

# Mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program



Transport  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

JANUARY 2015

**Stricter requirements on NSW drivers convicted of serious and repeat drink driving offences come into effect from 1 February 2015.**

**The NSW Government initiative will include a requirement to fit alcohol interlock devices to their vehicles.**

## **Q. What is happening?**

From 1 February 2015, courts will be required to order offenders convicted of high range, repeat and other serious drink driving offences to complete:

- a minimum licence disqualification period
- a minimum 12 month participation in the interlock program.

The court may grant exemptions only in exceptional circumstances.

## **Q. What is an interlock?**

Interlocks are electronic breath testing devices linked to a vehicle's ignition system.

Drivers must provide a breath sample that the interlock analyses for the presence of alcohol before the vehicle will start. Randomly timed breath tests must also be passed during a journey.

If at any time the interlock detects alcohol on the driver's breath, the vehicle's ignition system will be disabled.

## **Q. Who is affected?**

It is expected that the mandatory interlock program will apply to up to 6,000 convicted drink drivers each year.

Under the program, alcohol interlocks will be fitted to vehicles of all drivers convicted of a:

- serious drink drive offence such as high range drink drive or refuse breath test, or
- second drink drive offence within five years.

If an offender fails to participate in the interlock program, they may remain disqualified from driving for at least five years from their date of conviction.

## **Significant features**

Significant features of the program include:

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For further information:

Phone: 13 22 13

Web: [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock)

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- **Zero blood alcohol concentration** – Participants will be required to have a zero blood alcohol concentration when driving.
- **Performance requirements** – Interlock program participants must show that they do not attempt to drink and drive during the program:
  - Data will be regularly collected from interlocks and reviewed by Roads and Maritime Services.
  - Roads and Maritime may send program participants who continue to attempt to drink and drive a letter recommending that they visit a doctor to discuss their drinking behaviour.
  - For the last six months of involvement in the program, participants who cannot show that they can safely separate drinking and driving may be referred for a Fitness to Drive Assessment. This may result in Roads and Maritime extending their time in the interlock program.

## How the program works

- An interlock order by the court will include a period of total driver licence disqualification. When this disqualification is completed, it will be followed by a minimum 12 month interlock period. Longer interlock periods apply for more serious offences
- The court may grant exemptions, but only in exceptional circumstances
- All licence classes are included: car, motorcycle and heavy vehicles
- The participant will arrange for an approved provider to install and maintain an interlock in their vehicle. Interlock providers will be accessible across NSW
- The interlock records every breath test. This information is collected during compulsory regular inspections by the interlock provider. The data is monitored by Roads and Maritime
- The program is user pays. These costs are in addition to fines imposed by courts. Concessions are available to holders of select concession cards. Some additional financial assistance may also be available, but only in exceptional circumstances
- Roads and Maritime manages participants during the interlock program. Depending on performance, it may:
  - grant an unrestricted or provisional driver licence to the person, if participation is completed satisfactorily, or
  - require an alcohol-related Fitness to Drive medical assessment, if participants cannot show that they can safely separate drinking and driving, and may extend the participant's time in the interlock program
- An administrative interstate interlock driver licence transfer program will be established for interlock licence holders from other States and Territories who move into NSW so that they can drive using an interlock in NSW.

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## Aims of the new program

The new program aims to reduce drink driving-related deaths and injuries on NSW roads. These are currently at about 15 per cent of the annual road toll. In 2013, alcohol was a factor in 50 deaths and 987 injuries.

The program will also help reduce the personal and community costs of drink driving-related deaths and injuries. During the five years 2008-2012, alcohol-related crashes cost NSW an estimated \$640 million annually.

Research shows that drivers previously convicted of drink driving are around four times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than an average driver. The interlock program is designed to help drink drivers separate drinking and driving and reduce this road safety risk. It does this by keeping offenders in the licensing system on a closely monitored basis, with the interlock physically preventing drink driving.

It has also been found that data monitoring, medical consultations and counselling for interlock program participants may help achieve longer term behaviour change and extend road safety benefits beyond the time an interlock is installed.

The mandatory interlock program will be evaluated to assess the benefits it delivers to the community and to improve the program.

### Outline – NSW Mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program

| Court  | Entry to Interlock Program  | Performance Monitoring  | Performance Outcomes  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prison</li> <li>○ Fine</li> <li>○ Driver licence disqualification period</li> <li>○ Interlock program participation period</li> <li>○ Limited exemptions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consultation about alcohol use with GP</li> <li>○ Interlock installed by provider</li> <li>○ Driver licence issued with interlock condition</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drivers must provide breath samples at the start of and during their journey</li> <li>○ Data on drink drive attempts downloaded from interlock</li> <li>○ Data reviewed by RMS, which may result in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RMS advisory letters</li> <li>- Recommendation for further medical alcohol use assessments</li> <li>- Referral to Fitness to Drive Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unrestricted licence granted at end of interlock period to those able to safely separate driving and drinking</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><b>or</b></li> <li>○ Time in interlock program extended</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><b>or</b></li> <li>○ Licence suspension</li> </ul> |

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