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Could Drunk Driving Become a Thing of the Past?

Will Alcohol Sensors Be in Cars of the Future?

By **Patty Oh**

Perhaps someday drinking and driving will be a thing of the past. With an award of \$2.5 million, the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS) [recently announced](#) that they are undertaking an exploratory study to see whether or not it would be realistic to have vehicle-based sensors that would be able to detect whether or not a driver was impaired by alcohol.

Alcohol has been, and continues to be, a problem for all drivers. Whether you drink and drive, or just drive a car on the road, your chances of encountering others who have been drinking is significant. According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, three out of every 10 people will be involved in an accident, where alcohol was involved, at some point in their life.

The National Advanced Driving Simulator uses a simulator and conducts different types of research and testing to see how people react in different situations. All the while, people are not put in harms way and no one is injured or any property damaged.

Their goal will be to try to find a way that they can detect when someone is impaired, and take appropriate countermeasures.

"We are extremely excited to have been asked by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to perform this important, cutting-edge research. As the alcohol-related fatality rate has been stagnant over the past decade and a half, our expectation is that this research will reveal measures that can be used to monitor impaired driving in real time using appropriate vehicle-based sensors and processors. Understanding driving impairment is one of the research questions best-suited to be answered using the high-fidelity NADS 1 simulation platform," said Karim Malek, the director of NADS.

Alcohol is involved in nearly half, 41 percent, of all U.S. traffic deaths. Every year, more than 12,000 deaths are attributed to car accidents where people are legally drunk and yet they are still driving an automobile. Even with a blood alcohol level of .08 or more, people get behind the wheel and drive motor vehicles.

The number of alcohol-related deaths has remained pretty steady since 1992. Prior to that, it had been decreasing beginning in 1982.

NADS is based at the University of Iowa. Anyone who holds a valid drivers license can apply to participate in one of the various studies they conduct. They have been involved in motor vehicle safety research including helping to develop electronic stability control systems in vehicles.

Source:

http://news-releases.uiowa.edu/2007/november/110707nads_contract.html

<http://www.madd.org/>

More resources

Volunteer online: <http://www.nads-sc.uiowa.edu/forms/recruiting.htm>

Takeaways

Any licensed driver can volunteer for this study

NADS is located on the University of Iowa's Oakdale Campus

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