

“Why Are Ignition Interlock Devices Becoming More Widespread? Do Ignition Interlock Systems Achieve Their Goals?”

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People with previous drunk driving convictions make up approximately one-third of the drunk driving problems in America. And in spite of 27 years of intense public education and law enforcement’s best efforts—people continue to drive drunk. In fact, the most frequent time of day for recording elevated BAC levels is generally at 7:00 a.m., which clearly indicates that heavy alcohol consumption occurs during a busy night of drinking.

States Getting Tougher on Repeat Drunk Driving Offenders

Most states are getting tougher on those who repeatedly drink and drive. In many states the person is authorized for a restricted license and the hearing officer must order the installation of an ignition interlock device in any vehicle the person intends to drive. The interlock device must be installed for the first year of license restrictions, which means the person cannot drive until after the ignition interlock device has been installed. After the year, they may petition for a hearing to have it removed. During the hearing the offender must present a final report issued by a provider to establish the mandatory minimum length of installation required by law.

Using Ignition Interlock Devices

According to a great deal of research breath alcohol ignition interlock devices are one of the most effective ways of keeping convicted drunk drivers from continuing to drive drunk. In fact, interlocks have proven to be up to 90 percent effective when installed on a vehicle and have proven to stop individuals from driving drunk during high-risk time periods. When used by the courts or state motor vehicle departments along with monitoring, reporting and support programs, ignition interlock devices provide drunk drivers with an alternative to full license suspension. The use of Ignition Interlock systems is spreading across the country with more than 37 states enacting legislation for integration into the DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) sentencing process.

What Exactly is An Ignition Interlock Device?

Ignition Interlock Devices test for alcohol on a driver’s breath. It requires the vehicle operator to blow into a small handheld alcohol sensor that is attached to a vehicle’s dashboard. The vehicle cannot be started if the blood alcohol count (BAC) is above the preset level which is usually .02 to .04 BAC. Interlocks must meet the standards issued by the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) and require a test to start the engine, but they also require a test every few minutes while driving, which prevents a friend from starting the car. With up to date safeguards, alcohol safety interlocks are very difficult to get around if properly installed and monitored at least every 30 to 60 days.

Do DUI Offenders Benefit From Ignition Interlock Devices?

DUI offenders definitely benefit from Ignition Interlock Devices. It makes their lives and the lives of family members more secure as it allows for individuals who have DUI convictions to drive to work, pick up children and run errands without disruption. In most cases, the installation and maintenance fees for the Ignition Interlock Device costs about \$60.00 a month and are usually paid for by the DUI offender.

How Many DUI Offenders Are Outfitted with Ignition Interlock Devices?

According to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) only one out of eight convicted drunk drivers get the device each year. And while there are 1.4 million DUI arrests made per year, there are approximately only 100,000 installed ignition interlock devices in the U.S. Yet research clearly demonstrates their effectiveness. Based on about a dozen studies on interlocks for repeat offenders, six studies on interlocks for first time offenders and four studies on multiple jurisdictions, all have shown a decrease in repeat offenses while the interlock remains on the vehicle. It has also been shown that offenders who were assigned interlocks had 50 to 90% fewer repeat offenses over those who didn't receive the device.

Based on research and the apparent effectiveness of ignition interlock devices, it looks like the ignition interlock will continue to be an integral part of driver recognition and control systems. Because studies have shown that less than 2% of offenders are arrested again for alcohol impaired driving while on the Interlock program, and that 90% of Interlock graduates drive successfully without further drinking-driving offenses, this may very well be the way to keep drunk drivers off the road.

We at Straight DUI do everything we can to help those who have been arrested for a DUI. We help keep your record clean and prevent you from losing your license to drive. We start by believing that you shouldn't have been arrested, so with that uppermost in our minds, we fight for you. When you place yourself in the hands of the knowledgeable DUI attorneys at www.straightdui.com, you know you will be treated fairly and will receive the best defense possible. We understand how important a good defense is to your case and so we do everything to protect your rights. Call us today at (800-353-6348) and let us help.