Introduction of an Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program in The Netherlands: The Alcohol Ignition Technique Combined with Psychological Treatment

J. A. M. M. Vissers*1 and R. J. van Beekum2

1DHV Environment and Transportation, P.O. Box 1132, 3800 BC Amersfoort, The Netherlands
2Driver Rehabilitation Department, Dutch Driving Test Organisation CBR, P.O. Box 3012, 2280 GA, Rijswijk, The Netherlands

In The Netherlands the implementation of an Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program is in preparation. In the program the ignition interlock device will be combined with a tailor-made psychological treatment program. The implementation of the Dutch Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program is planned for the year 2008.

In 1996 in The Netherlands a rehabilitation program was introduced to reduce the problem of drunk driving: the Educational Measure Alcohol and traffic (EMA). Anyone apprehended while driving with a blood-alcohol-concentration (BAC) of between 1.3 and 1.8 per mille qualifies for this measure. Research into the effects of the EMA-program has pointed out that a lot of course participants are on the verge of problem drinking and that they need more support to get control over their problem drinking and their DUI behavior. This is why a more differentiated approach of the group of DUI drivers has been developed. In this new approach four groups are distinguished:

- 0.8 – 1.0 per mille: ‘light’ version of the EMA-program
- 1.0 – 1.3 per mille: standard version of the EMA-program
- 1.3 – 2.1 per mille: Alcohol Interlock Program combined with a new psychological support program
- 2.1 per mille and higher: medical test

The above-mentioned measures are imposed within the framework of administrative law. The legal procedure starts with the assumption that a holder of a driving license doesn’t meet the required standards of driving anymore. Based on this assumption and depending on specific criteria, a decision will be made concerning the appropriate action to take. The Transport Department has delegated the execution of the DUI measures exclusively to the Dutch Driving Test Organisation.

The intention is that the Dutch interlock program will last 2 years and during this 2-year period each DUI driver has to follow a psychological support program. In this program data from the alcohol interlock will be used to make the treatment tailor-made to each DUI driver. The intention is that the costs of the alcohol interlock device will have to be borne by the offender. The treatment program will be carried out by by didactically skilled workers in the Centres for Alcohol and Drugs. Because there is a health interest in the treatment of the DUI drivers, the intention is that the treatment program will be financed by the Health Department (health insurance). Based on the criteria mentioned above about 12,000 DUI drivers are qualified for the alcohol interlock program each year.

The presentation will give an overview of:

- The legal framework for the alcohol interlock program.
- The intended setup of the alcohol interlock program.
- The intended contents of the psychological support program.

Keywords: Alcohol ignition interlock, Psychological support program, Legal framework