Melanie’s Law / Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program
# Table of Contents

1. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program ................................................................. 1
2. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) .................................................................................. 1
3. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Operator Requirements ........................................ 2
4. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Operator Responsibilities ...................................... 2
5. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Minimum Vehicle Requirements ............................ 3
6. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Vendors / Service Providers ................................. 4
7. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Installation .......................................................... 4
8. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Use ...................................................................... 6
9. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Inspection & Maintenance ..................................... 7
10. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Violations ............................................................ 8
11. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Infractions and Violations Chart ............................ 9
12. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Removal ............................................................ 10
13. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Un-Authorized Removal ...................................... 11
14. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Fees .................................................................. 11
15. IID Indigency Program ............................................................................................ 12
16. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Operation ........................................ 13
17. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Program Credit ............................... 13
18. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Resident Deferment Policy............. 14
1. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program**

On October 28, 2005, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed legislation known as “Melanie’s Law” increasing the penalties for operating a motor vehicle Under the Influence (OUI) of Alcohol or Controlled Substances. This change helped to usher in new and enhanced periods of license suspension or revocation and further established the Commonwealth’s Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program. The IID program requires multiple and certain first-time OUI offenders to install an IID in their vehicle for a prescribed period of time. The IID program is managed by the Driver Control Unit of the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, §§ 24, 24D, and 24 ½, and 540 CMR 25.00 define the rules and regulations that govern the IID program.

Further, as a result of Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020, Sections 35-36, effective July 1, 2021, certain OUI first offenders seeking a hardship license will be required to have an IID installed into a vehicle as a condition of that hardship.

As most recently amended in 2020, Melanie’s Law requires that an IID be installed and used by both drivers with a conditional “hardship” driver’s license and by those operators whose driver’s licenses are eligible for reinstatement following completion of the OUI license suspension or revocation periods. Any operator meeting the requirements for hardship on the OUI offense will be issued a conditional twelve hour/day hardship license with the Hardship and Interlock (“HT”) license restriction. Any operators seeking reinstatement after completion of the OUI license suspension or revocation periods will receive a driver’s license with the Interlock (“T”) license restriction. The “HT” and “T” license restrictions assist law enforcement officials in identifying operators with an IID. The IID must remain installed throughout the operator’s conditional hardship license period plus, for multiple-OUI offenders, an additional two years after reinstatement of full operating privileges.

The IID regulations found at 540 CMR 25.00 were created to establish guidelines for the certification, installation, use, and maintenance of the IID. The RMV certifies interlock service providers to offer installation, maintenance, and monitoring of the IID at convenient locations throughout the commonwealth.

2. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID)**

Q. What is an Ignition Interlock Device (IID)?
A. An IID is a handheld breath-alcohol monitoring device (approximately the size of a cell phone) that is electronically connected to a vehicle’s ignition. Before starting your vehicle, the IID requires you to take and pass a breath-alcohol test. The IID also requires you to pull over to take breath-alcohol re-tests while you are operating the vehicle. Please note retests should be completed after the vehicle has been pulled over to a safe place.
3. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Operator Requirements**

**Q.** When is an IID required?

**A.** The IID program requires multiple offenders who have accumulated two or more suspensions for OUI (Alcohol or Controlled Substances) to have the IID installed in their vehicle. Further, the RMV will honor court orders requesting that an operator install the IID for the full length of that court order.

Additionally, effective July 1, 2021, certain OUI first offenders seeking a hardship license will be required to have an IID installed into a vehicle as a condition of that hardship. Drivers who took a breathalyzer at the time of arrest with results of .15 or above may seek a hardship license at the RMV once they have enrolled in a treatment program ordered by the court and have proof of hardship.

Finally, an IID can be required as a result of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or an order from the Board of Appeal.

**Q.** What is the length of an Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Restriction?

**A.** For multiple offenders, the minimum period for an IID restriction is two years. If the IID is issued on a conditional hardship license, the IID is required for the length of that OUI license suspension or revocation period plus two years after reinstatement of full operating privileges. For certain first offenders granted a hardship and required to have an IID installed as a condition of that hardship, the IID must remain in the vehicle throughout the length of the hardship, subject to removal procedures in 540 CMR 25.12.

