

Demerit points system

Driving offences sanctioned by points taken away from the driving licence

Driving offences	Penalty points
Breaking speed limit by under 20 km/h when the speed limit is ≤ 50 km/h	1
Breaking speed limit by under 20 km/h when the speed limit is ≥ 50 km/h	1
Breaking speed limit by between 20 and 30 km/h	2
Not using seat belt	3
Breaking speed limit by between 30 and 40 km/h	3
Using a mobile phone while driving a motor vehicle	3
Breaking speed limit by between 40 and 50 km/h	4
Not stopping before a stop sign	4
Not stopping before a red light	4
Driving under influence of drugs	6
Drink Driving: from 0.25 mg/l to 0.4 mg/l in breath sample, or from 0.5 g/l to 0.8 g/l in blood sample	6
Driving with excess alcohol of ≥ 0.8 g/l in blood sample, or ≥ 0.4 mg/l in breath sample	6
Exceeding the speed limit by over 50 km/h	6

Points return

Case	Points return	Number of points recovered	Probation period from the date of the offence
1	1 point taken away with no further offence during probation	1 point	6 months
2	1 point taken away, with further offence during probation, then with no further offence during longer probation	1 point	2 years
3	Points taken away, except for driving offences of the 4 th and 5 th class, with no further offence during probation	2 or 3 points depending on the seriousness of the offence	2 years
4	Points taken away for driving offences of the 4 th and 5 th class, with no further offence during probation	2 or 6 points depending on the seriousness of the offence	3 years
5	In the case of further offences during probation periods listed above	Points recovery of points initially deducted from the 1 st offence after :	10 years
Other means to recover points		Number of points recovered	Frequency
« Point recovery » training course		4 points	once a year

General principles

The driving licence's validity is based on a demerit points system where points can be deducted or recovered. The maximum number of points is 12.

After the driving licence is obtained, new drivers start with an allocation of 6 points for three years after passing their test, two years if they've followed an anticipated driving apprenticeship (AAC). If they do not commit driving offences, they obtain 2 points after the 1st, 2nd, 3rd year (or 3 points after the 1st and 2nd year if AAC).

All driving licences are based on a demerit points system. No points can be deducted for an offence committed by a moped driver, a cyclist or a pedestrian. However, a point can be deducted for every vehicles whose driving is authorized by the licence of the concerned holder.

Points withdrawal

Points are deducted from the initial capital points for driving offences committed (article L223-1 of the Highway Code). The number of points taken away depends on the seriousness of the offence. Financial penalty (fine) will still have to be paid. 1 to 6 points can be deducted. In the case of simultaneous offences committed, a maximum of 8 points can be deducted.

Points are deducted, not when the offence is reported by police forces, but when the offence is established, i.e. when the sanction becomes final, generally by paying the fine. Drivers losing all 12 points must surrender their driving licence to the *préfecture* and wait six months before being able to retake their test.

Points return

If, after 6 months, no new offence involving a point deduction is committed, one point is given back. Likewise, if one has lost several points, they are automatically reinstated if no new offence is committed over a two years probation period, after three years for driving offences from the 4th and 5th class.

The probation period to recover points shall run from the date the offence is established, i.e. when the sanction becomes final. « Point recovery » training courses, consisting of road safety awareness courses, last two days and allow to recover 4 points.