

Written Testimony of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Michael B. Carroll, Secretary of Transportation

House of Representatives and Senate Transportation Committees
Joint Public Hearing on Ignition Interlock Improvements

May 7, 2025

Chairs Ward, Neilson, Flynn, and Benninghoff, and members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees, I am Mike Carroll, Secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). We appreciate the opportunity to further the conversation on the much-needed improvements to Pennsylvania's ignition interlock process. We are hopeful that the insights and experiences presented today – from PennDOT, vendors, and individuals navigating the process, will assist us as we work together to examine legislative changes to state ignition interlock laws.

The current ignition interlock processes, which are complex, are governed primarily by Sections 1556, 3805, and 3808 of the Vehicle Code (Title 75). The last changes to ignition interlock processes were made in Act 33 of 2016. Prior to Act 33, an ignition interlock was required only after a second driving under the influence (DUI) offense within ten years of a prior DUI offense. The second offense triggered a one-year license suspension with a one-year ignition interlock requirement as a condition of restoration. In addition, all vehicles registered to an offender were required to have an ignition interlock device installed, regardless of whether they were primarily driving one vehicle.

Currently, when an individual is convicted of a DUI or reported for chemical test refusal, a driving privilege suspension is imposed, along with an ignition interlock requirement. Throughout the suspension and interlock requirement, an individual may have the ability to obtain both an Ignition Interlock Limited License (IIDL) and a standard Ignition Interlock (II) license.

Once PennDOT is notified of the conviction by the courts or receives the report of refusal from law enforcement, the department mails out a notice of suspension. The suspension notice lists the effective date of suspension, period of suspension, ignition interlock requirement, and information regarding an IILL. At that point, the individual may be able to apply for an IILL; however, prior DUI offenses and the term of suspension for chemical test refusal violations determine whether a minimum term of suspension must first be served. The responsibility for applying for an IILL belongs to the individual as it permits them to operate a vehicle with an ignition interlock device installed during their suspension.

The application process for an IILL requires individuals to have an ignition interlock device installed in advance of petitioning the department and to provide proof of installation with the IILL petition. In addition, the petition must include the application and fee for a duplicate or a renewal of driver's license, a non-refundable petition fee of \$80.00 (the current fee will increase

on July 1 to \$85.00), proof of insurance, and restoration fee if not already paid. Once the individual collects all necessary forms and fees, they must submit the IILL petition through certified mail. The credit towards the one-year ignition interlock requirement begins on the issuance date of the IILL. Following a suspension, which differs in length depending on the conviction, an individual is able to convert from an IILL to a standard II license to complete the remainder of their ignition interlock requirement.

PennDOT works closely with eight ignition interlock vendors across the state. The contracts hold vendors accountable to the Pennsylvania Ignition Interlock Specifications and the Commonwealth Standard Terms and Conditions, which indemnify the Commonwealth. Allegheny and Dauphin Counties have in-house capabilities through their probation departments to deliver the interlock program. Residents of the remaining 65 counties must utilize services provided through one of the eight vendors.

The Bureau of Operations under PennDOT's Highway Administration Deputate manages vendor contracts and assists vendors in renewing contracts every three years. The Bureau of Operations also manages a contract with the Pennsylvania DUI Association to provide quality assurance to the ignition interlock program. Under this contract, Pennsylvania DUI Association staff make site visits to the interlock installation/service centers, test interlock devices, train vendors on Pennsylvania interlock laws, train law enforcement on the interlock device, and completes quarterly data reviews of vendor program management. Through these tasks, the Pennsylvania DUI Association provides feedback to the Bureau of Operations on the status of the ignition interlock program.

Individuals who have elected to serve their suspension without petitioning for an IILL, must serve the one-year ignition interlock requirement upon restoration and issuance of a standard II license. As required by state law and regulations, ignition interlock vendors must verify that an individual has no vehicles registered in their name if applying for the standard II license. PennDOT provides vendors with access to its system via a virtual private network for purposes of verifying ownership of vehicles. The access is limited to name inquiry only. For individuals applying for an IILL, no vendor verification is required as individuals list the vehicles they will operate on the IILL petition.

PennDOT is proposing a comprehensive change to current ignition interlock processes. These changes include transitioning to a single Ignition Interlock Driver's License (IIDL) that will be required for an individual to operate a motor vehicle equipped with an ignition interlock device. The IIDL will replace the current IILL and standard II license. An IIDL holder will be permitted to operate a motor vehicle during a suspension imposed for a DUI or chemical test refusal. The proposed changes include updates to simplify the application process without compromising safety.

Currently, a driver who applies for an IILL may have to serve a minimum suspension period before receiving the IILL. Under PennDOT's proposed changes, if an individual is convicted of a DUI or reported for a chemical test refusal, they will be immediately eligible to obtain an IIDL

from PennDOT if they have an ignition interlock device installed by a vendor. Ignition interlock vendors would no longer need to access PennDOT vehicle records. All these changes will shorten and simplify the processes so that individuals can more quickly resume safe driving.

Also, under PennDOT's proposed changes, all individuals who receive a license suspension will be notified of the suspension via mail with an outline of the requirements they must meet to obtain an IIDL. In addition to the notice of suspension, they will receive an IIDL application and self-certification form as enclosures in the mailer. The receipt of the notice of suspension signifies the eligibility for an IIDL, which allows the licensee to submit the IIDL application and immediately schedule the ignition interlock device installation. An individual will be able to submit the IIDL application through regular mail – a change from the current requirement of submitting an IIDL application through certified mail. An individual will automatically lose eligibility for an IIDL if the individual is subsequently convicted of another offense that triggers a license suspension, disqualification, recall, cancellation, or revocation.

In closing, PennDOT supports updating ignition interlock processes. We look forward to continuing to work with both Committees and the entire General Assembly as we find a legislative solution to ignition interlock issues in Pennsylvania. Thank you, again, Chairs Ward, Neilson, Flynn, and Benninghoff, and members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees for allowing PennDOT to provide this testimony.