

New DMV Report Calls for Tougher Sanctions on Multiple Traffic Offenders

[View Final Report of Multiple Traffic Offender Workgroup](#) (PDF)

WETHERSFIELD – Commissioner Melody A. Currey today released her report with 9 separate recommendations, including tougher sanctions and penalties, for license holders who are convicted of multiple and continuing traffic violations.

Some actions recommended include increasing the number of offenses that could trigger a license suspension, giving police electronic roadside access to suspended drivers by town and suspending the licenses of people who must repeat a driver retraining program after habitually violating state traffic laws.

“These recommendations will help address some significant issues with multiple offenders and let them know we are going to get tough on them,” Commissioner Currey said, adding that some of these recommendations have already been put into bills before the legislature. On February 28, 2011, shortly after taking office, she directed that a study be conducted to address motor vehicle operators with a record of repetitive violations and suspensions.

Commissioner Currey, while serving as Mayor of East Hartford, faced an issue that many municipal chief executives, police chiefs and communities confront: A multiple traffic offender whose behavior state laws could not adequately address. As a result, the offender could continue causing both a public nuisance and possibly unsafe operation of a motor vehicle. After being named Commissioner earlier this year, she became aware of other kinds of matters in which multiple offenders of motor vehicle laws avoided either enforcement action or penalties for their actions because of the inadequacy of state law.

The Commissioner selected a committee comprised of officials from the Legislature, the State Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement, the Division of Criminal Justice as well as DMV policy staff to examine the issue. She thanked the committee for its hard work.

The workgroup issued the following recommendations:

1. Change DMV computer systems to provide secure electronic access for Connecticut law enforcement to a roster of suspended operators in each town. This will assist law enforcement personnel in the identification of persistent traffic offenders.
2. Amend DMV regulations to expand the current range of qualifying convictions for suspension of a driver’s license. Presently, the regulation authorizes a 30-day suspension of an operator’s license upon accumulation of any four convictions of 12 enumerated moving violations within a two-year period. That should be revised to include an additional 23 violations. Under the current arrangements, there are 302 suspensions on record under this provision. If the expanded list were now in place, over 4,000 motor vehicle operators would have incurred a suspension of their license.
3. Propose revising state laws to require repeat traffic violators to attend the operator retraining program for the following (now not included as violations triggering participation in the program):

- a. Obstruction of emergency vehicles
 - b. All operators regardless of age for violating use of hand-held mobile telephone and electronic devices by motor vehicle operators and school bus drivers
 - c. Failing to give right of way to pedestrians in crosswalks or violating control signals to allow pedestrians to pass through a cross walk.
4. Seek to revise state law to require multiple traffic offenders in the operator retraining program to have an driver's license or operating privilege progressively suspended if, within the three-year period following completion of the operator retraining program, additional convictions of moving violations or suspension violations occur.
 5. Propose revisions to state law regarding suspension of the driver's license for failure to appear in court. The revisions would focus on having the reasons for failing to appear resolved through the court. Under the existing arrangements, there is no requirement that the underlying matter(s) which caused the initial suspension action must be resolved. As a result, there is little incentive for the operator to reopen the earlier case(s) and attain a final disposition.
 6. Have law enforcement training include an emphasis about the necessity for police to document multiple traffic offenders, including information leading to identify and include driving history records and/or a notation in the prosecutor's report to ensure that the offender is properly identified and that the appropriate court action take place based upon law enforcement's cited offenses.
 7. Explore ways to give police through computer technology the latest picture on file of a license holder upon police request in conjunction with a roadside stop.
 8. Continue the implementation of e-citation technology being developed and deployed by the Judicial Branch, state and local law enforcement.
 9. Monitor the experience of other states in sanctioning habitual violators.

There also are drivers with habitual multiple violations and under certain circumstances DMV can now suspend their licenses. State regulation (14-137-82) authorizes a 30-day suspension for a history of unsafe operation of a motor vehicle. Under this section, on the fourth conviction for specific moving violations that occur within a two-year period DMV can impose this 30-day suspension. At present about 130,000 Connecticut license operators are under suspension, which is about 5 percent of the state's 2.6 million licensed drivers.

At present license holders usually receive a suspension either as a result of a court conviction mandating a license suspension or for failing to appear in court on a motor vehicle-related charge. Suspensions can also result from judges' orders as a condition of bail or probation.