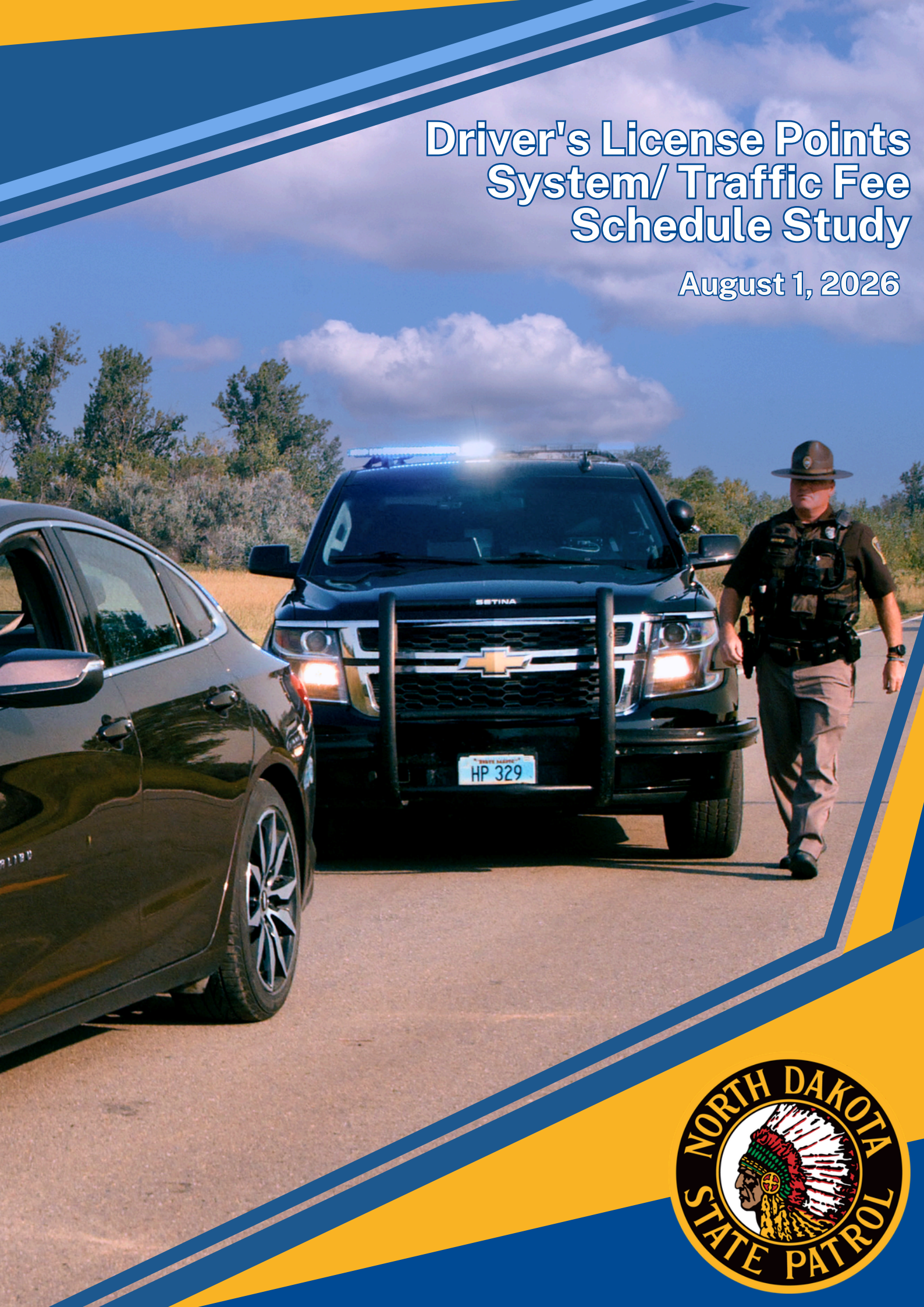
Driver's License Points System/ Traffic Fee Schedule Study

August 1, 2026



NORTH DAKOTA STATE PATROL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HB 1298 directed the highway patrol, in conjunction with local law enforcement, to study the driver's license points system and the traffic fee schedule. The study is to include a review of the driver's license points system, the traffic fee schedule, and a recommended structure to improve the driver's license points system and the traffic fee schedule and to deliver the report to legislative management on or before August 1, 2026.

This report examines the current driver's license point structure, traffic citation fee schedule, associated court costs and assessments, and license suspension practices. The study includes a review of comparable systems in other states, stakeholder input, available crash and citation data, and an analysis of policy alternatives.

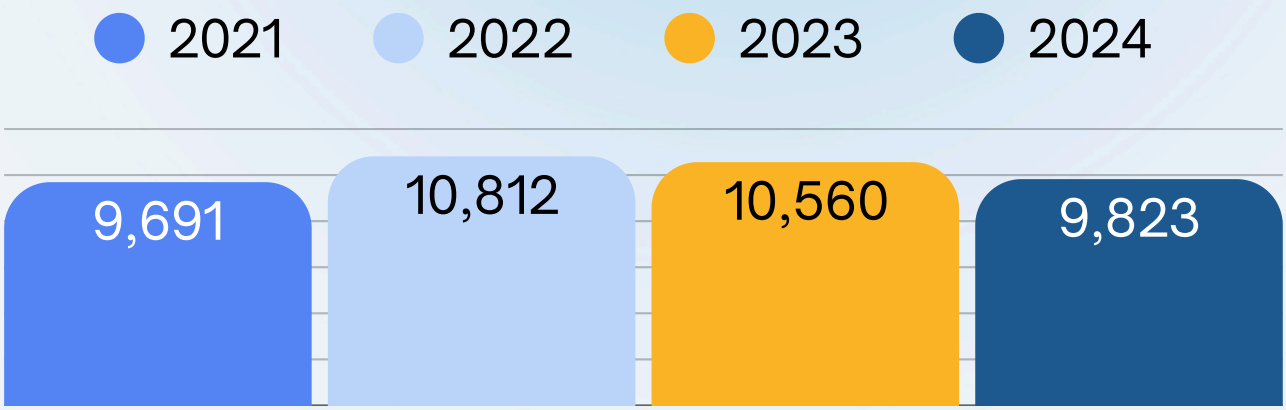
Key findings:

- North Dakota's traffic fine and point systems have developed incrementally since 1973 and have not undergone a comprehensive review based on current crash risks or deterrence.
- The standard $20 moving-violation fee has remained unchanged for more than 50 years and may no longer provide a meaningful deterrent for many unsafe driving behaviors. Inflation from 1973 to 2026 would have made a $20 fine $150 at a 650% increase.
- Distracted driving, careless or negligent driving, failure to yield, speeding, impaired driving, and following too closely are among the leading contributors to crashes, injuries, and fatalities in North Dakota.
- North Dakota's current penalties are not consistently aligned with crash risk. Several behaviors that commonly contribute to crashes currently carry minimal fines, no points, or both.
- The committee's proposed changes increase fines or points for priority violations while removing points from certain low-risk administrative or equipment violations, creating a system more closely tied to dangerous driving behavior and roadway safety.

The committee offers recommendations intended to improve public safety, promote consistency in traffic enforcement, and ensure that penalties remain proportional to traffic violations.

