



# REPORTER

The Newsletter of The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs & Traffic Safety

## Message from the ICADTS President

Dear ICADTS members,

Times have changed rapidly with the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic early this year. Working from home in isolation challenges the cohesion of our social and professional networks, and pushes us to develop and rapidly adjust to online solutions to continue work. However, while it has been a steep learning curve, it is also evident that not all of our work can be conducted in cyberspace. Many academic research programs that require the presence of humans in physical space were abruptly aborted, causing uncertainty among researchers and months of delays. Many of us are in the process of writing COVID-19 safety protocols that should minimize the risk of staff and research participants becoming infected and that hopefully will allow our research programs to come back on track soon. We look forward to resume research, but also realize that we will be moving at a slower pace for some time to come.

Everybody has been affected by COVID-19 and so has ICADTS. We had to cancel the regional ICADTS meeting that was scheduled between June 28-30 in Coimbra, Portugal. Fortunately, this decision was taken well in time, but with pain in her heart, by the meeting host Fatima Pereira da Silva, which is why incurred financial losses were minimal. Yet the program of the regional meeting had many promises that will be sorely missed. The local organizing committee of T2022 however has agreed to sit together with Fatima to evaluate whether parts of the regional program can be integrated in the tri-annual international meeting of ICADTS in Rotterdam. Hopefully, by that time, COVID-19 will no longer paralyze our society. In any case, ICADTS is very grateful for the effort and dedication that Fatima has shown in preparation of the regional meeting and hopes that she will retain her energy and enthusiasm for our organization in years to come.

There is good news as well! Thanks to our secretary Edward Ogden, the revised ICADTS website has gone online. Please check [www.ICADTSinternational.com](http://www.ICADTSinternational.com) and enjoy the improved clarity and functionalities of the website. The ICADTS board will be using some of these functionalities on a wider scale to set up polls and elections among ICADTS members and of course, to collect dues. In addition, members of our young scientist interest group, Juliana Scherer and Aurora van de Loo, have been preparing social media (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc) accounts for ICADTS which are expected to go live during the summer and that will be coupled to our website.

So, ICADTS is well prepared for the near future. Make sure to stay safe and healthy in these awkward times and look out for meeting again in physical space soon. Cyber collaboration has been very helpful to keep momentum so far, but the need for human interaction in a real word is eagerly growing.

Kind regards,  
Jan Ramaekers  
President ICADTS

## TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD CENTENNIAL PAPER ON IMPAIRED DRIVING

As the Transportation Research Board of the U.S. National Academies marks its Centennial Celebration, it has featured a series of papers on key topics. A recently featured paper was prepared for the Committee on Alcohol, Other Drugs and Transportation. The paper summarizes the history of the impaired field and highlights the challenges and opportunities we confront going forward.

The paper, authored by former committee chair Kathryn Stewart and current chair Tara Kelley Baker, can be viewed at <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/centennial/papers/ANB50-Final.pdf>.

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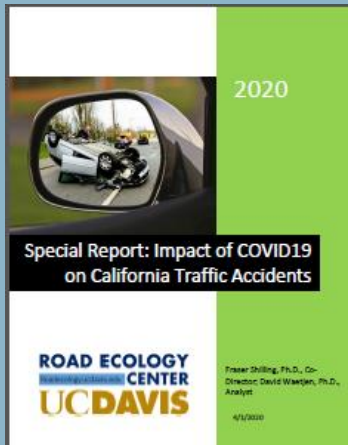
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[www.icadtsinternational.COM](http://www.icadtsinternational.COM)

The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs & Traffic Safety (ICADTS) is an independent nonprofit body whose only goal is to reduce mortality and morbidity brought about by misuse of alcohol and drugs by operators of vehicles in all modes of transportation.

