



Trafi

Finnish Transport Safety Agency

ETSC Safe & Sober – Alcohol interlocks and the fight against drink-driving

Alcohol interlocks in Finland

22 April 2015, Lisbon

Marita Löytty, Special Adviser

*Responsible traffic.
A joint effort.*

1. Finland: facts and number of DUI* cases

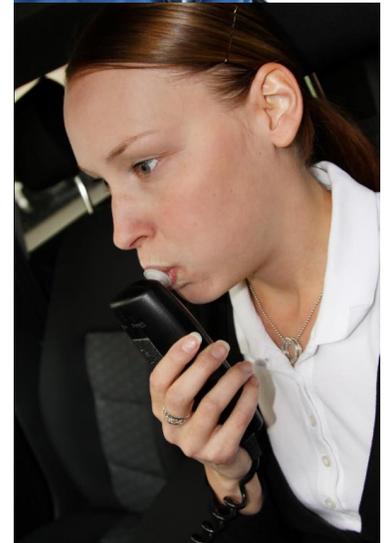
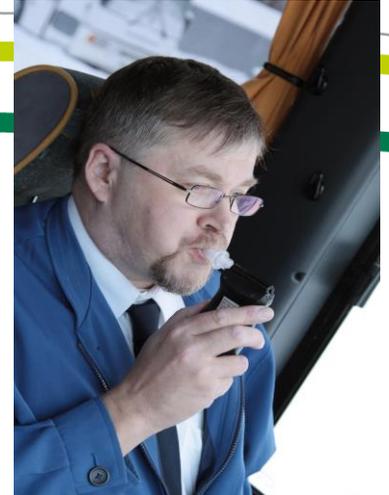
2. Rehabilitation programme for DUI offenders

- a. The facts
- b. The steps
- c. The evaluation study

3. Alcohol interlocks mandatory in school and day care transport

4. Tips to get started

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



Finland: facts

Area 338 432 m2 (10 % lakes)

5,4 million inhabitants

3,6 million driving licences

5,0 million vehicles

BAC-limit: **0,5** %

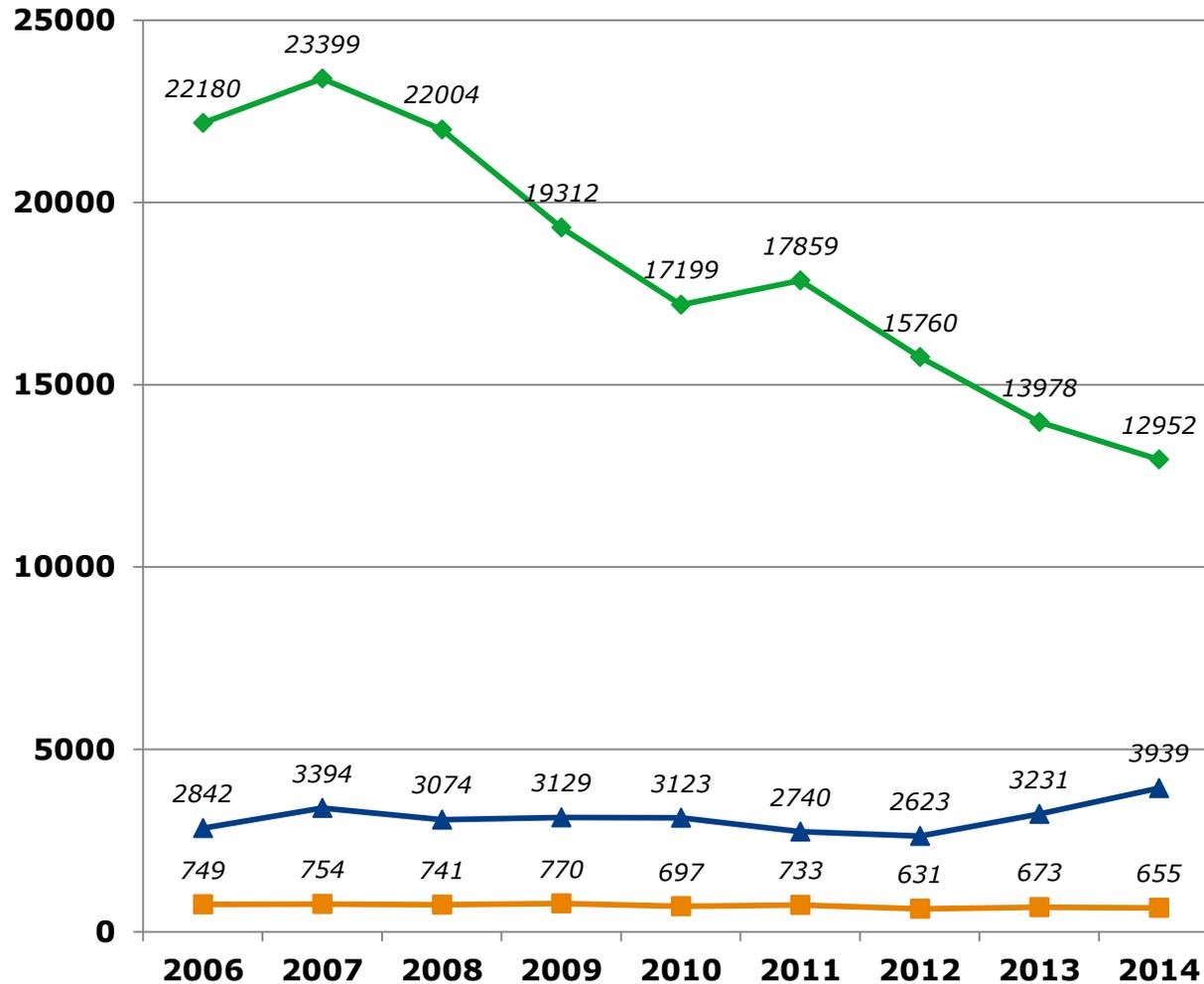
Road traffic accidents:

~ **20** % of deaths and

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



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



Rehabilitation program with alcohol interlocks

– the facts

- A trial July 2005 – June 2008 → Permanent since July 2008
- **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
 - The participation **rate is rather low** (still), as the driving bans for a DUI offence are fairly short in Finland → For many drivers a short driving ban is more appealing choice than investing in an alcohol interlock device.
 - **The plan** is to get the courts to order the interlock program to all DUI offenders. However, it would still require a consent from the offender (as e.g. they all do not own a vehicle, and they may not afford the program).
- Program **duration** 1–3 years (court decides)
- **Costs** for the participant ~150€/month
- Brochure in English:
http://www.poliisi.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/intermin/embeds/poliisiwwwstructuure/27627_alkolukkoesite_suomi_muokattu2_EN.pdf?2577f39c4d2ad288

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 an another health care professional
- submits the driving licence application to the police
- receives 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)

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

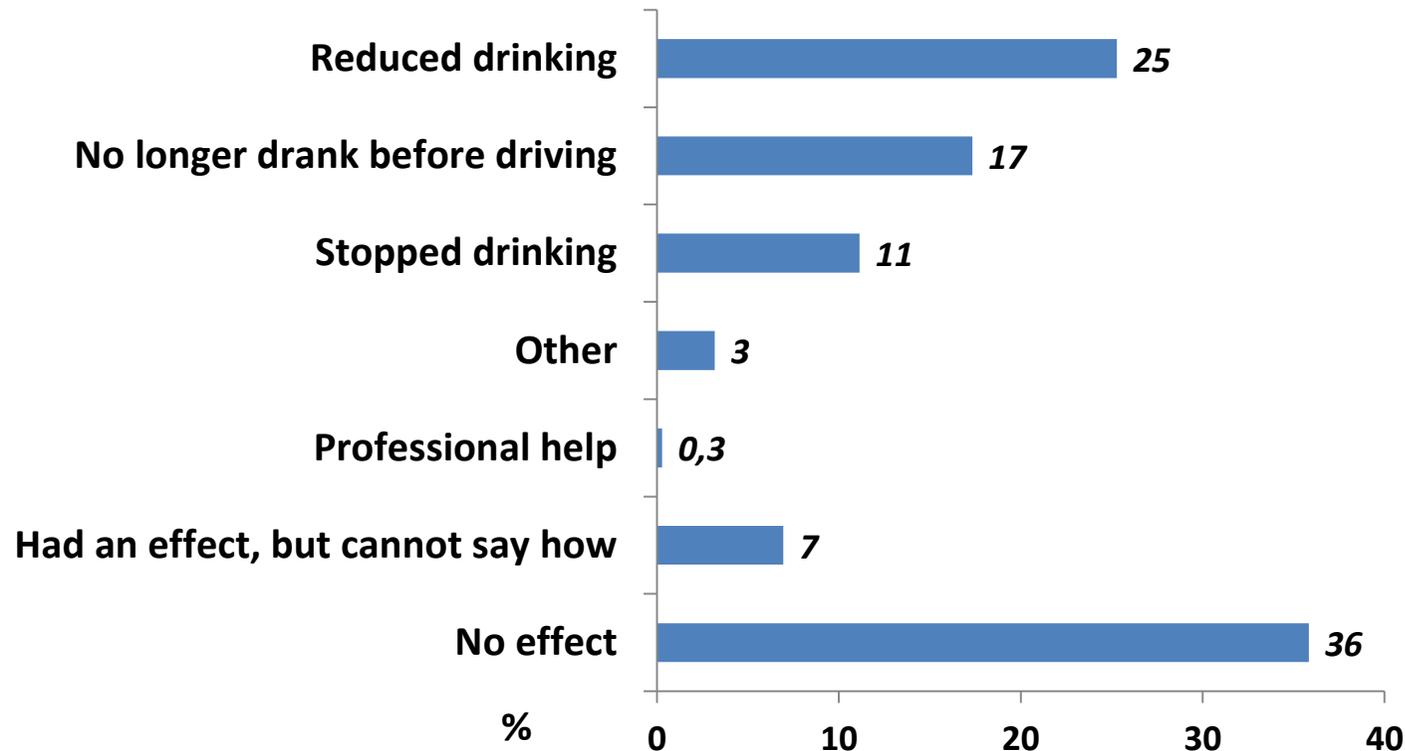
- The **average age** of the participants in the alcohol interlock program was **51 years**. The youngest was 20 years old, the oldest 82.
- 84 % of the drivers were male.
- 1.4 % of the participants had died before the end of the interlock program. In 37.5 % of the cases the cause of death was related to alcohol.
 - In general population 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