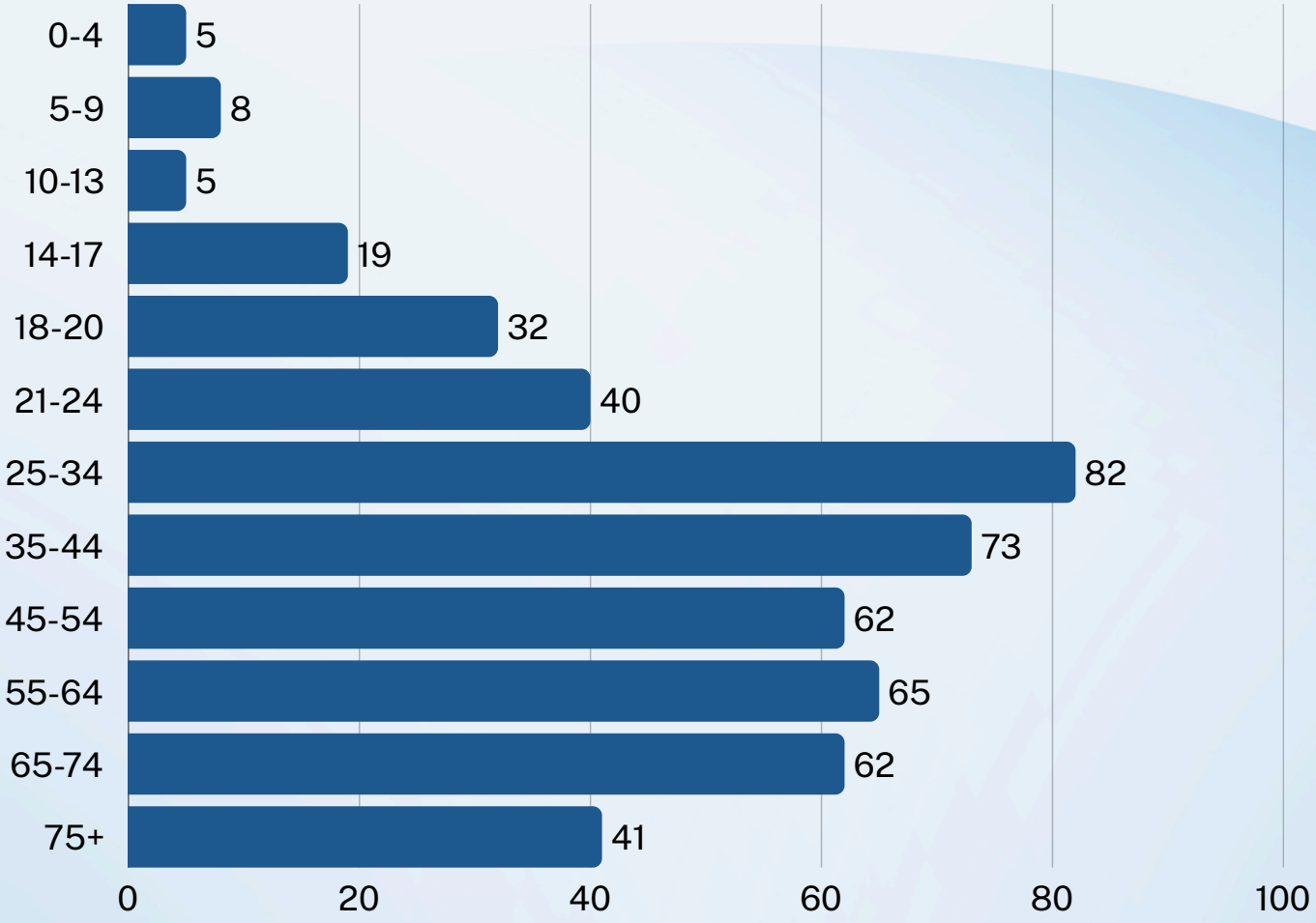
TOTAL CRASHES IN NORTH DAKOTA: 2021-24

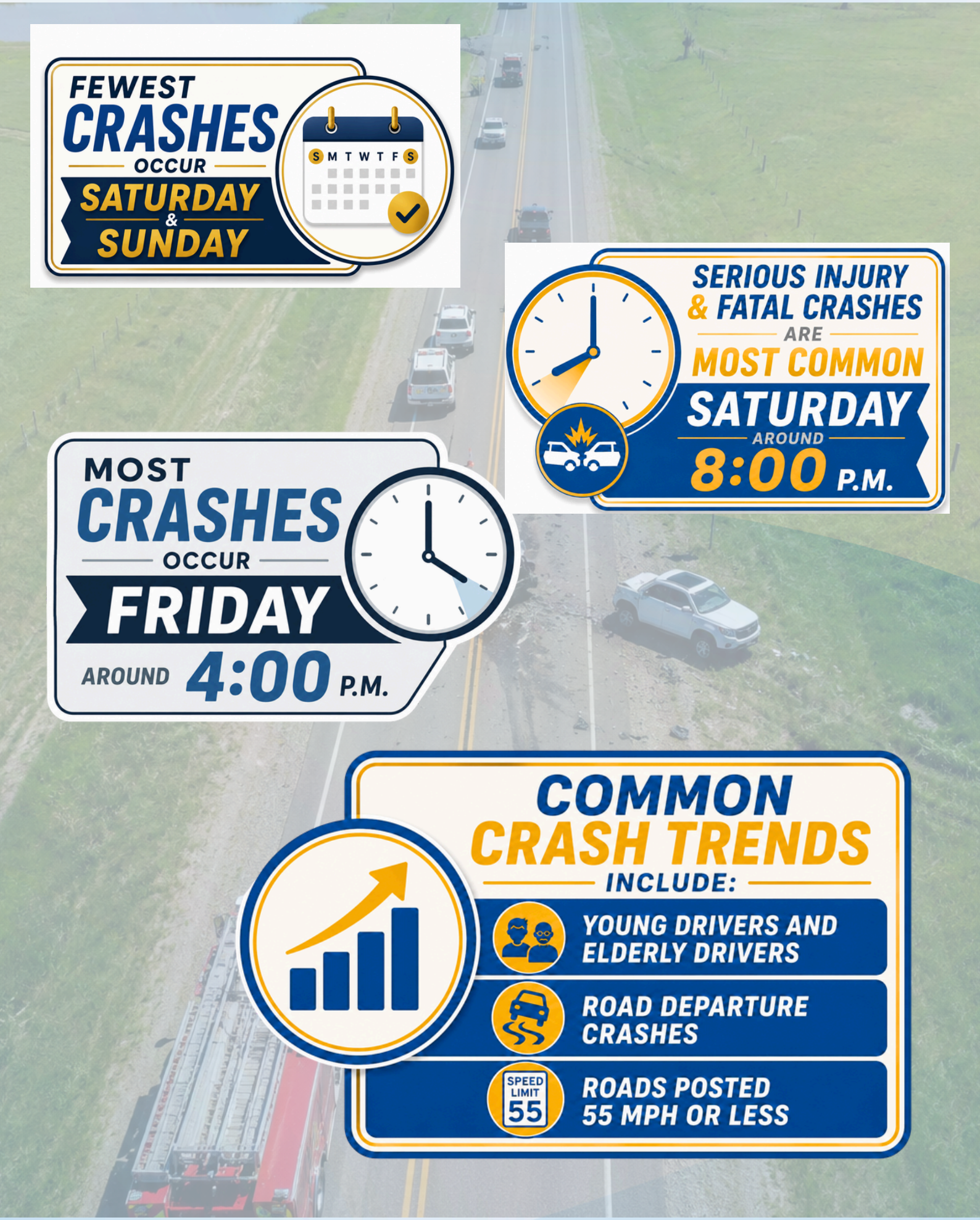
Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



NORTH DAKOTA VEHICLE FATALITIES BY AGE: 2020-24

Source: 2025 North Dakota Crash Summary:
https://www.visionzero.nd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/statistics/NDDOT-Crash-Summary-2024.pdf




FEWEST
CRASHES
OCCUR
SATURDAY
&
SUNDAY
S M T W T F S
SERIOUS INJURY
& FATAL CRASHES
ARE
MOST COMMON
SATURDAY
AROUND
8:00 P.M.
MOST
CRASHES
OCCUR
FRIDAY
AROUND 4:00 P.M.
COMMON
CRASH TRENDS
INCLUDE:
YOUNG DRIVERS AND
ELDERLY DRIVERS
ROAD DEPARTURE
CRASHES
SPEED LIMIT 55
ROADS POSTED
55 MPH OR LESS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to review the effectiveness and administration of the state's Driver's License Points System and Traffic Fee Schedule.

The study was authorized by HB 1298 during the 69th Legislative Assembly. The review was undertaken in response to questions regarding:

- the effectiveness of the point system as a traffic safety tool
- the consistency and fairness of traffic fines and fees
- the impact of point accumulation on driver behavior
- the relationship between traffic penalties and crash reduction
- a comparison with systems utilized in other states

This report summarizes the committee's work, findings, and recommendations.

COMMITTEE PROCESS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration explains that states use point systems "to track and deter drivers from committing repeated traffic offenses." As points accumulate, states may impose warning notices, driver-improvement programs, administrative hearings, license suspension, or revocation. NHTSA also cautions that increased penalties are most effective when supported by consistent enforcement and a meaningful likelihood that violations will be detected. Accordingly, fines and points should be considered as part of a broader driver-control system that combines proportionate penalties, visible enforcement, education, and escalating consequences for serious or repeat violations.

The committee examined North Dakota's traffic citation fee schedule and driver's license point system to assess whether the current framework provides an effective deterrent to unsafe driving behaviors. For many years, North Dakota has maintained some of the lowest traffic fines in the nation. While the adequacy of these penalties is often discussed during legislative sessions, limited analysis has been conducted comparing North Dakota's system with those of states that have similar populations, rural roadway networks, and law enforcement environments. To provide context, the committee conducted a comparative review of the traffic citation fee structures and driver's license point systems used in Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota.

The study process brought together representatives from the North Dakota State Patrol, sheriff's offices, police departments, the North Dakota Department of Transportation, and the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. The committee identified the leading contributing factors in North Dakota crashes and compared the associated fines, point assessments, offense classifications, and other consequences with those in the three comparison states.

Based on that analysis, the committee developed proposed increases to fines or points for priority violations at levels it believes will provide a stronger deterrent, reduce dangerous driving behaviors, and improve safety on North Dakota roadways.

REGIONAL STATE COMPARISON

Description	Wyoming	South Dakota *2nd amount includes added court costs*	Montana	ND Current	ND Proposed
Care Required: Too Fast for Conditions	* $250	$54/ $132.50 * 2 points	$85 2 points	$30 2 points	$50 2 points
Care Required: Overcorrected	* $250	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 * 2 points	$30 2 points	$50 2 points
Care Required: Inattentive	* $250	$54/ $132.50 * 2 points	$85 * 2 points	$30 2 points	$50 2 points
Care Required: Fatigued / Fell Asleep	* $250	$54/ $132.50 * 2 points	$235 2 points	$30 2 points	$50 2 points
Failed to Yield Right-of-Way	$100	$54/ $132.50 4 points	$85 2 points	$20 2 points	$50 2 points
Following Too Closely	$100	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 2 points	$20 2 points	$50 2 points
Improper Passing	$100	$54/ $132.50 4 points	$85 2 points	$20 2 points	$50 2 points
Improper Turn	$100	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 2 points	$20 2 points	$50 2 points
Improper Lane Change	$100	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 2 points	$20 0 points	$50 2 points
Wrong Side / Wrong Way	$100	$54/ $132.50 4 points	$85 2 points	$20 2 points	$50 2 points
Failed to Keep in Proper Lane	$100	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 2 points	$20 0 points	$50 2 points
Careless / Negligent Driving	$250	$54/ $132.50 2 points	$85 2 points	$100 6 points	no change
Reckless / Aggressive Driving	$250	$150/ $208 8 points	$285 ** 5 points	B. Misd 8 points	no change
Distracted Driving	$105	$100/ $178.50 2 points	$135 2 points	$100 0 points	$100 2 points

Notes:

- Excessive speed has multiple levels at each state and is therefore not included in this chart
- Wyoming does not use a demerit point system, but instead enforces license sanctions based on the number of convictions and severity of offenses.
- *Fines listed are WY law equivalent to North Dakota Law
- **Reckless driving in Montana has progressive fines up to $785; $2,035 for injury or death.
- In South Dakota, 15 points accumulated within 12 consecutive months results in a suspension; 22 points accumulated within 24 months also results in suspension.
- In Montana, a driver accumulating 6 points in 18 months must attend driver counseling session or retake license exam: failure to do so leads to a 3-month suspension. If 15 points are accumulated in a 36-month period the result is a 6-month license suspension. Accumulating 30 points in a 36-month period the driver is a habitual violator and license is revoked for a minimum of 3 years.

BACKGROUND

North Dakota Driver's License Points System

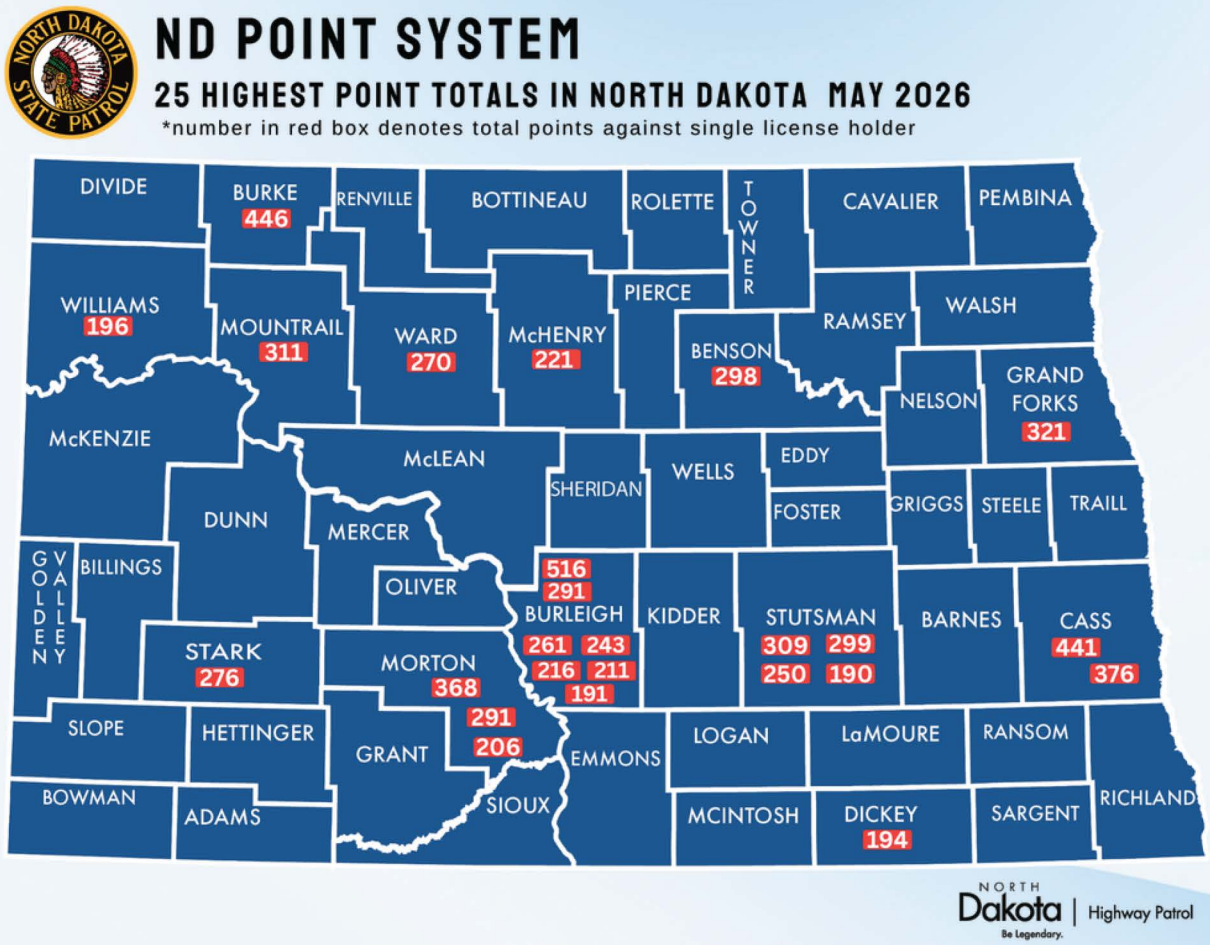
North Dakota's current driver's license point system developed as part of the state's broader revision of traffic enforcement in 1973. That legislation changed most traffic violations from criminal offenses to noncriminal violations and established a schedule assigning demerit points based on the type and seriousness of the conduct. The original schedule assigned points to 18 noncriminal violations and six criminal offenses. Over time, the Legislature added offenses and adjusted point values as traffic laws and safety priorities changed. By 2012, the schedule had expanded to 36 noncriminal and 14 criminal violations. Additional amendments have continued to modify the schedule, resulting in the detailed, offense-specific system contained in current law. North Dakota Legislative Council Report: 13.9375.01000