Editors:  
Kathryn Stewart  
Email: [kgbstewart@gmail.com](mailto:kgbstewart@gmail.com)  
James Fell  
Email: [fell-jim@norc.org](mailto:fell-jim@norc.org)

[www.icadtsinternational.com](http://www.icadtsinternational.com)  
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## ICADTS REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN COIMBRA, PORTUGAL CANCELLED

Unfortunately, in the context of the current health crisis and keeping in mind the safety of our participants, we sadly announce that the regional Conference on Alcohol and Drugs in Traffic: Commit to act for safe mobility (Coimbra – Portugal) planned for June 2020 and later postponed to 21-23 October 2020 has been canceled.

This has been the joint decision of The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety (ICADTS) and Coimbra Institute of Engineering (ISEC) in close collaboration with World Association for Connecting People (WACP), InOutCister (Lda), Robocorp (I2A-IPC) and Digitware.

We have already scheduled T2022, the 23rd International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety (ICADTS) Conference (28-31 August 2022) in De Doelen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands and we are aware that the year 2021 will still be a year of uncertainty, risks, financial instability and possibly with some resistance to mobility around the world. Thus, we have made this difficult decision.

However, Portugal will one day be the stage for a future meeting, when we are all well and with the certainty that this pandemic has passed.

Safety has always been and will be our major concern as an organization. It is this basic goal that legitimizes the existence of ICADTS. With that goal, we hope that all our members, friends and partners are and remain safe and healthy.

## TRAFFIC DOWN BUT FATALITIES UP IN SOME U.S. STATES

As Americans remain at home, many roads in U.S. cities, suburbs and rural areas are practically deserted. But the absence of traffic has reportedly increased the number of speeders. In an article published by the Pew trusts, Pam Shadel Fisher, a senior director at the Governors Highway Safety Association is quoted, “People are saying, ‘Wow, the roads are wide open. There’s no one here but me. We’re seeing incredibly crazy, off-the-chart speed and aggressiveness.”

Daily vehicle traffic dropped by two-thirds nationally from March 1 through April 10, according to StreetLight Data, a San Francisco-based traffic analytics company. And while many states, such as California and Ohio, have seen a reduction in overall crashes during the pandemic compared with last year, some are reporting a jump in traffic fatalities that they say is linked to speeding or reckless driving.

Despite the deserted roads, some states are experiencing a spike in traffic deaths. In Minnesota, where traffic volume has declined an average of 50%, there were 25 fatal crashes from March 16 through April 12. Last year, there were 17 during that period, said Mike Hanson, director of the state’s Office of Traffic Safety. In Missouri, where traffic has dropped more than 40%, officials had expected to see a big decrease in crash fatalities, said State Highway Patrol Capt. John Hotz. Instead, there have been 191 this year, as of April 13, compared with 189 during that period last year.

See related story below.

Source: STATELINE ARTICLE April 20, 2020, By: Jenni Bergal,  
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/04/20/speeders-take-over-empty-roads-with-fatal-consequences>

## IMPACT OF COVID19 ON CALIFORNIA TRAFFIC CRASHES

Using observations of reported traffic incidents in their real-time “California Highway Incident Processing System” (CHIPS), the Road Ecology Center of the University of California at Davis estimated the reduction in traffic incidents on state highways and rural roads that has resulted from the Governor’s “shelter in place” order. They estimate that since the order went into effect, collisions and especially injury and fatality collisions have been reduced by half, from ~1,000 collisions and ~400 injury/fatal crashes per day to 500 and 200 per day, respectively. They found that traffic volumes were up to 60% lower on certain highways after the order compared to a similar period prior to the order, which may account for the reduced number of collisions.

To see the full report, go to  
[https://roadeology.ucdavis.edu/files/content/projects/COVID\\_CHIPs\\_Impacts\\_updated\\_415\\_0.pdf](https://roadeology.ucdavis.edu/files/content/projects/COVID_CHIPs_Impacts_updated_415_0.pdf)

## AUSTRALIAN STUDY OF CANNABIS RELATED DEATHS

A paper by researchers from the Australian National Drug and Alcohol Research Center (NDARC) (Zahra *et al.*, 2020) describes a population-level study of cannabis-related deaths in Australia. The study covers Australian coronial cases for the period from 1 July 2000 to 31 December 2018 (from the National Coronial Information System – NCIS). The total number of deaths was 559, which is roughly 33 per year.

