

A respected nonprofit group, the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, has released a report on the safest states to drive in. The report ranked the states based on the 15 traffic laws that the Advocates believe that all states should adopt. The report ranks Pennsylvania among the least safe states to drive in.

There are several laws that Pennsylvania has failed to implement to make motorists safer and cut down on car accidents. These include:

- Inclusive helmet laws for all motorcyclists
- Mandatory blood alcohol content (BAC) testing for drivers after an accident
- Text messaging ban for all drivers
- Primary seatbelt law
- Ignition interlocks for drunk driving offenders

Pennsylvania accident victims pay a price for the state's failure to require convicted drunk driving offenders to install an ignition interlock device in their vehicles.

Ignition interlock devices, when installed, severely limit a drunk drivers ability to drive a vehicle. The devices require that a driver breathe into the device - essentially a Breathalyzer - that measures the driver's BAC. If the device detects that the driver's BAC is over a certain level, the ignition is locked and the car cannot be started.

In Pennsylvania, unlike a number of other states, ignition interlock devices are not required for a first driving under the influence (DUI) offense. Ignition interlock devices are usually required in Pennsylvania only if a person has a prior conviction for DUI, within the prior 10 years, and he or she is applying to have his or her driving privileges reinstated after a period of suspension.

Because of the danger that drunk driving poses to innocent people, reform is needed to toughen Pennsylvania's DUI penalties. Keeping everyone on the road safe should be everyone's concern. Passing and then implementing a law that requires an ignition interlock device in a driver's vehicle after a first DUI conviction is a good place to begin.