



Why You Should Fight **That Traffic Ticket!**

I recently received a call from a client who received a letter in the mail advising her that her license was being suspended by the Department of Motor Vehicles. She was shocked. After reviewing her driving history, I discovered she had received three speeding tickets over the past two years. Rather than contesting them, she simply checked the “guilty box” and mailed the tickets in, along with a check, to cover the fines. Unfortunately, as she found out the hard way, once you plead guilty there is nothing we can do to prevent a license suspension. It was too late. Had she called us sooner, this could have been avoided by challenging the tickets.

If you get stopped for a moving violation in Connecticut, expect to get hit with both a fine and points against your license. Points are issued by the DMV every time you are convicted of a moving violation. If you accumulate enough points, your driver's license will be suspended.

Although traffic violations are almost always issued by local or state police officers, all violations are reported to the DMV, which assesses and manages license points. Points remain in effect for 24 months after the date of assessment. If you get 6 points on your driving record, expect a warning letter from the DMV. Get 10 points or more and your driver's license will be suspended for 30 days.

The DMV Assesses Points for Each of the Following Infractions: Operating at an unreasonable rate of speed; Speeding; Failure to drive in the proper lane; Wrong direction at rotary or one-way street; Improper turn; Illegal stopping; Failure to signal intention to turn; Improper backing or starting; Failure to give proper signal; Illegal passing; Wrong way on a one-way street; Failure to obey traffic control signal light; Failure to obey stop sign; Failure to obey yield sign; Driving while impaired; Passing on the right; Passing in a no passing zone; Failure to drive at a reasonable distance apart from other vehicles; Failure to grant the right of way at an intersection; Failure to grant the right of way to a pedestrian; Passing a stopped school bus, along with many others.

If you are issued a traffic citation you should give serious consideration to fighting that ticket. Failure to do so may result in the following:

1) Points added to your driver's license:

Connecticut has a point system to measure how good (or bad) a driver is and a point limit at which they will suspend and/or revoke your driver's license. Receive 10 points in 24 months and your license will be suspended.

2) Higher insurance premiums:

Convictions, even if they carry no points, make a motorist a greater risk to insure and, therefore, subject to higher insurance premiums.

3) Driver license suspension:

Either due to a specific type of violation or an accumulation of points, convictions can lead to suspension of your driver's license. Failure to take care of a traffic ticket in a timely fashion may lead to driver's license suspension as well.

NOTE: Teen drivers can have their **license suspended** or **lose the privilege to apply for a license** for a conviction of speeding, reckless driving, street racing, driving while using a cell phone or texting, or any violation of the teen driving restrictions set by the state. This includes being in possession of any alcoholic beverage as a minor.

4) Driver license revocation:

Convictions for certain types of violations can lead to full revocation of your driver's license. Driver license revocation may mean you will need to reapply for a license from scratch, and/or you may be ineligible to re-apply.

5) Unemployment:

If you drive under an employer's insurance policy, accumulation of points makes you a greater insurance risk and could result in your termination. Any problems at all with a Commercial Driver's License can quickly and easily lead to unemployment.

6) Permanent Criminal Record and/or Imprisonment:

While most traffic tickets are considered civil infractions, more serious offenses may actually be considered misdemeanors. Misdemeanors are criminal offenses and may affect your employment, immigration or other status. Some are punishable by jail time.

These are just a few things you need to consider if you are issued a traffic citation.

Attorney Matthew E. Willis is a partner practicing in the areas of criminal defense and personal injury litigation. He assists clients charged with all types of motor vehicle infractions, including operating under the influence, throughout the State of Connecticut. Call Attorney Willis at (860) 812-1743 or email him at mwillis@kkc-law.com. If you are issued a traffic citation or arrested for a motor vehicle offense, please call before it is too late.