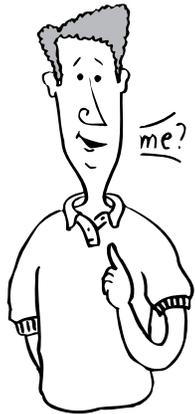


Nationwide, a vehicle crash occurs every five seconds. Roughly, more than 141,500 vehicle crashes occurred on Virginia's highways last year. The odds are one out of four that you will be involved in a crash during your lifetime.

To reduce these odds, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles has created a different kind of crash course. Our driver improvement program rewards safe drivers and warns potentially unsafe drivers in advance. It helps educate drivers who have developed risky driving practices and it takes dangerous drivers off the road. Here's how it works.



WHAT DOES THE POINT SYSTEM SAY ABOUT YOU?

DMV uses a point system to rate drivers. You receive **demerit points** for unsafe driving and **safe driving points** for good driving.

Demerit Points are assigned when you commit a traffic violation. Different violations carry different point assignments, depending on the seriousness of the offense.

For example, you will receive three demerit points if you make an improper U-turn. However, you will receive six demerit points if you speed 20 miles per hour or more above the posted speed limit. Demerit points remain valid two years from the date you commit an offense.

Safe Driving Points are assigned for each full calendar year that you hold a valid Virginia driver's license and drive without any violations or suspensions. You may also earn safe driving points by completing a driver improvement clinic

if you are 18 years of age or older. You can accumulate a total of five safe driving points and you may use these safe driving points to offset demerit points. Consider the following example.

For five years Molly Buttercup followed all the safe driving rules and always obeyed the speed limit. She accumulated a safe driving point each year, for a total of five points. But, one day Molly ran a red light. DMV assigned four demerit points to her driving record. However, since she had earned five safe driving points, she ended up with one safe driving point left on her record.

DEMERIT POINTS CAN ADD UP

Each time you commit a traffic offense, DMV adds additional demerit points to your record. This can add up to big trouble for some drivers.

Drivers under age 18

You will be required to complete a driver improvement clinic after your first demerit point conviction (including safety belt and child restraint violations). A computer-based course will not satisfy this requirement. You must enroll in a clinic that provides classroom instruction.

After your second demerit point conviction, DMV will suspend your permit or license for 90 days. After a third or subsequent demerit point conviction, DMV will revoke your permit or license for one year or until you reach age 18, whichever is longer.

You will not receive safe driving points for completing a driver improvement clinic voluntarily or when required by DMV or a court. Your parent(s) may attend the driver improvement clinic with you and, if eligible, may receive safe driving points. Contact the clinic to discuss this option.

Drivers age 18 and 19

You will be required to complete a driver improvement clinic after your first demerit point conviction (including safety belt and child restraint violations).

Drivers age 18 and over

If you accumulate 8 demerit points in 12 months (or 12 points in 24 months), you will receive an advisory letter that cautions you about the consequences of violating the law.



If you accumulate 12 demerit points in 12 months (or 18 points in 24 months), you will be required to complete a driver improvement clinic.

If you accumulate 18 demerit points in 12 months (or 24 points in 24 months), your driving privilege will be suspended for 90 days. Additionally, you must complete a driver improvement clinic before your privilege will be restored. Once your privilege is restored, you will be placed on a six-month probation.

A DRIVER IMPROVEMENT CLINIC WILL PUT YOU BACK ON THE ROAD TO SAFE DRIVING

When you complete a driver improvement clinic, you'll learn defensive driving techniques that can help you avoid and prevent crashes. These eight-hour classroom sessions cost no more than \$75 and are offered at sites around the state and as a computer-based course on the internet. Contact the court to be sure it will accept a computer based course.

If DMV requires you to complete a clinic, you must complete the entire eight-hour course. If you fail to complete the clinic within 90 days, DMV will suspend your driver's license until you complete the clinic.

If you hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) or committed an offense while operating a commercial motor vehicle, and you are required to complete a driver improvement clinic, you must complete a commercial driver improvement clinic designed specifically for commercial drivers.

After you successfully complete a driver improvement clinic, you may be awarded five safe driving points. If a court requires you to complete a clinic, the court determines whether you will be awarded safe driving points.



Insurance companies may offer premium discounts to policyholders under 55 years of age who complete a DMV-approved driver improvement clinic. Check with your agent to see if your insurance company offers this benefit.

If you take a driver improvement clinic to reduce your insurance premium, you will not be eligible to receive safe driving points. If a court assigns you to complete a clinic, you will not be eligible to receive the insurance premium reduction.

To find the location of the nearest driver improvement clinic in your area check the yellow pages of your local telephone directory. Or, check DMV's web site at www.dmvnow.com. If you need more information, call toll free 1-866-368-5463 (DMV-LINE) or 1-800-435-5137.

DRIVERS ON PROBATION

If you are convicted of a traffic offense which was committed while you were on probation, your driving privilege will be suspended. The suspension period depends on the number of demerit points assigned for the violation.

- 3 point violation = 45 day suspension
- 4 point violation = 60 day suspension
- 6 point violation = 90 day suspension

Once you complete the suspension period, you will be placed on probation for another six months.

If you are convicted of a traffic offense which occurred while you are on probation for the first

time, you may request DMV to grant you restricted driving privileges. If you violate a second or subsequent probation, DMV will grant you restricted privileges only if the probationary period during which the violation occurred was immediately preceded by a control period (an 18-month time period during which your driving record is monitored).

Restricted driving privileges granted by DMV allow you to drive only

- to and from your place of employment,
- during employment hours only if driving is a required part of your job,
- to and from school if you are a student,
- for medical treatment, including necessary transportation of an elderly parent,
- to transport your minor child to and from school, day care or for medical treatment, or
- to and from a court-ordered visitation with your child.

You may not receive restricted driving privileges to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

DRIVERS UNDER CONTROL PERIOD

If you receive demerit points for a violation during the 18-month control period, you will be placed on six months probation. Once you successfully complete the control period, you will exit the Driver Improvement Program.

Be sure to read *Moving Violations and Point Assessments (PRO15)* for more information about the Driver Improvement Program.



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The Virginia Driver Improvement Program

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CRASH COURSE

