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**ALCOHOL IGNITION INTERLOCK PROGRAM INTRODUCED IN THE YUKON**

WHITEHORSE – A program that will prevent a vehicle from being started when the driver has been drinking is being introduced in the Yukon this September.

The Alcohol Ignition Interlock program will allow people who have lost their driver's licences through impaired driving convictions to gain conditional driving privileges by using the device.

“This program is designed to modify the behaviours of drivers who have impaired driving convictions,” Infrastructure Minister Scott Kent said. “It is another government initiative aimed at increasing road safety in the territory.”

Judges can direct that some convicted drivers be considered by the Driver Control Board for this program. People with alcohol impaired convictions can also apply to the Board to participate in the program.

Individuals who have been approved to enter the program must pay to have an alcohol breath-testing device installed and maintained in their vehicles. The vehicle won't start or continue operating if the driver has been drinking alcohol. To leave the program, the device's data record must indicate six consecutive months without a program violation.

“Participants are closely monitored to ensure they are separating drinking from driving,” Driver Control Board Chair Tom Fairman said. “The goal is to improve road safety for the public by deterring participants from driving under the influence of alcohol.”

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) endorses the use of ignition interlock devices and last year rated the Yukon as one of four jurisdictions ‘setting a good example’ by bringing forward progressive responses to address impaired driving.

The Yukon government amended the *Motor Vehicles Act* in order to allow the program to operate in the territory. It is administered by the Yukon Driver Control Board, a quasi-judicial board that carries out an adjudicative role in determining if an individual may hold a driver's licence. For more information, contact the Yukon Driver Control Board or visit [www.gov.yk.ca/services](http://www.gov.yk.ca/services).

*Background information attached.*

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## **YUKON'S ALCOHOL IGNITION INTERLOCK PROGRAM**

### **How does the alcohol ignition interlock program work?**

The program, administered by the Yukon Driver Control Board, is designed to modify the behaviour of drivers who have alcohol impaired driving conviction(s). Drivers approved for the program have an alcohol breath-testing device installed in their vehicle, which prevents it from being started or operated when the driver has been drinking. Participation in the program is closely monitored by the Driver Control Board to determine that the driver has been able to separate drinking and driving, and therefore will not pose a safety concern to the public

### **Is the program mandatory? Who is eligible?**

Only those persons who are convicted of impaired driving and voluntarily apply for the program can participate, along with those who are directed by a judge to participate as a condition of sentencing. To be eligible for the program the driver must meet program criteria and have already served the minimum period of disqualification, which varies depending on the number of impaired driving convictions a driver has received.

### **Once a driver is approved to participate in the program, what happens?**

The driver will be required to meet all the conditions of a new licence, including a written test on driving, a vision test, and a road test to ensure that they can safely drive. A conditional driver's license will be issued to those who meet the eligibility criteria.

The person must sign a leasing contract with the ignition interlock service provider and agree to pay to the service provider to have an alcohol breath-testing device installed and maintained in their vehicle. The applicant will be required to remain on the program until s/he meets the program exit criteria.

### **What is the cost to have the device installed?**

The interlock devices are leased from the service provider, who sets the fees. The service provider advises that a fee of \$200 will be charged for the installation/de-installation of the device. In addition there is a monthly fee of \$125 for monitoring and monthly service of the device. All fees are paid direct to the service provider. The fee is equivalent to one drink a day, and is similar to the fees charged in other jurisdictions.

### **How does the Ignition Interlock Device work?**

An alcohol ignition interlock system consists of a small breath-testing device, which is wired into the vehicle ignition system that requires the driver to provide a breath sample when starting the vehicle. Once the vehicle is operational, the device requires the driver to continue providing breath samples at random intervals. A number of sophisticated anti-circumvention features such as temperature and pressure sensors, a running retest feature and a data recorder are built into the device to ensure it is being used as intended.

### **How is information gathered and used?**

The device has a built in data recorder with its own power source. Every request for a breath sample and every breath sample itself is recorded and held in the data recorder until such time as the data is downloaded by the service provider, who is responsible for servicing and maintaining the equipment.

The service provider reviews the data with the program participant. All significant events are discussed with the driver who is required to fill out an incident report for all significant events that were recorded. This gives the driver an opportunity to explain in writing what occurred to cause the event(s). The data and incident reports are then forwarded to the Driver Control Board, who reviews the driver's progress towards separation of drinking from driving. It also allows the Board to intervene when the driver fails to comply with the program conditions.

### **What happens if someone tries to drink and drive with this device?**

To operate the vehicle a driver must first provide a valid breath sample into the device. In the event that the breath test reveals a breath alcohol content in excess of the set limit, the vehicle will not start and the driver must wait a period of time before trying again.

The device also requests random breath samples while the vehicle is in motion. The device will detect alcohol that is ingested while the vehicle is in motion. Once the breath alcohol level exceeds the preset limit the driver will be directed to pull the vehicle to the side of the road and stop driving. If the driver fails to comply a very loud horn will sound until such time as the vehicle is shut off. The horn is intended to warn other drivers and attract the attention of enforcement officers.

Once the vehicle is turned off, the driver will be prevented from starting the vehicle (locked out) again until his/her breath alcohol level falls within the preset limit. If the driver chooses to ignore the horn and continues driving, it will be registered by the device as a program violation. This will cause the device to automatically advance the service date and the driver will be required to take the vehicle for servicing to the service centre. Failure to have the device serviced within the time frame will result in the device locking the driver out. The vehicle will then have to be towed to the service centre.

Points are assigned each time the driver's breath alcohol content reading exceeds the preset limit or the driver was locked out after the vehicle was started. When the driver reaches 100 points the Driver Control Board is notified. Warnings are issued by the Board to participants who continuously report failed attempts or reach 100 points within a reporting period. The Board can remove a person from the program for non-compliance and indefinitely suspend their driver's license as a result.

### **What is the length of time participant must be on the program?**

Just as eligibility for the program is determined by the Driver Control Board on a case by case basis, so is the length of time each driver must remain on the program. Before the Board allows a participant to leave the program it must be assured that the person will not endanger the public by drinking and driving. All drivers must participate in the program for at least the time remaining in their original driving disqualification and until such time as the driver is able, through use of the interlock device, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board that they have able to separate drinking from driving for at least six consecutive months.

### **Which other jurisdictions have ignition interlock programs in place?**

Alberta introduced the first Canadian ignition interlock program in 1990. Quebec's program was introduced in 1997. Since that time Manitoba, Yukon, Ontario, and Saskatchewan have passed enabling legislation that will allow a program to begin in the near future. Other Canadian jurisdictions are developing legislation for interlock programs as part of their commitment to Road Safety Vision 2010, Canada's national strategy to reduce accidents, injuries and deaths by 30%. Interlock programs are also in place in many other countries.

### **Has this program reduced the incidence of drinking and driving other jurisdictions?**

Despite the differences in the various studies and programs, the results are remarkably consistent. The re-arrest rate among offenders with an interlock device has been found to be as much as 75% lower than those without the device (source Traffic Injury Research Foundation).

The effectiveness of the interlock device was also recognized by the federal government during the 1999 Canadian Criminal Code amendments. The amendments added a provision supporting the early use of interlocks by provinces and territories to combat impaired driving. National organizations opposed to drinking and driving, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the internationally acclaimed Traffic Injury Research Foundation, support the use of interlock devices.

### **What is the Yukon Driver Control Board?**

The Driver Control Board is a five-member quasi-judicial board. It is mandated under the *Motor Vehicles Act*. Members are appointed by the Minister of Infrastructure. The purpose of the Board is to carry out an adjudicative role in determining if an individual may hold a drivers licence. Individuals may be referred to the Board by a judge or the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

The Board also acts as an independent appeal board for drivers who have been refused a licence or whose licence has been suspended by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. The Board has the power to invoke an indefinite driver's licence suspension or prescribe any measure or course of remedial education or treatment.