

How Many Points Do I Have On My License

The Unseen Score: Deciphering the Points on Your Driving License

The flickering neon sign of the local garage, the strained conversation with the DMV representative – the anxiety surrounding the number of points on your driving license often lingers in the background, a silent judgment on your driving habits. It's a number that often feels unfairly weighty, a silent scorecard dictating access to the open road. But what does it truly represent, and why does it matter so much? Let's dive into the often-overlooked world of driving infractions and their consequences. The digital dashboard of your driving record, often overlooked, whispers tales of your road interactions. A single point might seem inconsequential, a minor lapse in judgment. But, like grains of sand accumulating in a glass, these points can quickly escalate, threatening your freedom and financial well-being. This isn't just about a numerical value; it's about responsibility, consequences, and ultimately, the relationship we have with our roadways.

The Meaning Behind the Numbers: Points and Penalties

Understanding the correlation between points and penalties is crucial. Each jurisdiction differs slightly in its policies, but the underlying principle remains consistent: excessive infractions warrant escalating penalties. These penalties aren't just theoretical; they directly impact your ability to operate a motor vehicle legally and safely.

The Point System Breakdown

While specific point values vary, a common structure exists. Let's consider a hypothetical system: | Offense Category | Points Assigned | Example Offenses |
||| | Minor Violations | 1-3 points | Speeding (under 10 mph over limit), minor parking violations, etc. | | Moderate Violations | 4-6 points | Reckless driving, failing to yield, etc. | | Serious Violations | 7+ points | Driving under the influence (DUI), hit-and-run, causing significant property damage, etc. |

The Escalating Consequences

The point accumulation process isn't a simple linear equation. It's a domino effect with potentially severe repercussions.  (Placeholder for a visual chart demonstrating how point accumulation escalates into license suspension/cancellation and other penalties. A hypothetical chart would demonstrate the severity of penalties with escalating points.)

Beyond the Points: Understanding the Driving Culture

The number on your license isn't just a numerical score; it reflects your role within a complex social tapestry. Driving infractions aren't isolated incidents; they're often intertwined with broader cultural issues:

The Pressure of Modern Life

In today's fast-paced society, the pressure to move quickly can lead to risky behaviors. Stress, deadlines, and perceived time constraints can all contribute to lapses in judgment behind the wheel. Understanding the underlying factors that drive risky behaviors is crucial in fostering a culture of safety and responsible driving.

The Role of Education and Awareness

Driving schools, workshops, and educational campaigns play a pivotal role in creating responsible drivers. A robust educational system can equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of the road safely.

Benefits of Maintaining a Clean Driving Record

While the focus often lies on the negative consequences, a clean driving record offers significant advantages:

- **Reduced Insurance Premiums:** Insurers often factor in driving history when calculating premiums. A clean record can lead to substantial savings.
- **Financial Savings:** Avoiding license suspension or other penalties saves considerable financial resources.
- **Peace of Mind:** Knowing that you're adhering to the rules of the road, and that your driving record reflects responsible behavior, fosters a sense of peace and confidence.

Addressing the Root Cause: Proactive Approaches

Driving safely isn't just about avoiding points; it's about cultivating a proactive approach to safe driving practices. Consider these:

- *Regular Vehicle Maintenance:* Ensure your vehicle is well-maintained to prevent mechanical issues on the road.
- *Defensive Driving Techniques:* Develop and practice defensive driving techniques to anticipate and respond to potential hazards effectively.
- *Stress Management:* Proactive strategies for managing stress can dramatically reduce the likelihood of impulsive driving decisions.

Conclusion

The number of points on your driving license is a significant indicator of your responsible driving habits. It's a multifaceted issue, reflecting the interaction between personal responsibility, cultural pressures, and the consequences of one's actions. Understanding the system, acknowledging potential risks, and actively working towards safe driving practices are crucial for maintaining a clean record and enjoying the freedom of the open road responsibly.

