

Ignition Interlocks Grow With Popularity With The Courts

Ignition interlock devices (IID) are just what they sound like. Devices installed in a vehicle's circuitry between the ignition switch and starter. Programmed to detect and measure the level of alcohol in a person's breath, the device keeps a vehicle from being started above a preset threshold — usually 0.08%.

Just over 101,000 ignition interlocks were installed as of June 2006. By June 2013, that number had grown to over 300,000. Each year, there are roughly 1.5 million impaired driving arrests in America and approximately 22% of those drivers are required to install ignition interlocks on their vehicles, according to a [2013 Survey of Installed Interlocks](#) by Richard Roth, Ph.D.

The July 2013 survey places New York state in the middle of the pack with almost 7,000 devices in use. Texas had over 39,000 and Mississippi and Alabama each had zero. Per capita, New Mexico scored biggest at just over 60 devices per 10,000 residents. New York saw about three per 10,000 residents.

[New York Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 1193](#) requires installing an Ignition Interlock in any vehicle an individual who has been adjudged guilty of Driving While Intoxicated. It is a non-negotiable requirement imposed by the judge as part of any sentence following conviction.

Scope and Length

For any [DWI conviction](#) for an offense committed after November 1, 2013, a judge can require you to install an interlock for longer periods than outlined by the legal guidelines. Once the time for the IID is completed, the court will provide a letter indicating satisfaction of IID requirements. This letter should be kept and a notarized copy sent to New York's DMV. The manufacturer of the device should be notified so they can schedule a convenient date and time to remove the device.

Employer Exception

New York traffic law permits a limited exception to the rule if the individual drives a vehicle within the duties of their job. The employer must know about the IID requirement and must provide, to the court, written approval. This exception does not pertain to persons who are the sole owner of a business.

Affordability

Upon conviction, the individual is required to pay for all costs connected with the IID. If there is a provable financial difficulty, the judge may be asked to waive or reduce the fees linked to the IID. Anyone who feels they may qualify for this exemption should discuss it with their lawyer before trial.

Begin Installation

New York provides a 10-day window for installing the IID. It is best to have the device installed before sentencing. Doing so will permit you to drive away from the court, and it starts the clock for the required time on the device. If the device is to go on a vehicle owned by another person, the car owner will need to provide notarized permission to install the device. The owner's permission note and proof of installation will need to be given to the defense attorney, the sentencing court, and probation officer — if any.

Violation

If the IID agreement is violated, additional charges could be given by the court. If a person is called back to the court for violating the terms of the ignition interlock, jail time is possible. If law enforcement detects alcohol use during a sobriety checkpoint or the required regular check in with a probation officer, a person may lose all driving privileges and be sent to jail.

CoverCup

For some people, the financial hit of an ignition interlock isn't a problem. Those same people don't mind the inconvenient. But many people balk because of the stigma attached.

Necessity is the mother of invention and an entrepreneur, jumped all over the opportunity minimize the stigma of an ignition interlock when he invented — and patented — the CoverCup.

The attachment is a device that hides the ignition interlock during the necessary breath tests. While the driver is blowing in the breathalyzer others in the car, think that it's just a cup of coffee. Designed to fit in the vehicle's cup holder, the gadget has its brown base and white lid and resembles the cups from favorite coffee stops.