**Q.** Is the IID license restriction automatically removed at the conclusion of the IID license restriction period?

**A.** **NO.** All operators must apply to an RMV Hearings Officer to have the IID removed from their vehicle and the license restriction(s) lifted. Removal approval is subject to 540 CMR 25.12.

4. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Operator Responsibilities**

**Q.** Upon notification that an operator needs an IID, what are the operator’s responsibilities?

**A.** Operators are responsible for the installation, maintenance, monitoring, proper usage, and payment of all associated IID fees, unless the RMV has made a determination of financial hardship pursuant to 540 CMR 25.08(1A). *Please see “15. Indigency Program”.*

**Installation** – You must contact an approved vendor/service provider and schedule an IID installation.
**Maintenance Visits** – You must return to the service provider once every 25-30 days from the last service visit for scheduled maintenance and data uploads.

**Monitoring** – You must ensure your device is set to report real time notifications to the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles.

**Proper Usage** – You must follow all of the rules and guidelines you are given for using the IID and must never tamper with or try to circumvent the use of the IID.

**Payment** – You must pay the vendor/service provider all the required leasing and maintenance fees unless you qualify and have been approved for the Indigency Program.

Q. What if I change my address?
A. You are required to inform the RMV of your change of address within 30 days. You can change your address online: https://atlas-myrmv.massdot.state.ma.us/myrmv/_.

You can also change your address by phone at 857-368-8000.

Q. What if I want to change my vehicle that has an IID installed?
A. Operators are required to complete an RMV Hearing **before** transferring any IID between vehicles or transferring to a new IID vendor. Notification to the RMV is also required, but not limited to the following circumstances:

1) Change of IID vendor/service provider
2) Transfer of an IID to a new vehicle
3) Adding an IID to a second vehicle
4) Filing of additional licensed driver affidavits

If your vehicle is no longer operational, you must immediately notify an RMV hearings officer or the RMV’s Ignition Interlock Department at 857-368-7180.

Further information can be found at [https://www.mass.gov/guides/ignition-interlock-device-program](https://www.mass.gov/guides/ignition-interlock-device-program)

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**5. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Minimum Vehicle Requirements**

Q. Are there any minimum vehicle requirements to install an IID?
A. In order for an IID to be installed, your vehicle must have a 12-Volt electrical system and it must be in good working order. Operators are encouraged to check with the approved IID vendor/service provider for more details. The IID will **not** be installed on **motorcycles**. Drivers will be required to downgrade an “M” (Motorcycle) endorsement prior to being issued an interlock-restricted license.
6. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) - Vendors / Service Providers**

Throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there are several approved vendors that offer installation and maintenance of the IID at convenient service provider locations. The following is a link to those approved Service Providers in your area: https://www.mass.gov/doc/iid-vendorsservice-providers-listing/download

- Alcohol Detection Systems – Phone: 1-888-786-7384
- CST Intoxalock – Phone: 1-877-777-5020
- Draeger – Phone: 1-800-332-6858
- Guardian Interlock – Phone: 1-800-499-0994
- Lifesafer – Phone: 1-800-987-8040
- Sens-O-Lock of America, LLC – Phone: 1-800-219-9936
- Smart Start – Phone: 1-781-871-7677

7. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Installation**

Q. How do I get an IID installed in my vehicle?
A. **First** visit an RMV Service Center that conducts Suspension Hearings and apply for a Hearing. The RMV Hearings Officer will contact you by phone and explain the criteria for a conditional hardship license or for full reinstatement. **DO NOT** have an IID installed in your vehicle before you have received approval for the IID from an RMV Hearings Officer. You may review your license status online prior to your hearing at https://www.mass.gov/how-to/check-the-status-of-your-drivers-license-or-massachusetts-id-mass-id

Find out how to request a hearing at https://www.mass.gov/guides/suspension-hearings-information

