



## NEWS RELEASE

VirginiaDOT.org

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE  
CONTACT: Joan Morris 703 383-2465  
Ryan Hall 571 238-5029

June 21, 2004

### HOV Fines and Points Increase July 1

Violators on Northern Virginia High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes face stiffer fines and, for the first time, demerit points on their driving record when a more stringent HOV law takes effect July 1. VDOT, Virginia State Police, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and AAA Mid-Atlantic announced the stiffer penalties at a press conference today.

"Clearly, enforcement alone is not going to solve the ongoing problem we have with violators clogging up the HOV lanes," said Tom Farley, VDOT Northern Virginia District Administrator. "Tougher fines and demerit points take aim at those HOV violators who are breaking the law and reducing the effectiveness of our HOV system."

Last August, an HOV task force convened by Virginia's Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Public Safety recommended doubling fines and assessing demerit points for motorists who travel in the HOV lanes during restricted periods without the required number of occupants.

Under the new law, fines are doubled on the second offense as well as on subsequent violations that occur within five years of the first offense. The fine for a first offense will remain \$50 plus \$39 in court costs. The fine for a second offense increases from \$100 to \$200, a third offense from \$250 to \$500, and a fourth offense from \$500 to \$1,000. In addition, third- and fourth-time violators will receive three demerit points on their driving records for driving illegally in the HOV lanes.

"When you are convicted of a HOV violation, the court notifies DMV, which posts the conviction to your driving record where it remains for five years," said Marc Copeland of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

"Beginning July 1, think twice before driving the HOV lanes illegally. Violators will be stopped and risk receiving a ticket of up to \$1,000 with three demerit points on their driving record," said Sgt. Wallace Bouldin of the Virginia State Police.

"HOV lanes are a critical tool in our region for dealing with some of the nation's worst gridlock," said Lon Anderson of AAA Mid-Atlantic. "It is imperative that these lanes move well to serve as an incentive and facilitator for car pooling and for the many buses that use these lanes."

Beginning today, overhead message signs on the HOV corridors will remind motorists that **HOV FINES INCREASE JULY 1**. A radio spot will also air announcing the increased fines and points.

The new fines and points affect only Northern Virginia HOV lanes; HOV fines in Hampton Roads do not change.

HOV hours and rules are available at VDOT's Web site, [www.VirginiaDOT.org](http://www.VirginiaDOT.org). Commuter Connections at 1 800-745-RIDE or [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) helps motorists find car pool partners, a van pool or a bus to get to work.

**New HOV Fines Effective July 1, 2004**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense \$50 + \$39 for court costs
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense \$200 + \$39 for court costs
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense \$500 + \$39 for court costs + three demerit points
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense \$1,000 + \$39 for court costs + three demerit points

##

NR04-27

i  
e.  
:  
ie  
at  
:  
o:  
a  
cial  
52)  
B  
ad  
2

Let's get right to the **point:** if you drive illegally  
in the HOV lane, you'll get **points** against your  
driver's license, because the whole **point** of High  
Occupancy Vehicle lanes is to speed up traffic for legal  
carpools, and when you **point** your car into an HOV  
lane without enough passengers, you're sending ninety-nine  
**point** nine percent of the drivers on the road to  
their boiling **point,** so at some **point**  
a state trooper will **point** you out, pull  
you over, fine you up to \$1000, and slap those  
**points** against your license, which is  
really just a jumping-off **point** for higher  
car insurance rates and driver's license suspensions,  
and that's why we're trying to **point**  
out to you now, so that when you get caught  
abusing the HOV lane, you'll have no one to  
**point** the finger at but yourself.

**get the point?**

The Virginia State Police, the Virginia Department of  
Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Motor  
Vehicles are working to help you move safely and quickly  
from **point A** to **point B.**



Fairfax Express/Times-Star, July 22, 2004