



Mothers Against Drunk Driving
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April 11, 2014

The Honorable Alan Austerman
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee

The Honorable Bill Stoltze
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee

Oppose amendments to SB 64 weakening Alaska's drunk driving law

Dear Co-Chair Austerman, Co-Chair Stoltze and members of the House Finance Committee,

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is urging you to protect the public on Alaska roads by opposing amendments to SB 64 which would make the use of ignition interlocks optional for convicted drunk drivers and. This amendment would be detrimental to public safety and compromise the livelihood of Alaska residents.

In 2008, Alaska enacted one of the first laws to require all convicted drunk drivers to use an ignition interlock. Since the law took effect, drunk driving deaths have decreased by 28 percent. Nationally, drunk driving deaths have only decreased by 11 percent. Today, Alaska is one of twenty states to require ignition interlocks for anyone convicted of drunk driving. Last week, Alabama and Mississippi legislatures enacted similar laws so, upon signature by their respective governors, twenty-two states will have these lifesaving laws.

MADD supports all offender ignition interlock laws because ignition interlocks separate drinking and driving. Alcohol ankle bracelets have a place in the adjudication process but are not proven effective in stopping drunk drivers. In fact, ankle bracelets WILL NOT stop a drunk driver from starting his or her vehicle. An ignition interlock will.

Ignition interlocks are a strong deterrent to drunk driving behavior. License suspension alone no longer works as research shows 50 to 75 percent of drunk drivers will continue to drive on a suspended license. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requiring or highly incentivizing interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers reduces drunk driving recidivism by 67 percent. .

"First-time" offenders are rarely first-time drunk drivers. Conservative estimates show that a first-time convicted DUI offender has driven drunk at least 80 times prior to being arrested.

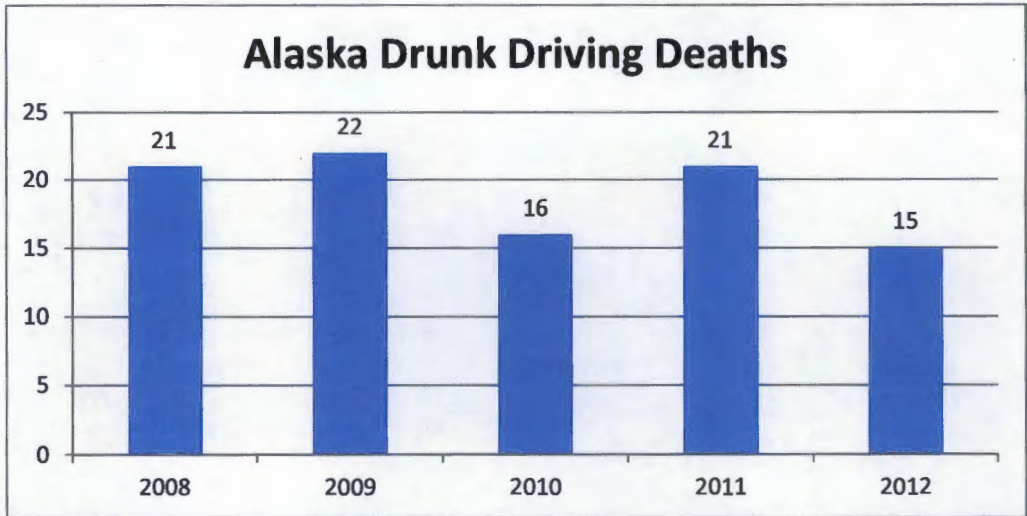
Ignition interlocks are paid for by the convicted drunk driver, at no cost to the public. Interlocks are proven to save lives and protect the public, while giving DUI offenders the opportunity to continue driving. Now is the chance for you to make a difference. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Frank Harris at frank.harris@madd.org or 877.275.6233.

MADD urges you to oppose any amendments to weaken Alaska's ignition interlock law by giving judges the option to order an interlock or an alcohol ankle bracelet. Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request.

