

TIPS ON WHAT TO DO FIRST:

Although the present situation may seem overwhelming and a bit complicated, your first priority must be to find an attorney to help guide you through this process. The earlier you start, the less pressure you will be under to make a decision. Take a deep breath and try to digest as much information as you can before you choose an attorney, (or make a decision not to hire an attorney). There is an incredible amount of information on the Internet about your situation. The problem is, that much of it is self-serving, inaccurate and misleading. Unless you have court right away, you are best off to WAIT at least 24 hours before hiring legal representation. It is sometimes helpful to interview several attorneys before deciding on who to hire.

CONTACT THE DMV TO REQUEST A HEARING: If you do not contact the DMV within **10 DAYS of your arrest you will lose your license as if you were convicted of the DUI!** Before you can get your license back, the DMV will require you have high-risk insurance and complete the DUI school - and it will be on your record for 10 years. It is always best to call the DMV (or we can do it for you) and request the hearing- that way your lawyer has time to prepare a defense for you at the DMV hearing and possibly save the loss of your license.

FIND THE BEST DUI LAWYER YOU CAN: The best way to find the most qualified attorney for your case is to first educate yourself about drinking and driving law and process. The more you know, the better prepared you will be to evaluate the attorneys you interview. (See our "10 questions to ask your Lawyer"). As the saying sometimes goes, " a cheap defense is no good, and a good defense is not cheap". A common myth is that you can't beat a DUI. This is perhaps the most troubling myth - one harbored by many attorneys and the general public. In my opinion, an attorney who believes this should never represent a person accused of drunk driving.

PUT IT IN WRITING: While the event is still fresh in your mind, write down everything you remember. This will help both you and your attorney sort through the case. If your case goes to trial, it might be months down the road, so details tend to fade.

GATHER YOUR WITNESSES: If you have witnesses, make sure you have their contact information. These can be people who were in the vehicle with you, people who saw you drinking (or who served you), or passers-by who witnessed the field tests. Its always a good idea to see if they are willing to write down the specifics of the event before details start to fade with time.

GET YOUR VEHICLE CHECKED: If you suspect that a mechanical defect with your vehicle caused the "bad driving" that caused the officer to stop you, get it checked out by a qualified mechanic immediately. If there are problems, get them documented before they are fixed.

GET YOURSELF CHECKED OUT: If you suffer from any medical condition that may have interfered with your ability to complete the field tests, or which may have misled the officer into believing that you were drunk, get the condition checked and documented by a physician immediately. This holds true even if you had a cold. An undocumented medical condition will not help you nearly as much as one that is supported by a signature followed by "M.D."