IOWA · OWI CHECKLIST

Iowa OWI Checklist

What to do today, this week, and before your court date. Print it. Check things off. One step at a time.

YOUR FIRST DEADLINE

10 days to act on your Iowa DOT OWI revocation appeal (contested case hearing before an administrative law judge)

10 days from the day the officer served you the notice of revocation, or by the date printed on the notice. If the DOT mailed the notice, 10 days from receipt. The officer's notice works as a 10-day temporary license. Miss the deadline and your right to a hearing is foreclosed. The hearing is held within 45 days of the request (§321J.13).

Who: Iowa Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Division; hearings held by an administrative law judge at the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing

KEY FACTS

SUSPENSION, 1ST FAILED TEST

180-day revocation (no prior revocation); 1 year with a prior

SUSPENSION, 1ST REFUSAL

1-year revocation (no prior revocation); 2 years with a prior

1ST OFFENSE CHARGE

Serious misdemeanor

1ST OFFENSE FINE

$1,250 (up to $625 can be waived if you show the court a temporary restricted license)

1ST OFFENSE JAIL

48 hours to 1 year

INSURANCE FILING

SR-22 for 2 years

PRIOR OFFENSES

Priors within 12 years count

IGNITION INTERLOCK

Required on every vehicle you drive to get a temporary restricted license (TRL) during any OWI revocation, including a first offense. After a second or later revocation under chapter 321J, an interlock is also required to reinstate. A court can also order one on conviction or as a condition of a deferred judgment.

1 First 24 Hours

- [ ] **Iowa DOT OWI revocation appeal (contested case hearing before an administrative law judge): act within 10 days. 10 days from the day the officer served you the notice of revocation, or by the date printed on the notice. If the DOT mailed the notice, 10 days from receipt. The officer's notice works as a 10-day temporary license. Miss the deadline and your right to a hearing is foreclosed. The hearing is held within 45 days of the request (§321J.13).**
- [ ] Find your notice of revocation — The officer took your Iowa license and served you a notice of revocation. It works as a temporary license for 10 days. Check the deadline date printed on it.
- [ ] Request an appeal within 10 days — Send your appeal to the Iowa DOT so it arrives within 10 days of service. OWI appeals start at the formal level and go to a telephone hearing with an administrative law judge.
- [ ] Ask about a temporary restricted license — You can apply for a TRL with Form 430400. You will need an SR-22, an ignition interlock on every vehicle you drive, and the civil penalty paid.
- [ ] Get your substance use evaluation started — Iowa requires an approved evaluation and any recommended treatment before reinstatement. Starting early keeps you on schedule.
- [ ] Talk to a lawyer about the criminal case — The court case is separate from the DOT revocation. A lawyer can tell you whether a deferred judgment is possible in your case.

2 Court

- [ ] Arrest and initial appearance — You usually see a judge within 24 hours. The judge tells you the charge and sets bail or release conditions.
- [ ] Arraignment — The formal charge is read and you enter a plea. For a serious misdemeanor, you can often file a written arraignment and plea instead of appearing.
- [ ] Pretrial and discovery — Your lawyer reviews the reports, test records, and video, and may file motions. The DOT revocation appeal runs separately.
- [ ] Plea or trial — A first OWI may qualify for a deferred judgment, but not if your alcohol concentration was over 0.15. A guilty plea to a serious misdemeanor can be made in writing with the court's approval.
- [ ] Evaluation and sentencing — You must get a substance use disorder evaluation before sentencing. The court orders you to follow its recommendations and to complete the drinking drivers course, along with jail, the fine, and revocation.

3 Getting Your License Back

- [ ] Substance use disorder evaluation and the course for drinking drivers: Everyone convicted of OWI must get a substance use disorder evaluation before sentencing and follow its recommendations. The court or the DOT also orders the course for drinking drivers. Both must be done before your license is reinstated.

- [ ] Ignition interlock: Required on every vehicle you drive to get a temporary restricted license (TRL) during any OWI revocation, including a first offense. After a second or later revocation under chapter 321J, an interlock is also required to reinstate. A court can also order one on conviction or as a condition of a deferred judgment.
- [ ] File SR-22 insurance and keep it 2 years.
- [ ] Ask about a Temporary restricted license (TRL): Install an approved interlock, file proof of financial responsibility (SR-22), pay any civil penalties, and apply to the Iowa DOT on Form 430400.

Your full Iowa OWI guide

Deadlines, penalties, the court process, license hearings, and FAQs, with links to the official sources.

https://dui911.org/iowa

Official source for your license deadline: https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/suspensions-revocations/appeals

This checklist is educational and is not legal advice. Laws, deadlines and fees change; confirm them with the agency or a licensed Iowa attorney before you rely on them. DUI911.org is not a law firm and is not affiliated with any law firm, interlock company or insurer.