

Western suburbs, IL —

Speeders driving through Illinois now may be more likely to serve jail time if they're caught.

Court supervision for a speeding violation of 40 mph or more over the limit became a thing of the past on Jan. 1, while speeding 30 mph over the limit is no longer a petty offense only punishable by a fine.

A ticket for traveling 30 mph over the speed limit now ranks as a Class B misdemeanor, which has a penalty of up to six months in jail and a \$1,500 fine. For those charged with speeding 40 mph or more — already a Class A misdemeanor — supervision is not an option.

Supervision allows for dismissal of the charge without a conviction, as long as the violator complies with the terms and conditions of the sentence. The record of supervision remains until it is expunged.

Class A misdemeanors carry a maximum penalty of up to one year in jail and a fine of \$2,500. As a result, the minimum sentence if convicted would be a conditional discharge or probation.

A new law regarding the changes was signed by Gov. Pat Quinn in July and took effect at the beginning of this year.

State Farm Agent Bob Sorensen in Wheaton said the law likely will have more of an effect on insurance carriers that carry higher-risk drivers.

“We tend to want to insure the better-than-average driver,” Sorensen said. “Anything we can do to slow people down, there’s certainly some merit to that.”

Kane County Sheriff’s Police Lt. Pat Gengler said it may be too early to tell how effective the laws will be, but he remains optimistic.

“Most of our fatal car crashes out here involve excessive speed,” Gengler said. “Hopefully with increased penalties, it may encourage people to follow the speed limit.”