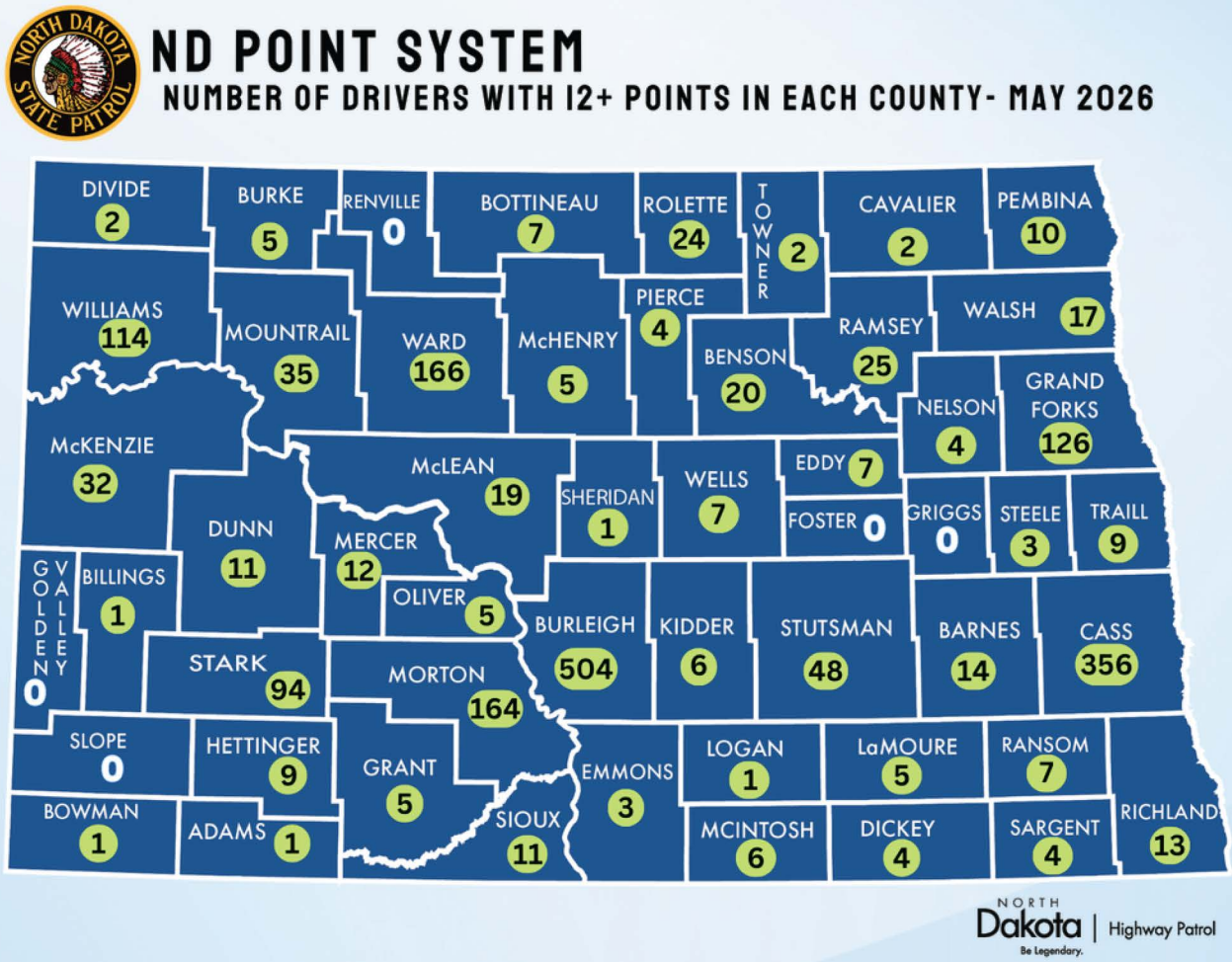
Under the current system, points are entered on a driver's record following a conviction, admission, or adjudication. A driver who accumulates 12 points is subject to a seven-day suspension, with an additional seven days imposed for each point above 12. Point assessments are generally graduated according to the seriousness of the conduct. For example, careless driving carries six points, reckless driving carries eight points, racing or drag racing carries 10 points, aggravated reckless driving carries 12 points, and fleeing in a motor vehicle carries 24 points. Speeding points are also graduated based on how far the driver exceeds the posted limit and whether the roadway is posted above 65 miles per hour.

The system includes several mechanisms for reducing or avoiding points. Eligible drivers may complete an approved driver-training course in lieu of receiving five or fewer points, once within a 12-month period. Points are also reduced by one for every three consecutive months in which the driver receives no additional violations. After a point-based suspension is completed, the driver's total is reduced to 11 points, placing the driver one point below the threshold for another suspension. Although the system has been amended repeatedly since 1973, it has developed through individual statutory changes rather than a comprehensive restructuring based on current crash risks, driver behavior, or the deterrent value of the assigned points.

Prior to the passage of House Bill 1417 during the 2023 legislative session, traffic violations carrying two points or fewer were recorded separately by the North Dakota Department of Transportation and were not available to the public. These violations were considered part of the driver's record only for point-reduction and license-suspension purposes. House Bill 1417 removed this exception, meaning all point-assessed traffic violations, including those carrying two points or fewer, are now entered on the driver's official driving record and may be discovered by any person or organization that lawfully requests the record.

Points assessed in North Dakota primarily affect drivers licensed in North Dakota. While some states recognize traffic convictions received in North Dakota and apply corresponding points or other consequences to their residents' driving records, many do not. As a result, the deterrent effect of North Dakota's point system can vary significantly for out-of-state drivers.


ND POINT SYSTEM
25 HIGHEST POINT TOTALS IN NORTH DAKOTA MAY 2026
*number in red box denotes total points against single license holder
DIVIDE
BURKE 446
RENVILLE
BOTTINEAU
ROLETTE
TOWNER
CAVALIER
PEMBINA
WILLIAMS 196
MOUNTRAIL 311
WARD 270
McHENRY 221
PIERCE
BENSON 298
RAMSEY
WALSH
NELSON
GRAND FORKS 321
McKENZIE
McLEAN
SHERIDAN
WELLS
EDDY
FOSTER
GRIGGS
STEELE
TRAILL
DUNN
MERCER
OLIVER
GOLDEN VALLEY
BILLINGS
516
291
BURLEIGH
261 243
216 211
191
KIDDER
STUTSMAN 309 299 250 190
BARNES
CASS 441 376
STARK 276
MORTON 368
291
206
GRANT
SLOPE
HETTINGER
EMMONS
LOGAN
LaMOURE
RANSOM
BOWMAN
ADAMS
SIOUX
MCINTOSH
DICKEY 194
SARGENT
RICHLAND
NORTH Dakota | Highway Patrol
Be Legendary.


ND POINT SYSTEM
NUMBER OF DRIVERS WITH 12+ POINTS IN EACH COUNTY- MAY 2026
DIVIDE 2
BURKE 5
RENVILLE 0
BOTTINEAU 7
ROLETTE 24
TOWNER 2
CAVALIER 2
PEMBINA 10
WILLIAMS 114
MOUNTRAIL 35
WARD 166
McHENRY 5
PIERCE 4
BENSON 20
RAMSEY 25
WALSH 17
NELSON 4
GRAND FORKS 126
McKENZIE 32
McLEAN 19
SHERIDAN 1
WELLS 7
EDDY 7
FOSTER 0
GRIGGS 0
STEELE 3
TRAILL 9
DUNN 11
MERCER 12
OLIVER 5
GOLDEN VALLEY 0
BILLINGS 1
BURLEIGH 504
KIDDER 6
STUTSMAN 48
BARNES 14
CASS 356
STARK 94
MORTON 164
SLOPE 0
HETTINGER 9
GRANT 5
EMMONS 3
LOGAN 1
LaMOURE 5
RANSOM 7
BOWMAN 1
ADAMS 1
SIOUX 11
MCINTOSH 6
DICKEY 4
SARGENT 4
RICHLAND 13
NORTH Dakota | Highway Patrol
Be Legendary.

CRASH DATA-SUSPENDED OR REVOKED DRIVERS LICENSE

Crashes Involving Drivers with a Suspended or Revoked Drivers License - 2025

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query

- 578 crashes involving drivers with ND suspended/revoked drivers licenses (23 drivers in 2 separate crashes, 3 drivers in 3 separate crashes)
- Of these crashes, 10 ND suspended/revoked licenses were in other states = 568 suspended/revoked drivers in ND possible injury crashes
- 9,809 total crashes in ND in 2025
- 568/9809 =5.79%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 5.79% of all crashes in North Dakota in 2025.

Fatal Injury

- 11 suspended/revoked drivers
- 77 total fatal crashes in 2025
- 11/77 =14.29%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 14.29% of all fatal injury cashes in North Dakota in 2025.

Suspected Serious Injury

- 36 suspended/revoked drivers
- 338 suspected serious injury crashes in ND
- 36/338=10.65%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 10.65% of all serious suspected injury cashes in North Dakota in 2025.

Suspected Minor Injury

- 113 suspended/revoked drivers (1 driver in 2 separate crashes)
- 1494 suspected minor injury crashes in ND in 2025
- 113/1494=7.56%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 7.56% of all suspected minor injury cashes in North Dakota in 2025.

Possible Injury

- 44 crashes involving drivers with ND suspended/revoked drivers licenses (1 driver was in 2 separate possible injury crashes)
- Of these crashes, 2 drivers with ND suspended/revoked licenses were in other states = 42 suspended/revoked drivers in ND possible injury crashes
- 761 total possible injury crashes in ND in 2025
- 42/761 =5.52%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 5.52% of all possible injury cashes in North Dakota in 2025.

CRASH DATA-SUSPENDED OR REVOKED DRIVERS LICENSE

No Apparent Injury

- 373 no apparent injury crashes involving drivers with ND suspended/revoked drivers licenses in 2025 (14 drivers in 2 crashes, 1 driver in 3 crashes)
- Of these crashes 7 ND suspended/revoked licenses were in other states = 366 suspended/revoked drivers in ND possible injury crashes
- 7,139 total no apparent injury crashes in ND in 2025
- 366/7139 = 5.13%

Drivers with a North Dakota revoked or suspended drivers license represented 5.13% of all no apparent injury cashes in North Dakota in 2025.

BACKGROUND

It is important to clarify that NDDOT does not automatically send traffic convictions or point assessments to insurance companies. An insurer must request or otherwise lawfully obtain the driver's record. However, the committee has heard anecdotally from numerous drivers who report changing their driving behavior because they are concerned that a traffic violation could be discovered by their insurance company and result in higher premiums. Although the actual insurance impact varies, the possibility of an insurer obtaining this information appears to provide an additional deterrent beyond the fine, points, or potential license suspension.