Advanced FAQs

1. Can points be expunged or removed from a driving record? This varies by jurisdiction. Some states or provinces may have procedures to remove certain minor violations under certain circumstances. 2. **What is the typical timeframe for points to expire on a driving record?** This varies, so consulting your local DMV or equivalent authority is essential. 3. **How do driving schools contribute to maintaining a clean record?** Through education and practical training, driving schools equip individuals with the skills and knowledge to avoid driving infractions. 4. **What are the penalties for driving while your license has been suspended?** These penalties can be severe, including substantial fines and potential imprisonment. 5. *Can a distracted driver accumulate points on their license?* Absolutely. Distracted driving, including cell phone use, is a major contributing factor to driving infractions and can result in point accumulation. By understanding the system, actively mitigating risk factors, and embracing proactive approaches to safe driving, we can all contribute to a safer and more responsible driving culture.

How Many Points Do I Have on My

License? Understanding the System and Your Driving Record

Ever had that nagging thought, "How many points do I have on my license?" You're definitely not alone. For most drivers, it's a question that pops up unexpectedly, often triggered by a speeding ticket, a minor fender-bender, or just a general curiosity about maintaining a clean driving record. Understanding the point system is crucial for safe and responsible driving, and knowing your current status can help you avoid serious consequences like hefty fines, increased insurance premiums, and even license suspension.

This comprehensive guide will demystify the points system, explain how it works, and most importantly, walk you through the straightforward steps to check your own driving record and discover precisely how many points you're currently carrying. We'll cover the nuances across different states, common violations that add points, and what you can do if you find yourself with a concerning number of points.

What is a Driver's License Points System?

At its core, a driver's license points system is a method used by state Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) or equivalent agencies to track a driver's history of traffic violations. Think of it as a scorecard for your driving behavior. Every time you're convicted of certain moving violations, points are added to your driving record.

The primary purpose of this system is to identify and address habitually unsafe drivers. By accumulating points, drivers are put on notice that their driving habits are considered a risk. The more points you accumulate, the more severe the penalties become. This incentivizes drivers to operate their vehicles safely and obey traffic laws.

How Do Points Get Added to Your License?

Points are typically assigned when you are found guilty or plead guilty to a traffic violation. This usually happens after you receive a ticket, pay the fine, or go to court. It's important to note that simply getting a ticket doesn't automatically mean points will be added. Some minor infractions might not carry points, or you might have options to dismiss them through traffic school or other programs. However, most moving violations will result in points.

Common violations that lead to points include:

1. Speeding
2. Reckless driving
3. Running a red light or stop sign
4. Improper lane changes
5. Following too closely (tailgating)
6. DUI/DWI (Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Intoxicated) – these carry significant points and severe penalties
7. Distracted driving (e.g., texting while driving)

The number of points assigned for each violation varies depending on the severity of the offense. A minor speeding ticket might add 2 or 3 points, while a DUI could result in 6 or more points, along with other legal repercussions.

How Long Do Points Stay on Your License?

This is a critical question. The duration that points remain on your driving record is not uniform across all states. In many states, points typically fall off your record after a certain period, usually 3 to 5 years from the date of the violation. However, some serious violations might remain on your record for a longer duration. It's essential to check your specific state's regulations for accurate information.

It's also worth noting that even after points are removed from your record, the conviction itself might still be visible to your insurance company for a longer

period, potentially affecting your premiums.

Why Should You Care About Points on Your License?

Beyond the abstract concept of a "driving record," accumulating points has tangible consequences. Understanding these ramifications is a powerful motivator to drive responsibly and keep your record clean. Here are the main reasons to be concerned about points:

Increased Insurance Premiums

This is often the most immediate and noticeable consequence. Insurance companies view drivers with points on their license as higher risks. To offset this perceived risk, they will likely increase your auto insurance premiums. The more points you have, and the more serious the violations, the higher your premiums can climb. In some cases, a history of multiple points could even lead to a cancellation of your insurance policy, making it difficult and expensive to find new coverage.

License Suspension or Revocation

Every state has a threshold for the number of points a driver can accumulate within a specific timeframe before their license is suspended or revoked. For example, a state might suspend a license if a driver accumulates 12 points in 12 months. A suspension means you are legally prohibited from driving for a set period. Revocation is more severe and means your license is permanently canceled, requiring you to reapply and potentially retake driving tests.

The exact number of points that trigger suspension varies significantly by state. Some states have a 6-point threshold, while others might have 10 or 12. Additionally, the timeframe for accumulating these points is also state-specific –

it could be 12 months, 18 months, or 24 months.

