PENNSYLVANIA · DUI CHECKLIST

Pennsylvania DUI 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

30 days to act on your PennDOT license suspension (no administrative hearing; appeal to the Court of Common Pleas)

Pennsylvania has no administrative hearing. You can appeal a PennDOT suspension notice (including a refusal suspension) to the Court of Common Pleas, Civil Division, in your county of residence within 30 days of the mailing date on the notice, not the arrest date. State law sets a 30-day appeal period for an appeal from a government unit to a court, counted from the order, and the Driver's Manual applies it to the notice's mailing date.

Who: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Driver and Vehicle Services

KEY FACTS

SUSPENSION, 1ST FAILED TEST

No suspension at arrest. After a first conviction: none at General Impairment, 12 months at High or Highest Rate

SUSPENSION, 1ST REFUSAL

12 months (18 months with a prior refusal or DUI)

1ST OFFENSE CHARGE

Misdemeanor; first degree if a passenger under 18 was in the vehicle

1ST OFFENSE FINE

General: $300. High: $500–$5,000. Highest or refusal: $1,000–$5,000

1ST OFFENSE JAIL

General Impairment: 6 months' probation, no mandatory jail. High Rate: 48 hours to 6 months. Highest Rate or refusal: 72 hours to 6 months

INSURANCE FILING

No special filing required

PRIOR OFFENSES

Priors within 10 years count

IGNITION INTERLOCK

Required for a second or later DUI. First offenders suspended at the High or Highest Rate, and drivers suspended for a refusal, can drive sooner with an Ignition Interlock Limited License.

1 First 24 Hours

- [ ] **PennDOT license suspension (no administrative hearing; appeal to the Court of Common Pleas): act within 30 days. Pennsylvania has no administrative hearing. You can appeal a PennDOT suspension notice (including a refusal suspension) to the Court of Common Pleas, Civil Division, in your county of residence within 30 days of the mailing date on the notice, not the arrest date. State law sets a 30-day appeal period for an appeal from a government unit to a court, counted from the order, and the Driver's Manual applies it to the notice's mailing date.**
- [ ] Know there is no hearing to request — Pennsylvania has no administrative license hearing after a DUI arrest. Your license is not taken at the stop for a test failure.
- [ ] Watch the mail for a PennDOT notice — If you refused a test, PennDOT mails a suspension notice. You have 30 days from the mailing date printed on it to appeal to the Court of Common Pleas in your county.
- [ ] Find your BAC tier — Your result puts you in General Impairment (0.08–0.099), High Rate (0.10–0.159), or Highest Rate (0.16+). Refusal is sentenced at the Highest Rate. The tier drives everything else.
- [ ] Ask about ARD — Most first offenders can ask the district attorney about Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition. Completing it can lead to dismissal and expungement.
- [ ] Write down what happened — Where you were stopped, what you drank and when, and exactly what the officer said before asking for a test. The refusal warning matters on appeal.
- [ ] Talk to a lawyer before the 30-day appeal window closes — Under state law, filing and serving a petition for appeal of a suspension pauses it until the court decides the appeal. Missing the 30-day deadline usually ends that option.

2 Court

- [ ] Charging and preliminary arraignment — Charges are filed before a Magisterial District Judge (MDJ). If you are arraigned after arrest, it generally happens within six hours.
- [ ] Preliminary hearing — Usually 3 to 10 days after arrest, before the MDJ, unless continued. You can waive it and send the case straight to the Court of Common Pleas.
- [ ] CRN evaluation — Every DUI offender gets a Court Reporting Network evaluation. It helps the court decide sentencing, probation, or ARD conditions.
- [ ] Formal arraignment and ARD — The district attorney files the charges (the "information"), and you plead at the courthouse, usually a month or two after the preliminary hearing. Many first offenders apply for ARD through the district attorney.
- [ ] Plea, trial, or ARD, then sentencing — If convicted, your BAC tier sets the minimum jail, fine, and suspension. A full drug and alcohol assessment comes before sentencing in some cases.

3 Getting Your License Back

- [ ] CRN evaluation, Alcohol Highway Safety School, and drug and alcohol assessment: Alcohol Highway Safety School is part of the sentence for a first or second offense at every tier, but not a third or later offense, and it is a condition of ARD. Every DUI offender completes a Court Reporting Network (CRN) evaluation. The CRN can recommend Alcohol Highway Safety School or a full assessment. A full drug and alcohol assessment is required before sentencing if your BAC was 0.16 or more, you had a prior DUI within 10 years, or the CRN recommends it. Treatment the court orders must be finished before PennDOT restores your license.
- [ ] Ignition interlock: Required for a second or later DUI. First offenders suspended at the High or Highest Rate, and drivers suspended for a refusal, can drive sooner with an Ignition Interlock Limited License.
- [ ] Ask about a Ignition Interlock Limited License (IILL): Apply to PennDOT. Its Ignition Interlock Limited License page and fact sheets list the eligibility rules and the application. An approved interlock must be installed in each vehicle you drive.

Your full Pennsylvania DUI guide

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

https://dui911.org/pennsylvania

Official source for your license deadline: https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dmv/resources/laws-and-regulations/dui-legislation

This checklist is educational and is not legal advice. Laws, deadlines and fees change; confirm them with the agency or a licensed Pennsylvania 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.