When a driver accumulates 12 or more points on their driving record, their driving privileges are suspended for 7 days for each point over 11. For drivers under the age of 18, driving license or privileges will be canceled upon an accumulation of 6 or more points. Drivers are eligible to take a defensive driving course to reduce their total points by 3, once every 12 months. A defensive driving course can also be taken "in lieu of points" being entered on your driving record for some violations with 5 or fewer points. With or without a defensive driving course, 1 point is reduced for every 3 months a driver has not had any new point violations applied to their record during that time. Reduction date is based on the date the violation is entered. If you are serving a suspension or cancellation related to point violations, points will not be reduced until the period of suspension is complete.

NORTH DAKOTA TRAFFIC FEE SCHEDULE

North Dakota's current traffic fee structure has its foundation in legislation enacted in 1973, when traffic offenses were divided into moving and nonmoving violations. At that time, the statutory fees were established at $10 for a nonmoving violation, $20 for a moving violation, and $30 for careless driving. The standard fee for a moving violation remains $20 today, meaning the base amount has not received a comprehensive adjustment in more than 50 years. Over time, the Legislature has amended the schedule by creating individual exceptions for particular violations, resulting in a structure that has developed incrementally rather than through a broad review of whether the fees remain proportionate or provide an effective deterrent.

The Legislature has also periodically adjusted penalties for specific high-risk conduct, however an analysis of all traffic related offenses has not been previously studied. For example, the 2023 Legislative Assembly added a $20 surcharge for exceeding the speed limit by at least 16 miles per hour. Other targeted amendments have established enhanced fees for conduct such as violations in school and construction zones, failing to move over, passing a stopped school bus, distracted driving, and other identified offenses. In 2025, the Legislature directed the North Dakota State Patrol, in conjunction with local law enforcement, to study the driver's license point system and traffic fee schedule and recommend a structure for improving both systems.

Using U.S. inflation, $20 in 1973 has the purchasing power of about $150 today (2026).

- 1973: $20
- 2026 equivalent: ≈ $150
- Inflation increase: About 650%, meaning prices are roughly 7.5 times higher than they were in 1973.

NATIONAL TRENDS

Nationally, states use a combination of monetary fines, driver's license points, and progressively stronger sanctions to address traffic violations. The severity of these consequences generally increases based on the risk associated with the conduct, the extent of the violation, and whether the driver is a repeat offender. For example, Iowa's 2024 automated-enforcement law established graduated speeding fines ranging from $75 for traveling 10 to 20 miles per hour over the limit to $500 for traveling at least 30 miles per hour over, with work-zone fines reaching $1,000. Alabama increased its move-over penalties to $200 for a first offense, $250 for a second offense, and $300 plus a license suspension for subsequent offenses. Washington, D.C., also established graduated point assessments ranging from two points for traveling 11 to 15 miles per hour over the limit to 10 points for aggravated reckless driving. These examples reflect a broader trend toward aligning fines, points, and licensing consequences with the seriousness and repetition of dangerous driving behavior.

NORTH DAKOTA'S DECLARATION OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT (NDCC 39-01-01.1)

North Dakota law declares that protecting public safety on the state's highways is a fundamental government responsibility. The Legislature recognizes that effective traffic laws, enforcement, and coordinated traffic safety programs are essential to protecting the public investment in transportation and promoting the general welfare. This policy supports maintaining effective traffic penalties that encourage compliance with motor vehicle laws and reduce crashes.

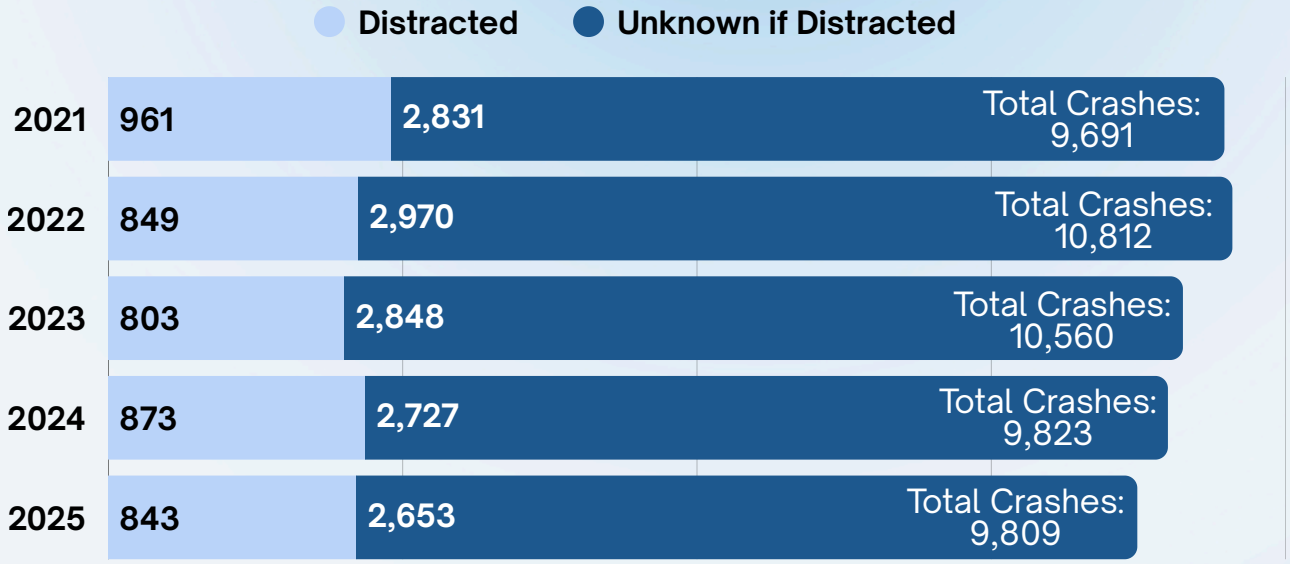
This legislative intent provides a strong policy foundation for considering increases to traffic fines and driver's license point assessments. Specifically, it demonstrates that:

- Traffic laws are intended to protect a significant public investment in North Dakota's highway system.
- The Legislature has already recognized that effective enforcement is an essential component of highway safety, not merely an administrative function.
- Public safety may appropriately take precedence over individual convenience when necessary to reduce crashes and improve compliance with traffic laws.
- The Legislature expects traffic safety policies to evolve in response to changing transportation conditions and research-based evidence.
- Enhancing penalties for traffic violations is consistent with the Legislature's stated goal of providing agencies with the authority and tools necessary to maintain an effective traffic safety system and reduce preventable crashes.

This declaration serves as an overarching policy statement that supports modernizing traffic penalties when existing sanctions no longer provide an effective deterrent or adequately advance the Legislature's stated objectives of protecting public safety and promoting the general welfare.

DISTRACTED AND UNKNOWN DISTRACTION CRASHES: 2021-25

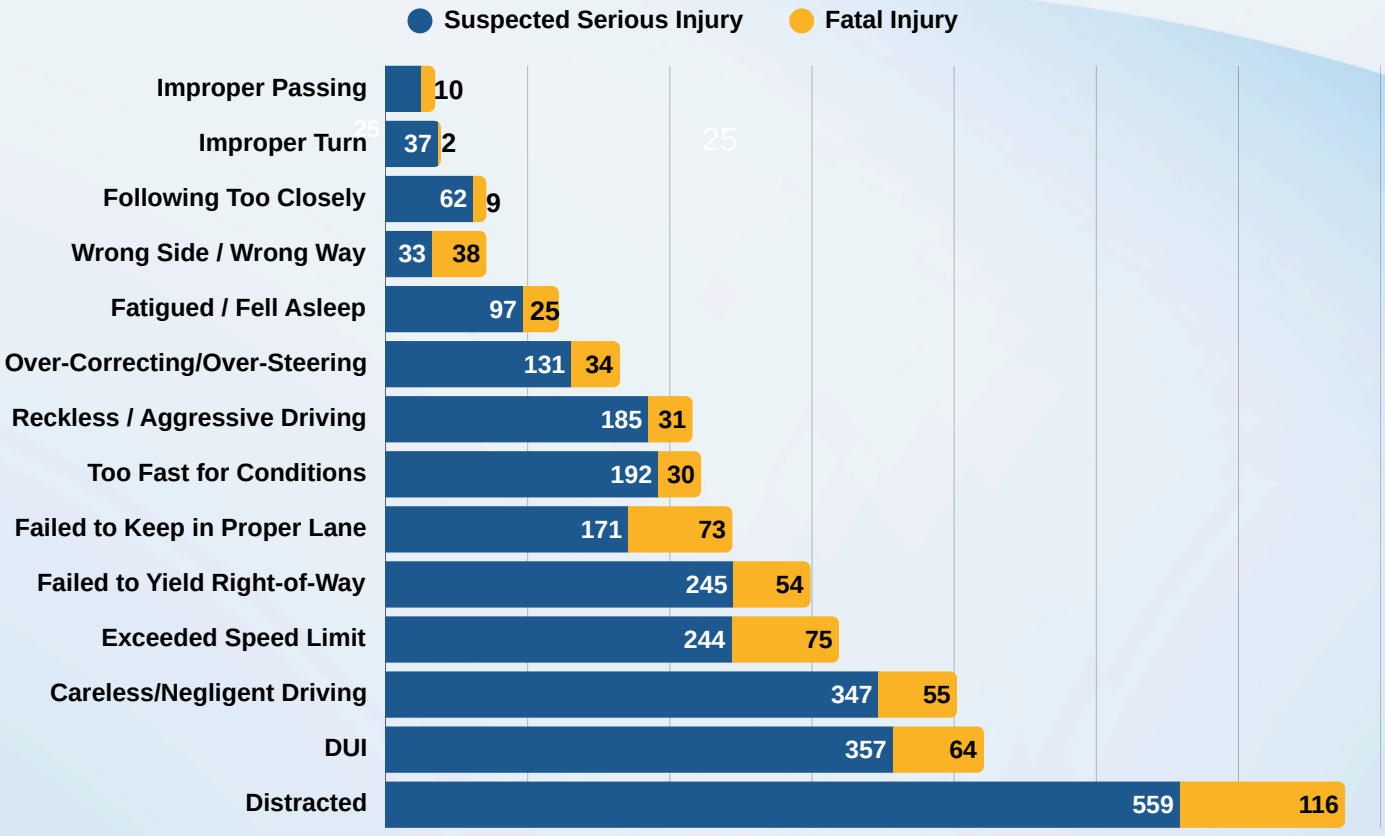
Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



**Distracted driving is vastly underreported as drivers may hesitate to admit they were distracted; witnesses may not notice; and other factors make it difficult to verify. As a result, North Dakota's crash data related to distraction is likely underestimated.*

FATAL AND SERIOUS CRASHES BY CONTRIBUTING FACTOR: 2021-25

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



Note: The statistics represented in these charts represent a multitude of factors, and represent each driver involved in the crash. A traffic crash may have more than one contributing factor. In many cases, crashes result from a combination of driver actions, roadway conditions, vehicle-related issues, environmental factors, or other circumstances. Identifying all contributing factors provides a more complete and accurate understanding of how the crash occurred and helps ensure that the incident is evaluated based on the totality of the available evidence rather than a single cause.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This synopsis summarizes findings from two authoritative publications evaluating the effectiveness of increasing traffic fines: (1) the SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research international review (2017), and (2) the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) countermeasures that work guidance. Together, these publications provide a strong evidence base for modernizing traffic fines while strengthening driver license point systems and enforcement.

Both publications conclude that increasing traffic fines can improve driver compliance and reduce crashes when implemented as part of a comprehensive traffic safety strategy. The research consistently demonstrates that moderate increases in fines are associated with fewer violations, but the greatest safety benefits occur when penalties are combined with visible enforcement, driver license point systems, and timely administrative sanctions. The evidence also indicates that monetary penalties alone are less effective for chronic repeat offenders, supporting the use of escalating sanctions.

MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

- **Moderate Fine Increases Are Most Effective**: International evidence indicates that increases of approximately 50–100 percent produced about a 15 percent reduction in violations.

- **Crash Reductions Follow Improved Compliance:** Penalty increases were associated with approximately 5–10 percent fewer crashes and 1–12 percent fewer fatal crashes.

- **Enforcement Drives Deterrence:** Both studies conclude that the certainty of enforcement is at least as important as the severity of the penalty. Drivers must believe violations will be detected and sanctions consistently imposed.

- **Driver License Point Systems Strengthen Accountability:** Graduated point systems identify repeat offenders and support escalating interventions such as suspension or revocation.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

- **Administrative Sanctions Improve Effectiveness:** Immediate actions such as automatic point assessment and license suspension generally produce stronger deterrence than delayed court processes.

- **Repeat Offenders Require Escalating Consequences:** Habitual violators are less responsive to monetary penalties alone and often require stronger administrative sanctions.

- **Fairness and Public Confidence Matter:** Penalties should remain proportionate, consistently applied, and clearly connected to traffic safety objectives.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTH DAKOTA

The combined research supports a balanced policy approach that updates outdated traffic fines while strengthening the state's driver control system. Specifically, the literature supports:

- Updating fine amounts to restore their deterrent value.
- Maintaining a proportional schedule of penalties.
- Strengthening driver license point consequences for repeat violations.
- Ensuring penalties are accompanied by visible, consistent enforcement.
- Using administrative sanctions for chronic offenders.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The available evidence consistently supports updating traffic fines as part of a comprehensive traffic safety strategy. Fine increases are most effective when they are moderate, supported by consistent enforcement, integrated with driver license point systems, and accompanied by escalating sanctions for repeat offenders. These findings provide a strong research foundation for legislative proposals intended to improve compliance with traffic laws and reduce crashes.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Traffic Fee Schedule Structure

Court Costs and Assessments Associated with Traffic Citations:

North Dakota does not add a separate court administration fee to a standard noncriminal traffic citation. The amount paid by the driver is normally the statutory fee established in North Dakota Century Code § 39-06.1-06. For example, a violation carrying a $20 statutory fee generally results in a total payment of $20 unless another statute establishes an enhanced fee. Court administration fees and related criminal assessments apply to misdemeanor and felony cases, but not to ordinary noncriminal traffic violations or infractions.

Type of Case	Base Penalty	Additional Court Administration Fee
Noncriminal traffic violation	Amount in §39-06.1-06	None
Infraction	Fine imposed by court	None under § 29-26-22
Class B Misdemeanor	Fine, if imposed	$125, plus $100 indigent-defense and court-facility fee
Class A Misdemeanor	Fine, if imposed	$200, plus $100 indigent-defense and court-facility fee
Class C Felony	Fine, if imposed	$400, plus $100 indigent-defense and court-facility fee

Cost to the Court System:

Although standard traffic citations do not include a court administration assessment, every citation creates work for the North Dakota Court System. This includes receiving the citation, creating and maintaining the court record, processing payments or bonds, reconciling and distributing funds, reporting the disposition to the North Dakota Department of Transportation, responding to public and agency record requests, addressing unpaid citations, and scheduling and supporting hearings when a citation is contested.

In 2025, North Dakota district courts received 90,812 administrative traffic filings and in 2024 the courts received 107,801. These cases in 2025, represented 59 percent of all district court filings. The Court System reports that administrative traffic cases require limited judicial involvement, but their processing burden falls almost entirely on clerk of court personnel. Consequently, even a citation that is paid without a hearing has an administrative cost. Review additional information: North Dakota Court System 2025 Annual Report.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Traffic Fee Schedule Structure

Revenue Does Not Directly Fund Court Operations:

It is also important to distinguish between the amount collected and the amount available to operate the courts. Under the North Dakota Constitution, fines for violations of state law and county and other amounts added by law are generally dedicated to the benefit of the common schools, whereas the city police traffic citations go to the city's general fund. Standard traffic citation revenue is therefore not retained by the judicial branch as reimbursement for processing the citation. The court system must absorb those costs through its legislative appropriation.

For a standard $20 moving violation, the practical breakdown is:

Citation Component

Statutory traffic fee paid by driver: $20.00

Separate court administration assessment: $0.00

Amount specifically retained to reimburse the Court System for processing: $0.00

Court processing cost: Paid through the Court System appropriation

This means the present system does not operate on a cost-recovery basis. A $20 citation may generate $20 in public revenue, but none of that amount is specifically assessed or retained to cover the judicial resources required to process the case.

Case Study: City of Bismarck/Bismarck Police Department

To illustrate the administrative costs associated with processing traffic citations, the committee used the Bismarck Police Department as a representative example. The analysis considers the personnel time required of clerks and accounting staff, including salary and benefit costs, as well as expenses related to information technology, electronic citations, payment processing, postage, records storage, and collection efforts. It also accounts for the additional work created by contested citations, reopened cases, payment defaults, and appeals, along with the total statutory fees collected and how those funds are distributed.

Although Bismarck was selected for this example, the same types of costs are incurred by law enforcement agencies and courts throughout North Dakota. The specific amounts will vary based on agency size, citation volume, staffing, technology, and local processes, but every jurisdiction devotes personnel and operational resources to issuing, processing, collecting, reporting, and resolving traffic citations. The Bismarck example is therefore intended to demonstrate the broader statewide cost structure rather than suggest that these expenses are unique to one jurisdiction.

Bismarck is similar to most other North Dakota communities in that fees and fines collected from traffic offenses are deposited into the city's general fund. The general fund supports services such as the police and fire departments, as well as the Municipal Court.

It is difficult to isolate the total cost of enforcing traffic ordinances within the city budget. Police officer salaries vary based on experience and current pay rates. Traffic enforcement also involves costs for computer maintenance and upgrades, citation-issuance systems, and the Records Section's processing of traffic citations.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Municipal Court is responsible for processing traffic citations and collecting the associated fees and fines. In 2025, the Municipal Court reported $1,297,913 in expenses and $1,495,211 in revenue. This revenue also included fines and fees from criminal offenses. According to the Municipal Court, approximately 40% of its revenue came from traffic offenses, while the remaining 60% came from criminal cases, including Class B misdemeanors and infractions.

This estimate should not be interpreted as net traffic-enforcement revenue because the available budget figures do not separately identify all police, records-processing, technology, and court costs attributable to traffic cases.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of North Dakota crash data from 2021 through 2025 demonstrates that a relatively small number of driver behaviors account for a significant percentage of crashes statewide. The following pages identify the five leading contributing factors associated with all reported crashes and the five leading contributing factors associated with fatal and serious injury crashes. Examining these factors provides the foundation for evaluating whether current traffic laws, fines, driver license point values, and enforcement practices align with the behaviors that create the greatest risk to public safety.

National traffic safety research consistently supports focusing enforcement efforts on high-risk driving behaviors. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has found that highly visible enforcement, paired with meaningful penalties and public education, contributes to reductions in speeding, impaired driving, seat belt violations, and other dangerous driving behaviors. These reductions are associated with decreases in crashes, injuries, and fatalities. While no single strategy eliminates crashes, research demonstrates that education, engineering, and enforcement work most effectively when used together.

Driver license point systems provide an additional deterrent by creating consequences beyond the immediate financial penalty of a citation. Increased point values identify repeat high-risk drivers, encourage behavior change, and provide licensing agencies with tools to intervene before repeated violations result in more serious outcomes. Similarly, traffic fines serve not only as punishment for unlawful behavior, but also as a deterrent intended to reduce future violations. Research suggests that penalties are most effective when they are perceived as certain, timely, and proportionate to the risk created by the violation.

The crash data presented in this study should also be interpreted with an understanding of its limitations. Contributing factors documented on crash reports are based on evidence available during the investigation. Some behaviors, such as speeding, failure to yield, or impairment, are often supported through physical evidence, witness statements, or chemical testing. Other behaviors are considerably more difficult to verify.

Distracted driving is widely recognized as being underreported in crash data, both nationally and in North Dakota. In many crashes, investigators have limited physical evidence to establish whether a driver was distracted immediately before the collision. Identification often depends on driver admissions, witness observations, or electronic evidence that may not be immediately available. As a result, crashes attributed to distracted driving likely represent only a portion of the actual number of distraction-related crashes.

Similarly, violations involving the use of an electronic communication device while driving present significant enforcement challenges. Establishing probable cause for these violations frequently requires direct observation or other admissible evidence that may not be available during a traffic stop or crash investigation. In addition, current legal precedent has affected the practical enforceability of these violations.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

State V Morsette (2019) - North Dakota Supreme Court:
“It appears to me that it is improbable that someone observing at a distance a person using a cell phone is able to determine the specific use of the device. As a practical matter, I understand that the result is that either every driver using a cell phone may be reasonably suspected of using the cell phone for a prohibited purpose or no driver may be reasonably suspected of using the device for an unlawful purpose. The statute was likely drafted with little thought of how offenders are to be apprehended in the first instance. It seems to me that the majority opinion substantially reduces, if not eliminates, the effective enforcement of the statute.” In reference to NDCC 39-08-23, use of an electronic communications device.

North Dakota Century Code 39-08-25 broadly defines distracted driving to include any non-essential activity that interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle. However, the statute also creates practical enforcement limitations. An officer cannot initiate a traffic stop solely because a driver appears to be looking down at or interacting with a cellular phone. To establish a violation, the distraction must contribute to a separate traffic offense, such as failing to maintain lane, disregarding a traffic control device, or another observable violation, or result in a reportable property-damage crash. Alternatively, the officer must be able to directly observe conduct that clearly meets the elements of the offense. As a result, many drivers who are visibly focused on a mobile device but have not yet committed another traffic violation cannot be stopped or cited under the statute. This enforcement threshold limits proactive intervention and contributes to the underreporting of distracted driving in crash data, as investigators frequently rely on driver admissions, witness statements, digital evidence, or other corroborating information to determine whether distraction was a contributing factor. Consequently, distracted driving is likely represented at rates lower than its actual contribution to crashes, particularly when compared with behaviors such as speeding or impairment, which are more readily observed and documented.

Accordingly, the crash data and contributing factors presented in this section should be viewed as a conservative representation of driver behavior. Some high-risk behaviors, particularly distraction related offenses, are likely underrepresented due to investigative and legal limitations rather than an absence of occurrence. These limitations should be considered when evaluating the relationship between crash causation, traffic laws, and the effectiveness of current fines and driver license point values.

