

Survey Shows Teenagers Want Drivers Licenses Early, but Expect Controls

Most teenagers want to get their drivers licenses as quickly as possible and most believe that their parents expect to control their driving, an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety survey shows.

In the Institute's latest study of teenage attitudes about driving, more than 52,000 students at 75 high schools in seven states were questioned about how they perceive their parents' role during their early months of driving and in traveling as passengers with others.

"Results indicated that most teenagers want to become licensed drivers as soon as possible, primarily to gain the independent mobility that accompanies licensure," the Institute researchers reported in their article, which is to appear in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

"The survey also showed that the majority of licensed students either own a car or have a car of which they are the principal driver, although they do not pay the bulk of the costs," they noted. "In another report on this survey, car ownership by teenagers was shown to be related to increased driving and to increased crashes." (See *Status Report*, Vol. 19, No. 18, Nov. 24, 1984.)

"By allowing and supporting car ownership," the researchers said, "parents may thus be increasing the crash risks of their sons and daughters." Fifty-six percent of the licensed drivers said they owned their own car or were the principal driver of a family car.

Most of the licensed teenagers indicated parental involvement in teaching them how to drive, along with school driver education, as the chief components of their precensure training.

Of the 43 percent who did not, in effect, own their own car, 68 percent said they drove the family car at

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New Sensor Gives Police Effective Device For Catching Drunken Drivers

An innovative device, built into a standard police flashlight, can dramatically increase detection of alcohol-impaired drivers, a new Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study has found.

Called a "passive alcohol sensor," because it indicates alcohol levels without the driver's active participation in breath tests, the device is held by a police officer near the face of the driver for an electronic readout of the motorist's blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

The results of a field test by police in Charlottesville, Virginia, at sobriety checkpoints are impressive: 68 percent of drivers with BACs of 0.10 or greater and 45 percent of the drivers with BACs of 0.05-0.099 were detected using the sensor, compared with 45 percent and 24 percent using conventional detection methods. Especially important for sobriety check-

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Driving Restrictions Imposed by Parents Reported by Licensed High School Students			
Restriction	Parents' Position (Percentage)		
	Don't Care One Way Or The Other	Did Not Say To Do This But Would Expect It	Said To Do This
Not drive after drinking	4	28	67
Tell them where I'm going	4	38	59
Be home by a certain time	12	33	56
Tell them who I'm going with	19	36	45
Not drive without their permission	35	33	32
Not drive in bad weather	30	48	23
Not drive if grades are bad	53	30	17
Wear a seat belt	52	35	12

(Sample size = 7,935 students)

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least four times a week, and 23 percent said they drove the family car two or three times a week.

All of the students were asked to indicate the importance of each of nine reasons for desiring or obtaining a license. The chief reasons cited as being either very or somewhat important were: To go where you want (92 percent); to drive to/from a job (83 percent); to go out at night (80 percent); and to help parents (75 percent).

"According to the survey, parents often impose restrictions on their high school sons and daughters when they drive or travel with others as passengers, and there is evidence that many students expect and support such restrictions," the researchers said. "Parents, in the view of their teenage children, have major concerns about drinking and driving; they are most explicit in warning against this behavior."

The most common restrictions after not drinking and driving that were cited by the students were: tell their parents where they are going and with whom; to be home at an appointed hour; and not to drive without parental permission.

The survey indicated that, in states where there are curfew laws, parents are the chief enforcers. The curfews have the effect of lowering nighttime crashes among beginning drivers. "However," the researchers

noted, "the majority of parents are perceived as not caring whether their sons and daughters wear seat belts when they drive or ride with others. Although seat belts provide substantial crash protection when used, seat belt use rates of drivers in general are very low, and even fewer teenage drivers use seat belts."

Copies of the report, "Parental Role in Teenage Driving," by David F. Preusser, Allan F. Williams, and Adrian K. Lund, may be obtained by writing Publications, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate 600, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Medical Society Refuses To Endorse Guidelines For Seat Belt Exemption

When New York state legislators wrote their seat belt use law, they included a caveat that drivers with a doctor's excuse did not have to buckle up. But doctors, in turn, wondered who would excuse them from liability in crashes involving unbuckled patients.

The Medical Society of New York has provided its members some legal advice on granting such exemptions. However, the society's governing council decided it would not endorse guidelines for granting medical exemptions that were drawn up by state authorities.

