

Commonly asked questions about the Pennsylvania Ignition Interlock Program.

Q: What do I need to do after the IID is installed in my vehicle?

A: Nothing. We will fax your lease agreement to Smart Start who will then fax documentation to the Restoration Department at PennDOT verifying installation of the device. Your restricted license will be processed and mailed to you in approximately 7-10 business days. If you do not receive your restricted license within 10 days, please follow-up with PennDOT.

Q: When is my next service appointment?

A: Your first service appointment must be within thirty (30) days after your IID is installed. This appointment will be automatically scheduled for you. From then on, you will be given a window of a few days to choose your next appointment. You may choose to have your next service appointment scheduled for either thirty (30) or sixty (60) days from your last service appointment. If you choose sixty (60) days, payment for both months is due in advance (on the day of your current appointment). Please be aware that if you choose sixty (60) days you will still only be allowed three (3) violations.

The date and time of your next service appointment is programmed into your IID. Press the “4” button on the keypad of your headset to display the date and time of your next service appointment.

Q: What happens if I miss an appointment?

A: An appointment is considered to be “missed” if you are not present at the service location within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled time. If you miss an appointment without providing at least two (2) hours notice to your service location, you will be charged a missed appointment fee. Even if you provide appropriate notice, however, your interlock device will go into lockout one hundred and nineteen (119) hours after your missed service appointment. Lockouts may be reported to the appropriate governmental authority and may be the basis for further action by the governmental authority. If you miss an appointment, you should contact your service location as soon as possible to schedule another service appointment. We strongly encourage you to be on time for all service appointments.

Q: When do I pay for service?

A: Payment for service is due at the time the service is provided. If you do not have appropriate funds at the time service is to be performed, your IID **WILL NOT** be serviced.

Q: Can I pay for my service by personal check?

A: No, Smart Start does not accept personal checks. Payments must be in the form of cash, credit card, check card, money order or certified check (bank check).

Q: How do I get emergency service?

A: If your IID needs service before your next scheduled appointment, you should call your service location to schedule an appointment. If it is after hours, you should call Smart Start at 800-880-3394. Please note that under the applicable governmental regulations, we are required to respond to all service inquiries within twenty-four (24) hours of your initial contact. We are required to complete any repair or replacement of your IID within forty-eight (48) hours of your initial contact. We typically provide a higher level of customer service.

Q: When will the Ignition Interlock Device be removed?

A: We will remove your IID upon your successful completion of the program or when you ask us to do so. If your IID is removed prior to successful completion of the program, the appropriate governmental authority will be notified of the early termination and the early termination may be the basis for further action by the governmental authority. Thus, we strongly encourage you complete the program. Successful completion of the program is when you have received your non-restricted driver's license from PennDOT.

Approximately thirty (30) days before the one (1) year anniversary of the issuance of your restricted license, you should receive a form from PennDOT. Once you have completed the form and returned it to PennDOT, they should send you your non-restricted license. We do not control when PennDOT issues non-restricted licenses. Once you receive your non-restricted license, you **MUST** contact your service location to schedule the removal of your IID. You cannot show up at your service location on your normally scheduled calibration date and expect to have your IID removed. A removal **MUST** be scheduled separately. You also **MUST** remember to bring your non-restricted license with you to your removal appointment. The service location needs to make a copy of this license for your file **BEFORE** your IID can be removed.

Q: Are there any charges for removing the IID from my vehicle?

A: Yes. The charge for removing the IID is \$50.00 plus tax. However, you will not be charged this if you have had your IID calibrated within the past 15 days of the date of removal. But be aware that all fees are subject to change without notice.

Commonly asked questions about the **Ignition Interlock Device**.

Q: Can someone use a balloon or other air source to mimic human breath?

A: No. All Smart Start devices have anti-circumvention techniques, which cause the IID to abort phony breath samples.

Q: Can a person with an IID have someone else take the breath test for the driver to start the vehicle?

A: Not legally. It is unlawful for another person to blow into an IID or to start a motor vehicle for a person whose driving privilege is restricted. However, other people can blow into the IID if they are going to be the one driving the vehicle.

Q: Will the IID unit lose all memory if the battery is disconnected?

A: No. The unit has a back up lithium battery to protect the data log's memory.

Q: If a driver gets stranded and thinks the IID unit is causing the problem, is there anything he/she can do?

A: Call Smart Start at 800-880-3394.

Q: Can a participant leave his/her car running outside of a bar, while drinking inside, and then drive away?

A: The unit will randomly ask for breath tests while the engine is running. If a sample is not given when requested, the device logs a violation.

