
Recent Research Findings

A number of alcohol and drug-impaired driving studies have been recently released that examine public attitudes and perceptions, crash risk, and ignition interlocks. Below, I highlight some of the more informative reports and studies that should be considered as we develop our strategies to reduce impaired driving.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. (2017). [2016 Traffic Safety Culture Index](#). Washington, D.C.: Author.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety released its annual public opinion survey results in February. The Traffic Safety Culture Index uses a nationally-representative sample of U.S. drivers to gauge attitudes and perceptions toward various traffic safety issues. Notable impaired driving findings include:

- Drinking and driving is viewed as a very serious threat and 96.7% of respondents disapprove of this behavior. However, more than 1 in 8 individuals admitted to driving in the past year when they thought their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) might have been at or above the legal limit.
- Support for policies such as mandatory interlocks for all DUI offenders, requiring built-in interlocks for all new vehicles (i.e., Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety), and per se limits for marijuana was high (81%, 71.8%, and 84.2% respectively).
- Drug-impaired driving is viewed as a lesser problem than drunk driving. Only 59.8% of respondents indicated that driving after using illegal drugs was a very serious threat; even

fewer respondents (33.9%) thought that driving after using prescription drugs was a very serious threat.

McGinty et al. (2017). [Ignition interlock laws: Effects on fatal motor vehicle crashes, 1982–2013](#). American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 52(4), 417-423.

The authors analyzed Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data from over a 30-year period to determine what effect, if any, state ignition interlock laws had on alcohol-involved fatal crashes during that timeframe. The results of the study reflect the life-saving potential of interlock technology. All offender interlock laws were associated with a 7% decrease in the rate of fatal crashes that involved a driver with a BAC of .08 or higher and an 8% decrease in the rate of fatal crashes that involved a high-BAC driver (.15>). This translates into an estimated 1,250 fatal crashes that were prevented due to interlock laws.

National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). (2017). [The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/24625.

The NASEM report contains a rigorous review of scientific research published since 1999 regarding the health impacts of cannabis/cannabis products, including an examination of marijuana's therapeutic effects and its potential for causing certain cancers, diseases, mental health disorders, and injuries. With respect to traffic safety, the committee explored whether there was evidence of a statistical association between cannabis use and motor vehicle crashes. The committee found "substantial evidence of a statistical association" and noted that these findings indicate a need for research to "further specify the strength of this association and to identify any mediating factors."

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The information provided is based upon my understanding of the facts as you have presented them and my view of the issues involved. The information does not in any way supersede or augment the statutes and administrative rules that apply to alcoholic beverage licensees. Please keep in mind that you are responsible for your decisions on how to operate your business and the information provided in no way mitigates or excuses any violations, nor will it reduce any penalty or liability you may face for any such violation. Accordingly, I strongly recommend that you consult with an attorney to determine your rights and

responsibilities as a licensee.