ALCOHOL-INTERLOCK-MONITORED CONDITIONAL DRIVING RIGHTS

A person suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol may request conditional driving rights instead of an absolute driving ban, allowing him or her to drive a vehicle equipped with an alcohol interlock.

What are conditional driving rights monitored with an alcohol interlock in practice?

A person suspected of drunken driving or gross drunken driving under the influence of alcohol may get back his or her right to drive by installing an alcohol interlock for his or her vehicle. Granting a conditional right to drive does not affect the penalty handed down for drunken driving.

What is an alcohol interlock?

An alcohol interlock is a device that keeps the vehicle from starting if the driver has at least 0.1 milligrams of alcohol in one litre of exhalation air. This corresponds to a blood alcohol content of around 0.2 per mille.

The alcohol interlock also randomly requires a breath sample during driving. It will not turn off a running engine, but the vehicle's horn will be activated if the breath sample during driving is not given within the specified time or it exceeds the allowed alcohol content.

The alcohol interlock registers all usage data and any violations and manipulation attempts in the memory of the central unit. Every 60 days, the person under monitoring must take the vehicle to a representative authorised by the device manufacturer and reported to the Finnish Transport Safety Agency for the control of the usage data.

Who may receive conditional rights to drive?

Conditional driving rights can be granted to a regular citizen of Finland guilty of drunken driving under the influence of alcohol who has no driving ban for another reason.

The person must already have the right to drive a passenger car, a van, a lorry, a bus, or a tractor. An alcohol interlock can be installed in one or more vehicles in the use of the person being monitored.

What must one do to be granted a conditional right to drive?

A conditional right to drive can be requested from the police or, at the latest, from the court during the hearing of the drunken-driving case. The request can also be made in writing. The police can order a conditional right to drive also before the court proceedings.

Before an alcohol interlock driving licence can be granted, the person under monitoring must see a doctor or other medical professional to discuss the use of intoxicants, their effect on one's health, and the treatment possibilities related to the use of intoxicants.

The person under monitoring must ask for a certificate for the visit that reveals the purpose of the visit. The certificate is to be delivered to the police of one's domicile when the driving licence application is submitted.

The driving licence application must also include two photographs, a certificate of the installation of the alcohol interlock, and the first part of the vehicle's registration certificate – showing that the vehicle's modifications have been inspected. The police collect a service fee when the alcohol interlock driving licence application is submitted.

Special national condition 111 is indicated on the driving licence, denoting the obligation to use an alcohol interlock.

How long must one keep the alcohol interlock installed?

Use of the interlock remains a condition for the full duration of the court-imposed conditional driving ban. Additionally, the court imposes probation with a length of at least one year and at most three years.

The alcohol interlock must be used throughout the probation – i.e., at least for one year, regardless of the length of the conditional driving ban.

What does it cost to use an alcohol interlock?

Using an alcohol interlock costs around 110–160 euros per month. One does not need to buy an alcohol interlock; it can be hired for the duration of the conditional right to drive. The person under monitoring bears the costs.

Where can one get an alcohol interlock?

Not all of the alcohol interlocks on the market have been approved for use with conditional driving rights.

One may enquire about approved alcohol interlocks with the representatives of device manufacturers or at alcohol interlock installation locations. Below, you can find the contact information of representatives of device manufacturers and a link to a list of alcohol interlock installation and service locations, maintained by the Finnish Transport Safety Agency.

What happens to one's driving licence?

In cases of drunken driving, the police impose a temporary driving ban for the vehicle's driver and take possession of the driver's driving licence.

The conditional right to drive begins when the police assign the alcohol interlock driving licence to the person under monitoring. The police may also grant an alcohol interlock driving licence before the court proceedings for the drunken driving case.

The alcohol interlock driving licence grants a right to drive only those vehicles in which an alcohol interlock has been installed and reported by the person to the police for entry in the traffic register.

Can others drive a vehicle equipped with an alcohol interlock?

Others may drive a vehicle equipped with an alcohol interlock. However, the person under monitoring is responsible for the alcohol interlock being used in accordance with the instructions.

What happens if one violates the conditions of the right to drive?

The conditional right to drive is revoked, and the conditional driving ban imposed for its duration comes into effect. This decision is made by the court.

What leads to revocation of conditional rights to drive?

A conditional right to drive is revoked if the person under monitoring violates a limitation related to the conditional right to drive or neglects a related obligation.

The person under monitoring may not drive any other vehicle than the one in which the alcohol interlock has been installed. Additionally, the driver must periodically take the vehicle to an authorised representative for control of the alcohol interlock's usage data.

The conditional right to drive shall be revoked if the person monitored commits/causes a serious traffic hazard, drunken driving, or gross drunken driving. The conditional right to drive is revoked also if the person under monitoring requests revocation.

What happens after the conditional right to drive (probation period for the conditional driving ban) ends?

The alcohol interlock can remain installed in the vehicle. The device then is given voluntary-use settings (no breath samples during driving or control of the usage data). The alcohol interlock driving licence is returned to the police, who will return the earlier driving licence.

Alternatively, the alcohol interlock may be removed from the vehicle. After its removal, the vehicle's modifications must be inspected. Again, the alcohol interlock driving licence is returned to the police, who will return the earlier driving licence.

After the term of the conditional right to drive ends, one may choose to keep the alcohol interlock driving licence. The person can then drive only the alcohol interlock vehicle indicated in the register.

Representatives of alcohol interlock manufacturers

Dräger Suomi Oy
tel. +358 20 711 9600
www.draeger.com/FI/fi

Suomen Alkolukko Oy
tel. +358 457 3435 254
www.suomenalkolukko.fi

Malux Finland Oy
tel. +358 19 574 5700
www.smartstart.fi

List of alcohol interlock installation and service locations
www.trafi.fi → Tieliikenne → Ajokortit ja tutkinnot → Alkolukko

More information

The police: www.poliisi.fi
Finnish Transport Safety Agency: www.trafi.fi
Ministry of Transport and Communications: www.lvm.fi

Stages of conditional rights to drive monitored with an alcohol interlock

1. *Getting caught drink-driving. The police immediately impose a temporary driving ban and take possession of the driving licence.*

2. *A request for conditional rights to drive is made with the police or, at the latest, during the hearing of the drunken-driving case at the district court.*

3. *A decision is made on conditional rights to drive, at the court hearing or by the police prior to that.*

4. *The alcohol interlock is installed, and the vehicle's modifications are inspected.*

5. A visit is made to a doctor or other medical professional.

6. *Certificates attesting to installation of the alcohol interlock and the vehicle's modification inspection, and for the visit to a doctor or other medical professional, are delivered to the police when the alcohol interlock driving licence application is submitted.*

7. *The person under monitoring is issued an alcohol interlock driving licence by the police. The conditional right to drive begins.*

8. *Checks are made of the alcohol interlock's usage data every 60 days.*

9. *After the probation period for the conditional driving ban ends, the alcohol interlock may be removed from the vehicle. The vehicle's modifications must then be inspected and the alcohol interlock driving licence returned to the Police. The police return the earlier driving licence. The alcohol interlock may be left installed in the vehicle, with voluntary use settings applied.*

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