

DRIVER'S LICENSE GUIDE

Pennsylvania License Points & Suspension Guide

How PA's driver point system works — accumulation, the 6-point and 11-point thresholds, how points come off, and what to do if you've already been convicted by a magisterial district judge.

Already convicted by an MDJ? You have **30 days** to file a summary appeal and stay the points, suspension, or CDL disqualification. Start here: [Harrisburg Summary & Suspension Appeals](#).

1. How points attach

Pennsylvania assigns a fixed point value to each moving violation under 75 Pa.C.S. § 1535. Points are added to your record when PennDOT receives notice of conviction — from a guilty plea, payment of the citation, or a guilty verdict at the magisterial district court (MDJ). Points do **not** attach if you're acquitted, the charge is reduced to a non-point violation, or the case is dismissed.

There is a window between the MDJ verdict and PennDOT reporting in which a [summary appeal](#) can stop the points from attaching at all.

2. Common PA point assessments

Violation	Penalty
Speeding 6–10 mph over	2 points
Speeding 11–15 mph over	3 points
Speeding 16–25 mph over	4 points (+ 15-day suspension in work/school zone)
Speeding 26–30 mph over	5 points + 15-day suspension
Speeding 31+ mph over	5 points + 15-day suspension + departmental hearing
Running a red light or stop sign	3 points
Failure to yield right of way	3 points
Improper passing	3 points

Violation	Penalty
Following too closely	3 points
Reckless driving (§ 3736)	6 points
Careless driving with injury (§ 3714(b))	3 points + 6-month suspension
Failure to stop for a school bus	5 points + 60-day suspension

3. The suspension thresholds

PennDOT acts automatically at two trigger points. Once you cross them, the suspension or hearing requirement is set in motion by statute — the notice in the mail just confirms it.

6 points — first time

PennDOT mails a notice requiring a written **special point examination** within 30 days. Fail or skip the exam and your license is suspended until you pass.

6 points — second time

PennDOT schedules a **departmental hearing**. The hearing examiner can suspend your license for up to 15 days, order a road test, or impose other restrictions.

6 points — third time and beyond

Treated as a habitually careless or unsafe driver. **30-day suspension is mandatory**. Every subsequent accumulation triggers another 30-day suspension.

11 or more points (§ 1539)

Mandatory suspension. Length is calculated per point:

- 1st 11-point suspension: **5 days per point**
- 2nd: **10 days per point**
- 3rd: **15 days per point**
- 4th and beyond: **1-year revocation**

Got a PennDOT letter? Most suspension notices — 6-point hearings, 11-point suspensions, Section 1535 speeding suspensions, and habitual-offender determinations — are appealable to the Court of Common Pleas within 30 days. Filing the appeal stays the suspension. [File your appeal with our Harrisburg office.](#)

4. How points come off

Safe driving (the only real way): 3 points are removed for every 12 consecutive months without a new violation or a suspension. The clock resets the day you commit a new offense — not the day of conviction.

Reaching zero: Once your record hits zero points, it stays there until a new violation. PennDOT does not erase the conviction history — only the point total resets.

Driver-improvement courses: Required after some 6-point accumulations, but a course does **not** remove points. It satisfies a PennDOT requirement so you can keep driving; the points stay until time removes them.

Never: There is no PA equivalent to a defensive-driving course that wipes points. The only way to keep points off your record is to avoid the conviction in the first place — at the MDJ summary trial or on [summary appeal to Common Pleas](#).

5. CDL holders — a second federal layer

Commercial driver's license holders accumulate PA points the same way for the underlying violation, but federal regulations also disqualify a CDL for **'serious traffic violations'** (15+ mph over, reckless, improper lane change, following too closely, no CDL on person) regardless of point total.

- Two serious violations within three years: **60-day disqualification**
- Three within three years: **120-day disqualification**
- DUI or refusal (even off-duty in a personal vehicle): **1-year disqualification** on a first offense

6. What to do right now

If you just received a citation

Do not just pay it. Paying is the same as pleading guilty — the conviction is reported and the points attach. Plead not guilty by the date on the citation to preserve your right to a summary trial in front of the MDJ.

If the MDJ just found you guilty

You have **30 days** from the verdict to file a summary appeal with the Court of Common Pleas in the county where you were convicted. The appeal is heard *de novo* — a fresh trial. The Commonwealth must re-prove the case; the officer must reappear and testify. [Read the summary appeal process.](#)

If PennDOT just sent a suspension notice

You have **30 days** to appeal the suspension to the Court of Common Pleas. Filing the appeal stays the suspension while the case is heard. Common grounds: errors in conviction reporting, expired prior convictions counted as recent, or arithmetic errors in the point total. [Start your suspension appeal.](#)

Free consultation	Sean P. Quinlan, Esq. has nearly three decades of experience defending Pennsylvania drivers in Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, York, and Adams County. Consultations are free, confidential, and the same day in most cases.
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