

Drunk drivers ordered to blow before they go 📺

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By Nancy Holland / 11 News

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When Texans' defensive back Marcus Coleman was convicted of drunk driving, part of his sentence was having to blow into a breathalyzer before he could start his car. It wasn't a unique sentence. Many others have to blow before they can go.

Around 70 convicted drunk drivers a month in the Houston area are ordered to get the installation and learn to live with taking a test before and during driving.

"You have to make a humming sound, almost like hmmmmmmmm," explained Stuart Sendelbach with Smart Start. "That's the whole idea behind the retest as you drive because if you did go ahead and have somebody blow into it for you, you'd have to have that same person ride with you to blow into it and, at that point, they might as well be driving 'cause they're sober anyway."

Every month they're back for recalibration.

"I admit that I was drunk you know," said one driver who didn't want his name used.

Some of the blunt ones admit it's a good idea.

"I can't drink and drive now," he said. "I think this is a good program for people that have been caught drunk driving or they drive and drink. This will stop them from drinking."

On the average, most people who have the devices put on their car are ordered to keep them on there for about a year. That's usually enough. But, every once in a while, somebody gets a second sentence. There's even a name for them. They call them Boomerangs."

They can't say how many accidents may have been prevented. But people at Smart Start believe the devices can help keep even repeat offenders off the road.