

## Drink-drive casualty rise is a matter of priorities

Rising road casualties due to drink-driving are very worrying but, with police resources stretched at key times, it is increasingly difficult for them to both enforce the law and deter drunken drivers, says the AA Motoring Trust.

In recent years, the peak times for breath test failures following a road accident have been between 23.00 and 03.00 on Friday and Saturday nights - the time that police officers are drawn into town centres to combat anti-social behaviour.

"A very welcome eight per cent reduction in the overall number of UK road deaths has been marred somewhat by the increase, albeit nearly two per cent, in deaths due to drink-driving," says Andrew Howard, head of road safety for The AA Motoring Trust.

"Today's figures indicate that the police are still catching many drunk drivers by breath-testing after accidents. However, if fewer police officers are available to create a visible deterrent at times when motorists are most tempted to drink and drive, this is worrying."

Nearly a quarter of motor vehicle drivers killed in accidents are over the 80mg/100ml legal limit - two thirds of these are over 150mg/100ml. The AA Motoring Trust believes that, while demands on policing stretch available resources, efforts to enforce drink-driving laws should concentrate on targeting drivers with the highest alcohol levels, who pose the greatest danger on UK roads.

"Much of this targeted approach is intelligence-led and the contribution of members of the public in tipping off the police when they see a drink-driver take to the road is crucial in combating this deadly form of anti-social behaviour," says Howard.