

Iowa OWI – Frequently Asked Questions

Contact Information

How can I contact the Iowa Department of Education's Drinking Driver Education program?

Contact us using the [OWI/DUI/DWI Assistance form](#). Our office hours are Monday – Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST

How do I contact the Iowa Department of Transportation?

By phone: 515-244-8725 or by email: ods@dot.iowa.gov

Requirements

What is the National Driver Register?

The National Driver Register (NDR) is a computerized database of information about drivers who have had their licenses revoked or suspended or have been convicted of a serious traffic violation for which they still have sanctions that need to be satisfied. State motor vehicle agencies provide the NDR a list of individuals who have lost their privileges to drive and a "hold" is then placed on their licenses. Prior to issuing or reissuing a driver's license, the state DMV checks the registry; if a person is listed, the license may be denied. The individual's license may be held until all sanctions have been satisfied. Once the hold is removed, there is no longer a record maintained on the NDR.

Why do I have a hold on my driver's license?

Individuals that are ticketed for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated face both civil and criminal sanctions. The court determines what criminal penalties to impose on the offender. They often include, but are not limited to, jail time, fines, education, substance abuse evaluation, community service and restitution to victims. State law determines what civil penalties are imposed on the offender to reinstate their driving privileges. In most cases, drivers that offend outside of their own state face sanctions in both the state they offended in as well as their home state or state where they hold a driver's license. Failure to satisfactorily complete the requirements will result in a hold being placed on a license in the National Driver Register.

What is a substance abuse evaluation/assessment?

A substance abuse evaluation is used to assess whether an individual is chemically dependent and would benefit from treatment. A variety of diagnostic tools may be used by the evaluator to make this determination. At the completion of the assessment, a summary report by the evaluator should be prepared. You are entitled to receive a copy of this evaluation.

Can I take the drinking driver education class or substance abuse evaluation online?

Iowa **does not** accept online classes/evaluations. Classes must be taken in a classroom setting at a state approved facility.

Where can I take the drinking driver education class in Iowa?

We maintain a [list of approved providers in Iowa](#) on our website.

Where can I get a substance abuse evaluation in Iowa?

We maintain a [list of approved providers in Iowa](#) on our website.

Is there a statute of limitations on having to complete the requirements?

No. Every person who received an OWI/DUI in Iowa or Iowa residents who offend in another state must complete the requirements.

What are the penalties for an OWI?

OWI offenders in Iowa face both criminal and civil penalties. The court determines what criminal penalties to impose on the offender. They often include, but are not limited to jail time, fines, education, substance abuse evaluation, community service and restitution to victims. State law determines what civil penalties are imposed for the offender to reinstate their driving privileges.

CRIMINAL Penalties Side of Arrest (COURT)	CIVIL Penalties Side of Arrest (DOT)
Fines	Financial responsibility requirements
Jail time	State mandated drinking driving course (12 hours education – Prime for Life course)
Others penalties	Substance abuse evaluation
Court can dismiss charges if they choose.	If treatment is recommended, complete this requirement.
	Show proof of SR22, if applicable

NOTE: Civil side penalties are imposed in order for the offender to reinstate their driver's license

The judge dismissed my OWI case. Why do I still need to take the drinking driver education class and substance abuse evaluation?

In Iowa, an individual charged with an OWI faces both **criminal (courts)** and **civil (driving) sanctions**. At the time an individual is arrested for the OWI, a copy of the citation is directed to both the court and the driving authority (Iowa Department of Transportation - IDOT). The court system does not notify the DOT of the dismissal. You have a limited amount of time to contest the charge with the IDOT. If not contested, the IDOT will still require that the offender satisfy the sanctions. Contact the IDOT at 515-244-8725 to learn more about contesting a charge.

What is a 48-hour class?

Iowa requires a first-time offender to spend 48 hours in jail and complete a drinking driver education course. Some providers have programs that combine the jail requirement and the education requirement. The offender attends the class at a local hotel where they are under house arrest and they are required to submit to random alcohol/drug testing. The cost of the 48-hour program includes the cost of the class plus the cost of lodging, meals, security and testing. With the approval of the judge, the offender completing the 48-hour program is not required to go to jail for the OWI offense.

Does AA count for the drinking driver education class?

