

ETSC Safe & Sober: Alcohol Interlocks: towards a European approach for the fight against drink-driving?

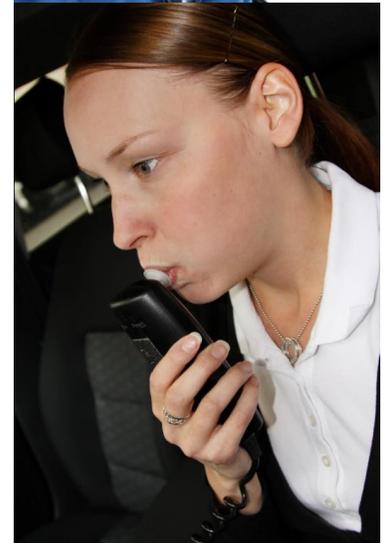
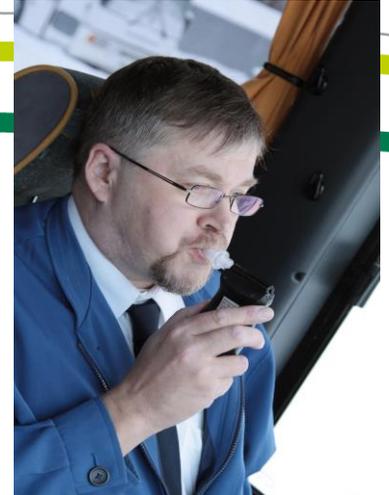
Feedback and analysis of Finnish legislation and interlock rehabilitation programme for offenders and recidivists

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*Responsible traffic.
A joint effort.*

- 1. Finland: Facts and number of DUI* cases**
- 2. National legislation for alcohol interlocks**
- 3. Current interlock programme for DUI offenders**
The facts, steps & costs
The results of the evaluation study
- 4. Ministry of Transport and Communications:**
Reform to legislation on alcohol interlocks



* **D**riving **U**nder the **I**nfluence (of alcohol)

Finland: facts

Area 338 432 m² (10 % lakes)

