



South Dakota Drivers Stay Sober

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The efforts against drunk driving include checkpoints, steep fines, and Breathalyzer-locked cars. But alcohol-related road deaths have held steady for a decade—except in South Dakota. Under the state's four-year-old 24/7 Sobriety Project, people convicted of repeated drunk-driving offenses are forced to go dry for at least three months, during which time they submit to police-observed Breathalyzer tests twice a day—no excuses. If they fail, refuse, or no-show, sanctions begin with an immediate night in jail. Now the results are in: drunk--driving fatalities fell from twice the national average, 70, in 2006 to just 34 in 2008, the most recent year for which data are available. And program veterans are half as likely as other DUI offenders to be arrested again.

Recently, North Dakota and Montana launched pilot programs of their own; at least two other states (and the city of London) are considering doing the same; and South Dakota is testing the idea on other offenders—domestic batterers, for example—who commit crimes while drunk. Best of all, the program is nearly self-supporting: offenders pay \$1 per puff.

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