

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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ISSUE BRIEF

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RDL Ignition Interlock Fee Estimate from Department of Motor Vehicles

The Joint Fiscal Office has reviewed the suggested fee for obtaining a Restricted Driver's License (RDL). This fee was suggested by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in response to a request from the House Committee on Judiciary. Under this law, DMV would be responsible for reviewing a driver's compliance with the RDL program's requirements, which include reviewing photos of the person who provided the breath sample to the ignition interlock device.

DMV's estimate:

DMV has recommended an annual fee of \$125 in response to the Committee's request. DMV estimates that staff would need to devote approximately 0.5 hours per month, per RDL driver, to the review of photographs and other compliance information. DMV estimates the average personal services (salary and benefits) cost for providing this service to be \$40,473 annually. Therefore, the cost to perform these duties for one RDL driver for one year is estimated at \$116.75 per year.

Issues to consider:

DMV's estimated cost per employee to perform the necessary duties did not include administrative and other overhead costs. At a minimum, computer access will be necessary. It may also be necessary for DMV to make upgrades to existing computer systems in order to make them compatible with the images and data collected by the ignition interlock devices. Whether or not the \$125 fee is sufficient to cover these overhead costs was not addressed by DMV.

DMV may need to add staff to achieve the intent of this legislation. Currently, DMV has a pilot program with 7 applicants. Due to the current allocation of staff resources, DMV does not review the photographs and other information for these applicants on a daily basis. DMV has estimated that total participation in this program could ultimately approach 5,000 people per year. At this level, the equivalent of about 15 positions would be necessary to devote 0.5 hours per month to review a sample of each RDL driver's photographs and data.

The proposed \$125 annual fee may be sufficient to cover the marginal cost of each new participant in the RDL program. However, participants would also need to pay for the installation of the ignition interlock device (\$60-\$100 one time) and monthly maintenance (\$60-\$90 per month). Therefore, the total cost of participation could approach or exceed \$1,000 for one year. A total cost at this level may deter some eligible drivers from participating in the RDL program.