

The Cost of Drunk Driving

Memoirs of Convicted Drunk Drivers



Videos based on memoirs
(Official YouTube Channel of the Chiba
Prefectural Police Headquarters)



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Chiba Prefectural Police

The Serious Consequences of Driving with an Irresponsible Attitude

Will you still drink and drive?

〈Driving While Intoxicated (DWI)〉(Note 1)

Penalty: Up to 5 years in prison or a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen

Base Points: 35 → License revoked, disqualification period of 3 years (Notes 2, 3)

〈Driving Under the Influence (DUI)〉

● **Breath Alcohol Content (BAC): 0.15mg/L to 0.25mg/L**

Base Points: 13

License Suspension: 90 days (Note 2)

● **Breath Alcohol Concentration: 0.25mg/L or higher**

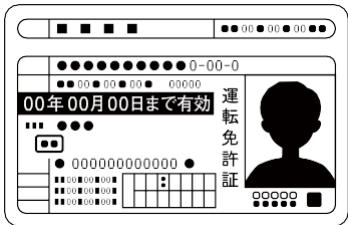
Base Points: 25

License revoked, disqualification period of 2 years (Notes 2, 3)

Note 1: "Driving while intoxicated" refers to being in a state where, due to the influence of alcohol, the driver is unable to operate a vehicle normally.

Note 2: Applies in cases where there are no prior violations or cumulative points.

Note 3: "Disqualification period" refers to the period during which the individual cannot obtain a new driver's license after revocation.



My Sin

Office Worker (20s)

The offenses committed include drunk driving, speeding, failure to render aid, and what is commonly referred to as a hit-and-run. Moreover, I was responsible for someone's death—basically, an act of murder.

The day after the incident was a day off from work, and since the previous day was a payday, I had quite a bit of money in my account. I was in high spirits from the start of the week, and when my friends invited me out for drinks, on the day of the incident, I immediately agreed without a second thought.

In the past, I had often driven home under the influence, so on this day as well, I thought, "After we finish drinking, since I'll be using my car, I'll give my two friends a ride home." With that mindset, I drove to meet them. After bar-hopping with my friends, I offered the devilish temptation to the two of them: "Want a ride?" Looking back now, I realize how ominous those words were.

However, at the time, none of this ever crossed my mind. My friends got into my car and I started the engine while blasting Western music from the car stereo. The moment we drove through a crosswalk on a green light, the windshield shattered with a loud "bang!" and my mind went blank. Before long, my passengers kept shouting, "Stop! Stop!" Their voices gradually brought me back to my senses, and I finally stopped the car about 400 meters away from the scene.

My friends went back to the accident site and reported what had happened to the police. Meanwhile, I was in a state of panic and wasn't able to do anything but sit down by the guardrail. I don't know how much time passed, but eventually, several police cars were parked around me.

A police officer asked, "You're the one who caused the accident, right?" I replied, "Yes." Then, I was given an alcohol detection test, a walk-a-turn test and a drug test.

After that, I was taken to a police station. When they put handcuffs on me, I thought to myself, "Ah, I really did cause the accident."

For about two weeks, I wasn't able to eat anything due to the unbearable reality that I had taken someone's life. I became a shell of a person, broken both mentally and physically. Later, during a meeting with my parents, they told me, "You have to live so that you can apologize to the bereaved family." Those words gradually helped me to start eating again.

However, another consequence of the incident is that I neglected my work, resulting in trouble for my clients. I heard that I had lost over a dozen business accounts. My father went to my place of work to apologize on my behalf. Meanwhile, the media swarmed my family home, and the incessant ringing of the doorbell and the telephone exhausted my parents.

In addition to that, because of what I had allow to happen, my brother's engagement was called off, and I brought immense trouble and sorrow upon my family.

During the trial, the bereaved family held a portrait of the victim whose life I had taken. When the judge delivered the verdict, saying, "The defendant ○○ is sentenced to three years and six months in prison...", the entire bereaved family wept. All I could do was to bow my head. I waived my right to appeal on the same day and I am now serving out my sentence.

Ideally, I would like to kneel with my head bowed low at the victim's grave, but due to the bereaved family's wishes, I have been informed that no personal information will be disclosed to me. Once I am released, I plan to visit the scene of the accident to offer my prayers, flowers, and tributes in the hope that the bereaved family might validate my efforts to atone for what I have done. I also intend to contribute to victim support centers and participate in traffic safety volunteer activities.

