

Public backs tougher drunk-driving rules: Report

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OTTAWA - A new report suggests Canadians overwhelmingly support tougher measures to combat drunk driving.

The report, which combines survey results and focus group findings, was assembled for Transport Canada and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

It found 91 per cent of those surveyed viewed impaired driving as the country's greatest road safety concern and a priority issue for governments.

And almost nine in 10 supported tougher measures to combat the crime, including vehicle confiscation, zero blood alcohol tolerance for drivers under the legal drinking age and mandatory breath testing at crash scenes involving fatalities.

Most supported ignition interlocks and random breath testing, as well.

MADD is urging the federal and provincial governments to conduct comprehensive reviews of their impaired driving laws.

The group's president, Margaret Miller, says the survey results are "a real wake-up call" for legislators and a clear indication they need to step up efforts to combat impaired driving.

Other findings:

- Two-thirds of those surveyed (66 per cent) think police should be allowed to randomly conduct breath tests.
- More than eight in 10 surveyed (83 per cent) want alcohol ignition interlocks in the vehicles of those convicted of impaired driving.
- A majority of those surveyed (56 per cent) want alcohol ignition interlocks installed in all new cars and are willing to pay extra for the technology.

MADD said a strong majority of focus-group participants favoured lowering the blood alcohol limit to .05 per cent from .08.

The survey of 1,514 drivers was conducted between April 23 and May 4.

Ekos Research Associates also conducted 10 focus groups of eight people each in June. There were two groups in each of five cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax.

No margin of error was readily available.