

February 2011: From The Beat To The Bench: Out of State Tickets

We have been asked, if a driver licensed in Ohio gets a ticket while traveling, does it stay on your record in Ohio? If you get a ticket in another state and it remains unpaid it will prevent you from being able to renew your Ohio driver license.

This is how it works: There are three major databases that keep track of driver license information. The National Driver Register (NDR), The Driver License Compact (DLC) and The Non-Resident Violator Compact (NVRC).

The NDR is a creation of The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The primary mission of FMSCA is to prevent commercial motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries. It tracks drivers with a commercial license as well as normal car driver license. The NDR keeps tabs on drivers who have had their license revoked or suspended or convicted of serious traffic violations such as driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. Every state and the District of Columbia submit information to the NDR and it is obligated to check the NDR before granting any license privileges. If problems have been reported in any state there is a very good chance that a license application will be denied.

Here is an example of how the NDR works. If your home state is Ohio and you have a driver license there. The Ohio Department of Transportation will check the NDR three and six months before you are up for renewal, if it finds an issue in another state, such as a DUI in Florida that has not been completely finalized they will let you know.

You would then need to resolve the Florida issue before renewing your license in Ohio. You are still legally allowed to drive in Ohio as long as your Ohio license is valid-you simply can't get a new license.

If you are in the NDR your record will consist of your name, gender, date of birth, license number and the name of the state that reported you. Anything more detailed is not included. You must contact the state reporting the ticket for more information.

You have a right to find out if you're listed in the NDR and you can get a copy of any NDR file sent to a potential employer. This can be beneficial if you are a commercial driver while driving in another state. You can request information through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by calling 202-366-4800.

The DLC and NRVC is an agreement between some states to track tickets received in other states. Unlike the NDR that notifies a state to tell you to address a problem elsewhere, the DLC makes a violation in another state the equivalent to a violation in your home state.

The NRVC works in the same manner. If you get a ticket in another state and don't pay it your home state will suspend your license until you handle the issue in the other state. However, your home state will not issue points and penalties on your license as is the case with the DLC. However, if your home state is not a member of the NRVC and you get pulled over somewhere else you may be forced to post bond before you can drive again.

Not all states are members of the DLC or NVRC. Georgia, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Massachusetts are not members of the DLC. Wisconsin, California, Montana, Oregon and Alaska are not part of the NRVC. Michigan is not of member of either compact, but it does exchange information and will take action if it wishes. Ohio is a compact state and it does honor out of state traffic citations.

Finally, while driving in other states it is wise to obey the posted speed limits. However, every states traffic laws are different and if a citation is received it must be satisfied. It is not taken care of it will eventually result in a driver license suspension.