



NEWS RELEASE

## **European Transport Safety Council Hosts 'Safe and Sober' Seminar in Dublin - Demonstration of Alcohol Interlock Device for Employers -**

*24 May 2012, Dublin* – The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)<sup>1</sup> held its 22nd 'Safe and Sober' seminar in Dublin today, Thursday 24 May. The seminar, which was jointly hosted by the ETSC, Road Safety Authority (RSA), Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and An Garda Síochána, is part of the ETSC's campaign on drink driving, with a particular focus on employers.

The 'Safe and Sober' seminars, which are supported by Volvo Trucks and Alcohol Countermeasures System (ACS), are organised by the ETSC in selected European countries. The purpose of the seminars is to bring together road safety stakeholders, experts and organisations in order to raise awareness among employers of drink driving in the workplace, particularly in the commercial transport industry, and to explore measures to address this high risk behaviour. Today's seminar was followed by a demonstration of an alcohol interlock device which is widely used in the commercial transport industry throughout the EU. The device prevents a vehicle from starting if alcohol is detected on the driver's breath.

Mr. Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director, ETSC said: "Drink driving is a contributory factor in as many as 7,500 road deaths in the EU every year. Furthermore, approximately 20% of driver deaths are thought to be caused by drink driving. Many EU countries, including Ireland, have now lowered their drink drive limit in line with EU recommendations, and 18 countries have reduced their limit for commercial drivers to 0.02mg/100ml or lower. The purpose of today's seminar is to look at measures such as alcohol interlocks that can be implemented by employers to reduce road risk, particularly alcohol-related, among the employees who drive as part of their work."

Among the speakers at today's conference were representatives from the ETSC, the Medical Bureau of Road Safety, the HSA, Volvo Trucks, ACS, Interactive Driving Systems (UK) and Boras Transport Ltd (Sweden). Carlsberg and Matthews Coach Hire – an Irish coach company – presented case studies on the implementation of alcohol interlocks in their business, showing how the technology has contributed to safer employees and reduced risk on the roads. Representatives from approximately 30 major Irish companies attended the conference.

Mr. Noel Brett, Chief Executive, Road Safety Authority said: "Drink driving continues to be one of the most devastating behaviours on our roads. Up to 1 in 3 deaths on Irish roads are work-related and the evidence indicates that a proportion of these are linked to drink driving. Exploring other ways to address this high risk behaviour is one of the actions in our current Road Safety Strategy and will form an

important part of our new Strategy which is currently being developed. We would encourage employers to take practical steps to reduce the risk of drink driving in the workplace, such as fitting alcohol interlocks in their company vehicles and implementing a 'driving for work' policy for their employees."

Superintendent Con O'Donohue, **Garda National Traffic Bureau**: "An Garda Síochána is delighted to participate in this important event which is highlighting the issue of alcohol and driving in the workplace to employers around the country. Huge strides have been made in the last number of years to tackle drink driving in Ireland, including the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) reduced drink drive limits **and continued enforcement operations by Garda Traffic Corps at local regional and national level** which have contributed to changing attitudes and behaviour to drink driving. An area of ongoing importance to An Garda Síochána is to reduce the risk of collisions among those who drive for a living and who take to the roads regularly as part of their work."

Mary Dorgan, Assistant Chief Executive, Health and Safety Authority said: "Almost half of all workplace deaths reported to the Health and Safety Authority involve a vehicle and up to a third of deaths on the road involve a vehicle used for work. An employee who is intoxicated in the workplace poses a risk to themselves and to others, particularly if he or she drives as part of their job. We would encourage all employers to have a policy and procedures in place to manage intoxicant risk in the context of driving for work. Employers should manage intoxicant risk in the same way as any other workplace risk to worker health and safety."

The RSA and HSA have developed 'Driving for Work' guidelines for employers to manage road-related risk among their employees who drive as part of their work. Further information on 'Driving for Work' is available at [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie) and [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

Further information on the ETSC's 'Safe and Sober' campaign is available at [www.etsc.eu](http://www.etsc.eu)

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<sup>1</sup> ETSC is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 45 national and international organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe. [www.etsc.eu](http://www.etsc.eu)