



Just the Facts – What You Need to Know About the Navy Alcohol Detection Device

In March 2012, the Secretary of the Navy announced the [21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative](#), which is a set of objectives and policies intended to maximize the personal readiness of Sailors and Marines. Curbing alcohol use and decreasing the number of alcohol-related incidents are among the initiative's goals. Irresponsible alcohol use not only threatens the health and careers of Sailors and Marines but also decreases the readiness of the force. To reinforce the importance of readiness, promote safety, and provide awareness and education for service members to assist them make responsible decisions regarding alcohol use, the Navy is implementing the use of alcohol detection devices (ADDs), or breathalyzers. ADDs will test blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of Sailors on duty during regular working hours. As full implementation of the policy nears, this article aims to dispel the myths and misconceptions of the ADD program.

What it is

The ADD program is just one of the integral tools of the Navy's effort to promote responsible alcohol use. ADDs will help to educate service members on the effects of their alcohol consumption decisions, identify self-impairment, and promote unit safety. Additionally, the ADD program will enhance command leadership's understanding of their unit's alcohol-use "culture."¹

Once the ADD program is fully implemented, ADD testing will assist with identifying Sailors who are at risk for irresponsible alcohol use. For example, if a service member drinks excessively or late at night before reporting to duty, they put themselves and their peers at risk. It is expected that when a service member reports for duty, they're ready and able to carry out their responsibilities.

According to the Navy's Instruction on the Use of Hand-Held Alcohol Detection Devices ADDs ([OPNAVINST 5350.8](#)), the decision to inspect and how to organize random ADD testing is at the discretion of the commanding officer. Random ADD tests are only authorized to be performed on Sailors who are on duty during normal working hours.

The results of ADD tests may lead to the following actions²:

- As a basis to further evaluate a service member's fitness for duty through the use of a [Competence for Duty examination](#).



- Removal from the performance of assigned tasks.
- Education and counseling for the member by command-designated leaders.
- Command referral to the Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) for assistance through the substance abuse rehabilitation program, including alcohol abuse and dependency education and counseling.
- Serve as the foundation for a probable cause search when considered along with other evidence of intoxication, including but not limited to, bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, muscular movement, general appearance or behavior, and/or an admission of alcohol use by the service member or statements of other witnesses.

What it is not

ADD testing is **non-punitive**. While the tests are designed to provide valuable information to Sailors and commanding officers, there are limitations of the use of ADD results. Results of ADD testing may not be used²:

- As evidence for disciplinary proceedings.
- As a basis for adverse administrative action against a service member.
- To document counseling of irresponsible alcohol use in a service members official military personnel records, such as fitness reports or enlisted performance evaluations.

Additionally, the use of ADDs does not replace or limit other tools that commanding officers currently use to detect and deter the irresponsible use of alcohol.

How it will be implemented

All commands, whether they are stateside or forward operating, will receive ADDs for use. The delivery of the devices was broken down into five phases, beginning in February of 2013, with all Navy commands receiving ADDs by May 24, 2013. Once all commands receive their devices, full implementation will occur with the following guidelines³:

- The ADD testing policy applies to all Sailors, including Selected Reservists and non-Navy personnel permanently assigned to a unit.
 - The policy does not apply to non-Navy units attached to a Navy vessel or base.
- ADD readings of:
 - 0.04 BAC or higher indicates a Sailor is not able to perform their duties. The Sailor will be relieved of their duties and remain onboard until the reading is not detectable.
 - 0.02 BAC or higher by members who are under the legal drinking age, or who have previously completed a rehabilitation program, will be referred to the command DAPA.



- Less than 0.02 BAC is considered non-detectable.

In any case where the ADD reading is 0.02 percent BAC or greater, the service member should be retested after a 20-minute waiting period to allow for the effects of any mouthwash, breath spray, gum or mint that may produce detectable results to clear.²

Where to find more information

Visit the NADAP website www.nadap.navy.mil for additional information on ADDs, or talk to your chain of command. If you would like more information about responsible drinking, check out the following:

- The Navy's [Keep What You've Earned](#) campaign
- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's [Preventing Drug Abuse and Excessive Alcohol Use](#) resources
- The Department of Defense's [That Guy](#) campaign

1. Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Program Office. Non-evidentiary alcohol detection device (ADD) operating guide. <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/nadap/Documents/ADD%20OP%20Guide%2022%20Jan%2013,%20N13%20.pdf>. Published January 2013. Accessed 15 May 2013.
2. Chief of Naval Operations. OPNAVINST 5350.8. Use of hand-held alcohol detection devices. <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/nadap/policy/Documents/OPNAVINST%205350.8.pdf>. Published 22 Jan 2013. Accessed 6 May 2013.
3. Navy Personnel Command. Alcohol detection device (ADD) update. Published 23 Apr 2013. Accessed 7 May 2013.