Fines and Penalties

The initial traffic tickets themselves often come with fines. However, accumulating too many points can lead to additional fines and penalties imposed by the state. These could be administrative fees for license reinstatement, court costs, or even surcharges specifically for drivers with multiple violations.

Employment Opportunities

For certain professions, a clean driving record is a job requirement. This is particularly true for individuals who drive as part of their job, such as truck drivers, delivery personnel, or sales representatives. A license with too many points could lead to job loss or make it difficult to secure employment in these fields.

How to Check Your Points on Your License

The good news is that finding out "how many points do I have on my license?" is usually a straightforward process. The exact method will depend on your state of residence, but here are the most common ways to access your driving record:

1. Online Through Your State's DMV Website

Many states now offer online services for drivers to access their driving records. This is often the quickest and most convenient method. You'll typically need to visit the official website for your state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Department of Public Safety (DPS), or equivalent agency. Look for a section related to "Driver Services," "Online Transactions," or "Request Your Driving

Record."

You may need to create an account, provide personal information (like your driver's license number, date of birth, and Social Security number) for verification, and potentially pay a small fee to download or view your record. Some states offer a free initial review, while others charge a nominal amount.

2. In Person at Your Local DMV Office

If you prefer a face-to-face interaction or are not comfortable with online services, you can always visit your local DMV office. Be prepared to wait, as DMV offices can be busy. You'll likely need to fill out a form and present a valid form of identification. Again, there might be a fee associated with obtaining a copy of your driving record.

3. By Mail Request

Most DMVs also allow you to request your driving record by mail. You'll need to download a request form from their website, fill it out completely, and mail it along with the required fee and a copy of your identification. This method takes longer than online or in-person requests, so plan accordingly.

4. Through Third-Party Services (Use with Caution)

There are various third-party websites that offer to retrieve your driving record. While some are legitimate, others may overcharge or not be entirely reliable. If you choose this route, ensure you are using a reputable service and understand what you are paying for. It's generally safer and more cost-effective to go directly through your state's official DMV channels.

Important Note on State Variations: The terminology and exact process for accessing your driving record can differ. For instance, some states may call it a

"Motor Vehicle Report" (MVR) or "Driving History Report." Always refer to your specific state's DMV website for the most accurate instructions.

What to Do If You Have Points on Your License

Discovering you have points on your license can be a bit unsettling. However, there are often steps you can take to manage the situation and improve your driving record:

1. Understand Your Record

Once you obtain your driving record, carefully review it. Note the date of each violation, the type of violation, and the number of points assessed. This will help you understand your current standing and identify patterns in your driving behavior.

2. Consider Traffic School or Defensive Driving Courses

Many states allow drivers to reduce points or avoid them altogether by completing a traffic school or defensive driving course. These courses often educate drivers on safe driving practices and traffic laws. Successfully completing a course might dismiss a ticket, prevent points from being added to your record, or even remove existing points. Check your state's DMV regulations to see if this is an option for you and if there are any limitations on how often you can use this.

3. Drive Safely and Obey Traffic Laws

The most obvious and effective way to prevent future points is to drive

defensively and adhere to all traffic laws. This means paying attention to speed limits, avoiding distractions, signaling properly, and being courteous to other drivers. A clean driving record for an extended period can help mitigate the impact of past violations.

4. Stay Aware of Point Accumulation Limits

Keep track of the number of points you have and your state's suspension thresholds. Knowing this information will help you make informed decisions about your driving and when to consider options like traffic school.

5. Consult with a Traffic Attorney

If you've received a serious ticket or are facing potential license suspension, it may be beneficial to consult with a traffic attorney. They can advise you on your legal options, represent you in court, and potentially help you negotiate a plea or get a ticket dismissed.

Conclusion: Taking Control of Your Driving Record

The question "how many points do I have on my license?" is a gateway to understanding your driving responsibility and the potential consequences of your actions on the road. By familiarizing yourself with how the points system works, the reasons why it's important to maintain a clean record, and the straightforward methods for checking your driving history, you are taking a significant step towards becoming a safer and more informed driver.

