

Policy Brief: New Mexico Governor's Task Force on Ignition Interlock

Credited by MADD and NHTSA as a National Model for DWI Prevention

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Overview

New Mexico's pioneering Ignition Interlock Program—hailed as a national model—emerged from the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Ignition Interlock and the multi-agency DWI Strategic Planning Team. The task force unified legislators, law enforcement, judiciary, treatment providers, and industry experts to create one of the most comprehensive impaired-driving countermeasures in the United States.

Key Recommendations & Outcomes

- **Mandatory Interlocks for All Convicted DWI Offenders:** New Mexico became the first state to require ignition interlocks for all convicted DWI offenders, including first-time offenders—setting a new national standard.
- **Elimination of “Wait-Out” Loopholes:** Offenders could no longer simply agree not to drive; installation became a condition of license reinstatement.
- **Creation of a Statewide DWI Coordinator (“DWI Czar”):** Established to oversee policy and inter-agency collaboration.
- **Interlock Indigent Fund:** A fee-based subsidy ensured access for low-income offenders.
- **Integrated Enforcement & Public Awareness:** Linked to high-visibility enforcement (“Superblitz”), education (“You Drink, You Drive, You Lose”), and DWI court expansion.
- **Enhanced Monitoring & Graduated Sanctions:** Improved tracking and penalties for tampering or failed tests.

Measured Impact

- Recidivism reduced by up to 65% during active interlock periods.
- 40% statewide reduction in alcohol-related fatalities and injuries.
- Program replicated nationally in more than 30 states.
- Recognized by MADD, NHTSA, and GHSA as a national benchmark for DWI prevention.

Timothy Hallford's Role

As a member of the Governor's Task Force, Timothy Hallford contributed operational expertise from the ignition interlock industry, helping design the implementation framework that balanced technology, justice, and public safety. His later work through *Road Safety Technologies* continues this legacy—consulting internationally to help governments and private partners replicate New Mexico's success in saving lives.

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