

## **NEW: Device aims to curb drunk driving**

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Last year in San Antonio, more than 9,000 people were arrested for driving while intoxicated.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Texas routinely leads the nation in DWI arrests and alcohol-related traffic fatalities.

The penalties for a DWI conviction are pretty strict and can include a device to keep your vehicle from starting if you've been drinking.

It's called Interlock. It's actually a mini-Breathalyzer. When it's hooked to an ignition, if the potential driver has been drinking they won't be driving — at least not that vehicle.

"I don't want blood on my hands. I don't want to be the guy on the news that ended up killing somebody," said "Ray," a recovering alcoholic.

But it took three DWIs to get there. Ray is now taking extreme measures to make sure he'll never be behind the wheel, if he's been drinking.

I am "erring on the side of life, that's what I'm doing and I think that's what people should be doing, if they have morals," he said.

Every time Ray gets into his truck he has to go through a series of events before the truck will even start.

"At that point I knew, for me, the right thing to do was keep it on my vehicle," Ray said.

Interlock measures the drivers blood alcohol level and if it's over a specific set limit the engine won't start.

The court ordered Ray to put Interlock on his vehicle.

Texas law requires the device placed on vehicles as a condition of bond for everyone who is given their second or subsequent DWI or their first charge of intoxication assault or manslaughter.

It's up to the judge as a condition of probation on the first conviction, but if a driver is under 21 it's mandatory.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving loves the device. They're pushing for it to be a requirement for first time offenders.

"MADD just wants to see people get home safely and stay out of their cars," said Bettye Berns with MADD.

So does judge Charles Stephens.

The New Braunfels judge has ordered the device placed on a lot of cars. He even had a unit hooked to his car for about a month, just so he could better understand how well it works.

"It's a way to step up the monitoring of that individual to make sure they don't violate the law and drive while they're intoxicated or drive while they've been drinking, because it detects even the smallest amounts of alcohol," Stephens said.

And it does work.

The I-Team put Interlock to the test, with an alcohol-based breath spray.

Though the device wasn't hooked to a car, it was the exact same unit. About a minute after using the breath spray, according to the machine, the tester was way over the legal limit.

Breath alcohol, like breath spray, is easily washed away with water. If alcohol is detected, the machine will call for a re-test within 70 seconds. Fail two re-tests and Interlock puts the car into lockdown.

"DWIs cost the state of Texas \$10.3 billion a year," said Dottie McDonald with Smart Start.

That is just the financial cost. Money can't measure the emotional cost of losing a loved one because of a drunk driver.

"I plan on keeping it on my vehicle for the rest of my life," Ray said.

What keeps someone else from blowing into an Interlock device and letting a drunk driver, drive away? The answer is random tests. After the engine starts, it tests again within two minutes and then periodically, before the engine is shut off again.

And if you think you can get around it by tampering with it — Interlock records any tampering and that information is sent to the state.