

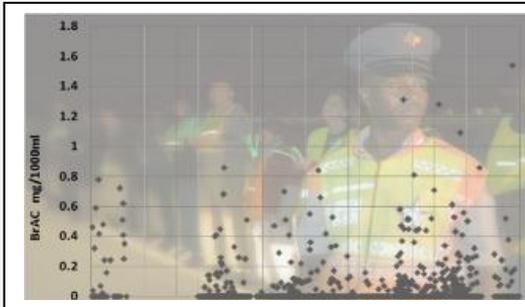
DRINK DRIVE SURVEY IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA



Date started: December 2007 **Date finished:** January 2008

Partners: Windhoek City Police, Namibia Breweries

Cost/time/resources: 10,000 USD, 1,000 person hours police time, 100 hours data entry and analysis



To better assess rates of drink driving in Windhoek, the Global Road Safety Partnership Namibia – in partnership with the Windhoek City Police and Namibia Breweries – launched a five-week survey that included breath tests of 3,814 drivers at 13 key locations around the city. Results show a high level of drinking and driving and not just during evenings also during the daytime. Alcohol has often been blamed for contributing to a high number of vehicle crashes in Namibia, however, the reliability of previous drink-driving statistics have been questioned by the National Road Safety Council (NRSC).

Summary project sheet.

Objectives and scope

The purpose of this study was to provide an indication of the level of driving with alcohol in the breath, measured as BrAC in Windhoek. The current legal limits specified by the 1999 Road Traffic Act are a BAC limit of 79mg/100ml of blood (BrAC 37 μ g/100ml of breath). Most people find it difficult to gauge their own blood alcohol level since there are many factors that need to be considered:

- The amount of alcohol consumed;
- The period of time over which alcohol is consumed;
- Body mass;
- Whether or not food has been consumed;
- Fitness levels; and
- The health of one's liver.

Activities

Random sampling was conducted for a period of 5 weeks, 7 days a week at 13 monitoring checkpoints in the City of Windhoek. Selecting the checkpoints was probably the most important decision when setting up the project. First, the checkpoints had to be safe for night-time surveys. Then, they had to be routes that drinking drivers are likely to take, and they must be difficult to avoid.

Conclusion and main lessons learnt

Results show that drivers are travelling with alcohol in their system during the early morning and during the middle of the day. This also coincides with high pedestrian movements for work and school journeys, putting vulnerable road users at much higher risk. Drinking and driving is not just a problem in the evening and night: it appears to be just as severe during the day too. A total of 50 out of the total sample of 3,814 drivers were above the legal limit. The survey also showed that only a very small percentage of drivers in Windhoek know what the legal limit is for drink driving. It is unlikely that they can relate this level to a specific volume of alcohol consumed.

A further study would be required to confirm the drinking and driving patterns in other regions of Namibia, where it is likely that there would be even less driver compliance to the law due to a lower level of policing. Efforts should be made to encourage responsible alcohol use.