



## Impaired driving enforcement practices among state and local law enforcement agencies

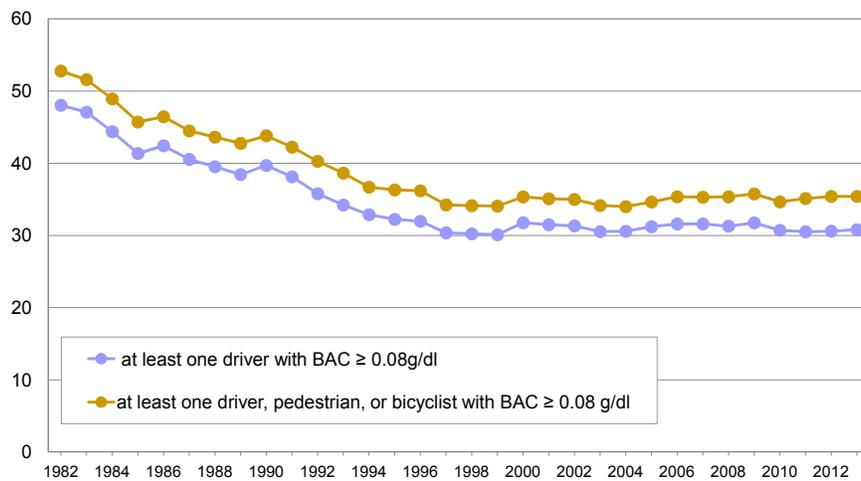
[www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org)

Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities  
Chicago, IL • March 15, 2015

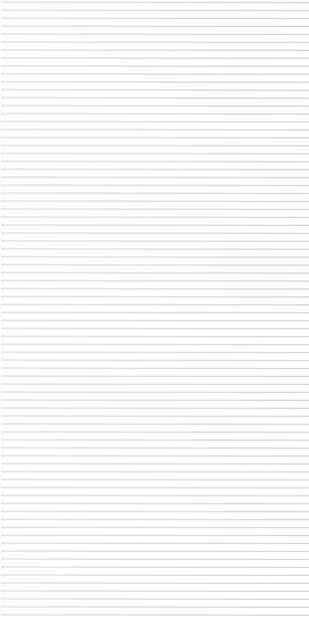
Angela H. Eichelberger, Ph.D.



**Percent of crash deaths involving BACs  $\geq$  0.08 g/dl**  
By calendar year, 1982-2013



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



## Prior research on DUI enforcement practices

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

## Are sobriety checkpoints effective?

- Checkpoints have been criticized for producing fewer arrests per man-hour than dedicated patrols
- However, publicized checkpoints can increase the public's perception that impaired drivers will be apprehended (Williams & Lund, 1984)
- A 2002 review of publicized sobriety checkpoint programs found a 20 percent median decline in alcohol-involved fatal crashes associated with the programs (Elder, et al., 2002)
- A review of 10 more recent studies found a median decrease in alcohol-involved fatal crashes of about 9 percent associated with checkpoint programs (Bergen, et al., 2014)

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

## Why are sobriety checkpoints not more widely adopted as an enforcement strategy?

- In most states that do not conduct sobriety checkpoints at all, they are prohibited
- A survey of state highway safety offices in 2000 found that 37 states conducted sobriety checkpoints (Fell, Ferguson, Williams, & Fields, 2003)
- Only 11 states conducted weekly checkpoints
- States with infrequent checkpoints cited lack of funding and police resources as the reasons for not conducting checkpoints more often
- Some enforcement agencies believed a large number of officers are required to run checkpoints

www.iihs.org

## Low manpower checkpoint program in West Virginia reduced percent of drivers with BACs $\geq 0.05$ g/dl

Lacey et al. (2006)



www.iihs.org

## What other types of enforcement are effective?

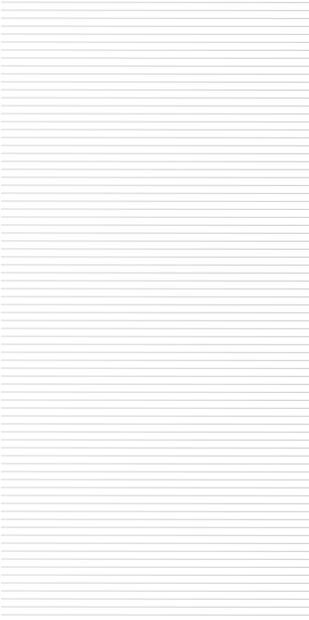
- Few evaluations of dedicated patrols, such as saturation or roving patrols, but there is some evidence that frequent, publicized patrols can be effective
- An evaluation of a publicized saturation patrol campaign in Michigan found a 14 percent decrease in alcohol-involved fatal crashes associated with the program (Fell, Tippetts, & Levy, 2008)

