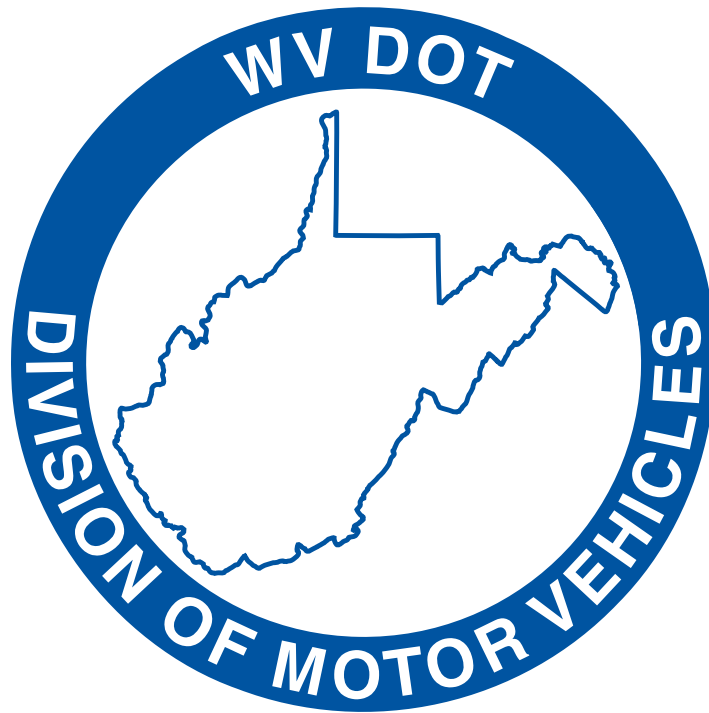


# Division of Motor Vehicles



## Driver Licensing Handbook



Got Proof?



=



**All** first-time applicants for an Instruction Permit, Graduated Driver’s License (GDL) or Driver’s License **MUST** bring the following documents:

- ✓ **CERTIFIED BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR U.S. PASSPORT**
- ✓ **SOCIAL SECURITY CARD**

**Ages 15 up to 18 years**

- ✓ **CURRENT SCHOOL DRIVER ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATE (With West Virginia Physical Address)**

**-OR-**

- ✓ **CURRENT SCHOOL DRIVER ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATE (If P.O. Box number listed only)**

**And**

- ✓ **2 PROOFS OF WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENCY (See Below)**

**AND**



- ✓ **Ages 18 years and older**
- ✓ **2 PROOFS OF WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENCY (See Below)**

**Proof of Residency Requirements include:**

- If the youth is living at home, the parent or legal guardian must provide proof of residency documentation and complete an affidavit
- Current utility bills indicating West Virginia physical address (not a P.O. Box number)
- Tax records indicating a WV physical address
- Residential rental and lease agreements for a WV residence
- Mortgage documents for a WV residence
- A W-2 form not more than 18 months old with a WV physical address
- A current concealed weapons permit with a WV physical address
- A motor vehicle registration card in the name of the applicant issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) with a WV physical address
- WV Voter’s Registration Card
- Proof of receipt of WV Public Assistance
- WV Homestead tax exemption

For questions on any of the requirements call 1-800-642-9066 or 558-3900

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
Building 3, Capitol Complex  
Charleston, WV 25317**

*Before you call, please have your license plate number, driver's license number and/or your file number ready so that we can assist you as quickly as possible.*

**General Information Center, Vehicle Titles,  
License Plates and Drivers License  
(304) 558-3900 / 1-800-642-9066  
Hearing-Impaired - 1-800-742-6991  
[www.wvdmv.gov](http://www.wvdmv.gov)**

**Other Important Telephone Numbers (Area Code 304)**

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Drivers License .....             | 558-2350 |
| Driving Records.....              | 558-4444 |
| Driving Under the Influence.....  | 558-3913 |
| Commercial Drivers License .....  | 558-2350 |
| Compulsory Insurance .....        | 558-0274 |
| Point System .....                | 558-0238 |
| Student Attendance.....           | 558-2058 |
| Unpaid Out-of-State Tickets ..... | 558-0238 |
| Unpaid West Virginia Tickets..... | 558-2058 |

Need help with reading skills or know someone who does?

**\*\*FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HELP WITH READING IS OUT THERE\*\*  
CALL NOW! 1-866-2MAKE-IT  
(1-866-262-5348)**

## WHERE TO TEST OR APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE

A WV resident can apply for a WV permit, license, or identification card at any DMV regional office. All DMV regional offices are open Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm; with the exception of Kanawha City which is open Monday-Saturday 8:00am-6:00pm. The Martinsburg regional office is also open on Saturday from 8:30am-12:30pm (noon). Please check the DMV website at [www.wvdmv.gov](http://www.wvdmv.gov) or call 1-800-642-9066 for further information.

### DMV REGIONAL OFFICE LOCATIONS

Beckley  
107 Pinecrest Drive  
Beckley, WV 25801

Lewisburg  
148 Maplewood Avenue  
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Princeton  
198 Davis Street  
Princeton, WV 24740

Charles Town  
24 Ruland Road  
Kearneysville, WV 25430

Logan  
428 Main Street  
Logan, WV 25601

Romney  
HC 64, Box 2570  
(Rt. 50 & Ridge Loop Rd.)  
Romney, WV 25757

Clarksburg  
105 Platinum Drive, Suite D  
Bridgeport, WV 26330

Martinsburg  
1438 Edwin Miller Blvd.  
Martinsburg, WV 25401

Spencer  
15 Church Street  
Spencer, WV 25276

Elkins  
1029 N. Randolph Avenue  
Elkins, WV 26241

Moorefield  
410 S. Main Street  
Moorefield, WV 26836

Weirton  
Municipal Plaza, Suite 100  
Weirton, WV 26062

Flatwoods  
295 Skidmore Lane  
Sutton, WV 26601

Morgantown  
1525 Deckers Creek Blvd.  
Morgantown, WV 26505

Welch  
92 McDowell Street  
Welch, WV 24801

Franklin  
HC 61, Box 18A, Suite 300  
(Thorn Creek Road)  
Franklin, WV 26807

Moundsville  
400 Teletech Drive, Suite 100  
Moundsville, WV 26041

Williamson  
225 E. 3rd Avenue  
Williamson, WV 25661

Huntington  
801 Madison Avenue  
Huntington, WV 25701

Parkersburg  
3001 Dudley Avenue  
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Winfield  
116 Liberty Square  
Winfield, WV 25526

Kanawha City  
140 Kanawha Mall  
Charleston, WV 25387

Point Pleasant  
1408 Kanawha Street  
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

### ADDITIONAL DRIVER TESTING LOCATIONS:

Fairmont Remote Testing Site  
9395 Middletown Mall  
White Hall, WV 26554

WV State Police Barracks  
2600 Eoff Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003

## FOREWORD

Driving a motor vehicle in West Virginia is a privilege and that privilege carries many responsibilities. This privilege must first be earned and then carefully guarded or it may be lost.

Your well-being, as well as the safety of the occupants of your vehicle, depends upon your ability to operate a motor vehicle. In addition, the safety of occupants of other vehicles you meet and pass and each pedestrian and bicyclist also depend directly upon your ability to operate a motor vehicle. As a driver on the road, you have the privilege to drive because you have successfully shown that you possess the knowledge and skill to be a safe driver.

However, the driving privilege can be lost if you do not continue to show you are a safe driver. You can lose your license for a short time, a long time, or a lifetime. This manual is only a partial digest of West Virginia motor vehicle laws. Copies of complete laws are available at any state police detachment or motor vehicle office. As a prospective driver, you should become familiar with all of the information in this manual. It will enable you to pass the driver examination and help you become a good driver.

Generally speaking, the majority of applicants for a driver's license will be operators of regular passenger vehicles, pickup trucks or vans (Class E). This handbook is designed to provide you with the information you need to obtain and keep a Class E license. Other manuals and handbooks are available for commercial drivers and motorcycle operators. This handbook guides you in following the laws and rules of the road, explains the best practices necessary to avoid accidents and encourages consideration for the rights of all users of the highways.

The driver examination program is necessary because it provides fundamental education in traffic safety and allows you to match your driving ability against accepted standards for safe driving.

[www.wvdmv.gov](http://www.wvdmv.gov)

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## ***Definitions***

**Acceleration Lane:** Extra lane on the side of a high-speed highway that permits you to enter the highway to pick up speed before merging with traffic in through lanes

**Antique Vehicle:** Motor vehicle that is over 25 years old and is owned solely as a collector's item for participation in club activities, tours, parades and similar use, but not to be used for general transportation

**Authorized Emergency Vehicle:** Fire, police, chartered rescue squad, ambulance and other emergency vehicles

**Blind Spots:** Areas on both sides of vehicles where you cannot see without turning your head

**Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC):** The amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. For drivers over the age of 21, it is against the law to drive if the BAC is 0.08% or higher. For drivers under the age of 21, it is against the law to drive if the BAC is 0.02% or higher.

**Bus:** Motor vehicle designed for carrying more than seven passengers and used primarily in the transportation of persons for compensation

**Commercial Driver:** Any person who drives a commercial motor vehicle for any purpose on the public streets or highways

**Commercial Motor Vehicle:** Any motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more or designed to carry 16 or more passengers, including the driver, or to transport hazardous materials in any weight class

**Deceleration Lane:** Traffic lane adjacent to regular traffic lanes which permits vehicles leaving the highway to reduce speed without obstructing through traffic

**Divided Highway:** Highway with separate roadways for traffic proceeding in opposite directions, separated by an unpaved strip of land, a raised median or other physical barrier

**Driver:** Any person who drives, operates or is in physical control of a motor vehicle, in any place open to the general public for purposes of vehicular traffic, or is required to hold a driver's license

**Driver's License:** A permit or license issued by this state to a person which authorizes the person to drive a motor vehicle of a specific class or classes subject to any restriction or endorsement contained thereon

**Driving Under the Influence (DUI):** Driving any motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or controlled substances

**Farm Tractor:** Motor vehicle designed and used primarily in agricultural situations for drawing plows, mowing machines and other implements of husbandry

**Following Distance:** Space cushion between your car and the car directly ahead of you.

**Graduated Driver's License (GDL):** A 3-phase graduated licensing program, for ages 15 to 18, which allows young drivers to develop their driving skills and self-confidence in a series of safe, measured steps. Each phase has its own requirements and restrictions.

**Highway:** Entire width between boundary lines maintained and open to the use of the public for the purpose of vehicular travel

**Implement of Husbandry:** Vehicle which is designed for or adapted to agricultural purposes and used by the owner primarily in the conduct of agricultural operations

**Implied Consent Law:** West Virginia state law provides that each licensed driver agrees to take a chemical test if charged with driving under the influence. Failure to submit to this test will result in suspension of the driving privilege for at least one year.

**Interchange:** System of interconnecting roadways in conjunction with one or more grade separations, providing for the exchange of traffic between two or more roadways on different levels

**Intersection:** Area common to two or more highways that meet at or near right angles, whether or not one highway crosses another

**Low-Speed Vehicle:** Low-speed vehicle means a four-wheeled motor vehicle specifically manufactured as a low-speed vehicle so designated on the manufacturer's certificate of origin (MCO). Modified golf carts and ATV's do not meet the definition. Low-speed vehicles may only be operated on private roads and on public roads and streets within the corporate limits of a municipality where the speed limit is not more than twenty-five miles per hour.

