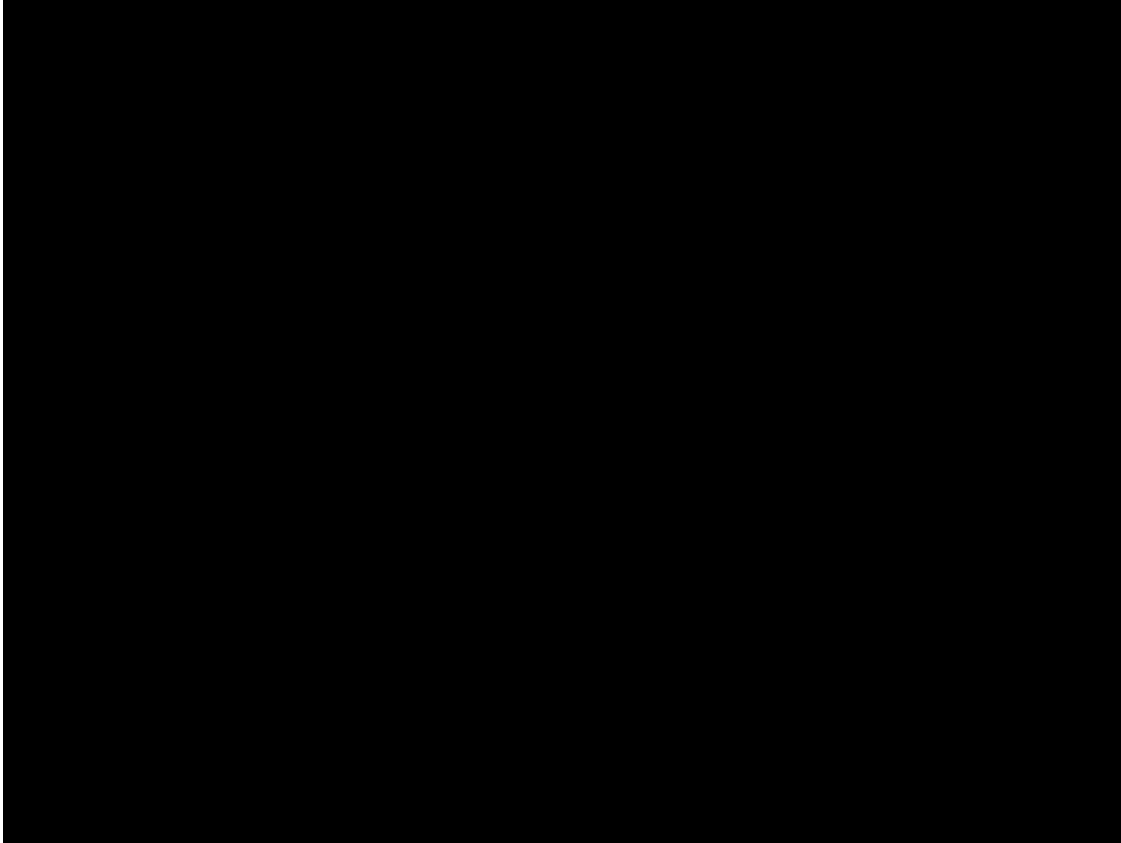


Can Interlock Devices Detect Drugs? | Low Cost Interlock



Alcohol-impaired driving still remains a prominent issue in the United States, accounting for about 29 traffic-related deaths every day. However, drug-impaired driving is becoming another growing problem. Studies show that drugs other than alcohol are involved in about 16 percent of all motor vehicle crashes. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration identifies and tracks over 400 different drugs that can cause impairment.

One of the most widely used tools in the fight against drunk driving is ignition interlock devices. As effective as they are, can interlock devices detect drugs? Read on to learn more.

What is an Ignition Interlock Device?

Car breathalyzers, or ignition interlock devices, connect to your car's ignition and require you to blow into a mouthpiece before you can start your car. The mouthpiece connects to the device, which measures your blood alcohol concentration. If your blood alcohol concentration exceeds the limit set by the court, the IID will prevent you from starting your car for either a set amount of time or until you provide a clean breath sample.

In order to prevent samples taken from other people, most ignition interlock devices will also require you to periodically provide a breath sample while you drive, which is known as a rolling retest. If your BAC is over the limit, the device will log the event and sound an alarm until you shut off the engine or provide a clean sample.

Ignition Interlock Devices and Breath

Alcohol is not immediately metabolized as soon as you take a drink, nor does its chemical structure go through any changes, leaving it fairly intact as it enters your bloodstream. When your blood flows over and around your lungs, some of the alcohol actually evaporates into the alveoli, which are small sacs found throughout your lungs. When you breathe out, a breathalyzer or ignition interlock device can detect the alcohol in your lungs and provide a relatively accurate estimate of your blood alcohol level. The ratio of alcohol in your breath to alcohol in your blood is about 2,100 to 1, meaning that 2,100 milliliters of breath will contain the same concentration of alcohol as 1 milliliter of blood.

