

# Closed Beta Introduction & Overview

## Introduction

Atlas is a open tuning project, provided for free to the Subaru community as a resource to recalibrate (tune) modern Subarus such as the VA and VB WRX. Even though we are a wide open door and do not impose any paywalls, licensing, or tune restrictions (beyond emissions tampering) on any number of vehicles you wish to tune, we do have certain tiers of releasing that does mean new features are released to a select group of individuals before the general public.

Although our public releases are typically a quarter-by-quarter phenomenon, truthfully Atlas is evolving every single day with enormous features and changes under the hood on a weekly basis. Our codebase is architected to enable us to move *extremely* quickly, unusually so for the tuning industry, and we simply cannot overwhelm the public with quickly evolving releases. But, we still need a solution to get our changes tested.

## Closed Beta and the Fast Ring

Our Closed Beta is a small group of volunteers (roughly a dozen) who are hand-selected by our development team to field suggestions, mold our releases, and test new changes.

The Closed Beta group comprises our **fast ring**, which is the group that receives bleeding-edge development releases as they are made available from our development environment for Atlas. Due to this tight integration with our extremely high-paced development environment, it is not uncommon for 2 or more patches to be made available to our Closed Beta testers in a single day. Beta testers are regularly reinstalling Atlas, upgrading projects, and providing feedback, sometimes doing all of this on an hour-by-hour basis.

## Support

We take this group and our commitment to its members ability to flash very seriously. For example, if an ECU ends up bricked due to our code (which is exceedingly rare), we have spare ECUs ready-to-go in storage in multiple team member's hands that we can overnight ship, free of charge, to our closed beta testers. We also typically are able to provide direct, same-day support to our beta testers using software like TeamViewer, and we do this for free. If you can't flash and tune, that is a stop-the-world event for us, halts all development, and your car immediately becomes our top priority. If you are experiencing mechanical, electrical, or tune issues, we expect our small community to swarm to each-other's aid.

## Culture

Our ultimate goal is maximum efficiency, ease-of-use, and overall product satisfaction from our end-users, so our Closed Beta groups and every single member is expected to be a part in setting the standard for that. Our Closed Beta members, ideally, become key members in our community that help guide new users using Atlas due to their extensive experience and background with the software. But, in reality we're just a bunch of car enthusiasts that hang out and - for the most part - just have fun.

There is a Closed Beta group for each generation of vehicle we support, and they are separated from each-other so as to help reduce noise and clutter. We do this on purpose as it's best for discussion between beta groups to happen in the public, so the entire community can gain from this as well.

## New Additions and Requests to Join

We also recommend reading through and familiarizing with our [Tuning Do's and Dont's](#). We prefer if you try to be the "guy" on the right in green, but we're not going to force you to.

Due to the high bar for support excellence and the time commitment it involves, and being a tight-knit community with its own culture, we are meticulous about who we add into these groups.

## Expectations

Each of these expectations is paramount, and sadly we have had to make the tough decision to remove closed beta members for not adhering to expectations, so take these into serious consideration if we're asking you to join a Closed Beta group:

- Comfortable with a fast-paced conditions with releases dropping almost daily in some cases and helping stay on top of multiple conversations/troubleshooting going on at once, etc.
- Understands the risks with nightly software updates; it's possible to brick an ECU, though it is typically less urgent as we have brick protection. We do test our releases before pushing them out, but there is always a risk.
- Open to learning and taking advice, and offering your own candidly, but doing so with respect. Remember, we're a small community passionate about tuning so our conversations about tuning, etc. can occasionally be disputatious, but we are still all friends at the end of the day.
- Will exercise patience if we ask you to **stop**. We won't be unreasonable (i.e. we're not about to tell you not to tune your car if you can't get to your job), but there are rare circumstances where we will ask you not to move forward until a release, etc., is made available that will avoid you from a situation we don't want to put you in.
- Commitment to respect confidentiality and **not** share tunes, software packages, special Atlas "flags", etc. with members outside of Closed Beta. We really don't have any DRM here, we just expect you to honor this ask. Your commitment to this prevents buggy

things from leaking out to the public before they're ready, that we then have to support/handle.

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