~ **5,5** million inhabitants

~ **3,7** million driving licences

~ **5,0** million motor vehicles

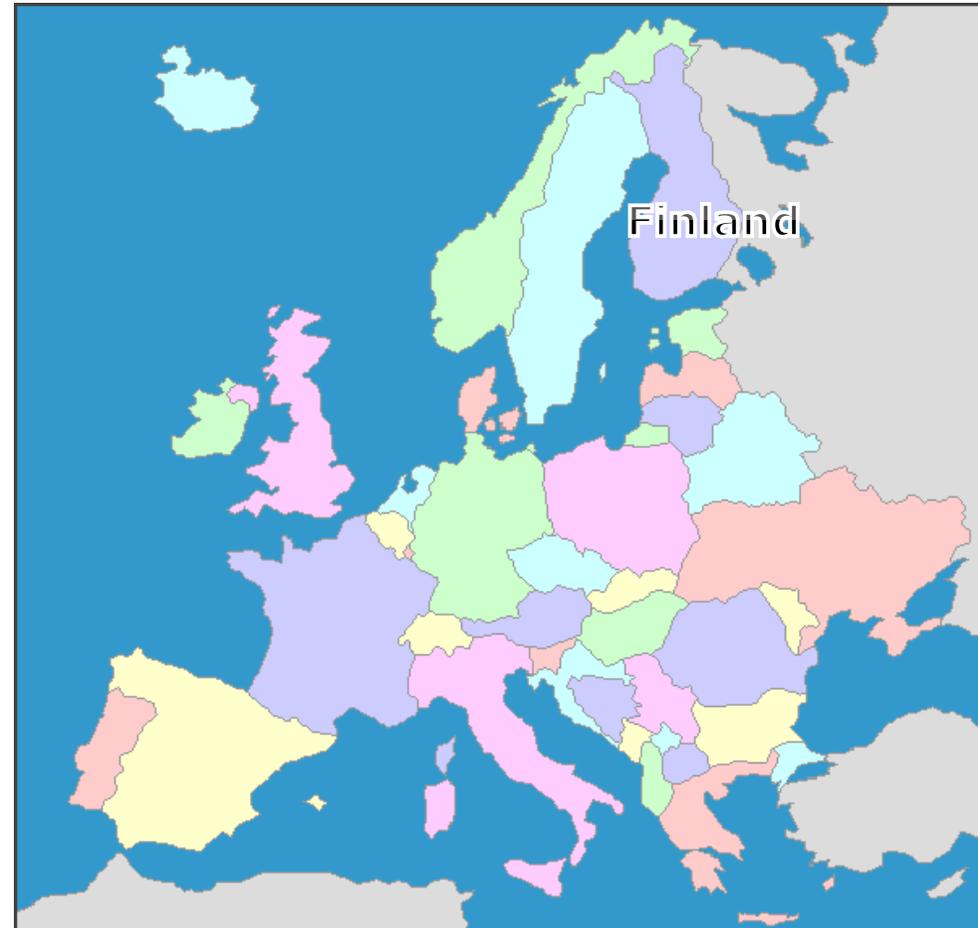
BAC-limit: **0,5 ‰**

*in alcohol interlocks the limit
is 0,1 mg/l ≈ 0,2 ‰*

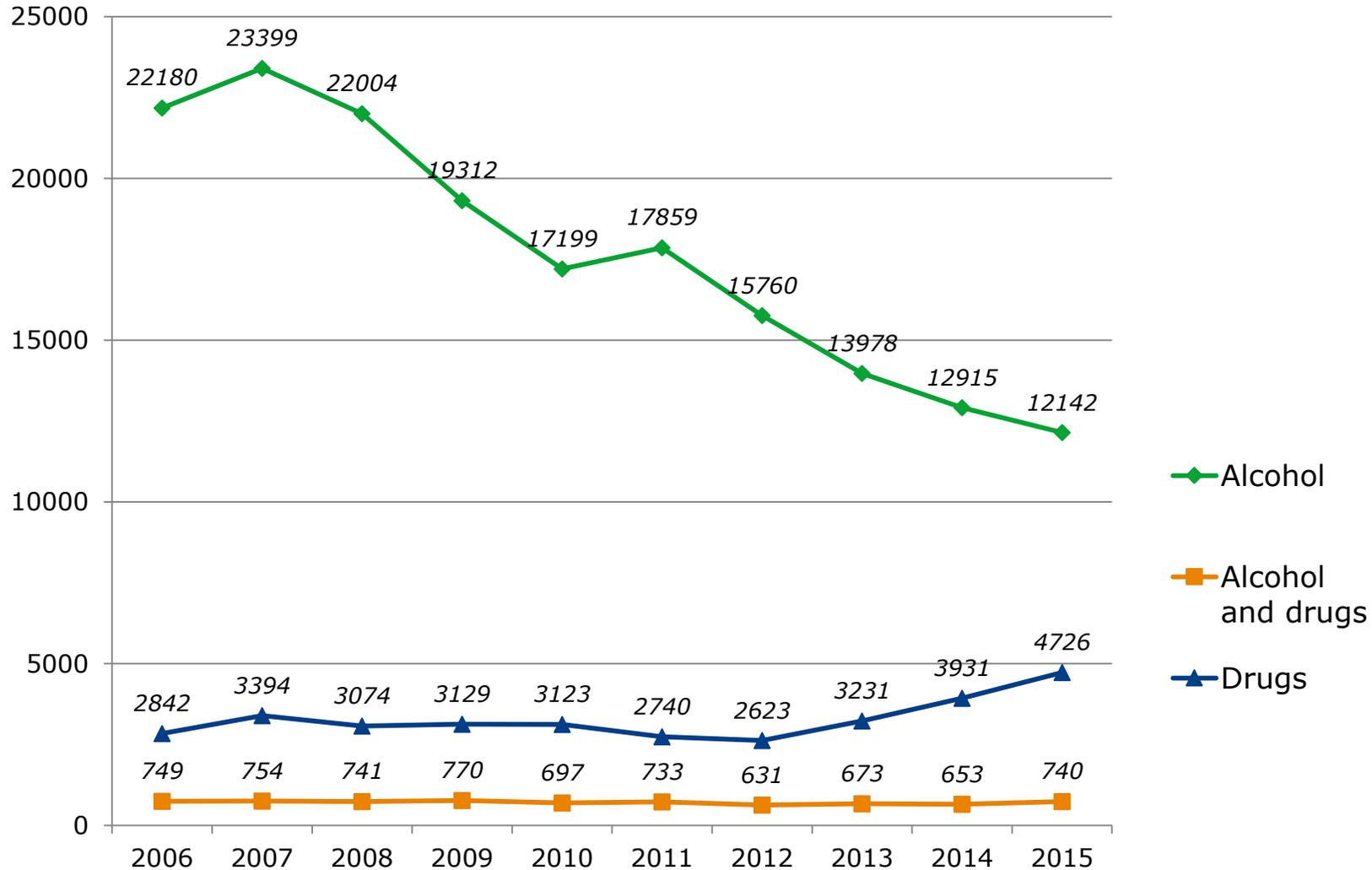
Road traffic accidents:

~ **20 %** of deaths and

~ **10 %** of injuries related to DUI



Finland: number of DUI cases (caught by the police)



Source: The Police. Year 2015: preliminary figures.