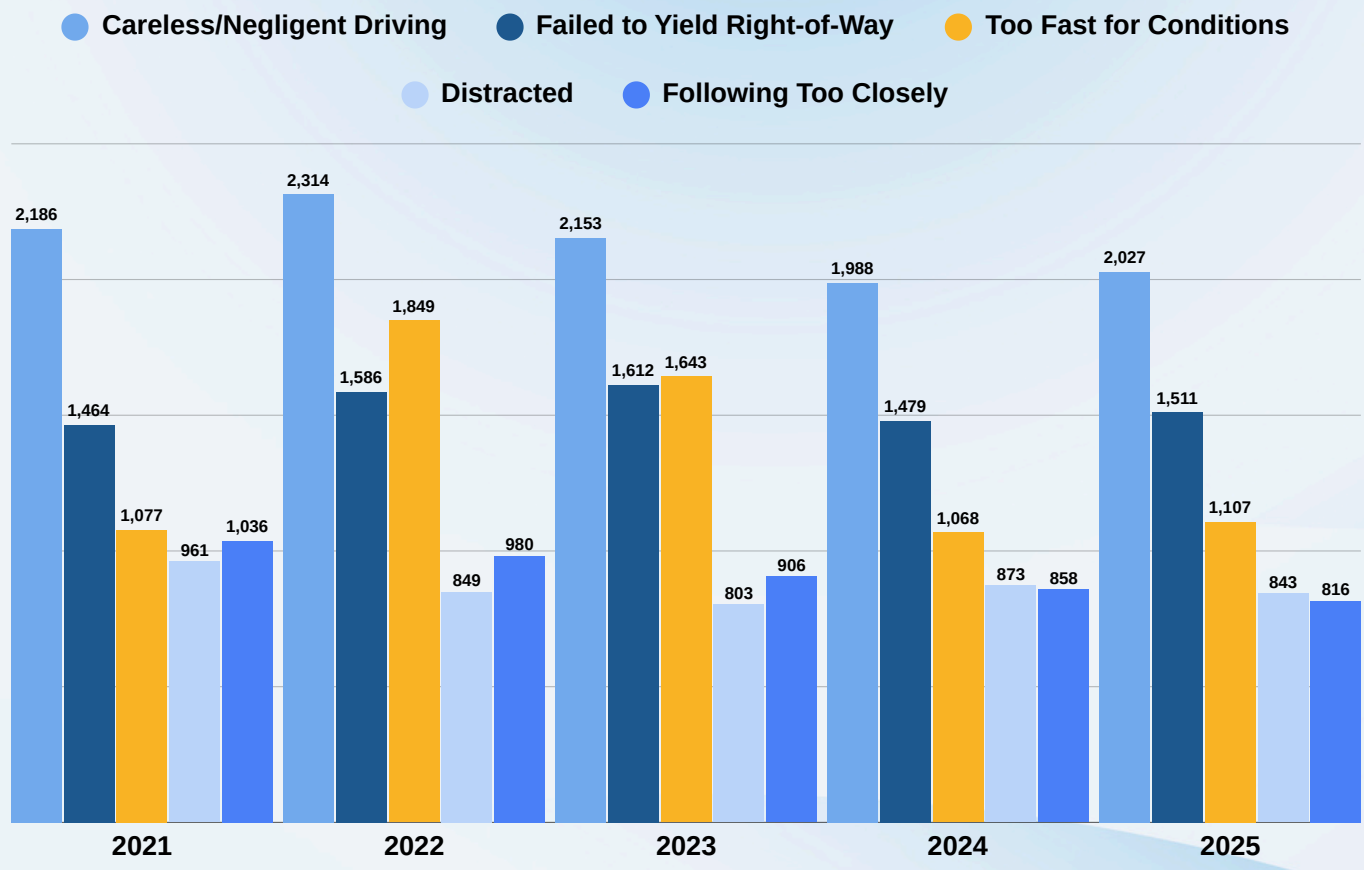
The graphics on the following pages present the leading contributing factors for:

- All reported North Dakota crashes (2021 through 2025)
- Fatal and serious injury crashes (2021 through 2025)

These findings provide the analytical basis for the recommendations presented later in this report regarding traffic fines, driver license points, and other measures intended to reduce the behaviors most closely associated with serious crashes.

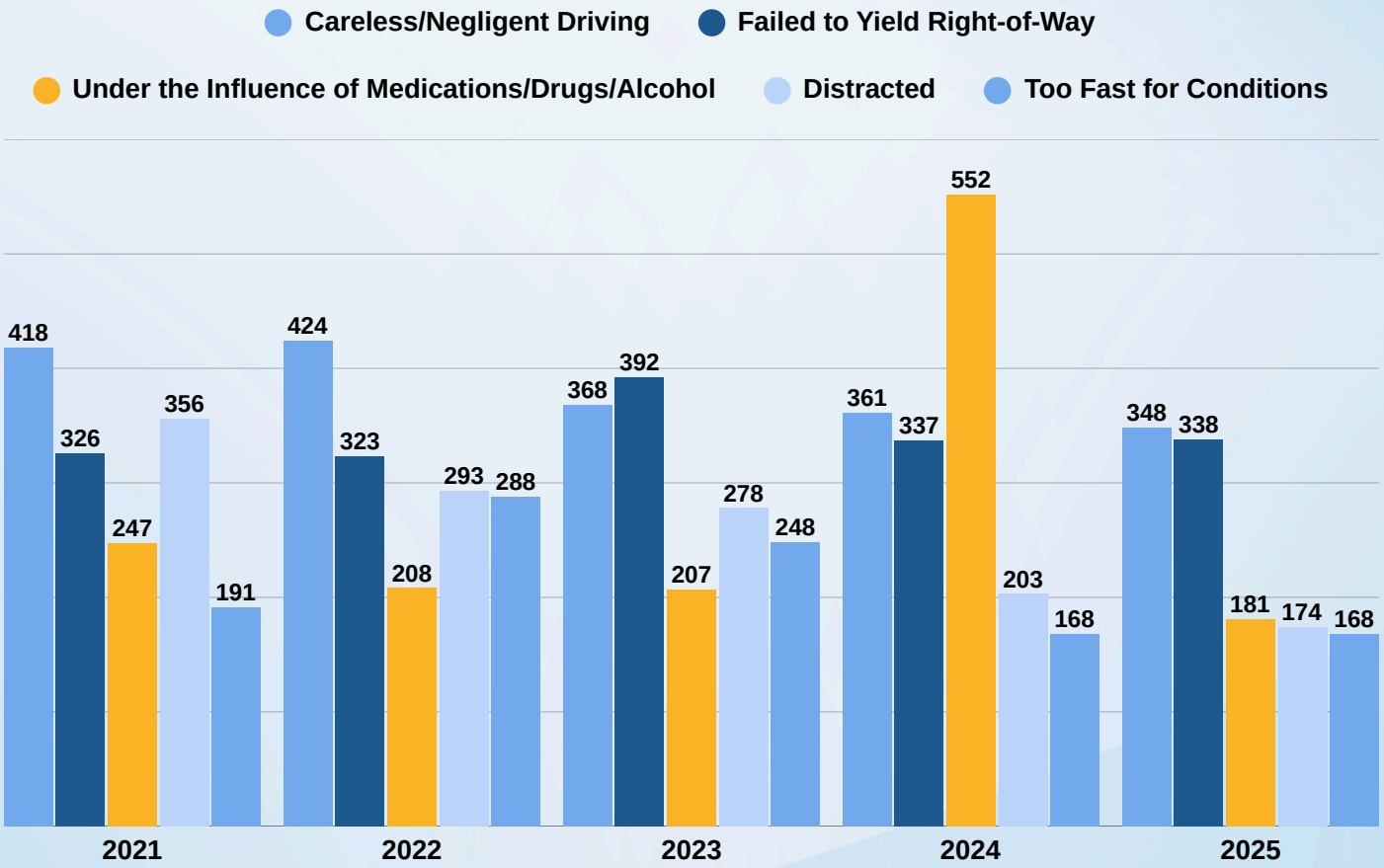
TOP 5 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF ALL CRASHES: 2021-25

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



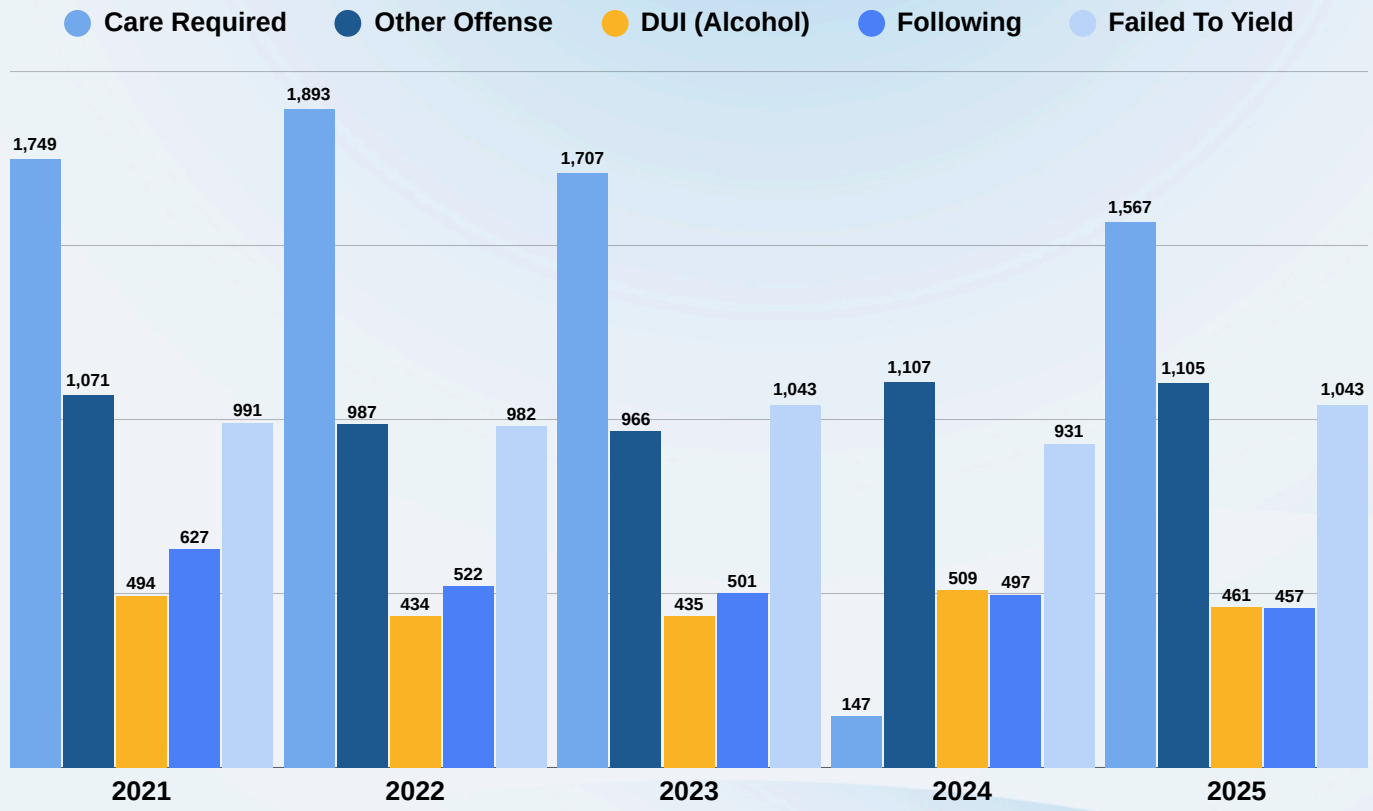
TOP 5 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN FATAL & INJURY CRASHES: 2021-25