Remember, your driving record is a reflection of your commitment to road safety. Regularly checking your status, understanding the impact of violations, and proactively taking steps to manage your record will not only protect your wallet from increased insurance premiums and fines but, more importantly,

contribute to safer roads for everyone. Drive smart, drive safe, and stay informed!

Understanding Your License Points: What They Mean and How Many You Have

Every driver's license carries more than just a photo and name—it reflects a measurable record of driving performance through points. These points serve as a standardized tracking system used by licensing authorities to assess driving behavior, promote safety, and maintain accountability on the road. Understanding how many points you currently hold on your license is essential for responsible driving, avoiding penalties, and staying compliant with state or national regulations. Points are typically assigned based on traffic violations, accidents, and other driving infractions recorded during your license holder's active period. Common causes include speeding, running red lights, failure to yield, reckless driving, and even minor offenses such as improper parking or using a mobile phone while driving. Each violation carries a specific point value, varying by jurisdiction and severity. For example, a simple traffic ticket might add just a few points, while a serious offense like reckless driving or causing an accident can result in a substantial point deduction—sometimes dozens or even over a hundred points. The total number of points on your license is not arbitrary; it directly influences your legal driving privileges. Most regions implement a point threshold system where accumulating too many points leads to license suspension, mandatory retesting, or mandatory defensive driving courses. This system creates a tangible incentive for safe, attentive driving. It also allows authorities to identify repeat offenders early, enabling timely intervention before more dangerous behavior escalates.

Key Insights into Point Accumulation and Its Implications

The way points accumulate is closely monitored and often auto-updated in official licensing databases. Drivers who maintain clean records—avoiding violations entirely—can retain higher privileges, including eligibility for commercial licenses or priority processing for renewals. Conversely, those with frequent infractions may find their point totals approaching or exceeding suspension thresholds, sometimes in a matter of months. This dynamic underscores the importance of consistent, law-abiding driving habits. Moreover, point systems are increasingly integrated with digital reporting tools, enabling real-time updates and transparent tracking through official portals or mobile apps. This shift enhances accountability and empowers drivers to monitor their standing proactively, fostering a culture of personal responsibility.

Practical Applications and Long-Term Benefits

Knowing your current point total is not just a matter of compliance—it's a strategic advantage. Drivers with low or zero points often enjoy benefits such as reduced insurance premiums, faster renewal approvals, and greater trust when applying for leading-edge driving privileges like motorcycle endorsements or heavy vehicle endorsements. Additionally, demonstrating a clean record can strengthen applications for specialized licenses, demonstrating reliability and maturity behind the wheel. Beyond personal gains, reducing point accumulations contributes to broader road safety. As driving behavior improves at the individual level, collective accident rates tend to decline, benefiting communities and reducing public costs associated with traffic incidents.

The Future of License Point Systems

Looking ahead, license point systems are evolving with advances in telematics and artificial intelligence. Emerging technologies allow for real-time monitoring of driving behavior, enabling dynamic point adjustments based not only on violations but also on factors like speed adherence, braking patterns, and time-of-day driving habits. This shift promises a more nuanced and personalized approach to license management—one that rewards consistent safe driving with fewer penalties and greater recognition. Governments and regulatory bodies are also exploring greener incentives, such as point reductions for eco-friendly driving choices like electric vehicle use or carpooling. These innovations suggest a future where license points serve not only as disciplinary tools but as catalysts for sustainable mobility. In summary, your license points are more than numbers—they reflect your driving history, reflect your commitment to safety, and shape your future on the road. Staying informed, driving responsibly, and actively managing your point total empowers you to drive with confidence, compliance, and long-term peace of mind.

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Perhaps the most significant change brought by digital access is how it reshapes attitudes toward learning. When information is readily available, curiosity feels encouraged rather than inconvenient. Readers are more willing to explore unfamiliar topics, revisit previous interests, and continue learning throughout their lives.

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Questions & Answers About how many points do i have on my license

No	Question	Answer
1	How can I quickly check my driving license points?	The fastest way to check your driving license points is usually online through your state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or equivalent agency. You'll typically need your license number and some personal information for verification.