Q. If I receive approval, what are the next steps in the process?
A. Once you have been approved for a conditional hardship license or for full reinstatement, the RMV Hearings Officer will provide you with a list of approved vendors/service providers along with legal documents (affidavits) that must be completed, signed, and returned to an RMV Hearings Officer. By signing these affidavits, you certify that you understand, as well as each licensed driver in your household understands, that you are not allowed to drive any vehicle without an IID and that you cannot try to bypass the IID in any way. The penalties for these actions are included in the affidavits. Additional important conditions and penalties are listed in the affidavits, and **you should be sure to keep copies for your records.**

Q. Do I have to return to an RMV Service Center with the completed, and signed legal documents (affidavits) before having an IID installed in my vehicle?
A. **YES.** You must return to an RMV Hearings Officer with the completed affidavits. An “HT” or “T” license restriction will be added to your driver’s
license. The “HT” or “T” license restriction means that you are only allowed to operate a motor vehicle equipped with an IID.

Q. Once I have submitted the legal documents (affidavits), can I schedule a permit exam or road test exam?
A. NO. If you do not have an IID installed in your vehicle(s) first, you will not be eligible to have your license reinstated or to schedule a permit or road test examination. You must have an IID installed in every vehicle that you own, lease, or operate (including your employer’s vehicle). No exceptions are made to this requirement. If someone who is not interlock-required drives your interlock-installed vehicle, they must use the interlock device to start the vehicle and you will be held responsible for their actions.

If you transfer your vehicle’s registration to a newly acquired vehicle, or obtain a new registration for an additional vehicle, you must follow the steps for IID installation. You must first seek approval from an RMV Hearings Officer to remove, transfer, or add an IID to a vehicle.

Q. Do I need an appointment for an IID installation?
A. YES. You must call an approved IID vendor/service provider to schedule an appointment for IID installation. DO NOT plan to drive yourself to the appointment – there are NO EXCEPTIONS to your requirement to drive a vehicle with an IID. When you go to your appointment, you must bring proof of your identity. The service provider will install the IID in your vehicle and give you detailed instructions on how to use and maintain the device.

Q. Will I be required to take a learner’s permit exam and road test?
A. MAYBE. If you have not held a license or have been serving a license suspension for greater than two years without conditional hardship license relief or full reinstatement of operating privileges, you are required to pass a learner’s permit exam. You are also required to take a road test in a vehicle equipped with an IID.

Q. How do I schedule a road test?
A. To schedule a road test, contact the RMV’s Contact Center at 857-368-8000. A “Special” IID road test is required when the IID vehicle is not equipped with an emergency brake in the center console area of the front seat, or if the vehicle does not provide a seat for the sponsor. A special IID road test is taken with a road test supervisor and must be scheduled by speaking with an RMV customer service representative.
8. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Use**

Q. Will I receive instructions on how to use the IID?
A. **YES.** At the time the IID is installed in your vehicle, you will receive instructions on how to operate the device from the service station representative.

Q. Are there steps that I need to follow when using the IID?
A. **YES.** Please see the steps below, and any specific instructions you are given at the time of your installation.

1) Turn on the vehicle’s ignition and wait for the IID to display instructions indicating you need to take an initial breath-alcohol test.

2) Blow into the IID until you have provided an acceptable breath-alcohol test sample. If you pass the initial breath-alcohol test, the IID will allow you to start your vehicle.

   If you fail the initial breath-alcohol test (Blood Alcohol Concentration “BAC” greater than .02%), you will not be able to start your vehicle. You will need to wait for your BAC to decrease before you take another breath-alcohol test.

   If you fail the initial breath-alcohol test (Blood Alcohol Concentration “BAC” greater than .02%), a second time within a **service period**, your vehicle will go into **lockout**, and you will need to visit your service provider within **48 hours** to continue operation of the vehicle. If you do not visit your service provider within 48 hours of your vehicle going into lockout, your vehicle will enter permanent lockout. You will have to tow your vehicle to the service provider before your vehicle will start.

3) After the vehicle has started, you will be required to take **rolling re-tests** at random intervals. **You should pull over to a safe place to perform the rolling retest.** When it is time to take a rolling re-test, the IID will beep, alerting you that you have five minutes to take the breath-alcohol re-test. If you do not take the rolling re-test, or if you turn the ignition off before taking the rolling re-test, this will be considered a **missed** test.

