

HALT Drunk Driving Law

What It Means for Law Enforcement

Every year, nearly 12,000 people are killed and 350,000 are injured in the U.S. in drunk driving crashes. Officers answer every call. They work every scene. They make every notification. The HALT Drunk Driving Law is built to change that permanently.

WHAT IS THE HALT DRUNK DRIVING LAW?

In 2021, Congress passed the bipartisan Honoring the Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate (HALT) Drunk Driving Act. The law directs the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to require passive anti-drunk driving technology in all new passenger vehicles. The technology operates without driver action, and if a driver is at or above the legal limit, the vehicle will detect impairment and prevent movement. **MADD does NOT support any system that collects, stores, or sells driver data.**

HOW WILL HALT KEEP OFFICERS SAFER?

Impaired driving scenes are among the most dangerous environments officers face. Reducing those scenes is officer safety policy, and the data is unambiguous.

17

officers struck and killed outside their vehicles in 2024 — a [113% increase over 2023](#)

1 in 3

accidental officer deaths in 2024 involved being [struck by a vehicle outside the patrol car](#)

27

officers fatally struck in 2021 — the highest struck-by [count in a decade at that time](#)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT?

Every 44 minutes, someone in the U.S. dies in a [drunk driving crash](#). That equates to nearly 12,000 drunk driving deaths and 350,000 injuries every year. Each crash pulls officers off patrol, ties up emergency services, clogs court dockets, and generates thousands of hours of mandatory documentation.

Drunk driving arrests currently represent **11% of all arrests nationwide**, nearly 805,000 arrests in [2024 alone](#). A single drunk driving arrest can take between 3 to 6 hours to complete from initial stop through booking, and that's before court [appearances begin](#).

The training burden mirrors the operational one. Every patrol officer must complete NHTSA's 24-hour Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) course. Officers pursuing advanced certification complete an additional 16-hour Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) course, and the highest-level Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) invest 72 hours in academic training alone, all before a [single arrest is made](#).

With the implementation of HALT, the vehicle itself becomes the first line of detection. Various technologies can detect illegal impairment at start-up, and/or throughout the trip, before a crash occurs. The HALT Law does not ask law enforcement to do more. It eliminates the demand at its source.

Struck-by fatalities occur most frequently at night, during crash investigations and motorist assists, which are precisely the conditions where impaired drivers are most concentrated. Traffic-related [officer fatalities rose 48%](#) from 2023 to 2024.



In 2015, Montgomery County, Maryland Officer Noah Leotta was struck by a drunk driver while conducting a roadside impaired driving investigation. He later succumbed to those injuries. Maryland passed Noah's Law in 2016, requiring all offenders to install ignition interlock devices in vehicles. HALT removes the drunk driver before they ever reach an officer's scene.

Specific officer safety benefits:

- Fewer roadside impaired driving scenes mean reduced officer exposure to secondary crash risk
- Reduced frequency of combative or unpredictable impaired subject encounters
- Decreased cumulative exposure to traumatic crash scenes, a well-documented driver of officer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and occupational stress
- Fewer high-speed pursuits initiated by impaired drivers fleeing initial contact

HOW WILL HALT IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY?

- Significant reduction in patrol hours dedicated to impaired driving stops, processing, and documentation
- Lower court overtime burden means fewer impaired driving cases cycling through the justice system
- Reduced crash investigation and reconstruction workload for traffic units
- Agency-wide resources redirected toward violent crime, mental health response, and community programs

12,000

killed every year in drunk driving crashes

350,000

injured every year

10,000+

lives saved every year once HALT is fully implemented

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

The HALT Drunk Driving Law is the most significant officer safety and operational efficiency advancement in traffic enforcement history. Prevention technology is officer wellness infrastructure. We don't investigate the crashes that didn't happen.

GET INVOLVED

MADD's National Law Enforcement Initiative partners with agencies nationwide to advance the HALT Law and build the coalition needed for full implementation. Contact MADD to learn how your agency can support this effort.

madd.org/halt

Impaired Driving Ends Here