TENNESSEE · DUI CHECKLIST

Tennessee DUI Checklist

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

YOUR LICENSE CASE

Court-ordered revocation (no separate administrative hearing)

Tennessee has no administrative license hearing to request after a DUI arrest. The court revokes the license on a DUI conviction, and the court decides any implied consent violation. Your deadlines are your court dates.

Who: Tennessee courts (revocation orders); Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (reinstatement and restricted licenses)

KEY FACTS

SUSPENSION, 1ST FAILED TEST

No administrative suspension for a failed test. A first DUI conviction brings a 1-year revocation ordered by the court.

SUSPENSION, 1ST REFUSAL

1 year, ordered by the court; 1 year 6 months for a first blood-test refusal in a misdemeanor DUI case since January 1, 2026, and for every first violation starting January 1, 2027

1ST OFFENSE CHARGE

Class A misdemeanor

1ST OFFENSE FINE

$350 to $1,500

1ST OFFENSE JAIL

48 consecutive hours to 11 months 29 days (7 consecutive days minimum at 0.20 or more)

INSURANCE FILING

SR-22

PRIOR OFFENSES

Priors within 10 years count

IGNITION INTERLOCK

Required to drive on a restricted license during any DUI revocation, and on a restricted license after an implied consent violation. You need a court Order for Restricted Driver License (ORDL), proof of SR-22 insurance, and proof of installation.

1 First 24 Hours

- [ ] **Court-ordered revocation (no separate administrative hearing): Tennessee has no administrative license hearing to request after a DUI arrest. The court revokes the license on a DUI conviction, and the court decides any implied consent violation. Your deadlines are your court dates.**

- [ ] Find your court date on the citation or warrant — Tennessee has no administrative license hearing to request. The criminal court decides your license, so your arraignment date is the deadline that matters.
- [ ] Check for a separate implied consent warrant — If you refused a test, it is charged on its own warrant or citation. A first refusal usually costs your license for 1 year, or 1 year and 6 months if you refused a blood test in a misdemeanor DUI case on or after January 1, 2026.
- [ ] Read your bond conditions — Follow every condition the magistrate set. Violating bond conditions can put you back in jail before your case is heard.
- [ ] Ask about a restricted license early — To keep driving after a revocation you need a judge-signed ORDL, SR-22 insurance, and an ignition interlock. Start pricing interlock and SR-22 now.
- [ ] Write down what happened and talk to a lawyer — Record where you were stopped, what you drank and when, and what tests you were asked to take. Every DUI conviction carries mandatory jail, so talk to a lawyer before your first court date.

2 Court

- [ ] Arrest and initial appearance — You first appear before a magistrate or General Sessions judge. You're told the charge, your right to a lawyer (appointed if you can't afford one), your release conditions, and your right to a preliminary hearing.
- [ ] General Sessions settings — Most first-offense DUI cases start in General Sessions Court. The case may be resolved there, or you may ask for a preliminary hearing where the judge decides whether there is probable cause.
- [ ] Bind-over and grand jury — If the case is bound over, the District Attorney General presents it to a grand jury. Twelve votes are needed to return an indictment.
- [ ] Criminal Court arraignment — After an indictment, you appear before a Criminal Court judge, hear the charges, and enter a plea of guilty or not guilty.
- [ ] Plea or trial, then sentencing — A DUI conviction brings mandatory jail (48 hours minimum for a first offense), a 1-year revocation, and any probation conditions the judge sets, such as DUI school. DUI is not eligible for diversion.

3 Getting Your License Back

- [ ] Licensed DUI School (Prime for Life curriculum): Proof of a completed alcohol or drug education course is required to reinstate after a 2nd or later DUI conviction. For a first offense, the judge may order DUI school as a probation condition. Licensed schools teach at least 12 hours.
- [ ] Ignition interlock: Required to drive on a restricted license during any DUI revocation, and on a restricted license after an implied consent violation. You need a court Order for Restricted Driver License (ORDL), proof of SR-22 insurance, and proof of installation.
- [ ] File SR-22 insurance.

- [ ] Ask about a Restricted driver license: Ask the court for an Order for Restricted Driver License. Install the interlock first. Then take two copies of the order, proof of SR-22, and proof of installation to a Driver Services Center within 10 days of the order date.

Your full Tennessee DUI guide

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

https://dui911.org/tennessee

Official source for your license deadline:
https://www.tn.gov/safety/driver-services/reinstatements-and-moving-violations/ignition-interlock.html

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