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Finnish Transport Safety Agency

Most advanced legislation in offender programmes and areas of use

ETSC Safe & Sober Transport
Alcohol Interlock Seminar

23 May 2013, Riga, Latvia

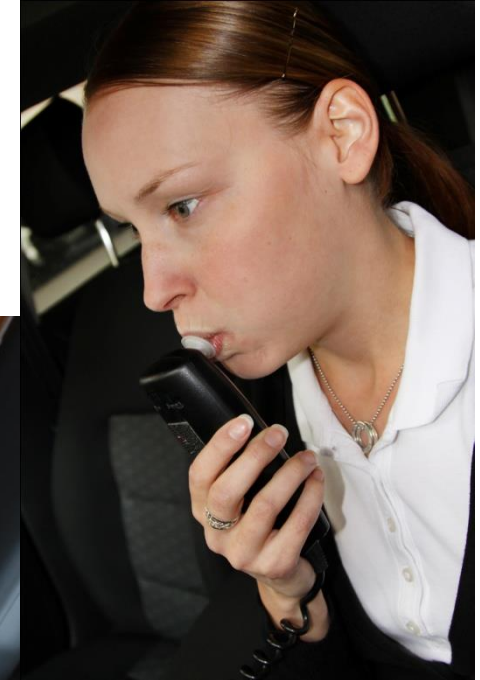
Marita Löytty

*Responsible traffic.
A joint effort.*

Technical requirements for alcohol interlocks

Alcohol interlocks for

- drink driving offenders
- as a preventive measure for drivers having a drinking problem
- professional transport



Photos (cc): The Central
Organization for Traffic
Safety (Liikenneturva)

Alcohol interlock approval

- “The sale, other handover and use of an alcohol interlock on the road are prohibited, if the Transport Safety Agency has not approved the alcohol interlock model.”
- “The Transport Safety Agency shall approve an alcohol interlock which complies with:
 - 1) the requirements of standard EN 50436-1 or EN 50436-2 or equal level national requirements in the provisions of a member state of the EEA; and
 - 2) the requirements of the Vehicle Act (1090/2002) as well as the technical requirements provided for in decrees based on the Vehicle Act concerning equipment to be installed in a vehicle.”

Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders



- A trial July 2005 – June 2008
- Implemented in July 2008
- After a drink-driving offence the driver may apply for the alcohol interlock monitored driving rights (instead of facing a driving ban)
 - The police issues a driving licence with a national code 111
 - Length of the programme 1–3 years; decided by the court
 - Log data read-out every 60 days --> the police follows up
- After the mandatory period the interlock may be removed from the vehicle. The police return the earlier driving licence.
- Instead, the interlock may be kept installed in the vehicle, with voluntary use settings applied. More than 30 % of the drivers keep the device in their vehicle.

An evaluation study published in February 2013:

Trafi Publications 6/2013: "Effectiveness and impact of alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights"

[http://www.trafi.fi/palvelut/julkaisut/2013_julkaisut/effectiveness and impact of alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights](http://www.trafi.fi/palvelut/julkaisut/2013_julkaisut/effectiveness_and_impact_of_alcohol_interlock-controlled_driving_rights)

