

# A Guide for Setting Up Successful Alcohol Monitoring Schedules: Soberlink's Level 1 – Parenting Time Only Program

## Main Takeaways

- Soberlink's Level 1 – Parenting Time Only alcohol monitoring can help family law professionals gather concrete evidence of sobriety in custody cases, **but only when testing schedules are set up correctly.**
- Incorrectly scheduled alcohol monitoring tests may fail to safely identify a parent's alcohol consumption.
- Testing windows should be two hours which means a 1:00 PM test must be submitted between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM.
- Allowing more than 10 hours between tests may cause a parent's dangerous drinking habits to go undetected.
- When starting alcohol monitoring, an optimal schedule requires 3 to 4 tests per day during parenting time.

## Introduction

Depending on the severity of a parent's alcohol abuse or allegations of alcohol abuse, family law professionals and the families they serve can choose between [Soberlink's Level 1 – Parenting Time Only Program](#) or [Level 2 – Daily Testing Program](#).

Level 1 can be a good option for lower-risk cases because parents only have to prove sobriety during parenting time. Because testing days and times will always be changing, Soberlink does not manage the testing schedule. Instead, the parents will manage the schedules by utilizing the tools they already use such as a shared calendar or Parenting Apps.

This document serves as a guide for family law professionals to set up alcohol monitoring schedule agreements correctly for Level 1 – Parenting Time Only.

**Note:** *If daily testing is required, parents must use Level 2 – Daily Testing Program.*

## [DOWNLOAD OUR EDITABLE LEVEL 1 SAMPLE ORDER »](#)

After reading this article, download the document above:

- As a guide when working with a client who needs alcohol monitoring only during parenting time
- To share with the Judge who is ordering Soberlink Level 1 – Parenting Time Only
- To share with parents during mediation that involves alcohol monitoring only during parenting time

## Testing Windows: Establishing Reasonable Timeframes

Parents cannot always submit an alcohol monitoring test precisely at the scheduled time. Due to commitments such as meetings, personal emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances, parents require a grace period during which testing is still considered “on time.” This is facilitated through “testing windows.”

For example, a scheduled test for 1:00 PM should have a 2-hour testing window and must be taken between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM.

**Example Order/Agreement Language:** *During Parenting Time the Monitored Client shall submit a test upon waking up between 5:00 AM and 7:00 AM, during the middle of the day between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM, and before bed between 9:00 PM and 11:00 PM. Any test submitted outside of this testing window is considered missed and will be handled accordingly per agreed-upon terms.*

## Managing Test Times Around Sleep to Prevent Undetected Dangerous Drinking Habits

Undetected dangerous drinking habits are most likely to occur at night, after the last scheduled test of the day. Allowing more than 10 hours between tests may cause a parent's alcohol consumption to go undetected.

It is critical that the scheduled testing times in agreements are never over 10 hours apart, including testing windows. This means that if the test before bed is scheduled with a 9:00 PM to 11:00 PM testing window, the morning test must be scheduled no later than with a 5:00 AM to 7:00 AM testing window.

## Optimal Number of Daily Tests

When starting alcohol monitoring, an optimal schedule requires 3 to 4 tests per day during parenting time.

According to Soberlink's [Best Practices: Based on an Expert Panel](#), alcohol monitoring schedules should start with “Three tests per day at the start of a Soberlink program.” For more high-risk or challenging cases, “a maximum of four tests per day would be acceptable. However, this should also be reduced over time as attitudes and habits improve.”

[To learn more about how tests can be reduced over time, read the Best Practices document here »](#)

Consistent, effective, and reasonable alcohol monitoring is key to maintaining safety and accountability in family law cases.

## Custody-Exchange Testing: Ensuring Safe Visitation Transfers

Incorporating Custody-Exchange testing into the agreement is critical for maintaining the child’s safety and minimizing stress during transitions. This testing protocol requires a test to be submitted within 2 hours before the child is dropped off and within 2 hours before the child is picked up. This ensures that any issues with parental intoxication are identified early, allowing for safer and more manageable custody exchanges. It alleviates the burden and distress of discovering at the last minute that a parent is unfit to proceed with the exchange, ensuring that the child does not face unexpected disruptions.

**Example Order/Agreement Language:** *A test shall be sent within 2 hours prior to Parenting Time and within 2 hours prior to the end of Parenting Time.*

## Example Level 1 Schedule

Below is an example of a successful weekly Level 1 testing schedule. In this example, the parent has the child from Friday at 7:00 PM to Sunday at 7:00 PM.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	PARENTING TIME ONLY		
					FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12:00 AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM						5:00-7:00 AM	5:00-7:00 AM
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM						1:00-3:00 PM	1:00-3:00 PM
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM					Custody-Exchange Test		Custody-Exchange Test
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM					PARENTING TIME START		PARENTING TIME END
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM					9:00-11:00 PM	9:00-11:00 PM	
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							
12:00 AM							