National legislation for alcohol interlocks

- **Act on Alcohol Interlock -Controlled Driving Rights** (for drink driving offenders) since July 2008
 - Act for a trial: July 2005–June 2008
- Government Decree on Alcohol Interlock -Controlled Driving Rights since July 2008
- **Act on the Use of Alcohol Interlock in School and Day-care Transportation** (busses and taxies) since August 2011
- Ministry Decree on the Use of Alcohol Interlock in School and Day-care Transportation since August 2011
- **Act on the Approval of Alcohol Interlock for Road Use** (EN 50436 standard and EMC-requirements) since August 2011
- **Driving Licence Act** (12 and 16 § on “health based interlock”, a preventive measure proposed by a doctor) since 2011

Rehabilitation program with alcohol interlocks

– the facts

- **Voluntary** for DUI offenders
 - The offender may apply for the alcohol interlock -controlled driving licence, instead of being banned from driving
- Approximately 500 new participants each year
- Program **duration** 1–3 years (court decides)
- The installation and calibration of alcohol interlocks are performed by authorized service providers that are trained by interlock manufacturers/importers
- The police monitors the participants (based on log data)
 - If there are violations (e.g. manipulation attempts or the interlock removed too early), the programme may/shall be terminated

Rehabilitation program with alcohol interlocks

– the steps

DUI offender is caught by the police

→ The police informs the offender about the interlock possibility

The offender

→ gets the alcohol interlock installed and the vehicle inspected

→ visits a doctor or another health care professional for a discussion

→ submits the required documents to the police

→ applies for a driving licence with national code 111 (interlock)

→ takes the interlock to log-data read-out every 60 days

→ after the mandatory period, may get the interlock removed from the vehicle, or instead, may leave the device in the vehicle (with voluntary use settings applied, e.g. no running re-tests, no data read-out)

Rehabilitation program with alcohol interlocks

– the costs

The participant pays all the costs (on average less than 5 € per day)

- Alcohol interlock device + installation: 1250–1500 €
- One visit to a doctor or another health care professional: in public sector ~ 30 €, in private sector up to 160 €
- Inspection of the vehicle after the installation of the interlock (and also after the removal of the interlock): ~ 40–60 €
- New driving licence (with code 111): 30 €
- Data read-out (every 60 days): 20–60 €
- Calibration (usually once a year): 30–60 €
- Removal of the interlock: 100–170 €

The evaluation study published in February 2013

- Trafi Publications 6/2013 (in English): “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 included

- 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

Population

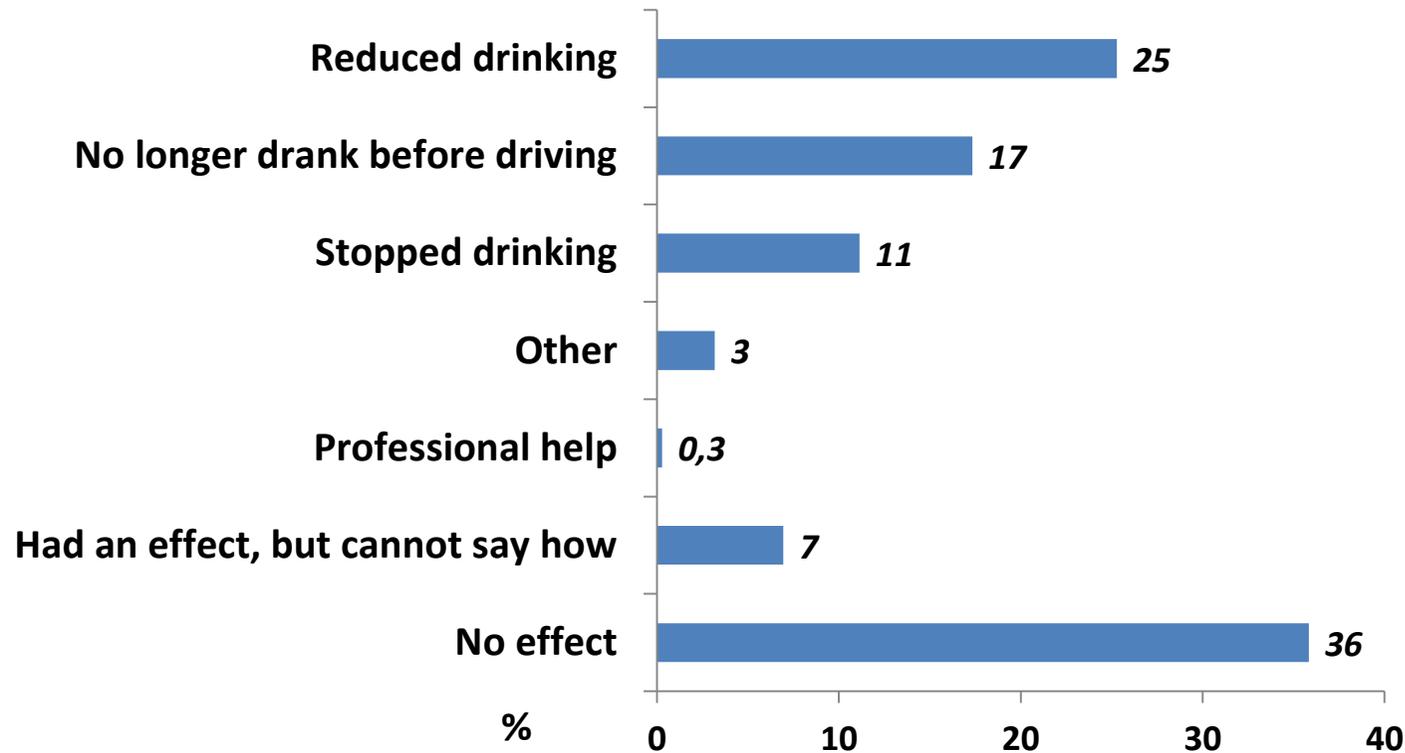
- The **average age** of the participants in the alcohol interlock program was **51 years**. The youngest was 20 years old, the oldest 82.
- 84 % of the drivers were male.
- 1.4 % of the participants had died before the end of the interlock program. In 37.5 % of the cases the cause of death was related to alcohol.
 - In general the mortality rate is around 1 %. Alcohol related causes of death account for about 6 % for men and 2 % for women.

