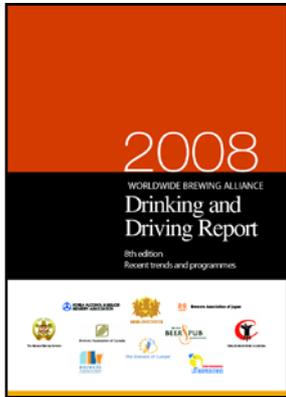




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World trends in drink drive prevention



The Worldwide Brewing Alliance has published the '2008 Drinking and Driving Report'. This, the eighth edition of the report, monitors progress throughout the world, gives an insight into effective strategies and serves as a vehicle to share experiences and promote initiatives to reduce impaired driving.

Janet Witheridge of the BBPA states in the preface 'Recent research supports the view that a targeted approach to solving the problems of alcohol impaired driving is taking hold. Two areas in particular are singled out. These are young people — a disproportionate number of young people are involved in alcohol-related accidents — and repeat offenders'.

Young people

The report gives a breakdown of BAC limit for each country. There have been few changes since the last WBA report in 2005, but amongst those who have changed legislation are Cyprus reducing from 0.09 to 0.05 and Luxembourg from 0.08 to 0.05. Brazil has also changed its level from 0.06% to 0.02%. However, many countries in Europe as well as Argentina, Mexico, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have chosen to set different BAC levels for learner or probationary drivers, and sometimes also for professional drivers. In Austria, for example, learner drivers, drivers under the age of 20 and professional bus and truck drivers have a BAC limit of 0.01. In August 2007, Germany introduced a BAC limit of 0.0% for Probationary drivers (within first 2 years of passing test or under the age of 21). Similarly, in Holland since January 2006, probationary drivers who have held a driver's licence for less than five years have a BAC limit of 0.02%. Luxembourg imposed a limit of 0.02% for professional and novice drivers in January 2006.

Alco-locks

Alco-locks are cited as a good example of targeted harm minimisation. Rather than trying to reduce the consumption of all drinkers, or the miles travelled by

all drivers, they target "hard core" of repeat drink drive offenders.

A new generation of alcolocks is emerging, and new devices in contact with the skin are now able to measure whether alcohol has been consumed.

Results of the first trials of these in-car "alco-locks" are now available. The results show that they can be used effectively to reduce recidivism (repeat offending) and have the potential to change behaviour in the hard-core drink drivers who are responsible for the majority of the problem. The "International Inventory of Interlock Programs" published by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) includes information on legislation and trials from jurisdictions in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States.

Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock device programmes have been implemented in Finland, the Netherlands, Mexico, Canada and the US, with pilots being carried out in Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, the UK and Australia.

In the Netherlands, after the completion of a European Union feasibility study, the Dutch Ministry of Transport amended the Road Traffic Act to enable alco-lock implementation in 2007. The alcolock programme is combined with counselling and driver improvement programmes.

Finland passed a temporary interlock law for three years, July 2005 — June 2008. During this period, it was possible to combine licence suspension with an alco-lock for one year. A decision has been made to expand and improve the programme and make it permanent. It is likely that alcolocks will be mandatory for recidivists.

Canada Interlock devices are used in all provinces in circumstances where an individual has been charged and convicted under the Criminal Code of impaired driving. Interlock devices are made available to first-time and subsequent offenders.

Alcohol related traffic accidents and fatalities

Witheridge comments 'The overall trend in the statistics is downwards for alcohol-related accidents, casualties and fatalities. In some countries, the rate of decline appears to be slowing; but most show a dramatic long-term decline since the 1980s. Given the differences in

legislation (8 different BAC limits are in force in the 53 countries listed), penalties and enforcement levels shown in this report, the common trend is remarkable. The report also highlights the very low risk of being caught in most jurisdictions.

It is clear from the countries where statistics are improving that the most effective policies include a package of measures including stricter enforcement, tougher penalties, educational programmes, mass media campaigns to produce a cultural shift and toughening the process of having a licence reinstated after suspension.

Many countries continue to actively address the issue of alcohol-impaired driving through additional legislation. The clear trend is towards tougher penalties and greater police powers to increase enforcement’.

Penalties

In the majority of countries, penalties for driving with a BAC level above the permitted maximum vary according to how much the limit is exceeded. For example in Costa Rica a driver with a BAC of 0.05-0.10% is charged with driving under the influence, a penalty of 20,000 colones (approx. \$45) and suspension of the driver’s licence for 3 months, whereas a driver with a BAC of >0.1% is charged with driving under the influence. Their vehicle is impounded and the licence is suspended for 6 months.

In other countries such as Turkey, and New Zealand and Panama punishment increases with frequency of offence. In Turkey, for a first offence of driving with a BAC above the limit of 0.05%, a fine and a licence suspension of 6 months are imposed. For a second offence, the penalty is an increased fine and a licence suspension of 2 years. For a third offence, there is a further increase in the fine and suspension for 5 years with possible imprisonment of up to 6 months. Psychological treatment and retest are mandatory. In the case of causing injury or death, criminal proceedings are taken and the drivers’ licence is revoked permanently.

Penalties for drink driving vary widely throughout the world with a BAC level of 0.08% being punished in Ecuador by imprisonment between 30 and 180 days and a fine of up to 10 times the minimum monthly salary. The same BAC level is not considered an offence in Colombia is not considered an offence (where the BAC limit is 0.10%) and in South Korea a fine of US \$1000.

Enforcement

The majority of countries in Europe now have a national policy of random breath testing. Exceptions are Germany, Malta, Russia and the UK. Similarly national policies exist

widely in South America, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. The policy for random breath testing are set by individual states in Australia and Canada.

A National Strategy Plan for Cyprus states the objective to carry out random breath testing on 1 in every 5 drivers. In Finland the police have an annual quota to be tested every year. In Ireland, since the introduction of the 2006 Road Traffic Act which gave the Gardai the power to breathalyse any driver stopped at a mandatory alcohol checkpoint, it is much more likely that anyone driving in Ireland having consumed alcohol will be detected and prosecuted by the Gardai and the number of people killed in alcohol related traffic accidents has reduced by 22%.

States in the US do not have random breath testing rules, however, all but 12 states perform ‘sobriety checkpoints’. These checkpoints screen all motorists travelling in a certain area, and law enforcement officers may submit any driver to a breathalyser test if there is a suspicion of drinking.

Other influences on traffic accidents/ fatalities

It is also important to recognise that many factors contribute to the reduced numbers of casualties and fatalities. They include: increased public awareness; safer vehicles; use of seat-belts and motorcycle helmets; active enforcement of existing laws; and increased personal responsibility.

There is also an increasing number of defined contributing factors for accidents, such as excess speed, fatigue, mobile phone use and drug use; and positive blood alcohol levels may be blamed for an accident which in fact had a number of contributing factors. More research is needed into the causes of these accidents.

Wetheridge concludes that ‘The brewing sector worldwide is committed to helping combat alcohol impaired driving and is proud of the part that it has played in increasing public awareness through its many initiatives and campaigns and in decreasing drinking and driving fatalities and injuries. The number of these initiatives aimed at reducing drink-driving, shown in this report, increases each year. Many are undertaken in partnership with the government or local road safety organisations, and this helps to strengthen the message.

Increasingly, evaluation of these campaigns is showing their effectiveness in raising public awareness and reducing the number of people driving after drinking. It is clear from this that the brewing sector is an important part of the solution which cannot be overlooked’.

The report is available at http://www.brewersofeurope.org/docs/publications/BI_DrinkDriveRpt07_4.pdf