

Ignition Interlock Program

The Ignition Interlock Program is a remedial program for drinking drivers. An ignition interlock device prevents a driver from starting or continuing to drive a vehicle if they have been drinking. Participants are required to have the device installed in all vehicles they drive.

Most North American jurisdictions have created alcohol ignition interlock programs. Program evaluations have consistently found up to a 90% reduction in repeat drinking and driving while the device is installed. The B.C. program was introduced on a limited basis in 2005, targeting high-risk drivers.

Since then it has been expanded to include all criminally convicted drinking drivers as well as many drivers who receive administrative sanctions under the Motor Vehicle Act.

B.C. partners with Guardian Interlock Systems to deliver the program province-wide. This is a user-pay program.

What is an Ignition Interlock?

An ignition interlock is a device wired into a vehicle's ignition system. It requires the driver to provide a breath sample and prevents the vehicle from starting if alcohol is detected. It also demands ongoing, random breath samples while engaged to ensure the driver remains alcohol-free while operating his or her vehicle.

Activity on the device is recorded and stored in the device's handset. The device also records all attempts to tamper with it. If someone attempts to disconnect or bypass the device, or a breath test is failed, the device will repeatedly warn the driver to shut down the vehicle. If these warnings are ignored, the vehicle's horn will sound and its hazard lights will flash until it is shut down.

Participants

The program includes escalating terms for repeat offenders:

One-Year Interlock

- one alcohol-related impaired driving Criminal Code or Motor Vehicle Act (sec. 224 or 226) conviction
- one 90-day Immediate Roadside Prohibition (IRP)
- one 30-day Immediate Roadside Prohibition (IRP)
- one Administrative Driving Prohibition (ADP) within five years
- three alcohol-related 24-hour prohibitions (24P) in five years
- ... or any combination of three ADPs, 24Ps and IRPs within five years

Two-Year Interlock

- Two alcohol-related Criminal Code or Motor Vehicle Act convictions.

Three-Year Interlock


- Three alcohol-related Criminal Code or Motor Vehicle Act convictions.

Other drivers, including those whose drinking driving offences occurred prior to February 1, 2009 may be referred at the discretion of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, based on their alcohol-related driving records.

Participating in the Program

Drinking drivers convicted criminally lose their driver's licence and must complete a rehabilitation program – the Responsible Driver Program (RDP) – before they can get the interlock device installed.

Drivers referred due to administrative sanctions (IRPs, ADPs, 24Ps) will need to get the interlock installed and attend the Responsible Driver Program concurrently if they wish to continue driving.



Once the device is installed, participating drivers are required to abide by all conditions of the program. These conditions are set out in the driver's participation agreement with Guardian Interlock. Drivers are required to attend the interlock installation centre on a regular basis so that program activity can be downloaded from the device.

The information from the activity reports is used by the Superintendent to help decide whether someone is ready for unrestricted driving privileges at the end of the interlock term. Program violation information is shared with the RDP service delivery provider (Stroh Health Care) if the driver is still participating in the RDP.

Completing the Program

The Superintendent will review all the program activity reports near the end of the interlock term. As long as there have been no program violations the driver will be advised that he or she will be able to have the interlock removed at the end of their term, subject to a final violation-free program activity report.

Drivers who are also participating in the RDP will need to complete all the elements of that program as well before the ignition interlock device can be removed. If they don't, the interlock will stay on their vehicle and they will continue to pay the monthly monitoring charges until RDP is complete and the Superintendent is satisfied that they are ready for unrestricted driving privileges.

Once these requirements have been met and the device has been removed, the driver can go to a Driver Licensing Centre to apply for a driver's licence without the interlock restriction.

What does it all cost?

If you choose to drink and drive, you will pay the price: towing and storage of your vehicle, a taxi ride home from the police station, hiring a lawyer, court fines, and much more, all before the interlock device is even installed.

When the device is installed, you will pay the \$150 administrative fee to OSMV plus Guardian Interlock System's \$150 installation fee. Monthly monitoring will cost you \$105 plus \$10 loss protection. And when you have completed the program, there is a \$50 removal fee. All together, one year of interlock should cost \$1730 before tax. On top of that, the Responsible Driver Program will cost you \$880.

However, these simple calculations cannot account for the lasting trauma and full cost - to individuals, families, health-care providers, police and others - when someone is injured or killed due to this entirely preventable activity. And remember, if you do crash while impaired, don't expect your insurer to pick up the tab. You could lose everything.

For more information . . .

Visit the Office of Superintendent of Motor Vehicles website at www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv.