The study includes

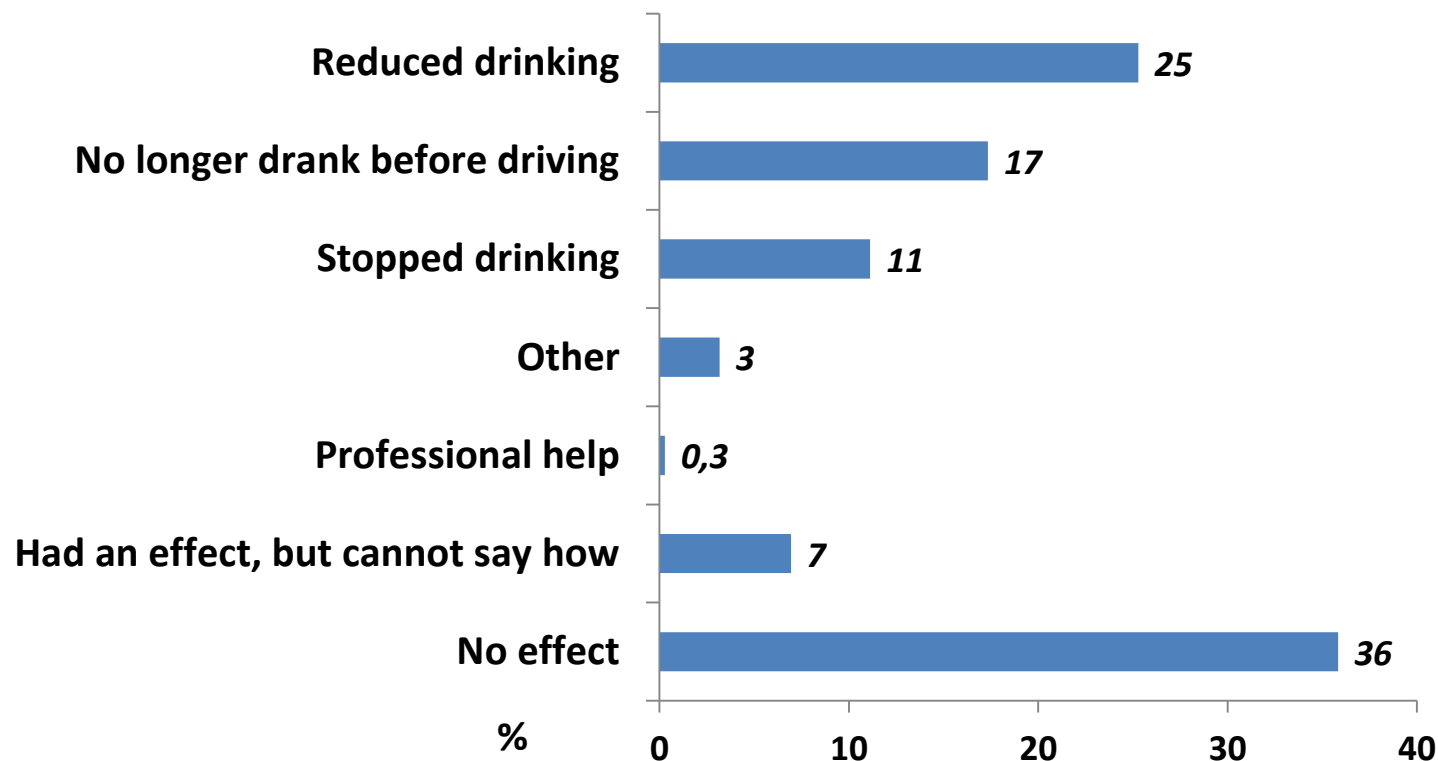
- a survey (questionnaire) to all the drivers in the interlock program since July 2008 (N=1569; response rate 45 %),
- an analysis of the drink-driving offences before, during and after the interlock period,
- an analysis of the interlock log data,
- interviews with the relevant authorities within the process.

The population

- The average age of the interlock driving licence holders was 51 years. The youngest driver was 20 years old, the oldest 82.
- 84% of the drivers were male.
- 1/3 of the drivers were workers on their employment status.
- 24 of the drivers had died since they were issued an interlock driving licence. Alcohol-related causes of death (37.5%) and suicides (16.7%) were much more prevalent among persons with interlock driving licence than in the general Finnish population (alcohol-related causes 3.7% and suicides 1.8%).

Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders – Questionnaire

How did the alcohol interlock affect alcohol use?



N=692

Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders

– Questionnaire



Best things about using an interlock

- Keeping one's driving rights was felt to be the largest benefit (95% of all the respondents).
- More than half (58%) of the drivers also appreciated the certainty that they would not accidentally set out intoxicated.
- One-third of the drivers kept their jobs thanks to the interlock.
- The emphasis on traffic safety was also valued (28%).

- Free-form answers listed getting sober as a benefit, as well as the fact that the interlock “teaches one to think” and reminds of “the dangers of the drink”.
- Some drivers viewed the interlock as a friend and travel companion: “I drive a Renault and I've named the alcohol interlock Pierre. Pierre tells me when it's safe to drive. Above all, the alcohol interlock is a health instrument and a friend.”

Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders

– Questionnaire



Worst things about using an interlock

- The drivers perceived waiting for the device to warm up (59% of all the respondents),
- and the rather high expenses (57%) as the worst aspects of using an alcohol interlock.
- Almost half (54%) of the respondents considered re-exhaling* while driving to be unpleasant, and many felt it to be a safety hazard**. The interval of randomly required re-exhalations was felt to be too frequent***.
- Exhaling in public was felt to be awkward by 43% of the respondents. Many also described the attitude of outsiders as suspicious or negative.

* giving a breath sample to the interlock

** 6 min to give a breath sample

*** first re-sample required in 5–10 min, after that every 30–45 min

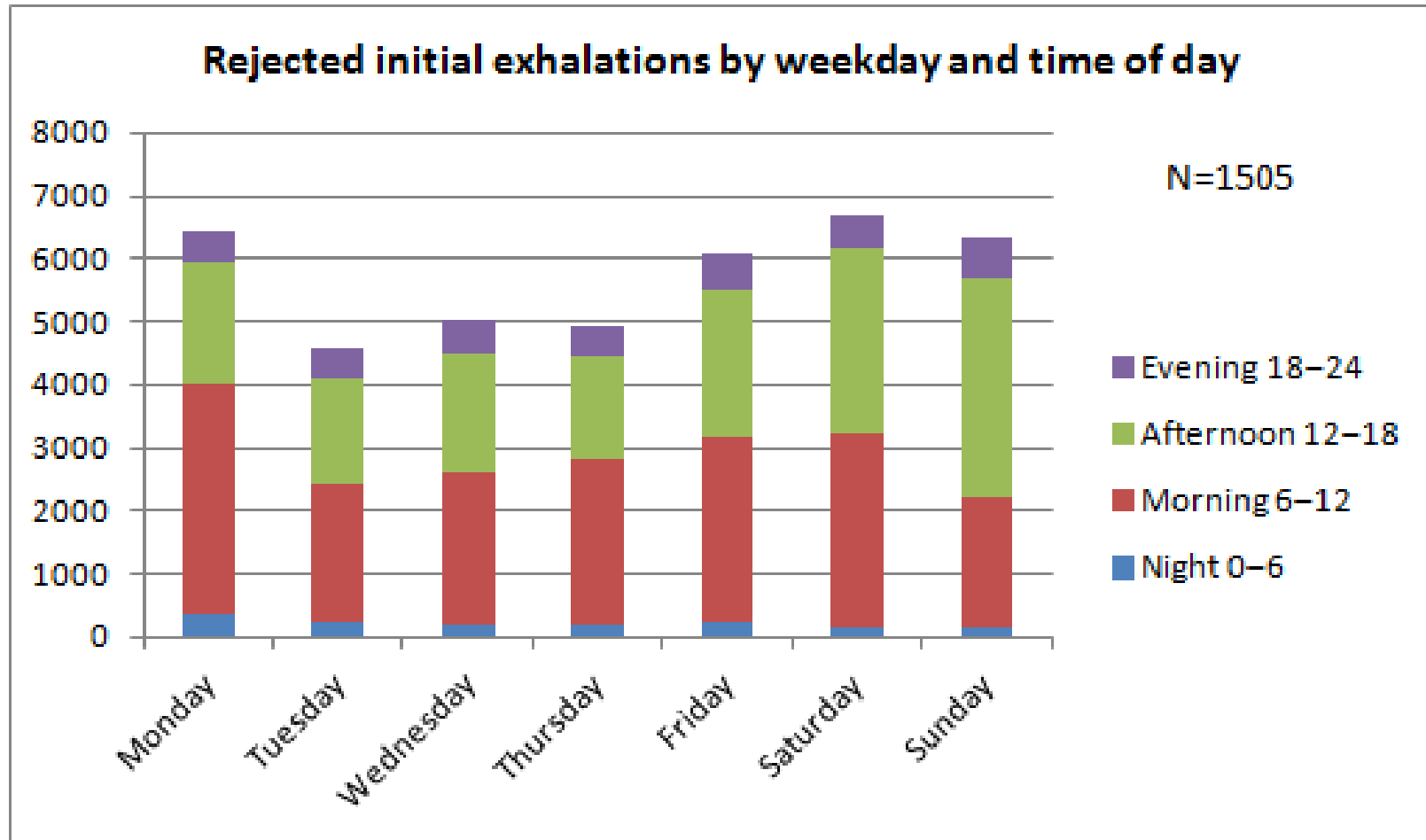
Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders

– Log data



- The interlock log data was analysed out of 1505 interlocks used by the DUI offenders.
- Interlocks used in the controlled driving rights have prevented **at least 12 000 instances** of driving while under the influence of alcohol (≥ 0.5 ‰; the legal limit) **since July 2008** in Finland.
- Overall the interlocks have prevented **over 40 000 times** a driver who had “had a few” (≥ 0.2 ‰) to start a vehicle for driving (the number includes also the cases with ≥ 0.5 ‰).

Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders –Log data



Alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders

– Recidivism



- **More than half** of the drivers had been convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol **several times before** applying for an alcohol interlock-controlled right to drive.
- Of all the drivers, 3.3% were caught driving while intoxicated **during** their period of alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights (most likely with another vehicle, not fitted with an interlock).
- **After** the end of the interlock supervision period, 2.5% of the drivers were caught driving while intoxicated.
- Thus, a **total of 5.7% of the drivers were caught driving while intoxicated during and/or after** their period of alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights.
- The recidivism rate of alcohol interlock users seems to be significantly smaller than that of all persons convicted of driving while intoxicated, as **generally the recidivism rate in Finland is around 30%**.

Alcohol interlocks as a preventive measure for drivers having a drinking problem

- EU Driving Licence Directive: "Driving licences shall not be issued to, or renewed for, applicants or drivers who are dependent on alcohol or unable to refrain from drinking and driving".
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's enactment on health requirements for driving:
 - "The minimum health requirements for driving are not fulfilled if the person in question is a substance abuser such that his or her ability to drive is substantially weakened, or if, as a driver, he or she must, due to the continuous abuse of alcohol or another intoxicating substance, be regarded as a danger to other traffic."
 - "The above notwithstanding, a doctor may regard the health requirement for driving as having been fulfilled (with respect to the abuse of alcohol), providing that the vehicle driven by the person in question has an **alcohol interlock** installed, which prevents drink driving."
- Since **January 2013**, alcohol interlocks are provided for under Sections 12 and 16 of the Act on Driving Licences.
 - Marked under national code 113 in the driving licence.

Alcohol interlocks in professional transport – School and day care transport

- Since August 2011, “if the transportation is organised by a municipality, municipal federation, school or institute as charter transport and support from a municipality or state is obtained, a **vehicle equipped with an alcohol interlock must be used** for:
 - 1) the transportation of pupils participating in preschool, primary school or voluntary additional basic education teaching;
 - 2) the transportation of pupils participating in upper secondary education; and
 - 3) day-care transportation”.
- Background
 - In 2006 the Ministry of Transport and Communications gave a recommendation to use interlocks in school and day care transports.
 - In 2008 interlocks had been taken in use in 17 municipalities only.
- Nowadays, interlocks are installed in approx. 10 000 taxies and busses transporting children to schools and day care centres.

Future plans: Expanding the use of interlocks for professional transportation?



- Ministry of Transport and Communications, programmes and strategies 6/2009: Finland's Strategy for Intelligent Transport
 - "Examine the introduction and impacts of the system in publicly funded transport services, bus traffic and professional goods transport. Studies on expanding the use of alcohollocks are completed by 2011, and the alcoholock is made mandatory by 2014 at the latest."
- Trafi Publication 5/2012: "Implementation and effects of alcohol interlocks in professional transportation"
 - In English <http://www.trafi.fi/publication05-2012>
 - "It would be necessary to begin taking measures to increase the **voluntary use** of alcohol interlocks and drafting of a law decreeing an obligation to use alcohol interlocks in all transportation covered by **professional qualification requirements**. In order to increase voluntary use, transportation ordered by the government and municipalities should require the use of alcohol interlocks."



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Thank you!

Questions?

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