The reason: "No medical condition has yet been found to warrant a medical exemption for seat belt use."

NHTSA Releases Results of 16 Crash Tests of '85 Models

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released the results of 16 more 35 mph crash tests of 1985 model trucks and cars under its crashworthiness assessment program.

Of the additional 16 cars tested, six exceeded the government's safety standards in the 35 mph impacts. They were, in descending order of performance: A 4-door Volvo DL station wagon, a 4-door Volvo DL, a 4-door Plymouth Caravelle, 4-door Plymouth Reliant, 4-door Toyota Cressida, and a 4-door Mitsubishi

Galant. A 4-door Volkswagen Jetta came very close to meeting the criteria. (See chart.) For results of five previously tested 1985 models, see *Status Report*, Vol. 20, No. 4, April 6, 1985.

Under NHTSA's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208 governing automatic restraints, head injury criterion (HIC) scores are not to exceed 1,000. Chest acceleration is not to exceed 60 g's, and femur loads are not to exceed 2,250 pounds. Generally, the higher the HIC values, the greater the likelihood of serious or fatal injury

**New Car Assessment Program — 1985 Models
Head Injury Levels in Crash Tests***

Models	Driver	Passenger
Subcompact Cars		
Chevrolet Spectrum/2-Dr Hatchback	1559	960
Compact Cars		
Mitsubishi Galant/4-Dr	747	986
AMC Renault Alliance/2-Dr Convertible	1519	2678
Volkswagen Jetta/4-Dr	898	1008
Volvo DL/4-Dr	651	310
Ford Tempo/4-Dr	1207	932
Toyota Cressida/4-Dr	883	914
Mercury Merkur/2-Dr Hatchback	1009	1450
Large and Mid-Size Cars		
Plymouth Caravelle/4-Dr	685	760
Plymouth Reliant/4-Dr	831	843
Audi 5000S/4-Dr	2105	557
Station Wagons		
Nissan Maxima/4-Dr	1014	1500
Volvo DL/4-Dr	621	282
Trucks		
Chevrolet Astro Van	2202	1597
Chevrolet S-10 Blazer/2-Dr	1036	1320
Volkswagen Vanagon Van	1905	1060

*The higher the number the greater the risk of head injury.

Drunk Driving

New Sensor Gives Police Effective Device For Catching Drunken Drivers

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points, where most motorists passing will have consumed little or no alcohol, the sensor also reduces the proportion of drivers with low BACs unnecessarily detained from 18 percent to 8 percent. (Drivers with BACs of more than 0.05 are impaired and, in Virginia and some other states, may be charged with driving under the influence of alcohol. In most states, a BAC of 0.10 is considered to be illegally driving under the influence.)

"We don't need the statistics to know this new equipment works, because our officers are spending more time processing drunk drivers on the nights we use the sensor," said Lt. A. E. Rodenizer of the Charlottesville police department. Other police departments will begin using the device in July.

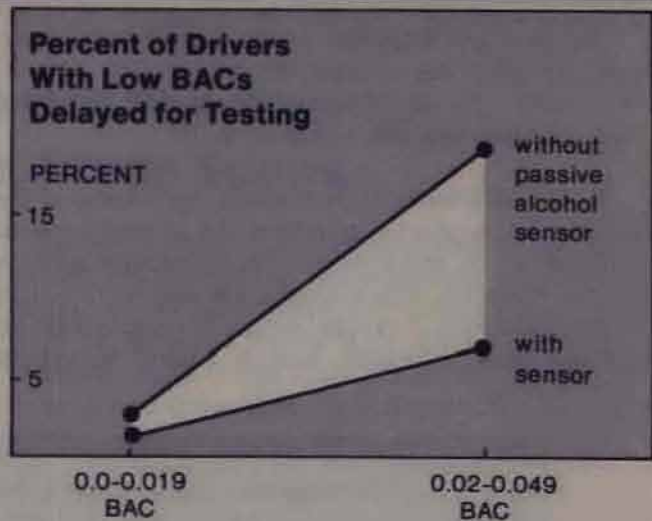
"In wide use, we expect the sensor to greatly improve both the efficiency as well as the effectiveness of police enforcement of drinking-and-driving laws,"