Q: What if the driver is taking a medicine with an alcohol base?

A: Alcohol is alcohol. If the driver's blood alcohol concentration, as measured in the breath, is over the preset level, the driver will not be allowed to start the vehicle. A FAIL will be registered as a violation. During the training session, drivers are particularly cautioned about common substances that contain alcohol and the use of mouthwash. Wait five (5) minutes, rinse with water and try again. However, be aware that this method may not always work.

Q: What if the driver uses mouthwash in the morning and the mouthwash has an alcohol base?

A: Again, alcohol is alcohol. If the driver does not allow sufficient time for the alcohol to dissipate from his/her mouth, a FAIL will be registered as a violation. Rinse with water and try again in a few minutes.

Q: What happens when a driver fails the breath test?

A: The IID will enter a short lockout period of a few minutes for the first failed breath alcohol test and a longer lockout for any subsequent failed breath alcohol test. This permits an opportunity for the alcohol to dissipate from the mouth and for the driver to consider the reason for the failed breath alcohol test.

Q: Can others besides the participating driver drive the IID-equipped vehicle?

A: Yes. However any intended driver must take and pass a breath test in order to start the vehicle, they will also have to take and pass the “rolling retests”. All other possible drivers should be trained on the operation of the device. The person with the IID restriction is responsible for all readings recorded by the device.

Q: What happens when the IID-equipped vehicle needs repair?

A: The driver needs to contact Smart Start before having repairs conducted on his/her vehicle in case the repair shop has questions about the IID. Documentation from the repair shop must be provided if the power to the vehicle is interrupted. Any time the power is disconnected the lithium battery will record a violation.

Q: If the Ignition Interlock Device unit malfunctions, will it shut the vehicle off?

A: No. The IID unit has no means of interrupting vehicle operation once it is started.

Q: What happens if the vehicle stalls in traffic?

A: The Ignition Interlock Device unit permits the driver to restart the vehicle without having to conduct another breath sample, but a breath sample will be requested shortly after restarting.

Q: What happens if the driver is out of Pennsylvania and experiences problems with his/her Ignition Interlock Device unit?

A: Most states currently have Ignition Interlock Device programs with service centers to assist them. Drivers are instructed to contact Smart Start at 800-880-3394 to be routed to the closest center for assistance.

Q: Will installation of the Ignition Interlock Device damage the vehicle?

A: No. The IID unit is only connected to the wiring under the dash and under the hood. At the end of the program, this wiring is restored to pre-IID installation conditions.

Q: Will the requirements to take a “rolling retest” cause the driver to take his/her eyes off the road creating a hazardous situation?

A: No. When the Ignition Interlock device signals for a retest, the driver has six (6) minutes to provide the sample or to pull over to the side of the road in a safe area to provide the breath sample. There are no buttons to push; the driver must only breathe into the unit to complete a breath sample. This is much simpler than using a cellular telephone or tuning a state-of-the-art car stereo.

Top Myths About Smart Start Ignition Interlock Devices

1. The Ignition Interlock unit drained the battery.

The SSI-1000 draws less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of one amp when not in operation and it draws $\frac{1}{2}$ of one amp when it is preparing for a test. This is minimal drain on the battery of a properly functioning vehicle electrical system. The Ignition Interlock will not drain the battery to the point where it will not start unless the vehicle is not started for approximately 10 consecutive days. This period will be shorter if the electrical system is not functioning properly such as poor alternator output or dead cells in the vehicle battery. These symptoms are common in vehicles 5 years old and older. In such a case, the vehicle would have battery problems with or without an ignition interlock device. Just as tires on a car wear out with use, so do batteries and alternators and they are considered standard maintenance items for proper vehicle upkeep.

We encourage Smart Start clients to start their vehicles on a regular basis so they maintain a charged battery. Keep in mind, the court/DMV order states the unit should be installed in the vehicle most often used. If the car sits unused for extended periods of time, the client may be driving another vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock.

2. Spicy foods or Mexican foods cause the Ignition Interlock to fail.

In some cases spicy foods, when mixed with the HCL in the stomach creates a gas called methane. With the non-alcohol specific devices the methane gas will create a false positive because the sensor reacts to the hydrocarbons. Anti-acids and water will usually relieve the situation. This phenomenon doesn't occur with the alcohol specific ignition interlock. Smart Start® ONLY utilizes alcohol specific, Fuel Cell technology.

3. Cigarette smoke and snuff cause the Ignition Interlock to fail.

Smart Start clients are instructed to always take a few deep breaths before blowing into the unit if they are smokers. Cigarette smoke does not affect the alcohol specific ignition interlock however; smoke should never be blown into any unit.