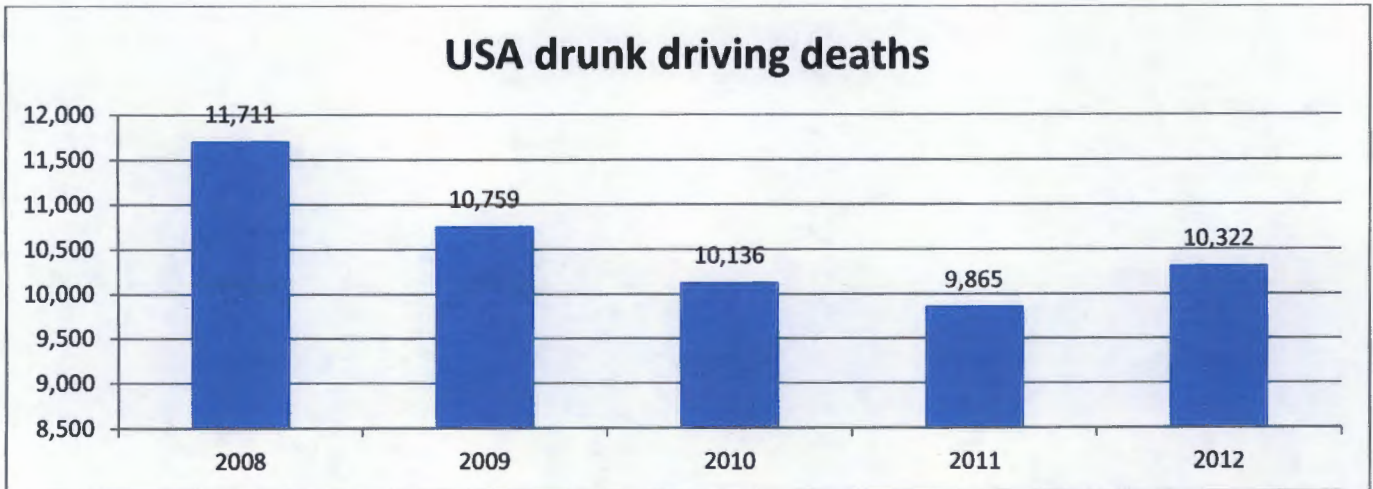
Sincerely,

Jan Withers
MADD National President

Enclosures



Since Alaska's ignition interlock law went into effect in 2009, drunk driving deaths have decreased by 28 percent. (NHTSA)



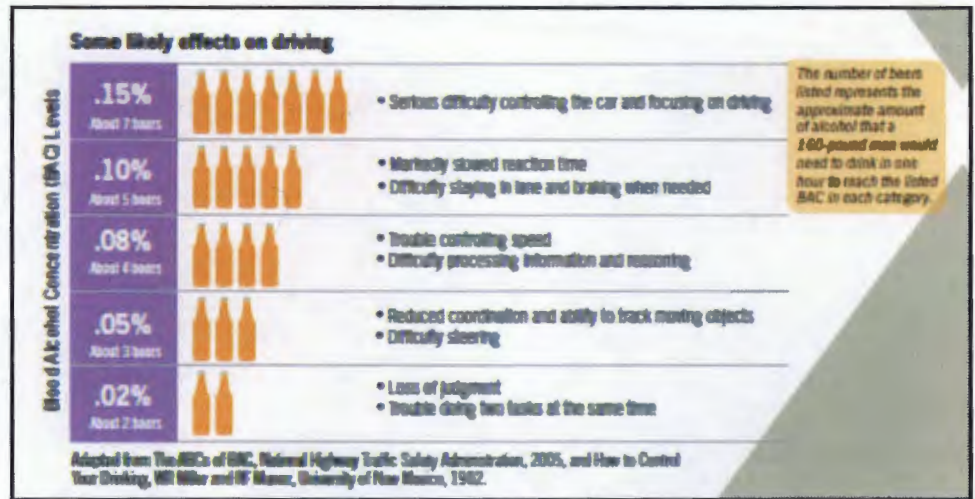
Compared to a 11 percent decline in drunk driving deaths in the United States during the same time.



Ignition Interlocks Save Lives

Ignition interlocks are effective in reducing repeat drunk driving offenses by 67 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). And, all offender interlock laws are found to reduce repeat offenses significantly, when effectively implemented.

First-time offenders are serious offenders. Research from the CDC indicates that first time offenders have driven drunk at least 80 times before they are arrested. Additionally, research has found that first offenders' patterns of recidivism are generally similar to a repeat offender.



To get to the illegal .08 BAC level, a 160-pound male must drink four drinks in an hour. (A standard drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 72-proof distilled spirits, all of which contain the same amount of alcohol – about .54 ounces.)

The FACTS

- An interlock is more effective than license suspension alone, as 50 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive on a suspended license.
- All-offender interlock laws are widespread. Twenty states, plus a California pilot program (covering a population of over 13 million) have laws requiring ignition interlocks for all first-time convicted drunk drivers.
- There are approximately 305,000 interlocks in use in the United States, including 1,922 in Alaska.

Ignition interlock laws saves lives. Due in part to laws requiring interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, states have seen significant reductions in drunk driving deaths:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Arizona: 43 percent | ✓ West Virginia: 33 percent | ✓ Kansas: 26 percent |
| ✓ Oregon: 42 percent | ✓ Utah: 30 percent | ✓ Washington: 20 percent |
| ✓ New Mexico: 38 percent | ✓ Alaska: 28 percent | |
| ✓ Louisiana: 35 percent | ✓ Colorado: 24 percent | |

Public supports interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. Three surveys indicate strong public support of ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers.

- 88 percent (Center for Excellence in Rural Safety, 2010)
- 84 percent (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 2009)
- 76 percent (American Automobile Association, 2012)

In addition to MADD, other traffic safety groups support ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, including all first offenders with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or greater.

- Advocates for Auto and Highway Safety
- American Automobile Association (AAA)
- Auto Alliance
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- National Safety Council
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)



Ignition Interlock FAQs

Please visit madd.org/interlock



An ignition interlock is a device about the size of a cell phone that is wired into the ignition system of a vehicle. A convicted drunk driver must blow into the device in order to start their vehicle. Interlocks are required to meet federal standards set by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Per NHTSA standards, if an interlock user has a measurable amount of alcohol in their system, the vehicle will not start. It is a simple and economical way to make sure that offenders can drive to and from work, but that they can't drive drunk.

