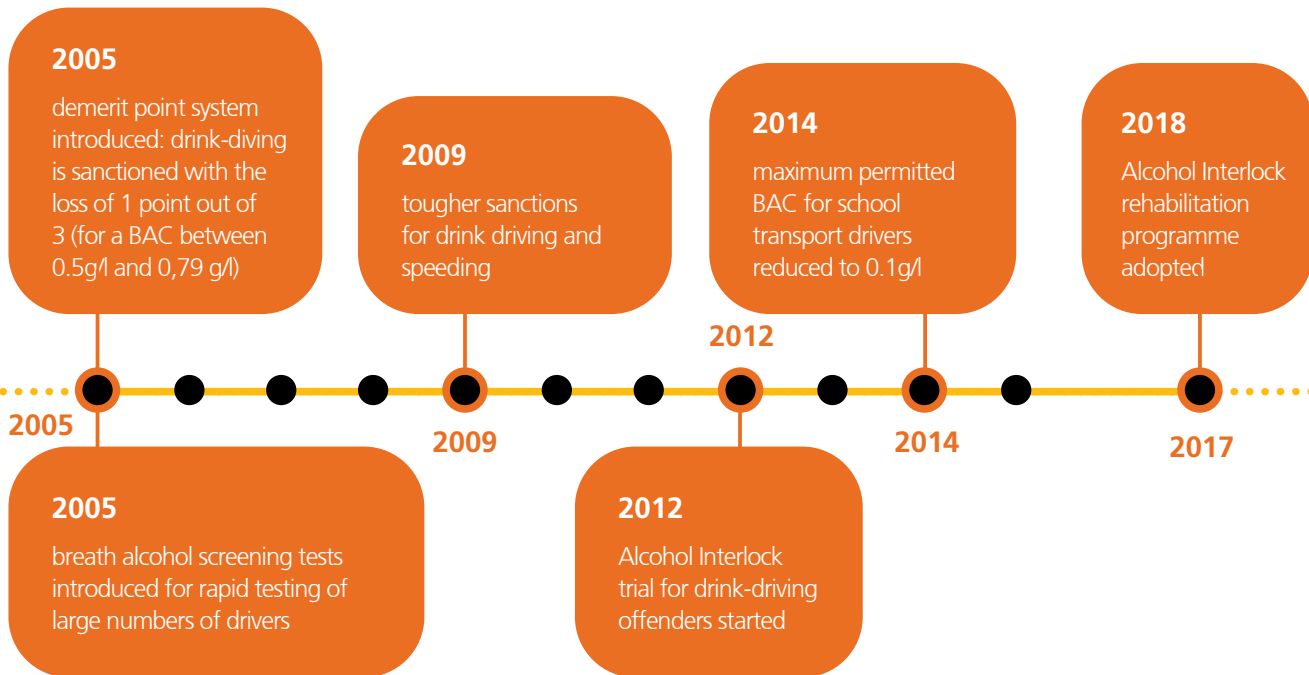
This figure includes deaths in crashes where at least one active participant was found to be under the influence of alcohol, and may include drunk pedestrians. Austria has adopted the following definition for alcohol-related deaths: 'Any death occurring as a result of a road accident in which any active participant was found with blood alcohol level above 0,5g/l'.

Nevertheless, killed and unconscious road users are not tested for alcohol unless the prosecutor requires it. There is no legal obligation to test all active participants (drivers, motorcycle and bicycle riders, pedestrians) in a road crash, either alive or dead. It can therefore be assumed that the real figure is considerably higher. In-depth studies in Austria and comparable figures for other countries indicate that the number of deaths from drink-driving accidents is higher than the official figure and could account for up to one third of all deaths.



NATIONAL POLICIES

Timeline of the main measures adopted in the fight against drink driving:



The Federal Ministry for Transport developed a 'Road Safety Programme for the years 2011 –2020' with the main objective of halving the number of road deaths by 2020, reducing the number of serious injuries by 40% and the number of crashes resulting in injuries by 20%.

Drink-driving is mentioned in several areas of action including vehicle safety and equipment, enforcement, rehabilitation and diagnostics.

