



## Suspended & Revoked Drivers – Overview

The suspension of driving privileges has been used for decades as a consequence and penalty for poor driving behavior. What was originally intended as a sanction to address poor driving behavior has since become associated with a host of non-highway safety reasons. Drivers are now commonly suspended for non-driving reasons such as drug violations (other than drugged/impaired driving), fuel theft, truancy, vandalism, and many others. To best serve public safety, while using limited resources more effectively, AAMVA's Reducing Suspended Drivers and Alternative Reinstatement Best Practices recommends not suspending driving privileges for non-highway safety related violations.

- Nearly 4 of every 10 suspended drivers are suspended for non-highway safety reasons.<sup>1</sup>
- Drivers suspended for highway safety related reasons are almost 3 times more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers suspended for non-highway safety reasons.<sup>1</sup>
- All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and many Canadian provinces, have laws that either require or permit the courts to withdraw driving privileges for non-highway safety reasons.
- Suspending driver licenses for non-highway safety related reasons takes resources from law enforcement and the legal and administrative system that could be used to keep dangerous drivers off the road – those that commit highway safety violations that cause fatal, injury and property damage crashes.
- Drivers who have been suspended for non-highway safety reasons often become trapped within the system. Some cannot afford the original fines and may lose their ability to drive legally as a result of a suspension. If the suspension was for a non-highway safety reason, the person, who may otherwise be a safe driver, loses his or her ability to drive to and from work, school, and other essential destinations that require driving. A suspension also results in increased financial obligations through new requirements such as reinstatement fees, court costs, and other penalties.
- Failure to Pay/Failure to Appear (FTP/FTA) often result in additional suspensions. The Working Group recommends jurisdictions determine the underlying violation that resulted in the FTP/FTA and if it is from a driving/highway safety related violation, it should still result in suspension. If, however, the FTP/FTA is from a non-driving violation, it should not result in suspension.

- When young drivers are suspended for non-driving reasons, the suspensions have collateral consequences such as financial responsibility filing requirements. The compounding effect of these consequences may have a long-term and substantial impact on a young person's ability to pursue educational opportunities and to secure and maintain future employment.
- Local communities, employers, and employees all experience negative consequences as a result of non-highway safety suspensions. People who are able to legally drive are more likely to have stable employment.
- When licenses are suspended for non-highway safety reasons, the suspension becomes less serious in the minds of law enforcement, the courts, and the public. As many as 75% of suspended drivers continue to drive<sup>2</sup>, indicating license suspension is not the sole solution to gaining compliance.
- More than one third of all driving privilege suspensions are for non-highway safety reasons. If these non-safety suspension actions were eliminated, the reduction in citations for driving while under suspension would benefit clogged court dockets. These individuals would retain their driving privileges and improve their ability to earn a living and contribute to the economy.
- Eliminating non-highway safety suspension actions would also reduce the administrative burden on motor vehicle agencies (MVAs) and allow law enforcement to focus on apprehending dangerous drivers.
- Some alternatives to driver license sanctioning for non-highway safety violations include: garnishment of wages, monetary programs, amnesty programs, and diversion programs.
- Several states, including Georgia, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington, and Washington DC, have passed legislation eliminating most non-highway safety suspensions and they are realizing outcomes consistent with those predicted in the Best Practices Guide.
- For more information, see AAMVA's Reducing Suspended Drivers and Alternative Reinstatement Best Practices at [AAMVA - Best Practices and Model Legislation](#).

<sup>1</sup> Robert Eger III, Ph.D. "Enhanced Analyses of Suspended/Revoked Drivers Related to Crashes." Florida State University. 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 500, Volume 2, 2003.

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