**Merging Traffic:** Vehicles entering moving lanes of traffic from adjacent lanes on the left or right

**Moped:** Motorcycle or motor-driven-type cycle which is equipped with two or three wheels, foot pedals to permit peddling and an independent power source providing a maximum of two horsepower. The maximum engine displacement is 50 cc and the maximum speed is 30 m.p.h.

**Motorcycle:** Motor vehicle, excluding a tractor, having a seat for the use of the rider and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground.

**Motor-Driven Cycle:** Motorcycles, including every motor scooter with a motor that does not exceed 250 cubic centimeters, excluding mopeds

**Motor Vehicle:** Vehicle that is self-propelled but not operated upon rails

**Operator:** Person who drives or is in actual physical control of a motor vehicle upon a highway or is steering a vehicle being towed by a motor vehicle

**Pedestrian:** Any person traveling on foot

**Revocation:** Driver's license and privilege to drive a motor vehicle on the public highways are terminated and shall not be renewed. Under certain circumstances, an application for a new license may be presented and acted upon by the DMV.

**Right-Of-Way:** Privilege of the immediate use of the highway

**Roadway:** Portion of highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the berm or shoulder

**School Bus:** Motor vehicle owned by a public governmental agency or privately owned and operated for the transportation of children to or from school

**Suspension:** Driver's license and privilege to drive a motor vehicle on the public highways are temporarily withdrawn.

## *Unlawful Disposal of Litter*

It is a violation of West Virginia law to litter public or private roadways or public or private property.

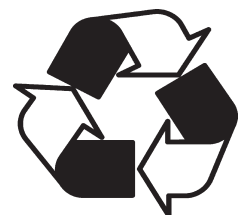
Upon conviction, an individual can be fined not less than \$50 nor more than \$1,000 or imprisoned in the county jail for not more than 60 days or sentenced to remove litter from any public or private roadway for a total of not less than 30 hours. A driver may also have "points" assessed against his or her driving record.

## RECYCLE

### **YOUR VEHICLE WASTE!**

How does operating a car or truck endanger the environment? The following waste products pose the biggest threats: dirty motor oil, old tires, antifreeze and batteries. If dumped in a lake, the oil from a single oil change (about a gallon) can ruin a million gallons of water. When stockpiled illegally, used tires collect water, attract mosquitoes and become a temptation for arsonists. Antifreeze is listed as a hazardous waste by the Environmental Protection Agency. Old batteries and other hazardous wastes contain large amounts of lead and sulfuric acid. The good news is that all of these "waste" products can be recycled and reused.

Many auto part retailers and gas stations with service areas recycle used oil for free. Leaving used tires with a tire retailer will ensure proper disposal. Some auto repair shops will recycle used antifreeze for a small fee. Battery retailers are required by law to recycle old batteries on request. To learn more about car and truck waste, call the West Virginia Office of Environmental Remediation at 1-(800)-472-8286.



# CHAPTER I

## DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION

### Who Must Be Licensed

If you live in West Virginia and want to drive a motor vehicle on the public roads, you must have a West Virginia driver's license, unless you are expressly exempt. You must carry your license with you when you drive.

### Who is Exempt

- \* Any person operating a motor vehicle in the armed services of the United States in the performance of official duties
- \* A non-resident who is at least 16 years old and has a valid license from another state or country (limited to 90 days in a calendar year)
- \* A non-resident who is attending a West Virginia college or university and has a valid license from another state

### Who Can Be Denied a License

- \* Any person who is a habitual user of alcoholic beverages or is addicted to the use of narcotic drugs
- \* Any person whose license has been suspended or revoked by this state or any other state or foreign jurisdiction, until the expiration of the suspension or revocation period
- \* Any person who the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles has good cause to believe would be hazardous to the public safety or welfare when operating a motor vehicle
- \* Any person who is under 18 years of age and not enrolled in or graduated from an approved educational institution

### Documents for Issuance of Permit/Graduated Drivers License (GDL)/License/Identification Card

The DMV requires several different documents for the issuance of licenses and identification cards. Below is a list of acceptable documents that can be used to obtain a license or identification card. Please refer to the type of license or identification card transaction to see what you are required to provide.

- \* An original birth certificate or a certified copy of your birth certificate (hospital birth certificates are not acceptable)
- \* An original valid, current, unexpired or legally extended United States Passport with current photo
- \* A valid photo driver's license or identification card that is current or expired less than six months
- \* A valid United States Uniform Service Identification and Privilege photo card
- \* A certificate of United States citizenship ICE (Immigration, Customs and Enforcement) Form N-560, N-561, N-565

- \* A certificate of United States naturalization ICE Form N-550, N-570, N-578
- \* A ICE Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card
- \* A valid Temporary I-551 stamp in a Foreign Passport (with English translation) or on ICE I-94
- \* Valid re-entries permit ICE Form I-327

### **Residency Requirement**

An applicant for any license or identification card shall be a resident of the State of West Virginia. The DMV shall not license or issue an identification card to an applicant who does not give a WV physical address and mailing address if requested for the mailing of notices. The DMV may use the mailing address on the face of the driver's license if applicant self-certifies that the Post Office does not recognize the physical address for the purpose of delivery. Acceptable documents for proofs of residency are:

- \* Current utility bills indicating a West Virginia address
- \* Tax records indicating a WV address (Property Tax receipt or bill)
- \* Residential rental and lease agreements for a WV residence
- \* Mortgage documents for a WV residence
- \* A W-2 form not more than 18 months old with a WV address
- \* A current concealed weapons permit with a WV address
- \* A current WV school driver eligibility certificate if the applicant is under the age of eighteen
- \* A motor vehicle registration card in the name of the applicant issued by the Division with a WV address
- \* WV voter's registration card
- \* Proof of receipt of WV public assistance
- \* WV homestead tax exemption

The DMV shall not license or issue an identification card to persons who are not bona fide residents of this state. Non-residents who previously resided and were licensed or issued an identification card in WV may not renew their WV licenses or identification cards until they again establish residence in this state.

### **Social Security Card**

The DMV requires the Social Security card of every applicant for a driver's license or identification card or holder of a driver's license or identification card as required by the provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996. The Social Security card is proof of the actual issued number. If an applicant is not eligible for a Social Security card the applicant must provide a letter from the Social Security Administration stating they are not eligible.

The DMV does an online verification with the Social Security Administration (SSA) on your Social Security Number. There is a possibility that you may have a problem with the SSA such as incorrect name, date of birth, or incorrect information in the SSA database. If you have such a problem, you will be required to have this corrected with the SSA before the DMV can issue a permit, license, or identification card. The DMV does not accept metal Social Security cards. The DMV will accept the following as an alternative to the Social Security Card requirements:

- a. A Medicare Card issued to the applicant.
- b. A Military Identification card issued to the applicant or an original certified copy of the Military discharge form DD214.
- c. A W-2 Form with the applicant's employer's name and identification number and the applicant's name, number and Social Security number.

### **School Driver Eligibility Certificate**

A valid school driver eligibility certificate is required for an applicant under the age of 18 to perform any driver's license transaction. It also fulfills the residency requirement if a physical address is listed. If the address on the eligibility certificate is a PO Box, the applicant is required to provide two (2) additional proofs of residency from the list on page 5 of the handbook. The school driver eligibility certificate can be obtained at the school which the student attends. A home-schooled student must obtain a school driver eligibility certificate from the Board of Education in the county in which he or she resides. A student attending an out-of-state school can obtain a school driver eligibility certificate from any DMV Regional Office or Testing Center. The Out-of-State school driver eligibility certificate must be completed by the school principal and must be accompanied by a letter from the school on its letterhead. Also, a student attending an out-of-state school is required to provide one proof of WV residency from the list on page 5 of the handbook. If an applicant has already graduated from school and has not reached the age of 18, a diploma can be used in place of the school driver eligibility certificate.

### **First-Time Applicants**

Any first-time applicant must present the same documentation for any type of license (instruction permit, GDL, driver's license) or identification card. The required documents are a certified birth certificate, Social Security card, and two (2) proofs of WV physical residency. Pages 4 and 5 list acceptable documents for both identity and residency. An unexpired U.S. Passport may be used in lieu of a birth certificate.

An applicant under the age of 18 is required to meet the school enrollment requirement as listed above on this page. If the applicant has had a name change, proper documents are required to verify the name change.

### **Immigrants**

Immigrants who are applying for an instruction permit, driver's license or identification card are required to provide one of the following documents:

- \* An ICE Form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card
- \* A valid Temporary I-551 stamp on Foreign Passport (with English translation) or on ICE Form I-94
- \* Valid re-entry permits ICE Form I-327



### **Additional Requirements include:**

- \* Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security Card

- \* **Two (2) Proofs of WV residency**

### **Non-Immigrants**

Non-immigrants applying for a instruction permit, driver's license or identification card are required to provide the following documents:

- \* Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security Card
- \* **Two (2) Proofs of WV residency**
- \* A valid foreign passport with English translation
- \* An ICE Form I-94
- \* A visa issued by the United States, if the applicant is from a nation whose citizens are required by the United States to obtain a visa
- \* All original ICE documents to verify status and length of authorized stay
- \* An ICE Form I-20 and written verification of attendance at the school listed on ICE Form I-20 if the applicant's status is F-1 or F-2
- \* Written verification from an employer, if the applicant's status is H1-A, H1-B, H-3, or H-4
- \* A form DS2019 and written verification of attendance at the school listed on form DS2019 if the applicant's status is J-1 or J-2

### **Refugees**

Refugees applying for a instruction permit, driver's license or identification card are required to provide the following documents:

- \* An ICE Form I-94, Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security card
- \* An ICE Form I-94 showing grant of refugee status
- \* A Reception and Placement Program Assurance Form
- \* Written verification of identity and WV residency presented by an employee of a sponsoring organization approved by the United States Department of State to resettle refugees in WV

Refugees without an approved sponsoring organization or a person seeking asylum shall provide the following:

- \* **Two (2) proofs of WV residency**
- \* Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security card
- \* An ICE Form I-94, stamped Refugee/Asylee (person seeking asylum)
- \* An ICE Form I-688 B and ICE Form I-766 Employment Authorization Document

## **New Residents**

After establishing residency, new residents who want to drive in WV must apply for a WV driver's license within 30 days. If you have a valid, non-expired out-of-state license, you are eligible to transfer the license. You are required to pass a vision test, complete a brief alcohol awareness course and surrender your out-of-state license before a WV license will be issued. A transfer applicant must present all acceptable documents that are required for a first-time applicant. A written examination is also required for applicants under the age of 18. If you have a motorcycle endorsement on your license, the DMV will transfer the endorsement for an additional fee of \$5.

If the applicant's out-of-state license has expired, the applicant is required to take all examinations that are required for a first-time applicant.

A new resident who does not possess an out-of-state license must obtain a certified driving record from the state in which he or she was previously licensed in order to waive the testing requirement.

If your out-of-state license is suspended or revoked, you will not be licensed in WV until you receive a "clearance" from the Problem Driver Point System (PDPS). It is illegal to drive in WV with a suspended or revoked license. All applicants for a WV driver's license must be verified with PDPS, the national driver registry. It is important to confirm that you are not under suspension in any other jurisdiction before attempting to obtain a license in WV.

