

Impaired Driving: Confirm the Sober Ride

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Why this matters

A ride plan can fall apart when an event runs late, a phone loses service or the designated driver starts drinking. Make the arrangement before it is needed and check what happens if the first option disappears.

Objective: Confirm a sober ride, pickup details and a backup that does not depend on someone driving impaired.

Key hazards or failure points

An assumed designated driver; cancelled transport; self-judging sobriety; alcohol or drug effects; dispatch pressure; passengers accepting an unsafe ride.

Practical controls

- Plan a non-drinking designated driver or another sober transport option before drinking. Confirm the person's agreement and the actual ride; do not rely on "someone will drive."
- Check medicine warnings that affect driving with a pharmacist or prescriber. Feeling alert, drinking coffee or taking a short break does not establish safe driving.
- For work travel, make relief and alternate transport available when someone cannot drive safely. Passengers should use another ride instead of pressuring the person to continue.

Verify It in the Field

Before departure or an event, identify who is driving, the pickup point and the destination. Check any booking confirmation and how the driver will be contacted. Each passenger should know the arrangement.

Check the backup: another sober driver, an available transport service or an agreed safe place to wait. Confirm phone access and who can help if service or payment access fails.

Ask the leader who can reassign a vehicle or trip without requiring an unsafe drive first. Record the transport arrangement and unresolved gap, not a homemade sobriety assessment. Wear seat belts for the journey.

Stop and reassess

Do not start or continue when impaired or when the agreed safe ride is unavailable. If driving becomes unsafe, stop in a safe location as soon as possible and get help. Report immediate road danger safely; do not follow or confront a suspected impaired driver.

Ask the crew

1. Who has agreed to drive, and where will they collect us?
2. What is the backup if that ride is cancelled?
3. Who can change a work-driving assignment?

Before travel: confirm the ride and the fallback.

Sources: NHTSA, Drunk Driving; FDA, Some Medicines and Driving Don't Mix.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.