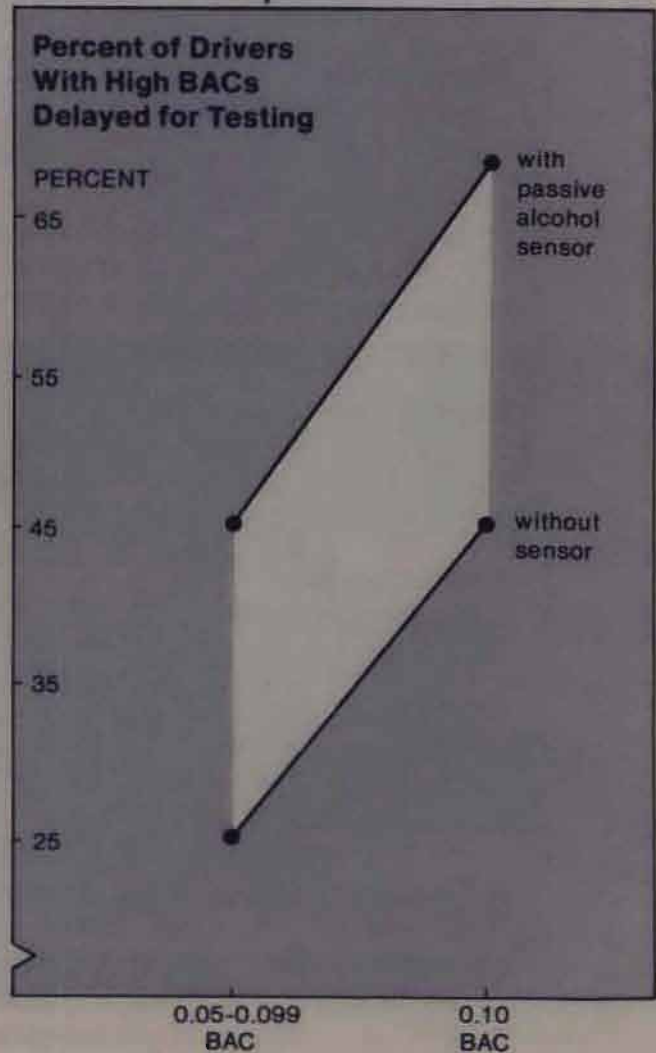
IIHS executive vice president Brian O'Neill said. The sensor was developed by the Institute, Lion Laboratories of Wales, U.K., and Prototypes Inc., of Maryland.

It has been estimated that without special enforcement as few as one in 2,000 alcohol-impaired drivers is actually apprehended.

For more information and a copy of the study, "Detection of Alcohol-Impaired Drivers Using a Passive Alcohol Sensor," by Ian S. Jones and Adrian K. Lund, write, Publications, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate 600, Washington, D.C. 20037.



A new passive alcohol sensor that indicates drivers' blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) is now being tested by IIHS at sobriety checkpoints. The sensor helps police detect more impaired drivers (below), and it reduces the number of drivers with low BACs who are delayed unnecessarily (above).



Drunk Driving

Mandatory Penalties Impose Heavy Demands On Courts and Jails

Mandatory confinement programs impose new and heavy demands on the courts, jails, and probation services says a National Institute of Justice report.

James K. Steward, director of the National Institute of Justice, said in the report, "Each year thousands of Americans are killed or maimed by drunk drivers. Citizens are demanding tougher criminal justice sanctions against those people convicted of drunk driving. An increasing number of jurisdictions are responding to this serious problem by adopting stricter penalties — including mandatory confinement — to control drunk drivers."

To examine the effects of these new sanctions, the National Institute of Justice, the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, reviewed the effects of mandatory confinement for drunk driving in four jurisdictions: Seattle (King County), Washington; Memphis (Shelby County), Tennessee; Cincinnati (Hamilton County), Ohio; and Minneapolis (Hennepin County), Minnesota. Information was also obtained from selected counties in California that have jailing as an option.

The report noted an unexpected result: when the new sanctions were well-publicized, arrests increased. Drunk driving arrests increased in three of the four jurisdictions that implemented mandatory confine-

"Each year thousands of Americans are killed or maimed by drunk drivers. Citizens are demanding tougher criminal justice sanctions against those people."

ment; in Memphis, where there was little publicity about the new law, arrests did not increase.

Court workloads increased, too. In Seattle, additional judges were needed because of the time devoted to drunk driving cases. Seattle judges and prosecutors estimated they spent 75 percent of their time on drunk driving cases. In Cincinnati, an additional daily traffic court had to be added.