4. Gasoline at the service station causes the Ignition Interlock to fail.

Normal refueling at the gas station will NOT create a failure. Gasoline in high concentration will not register enough to be a fail on an alcohol specific ignition interlock.

5. Perfume, hairspray, after-shave colognes, cause the Ignition Interlock to fail.

Most perfumes and colognes contain alcohol but the ignition interlock will not react to it in heavy concentrations.

6. Mouthwash/Mouthspray causes the Ignition Interlock to fail.

Mouthwash and sprays usually contain up to 30% alcohol and will definitely react as alcohol in all ignition interlock devices. Non-alcohol mouthwash is available and all ignition interlock users should use this mouthwash. The alcohol concentration level can register as high as .250 but will immediately dissipate within a fifteen (15) minute timeframe due to being mouth alcohol only or quicker if the mouth is rinsed with water. Smart Start clients are always instructed to rinse their mouths out with water before each and every test.

7. Chocolate mints, Altoids, Dentyne and other gums cause the Ignition Interlock to fail.

Alcohol filled chocolates will register a fail; however, the alcohol in the chocolate will dissipate in 3 minutes.

8. Cinnamon Rolls and Donuts make the Ignition Interlock fail.

The sugar and the active yeast can combine to create a low level alcohol fail some of the time. However, as with cigarette smoke or mouthwash, a second test will indicate a drop or a completely clean test. Rinsing the mouth with water after eating and before blowing into the device will eliminate a fail. Smart Start clients should ALWAYS rinse their mouth with water before taking a test.

9. The Ignition Interlock just aborts and I can't start my vehicle.

The majority of all aborts are caused by improperly blowing into the SSI-1000. If the aborting continues, the client should always call Smart Start at **1-800-880-3394** for a solution.

10. My friend or girlfriend blew a fail and was drinking.

The client is informed that they are responsible for all tests recorded on the vehicle's ignition interlock.

11. My engine stopped due to the ignition interlock OR What if it shuts the car down in a bad part of town.

The SSI-1000 is designed to prevent the starting of a vehicle if a breath test is not passed. There is only one wire interrupted for the installation of the ignition interlock device and it serves no other purpose than to send the signal to the starter for the vehicle to start once the test is passed. If the individual fails a test while driving, it simply records a violation; *it does not shut the vehicle down.*

13. I only had one beer or glass of wine or one cocktail.

If one drink is consumed one hour or more prior to startup, the average person will pass the test. Alcohol is normally metabolized at the rate of 1 ounce of alcohol per hour. It should be noted that size, gender, and several other factors play a key role in determining the body's absorption of alcohol. There is no single formula that can be used for everybody in determining how much he or she can drink before they are affected by the alcohol.

14. I can start my vehicle without taking a test.

This can only be accomplished by a deliberate means of circumventing the ignition interlock. This would be considered tampering and would be recorded by the ignition interlock as a start violation. The only exception is if you have just turned your vehicle off or your vehicle has stalled. It takes approximately three (3) minutes for the IID to power down completely giving the client time to restart the vehicle without conducting another test.

15. What does anti circumvention mean?

This is a generic term for features designed to make tampering of the ignition interlock much more difficult. Some anti-circumvention features of the SSI-1000 include voice-tone, rolling-retests and the ability to detect power disconnects.

16. The rolling retest is dangerous.

The rolling retest is programmed to ask for a test within 5 to 15 minutes after initial start up of the vehicle and then randomly thereafter about every 15 to 45 minutes. Once the SSI-1000 requests the test, the client has six (6) minutes to respond. The test does not require eye contact with the device and the (6) minutes allows adequate time to pull over if the client feels more comfortable doing so.

17. The device is not very accurate.

All interlock devices must be certified to meet NHTSA specifications for accuracy and dependability and often by each State's specs as well. When properly calibrated the ignition interlocks are accurate enough to determine the presence of alcohol and its concentration. The ignition interlock cannot be used to determine if a client is legally intoxicated because the test is unsupervised. Some of the evidentiary breath testing equipment used by the police departments actually utilizes a fuel cell sensor as an additional means of verifying test results. Interlocks with fuel cell sensors are accurate.

18. Anyone can blow in the Ignition Interlock. I only have one car in our family.

All family members must be trained to use the ignition interlock; however, the client is responsible for any positives and all readings registering on the monthly data logs. Yes, anyone can blow into the ignition interlock, but they must be able to make the voice tone and pass a test, at a level determined by State requirements, and they must also submit to the rolling retests.