As they current are, ignition interlock devices are not capable of detecting drugs in your system, and it's not as simple as tweaking the design of existing devices. All substances are metabolized differently and at different rates.

The main mechanism in action here is vapor pressure. Vapor pressure describes the behavior of a compound as it goes from liquid to gas. Alcohol has a higher vapor pressure, meaning that its molecules are always escaping in gas form, which is why even without a breathalyzer or ignition interlock device, you can smell alcohol on a person very easily.

THC, CBD, and most other cannabinoids (the active components in marijuana) have low vapor pressures. If you were to try to measure THC the same way you measured alcohol, the process would take exponentially longer, and it wouldn't be particularly accurate either. Currently, the only

ways to accurately measure marijuana in a person's system is through blood or urine samples.

Recent developments in science have developed a device that can detect marijuana, meth, and cocaine through someone's breath. The problem is that researchers were unable to detect exactly when a person took a drug, which is a significant part of determining a person's level of impairment. Some opioids, including THC, can stay in your body for weeks, meaning that you could be well past the point of impairment. This is compounded by the fact that some opioids are time released, while others are immediate release.

Drug-Impaired Driving Laws

Even though your ignition interlock device may not detect drugs just yet, it's never a good idea to drive while drug-impaired. Aside from putting you and others on the road in danger, the potential punishments and penalties that you may incur if you're caught could be substantial. Every state currently has laws for drug-impaired driving, though these laws vary from state to state and remain nuanced and hard to prosecute or enforce. While a breathalyzer or IID may not be able to detect drugs in your system, a police officer can still apprehend and arrest you if they believe you to be driving under the influence of a controlled substance.

It's never a good idea to try to cheat your IID, which can result in harsher penalties and longer IID periods.

Sources:

- https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html
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Can An Ignition Interlock Device Detect Marijuana? – Ignition Interlock Comparisons

An ignition interlock device is solely designed to measure your blood alcohol content, so no, it is not designed to detect marijuana, or pot, as it is commonly referred to. However, if you happen to blow into your device while smoking marijuana, it could potentially register a violation, which would result in your vehicle not starting. Smoking marijuana while driving is never recommended, even in you live in a state that has legalized the use of it.

Do Ignition Interlock Devices Only Detect Alcohol?| ALCOLOCK

Ignition interlock devices (IIDs) are designed to keep people from driving drunk. Specifically, an IID is designed to prevent you from starting your car if your blood alcohol concentration is above the state-permissible level (generally .02-.025). The full name that the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) uses is Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices (BAIIDs).

The NHTSA Model Specifications for BAIIDs lay out a lot of information about how reliably accurate the devices must be in detecting alcohol, and how they must not result in a false positive. So yes. When you blow into an ignition interlock device, the only substance the device will detect in that breath sample is alcohol. It ignores anything else on your breath. If there is alcohol on your breath, it will compute the blood alcohol content (BAC) based on your breath sample. It will then either indicate that you passed the test or failed the test. It may also issue a warning that while you did not fail the test (blow above the set level), it detected a smaller amount of alcohol.

If you pass the test, you can start the car. If you fail the test, the device locks you out from starting the car. Depending on your state, you will have another chance to blow a clean sample in a few minutes.

But the Camera May Detect Evidence of Impairment

So while the ignition interlock device breath sample cannot detect cigarette smoke, marijuana, or other drugs in your system, if your device is camera-equipped, you should be aware of that fact.

More and more state ignition interlock laws are now requiring that the interlock devices used in their restricted driving programs be camera-equipped. This is in order to ensure that you are not having someone else take the breath test for you. A camera equipped device takes a quick snapshot of you each time you submit a breath sample — both in a start-up test and in a rolling retest.

So if you've been smoking weed, there may be a cloud of smoke in the car. If you've been using certain drugs, your pupils may be dilated, or be reduced to pinpoints. All of these snapshots and breath test results are recorded on your device. That data is then transmitted to your monitoring

agency either in real-time, or at regular service visits. Rest assured, someone at the DMV or in the court system is reviewing those snapshots. If they suspect you have been driving while impaired, even if they didn't catch you in the act, they may use the pictures as a reason to order a drug test. Depending on the results of that drug test, you could face additional charges.

If You Get Pulled Over

If you get pulled over for any reason, and an officer suspects you are impaired, they may ask you to blow into the IID and check the results. They may also use their own breathalyzer. If both of those tests are negative, the officer may administer a number of other roadside tests designed to detect drug use. If you are charged with driving under the influence of drugs, that will be a major violation of your restricted driving program. So not only could you face criminal charges, but you could lose all of your driving privileges again.

So please, don't drive impaired, for your safety, and the safety of everyone else on the road.