2	Will I get points if I pay a ticket online?	Paying a ticket online usually means you are admitting guilt and will likely incur the associated points on your license, in addition to the fine. Some jurisdictions offer traffic school or diversion programs that might waive points if completed.
3	How long do points stay on my driving record?	The duration points remain on your driving record varies by state and the severity of the violation. Typically, points can stay for 3 to 5 years, but some serious infractions might have longer impacts on your record.
4	What happens if I accumulate too many points on my license?	Accumulating too many points can lead to serious consequences, including license suspension or revocation, increased insurance premiums, and mandatory defensive driving courses. It's crucial to keep your point total low.
5	Can I reduce the points on my license?	Yes, in many states, you can reduce points on your license by completing a defensive driving course or traffic school. Some states also have programs that automatically remove older points after a certain period of clean driving.

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Unveiling Your Driving Record: How Many Points Do I Have on My License?

Navigating the complexities of traffic laws and maintaining a clean driving record can feel like a labyrinth. A common concern for drivers, especially those who have received a traffic citation, is understanding their current standing: "How many points do I have on my license?" This seemingly simple question opens

the door to a deeper understanding of driver responsibility, the consequences of infractions, and the proactive steps you can take to protect your driving privileges. This comprehensive guide will demystify the point system, explain how to check your license status, and offer strategies for managing and reducing any accumulated points.

Understanding the Point System: A Foundation for Safe Driving

The point system is a nationwide mechanism implemented by most state Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) or equivalent agencies to track driving behavior. It serves as a disciplinary tool, aiming to identify and penalize habitual traffic offenders while encouraging safer driving practices among all motorists. Each state has its own unique set of rules regarding point accumulation, but the core principle remains the same: minor and major traffic violations result in a specific number of points being added to your driving record.

What Constitutes a Pointable Offense?

The types of traffic violations that incur points vary significantly by state and the severity of the offense. Generally, more serious infractions lead to a higher point penalty. Common examples of pointable offenses include:

1. Speeding tickets (points often increase with the excess speed)
2. Running red lights or stop signs
3. Reckless driving
4. Drunk driving (DUI/DWI)
5. Improper lane changes
6. Following too closely (tailgating)
7. At-fault accidents
8. Driving without insurance
9. Operating an unregistered vehicle

It's crucial to remember that a conviction for any of these offenses, not just a ticket being issued, typically triggers the point assignment. For instance, if you pay a ticket without contesting it, you are generally admitting guilt, and points will be assessed. Understanding the specific "pointable offenses" in your state is the first step in managing your license status.

How Many Points Are Added Per Offense?

The point value assigned to each violation is determined by state law. For example, a minor speeding ticket might add 2 or 3 points, while a DUI conviction could result in 6 or more points, along with significant license suspension. Some states also have tiered systems where points can escalate for repeat offenses within a specific timeframe.

It's important to note that certain violations may not directly add points but could still lead to license suspension or other penalties. These might include failing to appear in court or not paying fines. Always refer to your state's DMV website for a definitive list of offenses and their corresponding point values.

The Impact of Points on Your Driving Record

Accumulating points on your license is not merely an administrative inconvenience; it carries tangible consequences. The most significant impact is the increased risk of license suspension or revocation. Most states have a point threshold. If you exceed this limit within a certain period (often 12, 24, or 36 months), your driver's license will be suspended. The duration of the suspension typically increases with the number of points accumulated.

Beyond license suspension, points can lead to:

1. **Increased Insurance Premiums:** Insurance companies view drivers with points on their record as higher risks. This can result in substantial hikes in your auto insurance rates, making it more expensive to drive legally. Some insurers may even refuse coverage altogether.

2. **Driver Improvement Courses:** In some states, you may be required to attend a driver improvement program or defensive driving course to have points removed or to avoid further penalties.
3. **License Reinstatement Fees:** If your license is suspended due to points, you will likely have to pay significant fees to get it reinstated, in addition to completing any required courses or passing re-examination tests.
4. **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Issues:** For professional drivers, a point accumulation can have even more severe consequences, potentially jeopardizing their CDL and their livelihood.

How to Check Your Point Balance: Unveiling Your Driving History

Knowing "how many points do I have on my license?" requires proactive effort. Fortunately, most DMVs offer accessible ways to check your driving record. This is an essential step for any driver who has received a ticket or is concerned about their driving history.