After the mandatory period

- At least **one third** of the drivers leave **voluntarily** the alcohol interlock device fitted in their vehicle after the mandatory period of 1–3 years!

The evaluation study: effect on alcohol use

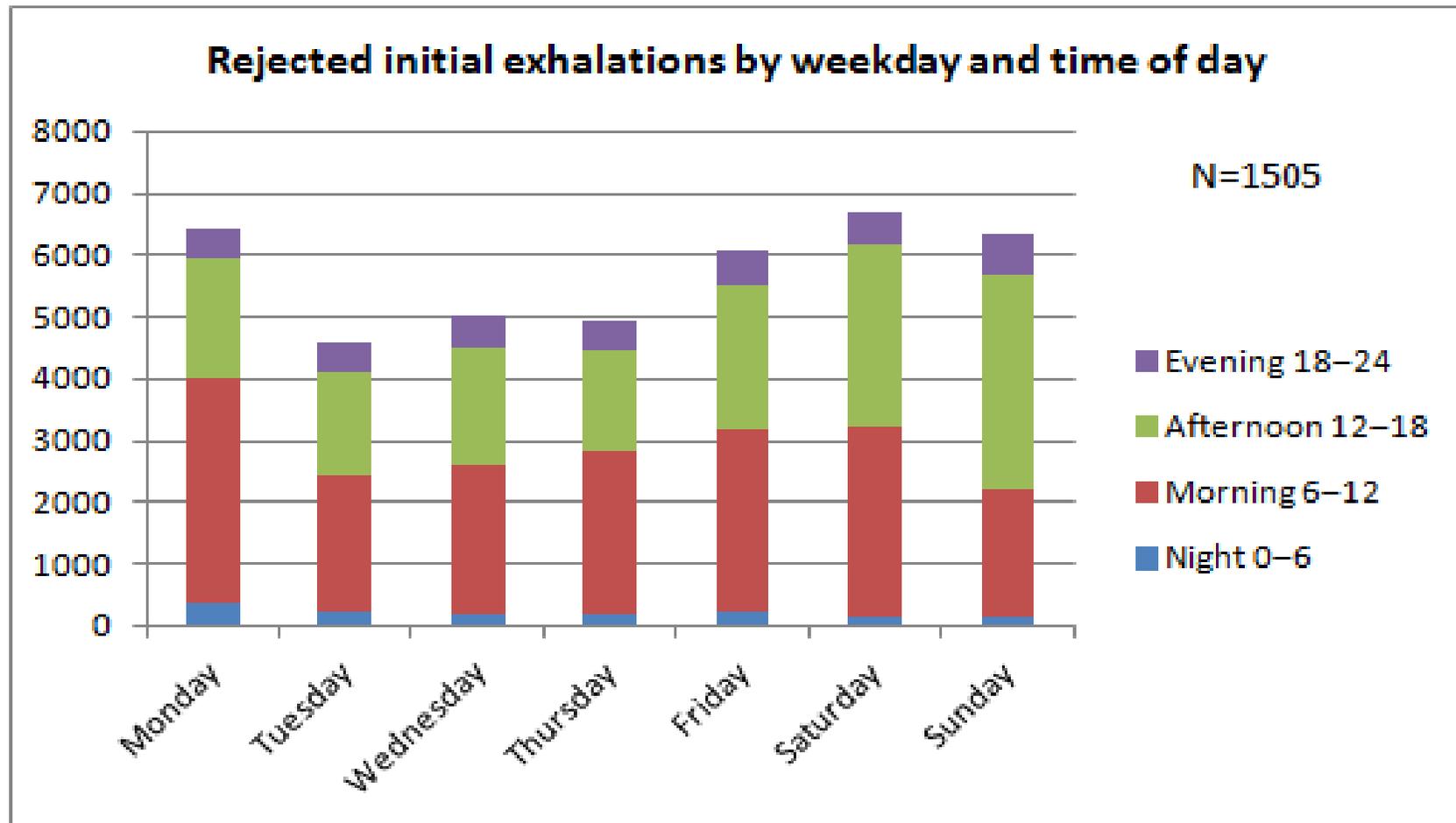
How did/does the alcohol interlock affect the use of alcohol for you?