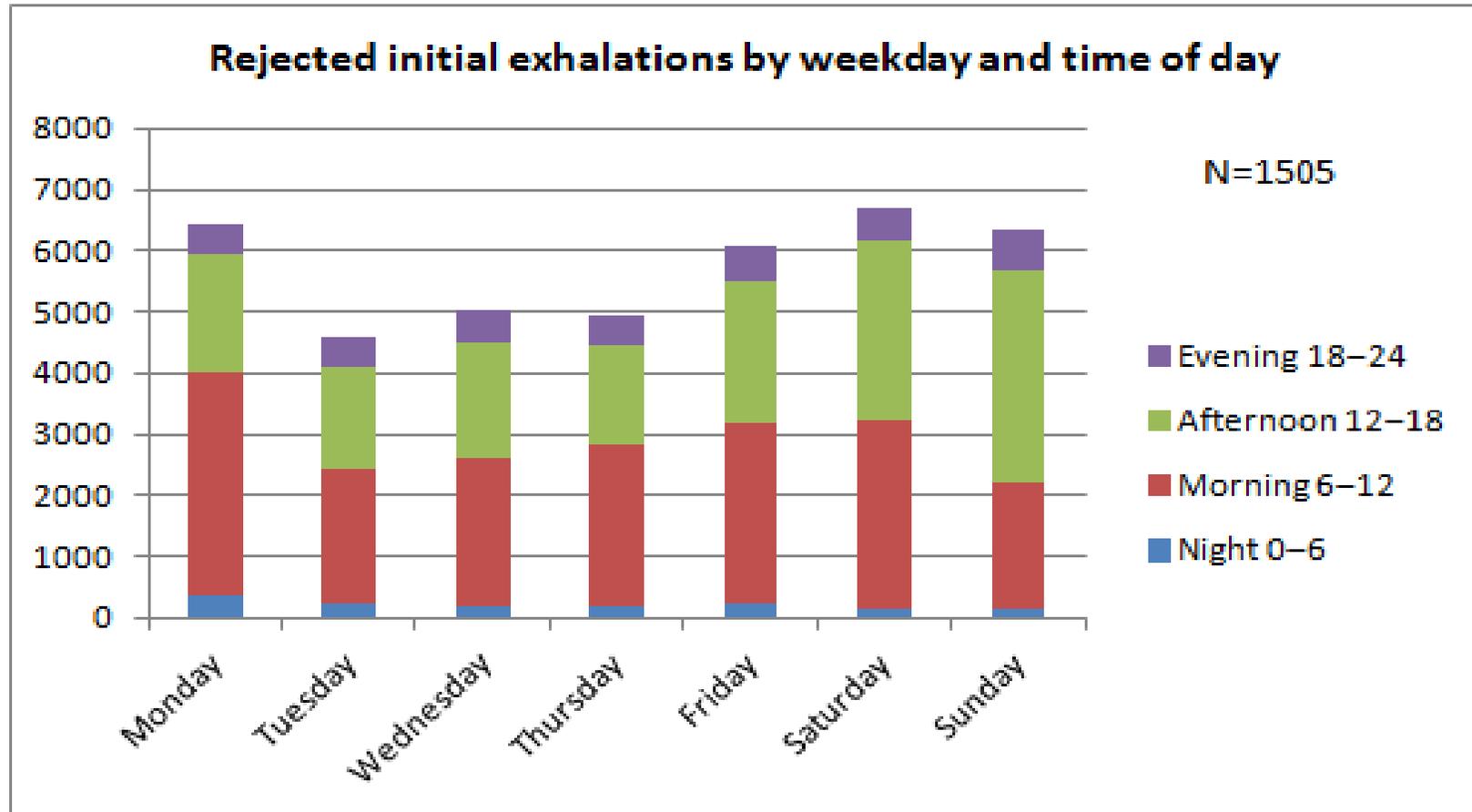
How did/does the alcohol interlock affect the use of alcohol for you?



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 %**.

Alcohol interlocks mandatory in school and day care transportation

Background

- The share of professional drivers of all DUI cases (caught by the police) in Finland is estimated to be around 8–9 %.
- In 2006 the Ministry of Transport and Communications gave a recommendation to use alcohol interlocks in all professional school and day care transports.
- In 2008 alcohol interlocks had been taken in use for these transports **in 17 municipalities only** (total number of municipalities more than 400).

Alcohol interlocks mandatory in school and day care transportation

Since August 2011 the Act:

"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".

DUI offenders

- Learn from other countries and jurisdictions that have widely implemented interlocks (e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands)
- Involve all the relevant national authorities and key stakeholders in planning a national trial
- Start a trial with voluntary DUI drivers; gather feedback, modify the process if needed
- Plan e.g. how often to ask the offenders to download the log data and how to use the data (e.g. several "red" breath samples → any consequences for the driver?)
- Support the driver to reduce his/her alcohol use (get the health care sector involved)
- An alcohol interlock is a chance to **keep on driving safely**
 - Motivate as many drivers in the program as possible, as the general DUI recidivism rate is around 30 %!

Commercial transport

- Include the requirement for alcohol interlocks in **public tenders**
 - E.g. Helsinki Region Transport in 2012: "Alcohol interlock is a mandatory equipment in all new busses. The transport company gets extra points, if an alcohol interlock is retro-fitted also in busses that are already in use."
 - E.g. Road Maintenance contracts since 2012: "All the vehicles that require a valid professional competence (CPC) from the driver, need to be equipped with an alcohol interlock."
- Explain that the commercial drivers in general are not thought of being drink drivers, but that the use of alcohol interlocks ensures the **quality and safety** of the transports and promotes the overall **safety culture** of transportation companies
 - One accident caused by a drink driver may cost several times more to a transportation company than investing in interlocks.

Thank you!

Questions?

marita.loytty@trafi.fi



Trafi

Finnish Transport Safety Agency

Finnish Transport Safety Agency

Kumpulantie 9, 00520 Helsinki

PO Box 320, FI-00101 Helsinki, Finland

Telephone +358 29 534 5000

www.trafi.fi