The study also found that when mandatory confinement was introduced, more defendants were likely to challenge court procedures and decisions. Several of

the study jurisdictions had increased "not guilty" pleas and requests for jury trials. In Seattle, the number doubled in the first year following introduction of mandatory jailing.

The effects of the new sanctions on conviction rates varied in the different study sites. They remained stable in Memphis, declined in Seattle, and increased in Cincinnati.

Incarceration rates for convicted drunk drivers increased dramatically in the four jurisdictions. "This finding is clear and consistent and includes drunk drivers convicted of their first offense," said the report. In Seattle, the rate increased from 9 percent before mandatory confinement to 97 percent; in Memphis, it increased from 29 percent to virtually 100 percent,

The study also found that when mandatory confinement was introduced, more defendants were likely to challenge court procedures and decisions.

with similar increases in Cincinnati and Minneapolis. The California counties where judges have discretionary sentencing power failed to show a consistent pattern.

Incarcerated drunk drivers often require an array of special programs and facilities that can strain correctional systems, the report said. Because of their previous "noncriminal" history, drunk drivers frequently are confined in a building or area apart from other prisoners. A new building was built to house drunk driving offenders in Seattle, and all of the facilities reviewed were crowded because of policies allowing drunk drivers to serve their sentences on weekends.

The report concludes that before initiating mandatory confinement sanctions for drunk driving, careful consideration should be given to the effects of such policies on criminal justice operations and resources. "The planning process should include legislators as well as representatives of all the agencies concerned with drunk driving control — police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, correctional officials, and state motor vehicle officials," said the report.

Copies of a Research-In-Brief Summary of "Jailing Drunk Drivers: Impact on the Criminal Justice System," (National Institute of Justice, Justice Department, Washington, D.C., 1984) are available free from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850.

Drunk Driving

Scandinavian Sentencing

Liberalization of Laws Does Not Significantly Increase Highway Fatalities, Study Shows

Liberalization of Scandinavia's stringent drunk driving laws has not resulted in any significant increases in the numbers of alcohol-related fatalities, a study supported by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reveals.

In the late 1970s, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden eased away from automatic prison sentences for driving under the influence of alcohol. At the same time, they rationalized their laws by adopting legislation setting objective levels of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) as evidence of law breaking. The threshold for a driver being considered intoxicated ranges from 0.05 percent in Finland, Sweden, and Norway, to 0.08 percent in Denmark.

The rationalization also included the adoption of a tiered system so that drivers who imbibe more face stiffer penalties. And each country adopted laws permitting the use of random breath testing at road blocks, which increases public perception that drunk drivers will be caught.

Since the late 1970s, imprisonment has been used less often as a standard penalty in Finland, Denmark, and Sweden. Judges have emphasized sentences that stress fines and therapy for the problem drinker. Only in Norway, where there is a strong social ethic that views drunk driving as immoral, has the situation remained relatively the same. The trend in these three countries has produced "a shift of emphasis...from severity of punishment to certainty of punishment," the study's authors reported. In Norway, however, since 1936, the ordinary punishment for BACs of 0.05 percent or more has been imprisonment.

Analysis of fatality and injury data in each country yielded no evidence of significant changes as a result of the enforcement trend, the study concluded.

Earlier studies of the effectiveness of antidrunk driving measures have indicated that, among other things, it is the *certainty* that one will be punished swiftly for breaking the law and if the perceived likelihood of being caught is high, then people will be less likely to drink and drive. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 16, No. 5, April 16, 1981.)

The study was conducted by H. Laurence Ross, of the University of New Mexico, Hans Klette, of the University of Lund in Sweden, and Richard McCleary, also of the University of New Mexico.

In the most recent study, which appeared in the latest issue of *Accident Analysis and Prevention* the authors commented: "it is significant that these tendencies [toward rationalization and more liberal sentencing come] at the same time as much of the North American antidrunk-driving movement presses for harsh and mandatory punishments, partly on the grounds that these have demonstrated their effectiveness in the Scandinavian countries. The Scandinavians have found that such legislation leads to exhausting drains on their criminal justice system, produces inequities among different kinds of offenders, fails to