## **Renewing**

To renew a driver's license, you **must present** one of each of the identity and residency documents noted on pages 4 and 5 of the handbook. If your license has been expired for more than six months, you are required to retest and apply as a first-time applicant. If your Social Security number is not in the DMV data system you are required to provide your Social Security card before a new license will be issued. If you do not have your Social Security card you may present one of the following: a Medicare card issued in your name which contains your Social Security number as well as your signature, a Military Identification card with your Social Security Number and also shows if you are active, retired, reserve or dependant status of the United States Military, an original or certified copy of the Military Discharge Form DD 214 with the Social Security number, a Wage and Tax Statement Form (W-2) or a payroll stub with your employer's name and employer identification number and your Social Security number. An applicant who is not a citizen of the United States shall present all documents required by the Division to verify his or her legal status in the United States, proof of identity and proof of residency in this state. If your Social Security number is incorrect in the DMV data system, you **must provide** your Social Security card.

## Duplicate License

To obtain a duplicate license, you **must present** one document from the list of identity documents on page 4 and one document from the residency requirements from the list on page 5 of the handbook. If you are under the age of 18 and are applying for a duplicate license, you need a valid school enrollment form. If your Social Security number is not in the DMV data system, or is wrong, you **must provide** your Social Security card before a new license will be issued. An applicant **who is not** a citizen of the United States **shall present all documents required by the DMV to verify his or her legal status in the United States, proof of identity and proof of residency in this state.**

## Expired License

Any person renewing a WV license, including a CDL license, that has been expired for more than six months is required to retest. If your out-of-state license has expired, you are also required to retest. You will be required to go through the full examination process, as well as provide all necessary documents as a first-time applicant.

## Changes to Birth Date, Name, Gender, and Social Security Number

The holder of a license or identification card shall substantiate a change of name by marriage with a marriage certificate. He or she may choose from the following options to display his or her name on the driver's license (however, a court order specifying a change of name supersedes a birth and marriage certificate):

- \* Last name, first name, then middle name, as evidenced by the applicant's certified birth certificate
- \* Last name of spouse, as evidenced by the applicant's marriage certificate, then the first name and middle name as evidenced by the applicant's birth certificate
- \* Last name, as evidenced by the applicant's marriage license, first name, then maiden name, as evidenced by the applicant's birth certificate, to stand in place of the middle name

Any change in the birth date requires a certified birth certificate.

Any change or correction of the Social Security number requires a Social Security card.

Any change of gender requires a court order specifically indicating that the gender change is complete.

## A Word About the Problem Driver Point System

All driver's license applicants are subject to a review of their driving records through the Problem Driver Point System (PDPS), a national driver registry designed to track violations and suspensions from state to state. All drivers who renew their driver's license will be reviewed through PDPS as well. If you have previously held a license in another state and had any moving violations, please make sure to satisfy any citations and suspensions you may have pending before applying for or renewing a West Virginia driver's license. The DMV is prohibited from licensing any driver whose driving history reflects an unsettled problem in another state.

If you have received citations in another state which you failed to pay, that state may have suspended your privilege to drive, even if your West Virginia driver's license is valid. West Virginia will suspend your driver's license if we receive notice from another state that you have failed to pay a citation. When other states notify West Virginia of unpaid citations, the DMV will notify you by certified mail at the current address in its system and give you a certain amount of time to address the matter before a suspension action is taken against you. Nevertheless, unpaid citations are your responsibility. Do not expect the court to notify the DMV when you resolve an unpaid citation. If the DMV has notified you of an unpaid citation or if you suspect that the court has notified the DMV, you must provide the DMV proof that you have paid the citation or have satisfied the court's order to avoid suspension or to reinstate your driver's license.

## Level 1 Permit (Instruction Permit)

The Level 1 License (Instruction Permit) allows you to learn how to operate a motor vehicle with an adult driver over the age of 21. To obtain a Level 1 License, you must be at least 15 years old, pass a vision and knowledge test and have a valid school driver eligibility certificate from your local school board. You must also have the permission (in writing) of your parent or guardian indicated on the Level 1 application. Parental consent is not required for married applicants under the age of 18; however, you must present a certified copy of your marriage certificate.

Each time you apply and test for the Level 1 permit, you must show a certified birth certificate issued by a state or governmental agency of the U.S. who is responsible for the collection of vital records. You must also show a Social Security Administration-issued Social Security card signed by you.

The vision and written tests are administered by driver examiners at DMV-designated locations. After you pass the required tests, the driver examiner will approve your application for processing. For more information concerning the vision and written tests, refer to Chapter II.

If you are under the age of 18, state law requires that you provide proof of enrollment in a school certified by your local school board. The expiration date of the document must be current. During the summer break, the school driver eligibility certificate must be issued within the last 30 days of the current school year. When the new school year begins, a new school driver eligibility certificate must be obtained. The proof of enrollment includes certification that you are (1) enrolled in a general education development (GED) program and making satisfactory progress or possess a certificate of completion for the program or are (2) enrolled in a secondary school of this state or any state.

Level 1 permit requirements:

- \* Be at least 15 years of age
- \* You may only drive with a licensed driver who is 21 years old or older
- \* You may only drive between the hours of 5:00 am and 11:00 pm
- \* You may only have two (2) additional passengers in addition to the supervising, licensed adult driver
- \* Two convictions will result in revocation of your permit (90 days)
- \* You may not have **any** measurable **amount** of alcohol in your system while operating a motor vehicle
- \* You must require all occupants to adhere to the safety belt law
- \* Fee for a Level 1 permit is \$5
- \* May not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system

A Level 1 permit is non-renewable. If it expires you must retest for the Level 1 permit and maintain the permit for another 180 consecutive days, conviction-free, prior to applying for a Level 2 license. If you surrender your Level 1 permit for any reason, you will be required to complete the examination process, maintain the Level 1 permit for 180 consecutive days, conviction free and resubmit all identity, residency and school driver eligibility certificate prior to issuance. A Level 1 permit will be issued up to the applicant's 18th birthday, and will expire on the 18th birthday. However, to allow sufficient time to complete the Road Skills Examination, a 30 day grace period (beyond the applicant's 18th birthday) will be allowed.

## Level 2 License (Intermediate License)

If you are between the ages of 16 and 18 and have completed all the requirements of the Level 1 permit, you will be eligible for a Level 2 license. To be eligible for a Level 2 license, you must:

- \* Be at least 16 years of age

- \* Have a minimum of 180 consecutive days of conviction-free driving at Level 1 immediately preceding the date of your Level 2 application
- \* Have a parent or legal guardian certification (log sheet) of a minimum of 30 hours behind the wheel **or** complete a driver's education course approved by the West Virginia Department of Education
- \* Pass a road skills test (a maximum of three attempts to complete)
- \* Have a valid school driver eligibility certificate
- \* **Identification and residency documents**
- \* May not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system

When you meet all the requirements, you will be issued a Level 2 license. The Level 2 license has certain restrictions that will apply to allow you to gain experience operating a motor vehicle, but with limitations to promote safe use of your motor vehicle. Level 2 drivers **may drive without a supervising, licensed adult driver who is age 21 or older between the hours of 5:00 am and 11:00 pm. Level 2 drivers must drive with a supervising, licensed adult driver who is age 21 or older between the hours of 11:00 pm and 5:00 am.** The exceptions to this rule are when the licensee is participating in, going to or returning from: 1) lawful employment; 2) a school-sanctioned activity; 3) a religious activity; or 4) an emergency situation that requires the licensee to prevent bodily injury or the death of another. Level 2 drivers may only have three (3) additional passengers, excluding family members, under the age of 19 at any time. As with Level 1 drivers, Level 2 drivers may not operate a motor vehicle with any measurable alcohol in their system and must require all occupants to follow the seat belt law. If you surrender your Level 2 GDL for any reason, you must start over with a Level 1 permit.

### **GDL Violations and Convictions**

Convictions at Level 1 and Level 2 result in penalties that may include suspending or revoking your driving privilege. These penalties reflect the importance of safe driving. Remember, in order to graduate to the Level 2 License, you must remain conviction-free for six consecutive months. If you receive one driving conviction under your Level 1 permit, the six-month period will start over again at the point of the conviction. Under a Level 1 license, two convictions will result in the revocation of your license. The revocation will last for 90 days and then you will be eligible to reapply and retest to obtain your Level 1 permit. The use of a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle under a Level 1 permit or Level 2 license is prohibited. If a citation is issued for the use of a cell phone on a Level 1 permit or Level 2 license, you must begin the conviction free time period over (Level 1 - 6 months; Level 2 - 12 months).

The Level 2 license requires a 12-month conviction-free period before eligibility to graduate to the Level 3 stage. If you receive a conviction, the 12-month conviction-free period will start over again at the point of that conviction. Level 2 licensees are required to enroll in a driver improvement program upon the first conviction. Failure to enroll in a driver improvement program will require the driver to remain at the Level 2 stage until the age of 18. The second conviction for a moving violation requires the revocation of your driving privilege until you are 18.

Drivers under the age of 18 years old with a Level 1 permit or Level 2 license may not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the cell phone is used for contacting a 9-1-1 system as stated in WV State Code §17B-2-3a(F).

Criminal penalties for violating GDL restrictions are: \$25 fine for first offense; \$50 fine for the second offense; and \$75 for the third offense.

### **Level 3 License (Non-GDL)**

Once the applicant has met the requirements to obtain a Level 3 license, it is the driver's option to apply for this license or to keep the Level 2 license and follow its restrictions until he or she is 18 years of age. To be eligible for a Level 3 license, you must have completed 12 months of conviction-free driving under a Level 2 license. You must be at least 17 years old and have successfully completed all requirements. You must visit a DMV Regional Office or Testing Center to apply for a Level 3 license.

### **Graduated Licenses Are Color-Coded**

If you are under 18 years old, your license will be color-coded to reflect your age. All levels of licenses issued to anyone under 18 years old will be color-coded red. If you are 18 or over but under 21, your license will be color-coded blue. These two distinctions will indicate your age immediately to law enforcement officials and retailers. When you become 21, a regular Class E license with the landscape background will be issued. Currently licensed drivers under the age of 21 will not be required to obtain a new "color-coded" license. But if you are under the age of 21 and apply for a duplicate license, your new license will be color-coded.

- \* Under 18 - Red Background License
- \* 18 to 20 - Blue Background License
- \* 21 and over - Landscape Background License

### **Regular (Non-GDL) Instruction Permit**

If you are 18 or over and have never had a driver's license (Level 2 or comparable), you must obtain a regular Class E Instruction Permit. GDLs are not issued to drivers age 18 or older. When you have completed the application and presented the appropriate documents, you will be allowed to take the vision and written tests. When you pass the vision and written tests, you will be issued a regular Class E Instruction Permit. The Instruction Permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle when a licensed driver who is 21 or older occupies the front seat with you. The Instruction Permit will be valid for a period of 90 days. If the permit expires it may be renewed, however, **YOU MUST RETEST**, taking both the vision and written tests to obtain another Instruction Permit. If you have never been licensed at Level 2 or comparable, you must maintain the instruction permit for at least 30 days before you are eligible to take the road skills test.