No. Iowa requires that an OWI offender complete a drinking driver education class in a classroom setting.

Will attending a Victim Impact Panel satisfy my drinking driver education requirement?

No.

When stopped, I refused to be tested (did not submit breath or blood sample). Do I still need to comply with the sanctions?

Yes.

I don't live in Iowa. Do I still need to take the drinking driver education and substance abuse evaluation?

Yes.

Can I take my drinking driver education class outside of Iowa?

Yes. Iowa will accept drinking driver education courses taken outside of Iowa as long as it has been approved by the state in which it is offered, is completed in a classroom setting and is at least **eight hours in length**.

How can I find a place to take the drinking driver education class or a place to do a substance abuse evaluation in a state other than Iowa?

We maintain a listing of approved facilities throughout the country. Complete the [OWI/DUI/DWI Assistance form](#) and information will be sent to you.

I need to know what my blood alcohol content (BAC) was when I was arrested. How can I get that?

Contact the arresting law enforcement agency or the Iowa Department of Transportation at 515-244-8725.

I completed my education and evaluation *outside* of Iowa. How long does it take to clear the hold on my record?

There are several things that can impact the hold on your license. It typically takes 48 hours for the hold to be lifted once ALL of the following have been received and processed:

- Payment of civil penalty to the Iowa Department of Transportation
- Certificate of completion of a drinking driver education class
- Payment of processing fee for drinking driver education class, if outside of Iowa
- Substance abuse evaluation completion
- Treatment completion if recommended during substance abuse evaluation
- Complete revocation period
- Show proof of SR22 insurance/residency statement, if applicable
- Comply with interlock requirements, if applicable

I am an Iowa driver and got an OWI in another state. What is required of me?

Iowa requires that you satisfy the requirements of the state where you offended **AND** the requirement of Iowa. You can review your reinstatement requirements online at: <https://mymvd.iowadot.gov/Account/Login>

If I complete my drinking driver education class in Iowa, do I need to send anything in to be processed?

No. The agency at which the class was taken is responsible for electronically notifying the Iowa Department of Transportation that the class has been completed.

When and why do I need to complete a Residency Statement?

The Residency Statement is used to notify the Iowa Department of Transportation that you are no longer an Iowa resident. Someone who is required to file SR22 insurance but is not a resident of Iowa can submit a Residency Statement in order to waive the SR22 requirement.

I completed treatment. Do I still need to take the drinking driver education class?

Treatment does not always include an education component. If your treatment did include at least eight hours of a drinking driver education course, and the treatment facility specifically states this in your treatment completion documentation, you do not need to complete an additional course. A drinking driver course will need to be completed if one was not included in your treatment.

I cannot afford to take the drinking driver education class or do the substance abuse evaluation.

Please contact a provider in your area to see if they have a reduction of fees program.

Documents

What documents does the Iowa Department of Education Drinking Driver Education Program process?

If you took a drinking driver education class, a substance abuse evaluation or completed treatment outside of the state of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education will process your completion documentation and

electronically notify the Iowa Department of Transportation that you have completed the requirements. If you took the drinking driver education class or had a substance abuse evaluation or treatment in Iowa, the Iowa agency at which you completed your requirement is responsible for electronically notifying the Iowa Department of Transportation. An Iowa agency might withhold completion information until you have paid any fees owed to them for the services provided.

Payments/Fees

Is there a fee for sending documents?

If you completed your drinking driver education class **outside** of Iowa, there is a \$37.50 processing fee. It is a one-time fee and may be paid at any time. There is a \$1.00 convenience fee for paying online. There is no fee for processing substance abuse evaluation/treatment documentation.

How can I pay my \$37.50 document processing fee?

You may pay online with a debit or credit card (VISA, Master Card or Discover) at <https://stateofiowa.seamlessdocs.com/f/owiadmin> or send a cashier's check or money order made out to the Iowa Department of Education through postal mail to the address below. We do not accept personal checks. Please note that there is \$1.00 convenience fee for paying online.

Iowa Department of Education
Drinking Driver Education Program
400 E 14th St
Des Moines, IA 50319

I owe a civil penalty to the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). Can I pay this online?

Contact the IDOT to determine if you qualify to pay your penalty online at 800-532-1121 or by email at ODS@dot.iowa.gov.