



# Alcohol ignition interlocks after drink driving convictions

**Date: Sunday February 16, 2025**

## What is an alcohol ignition interlock?

An alcohol ignition interlock is a device that is fitted to a vehicle's ignition that measures the alcohol in the driver's breath. The vehicle will not start if any alcohol is detected.

The alcohol ignition interlock program was first introduced in Queensland in 2010 as a way to deter drunk drivers. If you are convicted of a relevant drink driving offence (detailed below), you will have to complete the interlock program and have an alcohol ignition interlock fitted to your nominated vehicle upon getting your licence back.

If you are subject to an interlock condition, you must nominate a vehicle to be fitted with an interlock device. The vehicle with the interlock device can be driven by other people (i.e. your family and friends). However, they will also need to provide a breath sample (and return a blood alcohol reading of zero) to use the vehicle. The driver of the nominated vehicle may also be required to do random breath samples whilst driving.

The interlock device is also fitted with a camera. The camera will take a reference photo of you upon it being first installed and then a photo each time a breath sample is given. This data is ultimately sent to the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. They then review the data to ensure that when you are driving, you are the person providing the breath sample.

## When will you be subject to an alcohol interlock?

In Queensland, you will be required to complete the interlock program if you are convicted of any of the following [traffic offences](#):

- Driving with an alcohol reading of 0.10% or more;
- Failing to provide a blood/breath specimen for analysis;
- Operating a vehicle dangerously while adversely affected by alcohol;
- A second drink driving offence of any kind within five years of a previous conviction of drink driving of any kind.

## What does the interlock program involve?

The interlock program takes effect from either the day after your driving disqualification period ends or if you are eligible, the day you are granted a work licence by a court. Further information and eligibility requirements in respect of a work licence can be found within our article, [‘Applying for a work licence in Queensland.’](#)

Following either of the above occurring, you will be required to:

1. attend the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to obtain your probationary licence, which will be issued with an interlock condition; and
2. have the interlock device installed by [an approved interlock provider](#) in the vehicle you intend to drive (your nominated vehicle) at your own expense. You can have more than one nominated vehicle fitted with an interlock if required (i.e. work and personal vehicle).

Once the interlock device has been installed, the program will last for 12 months. During the interlock program, you must:

- hold a current driving licence with an interlock condition;
- only drive a nominated vehicle with an approved interlock installed;
- have zero alcohol in your system whilst driving;
- attend all interlock service appointments; and
- not attempt to tamper with or bypass the interlock device.

You may also be required to undertake a driver education course as part of the interlock program.

Once the relevant interlock period ends, you may apply to the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to have the interlock condition on your licence removed, and if granted, then have the interlock device removed from your vehicle.

## What happens if you breach the conditions of your interlock program?

If you fail to comply with the requirements of your interlock program, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads will be notified, and your 12-month period may be extended. Depending on your non-compliance, you may also be criminally charged.

Whilst you are subject to your interlock program, it is an offence to:

- drive any motor vehicle that is not fitted with a prescribed interlock; and
- drive a motor vehicle fitted with a prescribed interlock that is not your nominated vehicle.

## The costs of the interlock program

The costs associated with installing, servicing and removing the alcohol interlock device can be significant, costing upwards of two thousand dollars across the 12-month period. In some circumstances, you may be eligible for financial assistance to undertake the interlock program.

To apply for financial assistance, you can [complete and submit the relevant application](#) together with supporting material to the Department of Transport and Main Roads up to six weeks prior to your licence disqualification period ending.

## If you decide not to participate in the interlock program

If you do not participate in the interlock program, you cannot have your licence reinstated without the interlock condition until five years following the end of your disqualification period.

## Exemption from the interlock program

You can apply for an exemption from participating in the interlock program if one of the following circumstances apply:

- You reside in a significantly remote location, including on an island, whereby your principal place of residence is outside the radius of 150km from the nearest place of business of a prescribed interlock installer;
- You are suffering from a medical condition that prevents you from providing a sufficient sample of breath to use an interlock device; or
- Participating in the interlock program would cause you severe hardship (other than by preventing you from driving in the course of employment, to or from your place of employment or educational institution).

To apply for an alcohol interlock exemption, you can complete and submit the relevant application together with supporting material (i.e. proof of residence, medical documents, etc.) to the Department of Transport and Main Roads up to six weeks prior to your licence disqualification period ending. From there, your application will either be granted or rejected within 28 days.

If your interlock exemption application is granted, you must always carry your exemption certificate with you, and produce it to police if required. It is an offence if you fail to do so without reasonable excuse.

## Get help from a traffic lawyer

Our lawyers at Gilshenan & Luton are highly experienced in driving and traffic matters. You should seek legal advice early if:

- you are faced with any traffic charges; and/or
- you are considering applying for an alcohol interlock exemption; and/or
- it is alleged you have breached the conditions of your interlock program.

## Contacting Gilshenan &Luton Lawyers

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