The NDARC study covered many different categories of cannabis-related deaths. Every Australian road-crash fatality for the NDARC study period, where there was toxicological and supporting evidence of the contribution of cannabis to the crash, and where the case was closed, was included in the study.

Of the 559 deaths over the study period, 125 were in the category of ‘Transport Injury’ (i.e., road crash), which is slightly less than 8 per year. Of those 8, over half had also consumed alcohol. There are about 1,200 road-crash fatalities per year in Australia.

Source: Zahra E, Darke S, Degenhardt L, Campbell G, Rates, characteristics and manner of cannabis-related deaths in Australia 2000-2018, *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (2020), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2020.108028>

## FORTHCOMING BOOK ON IMPAIRED DRIVING

A new book, edited by A. Wayne Jones, Jørg G. Mørland and Ray H. Liu, is scheduled for release June 22 2020 by Taylor & Francis (CRC Press). The book is entitled *Alcohol, Drugs, and Impaired Driving: Forensic Science and Law Enforcement Issues* and addresses many theoretical and practical issues related to the role played by alcohol and other psychoactive substances on driving performance, road-traffic safety, and public health.

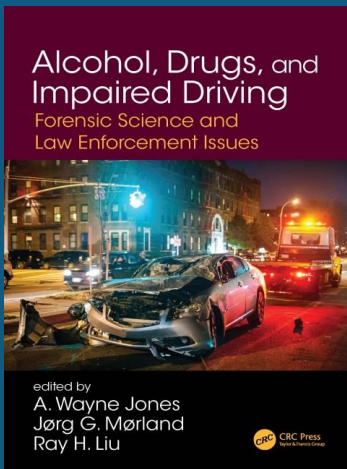
The historical background about the analysis of ethanol in blood and breath in forensic science and legal medicine is covered in details and many issues related to forensic blood- and breath-alcohol testing as evidence for prosecution of traffic offenders is covered. The book also gives a broad overview of the current state of knowledge about driving under the influence of non-alcohol drugs in various countries. The concluding section of the book deals with epidemiology, law-enforcement, and countermeasures aimed at reducing the threat of drunken and drugged driving.

All chapters have been previously published in the international journal *Forensic Science Review*, although they are now updated with recent developments, current data, and the latest literature references. The book provides a convenient collection of peer-reviewed articles dealing with a broad overview of alcohol/drugs and impaired driving, including toxicological analysis, and considerations for interpretation of the results in connection with enforcement of drunk- and drugged-driving laws in various countries. Several well-known members of ICADTS were among the co-authors of the various chapters in the book. For more information, go to <https://www.routledge.com/Alcohol-Drugs-and-Impaired-Driving-Forensic-Science-and-Law-Enforcement/Jones-Morland-Liu/p/book/9780367251628>

## CANNABIS USE BY DRIVERS ON INTERLOCK

A recent article discusses the potential impact of alcohol interlock installation on use of cannabis by drivers of interlock-equipped vehicles. Some alcohol interventions have been found to have the adverse outcome of increasing non-alcohol-related substance use. It is unknown, however, how changes in alcohol use over the course of alcohol ignition interlocks – a common DUI intervention – may impact other substance use. Alcohol and cannabis use were measured using hair ethylglucuronide and Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol concentrations in blood, respectively. Participants (N = 69) were measured at the interlock installation period and again 6-months later while the interlock was installed. The results indicated that installing interlocks may inadvertently increase cannabis use among those drivers who decrease alcohol use. Crash risk associated with cannabis use is notably less than that of alcohol use, however, continued cannabis use may be problematic when the device is removed and alcohol use is expected to return to the higher pre-interlock levels.

