



Governor Bill Richardson Announces Ignition Interlock Initiatives to Reduce DWI in New Mexico

Gov's Interlock Task Force presents recommendations, including requiring interlock devices for first time

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ALBUQUERQUE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced he will introduce legislation to increase the use of ignition interlock devices designed to keep drunk drivers off New Mexico's roads. The Governor received a detailed list of recommendations from his Task Force on Ignition Interlock Technology and Deployment, which he created by Executive Order last March.

"The ignition interlock device is a proven weapon in our battle to reduce DWI in New Mexico, particularly repeat offenses," said the Governor. "I believe increasing the use of this, and other cutting-edge technology will help save lives and reduce the devastating social and financial toll of DWI."

The Governor pointed to several factors that support the use of interlocks:

- Interlocked DWI offenders have less than 30% as many DWI arrests as comparable non interlocked offenders,
- Ignition interlock is on duty 24 hours a day, the machines test and record breath alcohol count (BAC) daily and automatically report all violations to the Court. The Court has the option to review and assign the offender to keep the device for longer, and
- Ignition Interlock costs offenders only about \$2.30 per day, and more importantly it keeps drunk drivers off the road.

Recommendations from the task force include:

- Requiring ignition interlock for *all* convicted DWI offenders. The Governor has already included this within his DWI/Public Safety package as follows:
 - a. 1st Conviction-1 year mandatory

- b. 2nd conviction-2 years mandatory
- c. 3rd conviction -3 years and
- d. Lifetime for 4th with 5 year Judicial Review

The Governor will also support other legislative recommendations from the task force:

- Developing an administrative process that mirrors the criminal process with like penalties and time limits,
- Creating penalties for tampering with an Interlock device; as well as for driving on a revoked license,
- Amending the current Ignition Interlock fund to attach a standard fee to all installations rather than 10% of all revenue.

At the recommendation of the Ignition Interlock Task Force, the governor announced he has awarded \$175,000 to the Bernalillo County Metro Court to fund three positions to form a Metro Court Compliance Unit.

- Metro Court will be hiring two probation officers and a judicial specialist to conduct enrollment, verification, and compliance monitoring and reporting of interlock offenders sentenced in Bernalillo County Metro Court.
- We are working to insure that mandated DWI offenders install ignition interlock devices within 48 hours of sentencing, and to insure that offenders comply with monitoring requirements.

The Compliance Unit will be able to identify:

- Number of mandated DWI offenders sentenced to comply
- Number of mandated DWI offenders who install interlocks
- Number of mandated DWI offenders remaining in compliance

“Together, these strategies form an comprehensive interlock initiative that will help dramatically reduce the number of drunk drivers on New Mexico’s roads,” added Governor Richardson.