If I can help reduce the number of foolish individuals like myself, even by one, it might lessen the number of people who experience life-changing sorrow. I will devote myself fully to what I can do as the perpetrator, and live without forgetting this tragedy.

An Unforgivable Mistake

Interior Worker (40s)

When I first started drinking alcohol, I never imagined that I would one day drive under the influence. However, one evening after work, I decided to have a quick drink before heading home.

I had driven to work that day, so I was unsure about what to do. But I convinced myself, thinking, "A little bit should be fine," or "I can just call for a car service if I need it." And with that mindset, I went out for drinks. Since I only drank a small amount that time, I ended up driving myself home. It was then that I felt, "Oh, I can actually drive in this shape." That false sense of confidence was precisely what led me down the path to a much bigger mistake.

From that day onward, the naïve notion of "just a little should be fine" began to take precedence in my mind. I started driving under the influence in my early 20s. However, not long after, penalties for drunk driving were strengthened, so at that point, I completely stopped driving under the influence. I realized it was nothing but risky.

Nevertheless, as I approached my 40s, I started drinking and driving again. By that time, I had developed a stronger tolerance for alcohol compared to when in my 20s. More importantly, the convenience of being able to travel whenever I wanted, return home whenever I pleased, and even sleep in the car if I got sleepy was too appealing. This level of freedom and ease became irresistible.

Then, one night, I did something that should never have happened.

On that night, I drank alcohol from around 8 p.m. until early morning. At the time, I intended to either sleep in the car before driving home or call for a car service. However, when it was time to head home, I didn't feel sleepy at all, nor did I feel sick. Since it would have only taken about 20 minutes to drive home, I decided to start driving. At first, there were no issues, and I was driving without any problems. Then, about halfway home, I fell asleep at the wheel. I woke up because I felt a strong impact, but at the time, I had no idea what had happened. Without bothering to check, I continued driving home. It was later revealed that I was involved in a hit-and-run accident.

That evening, the police came to my house, and I was taken into custody. In the car, they explained what had happened, and my mind went completely blank. I realized that I had killed someone—not through an accident, but through my own irresponsible actions. I lost my father when I was young and I have no siblings. I was living with my mother, who has poor eyesight and cannot go out on her own. Leaving her by herself, I began my life in detention. Relatives brought my mother to visit me, but I felt too ashamed to face them. During that time, relatives and neighbors helped with household matters, so my mother managed to get by.

Later, I was released on bail and lived with my mother until the day of the verdict. The court sentenced me to three years in prison. For those three years, I would have had to leave my mother alone. However, something completely unexpected happened. I received a letter from a relative informing me that my mother had passed away from an illness.

The letter said, "Your mother was always waiting for you to come home. I can't forget how lonely she looked." As I read it, I couldn't stop my tears. I felt unbearable shame for not being there during my mother's final moments. It made me realize the pain of suddenly losing someone close to you. My mother taught me this through her own passing. The bereaved family of the victim must be feeling the same way I do now. And I believe my mother was trying to teach me that it was I who caused their pain.

At present, I am unable to send a letter directly to the victim's bereaved family. That's only natural. However, I believe that no matter how many years it takes, I must never stop atoning for what I've done. True atonement begins after leaving prison. From now on, I intend to dedicate my entire life to making amends.

The Cost of an Irresponsible Attitude

Office Worker (30s)

My life had been one of continuing happiness, with no dramatic highs or lows, as I tried to add to my life day by day. At the time, I was a company employee and entrusted with managing a branch office. Although there were ups and downs, I contributed to society and my local community.

I fell in love, got married, and was blessed with two children. I even achieved my dream of owning a home. In the midst of those fulfilling days, enjoying a drink after work was one of the moments that made me feel truly happy, especially when I was with close friends.

We often started with a quick shot of tequila and then enjoyed different drinks depending on the mood of the evening. There were many nights when drinking carried on late into the night, and I often found it difficult to secure a taxi or driver service. Thinking about the work awaiting me the next day, I chose to drive myself home on more than one occasion.

