



All Offender Ignition Interlocks

Possible Lives Saved Nationally

716

Economic Impact

\$9,809,200,000

Background

An ignition interlock device is an alcohol breath-screening device installed in a vehicle and often used as a condition of license reinstatement after a driver has been arrested or convicted of drunk driving. For drivers to start a vehicle, they must blow into the interlock and have a BAC below a preset limit. An interlock does not detect drugs other than alcohol, but serves as a proven tool to separate drinking from driving. Interlocks are one of the most effective tools for saving lives by preventing a drunk driver from repeating the offense while the device is installed.

Data and Research

Interlocks are a strong deterrent to stop offenders from repeating their past behavior. Compared with all other policies, data consistently demonstrates that interlocks are one of the most effective tools to prevent recidivism, and if every state had an all-offender requirement, interlocks would save more lives.

- **Recidivism Reduction:** Interlocks reduce the rate of repeat offenses for alcohol-impaired driving by an estimated 70% while the device is installed, compared to license suspension alone.⁷
- **Lives Saved:** Laws mandating interlocks for all drunk driving offenders are associated with a 26% reduction in the rate of fatal crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver.⁸ If all states without such laws adopted them, 716 lives could be saved annually.
- **Economic Impact:** This estimates how much money society saves when policies prevent deaths and injuries in car crashes. If all states enacted an all-offender ignition interlock law, almost ten billion dollars would be saved.
- **Prevented Attempts:** From 2006 to 2023, Interlocks have prevented nearly 5 million attempts by a drunk driver to start their vehicle with a BAC of 0.08 or greater.⁹

Currently, 13 states and Washington, D.C., have laws that require all offenders to install an ignition interlock device to drive or return to an unrestricted license.



Policy Recommendation

States should require all drunk driving offenders to install an interlock.

This policy recommendation is supported by AAA, MADD, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Transportation Safety Board.

Additionally, states can also look to further strengthen their interlock programs by including:

- **Compliance-based removal** – This policy will extend the time period a driver must have an interlock installed if they attempt to drive after drinking, tamper with their interlock, or otherwise try to circumvent the law. Interlocks can only be removed if the driver maintains a set amount of violation-free days.
- **Graduated sanctions** – This policy increases sanctions for drivers who repeatedly tamper with their interlock or otherwise try to circumvent the law.
- **Availability during administrative license suspension** – Requiring ignition interlocks as the only way to have driving privileges during an administrative license suspension helps to ensure drunk driving offenders don't drive on a suspended license.
- **Including treatment as part of the interlock program** – Combining the interlock program with substance abuse treatment can boost the effectiveness of the interlock program beyond the installation period.
- **Ensuring offenders pay the cost for their interlock** – Unless drivers are deemed unable to pay, drunk driving offenders should bear the cost of the interlock program. However, states can establish affordability programs for those who cannot afford an interlock.

Relevant Research

For more resources and tools visit newsroom.aaa.com/impaireddriving.