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



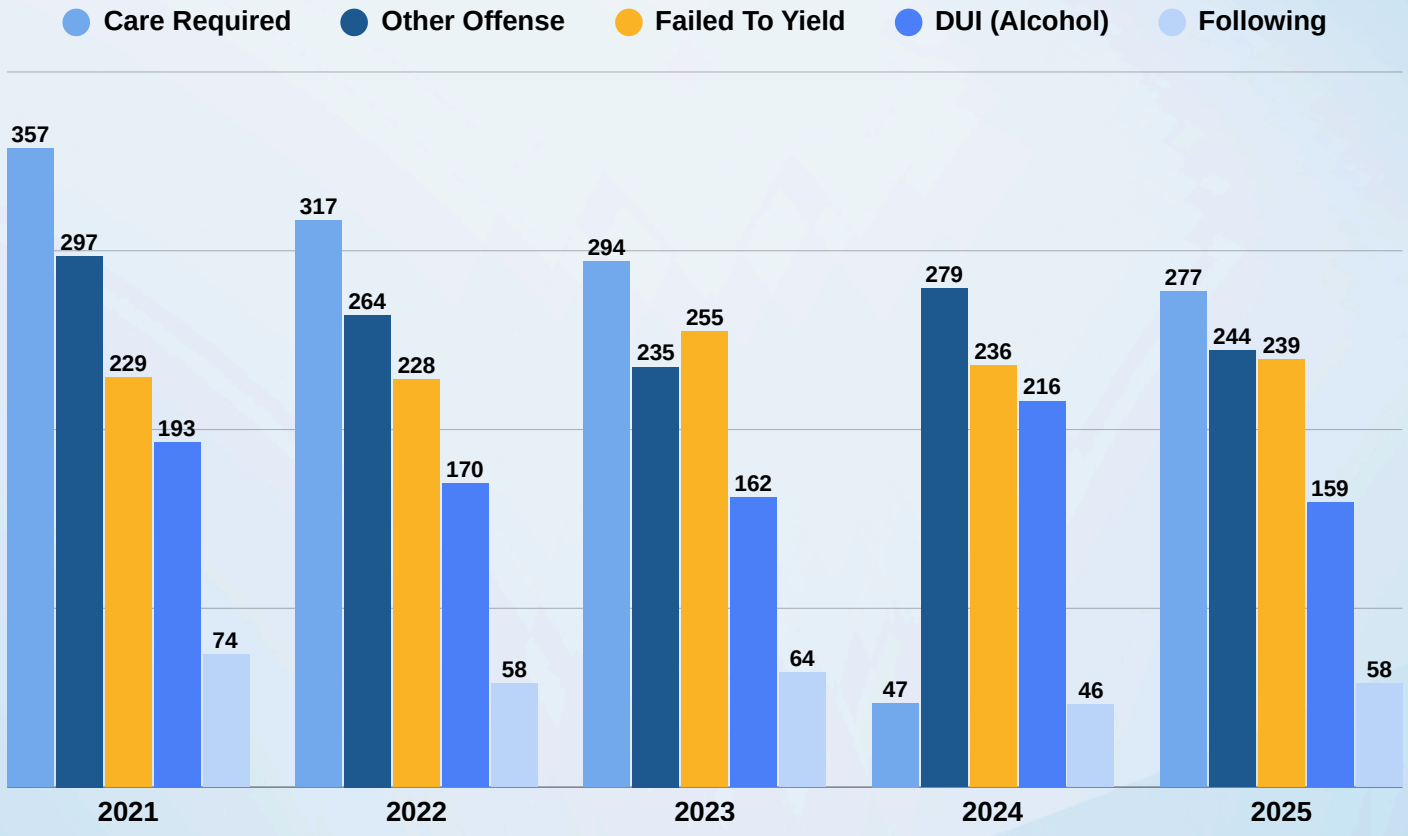
TOP 5 CRASH VIOLATIONS ALL CRASHES: 2021-25

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



TOP 5 CRASH VIOLATIONS IN FATAL AND INJURY CRASHES: 2021-25

Data pulled on 06/26/2026 by AASHTOWARE Crash Query



MATRIX: ND CENTURY CODE WITH CURRENT AND PROPOSED FINES & POINTS

	CURRENT FINE	PROPOSED FINE	CURRENT POINTS	PROPOSED POINTS	DESCRIPTION
EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS					
39-21-21(1)	$20	$20	1	0	Failure to dim headlamps
39-21-21(2)	$20	$20	1	0	Failure to dim headlamps
39-21-41.2	$25	$50	1	2	Operator failed to provide child restraint device
39-21-41.4	$20	$50	0	2	No Seatbelt
FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS					
39-10-18(1)	$20	$50	0	2	Following too close
39-10-18(2)	$20	$50	0	2	Failure to leave sufficient distance between trucks
MOTORCYCLE VIOLATIONS					
39-10.2-06	$20	$50	2	2	No helmet worn by driver or passenger under the age of 18
OVERTAKING					
39-10-11(1)	$20	$50	2	2	Drove to the right before safely clear while passing
39-10-11(2)	$20	$50	2	2	Failure to give way when overtaken
39-10-11.1	$20	$50	0	2	Overtaking and passing a bicycle
39-10-12	$20	$50	2	2	Overtook vehicle on the right when prohibited or unsafe
39-10-13	$20	$50	2	2	Overtook when unsafe
39-10-15	$20	$50	2	2	Overtook where prohibited
PEDESTRIANS					
39-10-30	$20	$50	0	2	Driver failed to exercise due care upon approaching pedestrian
39-10-33.1	$20	$50	0	2	Driver failed to yield right of way to pedestrian on sidewalk
39-10-33.2	$20	$50	0	2	Pedestrian failed to yield right of way to authorized emergency vehicle
REGISTRATION					
39-04-11	$20	$20	1	0	Failure to display number plates/tabs

MATRIX: ND CENTURY CODE WITH CURRENT AND PROPOSED FINES & POINTS

	CURRENT FINE	PROPOSED FINE	CURRENT POINTS	PROPOSED POINTS	DESCRIPTION
RIGHT OF WAY VIOLATIONS					
39-10-04	$20	$50	2	2	Disregarded traffic control device
39-10-05	$20	$50	2	2	Drove through red light
39-10-07	$20	$50	2	2	Failure to stop/yield for flashing red light
39-10-22	$20	$50	2	2	Failure to yield at intersection
39-10-22.1	$20	$50	2	2	Failure to yield right of way when entering a freeway
39-10-23	$20	$50	2	2	Turned left in front of approaching traffic
39-10-24(2)	$40	$50	2	2	Failure to yield right of way at intersection marked with a stop sign
39-10-24(3)	$40	$50	2	2	Failure to yield right of way at intersection marked with a yield sign
39-10-25	$20	$50	2	2	Failure to yield entering roadway from any place other than another roadway
39-10-26	$50	$50	2	2	Failure to yield to emergency vehicle or highway maintenance vehicle
39-10-26(2)	$50	$100	2	2	Failure to change lanes for authorized emergency vehicle
39-10-26.3	$20	$50	0	2	Failure to yield right of way to stationary motor vehicle with hazard lights
39-10-37	$20	$50	0	2	Failure to yield from stopped or parked position
39-10-44(3)	$40	$50	2	2	Disregarded stop sign
39-10-45	$20	$50	0	2	Driver emerging from alley, driveway, etc. failed to stop prior to entering crosswalk or roadway
39-10-68	$20	$50	0	2	Entered intersection or RR grade crossing when roadway was obstructed
39-10-72	$20	$50	2	2	Violated right of way to funeral procession

MATRIX: ND CENTURY CODE WITH CURRENT AND PROPOSED FINES & POINTS

	CURRENT FINE	PROPOSED FINE	CURRENT POINTS	PROPOSED POINTS	DESCRIPTION
WRONG SIDE OR WRONG WAY					
39-10-08	$20	$50	2	2	Drove on left half of roadway not in overtaking
39-10-14(1a)	$20	$50	2	2	Drove on left half of roadway on hill or curve
39-10-14(1b)	$20	$50	2	2	Drove on left half of roadway at intersection or RR crossing
39-10-16(3)	$20	$50	2	2	Drove wrong way or one-way roadway
39-10-17	$20	$50	0	2	Changed lanes without regard for other traffic
39-10-19	$20	$50	0	2	Crossing the median
39-10-20	$20	$50	2	2	Drove onto controlled-access highway other than entrances or exits
39-10-21.1	$250	$250	0	2	Drove on a closed road during hazardous conditions, when closure has been announced to the public
39-10-55	$20	$50	0	2	Driver failed to stay to the right while traveling through defiles or canyons or failed to give audible warning
DISTRACTION					
39-08-23	$100	$100	0	2	Used a wireless communication device to compose, read, or send an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle
39-08-24	$20	$50	0	2	Used an electronic communication device while operating a motor vehicle, Class D license holder age 16-17
39-08-25	$100	$100	0	2	Failure to maintain control of motor vehicle while distracted
FLEEING					
39-10-71.1	$100	$250	0	0	Owner's responsibility regarding fleeing vehicle - 1st offense $250, 2nd or subsequent offense $500
SPEED					
39-09-01.1	$30	$50	2	2	Care required in operating motor vehicle
39-09-09	$20	$50	0	2	Impeding traffic or operating slower than minimum posted speed

Proposed Speeding Fines effective August 1, 2027											
MPH Over	Points	25 MPH zone	35 MPH zone	45 MPH zone	55 MPH zone	60 MPH zone	65 MPH zone	70 MPH zone	80 MPH zone	School Zone with Children and Construction Zone	
1	0	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	0	$150
2	0	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	0	$150
3	0	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	0	$150
4	0	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	0	$150
5	0	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	0	$150
6	1	$55	$55	$55	$55	$55	$55	$55	$55	1	$150
7	1	$60	$60	$60	$60	$60	$60	$60	$60	1	$150
8	1	$65	$65	$65	$65	$65	$65	$65	$65	1	$150
9	1	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	1	$150
10	1	$75	$75	$75	$75	$75	$75	$75	$75	1	$150
11	3	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	3	$155
12	3	$85	$85	$85	$85	$85	$85	$85	$85	3	$160
13	3	$90	$90	$90	$90	$90	$90	$90	$90	3	$165
14	3	$95	$95	$95	$95	$95	$95	$95	$95	3	$170
15	3	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	3	$175
16	5	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	5	$200
17	5	$130	$130	$130	$130	$130	$130	$130	$130	5	$205
18	5	$135	$135	$135	$135	$135	$135	$135	$135	5	$210
19	5	$140	$140	$140	$140	$140	$140	$140	$140	5	$215
20	5	$145	$145	$145	$145	$145	$145	$145	$145	5	$220
21	7	$150	$150	$150	$150	$150	$150	$150	$150	7	$225
22	7	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	7	$230
23	7	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	7	$235
24	7	$165	$165	$165	$165	$165	$165	$165	$165	7	$240
25	7	$170	$170	$170	$170	$170	$170	$170	$170	7	$245
26	10	$175	$175	$175	$175	$175	$175	$175	$175	10	$250
27	10	$180	$180	$180	$180	$180	$180	$180	$180	10	$255
28	10	$185	$185	$185	$185	$185	$185	$185	$185	10	$260
29	10	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	10	$265
30	12	$195	$195	$195	$195	$195	$195	$195	$195	12	$270
31	12	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	12	$275
32	12	$205	$205	$205	$205	$205	$205	$205	$205	12	$280
33	12	$210	$210	$210	$210	$210	$210	$210	$210	12	$285
16 mph over and up in any zone increase the fine by $20 per NDCC											
30 mph over in any zone will trigger a suspension based on points											

PROPOSED SPEEDING FINES/POINTS SCHEDULE

Proposed Speeding Fines effective August 1, 2027											
MPH Over	Points	25 MPH zone	35 MPH zone	45 MPH zone	55 MPH zone	60 MPH zone	65 MPH zone	70 MPH zone	80 MPH zone	School Zone with Children and Construction Zone	
34	12	$215	$215	$215	$215	$215	$215	$215	$215	12	$290
35	15	$220	$220	$220	$220	$220	$220	$220	$220	15	$295
36	15	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	15	$300
37	15	$230	$230	$230	$230	$230	$230	$230	$230	15	$305
38	15	$235	$235	$235	$235	$235	$235	$235	$235	15	$310
39	15	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	15	$315
40	15	$245	$245	$245	$245	$245	$245	$245	$245	15	$320
41	18	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	18	$325
42	18	$255	$255	$255	$255	$255	$255	$255	$255	18	$330
43	18	$260	$260	$260	$260	$260	$260	$260	$260	18	$335
44	18	$265	$265	$265	$265	$265	$265	$265	$265	18	$340
45	18	$270	$270	$270	$270	$270	$270	$270	$270	18	$345
46	21	$275	$275	$275	$275	$275	$275	$275	$275	21	$350
47	21	$280	$280	$280	$280	$280	$280	$280	$280	21	$355
48	21	$285	$285	$285	$285	$285	$285	$285	$285	21	$360
49	21	$290	$290	$290	$290	$290	$290	$290	$290	21	$365
50	21	$295	$295	$295	$295	$295	$295	$295	$295	21	$370
51	24	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	24	$375
52	24	$305	$305	$305	$305	$305	$305	$305	$305	24	$380
53	24	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	24	$385
54	24	$315	$315	$315	$315	$315	$315	$315	$315	24	$390
55	24	$320	$320	$320	$320	$320	$320	$320	$320	24	$395
16 mph over and up in any zone increase the fine by $20 per NDCC											
30 mph over in any zone will trigger a suspension based on points											

