

Penalty Points

Did you know that penalty points were introduced for driving offences in Ireland almost 7 years ago and that over 500,000 drivers received penalty points. Of these the almost 400,000 held full driving licences; 30,000 were provisional drivers and almost 200,000 had no driving licences at all.

Can I get penalty points if I am driving under a Polish or English Driving Licence?

Yes you can. The penalty points do not physically appear on your driving licence (whether it is Irish or foreign) instead they are recorded on your **driving licence record**. These records are held on the National Vehicle and Driver File operated by the Road Safety Authority.

If someone is driving in Ireland on a foreign licence the driver's details are held on a separate database for the purpose of recording penalty points. If that driver applies for and obtains an Irish driving licence the penalty points are then activated on his/her Irish licence.

How many penalty points do I have to get before I am disqualified?

Nobody in Ireland is allowed to drive a vehicle while holding 12 current penalty points on their driving licence. Any driver that received 12 penalty points in any three year period is automatically disqualified for a six month period.

If I get penalty points in another EU Member State does that affect my Irish driving licence?

Not at the moment but the Irish and British Governments are currently examining the recognition of penalty points between Northern Ireland and Ireland and there is an EU framework (currently unimplemented) designed to provide for a joint penalty recognition situation for a number of serious road traffic offences committed in other Member States.

How many driving offences currently attract penalty points?

The Road Traffic Act of 2002 provides a total of 69 motoring offences will incur penalty points but not all have been implemented. In May 2009 5 additional driving offences in penalty points were added and at present they relate to 42 driving offences.

How do I find out how many penalty points I have on my driving licence?

Contact the Road Safety Authority at 1890 41 61 41 quoting your driving licence number.

If I commit a “penalty point road traffic offence” what is the procedure from there to me getting penalty points?

Generally if you commit a driving offence that incurs penalty points you receive what is called a Fixed Charge Notice by the Gardaí which gives you details of the offence.

There are some offences which are so serious that they can not be dealt with by payment of a fixed penalty and are only dealt with in Court.

You have 28 days to pay the penalty on the Fixed Charge Notice and if you do not pay within the 28 day period there is a further extension of 28 days within which to pay but the fine is then increased. If you pay the fine in this manner then the penalty points attached are generally halved (and sometimes less than half depending on the offence) of the penalty points that you get if you do not pay on foot of the Fixed Charge Notice but the matter is dealt with in court.

If the matter goes to court (either because you have not paid on foot of the Fixed Penalty Notice or because there is no provision for a fixed penalty due to the seriousness of the offence) the penalty points imposed by a court, on conviction, are much greater than would have been imposed on foot of the Fixed Charge Penalty Notice.

What happens if I drive a car without a Test Certificate?

There is no provision for payment of a fixed charge for this offence. It is an automatic summons to court and on conviction in court 5 penalty points attach with a court fine. It is a similar situation to driving without insurance or careless driving.

For further information on penalty points check out www.penaltypoints.ie