

DRIVING AND ICE USE

SUMMARY

- It's illegal to drive, attempt to drive or instruct a learner while affected by drugs including crystal methamphetamine (ice).
- Driving under the influence of ice can lead to erratic driving styles, which increases the risk of accidents and injuries to the driver and the community.
- Drivers under the influence of ice contribute to the annual road death toll in Australia.
- Urine based drug tests can detect ice up to 3 days post consumption and this can be extended to a week following heavy use of the drug.
- The effects of ice can last a long time and it can take days for ice to be eliminated from the body.

HOW DANGEROUS IS DRIVING ON ICE?

Driving on ice brings together an extremely dangerous combination of factors. Ice can give the driver an increased sense of confidence and desire to take risks on the road, whilst at the same time it undermines skills required for safe driving i.e. reaction times and concentration.

Ice impacts a person's capacity to interact with the world around them, affecting:

- Perception & Judgement
- Problem solving
- Confidence & Risk taking
- Control & Reaction times
- Depth perception
- Concentration



Features of drug driving on ice

- Erratic driving
- Weaving
- Speeding
- Tailgating
- Changing lanes with no indication
- Drifting off the road
- High-speed collisions

HOW LONG UNTIL IT IS SAFE TO DRIVE AFTER USING ICE?

It can take several days to come-down after using ice, meaning someone who uses ice is likely to experience changes in behaviour and mood for days or weeks to come.

The comedown experience of ice usually brings on a different set of symptoms compared with the drug's more immediate effects. However, a driver coming down from ice can be just as dangerous on the road, and evidence of drivers experiencing comedown and withdrawal from ice use has been recorded in road side accidents.

The length of time ice can be detected in the body depends on the amount taken, frequency of use, presence of other contaminating substances and personal factors.

'COMEDOWN'/ WITHDRAWAL	IMPACTS SAFE DRIVING SKILLS
Exhaustion and increased need for sleep	Making it difficult to pay attention for prolonged periods, possible fatigue and sleepiness.
Headaches, dizziness and blurred vision	Impairing peripheral vision and reducing ability to pick up on changing traffic conditions and details.
Irritability and feeling down or depressed	Reduced emotional control can affect decision making on the road and can increase risk-taking.

DRUG TESTING AND PENALTIES INVOLVED

It is an offence in all Australian states and territories to drive under the influence of a drug (or alcohol). A saliva swab test may be used during random breath tests to detect the presence of illicit substances such as ice. If the test is positive, a further saliva test and/or urine or blood sample may be taken, which will be taken for analysis in a police forensic laboratory. If the second saliva test is positive, the driver is directed not to drive for 24 hours. If the laboratory results show a positive test for an illicit drug, the driver will be issued with a court notice.

In contrast to alcohol, where people must have more than a prescribed concentration of alcohol in their blood to be charged with an offense, there is no legal limit for driving after using an illegal drug. The presence of any level of an illicit drug in a driver's system is enough evidence to prove they are driving under the influence of that drug.

A charge of driving under the influence (DUI) has serious penalties including loss of licence, fines and jail time. All states and territories in Australia have roadside drug testing for ice. The maximum penalties for driving under the influence of methamphetamine and other illicit drugs are different for each state and territory. For more information please visit the '[laws about ice](#)' section of **Cracks in the Ice**.

If you suspect that someone is on ice and considering driving, alert the police.

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