And though doing so even once or twice is inexcusable, I grew accustomed to it—a terrifying thing. I began to think, "I can drive just fine even after drinking," and "It's safe since there aren't any pedestrians around at that time of night."

That day, I was about to go out drinking as usual when I received a call from my wife. She asked me, "Will you be able to come home early today?" And she said, "The kids are waiting for you!". I could hear my children's voices in the background, calling out, "Daddy!" Despite hearing their voices, I had already made plans with a friend, so I replied, "I'll just have a quick drink and head home," and ended the call. Later, after starting with a shot of tequila, I realized it was already past 1 a.m. So, I got in my car and drove home, as I usually did.

Thinking, "If I take the back roads, there won't be any checkpoints, so I'll be fine," I drove down a one-way street. As I cruised along absentmindedly, feeling at ease, I suddenly thought, "A person!" At that very moment, I collided with someone. I hit the brakes and slowed down. Looking in my side mirror, I saw a bicycle lying on the ground. Terrified of losing everything, I couldn't bring myself to stop the car. Instead, I continued driving slowly. At the time, my mind was torn between fear and rationality. Finally, about 300 meters away from where it happened, I brought the car to a stop and walked back to the scene. I desperately thought to myself, "I hope it's just an injury," or, "Please, let it not have been a person." However, the reality was that there was a man lying motionless on the ground. Soon after, the police and an ambulance arrived, perhaps called by someone nearby. They moved hurriedly, but I just stood there in a daze, unable to do anything. The police took me into custody on the spot, but I couldn't process the reality of what had happened. My mind kept replaying the incident over and over again. When the investigation began, I was informed that the victim had died. As tears ran down my face, I realized that I had taken someone's life.

Later, I was granted bail and returned home, but the house was empty, with no family waiting for me. On a desk lay nothing but divorce papers. When I called my workplace, their response was distant and cold. In the end, I resigned, and I then fully realized the gravity of the crime I had committed.

Up until that point, I poured my regret and feelings of self-reproach into a written apology, which I sent to the bereaved family of the victim. However, I did not receive a reply, nor did I expect one. When the trial began, I had the opportunity to face the bereaved family for the first time. I bowed my head and apologized, but it was clear that I was invisible in their eyes. They looked as though having lost a beloved family member had drained the life from them.

My sentence was three years in prison. Looking back now, I deeply regret not having listened to my family's voices on the day of the accident. I could have avoided causing the loss of the victim's precious life, the sorrow brought upon the bereaved family, and the loss of my own family, career, and everything else. It has been what feels like an unbearably long stretch of time, but since the day it happened, I have neither been able to see nor hear from my family.

I knew that society was working hard to eradicate drunk driving, but I thought, "I'll be fine." That irresponsible attitude has led to me having to carry an unforgivable burden for the rest of my life. I ended the victim's life so cruelly, and I brought a sorrow so deep to the bereaved family that they will never be able to return to their former way of life. This is the cost of my irresponsible attitude.

The Impact of Drunk Driving

Truck Driver (50s)

I was driving a large truck when I hit and killed a woman. I was arrested for drunk driving and failing to properly observe my surroundings.

The evening before, I drank three beers and one canned cocktail starting around 6 p.m. and I went to bed before 8 p.m. The next morning, I woke up at 1:30 a.m., prepared my breakfast and lunch, left the house, went to the truck yard, and began my workday. While driving my usual route, I hit someone at an intersection.

This is how it happened. After confirming that there were no pedestrians at the crosswalk, I made a right turn. Suddenly, I saw something white flutter in front of me to the right. Unsure of what had happened, I immediately hit the brakes and stopped. When I got out of the truck to check, I found a person lying between the rear tires.

I repeatedly asked, "Are you okay?" but there was no response, so I called an ambulance. Five minutes later, the ambulance arrived, and I explained the situation to them.

Afterward, I was taken to the police station for questioning and was detained. For about the next two months, I remained at home, but when the trial began, I was sentenced to two years and six months in prison.

Because I had driven a large truck while still under the influence of alcohol from the previous night, the company was subjected to an audit, causing trouble for the president. I was dismissed from the company, and communication with my family ceased entirely.

In addition, my driver's license was revoked, and I could no longer work as a truck driver. For the first time, I realized the gravity of what I had done and the immeasurable impact alcohol had on my life.

