2663 OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF AN INTOXICANT — CRIMINAL OFFENSE — § 346.63(1)(a)

Statutory Definition of the Crime

Section 346.63(1)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes is violated by one who drives or operates a motor vehicle on a highway[1] while under the influence of an intoxicant.[2]

State's Burden of Proof

Before you may find the defendant guilty of this offense, the State must prove by evidence which satisfies you beyond a reasonable doubt that the following two elements were present.

Elements of the Crime That the State Must Prove

1. The defendant (drove) (operated) a motor vehicle[3] on a highway.[4]

   ["Drive" means the exercise of physical control over the speed and direction of a motor vehicle while it is in motion.][5]

   ["Operate" means the physical manipulation or activation of any of the controls of a motor vehicle necessary to put it in motion.][6]

2. The defendant was under the influence of an intoxicant at the time the defendant (drove) (operated) a motor vehicle.

Definition of "Under the Influence of an Intoxicant"

"Under the influence of an intoxicant" means that the defendant's ability to operate a vehicle was impaired because of consumption of an alcoholic beverage.[7]

Not every person who has consumed alcoholic beverages is "under the influence" as that term is used here. What must be established is that the person has consumed a sufficient amount of alcohol to cause the person to be less able to exercise the clear judgment and steady hand necessary to handle and control a motor vehicle.

It is not required that impaired ability to operate be demonstrated by particular acts of unsafe driving. What is required is that the person's ability to safely control the vehicle be impaired.

How to Use the Test Result Evidence

The law states that the alcohol concentration in a defendant's (breath) (blood) (urine) sample taken within three hours of (driving) (operating) a motor vehicle is evidence of the defendant's alcohol concentration at the time of the (driving) (operating).[8]

WHERE TEST RESULTS SHOWING MORE THAN 0.04 BUT LESS THAN 0.08 GRAMS HAVE BEEN ADMITTED, THE EVIDENCE IS RELEVANT BUT DOES NOT HAVE PRIMA FACIE EFFECT. SEE WIS JI-CRIMINAL 232.[9]

WHERE TEST RESULTS SHOWING 0.08 GRAMS OR MORE HAVE BEEN ADMITTED[10] AND THERE IS NO ISSUE RELATING TO THE DEFENDANT'S POSITION ON THE "BLOOD-ALCOHOL CURVE,"[11] THE JURY SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED AS FOLLOWS:

[If you are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that there was [.08 grams or more of alcohol in 100 milliliters of the defendant's blood] [.08 grams or more of alcohol in 210 liters of the defendant's breath] at the time the test was taken, you may find from that fact alone that the defendant was under the influence of an intoxicant at the time of the alleged (driving) (operating), but you are not required to do so. You the jury are here to

decide this question on the basis of all the evidence in this case, and you should not find that the defendant was under the influence of an intoxicant at the time of the alleged (driving) (operating), unless you are satisfied of that fact beyond a reasonable doubt.]

IF AN APPROVED TESTING DEVICE IS INVOLVED, THE FOLLOWING MAY BE ADDED:[12]

[The law recognizes that the testing device used in this case uses a scientifically sound method of measuring the alcohol concentration of an individual. The State is not required to prove the underlying scientific reliability of the method used by the testing device. However, the State is required to establish that the testing device was in proper working order and that it was correctly operated by a qualified person.]

Jury's Decision

If you are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that both elements of this offense have been proved, you should find the defendant guilty.

If you are not so satisfied, you must find the defendant not guilty.

COMMENT

Wis JI-Criminal 2663 was originally published in 1966 and revised in 1978, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1993, 2004, and 2006. This revision was approved by the Committee in June 2020; it added to the Comment.

The 2004 revision reflected the change in the prohibited alcohol concentration level for persons with two or fewer priors from 0.10 to 0.08 made by 2003 Wisconsin Act 30. For persons with two or fewer priors, a test showing 0.08 grams or more is prima facie evidence of being "under the influence of an intoxicant." § 885.235(1)(c). The change applies to all offenses committed on or after September 30, 2003.

The 2006 revision reflected the correction made in § 885.235 by 2005 Wisconsin Act 8. That correction restored statutory authority for giving prima facie effect to test results in cases where the defendant has three or more priors. See Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, sec. VII.

