ADVOCATES FOR HIGHWAY & AUTO SAFETY

FACT SHEET

Impaired Driving

In 2018, 10,511 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.[i] The total comprehensive costs of drunk driving are more than $200 billion annually.[ii]

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.[iii]

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.[iv] 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 twelve years from 2006 through 2018, IIDs prevented more than 3 million attempts to drive drunk, according to a 2019 report from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).[v]

Ignition Interlock Law Facts

- An average of one alcohol-impaired driving fatality occurred every 50 minutes in 2018.[vi]

- 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.[vii]
- 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.[viii] However, only 1.1 million, or approximately one percent of that 111 million, were arrested for driving under the influence that year.[ix]

- 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.[x]

- 82 percent of offenders themselves believe the ignition interlock device was effective in preventing them from driving after drinking.[xi]

- When IIDs are installed, they are associated with an approximately 70 percent reduction in repeat offenses for impaired driving.[xii]

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- 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.[xiii]

- Drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher involved in fatal crashes were 4 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).[xiv]

- 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.[xv]

- 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.[xvi]

- 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."[xvii]

Advanced Vehicle Safety Technology: Proven and available safety technology must be required in all new vehicles, with a minimum performance standard, to prevent and mitigate common crash causes. When a safety feature is mass produced, costs for the systems are reduced and help to ensure they are within the reach of new car buyers. Minimum performance standards ensure that the technology offers at least a certain level of safety regardless of manufacturer.

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS): Available proven collision avoidance systems have the capability to prevent and mitigate crashes caused by numerous behavioral issues such as distraction, impairment, fatigue, speeding and reckless driving. The technology includes automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane departure warning (LDW), blind spot detection (BSD), rear AEB and rear cross-traffic alert.

- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has found that:
    - AEB can decrease front-to-rear crashes with injuries by 56 percent;
    - LDW can reduce single-vehicle, sideswipe and head-on injury crashes by over 20 percent;
    - BSD can diminish injury crashes from lane change by nearly 25 percent;
    - Rear AEB can reduce backing crashes by 78 percent when combined with rearview camera and parking sensors; and,
    - Rear cross-traffic alert can reduce backing crashes by 22 percent.[xviii]
- In 2017, IIHS reported on the on-road effectiveness of FCW and AEB systems concluding that "[a]lmost 1 million U.S. police reported crashes in 2014 and more than 400,000 injuries in such crashes could have been prevented if all vehicles were equipped with FCW and AEB that perform similarly as systems did for study vehicles."[xix]
- The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has identified the potential benefits of FCW/AEB, noting that "there were an estimated 1,994,000 crashes, 884,000 injuries, and 4,738 deaths that could have been potentially prevented or mitigated by FCW or AEB systems in 2016."[xx]

Impaired Driving Prevention Systems:

- According to research from IIHS released in July 2020, *Potential lives saved by in-vehicle alcohol detection systems,* impaired driving prevention technology could yield considerable benefits. IIHS finds that alcohol-detection systems could save upwards of 9,000 lives a year in the U.S., accounting for more than 25 percent of road fatalities.[xxi]

- The European New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) has started evaluating driver monitoring systems which can help "mitigate the very significant problems of driver distraction and impairment through alcohol, fatigue, etc."[xxii] in its rating program.

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[ii] 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

[iii] Intoxalock Ignition Interlock Device website, available at https://www.intoxalock.com/ignition-interlock-devices/what-is-an-ignition-interlock-device/

[iv] 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

[v] Drunk Driving Starts Stopped (.08 BAC or higher) by an Ignition Interlock, , MADD, available at https://www.madd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019IIDReportData.pdf

[vi] Traffic Safety Facts 2018 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving; NHTSA, December 2019, DOT HS 812 864, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812864

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[xii] Increasing Alcohol Ignition Interlock Use website, CDC, available at https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/ignition_interlock_states.html

[xiii] 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

[xiv] Traffic Safety Facts 2018 Data: Alcohol-Impaired Driving; NHTSA, December 2019, DOT HS 812 864, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812864

[xv] 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.

[xvi] Status Report, Vol. 47 No. 2, "Alcohol ignition interlocks: Study shows devices reduce DUI recidivism", IIHS. March 6, 2012.

[xvii] 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

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[xxii] Euro NCAP 2025 Roadmap: In Pursuit of Vision Zero, Euro NCAP