

CITATION

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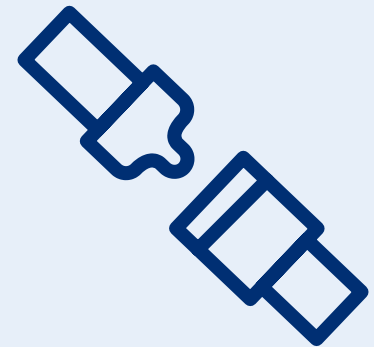


Evidence Synthesis on the Impact of Demerit Point Systems in Reducing Road Traffic Injuries and/or Fatalities

Background

Demerit Point Systems (DPS) has successfully been implemented in a number of countries including Italy, Spain, and Ireland. In the application of DPS, when a driver accrues a certain number of points, they are assigned punitive measures, such as corrective driving classes, license suspension, or license revocation and there are often opportunities to reset point levels. Infractions such as speeding, drink driving, and lack of helmet and seat-belt use are given point values based on their severity. Some of the important considerations that vary among countries are which traffic violations are assigned points, the relative severity assigned to each violation, what type of punitive measures should be used, and at what point threshold should they be used.

We set out to summarize the literature on DPS and identify some of the DPS features that contribute to both initial and sustained success in reducing road traffic injuries (RTIs) and/or fatalities.



Observed seat-belt use in Italy increased by 52% in the 18 months following the implementation of DPS.¹



Fatality rate reduced by 17% after DPS was implemented in Spain.²

What Our Review Found

Key Findings

- Which traffic violations are assigned points can differ greatly between countries to fit their specific needs, e.g., Austria only includes 13 offenses while Germany includes almost 1,300.⁴
- The relative severity assigned to each violation is often determined by the types of offenses that are most prone to cause crashes or injuries, e.g., drink driving is often given the highest point level.⁵
- The severity of punishments that are enforced determines the effectiveness of DPS. A study in Canada found that fear of losing one's license led drivers to be more careful on the road.⁶
- The positive effects of DPS on road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities may taper off after 12 to 18 months as a result of inconsistencies in implementation.³

Recommendations

- Include violations that are linked to negative outcomes (e.g., speeding, drink driving, lack of helmet and seat-belt use) and assign higher point values for more severe infractions.
- Increase the severity of deterrence measures for repeat offenders.
- Invest in resources to ensure continued program implementation, considering the long-term positive impact of the DPS program.
- Pair implementation of DPS with coordinated awareness and enforcement campaigns.



RTIs reduced by
15% in the 42-month
post-DPS period in
Kuwait.⁷



The implementation of DPS in Veneto, Italy
prevented 1,545 fatalities and 91,772 injuries in
just 18 months.⁴

References

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