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Liikenne- ja viestintävirasto

The use of alcohol interlocks in Finland

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Alcohol interlocks in Finland: Driving bans and conditional driving bans

- ▶ Alcohol interlock programmes for offenders
 - ▶ Alternative for driving ban (i.e. conditional driving ban)
 - ▶ Probation period min. 1 year/max 3 years.
 - ▶ Violation during probation period → driving ban
- ▶ Driving under the influence (DUI) and driving bans
 - ▶ DUI (0.5-1.19 per mille) driving ban 1 month to 5 years (driver licence act)
 - ▶ In practice: average 245 days and median 184 days.
 - ▶ Serious DUI (1.2- per mille) driving ban 3 months to 5 years (driver licence act)
 - ▶ average 349 days and median 286 days.
- ▶ Conditional driving bans (mandatory to use alcohol interlock)
 - ▶ DUI probation period median 16 months.
 - ▶ Serious DUI probation period median 18 months.

Use of data in offender programme: old legislation

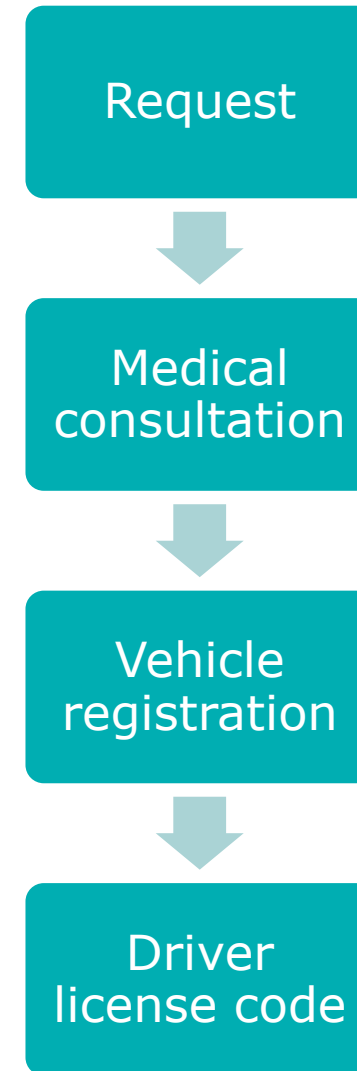
- ▶ Previous model: the interlock manufacturers and their representatives received information from the alcohol interlocks every 60 days.
 - ▶ The idea was that the police would have direct access to the register and take appropriate measures when needed
 - ▶ Due to lack of resources, the manufacturers provided the police with relevant data by email. Cases sent to the police were at the manufacturers discretion
 - ▶ Lack of detailed legislation on how the data should have been handled
 - ▶ Problematic with regards to the delegation of administrative tasks to others than the authorities
- ▶ Also a question of the level of supervision needed
 - ▶ Keeping in mind, that a person always has the possibility to use a vehicle without an interlock

Use of data: new legislation

- ▶ Objective: de-regulation, improvement of data protection, increased use of alcohol interlocks and decrease price of the program
- ▶ The user data is no longer stored → not “necessary” for the performance of the task
 - ▶ The manufacturers no longer government contractors
 - ▶ The program is cheaper, as there is no obligation to visit representative every 60 days
- ▶ Surveillance of alcohol interlocks same as vehicle inspection
 - ▶ Police use REVIKA-system
- ▶ Calibration, interval defined by manufacturer
 - ▶ Standard 12 months
 - ▶ Calibration certificate

Procedure for entering the offender programme

- ▶ Request for alcohol interlock from the police already during the pre-trial investigation
- ▶ Required to visit a doctor or another healthcare professional to discuss intoxicant use, its health impacts and treatment options.
 - ▶ A certificate of this must be submitted to the police.
- ▶ The vehicle must be subjected to an alteration inspection after the installation of the alcohol interlock.
 - ▶ An entry about the alcohol interlock will be made in the registration details of the vehicle.
- ▶ An entry will be made in the driver's driving licence, meaning an obligation to use an alcohol interlock.
 - ▶ An alcohol interlock driving licence only entitles the holder to drive a vehicle equipped with a functioning alcohol interlock.



Evaluation of offender program (2013)

- ▶ Average age: 51 year old
- ▶ 84% male
- ▶ 5% of participants ended the programme before the mandatory year of the offender programme
- ▶ Average duration: 17 months
- ▶ 5.7% of the drivers reoffended during or after the probation period whereas the usual recidivism rate for driving while intoxicated offenders is 30%

Source: *Effectiveness and impact of alcohol interlock-controlled driving rights (2013)*, Vehmas & Löytty.
https://arkisto.trafi.fi/filebank/a/1364296057/07ec5f80fc5103a8c0f05b84e2ff89ab/11854-Trafi_Publications_6-2013.pdf

General thoughts on alcohol interlocks in Finland

- ▶ The expense of an interlock can be a challenge to some
 - ▶ Around 900 participants at the moment
- ▶ Resources to supervise manipulation of devices is challenging
 - ▶ Criminalized under current law (problem with on/off switches)
 - ▶ Balancing act: degree of supervision vs. possibility to “fool the system”
 - ▶ e.g. using another car
- ▶ Increasing trend: drug related offences
 - ▶ Accounts for 30% of the *driving under the influence*-cases
- ▶ Finnish driving bans short compared to other countries
 - ▶ Longer driving bans might affect attractiveness of alcohol interlocks



Thank you!

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