### **Motorcycle License**

#### **Instruction Permit**

The Motorcycle Instruction Permit allows you to ride a motorcycle on public roads during daylight hours without passengers. In order to obtain a Motorcycle Instruction Permit you must:

- \* Be at least 16 years old and have fulfilled all the requirements of the Level 1 Instruction Permit and, at minimum, met all of the requirements for a Level 2 Intermediate License **or** be at least 18 years old
- \* Pass a 25-question motorcycle knowledge examination with a grade of 80% or better
- \* Present Identity and Residency documents (**listed on pages 4 and 5**)

#### **Motorcycle Endorsement (F Endorsement)**

In order to add a Motorcycle Endorsement (F) to a driver's license, you must begin by obtaining a Motorcycle Instruction Permit (as outlined above). Once you have your Motorcycle Instruction Permit, you have two options to obtain your F Endorsement:

- 1) Pass a motorcycle road skills test given by a DMV driver examiner **or**
- 2) Complete the West Virginia Motorcycle Rider Education Program.

When one of these two components has been successfully completed, you may have the (F) endorsement added to your driver's license for a duplication fee of \$5, plus a \$1 per year fee for the length of time the driver's license is valid. (Example: License valid for 3 years, the total fee would be \$8. \$5 duplication fee, plus \$3 fee for 3 years validation)

### **Motorcycle-Only (Class F License)**

In order to obtain a Class F (Motorcycle Only) license, you must begin by obtaining a Motorcycle Instruction Permit (as outlined above). You must also:

- 1) Pass a motorcycle road skills test given by a driver examiner of the DMV **or**
- 2) Complete the West Virginia Motorcycle Rider Education Program

When you have successfully completed one of these two components, you may have your Class F (Motorcycle-Only) license processed for a fee of \$2.50 for each year the license is issued. (Example: 5 year license = \$12.50 fee) The Class F (Motorcycle-Only) license limits the licensee. The bearer of a Class F license cannot drive any other type of motor vehicle. For further information concerning the Motorcycle Instruction Permit, Class F Endorsement for a regular license or a Class F License only, you may consult the West Virginia Motorcycle Operator Manual available at your local DMV Regional Office or on our website ([www.wvdmv.gov](http://www.wvdmv.gov)).

### **Motorcycle Rider Education Class**

The DMV offers motorcycle rider instruction classes to inexperienced operators to develop safe street riding skills. The classes are offered to persons who are at least 16 years old, have met all of the requirements for a Level 2 license, except for passing the road skills test, and have a motorcycle instruction permit. The classes are also available to anyone who is at least 18 years old and has a motorcycle instruction permit. The 20-hour course consists of both classroom and on-cycle instruction. The successful completion of this course will allow you to have the on-cycle skills test waived. Please direct your questions about these classes to the Motorcycle Rider Education Program at 1-866-355-9399.

### **License Restrictions**

The DMV is authorized to impose license restrictions to assure the safe operation of motor vehicles. The restriction will be indicated on the front of the license by a number or letter code in the "restrictions" field. The explanation of the restriction will appear on the back of the license. Operating a motor vehicle in violation of the restriction or restrictions is a serious offense and could result in the suspension or revocation of your driving privilege.

#### **The restrictions are:**

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Artificial Limbs  | Daylight Driving Only        |
| Corrective Lenses   | Interlock                    |
| Automatic Transmission  | Spinner Knob                 |
| Mechanical Signals  | CDL intrastate only/Under 21 |
| Hand Controls   | Vehicle without Air Brakes   |
| Outside Mirrors   | Class B or C Bus only        |
| Corrective Lenses and Outside Mirrors                         | Class C Bus only             |
| Other (The Division may impose restrictions not listed above) | Power Steering & Brakes      |

## Drive for Five

The DMV now makes it easier for you to remember the expiration date of your driver's license or identification card. Under the "Drive for Five" program, all drivers' licenses will expire in a year in which your age is divisible by five: For example, age 25,30,35,40,45, etc.

Under this program, your license is valid for five years. However, before you begin the five-year cycle, the DMV may need to phase you into the program. In order to do this, your initial license will be issued for a period ranging from three years to seven years, depending on your age at the time of renewal. For instance, if you are or will be 34 in the year that your license expires, you will be issued a six-year license that will expire when you are 40.

New licenses issued after January 1, 2001, expire on the applicant's birthday instead of the end of the month. Licenses expiring on a licensee's 18<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday will have a 30-day grace period to allow the bearer to obtain the appropriate-color license.

Please note that the license fees have not increased. The fees may be more or less for this renewal period, depending on the number of years for which the license will be valid. Your renewal fee and year of expiration will appear on your renewal card as well.

All license renewal fees will be based on the number of years you will have a license until your age is divisible by five (25, 30, 35, 40, etc.), at a rate of \$2.50 per year plus 50 cents. For example, if you are 21 years old when you renew your license, your license will next expire on your 25th birthday and the fee would be \$10.50 ( $\$2.50 \times 4 + .50$ ).

## LICENSE FEES

### Graduated Driver's License

| <u>Min. Age</u> | <u>Type of License</u> | <u>Expiration</u>                        | <u>Fee</u>                     |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 15              | Level 1                | 18th birthday (plus 30 day grace period) | \$5                            |
| 16              | Level 2                | Until 18                                 | \$5                            |
| 17              | Level 3                | Until 21                                 | \$2.50/ year + .50 motor voter |

### Instruction Permit

|    |   |                       |     |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----|
| 16 | Motorcycle Instruction Permit (must have met the minimum qualifications of Level 2 License) | 90 days from issuance | \$5 |
| 18 | Instruction Permit  | 90 days from issuance | \$5 |



## Regular Driver's License

| <u>Min. Age</u> | <u>Type of License</u>             | <u>Fee</u>                           | <u>Expired Fee</u> |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 18              | Driver's License<br>(Class E or F) | \$2.50 per year +<br>.50 motor voter | \$5                |
|                 | Duplicate License                  | \$5                                  |                    |

## Carry Your License

Be sure you have your driver's license with you when you drive. You are required to display this license upon demand to any law enforcement officer, magistrate or official of the DMV. Violation of this requirement is a misdemeanor. However, you will not be convicted if your license is valid at the time of arrest and you can produce it in court or in the office of the arresting officer.

## Organ Donor Program

You may become an organ donor by checking "YES" on your renewal application. Tell your family you want to be a donor or your wishes may not be carried out.



**This symbol appears on the driver's license of organ donors.**

## Diabetics

Drivers with diabetes may, upon providing the DMV with a doctor's certificate of their condition, receive a special symbol on their driver's license. The DMV will place a diabetic designation on their license for a fee of \$5.



**Diabetics may choose for this symbol to appear on their driver's license.**

## Hearing-Impaired

Drivers who are hearing impaired may, upon having an application completed by their licensed audiologist or physician, receive a special symbol on their driver's license. The DMV will place a deaf designation on their license for a fee of \$5.



**The Hearing-Impaired may choose for this symbol to appear on their driver's license.**

## Selective Service

The DMV offers young men ages 15-26 the opportunity to register with the Selective Service. The applicants must complete a DMV license or identification card transaction to register.

# CHAPTER II

## DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

The privilege to drive carries with it many responsibilities. You, and only you, are responsible for your actions. There are a number of requirements that the license holder must be aware of in order to maintain the privilege of driving in West Virginia.

### **School Attendance for Minors**

If your school notifies the DMV that you are not attending or have excessive unexcused absences, the DMV is required to suspend/revoke your license until age 18 or until you present a reinstatement authorization form from your school. You should contact your school or local school board if you have any questions concerning this law.

### **How to Refer an Unsafe Driver**

If you are concerned about an immediate family member who can no longer safely operate a motor vehicle, you may write a detailed explanation to the DMV at the address listed below. You should provide us with the person's name, address, date of birth and driver's license number, if possible. Law enforcement may submit this information if they have had personal observation or contact with an unsafe driver. You may also wish to seek the advice of the family member's personal physician or the physician may submit information directly to this office.

Division of Motor Vehicles, Driver Improvement Section  
Building Three, Capitol Complex  
Charleston, WV 25317  
Telephone: (304) 558-0238

Based on the submitted information, the DMV will re-examine the person's driving skills or ask for updated medical information from the person's doctor. After re-examination, the DMV may issue the person a restricted license or revoke his or her driving privilege, not only for the safety of that individual but for the safety of other motorists.

### **Reexamination of Drivers**

You may be required to take a medical, written or driving examination if the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles has good cause to believe you are incompetent or otherwise not qualified to be licensed.

After you have taken the examination, your license may be suspended or revoked or you may be issued a restricted license. Refusal to submit to this test is grounds for suspension or revocation of your license.

### **Accidents**

Accidents resulting in injury to, or death of, any person or property damage in excess of \$500 must be reported by the quickest means possible (oral or written) within five days to the local police department if it occurs within a municipality; otherwise it must be reported to the county sheriff or the nearest WV State Police office (see WV Code §17C-4-6). If your vehicle was not covered by automobile liability insurance on the date of the accident, your motor vehicle registration and driving privileges will be suspended.

### **Compulsory Insurance**

West Virginia law mandates that all motorists driving on the state's public roads must carry motor vehicle liability insurance. The minimum amount of coverage, as provided by law, is \$20,000 for one death or injury, \$40,000 for two deaths or injuries and \$10,000 for property damage.

When you obtain or renew your vehicle registration, you must sign a statement, under penalty of false swearing, that you have liability insurance on your vehicle and will keep this insurance for the full registration year.

In addition, a certificate of insurance or other proof of insurance, which can be obtained from your insurance company, must be carried in your vehicle at all times along with a valid vehicle registration. In the event of an accident, you must present this certificate or other proof to any investigating officer. You must also show the certificate at the time of annual vehicle inspection.

The DMV may verify the insurance information which you provide when you obtain or renew your vehicle registration. The DMV may also ask you to verify that you have current insurance in effect. The insurance company you list may be contacted to verify that you were insured. If the company does not verify your insurance information and you are unable to prove otherwise, your driver's license will be suspended for 30 days.

Also, if you have been cited or convicted in magistrate court for not having insurance or if a police officer files an accident report that says you did not have insurance, your license will be suspended for 30 days. Your license will be suspended for 90 days upon the second offense. Your vehicle registration will also be suspended until you show current proof of insurance.

Filing of false or fraudulent insurance information will result in an additional 90-day suspension of your driver's license, revocation of your vehicle and possible prosecution that carries a fine of not more than \$1,000 and jail time not to exceed one year. (296)

## **Point System**

The DMV has a point system to identify and control problem drivers and maintains a record of all violations of traffic laws.

Your record will show the date, nature of the violation and the court in which you were convicted. Points have been assigned to various in-state and out-of-state moving traffic violations depending on the seriousness of the violation. Repeated convictions may build a point record leading to suspension of your driving privilege. Points remain on your driving record for two years from the conviction date.

When you have six points or more on your record, the DMV will send you a letter of caution, urging more careful driving and obedience of traffic laws. When you accumulate 12 points on your record, your driver's license is subject to suspension.