Who pays for the device? Offenders pay for the interlocks, which costs \$2.50 a day to lease from an interlock vendor. In most states, interlock companies provide interlock devices for offenders who can't afford the devices or an indigent fund is set up by the state, which is funded by other interlock users to cover all or a portion of the costs for these offenders.

Are there ways to bypass the device, like having someone else blow into it? This is possible, and there should be strict penalties for attempting to bypass the device. Interlocks are required to have anti-circumvention features that prevent such activity. One of these features is the running retest, which requires offenders to blow into the device at random intervals once the vehicle has been allowed to start. The tests are not designed to be done while the car is actually rolling. Interlocks give people a few minutes – enough time to pull over – to retest.

What if someone else drives the vehicle with the interlock and fails a retest?

This is possible, but with states requiring the use camera interlocks to verify the user, this is becoming a non-issue. However, when someone commits a crime, he/she is responsible for the consequences of his/her actions. If an interlock is one of these consequences, then the offender is responsible for making sure those driving his/her vehicle do not drive intoxicated.

Could an interlock stop a person's car in traffic, making a more dangerous hazard?

Interlocks are hooked up to a vehicle's starter system, not to the engine itself. The interlock does not have the ability to stop the vehicle once it is running for safety reasons. When a driver fails a running retest, the vehicle's horn will honk and/or the lights will flash to alert law enforcement – the vehicle will not stop.

Are interlocks an inconvenience to family members who share the offender's vehicle? No, they can drive the vehicle as well and also taught how to use the device; they simply must blow into the device and prove sobriety before the car will start.

Don't offenders go back to their old behavior after the device is removed? Studies have shown that interlock devices decrease recidivism by 67 percent while installed on the vehicle. When removed, these rates could go back to normal. As a result, more states are enacting laws including compliance based removal of the interlock where an offender must have a certain period prior to removing the device with no recordable violations such as consecutive running retest failures or multiple positive tests for alcohol.

Who monitors interlock device users? How are monitoring programs funded?

Interlock reports are sometimes monitored by the courts or probation departments. Some states require offenders or interlock companies to pay probation costs. Other states have no probation monitoring and instead implement the program through a driver license agency (DMV). These offenders must provide proof of installation from an interlock vendor in order to obtain an interlock license or proof of compliance with the interlock in order to obtain unrestricted driving privileges. States are able to have revenue neutral programs by charging interlock users licensing fees and in some instances a monthly fee of \$30.

Anti-circumvention Technology.

Interlocks require a deep lung sample and an offender is taught to use the device and must typically blow, suck or hum to prevent circumvention attempts such as having a child or balloon deflate to get around the interlock. Here are other anti-circumvention features.

Camera to verify user



A camera eliminates the excuse that the interlock violation was by another person. It also ensures the offender is the one using the device. The camera is safely mounted near the dashboard.

Real time reporting of interlock violations



Some interlocks have GPS and/or cellular ability to report recordable violations to a monitoring agency immediately, as opposed to waiting days for a violation to be reported.

Status of State Ignition Interlock Laws



Interlock requirement starts on the first conviction

Mandatory with a BAC of .08 or greater		Mandatory with a BAC of .15 or greater	
Alaska (1/09)	Missouri (3/14)	Alabama (9/12)	New Hampshire .16 BAC (7/07)
Arizona (9/07)	Nebraska (1/09)	Delaware (7/09)	New Jersey (1/10)
Arkansas (4/09)	New Mexico (6/05)	Florida (10/08)	North Carolina (12/07)
California Pilot Program* (7/10)	New York (8/10)	Iowa** .10 BAC (7/95)	Oklahoma (11/11)
Colorado (1/09)	Oregon (1/08)	Maryland (10/11)	Texas (9/05)
Connecticut (1/12)	Tennessee (7/13)	Michigan .17 BAC (10/10)	Wisconsin (7/10)
Hawaii (1/11)	Utah (7/09)	Minnesota .16 BAC (7/11)	Wyoming (7/09)
Illinois (1/09)	Virginia (7/12)	Nevada .18 BAC (7/05)	
Kansas (7/11)	Washington (1/09)		
Louisiana (7/07)	West Virginia (7/08)		
Maine (12/13)			

(month/year listed note effective date)

Mandatory with a second conviction
Georgia (5/99)
Idaho (10/00)
Massachusetts (1/06)
Mississippi (7/14)
Montana (5/09)
Ohio (9/08)
Pennsylvania (10/03)
South Carolina (1/09)

Not mandatory
Judicial discretion
California for any offender
Indiana for any offender
Kentucky for any offender
North Dakota for any offender
Rhode Island for repeat offenders
Other
DC any offender can choose to go an interlock
South Dakota part of the 24/7 program
Vermont any offender can choose to go an interlock

Revised July 2013

* California's pilot program covers the counties of Los Angeles, Alameda, Sacramento, and Tulare. These counties combined have a population of over 13 million. * In Iowa, interlocks are required starting on the first conviction for offenders with a BAC of .10 or greater.