



Methodology

Lives Saved

Researchers from AAA and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reviewed high-quality, peer-reviewed studies to estimate how many lives could be saved by different safety countermeasures. When possible, they used the most recent and reliable research as the basis for their estimates.

To calculate potential lives saved, they looked at alcohol-related fatalities (blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or higher) from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 2024 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). They then focused on states that do not yet have each recommended countermeasure in place.

These studies include:

Per Se BAC 0.05+

Fell, J. C., & Scherer, M. (2017). Estimation of the Potential Effectiveness of Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limit for Driving from 0.08 to 0.05 Grams per Deciliter in the United States. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 41(12), 2128–2139.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13501>

Ignition Interlock

Teoh, E. R., Fell, J. C., Scherer, M., & Wolfe, D. E. R. (2021). State Alcohol Ignition Interlock Laws and Fatal Crashes. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 22(8), 589–592.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15389588.2021.1984439>

Sobriety Checkpoints

Bergen, G., Pitan, A., Qu, S., Shults, R. A., Chattopadhyay, S. K., Elder, R. W., Sleet, D. A., Coleman, H. L., Compton, R. P., Nichols, J. L., Clymer, J. M., Calvert, W. B., & Community Preventive Services Task Force (2014). Publicized Sobriety Checkpoint Programs: A Community Guide Systematic Review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 46(5), 529–539.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2014.01.018>

Open Container

Wright, N. A., & Lee, L. T. (2021). Alcohol-Related Traffic Laws and Drunk-Driving Fatal Accidents. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 161, 106358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2021.106358>

Economic Impact

The U.S. Department of Transportation uses the Value of a Statistical Life to help decide whether safety improvements are worth the cost. It does not put a price on any individual person, but instead estimates how much society is willing to invest to prevent one *potential* death.

For 2024, that value is set at about \$13.7 million. So, if a safety upgrade—like a stronger impaired-driving prevention law or vehicle safety technology—is expected to save even one life, and it costs less than \$13.7 million, the government considers it a smart investment.

In short, this number helps ensure lives saved are counted just as seriously as dollars spent when making transportation safety decisions.