At Ichihara Prison, I participated in an alcohol rehabilitation program where I was asked about my drinking habits and motives. I shared that I drank daily and often used alcohol to help me fall asleep. In addition to that program, I attended an educational program focused on "incorporating the victim's perspective," which made me confront the naivety of my thoughts and allowed me to come to grips with a fraction of the feelings of the victim's bereaved family.

When I put myself in the shoes of the victim's family and thought about the incident, I realized that this was not an accident, but a crime. It was the act of taking a life—murder.

Reflecting on what I learned at Ichihara Prison and drawing inspiration from the thoughts of my fellow inmates, I am determined to ensure what happened is never forgotten. I aim to become a better person, reintegrate into society, and never repeat the same mistake.

As the perpetrator, I will eventually have the opportunity to see my family again. However, the bereaved family will never be able to see their loved one again. Thinking about this fills me with deep remorse. I feel truly sorry for what I have done, and I understand that it is only natural if they cannot forgive me.

I will work with my family to consider how best to make amends and will take steps to atone to the victim's bereaved family.

What has resulted from the crime I committed will never fade.

By drinking alcohol and driving a truck, I changed the lives and futures of the victim, the victim's family, my own family, and many others. This is something that can never be forgiven. To the victim and their bereaved family, I am truly and deeply sorry.

I will never drink alcohol again.

If I could turn back time to before the accident, I would start over from the beginning and do things differently.

Repeated Drunk Driving

Welfare Worker (30s)

I am currently in prison, reflecting on the crimes I committed and working on my rehabilitation. In the past, I often drank alcohol until late at night and went to work the next day while still hungover. Sometimes, I would drink one or two beers, rest for a few hours, and then convince myself that I had sobered up enough to drive, engaging in drunk driving out of my own convenience. At first, I understood that driving while under the influence was dangerous and felt guilty about doing it. However, as I continued to drive under the influence, I became overconfident, believing that as long as there was only a little alcohol left in my system, I could drive without causing an accident. Gradually, I lost my sense of danger and guilt about drunk driving.

My irresponsible behavior continued and one summer, I had an argument with my wife during dinner. Being drunk at the time and feeling irritated, I decided to buy more alcohol at a nearby convenience store. Thinking that returning home and facing my wife would only prolong the argument, I decided to lie down and rest in my car for a while. I did not remember what I did thereafter, but when I came to, I found myself at a traffic light at an intersection, having apparently fallen asleep. Ambulances and police cars were parked around me, and I was arrested on the spot. For this incident, I received a suspended sentence. Following that, I continued my life while undergoing treatment for alcohol dependency. However, I eventually started drinking again, which led to another argument with my family. Despite having had my driver's license revoked due to the previous incident and knowing I was driving without a license, I let my anger take over and took a car owned by my family without permission.

I stopped by a convenience store, bought more alcohol, and continued drinking for selfish reasons, such as trying to calm myself down. Driving a car in such a state naturally makes it impossible to make rational decisions and leads to misjudging the surrounding situation. However, at the time, I naively believed that even if I continued to drive under the influence, it would not lead to anything as serious as a traffic accident.

After drinking the additional alcohol I had purchased, I became heavily intoxicated. Realizing that if I continued to drive in such a state, it would be dangerous, I decided to park the car and attempted to make a right turn into a parking lot. However, I messed up using the steering wheel and collided with a truck driving in the oncoming lane. The impact from my car caused the truck to veer over a curb and eventually knock over a nearby traffic signal pole before coming to a stop. Tragically, due to the head-on collision, the victim was pinned between the crushed front section of the truck and his seat, suffering greatly.

In such a state, I was not fully conscious of what was happening and was unable to call for help or provide assistance. Nearby witnesses at the scene called emergency services, leading to the rescue of the victim.

I was able to reach a settlement with the victim, but I was not given the opportunity to apologize in person. Even when I sent a written apology, the response stated, "I don't want you to do anything more. Please don't contact me."

This made me realize just how selfish and foolish my actions were, resulting in the harm I caused to others due to my own recklessness. I am now deeply remorseful from the bottom of my heart.

