



## FACT SHEET

# Impaired Driving

In 2017, 10,874 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving drivers with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. These alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities accounted for 29 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The total comprehensive costs of drunk driving are more than \$200 billion annually.<sup>2</sup>

An alcohol ignition interlock device (IID) is a mechanism similar to a breathalyzer which is linked to a vehicle's ignition system. An IID can be used to deter an individual who has a prior drunk driving conviction from driving the vehicle with a BAC that exceeds a specific level. Before the vehicle can be started, the driver must breathe into the device, and if the analyzed result is over the specified BAC limit, the vehicle will not start. In addition, at random times after the engine has been started, the IID will require another breath sample. This prevents cheating where a friend or relative breathes into the device to bypass the system in order to enable an intoxicated person to get behind the wheel and drive. If the breath sample is not provided, or the sample exceeds the device's preset BAC, the device will log the event, warn the driver and then set off an alarm (such as the lights flashing or horn honking) until the ignition is turned off.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, IIDs are mandatory for first and all offenders in only 34 states (AL, AK, AZ, AR, CO, CT, DE, HI, ID, IL, IA, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MS, MO, NE, NJ, NV, NH, NM, NY, OK, OR, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA and WV) and the District of Columbia.<sup>4</sup> These state laws offer the most effective means for denying drunk drivers the opportunity to get behind the wheel after having been convicted of a drunk driving offense. Nationwide, in the decade between 2006 and 2016, IIDs prevented 2.3 million attempts to drive drunk, according to a 2017 report from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).<sup>5</sup>

### Ignition Interlock Law Facts

- An average of one alcohol-impaired driving fatality occurred every 48 minutes in 2017.<sup>6</sup>
- A common misconception is that most people who are convicted of their first drunk driving offense are social drinkers who made one mistake. However, studies show that the average first offender will have driven drunk 87 times before getting arrested.<sup>7</sup>
- According to the CDC, adult drivers admitted they drank too much and got behind the wheel approximately 111 million times in 2014, which equals over 300,000 incidents of drinking and driving each day.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2017 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving; NHTSA, November 2018, DOT HS 812 630, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812630>

<sup>2</sup> The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (Revised), DOT HS 812 013, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Intoxalock Ignition Interlock Device website, available at <https://www.intoxalock.com/ignition-interlock-devices/what-is-an-ignition-interlock-device/>

<sup>4</sup> Ignition Interlocks Laws in the United States of America: A look at how States implement ignition interlock laws, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Jun. 18, 2018, available at <https://www.madd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/State-IID-overview.6-18-18.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> 2.3 Million Attempts To Drive Drunk Stopped By Ignition Interlocks: State-by-State Counts For 12 months & 10 Years, Mar. 14, 2017, MADD, available at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/197837/>

<sup>6</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2017 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving; NHTSA, November 2018, DOT HS 812 630, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812630>

<sup>7</sup> Drinking and Driving Trips, Stops by the Police, and Arrests: Analyses of the 1995 Survey of Drinking and Driving Attitudes and Behavior, NHTSA, Dec. 2000, DOT HS 809 184, available at [https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/1779/dot\\_1779\\_DS1.pdf](https://rosap.nhtl.bts.gov/view/dot/1779/dot_1779_DS1.pdf)

However, only 1.1 million, or approximately one percent of that 111 million, were arrested for driving under the influence that year.<sup>9</sup>

- There is clear public support for IIDs for all convicted drunk drivers, with surveys showing between 69 and 88 percent of respondents are in favor of requiring ignition interlocks for all convicted DUI offenders, even if it's their first conviction.<sup>10</sup>
- 82 percent of offenders themselves believe the ignition interlock device was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.<sup>11</sup>
- When IIDs are installed, they are associated with an approximately 70 percent reduction in repeat offenses for impaired driving.<sup>12</sup>
- Research shows that ignition interlocks reduce recidivism among both first-time and repeat DWI offenders, with reductions in subsequent DWI arrests ranging from 50 to 90 percent while the interlock is installed on the vehicle.<sup>13</sup>
- Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were 4.5 times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) than were drivers with no alcohol (nine percent and two percent, respectively).<sup>14</sup>
- A University of Pennsylvania study found that requiring ignition interlocks for all drunk-driving convictions was associated with 15% fewer alcohol-involved crash deaths, compared with states with less-stringent requirements. Interlocks are a life-saving technology that merit wider use.<sup>15</sup>
- An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study on the effects of Washington's interlock requirement found that the law change was associated with an 8.3 percent reduction in single-vehicle late-night crash risk, suggesting a general deterrent effect of the expanded interlock requirement.<sup>16</sup>
- According to the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, “[i]ncreasing the spread of interlock laws that are mandatory for all offenders would have significant public health benefit.”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> CDC Impaired Driving: Get the Facts, June 16, 2017, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired\\_driving/impaired-driv\\_factsheet.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html)

<sup>9</sup> Crime in the United States: Table 29, Estimated Number of Arrests, US 2014, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, available at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-29>.

<sup>10</sup> Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), How Technology Has Stopped 1.77 Million Drunk Drivers: A State by State Guide to Creating a Future of No More Victims, February 10, 2016; available at [http://www.talklikemadd.org/books/ignitioninterlockreport2016/files/assets/common/downloads/ignition\\_interlock\\_report.pdf](http://www.talklikemadd.org/books/ignitioninterlockreport2016/files/assets/common/downloads/ignition_interlock_report.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Morse, BJ and DS Elliott; Hamilton County Drinking and Driving Study: 30 Month Report. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use website, CDC, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired\\_driving/ignition\\_interlock\\_states.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/ignition_interlock_states.html)

<sup>13</sup> Ignition Interlocks – What You Need to Know: A Toolkit for Policymakers, Highway Safety Professionals, and Advocates, NHTSA, Nov. 2009, DOT HS 811 246, available at [http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/impaired\\_driving/pdf/811246.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/impaired_driving/pdf/811246.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2017 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving; NHTSA, November 2018, DOT HS 812 630, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812630>

<sup>15</sup> Elinore J. Kaufman, Douglas J. Wiebe, “Impact of State Ignition Interlock Laws on Alcohol-Involved Crash Deaths in the United States”, American Journal of Public Health 106, no. 5 (May 1, 2016): pp. 865-871.

<sup>16</sup> Status Report, Vol. 47 No. 2, “Alcohol ignition interlocks: Study shows devices reduce DUI recidivism”, IIHS. March 6, 2012; available at <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/sr/statusreport/article/47/2/1>.

<sup>17</sup> McGinty EE, Tung G, Shulman-Laniel J, Hardy R, Rutkow L, Frattaroli S, Vernick JS. Ignition Interlocks: Effects on Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes, 1982-2013, American Journal of Preventative Medicine, April, 2017