You may have three points deducted from your record by completing an eight-hour defensive driving course. The defensive driving course can only be taken to remove three points if an individual has 11 points or fewer and no outstanding tickets that would place him or her over the 12- point limit. Motorists are only eligible for this point reduction once every two years. If you have accumulated 12 or more points prior to taking the defensive driving course, the DMV will not remove points from your record. For more information you may contact the DMV at 1-800-642-9066. The most common point bearing offenses are listed below:

### ***POINT SCALE***

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Fleeing from an officer      | 8 |
| Speeding in a school zone    | 6 |
| Passing a stopped school bus | 6 |
| Reckless/careless driving    | 6 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Property damage only, hit and run, leaving the scene | 6 |
| Speeding 15 m.p.h. or more above the speed limit     | 5 |
| Speeding 10 m.p.h. to 14 m.p.h. over the speed limit | 3 |
| Passing violation                                    | 3 |
| Failure to yield violation                           | 3 |
| Failure to obey traffic light                        | 3 |
| Failure to obey stop sign                            | 3 |
| Driving left of center                               | 3 |
| Driving too fast for conditions                      | 3 |
| Failure to maintain control of vehicle               | 3 |
| Hazardous driving                                    | 3 |
| Driving the wrong way on a one way street            | 3 |
| Littering  | 3 |
| Improper lane violations                             | 3 |
| Driving on wrong side of road                        | 3 |
| Speeding 5 m.p.h. to 9 m.p.h. over the speed limit   | 2 |
| Following too closely                                | 2 |
| More than 3 in the front seat                        | 2 |
| Improper turning                                     | 2 |
| Improper backing                                     | 2 |
| Improper signal or no signal                         | 2 |

### **Driving in Other States**

West Virginia is a member of the Driver License Compact. Traffic violations you receive in other states will become part of your West Virginia driving record and, if warranted, points will be assessed. If you are convicted in other states and the offense is grounds for suspension or revocation, your West Virginia driver's license may be suspended or revoked. Other states may also restrict, suspend or revoke your privilege to drive a motor vehicle in those states.

West Virginia is also a member of the Non-Resident Violator Compact. This allows drivers to accept traffic citations for certain violations and continue on their way, regardless of whether the driver resides in that jurisdiction. Each member state agrees to suspend the driver's license of its own citizens who fail to comply with the terms of the traffic violation committed in another state.

### **Failure to Comply with In-State Citations**

State law requires municipal, magistrate and circuit courts to notify the DMV when you fail to pay, fail to appear or fail to comply with any type of ticket or court order/decision, even if it is not a traffic ticket.

The DMV will suspend your driver's license until you present proof of compliance with the court action and all penalty fees are paid. State law also requires the DMV to suspend your driver's license if you fail to maintain any child support payment obligations.

Traffic tickets and other types of citations should be handled promptly to avoid possible driver's license suspension.

## **Fraudulent Use of Driver's Licenses**

The information you provide when you apply for your driver's license or apply for a duplicate license must be true and accurate. It is against the law to provide false information when you apply for any type of driver's license. It is also illegal to use someone else's license as your own, to permit someone else to use your driver's license, to permit someone to use your identity documents to obtain a license or to use or display a fictitious license. The penalty for these offenses is a 90-day suspension.

## **Mandatory License Revocation**

Convictions for certain violations of motor vehicle laws are serious and require the immediate revocation of your driver's license. The DMV must revoke a driver's license when it receives a notice of final conviction of any of the following:

- \* Manslaughter or negligent homicide resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle
- \* Two or more moving violation convictions as a graduated driver
- \* Providing false information to the DMV
- \* Leaving the scene of an accident that results in death or personal injury
- \* Three convictions of reckless driving in 24 months
- \* Racing on streets or highways (drag racing)
- \* Driving while license is suspended/revoked
- \* Failure to satisfy a civil judgment against you as a result of your involvement in an automobile accident
- \* Conviction in this state or in any other state for driving under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances or drugs
- \* Failure to pay for gasoline upon second conviction
- \* Any felony committed using a motor vehicle

## **Driving While License Is Revoked or Suspended**

Revocation and suspension periods vary depending on the offense. Driving while your license is suspended or revoked (non-DUI related) is a serious matter and may cause a 90 day revocation. The penalty for driving while your license is revoked on a DUI is a mandatory minimum jail sentence of 30 days to six months. The law also requires that your driving privileges be revoked for an six months.

**All suspension/revocation transactions and reinstatements must be handled by mail or in person at the Capitol Complex office in Charleston, WV.**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE**

Alcohol mixed with driving is one of the greatest factors in highway accidents. Studies show that in recent years about 40 percent of the fatal accidents in West Virginia involved drivers who had been drinking. Adults are not the only drivers responsible for this terrible toll; of the drivers under 21 years of age who were involved in fatal accidents, more than 40 percent had been drinking. Here are some points to remember:

- \* **Alcohol reduces alertness, interferes with judgment and impairs vision**
- \* **Alcohol affects a person differently at different times. Physical and emotional conditions, other drugs or even the amount of food in the stomach can cause alcohol to have a varied effect.**
- \* **Physical exercise, black coffee, fresh air, cold showers and other “home remedies” do not effectively help someone to sober up. Time is the only sobering influence.**
- \* **The amount of alcohol in a one-ounce shot of 100-proof whiskey, six-ounce glass of wine or a 12-ounce can of beer is the same.**
- \* **Our judgment is affected when we drink; thus, decisions made under the influence of alcohol reflect impeded judgment. DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!**

#### **Under Age 21-Drinking and Driving**

The legal drinking age in West Virginia is 21 years old. West Virginia has a zero tolerance law for drivers under the age of 21 who unwisely and illegally choose to drive with any measurable alcohol in their system.

This means that if you are under the age of 21 and any amount of alcohol is found in your system, you will lose your driver's license.

#### **Designated Driver**

Having a designated driver is the most reasonable, safe and practical method to avoid drinking and driving and/or a DUI violation.

The designated driver is a selected or volunteer companion who will not drink alcohol during the time he or she has the responsibility for driving his or her friend(s) home after a drinking situation. A designated driver should always be appointed before the start of any activity involving alcohol.

#### **Knowing Your Limits**

In West Virginia, a BAC of more than 0.05% and less than 0.08% is relevant evidence to presume that a person is driving while his or her ability to drive is impaired. If a driver's BAC is 0.08% or more, he or she is presumed to be driving under the influence. Be aware, however, that under the West Virginia law, your driver's license can be revoked if your BAC is less than 0.08%.

When a person has more than one drink per hour, the BAC level builds up in his or her body. For example, the BAC level actually continues to increase after the last drink at 11:30 p.m. and several hours later, at 4 a.m., the BAC of that person is still above 0.06%. Persons with this level of alcohol in their bodies can be arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI).

## **Other Drugs**

Driving while using other drugs is very dangerous and has effects like those of drinking. Using drugs, even though prescribed by a physician or bought over the counter, can cause drowsiness, loss of coordination, hallucinations or total body malfunctions. The use of alcohol and drugs can be a deadly combination.

## **Implied Consent and the Chemical Test**

If you are arrested for DUI, you are subject to the Implied Consent Law. As a driver, you are deemed to have given consent to take the designated breath test for purposes of determining alcohol content in your body. If you refuse to take the breath test, your privilege to operate a motor vehicle will be revoked for a period of one year and up to life.

Many people mistakenly assume that the Implied Consent Law means they will be fined or go to jail if they are stopped and have alcohol on their breath. On the contrary, the law is designed to protect the driver who has not been drinking since the blood alcohol test will provide a medically accepted measure of alcohol concentration. The Implied Consent Law safeguards the public from a driver who is intoxicated by arresting those who refuse to be tested for alcohol content. Without this law, some drivers might escape punishment and continue to pose a hazard to the community.

## **Penalties for Driving Under the Influence**

Because the public menace posed by intoxicated drivers is so great, the penalties for violators are severe.

If you are under the age of 18, a DUI offense will result in revocation of your driver's license until you reach the age of 18 or for the applicable statutory period of revocation or suspension, whichever is longer and until all other requirements are met.

Anytime your license is revoked or suspended for DUI, you must complete a prescribed Safety and Treatment program before you will be eligible to reinstate your driving privileges.

The chart on the following page shows the penalties and minimum revocation period for each DUI offense.

| <b><u>OFFENSE</u></b>  | <b><u>JAIL/FINES</u></b>                          | <b><u>MINIMUM<br/>REVOCATION PERIODS</u></b>           |
|--|---|--|
| Zero tolerance<br>(Under 21 w/any measurable alcohol)                                  | \$25 to \$100 fine                                | 30 days*   |
| Zero tolerance - 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense   | 24 hours/\$100 to \$500 fine                      | 60 days or until 18th birth-day, whichever is greater* |
| DUI - alcohol or drugs w/BAC <.15<br>or knowingly permitting - 1 <sup>st</sup> offense | Up to 6 months/\$100 to \$500 fine                | 15 days*   |
| DUI - alcohol or drugs w/BAC .15 or<br>> - 1 <sup>st</sup> offense                     | 2 days to 6 months/<br>\$100 to \$1,000 fine      | 45 days*   |
| DUI w/Implied Consent<br>1 <sup>st</sup> offense                                       | 24 hours to 6 months/<br>\$100 to \$500 fine      | 45 days*   |
| DUI w/Child Endangerment   | 2 days to 12 months/<br>\$200 to \$1,000 fine     | 60 days*   |
| DUI w/bodily injury  | 24 hours to 12 months/<br>\$200 to \$1,000 fine   | 60 days*   |
| DUI w/Death - misdemeanor  | 90 days to 12 months/<br>\$500 to \$1,000 fine    | 1 year*  |
| DUI w/Death - felony   | 2 to 10 years/\$1,000 to \$3,000 fine             | 1 year*  |
| DUI - 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense  | 6 months to 12 months/<br>\$1,000 to \$3,000 fine | 1 year*  |
| DUI - 3 <sup>rd</sup> or subsequent offense  | 1 to 3 years/\$3,000 to \$5,000 fine              | 1 year*  |

\*Minimum revocation periods are based upon participation in the WV Alcohol Test and Lock Program (Interlock). Participation in the Interlock program may be an option for some DUI offenders, while for others it is a mandatory requirement depending on the type of offense. Interlock is a mandatory requirement for any offender whose license is revoked for two or more alcohol-related offenses within a ten-year period. Participation periods vary depending on type and number of offenses. Individuals revoked for driving under the influence of a controlled substance or drugs are not eligible to participate in this program and must serve the minimum revocation period of 6 months and up to life, depending on the number of previous DUI's.



# CHAPTER IV

## EXAMINATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

### A Message From Your Examiners

The examination you are preparing to take is a series of tests that measures your qualifications to drive against established standards.

These tests include vision and color recognition, knowledge of traffic laws, recognition of road signs and the ability to safely and skillfully operate a motor vehicle in traffic.

The DMV realizes that taking a driving test may be a new experience for you and that you may be nervous or uneasy. Please keep in mind that examiners are trained and experienced professionals in their field. They are riding with you only to see that you can control your vehicle and observe the rules of the road. During the examination, concentrate on your driving-not on your errors.

On behalf of the State of West Virginia, the DMV asks every driver who has obtained a West Virginia driver's license to drive either as well as or better than you did while taking the examination.

### Vision Examination

If your vision is 20/40 or better using both eyes, either with or without conventional corrective lenses, and you show no serious visual defect, you will pass the vision test. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision may also be checked. Special lens arrangements, including but not limited to bi-optic or telescopic lenses, may not be utilized to satisfy the visual acuity standards.

If you require glasses or contact lenses to have a vision level of 20/40 or better, your license will show a restriction code for "corrective lenses." If you have only one eye, you may be passed if the vision level with that eye is 20/40 or better.

If your vision is less than 20/40 or you have a serious visual defect, you will not pass the test and will be advised to consult a vision specialist to determine if your vision can be brought to the 20/40 level. If it cannot, you must provide a statement (DLAB-Form 2) from a vision specialist which includes a description of your visual condition and a recommendation as to whether you can drive with reasonable safety and what restrictions, if any, should be placed on your driving.