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

## Passive alcohol sensors can improve detection of alcohol-impaired drivers

- Passive alcohol sensors unobtrusively sample the ambient air around a person's mouth to determine the presence of alcohol
- Use of passive alcohol sensors at sobriety checkpoints has been shown to improve detection of alcohol-impaired drivers (Lund & Jones, 1987; Ferguson, Wells, & Lund, 1995)
- Studies evaluating the use of passive alcohol sensors during routine traffic stops have found mixed results
  - A study in which officers used passive alcohol sensors on alternate nights found that officers detected alcohol-impaired drivers more often with the devices (Kiger, Lestina, & Lund, 1993)
  - Another study did not find a difference in the arrest rates for DUI of officers using passive alcohol sensors, compared with officers without the devices (Fell & Compton, 2007)

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



## Current impaired driving enforcement practices

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

## Impaired driving enforcement practices among state and local law enforcement agencies

- Law enforcement liaisons at 50 highway safety offices surveyed about use of sobriety checkpoints in 2011
- Nationally representative sample of municipal and county agencies and all state law enforcement agencies surveyed in 2012-14
  - 97 municipal, 90 county, and 48 state agencies
  - Response rates were 86 percent for county agencies, 93 percent for municipal agencies, and 98 percent for state agencies
- Interviews covered impaired driving enforcement practices in 2011-12, including types of enforcement, frequency of use, and whether activities were publicized

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

## Results of highway safety office survey

- Law enforcement agencies in 38 states conducted sobriety checkpoints in 2011
- In 30 states, municipal, county, and state enforcement agencies all conducted checkpoints
- In all 38 states, the highway safety office provided funding for checkpoints
- Funding was most often for overtime enforcement (86 percent), media or other publicity (62 percent), or equipment (31 percent)
- 25 highway safety offices reported helping to organizing checkpoints

www.ihs.org

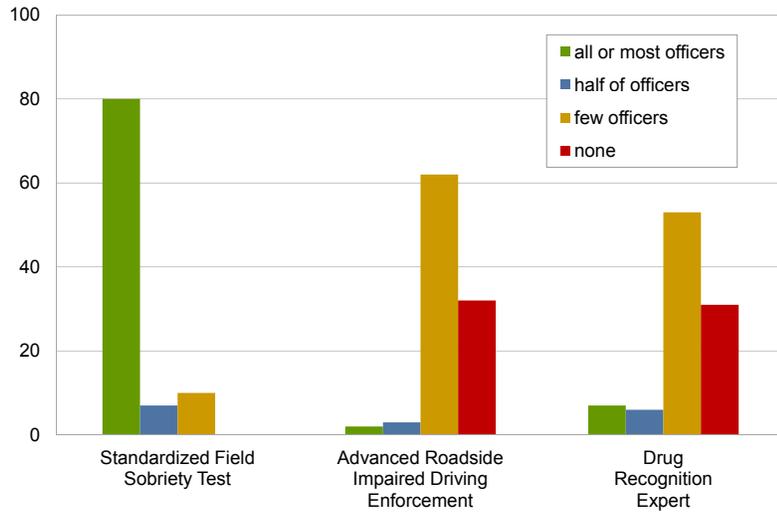
## Characteristics of participating agencies (percent)

National survey of law enforcement agencies

	county	municipal	state	national estimate
percentage with more than 100 officers	21	39	93	31
percentage with some officers assigned solely to DUI enforcement	10	16	25	13
percentage with a unit dedicated to DUI enforcement	11	13	27	12

www.ihs.org

## Percent of agencies with officers trained in alcohol and/or drug impairment detection



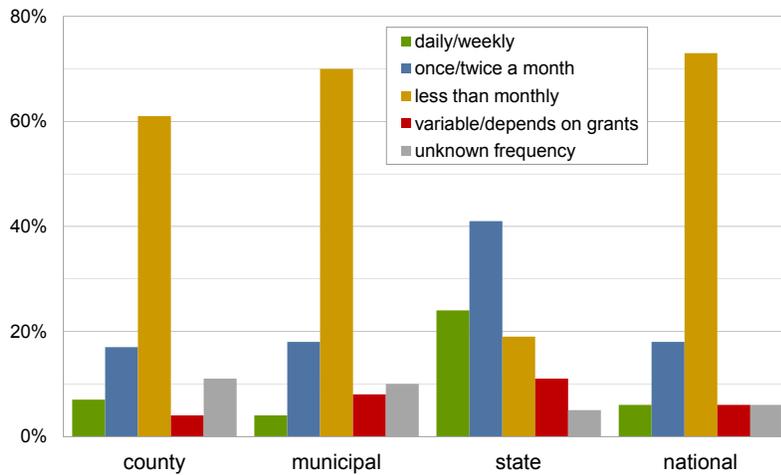
www.ihs.org

## Percent of agencies that conducted or helped conduct sobriety checkpoints in the previous year

	county	municipal	state	national estimate
conducted sobriety checkpoints	60	55	77	58

