

# NSW Alcohol Interlock Program Quick Start Guide

July 2023



Transport for NSW (TfNSW) will send you a letter that will tell you the date you can apply for an interlock licence.

If you do not get an interlock licence, you remain disqualified from driving for at least 5 years from when you were given your court order. Driving while disqualified is a serious offence.

Below are the steps you need to follow to get your interlock licence and your interlock device. If you are unsure whether you can get a licence or do not understand any of the steps below, please call Service NSW on 13 22 13 for more help.

## 1. Go and see your doctor

You must see a GP before you apply for an interlock licence. This visit needs to be in the month (28 days) before you are eligible to get your licence.

When you see your doctor, you must complete and sign a Medical Consultation Certificate. This form is part of the package you receive in the mail. It is also available here **Medical Consultation Certificate** or by calling Service NSW on 13 22 13. Your doctor must also sign this form.

## 2. Find an interlock service provider and have the interlock installed in your vehicle

You must have an interlock device installed from one of the following providers. The providers have service centres across NSW and costs of an interlock vary between providers. You can choose the provider that suits you best.

- **Guardian Interlock Systems**  
<https://www.guardianinterlock.com.au/>
- **Draeger Australia**  
[https://www.draeger.com/en\\_aunz/Safety/Alcohol-Interlock-Program/New-South-Wales-NSW](https://www.draeger.com/en_aunz/Safety/Alcohol-Interlock-Program/New-South-Wales-NSW)
- **Smart Start Interlocks**  
<https://www.smartstartinterlocks.com.au/>
- **Affordable Interlocks**  
<https://www.affordableinterlocks.com.au/>

Think about choosing a provider that is close to your home or your place of work because you need to go back to have your interlock serviced every 60 or every 90 days.

You need to arrange for someone to drive your vehicle to and from the provider so that they can install the interlock. You will need to attend with them. The provider will show you how to use the device. Installation may take several hours.

The provider will sign and give you an **Interlock Installation Certificate**. Do not throw this away. You need to take this to the Service NSW Centre when you apply for your interlock licence.

## 3. Apply for an interlock licence at a Service NSW centre

You must visit a Service NSW centre to apply for an interlock licence. Depending on how long you have been disqualified and your offence, you may also need to pass licence tests.

You will have to pay to get your interlock licence. Exemptions from licence and testing fees are available for eligible pensions.

Fill out an **Interlock Driver Licence Statement and Privacy Declaration** and take that along with the **Interlock Installation Certificate** and the **Medical Consultation Certificate** to the Service NSW centre.

# NSW Alcohol Interlock Program

## Tips for Participants



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

**You are required to have a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC) when driving with an interlock.** This means that you cannot drink any alcohol before driving.

You also have to be careful that alcohol from the day or night before has left your body. Many people are booked for drink driving the next day.

For example:

- If someone has eight cans of beer in the evening, this can take around 12 hours to clear
- If someone drinks a case of beer one day, this can take more than 30 hours to clear.

**The safest option is to avoid drinking any alcohol before driving.**

### How can I avoid 'false positive' results?

Some foods, drinks and products such as hand sanitiser and mouthwash can contain alcohol that may cause a positive reading. It's recommended that you avoid using products containing alcohol, by using alcohol-free alternatives.

You should also wait a few minutes after eating or drinking (all non-alcoholic drinks) before blowing into your device.

**Remember:** your interlock device should never be used as a breathalyser to check if you are OK to drive. If you do this, and you have alcohol in your system, it may register as a positive reading which can lead to an extension of your interlock licence.

### 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.

Ensure you are seated in the drivers seat when providing a breath sample and have your camera positioned correctly at all times. It will be assumed that you were the driver responsible unless the image clearly shows that someone else was in the driver seat providing the breath sample.

If you fail an initial test to start the vehicle and have not been drinking alcohol, ventilate your vehicle, rinse your mouth with water and provide a re-test when your device allows you to. If you provide a zero re-test shortly after a failed test and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) can clearly see from the photographs that it is you providing the zero re-test, the failed initial test will not be counted as a verified breach event.

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. You do not have to switch off the engine to take this test. Do not leave your vehicle running and unattended because the interlock device might request a breath test that you don't notice.

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.

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

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 TfNSW. 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 – TfNSW 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.
- Failed breath tests in the last six months of your program (even at low range) can result in TfNSW determining that you need to undergo an Interlock Medical Examination (IME) with a GP before your interlock condition can be removed. Based on the outcome of this examination and the review of your interlock data, TfNSW may extend your interlock period for a further six months.

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

You must have your interlock device serviced regularly. This ensures TfNSW 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 02 8775 7951. They will assess your financial situation and eligibility for assistance. TfNSW will advise you in writing about the outcome of your application.

## **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.

## 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 is installed so that they can also be trained in how to use it.

## 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 TfNSW.

If you've demonstrated good performance, you will be told by TfNSW that you can exit 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 GP for a medical assessment. 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* as well as the information given to you by your provider.

For more information, visit:

[www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/demerits-penalties-and-offences/offences/alcohol-and-drug-offences/alcohol-interlock-program](http://www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/demerits-penalties-and-offences/offences/alcohol-and-drug-offences/alcohol-interlock-program)

### Have you remembered to do the following?

- ☐ Download and complete the **Medical Consultation Certificate** and take the form to your GP to sign.
- ☐ Download the **Interlock Installation Certificate**, choose an interlock provider, and have them complete the form.
- ☐ Download and complete the **Interlock Driver Licence Statement and Privacy Declaration** and take all three forms to Service NSW to apply for an interlock licence.