Alberta

What is the pre-set breath alcohol concentration (BAC) level for an alcohol interlock device in Alberta?

The pre-set BAC level for the interlock device is 0.02%.

Do rehabilitative measures or treatment programs exist in Alberta and if so, what do they entail?

Yes, there are rehabilitative measures in place in Alberta however, they are not a part of the interlock program but are instead run in conjunction with it. Before entering the alcohol interlock program, first-time offenders must complete the Planning Ahead program. The cost for this program is $200. Repeat offenders must complete the Impact program which costs $465.

The Alberta Transportation Safety Board (ATSB) will obtain an assessment from a Driver Program called "Impact" for a driver that is considered a repeat offender (2 or more convictions within a 10 year window). This assessment will include recommended supports, if any, by the facilitator of the course and ATSB can impose these recommendations. Should the driver be a first time offender (1 conviction within a 10 year window) ATSB can impose similar types of recommendations (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) attendance, commence or continue a program with the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) a referral to Driver Fitness and Monitoring (DFM) for medical testing for alcohol dependency, etc.).

The recommended supports from the Impact Driver Program are:

- Alcohol/Drug Use Counselling/Treatment (with family and friend participation)
- Alcohol/Drug Use Support Groups (Clergy/Faith or Spiritual Groups)
- Mental Health Counselling/Treatment
- Elder/Community Leaders
- Medical
- Employment
- Counselling
- Leisure Activities
- Financial
- Counselling
- Other

* ATSB can require the driver to provide assessment/confirmation from these supports.

If there is concern with regards to medical testing the Medical Review Board is the only body in Alberta that has the authority to suspend the operator’s licence or make further conditions a requirement for continued driving privileges.
Offenders are not screened before receiving approval into the interlock program. All offenders who are eligible are approved for entry. The screening begins with the service reports provided by the service provider. The first positive sample provided on the program will generate a “Warning” letter to the driver. The second positive sample will generate an automatic one month extension on the program. Any further positive samples are reviewed by the Chair or members of the Board. This can result in a required reappearance, whereby further conditions can be applied to keep their restricted driving privileges or an extension to the term of their program.

Are addicts eligible to participate in the alcohol interlock program in Alberta? If so, is heightened attention paid to addicts?

Yes, addicts are eligible to be participants in Alberta’s interlock program. Offenders that are considered “addicts” may be kept on the program for an undetermined term as they may have to provide continued medical testing for DFM as sanctioned by the Medical Review Board. The heightened level of attention would be monitored by ATSB and then brought to the attention of DFM.

When was the alcohol interlock program implemented in Alberta?

The interlock program was implemented in Alberta in 1990. The pilot program was from 1990 to 1995 and continued on an expanded level since then to include all drivers convicted of an alcohol related offence (excluding those causing injury or death). As of July 1, 2008 there is a mandatory participation for drivers that have provided a breath sample of 0.16% or more, drivers that provided a breath sample of over 0.08% a second or subsequent time, and all drivers that have refused to provide a sample.

What type of alcohol interlock program exists in Alberta?

Alberta has an administrative-based interlock program for offenders. It is run primarily through the ATSB.

Have any recidivism studies been conducted in Alberta?

Several studies have been done in Alberta. The Voas et al. study conducted in 19991 used controlled trials. The interlock group included both first offenders and repeat offenders while the control group was comprised of reinstated and ineligible offenders. The study found that the percentage of reduction in recidivism while the device was installed for first offenders was 95% and 89% for repeat offenders. The study also found that the percentage change in recidivism after the interlock was removed for first offenders was a 9% decrease and a 4% decrease for repeat offenders.

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In Weinrath’s (1997) study the interlock group consisted of repeat offenders and the control group consisted of suspended drivers. Recidivism while installed for the interlock group was 10% and was 25% for the non-interlock group. Recidivism after de-installation for the interlock group was 7% and was 11% for the non-interlock group.

What are the consequences for failing to take a running retest?
If an offender fails to take a running retest it is considered a program violation. There is a special siren connected under the hood of the vehicle at the time the interlock device is installed. If a driver fails to perform the running test the siren starts going and does not stop until the sample is provided or the vehicle is turned off. If the car is turned off and there is no pass within ten minutes ATSB will consider this a positive sample with possible consequences.

What are the consequences for failing a running retest?
If an offender fails a running retest it is considered a program violation. Sanctioning is carried out by the ATSB who are most concerned with serious violations such as high-BAC tests or attempts to by-pass the interlock device. Violations can result in a warning, a Notice to Attend an inquiry with the Board, and an extension or revocation from the alcohol interlock program.

Is indigent funding available in Alberta?
Indigent funding is not available in Alberta.

Has Alberta utilized any strategies to decrease the costs associated with running the alcohol interlock program?
No cost saving strategies have been utilized at this time.

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