

## **Alcohol Ignition Interlock Fact Sheet**

### **Alcohol ignition interlocks save lives.**

- The breath alcohol ignition interlock prevents a vehicle from being driven by a drunk driver. If used correctly, the device can substantially reduce repeat offenses.<sup>i</sup>
- If properly administered, alcohol ignition interlocks could save thousands of lives and give offenders the ability to drive while not endangering the public.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Studies clearly show alcohol ignition interlocks are effective.**

- Multiple studies on interlocks for both first-time and repeat offenders show that Interlocks reduce repeat drunk driving offenses by an average of 64 percent.<sup>iii</sup>
- Most of the failures of interlocks are legal system failures, where mandatory interlock laws are not enforced and offenders who are sentenced to receive interlocks either do not have them installed or receive little oversight. MADD's proposed model interlock law will alleviate many of these issues.<sup>iv</sup>

### **The public supports the implementation of alcohol ignition interlocks.**

- Sixty-five percent of the public supports the mandatory installation of alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers.<sup>v</sup>

### **First offenders are likely to become repeat offenders.**

- First-time arrestees have driven drunk an average of 87 times before they are arrested.<sup>vi</sup>
- First-time arrestees are likely to have committed the crime before and will commit the crime again unless significant intervention is taken.

### **Current sanctions alone are not effective in stopping repeat offenses.**

- Currently, the most common sanctions for first-time offenders in the United States are fines, license suspensions and assessment and treatment for problems with alcohol.<sup>vii</sup>
- Studies estimate that 50 to 75 percent of drunk drivers whose licenses are suspended continue to drive anyway. A strong alcohol ignition interlock program will prevent the suspended offender from driving.<sup>viii,ix</sup>

### **How interlock technology works**

- An alcohol ignition interlock is a breath test device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. When a convicted drunk driver wishes to start his or her vehicle, he or she must first blow into the device. The vehicle will not start unless the driver's Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) is below a pre-set level.<sup>x</sup>

### **Expanding interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers**

- MADD is undertaking an aggressive state legislative strategy to push for new state laws to require interlock use by all drunk driving offenders, including first conviction.
- MADD's model state legislation includes a compliance revision. An interlock should remain installed in a vehicle until an offender can adequately demonstrate sober driving through an interlock or electronic monitoring. If an offender fails a test, the offender's interlock installation should be extended to match the initial interlock period (e.g., 150 days for a first offense).
- The total number of currently installed interlocks in the US is 146,000 based on confidential data supplied by 10 interlock distributors. That's up 10% from last year's estimate of 134,000.
- There are approximately 1,400,000 drunk driving arrests each year in the US. That means that about 10% of those arrested for drunk driving actually install interlocks.
- The total number of currently installed interlocks is 146,000 and the US population is about 302,000,000. So there are approximately 485 currently installed interlocks per million residents in the US.

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- <sup>i</sup> MADD, *Stopping Drunk Driving Before It Starts: A Technological Solution*.
- <sup>ii</sup> MADD, *Stopping Drunk Driving Before It Starts: A Technological Solution*.
- <sup>iii</sup> Willis, C., Lybrand, S., & Bellamy, N. "Alcohol Ignition Interlock Programs for Reducing Drunk Driving Recidivism." Cochran Database of Systematic Reviews (2005).
- <sup>iv</sup> MADD, *Stopping Drunk Driving Before It Starts: A Technological Solution*.
- <sup>v</sup> McInturff, Bill. "A Presentation of key findings from a national survey of 800 drivers conducted June 8-11, 2006." Presentation at the *MADD International Technology Symposium*: June 19-20, 2006.
- <sup>vi</sup> Zador, Paul, Sheila Drawchuk, and B. Moore. (1997) "Drinking and Driving Trips, Stops by Police, and Arrests: Analysis of the 1995 National Survey of Drinking and Driving Attitudes and Behavior," Rockville, MD: Estat, Inc, 1997.
- <sup>vii</sup> MADD, *Stopping Drunk Driving Before It Starts: A Technological Solution*.
- <sup>viii</sup> Nichols, James, and H. Lawrence Ross. "The Effectiveness of Legal Sanctions in Dealing with Drinking Drivers." *Alcohol, Drugs and Driving* 6(2) (1990): 33-55.
- <sup>ix</sup> Peck, Raymond, R. Jean Wilson, and Lawrence Sutton. "Driver License Strategies for Controlling the Persistent DUI Offender," *Strategies for Dealing with the Persistent Drinking Driver. Transportation Research Board, Transportation Research Circular No. 437*. Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1995.
- <sup>x</sup> MADD, *International Technology Symposium: A Nation without Drunk Driving Summary Report*. November, 2006: pg 4.