

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Ignition Interlock

What is an Interlock Program?

It is a program designed to reduce repeat offenses of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) through the installation of a breath alcohol Ignition Interlock Device, (IID) in the vehicle(s) of a person convicted of Driving Under the Influence. The rationale for such a program is that it protects society, provides a means for the convicted driver to use a vehicle to travel to and from work, and provides probation departments and/or other appropriate authorities with a means to monitor the driver's behavior, and see the improvements that the driver is making.

What is an ignition interlock device?

An ignition interlock device is a small electronic handheld device wired into the vehicle's ignition system. The device requires the driver to take and pass a test that screens for breath alcohol. Without a successful pass the ignition interlock device disables the car's ignition system rendering the car inoperable.

How does the IID work?

The device is connected to the ignition system of a vehicle. Before starting the car, the driver must complete a breath test verifying his or her Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC) to be below a preset limit. If the BAC test is at or above the pre-set limit, the car will not start. There are many safeguards built-into these devices to prevent or detect unauthorized use or circumvention of the device.

How are IID programs administered?

Over thirty seven states have enacted Legislation or Administrative Directives establishing interlock programs. In most cases, their regulations call for installation following a second conviction; in some, following their first conviction; in others, as a post-revocation program where the driver may be required to install an interlock as a condition of re-licensing following a period of suspension or revocation.

What is a rolling re-test?

Once the vehicle is in motion, the driver is required to provide additional breath samples at random intervals (Random Rolling Retest). The driver is alerted and given a grace period to re-test after the vehicle is put into the run state. The test can be delivered while operating the vehicle. Breath test refusal or failure is recorded and sanctions are imposed, including honking of the car's horn. This deters drinking after completing a sober start, as well as preventing the vehicle from idling at bars.

How does a person get an interlock installation?

Following conviction, the option of installing an interlock may be:

offered to the driver by the DMV, ordered by the court, or requested by the defense attorney on behalf of the client as a means of retaining some driving privileges.

The court will issue an order calling for the installation within a fixed time period, e.g., 15-30 days, and will typically provide the driver with a list of approved devices with contact phone numbers. The driver then makes an appointment to have the system installed.