Below is a list of drink-driving policies from the Austrian programme:

- Alcohol interlock: a pilot test prior to a potential introduction; assessment of the technical, legal, medical and psychological aspects. Possible areas of use: support in the rehabilitation of repeat drink driving offenders, quality assurance in vehicle fleets (taxis, buses, freight transport) (carried out between 2011 and 2013);
- Regular, scientifically-monitored screening of driver alcohol levels in normal traffic in close cooperation with the police;
- Equipping the federal police with alcohol screening devices with the target of reducing alcohol-related road crashes by 15%;
- Introduction of alcohol interlocks, implementation of the results from the pilot test. Examination of the technical, legal, medical and psychological aspects (the alcohol interlock programme for offenders came into force in 2017).

The new Austrian road safety strategy is currently under review by the Ministry of Transport and not yet published (publication expected in the course of 2021).



BAC LIMITS AND SANCTIONS

Since the introduction of lower BAC limits in 2011:

The legal limit for **drivers** is:

0.5g/l



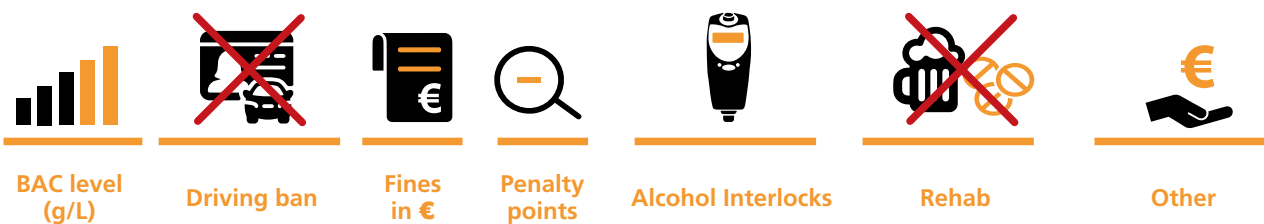
The legal limit for **novice and professional drivers** is:

0.2g/l

In 1998, the BAC limit was reduced from 0.8 g/l to 0.5 g/l. The lower BAC for novice drivers was adopted in 1992. Since 1997, drivers of buses and heavy goods vehicles also have to comply (above 7.5 t: since 1997, above 3.5 t: since 2013).

The table below gives in detail the sanctions set out in Austrian laws, according to BAC level:

BAC level (g/L)	Driving ban	Fines in €	Penalty points	Alcohol Interlocks	Rehab	Other
0,1 - 0,49 (categories C1/C, D1/D)	No	From 36 to 2180 (cat. C/ C1)	1 (out of 3 total points in the penalty point system)	No	Psychological driver improvement course after 2nd offence in the penalty point system	-
0,5 - 0,79	No	From 363 to 2180 (cat. D/ D1)	1 (out of 3 total points in the penalty point system)	No	Psychological driver improvement course after 2nd offence in the penalty point system	If three times above 0,5 within 12 months, in case of an accident, the insurance company may reclaim damages paid from an insured person driving under the influence of alcohol (up to a certain amount).
0,8 – 1,19	1 month	From 300 to 3700	No	No	Traffic coaching (short course on consequences of DUI combined with psychological component aimed at changing the driver's behaviour)	In case of an accident, the insurance company may reclaim damages paid from an insured person driving under the influence of alcohol (up to a certain amount).
1,2 – 1,59	From 4 months	From 800 to 3700	No	Yes (voluntary participation possible after half of licence withdrawal period is over, duration twice the remaining withdrawal period, minimum six months)	Psychological driver improvement course	In case of an accident, the insurance may reclaim damages paid from an insured person driving under the influence of alcohol (up to a certain amount).



BAC level (g/L)	Driving ban	Fines in €	Penalty points	Alcohol Interlocks	Rehab	Other
> 1,6	From 6 months	From 1200 to 4400	No	Yes (voluntary participation possible after half of licence withdrawal period is over, duration twice the remaining withdrawal period, minimum six months)	Psychological driver improvement course, medical and psychological driver assessment	In case of an accident, the insurance company may reclaim damages paid from an insured person driving under the influence of alcohol (up to a certain amount).
Recidivist	In case of a second offence due to intoxication within five years, the period of suspension of the driving licence increases, depending on the BAC levels of both offences. Withdrawal in the penalty point system after three offences.	From 1600 to 5900	Like first offenders	Yes (voluntary participation possible after half of licence withdrawal period is over, duration twice the remaining withdrawal period, minimum 6 months)	Psychological driver improvement course.	Like first offenders.