The DLAB-Form 2 must be forwarded to the DMV. These applications and statements of vision specialists may be subject to review by the Driver's License Advisory Board at the discretion of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles before an instruction permit or a driver's license is issued.

**\*Effective January 1, 2009, all persons will have to pass the same visibility screening given to new drivers before their driver's license is renewed. See your eye care professional if you have any doubts about your vision before you renew to avoid delays.**

### Knowledge Examination

The knowledge examination has at least 25 questions based on the basic knowledge, traffic rules, regulations, signs and markings found in the handbook.

Automated testing is given at all locations. You must answer 19 out of the 25 questions correctly to pass the test. There is a time limit on the test and those questions not answered in the prescribed time will be considered incorrect.

## **DUI Awareness Cards**

The DMV requires that all first-time applicants for a driver's license or motorcycle-only West Virginia driver's license complete a short DUI awareness course given upon the passage of the road test. The course must be completed by all out-of-state drivers coming into West Virginia as well as all drivers who are coming back to the state, even though they have been previously licensed in West Virginia. Upon completing the short course, the individual will receive a card or a stamp on his or her application showing completion.

## **Vehicle Check**

Your vehicle must first be checked to make sure it complies with registration, vehicle inspection and equipment laws and you must also be able to show proof of insurance on the vehicle. Vehicle defects may constitute failure of examination.

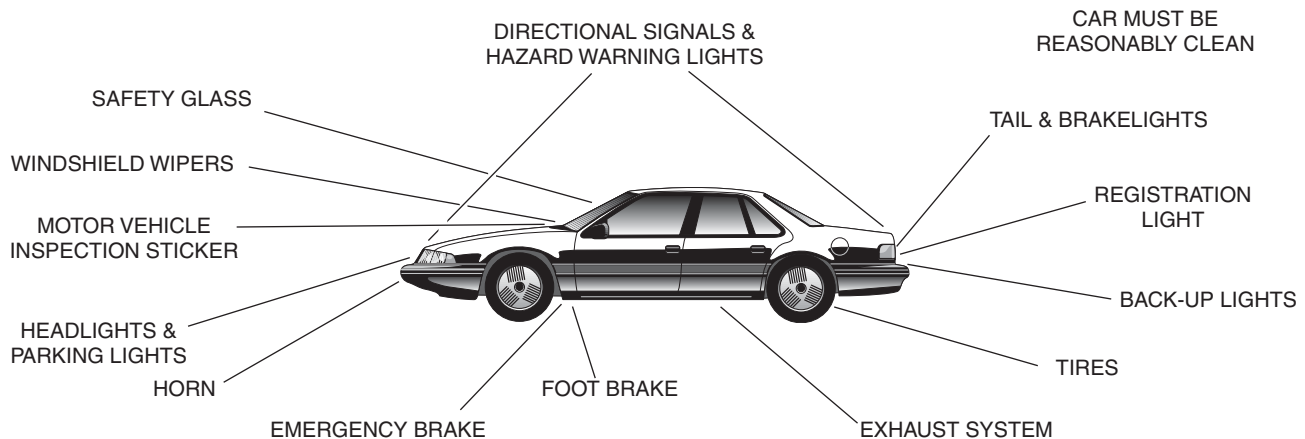
The examiner may permit you to have a minor defect corrected and continue the examination. However, you will not be permitted to continue the examination in another vehicle.

The examiner cannot give the driving test unless your car is in safe condition and legally equipped. The applicant must know the location and function of all safety equipment. Failure to locate or demonstrate the use of this equipment will result in the applicant failing the road test. Proper use of the parking brake and vehicle lighting are only two examples of the vehicle check.

## **Illegal Equipment**

- \* Red and/or blue flashing lights. Only authorized emergency vehicles may have these warning lights.
- \* Siren, bell or whistle
- \* Cutout or loud-sounding muffler
- \* Signs, posters or stickers on the windshield or car windows, unless required or permitted by law
- \* More than one spotlight
- \* More than two side cowl or fender lights
- \* More than two backup lights, which do not show light when your vehicle is going forward
- \* Any load on your passenger car extending beyond the line of the fenders on the left side or six inches beyond the line of the fenders on the right side
- \* Any motor vehicle not equipped with safety glass
- \* Windows tinted to less than 35 percent light transmission
- \* Broken or cracked windshield
- \* Holes in the body of the vehicle
- \* Broken lenses on vehicle
- \* Any doors and windows that are not operational

## Equipment test consists of the following:



The applicant must know and **demonstrate** (if asked by the examiner) the proper procedures for setting and releasing the emergency brake and to **demonstrate** proper procedures to follow regarding the high beam and low beam headlights. **FAILURE TO DEMONSTRATE THE FUNCTION OF ANY EQUIPMENT LISTED IN THE ABOVE DIAGRAM WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FAILURE.**

### Road Test

The road test, or driving examination, will not be given until you have passed all other parts of the written or oral examination. The driver accompanying you must be at least 21 years of age and have in his/her possession a valid registration, insurance certificate and valid driver's license.

The test will be over a course of reasonable length which may, if possible, include a moderate grade, right turn, left turn and a traffic control light or stop sign. You will be expected to use all arm or directional light signals where the law requires their use.

You will be expected to turn the vehicle around by backing. Also, you must parallel park the vehicle between two standards placed one and half car lengths apart and no more than 18 inches from the curb. You will also be asked to demonstrate your ability to park properly from other angles.

Adjust the car seat and rear view mirror before driving. Proper seat adjustment assures better control of the vehicle. A properly adjusted rear view mirror helps you see the vehicle behind you when you must slow down, change lanes or turn. Keep both hands on the steering wheel and do not rest your elbow in the window.

The examiner will direct you during the test while observing whether or not you give the proper signals, use good judgement in traffic and have the proper regard for pedestrians and traffic control systems.

When you return to the examining station, the examiner will review your ability as recorded on the driver score sheet. If the examiner does not provide you with a passing score, you will be told what you should practice and when to return for another examination.

There are six circumstances that will cause failure of the driving test as soon as they develop:

1. Any accident involving any amount of property damage or personal injury.

2. Any dangerous action in which:
  - \* An accident is prevented only because of an action on the part of other drivers
  - \* The examiner is forced to grab the wheel, pull the hand brake or otherwise assist to avoid an accident
  - \* You drive into or stall the vehicle in any location which might be dangerous under certain traffic conditions
3. You commit one of the following motor vehicle law violations:
  - \* Pass another car yielding to a pedestrian while that car is stopped at a crosswalk
  - \* Make two successive turns from the wrong lanes under traffic conditions which render such action dangerous
  - \* Drive through a red light or stop sign
4. You refuse to perform any maneuver which is part of the road test.
5. After proceeding a short distance on the driving course, it becomes apparent you are dangerously inexperienced.
6. You fail to follow any traffic control device or lawful direction by driver examiner.

### Retest Information

Applicants who fail either the written or road skills test may not be tested twice within a period of one week, in accordance with §17B-2-6, *West Virginia State Code*.

# Got Proof

## See pages 4 – 7!



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## DRIVER'S TEST SCORE OF

Driver's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### A. STARTING

1. Fails to look around when starting \_\_\_\_\_
2. Unnecessarily fast getaway \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fails to signal properly \_\_\_\_\_

### B. STOPPING

1. Fails to signal \_\_\_\_\_
2. Slows down too suddenly \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fails to check rear traffic \_\_\_\_\_

### C. TURNING

1. Fails to approach in proper lane \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fails to signal properly \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fails to use mirrors \_\_\_\_\_

### D. BACKING

1. Fails to look behind before and while backing \_\_\_\_\_
2. Uncertain steering when backing \_\_\_\_\_
3. Excessive speed \_\_\_\_\_

### E. PARKING

1. Strikes other vehicle while parking \_\_\_\_\_
2. Climbs curb in parking \_\_\_\_\_
3. Parks too far from curb \_\_\_\_\_

### F. TRAFFIC SIGNALS

1. Fails to notice signal-runs through on red \_\_\_\_\_
2. Starts before light changes to green \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does not start promptly on green \_\_\_\_\_
4. Fails to make permissible turn on red \_\_\_\_\_

### G. SIGNS

1. Does not make full stop at stop sign \_\_\_\_\_
2. Ignores or doesn't see stop sign \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fails to observe directional signs \_\_\_\_\_

### H. PASSING

1. Does not await clear distance ahead \_\_\_\_\_
2. Passes car in intersection \_\_\_\_\_
3. Cuts in too quickly ahead \_\_\_\_\_

### I. HILLS

1. Cannot shift gears on upgrade \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rolls back when starting on hill \_\_\_\_\_
3. Descends in neutral; cannot shift going down \_\_\_\_\_

### J. SPEED

1. Speeds greater than consistent with safety and/or law \_\_\_\_\_
2. Hinders traffic by driving slowly in center of street \_\_\_\_\_

### K. ATTENTION

1. Fails to notice dangerous spots \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does not give complete attention to all traffic intersections \_\_\_\_\_

### L. ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHERS

1. Depends on others for safety \_\_\_\_\_
2. Inconsiderate of pedestrians \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fails to anticipate what others may do \_\_\_\_\_
4. Uncooperative \_\_\_\_\_

### M. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Stalls in intersection \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fails to stay in correct lane \_\_\_\_\_
3. Follows too closely \_\_\_\_\_
4. Poor posture \_\_\_\_\_
5. Reacts slowly in emergency \_\_\_\_\_
6. Stops in crosswalk \_\_\_\_\_
7. General inexperience \_\_\_\_\_
8. Takes right of way at intersection when not entitled thereto \_\_\_\_\_

# CHAPTER V

## TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

### Traffic Signs

The shape and color of signs have meaning. If fading light, fog, rain, snow or darkness make it difficult to see the letters, you should still know how to recognize a sign and respond accordingly.

### Regulatory Signs

These signs tell you about speed limits and other traffic laws. Most signs are white with black letters. When the message is very important, the sign is red with white letters. A red outline with a diagonal bar through it always means "NO".



**Square, Rectangular** - These signs show traffic regulations and guide your speed and direction.



**No U-Turn Sign** - This sign means do not turn around:  
\* In the middle of a street  
\* In an intersection



**Dual Turn Lane** - This sign is posted over a highway lane that is used only for making left turns from either direction. Traffic from either direction will be using this lane. Never use a turning lane to overtake and pass other vehicles.



**Wrong Way** - Wrong-way signs warn you that you are going the wrong way on an interstate ramp or street and you may run into another vehicle.



**Speed Limit** - This sign shows the fastest speed you may drive under optimal weather and road conditions. Sometimes the minimum speed is also shown. Advisory speed signs are found at interstate entrances and exit ramps which show the maximum recommended safe speed for driving on the ramp. These advisory signs are black on yellow.



**Triangle** - This shape requires that you yield the right-of-way to cross traffic or to merging traffic.

**Octagon** - These eight-sided signs are reserved for stop signs.

**Stop Sign** - This sign means you must stop completely. Give the right-of-way to pedestrians and to all cross traffic before starting again. At a stop sign, you must stop behind:



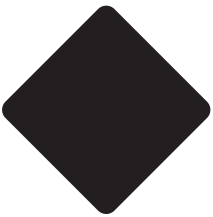
\* A marked or unmarked crosswalk (joining sidewalks on opposite sides of the street)

\* A stop line. If there are no pavement markings or crosswalks, you must stop before entering an intersection. Stop at a place where you can see traffic coming from all directions.

