Alcohol Interlock Programme - Questions and answers

What is an alcohol interlock device?

An alcohol interlock is a device similar to a breathalyser that is connected into a vehicle's starting system. Before the vehicle can be started, the driver must blow into the device. If the analysed result is over the pre-programmed breath-alcohol level the vehicle will not start. Interlocks will be set for a breath alcohol level which is effectively zero.

Why has New Zealand introduced the programme?

Introducing alcohol interlocks and zero alcohol licences to New Zealand is an initiative of the Safer Journeys road safety strategy and aims to reduce the impact of drink driving on our roads.

Who is eligible to take part in the Alcohol Interlock Programme?

Offenders who have been convicted of repeat drink driving offences or of an excessively high blood/breath alcohol concentration and who have been given an alcohol interlock sentence are eligible for the programme. It is up to the courts to decide if an alcohol interlock sentence is appropriate. Certain circumstances, such as financial instability or the offender being unlicensed could mean that the interlock programme may not be suitable.

Who can install my alcohol interlock?

There are two NZTA-approved providers of alcohol interlock devices - Draegar Safety Pacific and Sober Check. Each provider has a network of installers around the country. Please contact your preferred provider to select an installer who best suits your needs and location.

Draeger Safety Pacific Pty Ltd
Phone - 0800 DRAGER (0800 372 437)
interlock.nz@draeger.com

Smart Start NZ
Phone - 0800 002 182
info@smartstartinterlocks.co.nz
www.smartstartinterlocks.co.nz

Where do I get my interlock installed?

The NZTA's two approved providers have a network of installers around the country where you can get your interlock installed. Please talk to your provider about the most convenient location.

What costs are associated with the Alcohol Interlock Programme?

There are a number of steps which you must complete during the programme and you will need to apply for a new driver licence at certain stages. The costs (inclusive of GST) associated with the programme are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol interlock licence application fee</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Device initial installation fee</td>
<td>$150 to $175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Device monthly rental fee (@ $150-$175/month for 12 months)</td>
<td>$1800 to $2100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Device removal fee | $100 to $135
---|---
Zero alcohol licence application fee | $66.40
Reinstatement fee for Standard Licence | $66.40
Total cost of the programme | $2382.80 to $2742.80

Are there discounts or financial assistance available for the programme?

If you hold a community services card, you may be eligible for a discount or financial assistance. More information can be provided by your device installer.

What do I do if I do not hold a New Zealand licence?

If you do not have a New Zealand driver licence, you must apply for a licence class or to convert your overseas licence as part of the alcohol interlock licence application. You will need to pass the required tests and pay the relevant test fees in addition to the alcohol interlock licence application fee.

What rules apply on the alcohol interlock licence?

Once you have been issued with your alcohol interlock licence you are entitled to return to driving and will be subject to the same driving rules (as well as the alcohol interlock requirements) as any other licence holder.

All conditions of your licence (eg graduated licence restrictions for a learner or restricted licence, or the need to wear lenses while driving) will still apply while you are on the alcohol interlock programme.

What does the alcohol interlock licence look like?

The alcohol interlock licence will be pink. The words ‘Alcohol interlock’ will appear above the photo on your licence. The conditions of your alcohol interlock licence will also be printed on the back of the licence.

What does the zero alcohol licence look like?

The zero alcohol licence will be pink. The words ‘Zero alcohol’ will appear above the photo on your licence. The conditions of your zero alcohol licence will also be printed on the back of the licence.
What happens if I commit another offence while on the Alcohol Interlock Programme?

While holding an alcohol interlock or zero alcohol licence, you can be disqualified from driving if convicted for a further offence or have your licence suspended for excess demerit points. If this occurs, at the end of any suspension or disqualification, you would need to complete a licence reinstatement and pay the reinstatement fee of $66.40 before your alcohol interlock licence or zero alcohol licence can be reissued.

How do I exit the alcohol interlock licence stage of the programme?

The exit criteria for the alcohol interlock stage of the programme are as follows:

You must have held your alcohol interlock licence for at least 12 months and either:

- have no recorded alcohol interlock violations during the previous six months; or
- have no recorded alcohol interlock violations during the previous three months and have completed a successful assessment at a Ministry of Health-approved drug and alcohol assessment centre.

Who are the Ministry of Health-approved drug and alcohol assessment centres?

For information and contact details for all Ministry of Health-approved alcohol and drug assessment centres, call our NZTA contact centre on 0800 822 422.

What restrictions apply to me while I hold an alcohol interlock licence?

If you hold an alcohol interlock licence, the following restrictions apply:

- your alcohol interlock licence must be current
- you must only drive a vehicle that has been fitted with an approved interlock
- the interlock must be supplied and installed by one of the NZTA-approved interlock providers
- you must maintain a zero alcohol level while driving.

If I am sentenced to an alcohol interlock disqualification, can I obtain a limited licence?

A person sentenced to an alcohol interlock disqualification cannot obtain a limited licence. If you must drive for work purposes and you are unable to serve the mandatory three month disqualification, it is likely that you will not be eligible for an alcohol interlock disqualification and the courts will hand down an alternative sentence.
If I am sentenced to a zero alcohol sentence, can I obtain a limited licence?

If you are disqualified and sentenced to obtain a zero alcohol licence or you already hold a zero alcohol licence you may be able to get a limited licence if you receive a further disqualification or suspension. If the disqualification or suspension will cause extreme hardship to you or undue hardship to another person, you will need to apply to the court to request they consider your situation and grant an Order so you can apply for a limited licence.

What do I do when I want to drive my car if I have an alcohol interlock licence?

If you have an alcohol interlock licence you are only eligible to drive a vehicle which is fitted with an approved alcohol interlock device. Before starting the car, you will need to blow into the device, like you would a breathalyser. If you record a zero alcohol reading, the vehicle will start. While driving the vehicle, the device will prompt you for a retest. If you do not comply, or attempt to tamper with the device, an alarm will go off inside your vehicle.

If the device detects alcohol, you will be required to wait for a set period of time before attempting to start the vehicle again, following the same process.

Where can I get further information?

For further information about the Alcohol Interlock Programme you can visit our website at www.nzta.govt.nz/alcoholinterlock or see factsheet 50 - limited licences, factsheet 55 - offences and penalties, factsheet 58 – alcohol interlocks.

If you think you are eligible to exit the programme, please call the NZTA contact centre on 0800 822 422.

If you have a general question relating to alcohol interlock devices you can visit the providers’ websites at www.draeger.com.au/interlocknz or www.smartstartinterlocks.co.nz. If you have already made contact with your device provider and the question is related to your own device, please discuss any queries you have with your provider.