

ALCO-Safe and Traka collaborate to take the keys away from drunk drivers - the safe way

2 March 2016

Alcohol and keys don't pair well. Alcohol is responsible for 60% of fatal accidents and up to 40% of workplace accidents. ALCO-Safe, experts in drug and alcohol testing solutions, and key management solutions company, Traka, a subsidiary of ASSA ABLOY, are delivering an innovative new solution to market – a breathalyser added to Traka's Key Management System – that will ensure only sober employees can access and return keys.

Rhys Evans, director at ALCO-Safe says: "Irresponsible use of alcohol puts people, assets and the business at risk. For businesses that make use of vehicles and heavy equipment, like transport and construction companies, mines, and organisations using warehousing facilities, detecting and controlling substance abuse is critical. Legislation demands they put practicable processes in place and this collaboration between ALCO-Safe and Traka provides them with an excellent tool to do that."

Adding a breathalyser to a key management system

ALCO-Safe's alcohol testing solutions are used daily to test over 100 000 employees in mines and other businesses in South Africa. Among its leading products is the Lion Alcolock DS 10 which uses an electrochemical fuel cell sensor to measure the concentration of alcohol vapour in the subject's expired breath. Traka's Key System is an intelligent key management solution that combines RFID technology, touchscreen technology, PIN access and key security seals to enforce user, key and access rights.

The Lion Alcolock DS 10 is connected to Traka's Key System via an Application Programme Interface (API). To access or return a key, an employee must first identify themselves via fingerprint biometrics and a pin code, then blow into the breathalyser. Based on the signal from the breathalyser, the Traka system will open to release the key or allow its return, or not.

“This not only prevents employees from driving under the influence but checks that users returning keys have not used alcohol during their shift,” notes Evans.

Alcohol – it doesn’t take much

Legislation like the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Mines Health and Safety Act make it mandatory for businesses to put practicable measures in place to mitigate the risk of alcohol and substance abuse.

Evans adds, “Alcohol, even many hours after consumption has stopped, severely impairs a person’s ability to properly operate equipment and vehicles, slowing reaction time, reducing concentration, and leading to poor judgement.”

The National Road Traffic Act puts the current limit for a private motorist at 0.050% Blood alcohol concentration and for a professional driver at 0.020% BAC. At the old 0.080% legal drink-drive limit the probability of having an accident is four to five times that of a sober person. At the 0.12% level it is 12 to 13 times, and at the 0.160% level the increased chance is around 30 times. A 100kg person could reach these levels after consuming four, six or eight beers, respectively.

Blood alcohol levels as low as 0.020%, the result of approximately one drink, will decrease the ability to judge, for example, whether a vehicle is able to pass through a gap. Other trials have shown that lateral vision and depth perception of drivers deteriorates significantly with consumption, and that even five hours after stopping consumption, there is still a 16% deterioration, notes Evans.

“ALCO-Safe has been delivering drug and alcohol testing solutions to the market for over 43 years and we are fully aware of the challenges and risks businesses face daily. This solution is tailor-made for responsible companies that want to address direct daily risk.”

Says Managing Director of Traka, Clint Willemse, “The partnership with ALCO-Safe to jointly market our solutions makes great sense, enhancing the benefits for our clients. The breathalyser enhances the functionality of our key management system, adding an additional layer of security to

help our clients mitigate business risk and protect their people. It meets a critical need in the market.”