### Warning Signs

These signs are yellow with black letters. They warn of possible danger ahead and may have symbols or written warnings.

Pedestrian and school warning signs may be yellow-green with black letters.



**Diamond** - These diamond-shaped signs will usually appear without explanatory words beneath them. Learn what the symbol in each sign means.



Curve or sharp turn in the road ahead. The curve is too sharp to take at the regular highway speed. An advisory speed sign may be attached.



Crossroads or side roads ahead. Watch for other vehicles entering or leaving the highway.



Traffic may be moving into your lane. Be ready to change your speed or your lane to avoid a crash.



This sign is used to remind you that you are on a two-way road.



The road ahead has two-way traffic.



This sign is to warn you that a lane will be ending; in this case, the right lane. The symbol would be reversed if the left lane is ending.



This sign is to advise you of an added lane.



This sign warns of hills where special care must be taken. Slow down before you start downhill.



A bridge or underpass ahead with low clearance. The height is shown on the sign.



This section of highway is more slippery than other roads when wet. Reduce your speed.





Watch out for people walking across the road.



Traffic signal ahead.

### Construction and Maintenance Signs

Construction and maintenance signs are used to notify drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in or near work areas. Most signs in work areas are diamond-shaped. A few signs are rectangular.

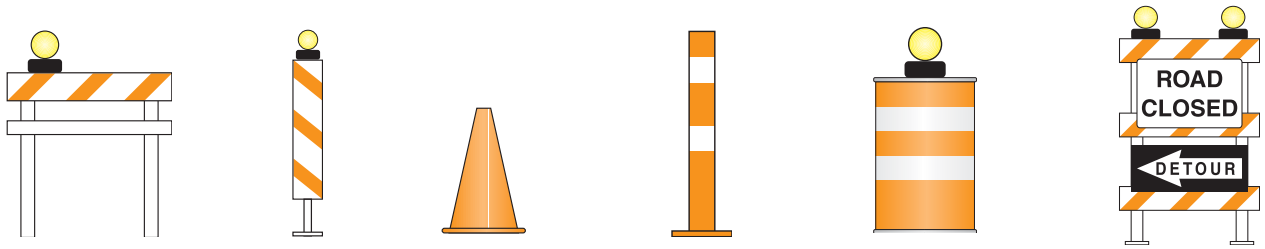
### Construction and Maintenance Signs and Devices

Various traffic control devices are used in construction and maintenance work areas to direct drivers or pedestrians safely through the work zone and to provide for the safety of the highway workers.

The most commonly used traffic control devices are signs, barricades, drums, cones, tubes, flashing arrow panels and flaggers. Orange is the basic color for these devices.



**Channeling Devices** - Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones and tubes are the most commonly used devices to alert drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in highway and street work areas and to guide drivers safely through the work zone. At night they are often equipped with flashing or steady-burn lights.



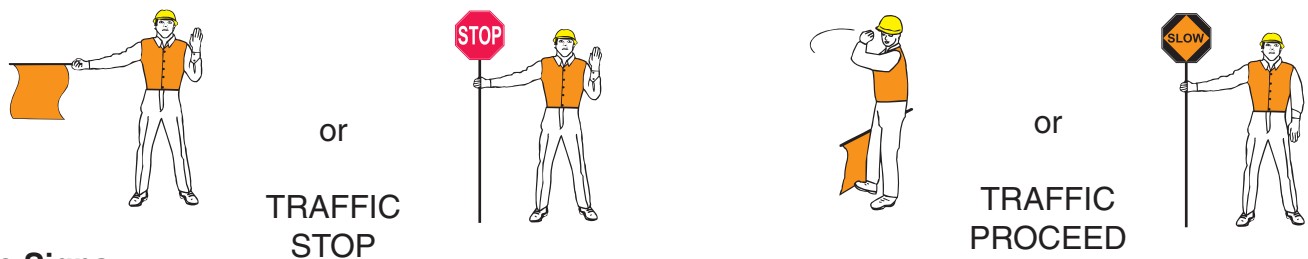
The diagonal stripes on the barricade or vertical panel guide the driver towards the direction to which traffic is to pass. Stripes sloping downward to the right mean the driver should bear to the right. Conversely, stripes sloping downward to the left mean bear to the left.



**Flashing Arrow Panels** - Large flashing or sequencing arrow panels may be used in work zones both day and night to guide drivers into certain traffic lanes and to inform them that part of the road or street ahead of them is closed.



**Flaggers** - Flaggers are often provided in highway and street work zones to stop, slow or guide traffic safely through the area. Flaggers wear orange vests, shirts or jackets and use red flags or stop/slow paddles to direct traffic through work zones.



**Guide Signs**

These signs tell you WHERE you are, WHAT road you are on and HOW to get where you want to go. There are many different types of guide signs, such as service signs, location signs, route marker information and distance signs. Most guide signs are white on green. Motorist services signs are white on blue and signs for parks and public recreation areas are white on brown.



Found in front of intersections, these signs show the direction to cities.

Used on main highways, these signs show distance.

**Route Markers** - These are generally black on white. Interstate markers are red, white and blue.



Interstate



U.S.



WV



**Pennant**-This sign marks the beginning of a no-passing zone.



**Round** - This yellow-and-black sign gives advance warning of a railroad crossing ahead.



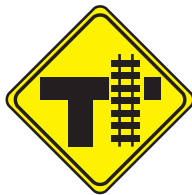
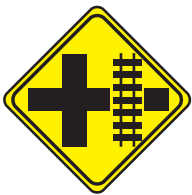
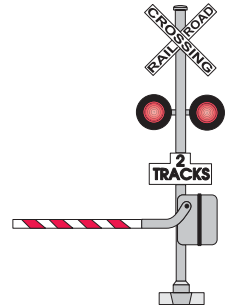
**Pentagon** - This sign warns of a school zone (school grounds and any street/highway abutting the school grounds and extending 125 feet along the street or highway from the school grounds) ahead or marks a school zone crossing. The maximum speed limit in a school zone is 15 m.p.h. when children are present or when specified.



**Slow-Moving Vehicle** - A triangular sign with a reflective red border and fluorescent orange center identifies a slow-moving

## Railroad Crossing Signs and Signals

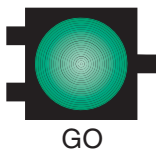
Railroad crossing signs consist of diamond-shaped yellow with black symbols, round yellow with a black X and the letter R on each side, and black letters on white bars in the shape of an X called a crossbuck. They mark the exact point of a highway-railroad intersection. A sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks when there are two or more. Some railroad crossings are equipped with electrical devices to signal the approach of a train. These devices consist of various types of signals such as bells, flashers and automatic gates. You must yield to all trains. Failure to stop when lights are flashing or a barrier is down will result in a citation. When there are two or more tracks, you must be alert for a second train on the other set of tracks. It is important to note that you should not enter a railroad crossing until the vehicle ahead has moved far enough so that you can clear the tracks. Otherwise, you may be trapped on the tracks and hit by another vehicle or by a train.



These diamond shaped signs indicate there is a railroad crossing on an intersecting roadway.

## Traffic Signals

Some intersections or crosswalks are equipped with traffic signals to control the movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Drivers must obey these signals, except when an officer is directing traffic. The colors and arrows used in traffic signals have certain standard meanings. Remember that traffic signals are subject to power outages due to storms, fallen trees, accidents, etc. If its power is interrupted or cut completely off, a signal will go completely dark. Drivers encountering a non-functioning traffic signal should approach the intersection with caution and not proceed until it is safe to do so.



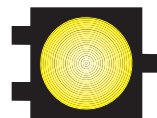
GO

**Circular Green:** Drivers facing this signal may enter the intersection and go straight through or turn right or left, unless other traffic control devices (signs or pavement markings) prohibit certain movements. All turns must be made in accordance with accepted right-of-way rules. A driver who is facing a circular green indication and wishes to turn left must yield to oncoming cars.



Left Turn

**Green Arrow:** A green arrow may be shown alone or with other indications. Drivers facing the signal may enter the intersection to make the movement shown by the arrow. When the green arrow is shown in a left-turn signal, it usually means that opposing traffic is stopped.



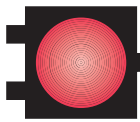
Clearance  
of vehicle  
within  
intersection

**Steady Circular Yellow:** This means that the green light is ending and will change to red.



Left Turn

**Yellow Arrow:** This means that the green arrow is ending and will change to red.



Stop

**Steady Circular Red:** Traffic facing a steady circular red signal must stop unless making a movement permitted by a green arrow. The driver must remain stopped until allowed to proceed by another indication. The only exception is to make a permitted turn on red. A driver may turn right on red at the intersection of two-way streets and may turn left on red from a one-way street to another one-way street. These turns may be made after yielding to all other traffic and pedestrians and if no signs are posted to prohibit them.



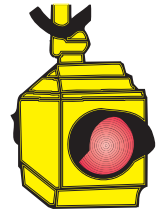
Left Turn

**Steady Red Arrow:** Come to a complete stop before reaching the intersection, stop line or cross walk for the direction indicated by the arrow. Remain stopped as long as the signal is red.

### Intersection Flashers

At certain intersections, flashers are installed to supplement or replace STOP signs. These flashers may have circular flashing red indications in all directions or may have circular flashing yellow indications for through traffic.

Drivers facing a circular flashing yellow light may proceed through the intersection with caution. A circular flashing red is the same as a stop sign; that is, drivers must come to a complete stop and yield to all other traffic and pedestrians.

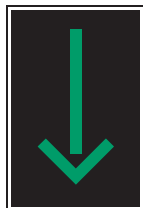


When traffic control signals are not needed or are out of order, they may be placed in flashing operations. When this happens, they are the same as intersection flashers.

### Lane Use Control Signals

Special signals are used to control traffic when the direction of a street or certain lane changes during the day. These signals indicate how the specific lanes may be used.

1. **Green Downward Arrow:** Traffic may use the lane under the arrow.
2. **Yellow X:** The lane is about to be closed or its direction is about to reverse. Move out of it as soon as you can.
3. **Red X:** The lane is closed or being used by opposing traffic. Do not use this lane.

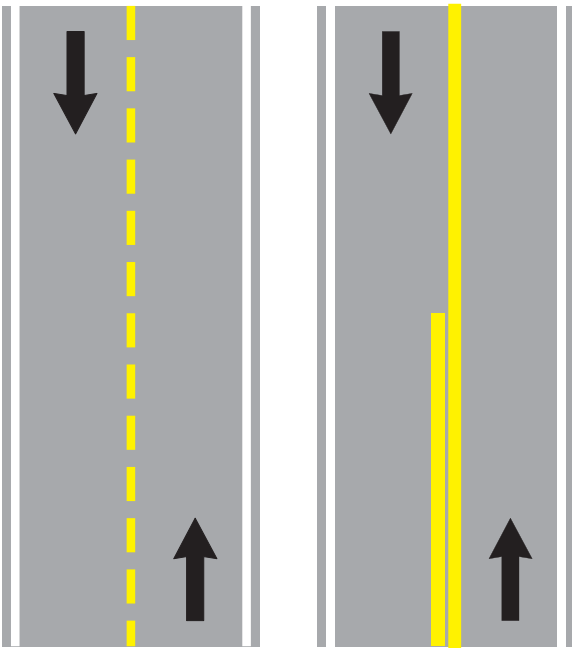
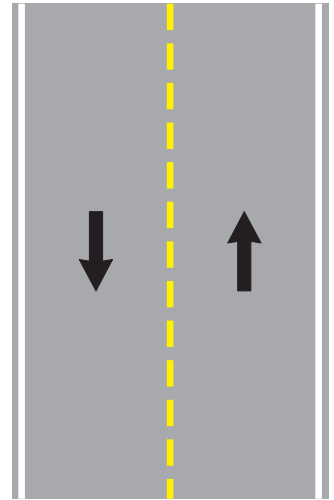


## Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are used like highway signs to warn, regulate and inform traffic.