North Dakota State Patrol
March 1, 2026
150 mph in 70 mph zone
80 mph over speed limit
Current: $420 fine; 15 points
Proposed: $445 fine; 39 points



Cass County Sheriff's Office
May 27, 2026
60 mph in 45 mph zone
15 mph over speed limit
Current: $45 fine; 1 point
Proposed: $100 fine; 3 points



North Dakota State Patrol
July 11, 2026
71 mph in 25 mph zone
46 mph over speed limit
Current: $158 fine; 15 points
Proposed: $275 fine; 21 points



Cass County Sheriff's Office
June 30, 2026
49 mph in 25 mph zone
24 mph over speed limit
Current: $92 fine; 3 points
Proposed: $165 fine; 7 points



McKenzie County Sheriff's Office
June 13, 2026
74 mph in 40 mph construction zone
34 mph over speed limit
Current: $198 fine; 9 points
Proposed: $290 fine; 12 points



Cass County Sheriff's Office
June 7, 2026
50 mph in 25 mph zone
25 mph over speed limit
Current: $95 fine; 3 points
Proposed: $170 fine; 7 points



North Dakota State Patrol
June 5, 2026
116 mph in 55 mph zone
61 mph over speed limit
Current: $203 fine; 15 points
Proposed: $350 fine; 30 points



McKenzie County Sheriff's Office
July 6, 2026
95 mph in 65 mph zone
30 mph over speed limit
Current: $ 110 fine; 9 points
Proposed: $ 195 fine; 12 points



Grand Forks County Sheriff's Office
April 24, 2026
111 mph in 80 mph zone
31 mph over speed limit
Current: $175 fine; 12 points
Proposed: $200 fine; 12 points



McKenzie County Sheriff's Office
July 17, 2026
67 mph in 25 mph zone
42 mph over speed limit
Current: $ 146 fine; 12 points
Proposed: $ 255 fine; 18 points



North Dakota State Patrol
May 20, 2026
123 mph in 65 mph zone
58 mph over speed limit
Current: $194 fine; 15 points
Proposed: $335 fine; 27 points



North Dakota State Patrol
June 20, 2026
125 mph in 70 mph zone
55 mph over speed limit
Current: $295 fine; 15 points
Proposed: $320 fine; 24 points



FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Speeding and Reckless Driving:

When engineers design roadways, they consider an enormous magnitude of factors and details to keep motorists safe. One of these details that we are all familiar with is the speed limit. When engineers evaluate an appropriate speed limit for an area or roadway, they consider available sight distance, reaction distance and physical braking distance. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is one of the guiding associations that engineers use in design considerations. Stopping Sight Distance on Level Roadways is one of the most basic considerations for setting speed limits. Other considerations would be elevation changes, curves, intersections, etc. that go beyond the scope of this simple explanation. AASHTO uses 2.5 seconds for perception reaction time and a deceleration rate (stopping ability) of 11.2 fps/s (0.347 g's) to account for almost all situations, road conditions, driver ability etc. These values, along with a given speed will indicate the minimum total stopping distance required for a driver. For example, if the minimum sight distance on a given roadway is limited to 250 feet then the designated speed for that roadway would be 35 mph to account for perception reaction time and stopping distance.

As drivers exceed the posted speed limit for a roadway, they are exceeding the engineered design capacities of the roadway and limiting their ability to avoid a crash if a hazard presents itself. If a driver is traveling 30 mph above any given speed limit on ND roadways (15 mph zone to 80 mph zone) a driver will still be above 100% to 300% the original posted speed limit when they reach a point where a driver could have stopped if traveling the posted speed limit.

The lower the speed zone, the greater the percentage over the original speed limit at impact. NDCC Reckless Driving 39-08-03(2) states "...and at a speed or in a manner so as to endanger or be likely to endanger any person or the property of another." At 30 mph over the posted speed limit a driver has removed their ability to regain control of their vehicle or reduce the speed of their vehicle to the speed limit prior to impact. Even in the lowest speed zone of 15 mph, traveling at 45 mph is a speed high enough to endanger or be likely to endanger any person or property if a crash happens.

It should be noted that applying 15 mph over the speed limit to speed zones 45 mph and less has the same effect as stated above. In zones 45 mph and less, a vehicle will still be traveling more than 100% of the original speed limit at impact. At 15 mph over, in speed zones 50 mph and greater, the percentage of original posted speed ranges from 71% to 96% at impact (with the lower percentage being at the highest speed).

It should also be noted that increasing the drag factor (braking ability) and reducing the perception reaction time makes it worse for the speeding drivers. Using the AASHTO guidelines is the most conservative approach and would be difficult to argue against since they are used in the design of the roadway.

SPEEDING AND STOPPING DISTANCES

Speed Zone	Total Stopping Distance (in feet)	30 MPH Over	Total Stopping Distance (in feet)	New MPH at Impact	Percent of Original Speed Zone at Impact
15	76.6	45	359.4	45.00	300%
20	111.7	50	423.4	50.00	250%
25	151.7	55	492.2	55.00	220%
35	246.0	65	644.1	64.38	184%
40	300.3	70	727.3	66.67	167%
45	359.4	75	815.2	68.89	153%
50	423.0	80	908.0	71.04	142%
55	492.2	85	1005.6	73.12	133%
60	565.7	90	1107.9	75.15	125%
65	644.1	95	1215.1	77.12	119%
70	727.3	100	1327.1	79.05	113%
80	908.0	110	1565.5	82.77	103%

NDCC 39-08-03. RECKLESS DRIVING - AGGRAVATED RECKLESS DRIVING - PENALTY.

Any person is guilty of reckless driving if the person drives a vehicle:

1. Recklessly in disregard of the rights or safety of others; or
2. Without due caution and circumspection and at a speed or in a manner so as to endanger or be likely to endanger any person or the property of another~~.~~; or
3. At a speed of 30 miles per hour or greater over the posted speed limit.

Except as otherwise herein provided, any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. Any person who, by reason of reckless driving as herein defined, causes and inflicts injury upon the person of another, is guilty of aggravated reckless driving, and is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

North Dakota's driver's license point system and traffic fee schedule have served the state for decades, but this study demonstrates that both have evolved incrementally rather than through a comprehensive review tied to current crash data, driver behavior, and roadway safety priorities. While the existing framework provides consistency in enforcement, many fines have remained unchanged for more than 50 years, and several point values and penalties no longer reflect the relative risk associated with today's most common causes of serious crashes.

The committee found that traffic enforcement is most effective when penalties are proportional to the danger a violation poses to the traveling public. Analysis of North Dakota crash data, stakeholder input, comparisons with neighboring states, and a review of court costs indicate opportunities to better align fines and points with behaviors that contribute to fatalities and serious injuries. The study also found that the administrative costs associated with processing traffic citations often exceed the revenue generated by statutory fees, further supporting the need for a modernized fee structure.

Based on these findings, the committee recommends:

- Modernizing the traffic fee schedule by increasing fines for violations that are most closely associated with crashes resulting in serious injury or death.
- Restructuring the driver's license point system so point values more accurately reflect the relative safety risk of each violation.
- Reducing or eliminating points for low-risk administrative and equipment violations that have little demonstrated relationship to crash causation.
- Periodically reviewing the traffic fee schedule and driver's license point system to ensure penalties remain consistent with current crash trends, inflation, and national best practices rather than allowing decades to pass between comprehensive updates.
- Recognizing that traffic citations serve not only as a deterrent but also help offset a portion of the administrative and judicial costs required to process violations, while acknowledging that current statutory fees do not fully recover those costs.
- The committee believes these recommendations create a more balanced and data-driven approach to traffic enforcement. By aligning penalties with crash risk, improving consistency across violations, and modernizing a system that has remained largely unchanged for decades, North Dakota can strengthen traffic safety while maintaining fairness and transparency for motorists.

The committee listed below respectfully submits this report and its recommendations for consideration for legislation presented in the 70th Legislative Assembly. Submitted August 1, 2026

- Major Tom Iverson - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Lieutenant Jenna Clawson Huibregtse - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Trooper Jacob Jones - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Trooper Bennett Bitz - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Cindy Solberg - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Brandy Dahlin - North Dakota Highway Patrol
- Rachel Bitz - North Dakota Department of Transportation
- Brie Nyberg - North Dakota Department of Transportation
- Lieutenant Jamie Huschka - Williams County Sheriff’s Office
- Lieutenant Jeff Solemsaas - Bismarck Police Department
- Kimberly Vachal, PhD - Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute

APPENDIX: RECKLESS SPEED CHART

Speed Zone (mph)	Feet Per Second (FPS)	PRT-Perception Reaction Time (in seconds)	PRD-Perception Reaction Distance (in feet)	Deceleration Rate	Braking Distance (in feet)	Total Stopping Distance (in feet)
15	22.0	2.5	55.0	0.347	21.6	76.6
20	29.3	2.5	73.3	0.347	38.4	111.7
25	36.7	2.5	91.6	0.347	60.0	151.7
35	51.3	2.5	128.3	0.347	117.7	246.0
40	58.6	2.5	146.6	0.347	153.7	300.3
45	66.0	2.5	164.9	0.347	194.5	359.4
50	73.3	2.5	183.3	0.347	240.2	423.4
55	80.6	2.5	201.6	0.347	290.6	492.2
60	88.0	2.5	219.9	0.347	345.8	565.7
65	95.3	2.5	238.2	0.347	405.9	644.1
70	102.6	2.5	256.6	0.347	470.7	727.3
80	117.3	2.5	293.2	0.347	614.8	908.0

30 Miles over Speed Limit (above)	Feet Per Second (FPS)	Perception Reaction Distance (PRD) in feet	Braking Distance (in feet)	Total Stopping Distance (in feet)	PRD % over Original Total Stop Distance	Available Brake Distance	New Velocity FPS at Original Stop Location	New MPH at Impact	Percent of Original Speed Zone at Impact
45	65.97	164.9	194.5	359.4	215%	-88.3	65.97	45.00	300%
50	73.3	183.3	240.2	423.4	164%	-71.5	73.3	50.00	250%
55	80.63	201.6	290.6	492.2	133%	-49.9	80.63	55.00	220%
65	95.29	238.2	405.9	644.1	97%	7.7	94.38	64.38	184%
70	102.62	256.6	470.7	727.3	85%	43.7	97.74	66.67	167%
75	109.95	274.9	540.3	815.2	76%	84.6	100.99	68.89	153%
80	117.28	293.2	614.8	908.0	69%	130.2	104.14	71.04	142%
85	124.61	311.5	694.0	1005.6	63%	180.6	107.20	73.12	133%
90	131.94	329.9	778.1	1107.9	58%	235.9	110.17	75.15	125%
95	139.27	348.2	867.0	1215.1	54%	295.9	113.06	77.12	119%
100	146.6	366.5	960.6	1327.1	50%	360.8	115.89	79.05	113%
110	161.26	403.2	1162.3	1565.5	44%	504.8	121.34	82.77	103%

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) uses 2.5 seconds for perception reaction time and a deceleration rate (stopping ability) of 11.2 fps/s (0.347 gs) to account for almost all situations, road conditions, driver ability etc. These values, associated with a given speed will indicate the minimum total stopping distance required for a driver. For example, if the minimum sight distance on a given roadway is limited to 250 feet then the designated speed for that roadway would be 35 mph to account for perception reaction time and stopping distance.