



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News Release

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Praises Historic Law Cracking Down On DWI Offenders

Governor's initiative makes New Mexico first state in the nation to require all DWI offenders to use ignition interlock devices

For Immediate Release
June 17, 2005

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SANTA FE, NM- Governor Bill Richardson today praised a New Mexico law now in effect that requires *all* convicted DWI offenders to use ignition interlock devices on their vehicles. The law, passed during the 2005 New Mexico legislative session, also strengthens the interlock requirements for repeat DWI offenders. New Mexico is the first state in the country to require interlock devices for everyone convicted of DWI, even first-time offenders.

“This cutting-edge technology will help reduce the devastating toll that DWI takes on New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “DWI destroys lives and rips families apart, and its consequences reverberate throughout our communities. The fact is that the deaths, injuries, and damage caused by DWI are **100% preventable.**”

The law took effect at midnight today, and also makes it tougher for repeat offenders, who must now keep interlocks on their vehicles longer-

- Two years for a second conviction,
- Three years for a third conviction, and
- Four-time offenders must use an interlock for the rest of their lives.

An ignition interlock is a device that uses a computer chip to measure a driver's breath alcohol level. If the level is too high, the device prevents the car from starting. The current generation of interlocks also requires frequent and random breath samples to

ensure drivers stay sober. Offenders must pay for the costs of installation and monitoring of the devices, totaling approximately \$1000 per year.

“An interlock device is a mechanical probation officer, on duty and monitoring DWI offenders 24-hours per day, 7 days per week,” added Governor Richardson.

Governor Richardson also praised legislators for bipartisan support for the law, which was sponsored by State Representative Ken Martinez (D-Grants) and State Senator Kent Cravens (R- Albuquerque).

“Representative Martinez, Senator Cravens, and their colleagues showed that this is neither a Republican issue nor a Democratic issue- it’s a New Mexico issue,” said the Governor.

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