**Note:** The IID will **never** shut your engine off after it has been started.
9. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Inspection & Maintenance

Q. Am I required to bring my vehicle in for “service visits”?
A. **YES.** An operator must bring his/her vehicle to the IID service provider once every 25 – 30 days for as long as the operator is subject to the IID license restriction. At these service visits, the IID will be inspected for mechanical and functional defaults. In addition, the IID vendor/service provider will examine the IID device for tampering, which is a violation of the IID program.

If an operator brings their vehicle in for a Service Visit on the 31st day or later, this is considered a **Missed Service Visit** and the vehicle will go into lockout. If an operator has Two (2) Missed Service Visits during the duration of their Interlock Program Requirement, the operator’s right to operate will be suspended for Ten (10) years.

Q. My vehicle is in “lockout”. What steps am I required to take?
A. If the IID in your vehicle goes into lockout, an infraction of the IID has been recorded. You have 48 hours to return to the IID service provider for inspection. If you do not return to the IID service provider within this time period, the IID will enter permanent lockout. Your vehicle will not be operational and must be towed, at your expense, to the interlock service provider to be unlocked. Lockouts for One Missed Service Visits Occur after the 30th day from the previous service visit and are immediate. You must have the vehicle towed to the service provider in order to resolve a lockout for a One Missed Service Visit.

Q. How will I know when a lockout occurs?
A. A lockout occurs when one of the following events happens:

- Two (2) failed start-up tests within one service period
- One (1) failed rolling re-test
- Two (2) missed rolling re-tests within one service period
- One (1) missed service visit

Q. What if I believe my lockout is not justified?
A. If you believe that a lockout is unjustified, you may request a hearing with the RMV within 30 days of the lockout. If the RMV finds the lockout was not justified, the lockout shall be excused. If an operator does not contest their lockout within 30 days, the operator may not contest their lockout at a later time.

Q. What if my IID equipped vehicle is disabled, broken-down, or non-operational?
A. It is the operator’s responsibility to report any change in the operational condition of their motor vehicle to an RMV hearings officer. If your IID equipped vehicle is disabled, broken-down, or non-operational, you must immediately provide proof of the vehicle’s operational status. Following notification, the RMV’s Ignition Interlock Department will remove you from the IID program and suspend your right to operate until the vehicle is returned to working order.
10. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Violations

Q. What constitutes an IID violation?
A. An IID violation consists of any of the following:

1) Operating a motor vehicle without an IID.
2) Soliciting or allowing any other person to blow into an IID in an attempt to either start an IID equipped vehicle or during a rolling re-test in an IID equipped vehicle.
3) Using any other means other than blowing a breath directly from your mouth into an IID.
4) Any attempt to tamper with or circumvent an IID.
5) A failed rolling re-test in which your BAC registered at or above .05 over the entire life of your IID obligation.
6) Two failed rolling re-tests within one service period in which your BAC registered between .02 and .05.
7) Two lockouts due to missed rolling re-tests over the entire life of your IID obligation.
8) Two missed service visits over the entire life of your IID obligation.
9) Two lockouts due to failed start-up tests over the entire life of your IID obligation.
11. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Infractions and Violations Chart

NOTE: Upon notification of violations, the RMV will schedule a hearing to address the IID violation(s). If you are found responsible for the IID violation(s), you may face license suspension, up to and including lifetime license loss. The RMV also has the right to take immediate action pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, Section 22, as warranted by the need to protect public safety.
12. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Removal

Q. When am I eligible to have the IID removed from my vehicle?
A. Multiple OUI offenders serving a suspension with a hardship period must complete that hardship period in the IID program, plus two years thereafter. Certain first offenders granted a hardship with IID must complete the hardship period with the IID only. There is no two-year obligation following the hardship period. Any court or Board of Appeal-ordered obligation would be reflected in that respective order.

