

Reduce Post-Interlock Recidivism: Alcohol Ignition Interlocks Plus Treatment for DUI Offenders



What is the issue?

- An ignition interlock is a breath-test device that measures the prospective driver's blood alcohol content (BAC) and prevents a drinking driver from starting the vehicle.
- Ignition interlocks reduce re-arrests (recidivism) for driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) offenders by nearly 70% while they are installed.¹
- Upon removal of ignition interlocks, recidivism rates are similar to those of offenders who have not had interlocks installed.¹

Does alcohol abuse treatment reduce recidivism after the interlock is removed?

In 2008, Florida mandated alcohol abuse treatment for DUI offenders with interlocks, based on the number of high BAC tests that prevented them from starting their cars.

Offenders who committed three or more interlock violations were mandated to attend alcohol abuse treatment for 8-12 weeks. A violation was defined as two failed attempts to start the car with a BAC greater than .05% within a 4-hour period.

CDC collaborated with researchers at Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to compare recidivism after the removal of the interlocks of 640 DUI offenders who received alcohol abuse treatment with the control group of 806 similar offenders not mandated to treatment. The offenders in the treatment group experienced **32% lower recidivism** during the 30 months following the removal of the interlock.

Benefits of treating ignition interlock users over the 30 months following interlock removal:

- **Lowered recidivism by 32%**
- **Prevented**
 - 45 arrests
 - 14 motor vehicle crashes
 - ~ 10 injuries

Economic benefit

Treated **640 DUI offenders** at a cost of **\$192,000**

Prevented **\$905,000** in crash costs

Net benefit = **\$713,000**

What can be done?

- Ignition interlock records can be used to identify offenders who would benefit from treatment.
- Incorporating alcohol abuse treatment into ignition interlock programs shows promise in reducing post-interlock recidivism.
- Offenders should have to complete treatment before the interlock can be removed.

¹Elder RW, et al. Effectiveness of ignition interlocks for preventing alcohol-impaired driving and alcohol-related crashes: a Community Guide systematic review. Am J Prev Med 2011;40(3):362-76.