Source: Michael Scherer, Paul Marques, Amy R. Manning, Thomas H. Nochajski, Eduardo Romano, Eileen Taylor, Robert Voas & Sagan King (2020) Potential for cannabis adaptation among participants in a drunk driving intervention, *Journal of Substance Use*, DOI: [10.1080/14659891.2020.1749950](https://doi.org/10.1080/14659891.2020.1749950)





## Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2019 PRELIMINARY DATA

Prepared for  
Governors Highway Safety Association

## REPORT ON PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES IN THE U.S.

The Governors' Highway Safety Association recently released a report on pedestrian deaths in the U.S. In recent years, the number of pedestrian fatalities in the United States has grown sharply. During the 10-year period from 2009 to 2018, the number of pedestrian fatalities increased by 53% (from 4,109 deaths in 2009 to 6,283 deaths in 2018); by comparison, the combined number of all other traffic deaths increased by 2%. Along with the increase in the number of pedestrian fatalities, pedestrian deaths as a percentage of total motor vehicle crash deaths increased from 12% in 2009 to 17% in 2018. The last time pedestrians accounted for 17% of total U.S. traffic deaths was over 35 years ago, in 1982.

Alcohol impairment — for the driver and/or pedestrian — was reported in about half of traffic crashes that resulted in pedestrian fatalities in 2018. One-third of fatally injured pedestrians ages 16 and older with known test results had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. A total of 2,015 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in 2018 had BACs of 0.08 or higher. An estimated 16% of drivers involved in fatal pedestrian crashes with known test results had a BAC of 0.08 or higher (Figure 12).

To see the complete report, go to [https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/GHSA-Pedestrian-Spotlight-2020-FINAL-rev\\_0.pdf](https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/GHSA-Pedestrian-Spotlight-2020-FINAL-rev_0.pdf)

## REPORT FROM HEALTHY PEOPLE 2020: USING LAW AND POLICY TO REDUCE ALCOHOL-RELATED DEATHS IN THE UNITED STATES

A new report from the Healthy People 2020 Law and Health Policy project has been released. *Using Law and Policy to Reduce Alcohol-Related Deaths in the United States* aims to help reduce the approximately 90,000 annual deaths from alcohol-related causes. Some key points from the report include:

- Laws and policies can help support healthier, safer, and more livable communities — and reduce the negative effects of alcohol use.
- Implementing evidence-based interventions to reduce alcohol consumption can prevent injuries and illnesses, reduce the number of premature deaths, decrease crime, and foster a better educated and more productive workforce.
- Legal and policy interventions can be important tools for states, tribes, and communities to improve public health and provide everyone with the opportunity to live long, healthy lives.

The report includes discussion of the following policy interventions that can help meet Healthy People 2020's objective to reduce the number of deaths caused by alcohol:

- Increase enforcement of minimum legal drinking age laws
- Regulate density of alcohol outlets
- Prevent further privatization of state-controlled systems
- Increase alcohol taxes
- Lower the illegal blood alcohol content to 0.05
- Mandate ignition interlocks for all offenders

The Healthy People 2020 Law and Health Policy project is a series of reports, webinars, and online resources highlighting evidence-based policy interventions that advance progress toward Healthy People 2020 objectives. The project is also supporting the development of Healthy People 2030. The Law and Health Policy project is a collaboration between the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the CDC Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

To view the report, go to <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/law-and-health-policy/topic/substance-abuse>



## Upcoming Events

### 4<sup>th</sup> Regional TIAFT Meeting

Postponed

[www.tiaftturkey2020.org](http://www.tiaftturkey2020.org)

### IFDAT 2020- 10th Annual International Forum for Drug and Alcohol Testing

6-8 September 2020

Salzburg, Austria

[www.ifdat.com](http://www.ifdat.com)

### 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine (AAAM)

Portland, Oregon, USA

October 13-16, 2020

<https://www.aaam.org/annual-conference/>

### 14<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

Postponed

[www.worldsafety2020.com/](http://www.worldsafety2020.com/)

### T2022

28-31 August 2022

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

[www.t2022.org](http://www.t2022.org)



To view past issues of the Reporter, go to

<https://www.icadtsinternational.com/Newsletter>



## 17TH INTERNATIONAL ALCOHOL INTERLOCK SYMPOSIUM POSTPONED TO SEPTEMBER 26-28, 2021

Due to concerns about COVID 19, the International Alcohol Interlock Symposium has been postponed to September 26-28, 2021 in Oslo, Norway. Organizers will continue to review the latest updates from the World Health Organization and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health regarding the international and regional situation.