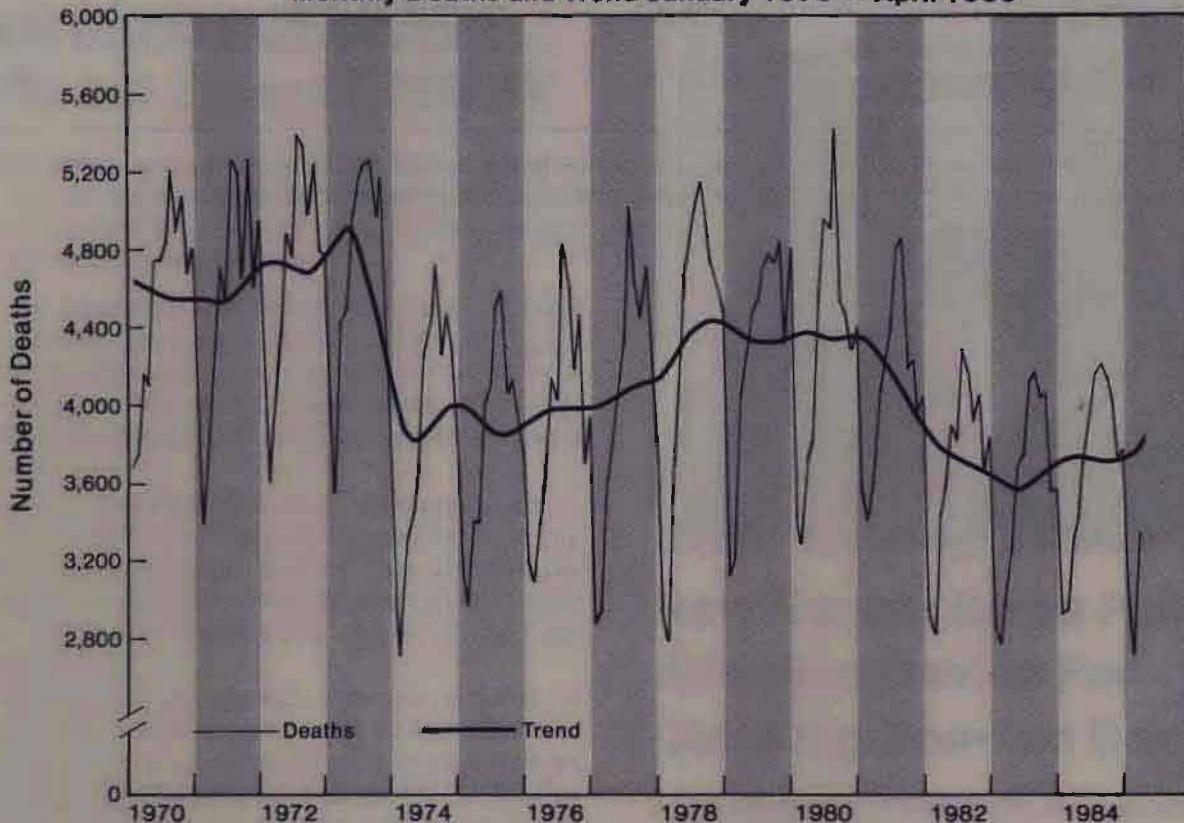


Rock star Stevie Wonder prepares for a scene in his new music video "Don't Drive Drunk." The five-minute video, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Advertising Council, and Chrysler Corporation, will be distributed nationally as a public service announcement.

Traffic Deaths Increase in First Quarter

For the first quarter of 1985, traffic fatalities in the United States totaled 9,041. This is an increase of 1.6 percent above the first three months of 1984. Continuing the upward trend, highway deaths in April of 1985 jumped to 3,567, an increase of 9.8 percent over the previous April.

Monthly Deaths and Trend January 1970 - April 1985



affect the behavior of hard-core offenders, and may well be unnecessary for the balance of the population.”

Random breath testing of drivers in each of the countries has disclosed that only a small minority drive illegally intoxicated. Most of those who drive drunk, they noted, have severe alcohol dependency problems.

They added: “That so few drivers tested in roadblocks are found to have illegal BACs may testify to the success of the Scandinavian approach — in custom as well as law — in keeping the less dangerous moderate drinkers off the highway. That so many serious

crashes nonetheless involve alcohol, often in very high concentrations, may testify to the failure of the Scandinavian approach to remove the more deadly alcoholic from behind the wheel. It may also testify to the failure of treatment programs currently available to help individuals with alcohol problems.”

The article: “Liberalization and Rationalization of Drunk-Driving Laws in Scandinavia,” by H. Laurence Ross, Hans Klette, and Richard McCleary, may be obtained by writing Publications, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Watergate 600, Washington, D.C. 20037.

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