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What Conduct Could Lead to Driver's License Suspension?

Since driving on public streets and highways is considered a privilege and not a right, a number of different actions can lead to a driver's license suspension. Some of these actions, such as failure to pay child support or a conviction on drug charges, are not even related to driving. This article covers the various types of conduct that may result in your driver's license being suspended. These actions vary from state to state (see [State DMV Offices](#) for state-specific driver's license laws and regulations).

Driving-Related Grounds for Suspension

All 50 states (and the District of Columbia) suspend the licenses of drivers convicted of a DUI who have accumulated a certain number of [traffic ticket points](#) or "countable" violations, while most states provide for license revocation for motorists convicted of driving with a suspended driver's license. Also, all states have so-called [implied consent laws](#), whereby motorists may obtain a driver's license with the understanding that they must comply with a breathalyzer or similar alcohol test if prompted by an officer. Failure to comply with a testing request by an officer usually results in an automatic suspension.

Other driving-related offenses which can result in a driver's license suspension include the following:

- Reckless driving
- Careless driving (only six states)
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Drag racing / speed contests
- Assault of another motorist, passenger, pedestrian, or bicyclist while on the highway ("road rage")

The point system varies from state to state, but [a California driver may be considered a negligent operator](#) if he or she accumulates four points in 12 months, six points in 24 months, or eight points in 36 months (at-fault collisions and speeding tickets may result in one point each, while reckless driving or a DUI are two-point violations). Violations received in a commercial vehicle carry one and one-half times the point count of non-commercial offenses.

Non-Driving Violations Resulting in Suspension

All states suspend drivers' licenses for a number of non-driving actions as well. A [failure to comply with a child support order](#) is by far the most common non-driving reason for suspension, adhered to by all but four states (New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, and South Dakota). Most states also suspend the licenses of motorists who fail to maintain the proper [automobile insurance coverage](#) or a [valid driver's license](#).

Additional non-driving offenses that may result in the suspension of your driver's license include the following:

- Failure to appear in court to satisfy a summons for a moving violation or parking ticket
- Failure to pay a DMV fine, surcharge, or fee
- Conviction for a drug-related offense (other than a DUI)
- Altered or unlawful use of driver's license
- Use of altered or fictitious license plates
- Non-DUI alcohol/drug offenses by minors
- Truancy
- Juvenile delinquency

In Texas, for example, [motorists convicted of a drug-related offense](#) automatically lose their driver's license for 180 days.

Driver's License Suspension Notice

Traffic courts usually send you a courtesy notice prior to the actual suspension date of your driver's license, sometimes to explain your options for avoiding suspension (for instance, paying an outstanding fine or overdue child support). Once your license is suspended, you will receive additional correspondence from the Secretary of State's office stating that your driving privileges are no longer valid in the state.

Each state has its own way of corresponding with licensees, but suspension notices usually contain the following information:

- Your name, address, driver's license number, and other personally identifying data
- Effective date of suspension
- Termination date of suspension
- Official statement that license has been suspended
- List of offenses that led to the suspension (including date, case number, etc.)

Consider speaking with a [traffic ticket lawyer](#) in your area if you have any additional questions or need help with a driver's license suspension.

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