Online DMV Portals: The Modern Approach

Many states have embraced technology, providing online portals where you can access your driving record. This is often the quickest and most convenient method. You will typically need to create an account and provide personal information such as your driver's license number, date of birth, and Social Security number to verify your identity. Once logged in, you should be able to view your current point total, a history of violations, and any pending actions against your license.

When searching for your state's portal, use terms like "[Your State] DMV driving record check" or "[Your State] license points inquiry."

Requesting Your Driving Record by Mail or In Person

If online access isn't available or you prefer a physical copy, you can usually request your driving record by mail or in person at a local DMV office. This process often involves filling out an application form and submitting it with a fee. Be prepared for a slightly longer turnaround time compared to online requests.

Why Checking Your Record is Crucial

Regularly checking your driving record offers several benefits:

1. **Accuracy Verification:** Ensure that the information on your record is accurate. Mistakes can happen, and it's your responsibility to identify and correct them.
2. **Proactive Management:** Knowing your point balance allows you to make informed decisions about your driving habits and take steps to avoid further infractions.
3. **Insurance Rate Awareness:** You can use your driving record to anticipate potential increases in your insurance premiums.
4. **Pre-Employment Screening:** Many employers, especially those in transportation or requiring driving, will check your driving record as part of the hiring process.

Strategies for Managing and Reducing License Points

Once you know your point status, you might be wondering, "What can I do if I have too many points?" The good news is that there are proactive measures you can take to manage and reduce your points, and ultimately, protect your driving privileges.

Option 1: Contest Traffic Tickets

If you believe a traffic ticket was issued in error or unfairly, you have the right to contest it in court. This process can be time-consuming and may require hiring a traffic lawyer, but a successful challenge can prevent points from being added to your license. Remember, the burden of proof is often on the prosecution, and a good defense can lead to a dismissal or reduction of charges.

Option 2: Attend a Defensive Driving Course

Many states allow drivers to attend an approved defensive driving course to reduce points or prevent them from appearing on their record. These courses typically teach advanced driving techniques, hazard perception, and the importance of responsible behavior behind the wheel. Completing such a course can often remove a certain number of points (e.g., 2-4 points) and may also lead to a discount on your auto insurance premiums.

To be eligible for this option, check your state's DMV regulations. Some states limit the number of times you can use a defensive driving course for point reduction within a specific period.

Option 3: Allow Points to Expire

In most states, points do not stay on your license indefinitely. They typically expire and are removed from your record after a certain period, usually 12, 24, or 36 months from the date of the violation conviction. If you have a few points but can maintain a clean record for the designated period, they will eventually fall off.

Option 4: Understand Your State's Point

Reinstatement Options

Some states offer specific programs for drivers who have accumulated a significant number of points. These might involve attending traffic school, passing a re-examination, or paying a reinstatement fee. These are typically employed after a license suspension has occurred but are worth understanding as part of your state's broader traffic laws.

Preventing Future Points: The Best Defense is a Good Offense

The most effective way to avoid the stress and consequences associated with license points is to practice safe and responsible driving habits. This proactive approach not only keeps your record clean but also contributes to safer roads for everyone.

Key Habits for a Clean Driving Record:

1. **Obey Speed Limits:** This is the most common reason for tickets. Adhering to posted speed limits reduces your risk of accidents and citations.
2. **Avoid Distracted Driving:** Put away your phone, avoid eating or grooming while driving, and focus solely on the road.
3. **Drive Sober:** Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Designate a driver or use ride-sharing services.
4. **Maintain a Safe Following Distance:** Give yourself ample space to react to sudden stops.
5. **Signal Your Intentions:** Always use your turn signals well in advance of changing lanes or turning.
6. **Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Anticipate potential hazards and react defensively.
7. **Ensure Your Vehicle is Properly Maintained:** Regularly check tires, brakes, and lights to ensure your vehicle is roadworthy.

By understanding the point system, knowing how to check your driving record, and adopting safe driving practices, you can effectively manage your license status and enjoy the freedom of the road with peace of mind. Remember, your driver's license is a privilege, and responsible driving is key to maintaining it.

LSI Keywords: traffic tickets, driving record, DMV, license suspension, traffic violations, defensive driving, auto insurance, driver's license points, how to check license points, points on license explained, traffic school, license reinstatement, speeding ticket, DUI, reckless driving.