For more information, contact them at [info@interlocksymposium.com](mailto:info@interlocksymposium.com).

### MARIJUANA USE AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

A recent report from the U.S. Congressional Research Office discusses how the growth of marijuana use may be dealt with in laws and policies relevant to traffic safety. Most U.S. states now allow the use of marijuana for treatment of medical conditions. Ten states and the District of Columbia, representing a quarter of the U.S. population, have decriminalized the recreational use of marijuana, and other states are considering following suit. As of May 2019, 18 states have enacted laws declaring that a specified concentration of THC in a driver's body constitutes evidence of impairment and is inherently illegal (referred to as per se laws), similar to the .08% blood alcohol content (BAC) standard of alcohol impairment.

Although laboratory studies have shown that marijuana consumption can affect a person's response times and motor performance, studies of the impact of marijuana consumption on a driver's risk of being involved in a crash have produced conflicting results, with some studies finding little or no increased risk of a crash from marijuana usage. Levels of impairment that can be identified in laboratory settings may not have a significant impact in real world settings, where many variables affect the likelihood of a crash occurring. Research studies have been unable to consistently correlate levels of marijuana consumption, or THC in a person's body, and levels of impairment. Thus some researchers, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, have observed that using a measure of THC as evidence of a driver's impairment is not supported by scientific evidence to date.

Congress, state legislatures, and other decision-makers may address the topic of marijuana use and driver impairment through various policy options, including whether or not to support additional research on the impact of marijuana on driver performance and on measurement techniques for marijuana impairment, as well as training for law enforcement on identifying marijuana impairment. Other deliberations may address federal regulations on marijuana use and testing for transportation safety-sensitive employees.

To see the report, go to Congressional Research Service <https://crsreports.congress.gov> R45719.

### MEASURING IMPAIRMENT IN BRAZILIAN NIGHTCLUB PATRONS

A recent paper examined signs of altered psychomotor capacity (SAPC) among patrons at the exits of nightclubs in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. Alcohol dosages were measured with breathalyzer test. The use of other drugs was obtained by interviewees' self-report. SAPC (speech, walking, glazed eyes, and alcohol odor) were verified by the interviewers at the time of the interview and categorized as "no sign" or "at least one sign". All measurements were evaluated at the exit of the nightclubs. Logistic regression analysis evaluated the association between the occurrence of SAPC, alcohol and other drugs use, controlling for sociodemographic variables.

At nightclubs, the SAPC among drivers are about 8 times higher when the breath alcohol concentration is above 0.05 mg/L if compared with those who did not drink alcohol, and about 30 times higher when the alcohol concentration was  $\geq 0.34$  mg/L in exhaled air. This finding is not generally verified in the literature for those who report the use of drugs inside nightclubs. 20.4% of the interviewed population reported using drugs in the places surveyed.

This study suggests the potential of using physical tests for alcohol intoxication in sobriety checkpoints at the exit of nightclubs. However, the verification of these signs is not enough for the identification of drug use by drivers.

Source: Rafaella Aranha Erbella, Zila M. Sanchez & Gabriela Arantes Wagner (2020) Signs of altered psychomotor capacity and use of alcohol and other drugs among nightclub patrons who drive in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, Traffic Injury Prevention, 21:5, 330-334, DOI: [10.1080/15389588.2020.1759047](https://doi.org/10.1080/15389588.2020.1759047)