www.ihs.org

## Frequency of sobriety checkpoints among agencies that conducted them



www.ihs.org

## Use of publicity with sobriety checkpoints among agencies that conducted them

- 87 percent publicized checkpoints
- Publicity included
  - Press releases (83 percent)
  - News coverage (37 percent)
  - Social media (36 percent)
  - Paid ads (12 percent)
  - Public service announcements (9 percent)
- 57 percent of agencies always or frequently publicized the specific location of checkpoints

www.ihs.org

## Implementation of sobriety checkpoints among agencies that conducted them

- Agencies varied in the number of officers typically present at checkpoints
  - 17 percent typically used fewer than 7 officers
  - 48 percent typically used 7-15 officers
  - 27 percent typically used more than 15 officers
- 63 percent pooled resources with other law enforcement agencies frequently or all the time
- 55 percent coordinated with other agencies so that efforts coincided across jurisdictions

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

## Why do some agencies not conduct sobriety checkpoints?

- Nationally, the most frequent reason for not conducting checkpoints was that sobriety checkpoints were illegal in the state (31 percent of agencies surveyed)
  - Ten states are prohibited from conducting sobriety checkpoints by the constitution or state statute (Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming)
  - Montana and Alaska do not conduct sobriety checkpoints, but they are not specifically prohibited by the constitution or state statute
  - However, Montana's statute authorizing roadblocks does not specifically include sobriety checkpoints
- 24 percent of agencies cited lack of staff as a reason for not conducting checkpoints

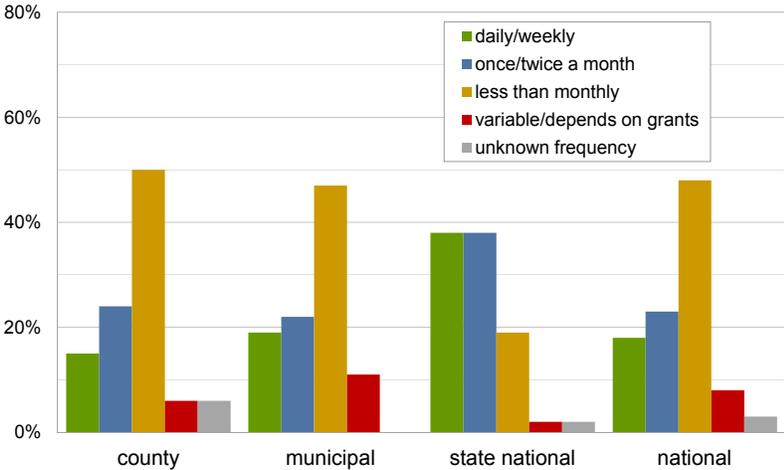
[www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org)

## Percent of agencies that conducted dedicated DUI enforcement patrols in the previous year

	county	municipal	state	national estimate
conducted dedicated patrols	84	89	98	87

www.ihs.org

## Frequency of dedicated patrols among agencies that conducted them



www.ihs.org

## Use of publicity with dedicated DUI patrols among agencies that conducted them

- 61 percent publicized dedicated patrols
- Publicity included:
  - Press releases (82 percent)
  - News coverage (45 percent)
  - Social media (36 percent)
  - Public service announcements (22 percent)
  - Paid ads (20 percent)

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

## Use of search warrants

- 73 percent of agencies used search warrants to get blood samples from drivers who refused to provide a breath or blood sample
- Among these agencies, 80 percent estimated that few DUI arrests resulted in a search warrant

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

## Use of preliminary breath tests (PBTs)

- 80 percent of agencies used PBTs to test blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) among drivers at the roadside
- Among agencies using PBTs, 82 percent said the devices were used frequently or all the time
- The most common reasons for not using them included lack of equipment (45 percent), inadmissibility in court (24 percent), and devices not needed/SFST preferred (21 percent)

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

## Use of passive alcohol sensors

- 18 percent of agencies used passive alcohol sensors
- Among agencies using passive alcohol sensors, most used them infrequently (54 percent)
- Among agencies not using passive alcohol sensors, most cited a lack of equipment as the reason for not using the devices (68 percent)

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

## Biggest challenge agencies face in conducting DUI enforcement

	county	municipal	state	national estimate
staffing	71	56	42	56
lack of funding	26	22	23	24
excessive paperwork	4	6	17	6

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

## Conclusions

- 38 states conducted sobriety checkpoints in 2011, only a small increase from 37 states in 2000
- Several areas of impaired driving enforcement could be enhanced:
  - Increasing the frequency of special enforcement, such as sobriety checkpoints and/or dedicated patrols
  - Publicizing these efforts to maximize deterrent effects
  - Using passive alcohol sensors to improve detection of alcohol-impaired drivers.
- Despite evidence of effectiveness, many agencies do not conduct frequent, publicized DUI enforcement or use passive alcohol sensors

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



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

Dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries,  
and property damage on the highway

Angela H. Eichelberger, Ph.D.  
Senior Research Scientist  
[aeichelberger@iihs.org](mailto:aeichelberger@iihs.org), 434-985-9248