Q. How do I apply to have the IID removed from my vehicle?
A. If you have completed all periods of license suspension or revocation and met all IID program requirements, and you wish to have the IID removed from your vehicle, you must complete the following steps:

1) Apply for a removal hearing with an RMV Hearings Officer. See www.mass.gov/rmv for instructions on how to apply. If you have any records or receipts (vendor, mechanical, or otherwise) related to infractions or violations that occurred within the last 6 months, excluding any time of inactive or suspended status, that you would like the Hearings Officer to consider, you may include these records with your removal hearing application. Including these records may expedite your removal hearing.

**Note:** If you did not contest your lockout within 30 days of the infraction, you may not contest your lockout during your removal hearing.

2) During the telephone hearing, the Ignition Interlock Department will review whether any infractions or violations occurred in the past 6 months. If the Hearings Officer finds infractions or violations within the last 6 months, excluding any time of inactive or suspended status, your IID removal request will be denied. At any time, the removal hearing may be adjourned by the Hearings Officer to collect additional evidence as warranted during the review. You will be required to participate in the IID program for an additional 6 months from the date of your last infraction or violation.

If your Ignition Interlock Restriction was originally imposed for a period of less than six months, then the Hearings Officer will review the entire period during which that restriction was in place. If the Hearings Officer finds infractions or violations within that time, excluding any time of inactive or suspended status, the Ignition Interlock Restriction will be extended for six months from the date of the most recent infraction or violation. At any time, the removal hearing may be adjourned by the Hearings Officer to collect additional evidence as warranted during the review.
If you do not have any infractions or violations, your IID will be approved for removal. The Hearings Officer will remove the Interlock Restriction (“T”) from your license.

3) It is necessary that you obtain an unrestricted replacement Driver’s License following your approval for removal of the interlock restriction. Access your myRMV account via https://atlas-myrmv.massdot.state.ma.us/myrmv/. Select the “Replace My Driver’s License” Transaction: www.mass.gov/how-to/replace-your-drivers-license. You may also call the RMV at 857-368-8000 for assistance in obtaining a replacement.

4) Once you have completed the unrestricted replacement Driver’s License process, contact your IID vendor/service provider to have the device removed.

13. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Un-Authorized Removal
Q. What happens if I remove the IID before completion of the IID program?
A. If you remove the IID before program completion, this early un-authorized removal will trigger an immediate license suspension, in additional to other penalties. With this early un-authorized removal and suspension action added, you are no longer active in the IID program and receive no credit towards program completion.

14. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Fees
Q. What is the RMV’s fee for an IID?
A. Pursuant to the provisions of 801 CMR 4.02, all operators subject to an IID license restriction shall be charged a $30 monthly program administration fee. This fee is collected by the IID vendor/service provider on behalf of the RMV at your initial service visit (not installation) and at each subsequent monthly service visit.

Q. Where does this fee go?
A. The $30 monthly program administration fee helps cover the RMV’s cost of running the IID program.

Q. Who must pay this fee?
A. The RMV requires multiple offenders who have accumulated two or more convictions for OUI (Alcohol or Controlled Substances) and certain first-time offenders seeking a hardship license to have the IID installed in their vehicle and pay the appropriate fees. This fee is effective following installation of the device, payment of all associated license reinstatement fees, and successful completion of
the license permit exam and driving road test. This fee is not charged to persons who the RMV has determined would suffer a financial hardship if the fee was imposed.

Q. I have multiple vehicles. Will I be charged multiple fees?
A. The IID must be installed in every vehicle that you own, lease, or operate (including your employer’s vehicle). No exceptions are made. The $30 monthly fee is collected per IID program participant, not per vehicle.

15. IID Indigency Program

Q. I heard the RMV has an IID Indigency Program available for people for are experiencing financial hardship. What costs and fees will be covered?
A. Approved drivers may receive a qualifying interlock device, installation, monitoring, and service at no cost.

Q. What fees and costs are not covered by the Indigency Program?
A. Costs for an IID that are related to unjustified lockouts or other behavioral penalties, upgrades, and service plans are not included in the Indigency Program. Any fees due to the RMV, including reinstatement fees, citation late and release fees, and exam and issuance fees are not included in the IID Indigency program.