ENFORCEMENT

In Austria, random breath tests are allowed at roadside police checks. The alcohol test is carried out using a breathalyser, and sanctions are imposed based on the breathalyser test result. Blood tests are only used in exceptional cases if the driver is not able to use the breathalyser (e.g. asthmatics).

The introduction of alcohol screening devices in 2005 led to a significant increase in the number of drink-driving checks. Drivers are first tested with these rapid hand-held screening tests. If the test is positive, drivers have to undergo a second test with a breathalyser. Only the second breathalyser test is reliable enough to provide evidence for sanctioning.

Austria ranks among the EU countries with a significant number of alcohol checks made by the police. In 2019, around 1.8 million checks were carried out by the police for alcohol while the percentage of those who tested positive was 1.7%, a figure that has remained stable in recent years (see table below).

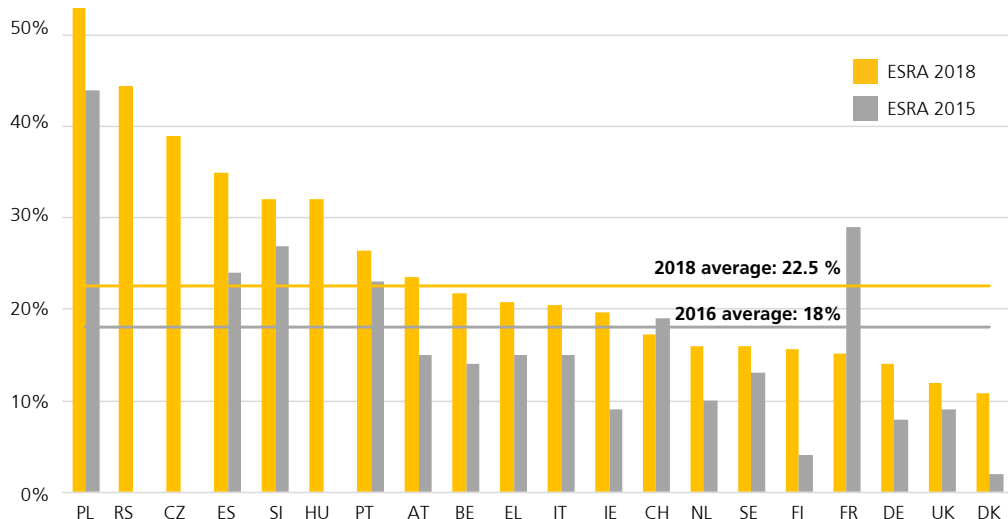
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of alcohol roadside police tests	1,624,279	1,674,157	1,720,903	1,741,992	1,807,053
Number of inhabitants	8,576,261	8,700,471	8,772,865	8,858,775	8,901,064
Tests per 1000 inhabitants	189	192	196	197	203
Proportion above the legal limit	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%



DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

Despite the number of police breath tests being one of the highest in the EU, the drivers' perception of being caught for drink-driving remains relatively low and follows the European average, according to the E-survey on Road Safety Attitudes published in 2019 (ESRA2).

Figure 3. Proportion (%) of car drivers who considered themselves likely to be checked by the police for drink-driving.
Source: ESRA survey (2015 and 2018)



In 2018, the percentage of people who considered themselves likely to be checked for alcohol was 23.6%, slightly higher when compared to the results from previous ESRA in 2015 (15% of drivers).

A national survey published in 2019 by several Austrian institutes working on traffic and psychology has shown similar results. When asked if drivers were afraid of being checked by the police after having drunk, the vast majority (64.4%) gave a negative answer.¹



REHABILITATION AND ALCOHOL INTERLOCK PROGRAMMES

Between 2012 and 2013 a pilot alcohol interlock offender programme was carried out in Austria including a mentoring programme. The results were very positive and as a result an alcohol interlock programme was introduced in 2017 (for a five-year trial). The programme will be evaluated at the end of the 5-year trial (in 2022) and extended if the programme is shown to be successful.

