



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jamie Ainsworth (225) 925-6998

New law mandates 45-day hard suspension of driver's license for second-offense DWI

Louisiana motorists convicted of second-offense DWI must wait 45 days to apply for a hardship driver's license under a new law that took effect this month.

Act 409 by Rep. Nickie Monica of LaPlace, which became law August 15, bolsters Louisiana's already tough penalties for DWI offenders.

Drivers convicted of first- or second-offense DWI in Louisiana have their licenses suspended for one year. DWI offenders whose licenses are suspended can apply for a hardship license but must install ignition interlock devices in their vehicles for one year.

Ignition interlocks prevent people who have alcohol in their system from driving a vehicle. A driver breathes into a device connected to the car's ignition system to determine blood alcohol concentration. If there is measurable alcohol in the blood, the vehicle does not start.

Act 409 requires second-offense offenders to wait 45 days before they can even apply for a hardship license. The 45-day suspension also applies to second-offense vehicular negligent injuring. Previously, there was no waiting period to apply for a hardship license.

Act 409 was backed by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and the Governor's DWI-Vehicular Homicide Task Force.

In 2009, alcohol-related crashes in Louisiana claimed more than 400 lives and resulted in more than 6,000 injuries. Forty-nine percent of the deaths on Louisiana roads in 2009 were alcohol-related, substantially higher than the national average.

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