The evaluation study: prevented DUI cases

- The alcohol interlock log data for about 4 years was analysed out of 1505 interlocks used by the DUI offenders.
- Alcohol interlocks used by the offenders had prevented at least 12 000 instances of driving while under the influence of alcohol (≥ 0.5 ‰; the legal limit) in Finland.
- Overall the alcohol interlocks had prevented over 40 000 times a driver who had “had a few” (≥ 0.2 ‰; the limit set to the interlocks) to start the vehicle for driving.

The evaluation study: rejected breath samples



Best things about using an alcohol interlock

- Keeping one's driving licence 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 interlock is a health instrument and a friend.”

Worst things about using an interlock

- **Waiting time** for the device to **warm up** (59 % of all the respondents) and
- rather **high expenses** (57 %) were seen as the worst aspects of using an alcohol interlock.
- Almost half (54 %) of the respondents considered **re-tests** while driving to be unpleasant, and many felt them to be a safety hazard*. The interval of randomly required re-tests 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.

* in re-test the driver has time period of 6 min to give a breath sample

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

The evaluation study: Recidivism

- **More than half** of the drivers had been convicted of DUI **several times before** applying for the alcohol interlock driving licence.
- **3.3 %** of the drivers were caught for DUI **during** their period of alcohol interlock controlled driving licence (most likely with another vehicle, not fitted with an interlock).
- **After** the end of the alcohol interlock supervision period, **2.5 %** of the drivers were caught for a DUI offence.
- The recidivism rate of alcohol interlock users seems to be significantly smaller than that of all DUI offenders, as **generally the recidivism rate** in Finland is **at least 30 %**.

Ministry of Transport and Communications'

Press Release 12 November 2015:

- The Ministry is preparing new legislation on alcohol interlock devices. The aim is to merge the various acts currently in force into one Alcohol Interlock Act and to simplify the procedures related with the use of alcohol interlocks. Amendments will also be made to the Driving Licence Act.
- The amendments also push forward the Government's key project of deregulation.

In November 2015 the draft act was circulated for comments that were due by 18 December 2015. The bill has not yet been passed to the parliament. The Ministry is currently working with the comments from the several stakeholders.

Main ideas of the reform concerning offenders

- “An entirely new aspect is that the court would be charged with imposing an alcolock-monitored driving right on **all drink driving offenders**. It would, however, be possible to refuse.”
(This is in order to get more participants in the interlock programme, as the rather short driving bans do not encourage the offenders to get an interlock.)
 - The Office of the Prosecutor General and some of the Courts are against this (e.g. workload of courts, endangers “principle of equality” and legal protection of citizens)
- “In future, it would not be necessary to transfer and analyse the alcolock's usage data every two months, and the use of alcolocks that do not store data would also be possible. This would **decrease the costs** of monitored driving rights, because the data transfer has to be carried out in the alcolock maintenance and installation facilities and is subject to charge.”
 - The enforcement and monitoring of interlock users (offenders) is nearly impossible without any log data.
Fortunately the interlock device may be set with requirements to perform some enforcement (it prevents the vehicle from starting after certain misuse if the interlock is not taken into maintenance).

Thank you!

Questions?

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