Q. What are the qualifying criteria in order to apply?
A. One of the following criteria must be met:

- Drivers currently enrolled in MassHealth or who receive benefits via an Electronic Benefits Card with the Department of Transitional Assistance will be electronically verified.
- Drivers who have a document from a court of competent jurisdiction, dated within 12 months preceding the application of indigency, stating they have been appointed counsel or have otherwise had financial status verified by the court may upload this document through the application portal.
- Drivers whose income, after taxes, does not exceed 125% of the current Federal Poverty Line, pursuant to the Poverty Guidelines as periodically updated by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court pursuant to G.L. c. 261, § 27B, may enter this date though the application portal, subject to electronic verification.

Q. Who makes the decision on who is indigent? How does my chosen IID vendor get notified of my status?
A. The RMV will review all applications for indigency submitted through the application portal and will notify drivers of a decision in a timely manner. The RMV will then electronically notify the IID vendors when installation is approved by an RMV Hearings Officer.
Q. How do I apply and what do I do if I am denied and wish to appeal the decision?
A. Applications are accepted online via the IID Indigency Application Portal. See https://www.mass.gov/guides/ignition-interlock-device-program for details. In all cases, if you are aggrieved by a decision or order of the Registrar, you may, within ten days of the effective date of the Registrar's order, appeal to the Board of Appeal on Motor Vehicle Liability, Policies and Bonds, 1000 Washington St., 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02118. You can download an appeal application from their website at https://www.mass.gov/how-to/appeal-a-decision-of-the-registrar-of-motor-vehicles

Q. What if I have questions about the Indigency Program?
A. Though the most detailed information can be found in this packet and at https://www.mass.gov/guides/ignition-interlock-device-program, a dedicated, informational phone number has been set up at 989-321-6846.

16. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Operation

Q. Am I required to have an IID equipped vehicle when travelling out-of-state?
A. YES. All operators who are licensed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and required to have an IID to operate a vehicle must continue to use an IID equipped vehicle when travelling out-of-state. Failure to use an IID and meet all IID requirements will result in the immediate suspension or revocation of your driver’s license.

17. Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Program Credit

Q. I have moved out-of-state and still maintain an IID in my vehicle. Will Massachusetts give me credit towards the IID program?
A. YES. An operator can receive program credit for time in which they maintain an IID in their vehicle while residing in another jurisdiction. You must be enrolled in the Massachusetts Interlock Program and meet all program requirements. You must use an IID vendor/service provider that conducts business in Massachusetts and the state where you reside, and the IID must be set to the same standards as Massachusetts. Program requirements require IID maintenance, monitoring, live time reporting, and regularly scheduled service visits. No credit will be given if Massachusetts standards are not set, or if there is evidence of program violations or non-compliance.
18. **Ignition Interlock Device (IID) – Out-of-State Resident Deferment Policy**

Q. I am licensed out-of-state and have two or more convictions for OUI (Alcohol or Controlled Substances) in Massachusetts. Do I need an IID while travelling in Massachusetts?

A. **Maybe.** If a Massachusetts IID is required, you cannot drive in the state without one. If you are living out-of-state and choose not to participate in the Massachusetts IID program, the interlock restriction will be added to your license or right to operate until you complete the two (2) year interlock requirement or process an Out-of-State Deferment. If you operate a vehicle in Massachusetts without an IID, you could face an additional license suspension as well as being subject to criminal penalties. You must see an RMV Hearings Officer to determine if the requirement applies to you.

Massachusetts will authorize your deferment of the IID program upon a showing of out-of-state residency and execution of an Out-of-State Resident Affidavit. This deferment from the Massachusetts interlock requirement enables you to apply for a license in another jurisdiction but does not satisfy program completion for Massachusetts purposes.

To complete the deferment process, you must submit to an RMV hearings officer a completed and signed Out-of-State Affidavit, along with two items of proof of out-of-state residency. Further, all other outstanding license obligations must be met, including suspension periods served, and reinstatement fees must be paid before the “T” restriction is removed.