



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Study: Ignition Interlocks Stop Repeat Drunk Driving Offenses

LANSING, MI, May 21, 2015 –A [report](#) released today by the Michigan Supreme Court says that when ignition interlocks are incorporated into a DWI/Sobriety Court program, they are successful in preventing convicted drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel and driving drunk. Following a minimum 45-day hard suspension of a repeat offender’s driver’s license, ignition interlocks prevent a vehicle from being driven if the blood alcohol content of the driver exceeds a certain level (measured by blowing into the device).

“Common sense says you cannot drive drunk if you cannot drive,” said Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. “As part of an intensive program of judicial supervision and sanctions, the ignition interlock forces repeat offenders to either stay sober or stay off the road. The result is fewer repeat offenses and more lives saved.”

The [report](#) reflects the Michigan Supreme Court’s commitment to measure performance and to assist local trial courts in implementing best practices and improve outcomes. This includes support for 41 DWI/Sobriety courts statewide that are designed to assist participants in their recovery, prevent drinking and driving incidents, while improving their quality of life and strengthening local communities. The program keeps participants out of jail, avoiding the cost of incarceration and helping participants stay on the job.

Specifically, the report found:

- **Recidivism Cut in Half.** A DWI recidivism rate of 2.8 percent among interlock participants who are off probation as compared to participants in the Standard Probation Group who have a DWI recidivism rate of 5.5 percent.
- **Nearly Universal Compliance.** More than 97 percent of people ordered by the DWI/Sobriety Court judges to put the devices on their vehicles actually put them on.
- **Failure Rate Two-Thirds Lower.** 12 percent of interlock participants failed the DWI/Sobriety Court program, while nonparticipants had a failure rate of 34 percent.

The [study](#), which uses data from 2011 to 2014, was commissioned by the Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals in cooperation with the State Court Administrative Office. The research in the report is based on data drawn from district courts in Kalamazoo, Waterford, Grand Rapids, Traverse City and Marquette.

Last year, there were 236 alcohol-related fatalities on Michigan roadways and 9,396 crashes involving alcohol (Michigan State Police, 2014).

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