The participants of the programme are offenders with a driving licence B caught with a BAC level of 1.2 g/litre or above or repeat offenders that were sanctioned with a driving licence ban of at least four months. People with an alcohol addiction cannot join the programme. An operative coordinating institution ("ABS-Institution") was created for the purpose of the trial.

After a mandatory period of licence withdrawal (at least half of the full withdrawal period) the driver can choose between further withdrawal or participation in the alcohol interlock programme. The period of the alcohol interlock programme is twice as long as the remaining period of licence withdrawal with a minimum programme duration of six months.

¹ <https://bit.ly/3ewON8d>

The programme is placed under administrative law and permits the installation of alcohol interlocks as an alternative to licence withdrawal.

The programme starts with the installation of the device in the participant's car(s) and an appointment with a mentor. During this appointment information is provided about the process of the programme and the operation of the device. Furthermore, the participants are informed about their rights and responsibilities during the programme. After this appointment, the device is activated and the driver will get a special permit to drive the vehicle.

Appointments with the mentor will take place on a regular basis (every two months). The mentor will read out the data from the device, check the data for possible infringements, calibrate the device and discuss the data as well as the participant's experience. Certain infringements will lead to exclusion from the programme (manipulation, repeated BAC levels above the limit recorded). After completion of the programme the participant can either choose to have the device removed or can keep it. The participant will get a certificate of completion of the programme by the coordinating institution and can then reclaim their unrestricted driving license at the driving license authority.

Costs to participate in the programme are as follows:

- 2,500 euros/year for the device;
- 600 euros (minimum) for the mentoring programme;
- 300 euros to install and remove the device.

Currently, the participation rate cannot be identified because there are no figures available of how many are eligible. It can be said that once a candidate is in contact with the ABS institution there is a participation rate of nearly 99%. On average, 150 - 200 vehicles are equipped with an alcohol interlock in Austria each year.



CAMPAIGNS

From the results of the E-survey on Road Safety Attitudes (ESRA2 2019), it appears that around 30% of the interviewees had driven after drinking alcohol during the previous month. When compared to the EU average of around 20%, this suggests that drinking and driving is seen as acceptable by a significant proportion of Austrian drivers.

Communication campaigns can therefore be an effective tool to raise awareness on the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol.

In 2013, the Austrian Ministry of Transport participated in the *"European Night without Accident"* with the motto '0.0% alcohol in the right place. For my friends I stay away from alcohol!'. The event took place in 20 disco clubs where around 3000 young people were informed on the risks of driving under the influence and the objective of the campaign. 61% of 1101 (=675) drivers received a bracelet as they agreed to refrain from alcohol that night to be able to drive themselves and their friends safely home.



Alkoholeinwirkung

Prüfblöberechnung %

Wärschneung & Risikoverhalten

Stoffwechselfaktor

Formel:

$$\frac{\%}{100} = \frac{\text{Gramm Alkohol}}{\text{Körperflüssigkeit}}$$

Getränk	Gramm Alkohol	Körperflüssigkeit
Strohalm (330 ml)	12g	60kg (Männchen) x 0,7
Wass (330 ml)	0g	60kg (Frauen) x 0,6
Wass (330 ml)	0g	50kg

Beispiel: 12g / 42kg = 0,28 %

Alkohol: 0,15 % pro Stunde



SOURCES

Austria Road Safety Programme 2011-2020:

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

Drink-driving campaign:

<https://bit.ly/3dARlfv>

Drink-driving national survey (2019):

<https://bit.ly/3upAY0J>

Drivers' perception:

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

ETSC, 14th PIN Annual Report (2020):

<https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/14-PIN-annual-report-FINAL.pdf>

ETSC, Alcohol Interlocks in Europe: An Overview of Current and Forthcoming Programmes (2020)

https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/ALCOHOL_INTERLOCKS_FINAL.pdf