Schedule Your Ignition Interlock Device Installation

If you just got an interlock restricted license and you're ready to get back behind the wheel, ALCOLOCK can help. We offer fast and affordable ignition interlock device installation. We have service centers all across the country. Simply call the service location nearest you to schedule your IID installation. You can also call ALCOLOCK directly at (866) 700-9300. You can save time by having your paperwork handy when you call, as we will need some of that information.

Generally, we can get you an installation appointment for some time during the two days after your call. Remember, you will need to have someone drive you and your vehicle to your appointment, which should take about an hour. That time includes the physical installation of the device, as well as the time it takes for the technician to show you how to use it, and explain what all of the sounds, lights, and messages mean. If someone else will be driving your car while you have the IID installed, we will need to train them to use it as well. And finally, before you go, you will schedule your first service visit. Those usually take about 20 minutes.

Can An Ignition Interlock Device Or Breathalyzer Detect Marijuana? | ALCOLOCK

If you've been convicted of DUI and ordered to install an ignition interlock device (IID) in your vehicle, you may also be wondering if an ignition interlock device, or car breathalyzer, can detect marijuana. The short answer is no. Current ignition interlock devices are made to detect alcohol and alcohol only. IIDs cannot detect drugs in your system. That being said, ALCOLOCK advises you to not operate your vehicle while impaired with marijuana or any other drug, including prescription drugs.

<https://alcolockusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Marijuana-with-an-Ignition-Interlock-Device.mp4>

Be advised that while your IID cannot detect marijuana, and a police breathalyzer cannot detect marijuana, police in many states and Canada do carry a roadside test kit with them that can detect marijuana and other drugs in your saliva. In Canada, recreational marijuana is now legal across the entire country. As a result, officers are using a roadside saliva test, a so-called "weedalyzer". The saliva sample taken at the roadside is then sent to a laboratory for testing. In addition, there's a marijuana breathalyzer officers could use in the U.S. to keep "stoned" drivers off the road by detecting THC on the breath. Just don't expect the technology to be put to use in ignition interlock devices any time soon.

The bottom line is driving while impaired is illegal, and if you are already on a restricted driving program with an interlock device, and you're pulled over and found to be impaired with marijuana, it would likely be considered a second offense, and you could face harsher penalties.

If you live in a state where marijuana or pot is legal for either medicinal or recreational use, please don't smoke while driving. And if you do smoke weed, you'll want to rinse your mouth out with water before taking a breath test with your ALCOLOCK ignition interlock device. Smoking marijuana can leave behind particles in your mouth which can litter, damage, or otherwise prevent your interlock device from allowing you to successfully complete and pass your breath test.

While our ignition interlock devices are not designed to detect pot, blowing pot smoke into your device may damage the fuel cell technology, which is a program violation. All 50 states have ignition interlock laws, and each state has different requirements. But all 50 states say that damaging or tampering with your interlock device is a program violation.

DUI Drugs

While we're on the subject of DUI and marijuana, it's a good idea to be aware that driving under the influence of any drugs — whether over the counter Benadryl, cough medicine, prescription narcotics or illegal street drugs — can result in a DUI drug charge. While we commonly think of DUI as being alcohol-related, the police can charge you with DUI if you are under the influence of any substance that affects your driving. Drugged driving is just as illegal as drunk driving.

When you get behind the wheel in any state, you have essentially made a deal with the DMV / DOT to drive responsibly. Failure to do so can result in you getting pulled over for suspicion of DUI. You may be given a roadside breathalyzer, which can eliminate alcohol as the cause for your erratic driving. The officer may then subject you to a blood or urine test to check for drugs in your system. If even a trace of drugs are found in

your system, you could face criminal charges and driving consequences. Depending on the charges against you and the state in which you are charged, penalties if you are convicted of DUI drugs can include:

- Suspension of your driver's license
- Fines
- Jail time
- A controlled substances charge
- Impounding of your vehicle
- Submitting to random drug tests
- Mandatory enrollment in a drug treatment program

Again, state laws vary on what charges will be filed if you are found to have drugs in your system. If you violate your state's DUI laws multiple times within five years, you are considered a repeat offender and you face more severe penalties. Getting your license back takes longer if you are a repeat offender.

Medical Marijuana and DUI

Even if you have a legitimate prescription for medical marijuana, you may still be charged with DUI. If a law enforcement officer has gathered enough evidence of marijuana impairment, state laws do not allow you to use an otherwise valid medical exemption as a defense. When it comes to DUI charges, medical marijuana is no different than other drugs.

We're With You On the Way Back

ALCOLOCK is dedicated to helping you succeed in your ignition interlock device program. We make it easy to comply with DUI/DWI program requirements so you can earn back your driver's license and get full driving privileges again. Call 866-700-9300 with questions, or use our contact form to schedule an installation.