

## NSW Alcohol Interlock Program

# Tips for completing the Alcohol Interlock Program

Once you have an interlock installed, you need to comply with the conditions of your licence. There are consequences – including more time on the program and additional costs – if you do not. If you are ordered to participate in the Alcohol Interlock Program, the best thing you can do is separate drinking from driving.

### Before you get into your vehicle

#### Do not drink any alcohol before driving with an interlock

You can only drive if you have a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC). That means you cannot have any alcohol in your system when you drive. It can take hours for alcohol to completely leave your body after drinking. The more you drink, the longer it will take for your BAC to return to zero. If you have had a lot to drink the night before, the alcohol may still be working its way through your system.

You should also wait a few minutes after eating and drinking before blowing into the device.

### Driving with your interlock

#### Safely complete any breath tests when prompted by the device

The interlock will require you to give a breath sample before you can start your engine. The camera installed with the device will also take a photograph of you whenever you provide a breath sample.

You also need to complete random breath tests during your drive. When your device indicates that a test is required, you should pull over to complete the test. You will have 10 minutes to pull over in a safe location to take the test. This is to make sure you don't have any alcohol in your system throughout a journey.

It is important not to panic, but to take the time to find a safe place to stop. You do not have to switch off the engine to take this test.

If you do not provide a breath sample in this time, the interlock will cause your lights to flash and your horn to sound. To stop the horn, you must retest successfully in the next 10 minutes. If you fail or miss this, the horn will sound until the engine is turned off. This will also be recorded in your data and you have to go to your provider for an extra service at your expense.

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## If you experience problems using your device, talk to your provider

Your provider will train you to use the device when it is installed. This will include showing you how to blow into the device and what the lights and reminders on the device mean.

If you think your interlock is not working properly, call your provider as soon as possible. It is an offence to drive a vehicle if the interlock is not working.

## Failing a breath test

### Do not attempt to drive if you think you might have alcohol in your system

The Alcohol Interlock Program is designed to help you separate drinking from driving. It's important not to try to start the vehicle if you think you may have alcohol in your system.

If you fail any breath test on your interlock, it will lock you out temporarily. The amount of time you are locked out depends on your BAC. You will not be able to start your vehicle while you are waiting to take the next test.

Each time you attempt to start your vehicle the interlock will record your BAC. This data is sent to Roads and Maritime Services (RMS). If you fail the breath test a number of times, there may be extra service requirements and additional costs.

## Be aware there are consequences if the device records failed breath tests

If your device registers alcohol on your breath you can expect to get:

- **A letter of advice** – RMS will send you a warning letter advising you that you have tried to start or drive your vehicle a number of times while alcohol was detected in your system. You may also get a letter encouraging you to seek advice from your doctor about your drinking.
- **Non-scheduled servicing and device lockout** – If you keep trying to blow into the device with alcohol in your system you will trigger an early service alert. This means you will need to pay extra costs to have the device serviced earlier than your normal scheduled service. If you do not get the device serviced, you will not be able to start your vehicle.

## Talk to your family about the interlock

If you share your vehicle, it's important that you talk to your family or anyone else who uses the vehicle about how to use the device. It may be useful for them to visit the service provider with you when it's installed so they can also be trained in how to use it.

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## Servicing the interlock

### Make sure you return to your provider to have the device serviced

You must have your interlock device serviced regularly. This ensures RMS receives the data from your device. Your provider will have a list of service centres where you can have the interlock serviced.

The interlock device will display reminders that it is nearly due for a service before the due date. It must be serviced every 60 days if you live in an urban area or every 90 days if you live in a remote area. To get the device serviced, contact your interlock service provider.

If you do not service your device in the agreed time period, you will be locked out from driving your vehicle and your interlock licence may be suspended.

### Ensure you pay the costs of the interlock

Fees for having the interlock need to be paid to your provider. If you have questions about any of the costs in your interlock contract, you need to talk to your provider.

A discount on the full cost is available if you have an eligible concession card. To check if you are eligible, contact your provider.

If you are in severe financial hardship, you may be able to get more short-term help to pay for the costs of the program. You can request an assessment by calling the Salvation Army on **1300 371 288**.

They will assess your financial situation and eligibility for assistance. Roads and Maritime will advise you in writing about the outcome of your application.

## Completing the Alcohol Interlock Program

To complete the program, you must demonstrate that you are not trying to drink and drive. The last six months of your interlock data records will be closely monitored by RMS.

If you've demonstrated good performance, you will be told by RMS that you can complete the program after you've completed the period ordered by the court. You can then go to your provider to have the interlock removed.

If you haven't met the requirements of the program you'll be required to go to your doctor for an assessment of whether you are fit to drive. Your interlock period may be extended by six months on the basis of the doctor's advice and your interlock record.

## More information

This information is a summary only. It is important to read all the conditions in the Participant Guide and the information given to you by your provider.

For more information, visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock)