

Background

The Guide to Community Preventive Services, *The Community Guide*, [recommends](#) ignition interlocks to reduce alcohol-impaired driving. Since 1995, Virginia has maintained an ignition interlock law to prevent repeat drunk driving offenses. Recently, the commonwealth toughened its existing law to enforce its commitment to reducing alcohol-impaired driving.

State Leadership Training in Evidence-Based Public Health

ASTHO is funded through CDC's Capacity Building Grant to increase awareness and adoption of evidence-based public health and recommendations from *The Community Guide*. ASTHO has worked with Virginia to build capacity in this area among state public health leadership.

- ASTHO sent Virginia's deputy commissioner for state public health to the Prevention Research Center's four-day Evidence-Based Public Health Training course in August 2011, where prioritizing evidence-based policy was highlighted.
- Evidence-based public health training and policies have been featured at Virginia Department of Health (VDH) leadership meetings and are part of VDH's decision making process.
- Motor vehicle safety is a priority at VDH for both employee and statewide policies.
 - VDH adopted a policy for its employees prohibiting the use of cell phones or texting while operating a state vehicle or while driving personal vehicles on official state business.
 - The VDH Child Passenger Safety Program promotes proper child safety seat use in the state by providing education on correct installation and addressing barriers that prohibit access to child safety seats, as recommended by [The Community Guide](#).
- The Virginia State Police and the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control played an important role in strengthening existing evidence-based policies to improve motor vehicle safety.

Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy

In March 2012, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell signed [HB 279](#)¹ "DUI Ignition Interlock; Required on First Offense as a Condition of a Restricted License." This new Virginia legislation:

- Became effective on July 1, 2012.
- Requires ignition interlock devices to be installed in the vehicles of first-time drunk drivers as a condition of a restricted license for at least six consecutive months.
- Toughens Virginia's current law, which mandates ignition interlocks only for repeat drunk drivers and first-time offenders whose blood alcohol content is .15 percent.

Importance of Ignition Interlock Policies

- Alcohol-impaired driving is a major public health problem that kills about 11,000 people annually and costs nearly \$110 billion a year.²
- Ignition interlocks are an evidence-based recommendation by [The Community Guide](#) that have been identified as an effective way to reduce alcohol-impaired driving.
- Virginia ignition interlocks will render a car inoperable if the driver fails to take the breath test or the device detects that the driver has a blood alcohol concentration above 0.02 percent.
- [View](#) all states who currently maintain ignition interlock policies.

¹ Virginia's Legislative Information. 2012 Session: Chapter 141- HB279. Available at: <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?121+ful+CHAP0141>. Accessed 03-26-12

² The Community Guide. Ignition Interlocks: A Proven Means for Preventing Impaired Driving Re-Arrests. Available at <http://thecommunityguide.org/news/2011/ignitioninterlocks.html>. 2011. Accessed 03-26-12.