The 2020 revision to the Comment reflected changes to the felony classes of fourth and subsequent offenses made by 2015 Wisconsin Act 371 [effective date: April 27, 2016]. The revision also reflected changes made by 2019 Wisconsin Act 106 [effective date: March 1, 2020] to the penalty provision of § 346.65(2)(am)5. This amendment increased the mandatory minimum confinement period of fifth and sixth offenses to not less than eighteen months, unless the court finds that a lesser term of confinement would be in the best interests of the community.

The 2004 revision adopted a new format for footnotes. Footnotes common to several instructions are collected in Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment. The applicable sections of Wis JI-Criminal 2600 are cross-referenced in the footnotes for the individual instructions to which they apply. Footnotes unique to individual instructions are included in full in those instructions.

This instruction is for a criminal offense under § 346.63(1)(a), which applies if "the total number of suspensions, revocations and convictions counted under § 343.307(1) within in a 10-year period, equals two . . ." Section 346.65(2)(b). The fact of a prior conviction is not an element of the criminal charge. State v. McCallister, 107 Wis.2d 532, 319 N.W.2d 865 (1982). The penalty provisions apply "regardless of the sequence of offenses." State v. Banks, 105 Wis.2d 32, 48, 313 N.W.2d 67 (1981). The time period is measured from the date of the refusals or violations. § 346.65(2c).

The penalty for criminal violations of § 346.63(1) increases with the number of prior convictions the defendant has. See § 346.65(2). Fourth offenses are Class H felonies. § 346.65(2)(am)4. Fifth and sixth offenses are Class G felonies. § 346.65(2)(am)5. Seventh, eighth, and ninth offenses are Class F felonies. § 346.65(2)(am)6. Tenth and subsequent offenses are Class E felonies. § 346.65(2)(am)7. This instruction may be used without change for all criminal violations. Although the number of priors is a fact that determines the applicable penalty level, it is not an issue that is presented to the jury. "Other than the fact of a prior conviction, any fact that increases the penalty for a crime beyond the prescribed statutory maximum must be submitted to a jury, and proved beyond a reasonable doubt." Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466, 490 (2000) (emphasis added).

The maximum penalty for these offenses is doubled if there was a child under the age of 16 years in the defendant's vehicle. See § 346.65(2)(f) and Wis JI-Criminal 999.

First violations of the statute are forfeitures, see Wis JI-Criminal 2663A. For instructions for cases where both "under the influence" and "prohibited alcohol concentration" charges are submitted based on a single act of driving, see Wis JI-Criminal 2668 [forfeitures] and Wis JI-Criminal 2669 [criminal charges].

For offenses involving operating under the influence of a controlled substance, see Wis JI-Criminal 2664.

For offenses involving operating under the influence of "any other drugs," see Wis JI-Criminal 2666.

For offenses involving operating under the influence of "any combination of an intoxicant and any other drug," see Wis JI-Criminal 2666A.

1. Regarding the "on a highway" requirement, see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. I, and Wis JI-Criminal 2605.

2. This instruction is drafted for cases involving the influence of an intoxicant. For a model tailored to the influence of a controlled substance, see Wis JI-Criminal 2664. For a model tailored to the combined influence of an intoxicant and a controlled substance, see Wis JI-Criminal 2664A. For a model tailored to the influence of a drug, see Wis JI-Criminal 2666.

3. Regarding the definition of "motor vehicle," see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. II.

4. Regarding the "on a highway" requirement, see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. I., and Wis JI-Criminal 2605.

5. This is the definition of "drive" provided in § 346.63(3)(a).

6. Regarding the definition of "operate," see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. III.

7. The instruction is drafted for cases involving the influence of an intoxicant. See note 2, supra. For a discussion of issues relating to the definition of "under the influence," see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. VIII.

8. This statement is supported by the general rule stated in § 885.235(1g) that the results of properly conducted alcohol tests are admissible. Whether the test result is accorded any additional evidentiary significance depends on the applicability of other provisions in § 885.235. See Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. VII.

9. It may be that cases will be charged under § 346.63(1)(a) where a test has shown an alcohol concentration of more than 0.04 grams but less than 0.08 grams. Section 885.235(1)(b) provides that a test result in this range "is relevant evidence on intoxication . . . but is not to be given any prima facie effect." Wis JI-Criminal 232 provides an instruction for this situation.

10. Regarding the evidentiary significance of test results, see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. VII.

11. Regarding the "blood alcohol curve," see Wis JI-Criminal JI 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. VII.

12. Regarding the reliability of the testing device, see Wis JI-Criminal 2600 Introductory Comment, Sec. VII.