As a result of this incident, I was sentenced to a prison term. I was dismissed from the company where I worked, unable to complete the responsibilities I had been entrusted with, and caused significant losses to the company. Additionally, I caused my family great emotional distress due to what I'd done, and I am sure they have had to endure the harsh words of others on numerous occasions. I caused trouble not only to the victim, but also to society and my own family. I continued to drink and drive until the day I was sent to prison. Reflecting on how I was unbothered by breaking the law in the first place, I now deeply regret my foolishness and spend my days reflecting on my actions.

Drunk driving: Never do it, never allow it, never tolerate it.

We accept reports on drunk driving information as outlined below:

1. Information about drivers engaging in drunk driving.
2. Information about establishments promoting or allowing drunk driving.
3. Other relevant information:
(Valuable information related to enforcement of measures against drunk driving, apart from 1 and 2 above.)

Submit Information Here: _____



Chiba Prefectural Police Website
[Mailbox for enforcement of measures
against drunk driving]

※For urgent cases, call 110 immediately.

On June 28, 2023, the ordinance aimed at eradicating drunk driving in Chiba Prefecture was amended.

1. **For Business Operators:** Employers will be notified of any drunk driving committed by employees during their commute.
2. **For Dining Establishments:** Penalties will be imposed on dining establishment operators who fail to implement the measures to prevent drunk driving.



Chiba Prefecture Website
Efforts to Eradicate Drunk Driving

- Applications are now open for "Drunk Driving Eradication Declaration Workplaces" and "Drunk Driving Eradication Declaration Establishments."

Issued by:

Traffic General Affairs Division, Traffic Department, Chiba Prefectural Police Headquarters

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(main line) URL : <https://www.police.pref.chiba.jp>

In collaboration with: Ichihara Prison

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Drunk Driving

NO!

The consequences of drunk driving: Five true stories, five regrets

Will you still
drink and
drive?

Video No. 1
"My Sin"



Video No. 2
"An Unforgivable Mistake"



Video No. 3 "The Cost of an
Irresponsible Attitude"



Video No. 4
"The Impact of Drunk Driving"



Video No. 5 "Repeated
Drunk Driving"

Drunk driving:
Never do it, never allow it, never tolerate it.

For the full text of the memoirs
by convicted drunk drivers and
all videos, click here.

Chiba Prefectural Police: Memoirs of
Convicted Drunk Drivers

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Chiba Prefectural Police

Driving While Intoxicated

**Up to 5 years in prison or
a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen**

"Driving While Intoxicated" refers to operating a vehicle while in a state of intoxication (being in a state where, due to the influence of alcohol, the driver is unable to operate a vehicle normally).

Driving Under the Influence

**Up to 3 years in
prison,
or
a fine of up to
500,000 yen**



Providing a Vehicle to:

A driver who is intoxicated

**Up to 5 years in prison, or
a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen**

**A driver who is under the
influence**

**Up to 3 years in prison, or
a fine of up to 500,000 yen**

Providers of alcohol and passengers

A driver who is intoxicated

**Up to 3 years in prison, or
a fine of up to 500,000 yen**

**A driver who is under the
influence**

**Up to 2 years in prison, or
a fine of up to 300,000 yen**

Refusal of breathalyzer test

**Up to 3 months
in prison
or
a fine of up to
500,000 yen**

*All of these are subject to administrative penalties related to driver's licenses.

Overview of the Ordinance for Eradicating Drunk Driving in Chiba Prefecture

Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to clarify the responsibilities of the prefecture, its residents, businesses, and other entities in eradicating drunk driving, as well as to establish the fundamental principles for related measures. By comprehensively promoting initiatives to eliminate drunk driving, the ordinance aims to create a community where drunk driving does not exist, ensuring a safe and secure society in which all residents of the prefecture can live with peace of mind.

Key Points of the Ordinance

Responsibilities of Residents

Matters to Be Observed by Residents

- Do not engage in drunk driving.
- In cases where you are required to drive a vehicle, or if there is a likelihood that such a necessity may arise, refrain from drinking alcohol if it may lead to driving under the influence.

- Strive to deepen an understanding of the effects of alcohol on your body.
- Endeavor to independently and proactively take actions to eradicate drunk driving within the home, workplace, community, and other settings.
- Cooperate with measures implemented by the national government, the prefecture, and municipalities.
- Report to police officers if a person engaging in drunk driving or suspected of doing so is discovered.