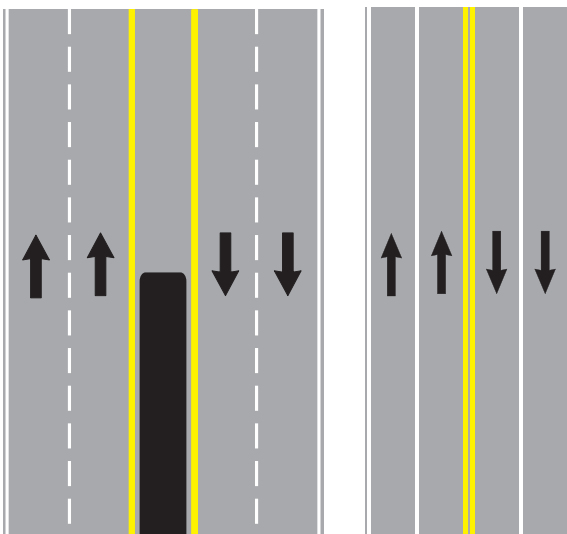
**WHITE** lines separate traffic lanes moving in the **SAME** direction.

**YELLOW** lines separate traffic lanes moving in **OPPOSITE** directions.



**Broken Yellow** - Broken yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions. If this marking is on your side of the road, you may pass when it is safe.

**Solid Yellow** - Solid yellow lines also separate traffic moving in opposite directions. If a solid yellow line is on your side of the road, you **MUST NOT PASS**. On interstates, one-way streets or divided four-lane roads, a solid yellow line will mark the left edge of the pavement.



**Broken White** - On roadways which have more than one lane moving in one direction, traffic lanes are separated by broken white lines. Broken black lines are sometimes added to make the white easier to see. Drive within these lines. Never straddle them, except when changing lanes.

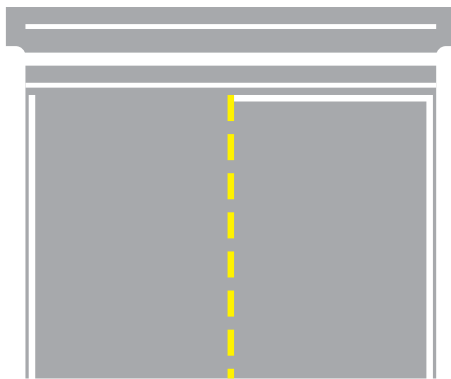
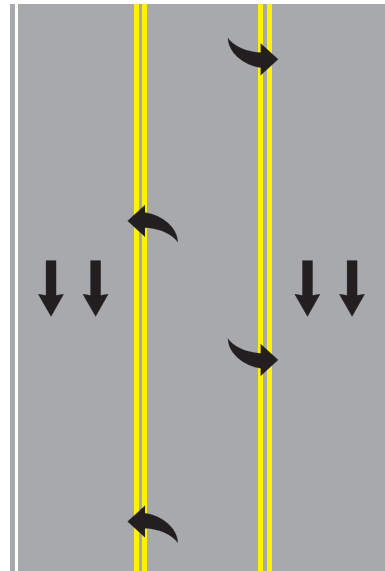
**Solid White** - Solid white lines mark the edge of the pavement. At night or in bad weather, they help you stay on the road. When solid white lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, do not change lanes.

**Special Purpose or "Diamond" Lanes** - White diamond shapes painted in the roadway to inform drivers the lane is designated for car pools, bicycles, or buses.

**Center Left-Turn Lanes** - These lanes are reserved for left turns from either direction and are not to be used as through or passing lanes. You can recognize these lanes by the solid yellow lines nearest the through lanes and broken lines to the left of them.

**Reversible Lanes** - Where traffic volumes are heavy at certain times of the day, it may be necessary to reverse the traffic flow direction. Lanes which reverse are marked on both sides by a double yellow broken line. This is the only case where a driver may drive for any distance to the left of a yellow line.

**Crosswalk Lines** - Many pedestrian crosswalks are marked by solid white lines. Some crosswalks, especially in residential areas, are not marked. When these lines are used, they will run all the way across the pavement. You will notice them at intersections and sometimes between intersections. **DO NOT** block a crosswalk with your car.



**Stop Lines** - Wide white lines, painted across traffic lanes, mark where you must stop your vehicle at intersections. This keeps you out of the way of pedestrians and cross traffic. If there are no stop lines or crosswalks, you must stop your vehicle before you enter the intersections. You should be able to see traffic coming from all directions.

# CHAPTER VI

## TRAFFIC LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD

### Basic Speed Law

When you exceed the speed limit, you endanger the lives of others as well as your own. Observe speed limits and adjust your speed to driving conditions.

To ensure your safety and the safety of others, you should slow down when you are faced with these driving situations:

- \* Approaching and crossing an intersection
- \* Approaching and going around a curve
- \* Approaching the top of a hill
- \* Traveling on a narrow road
- \* During traffic, weather, roadway hazards or other conditions that limit visibility or stopping distance

### Speed Limits

Your speed helps determine how much time you have to react to any traffic situation. The higher the speed, the less time you have to spot hazards, judge the speed of other vehicles and act to avoid personal mistakes and those of other drivers.

The speed limit for all vehicles in West Virginia is 55 miles per hour, unless otherwise posted. There are designated speeds set by law for highways and certain areas such as school zones, business and residential districts. Although speed limits are posted, drivers may not drive faster than is reasonable and prudent for conditions.

Designated speed limits, unless otherwise posted, are:

|  | <b>Maximum Speed</b>                   |
|--|--|
| Interstate   | 70 m.p.h.<br>(unless otherwise posted) |
| Open County Highway  | 55 m.p.h.<br>(unless otherwise posted) |
| Business or Residential Areas                              | 25 m.p.h.                              |
| School Zone (while children are present along the roadway) | 15 m.p.h.                              |

**A school zone is all school property, including school grounds and any street or highway abutting the school grounds and any street or highway abutting the school grounds and extending one hundred twenty-five feet along the street or highway from the school grounds.**

Authorized emergency vehicles may exceed the posted speed limits when on emergency duty with emergency signal equipment operating, as long as other road users are not endangered.



## Driving Slowly

When you drive at less than the normal speed of traffic, you should drive as close as possible to the right edge of the road.

If you must drive slower than the designated speed, pull off at the first safe turnout to let faster-moving traffic pass. This rule applies when you are on a road with one lane in each direction and overtaking traffic does not have a clear lane for passing.

## Driving Signals

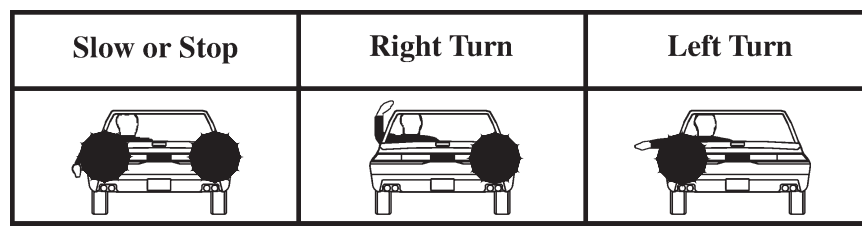
Other drivers expect you to continue traveling in the same direction. By using your turn signals, you let them know that you intend to turn or change lanes. Give other drivers time to react to your moves. Use your turn signal before you:

- \* Change lanes
- \* Turn at an intersection
- \* Enter or leave an interstate
- \* Pull away from the curb
- \* Pull over to the side of the road

Get into the habit of signaling every time you make a change. Signal properly and well in advance—at least 100 feet before you plan to turn.

Switch off your turn signals after completing the turn. Driving with turn signals on without intending to turn can create confusion.

If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, don't confuse other drivers by signaling too soon. They may think you are turning at the intersection and pull into your path. But if you signal too late, the drivers behind you may not have enough time to react safely. In these situations, know traffic conditions and use your best judgement.



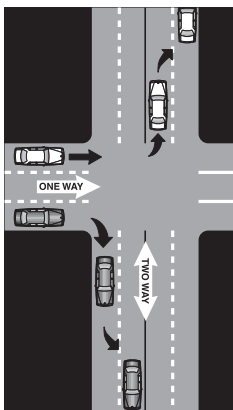
## Driver's Hand Position

It is best to have both hands on the steering wheel. Consider the steering wheel as the face of a clock. The left hand should be placed approximately at 8 o'clock and the right hand at 4 o'clock. This placement will afford the driver maximum control of the vehicle at all times and reduce the chance that a deploying air bag will knock your hands off the steering wheel.

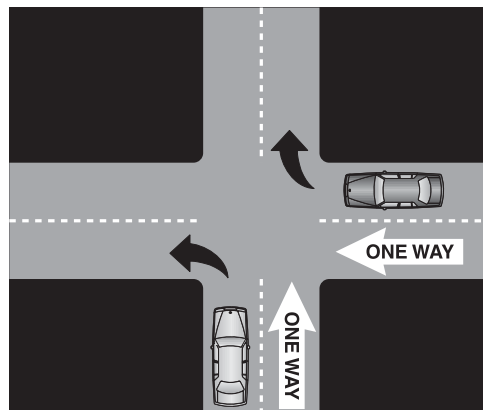
## Turning Maneuvers

Improper turns cause many traffic accidents. Pedestrians and bicyclists are often victims of improper turns by vehicle operators. It is important that you learn and abide by correct turning procedures. Rules for turns:

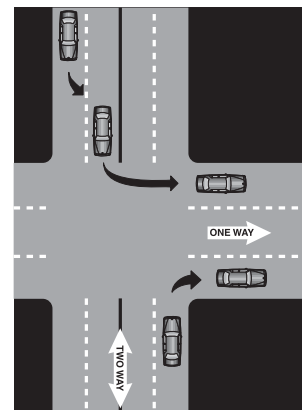
- \* Prepare for the turn. Don't make decisions to turn at the last moment.
- \* Before entering the turning lane, signal, look in the mirrors and check the blind spot by glancing over the proper shoulder
- \* Signal at least 100 feet before turning
- \* Slow down before making turns. Don't brake while turning.
- \* Make sure it is safe to turn. Check traffic to the front and rear of your vehicle and watch for pedestrians.
- \* Always finish turning in the proper lane
- \* When turning left, watch for approaching traffic in the opposite lane. If traffic is about to reach the intersection at approximately the same time, stop until it is safe for you to turn.
- \* When waiting to turn left, do not turn the wheels to the left. Otherwise, a bump from behind could push your vehicle into oncoming traffic.
- \* If an intersection has no signs prohibiting a turn on red, traffic facing a red signal may, after coming to a complete stop and yielding to pedestrians and traffic, make a right turn. The same rule applies to left turns from a one-way street to a one-way street.



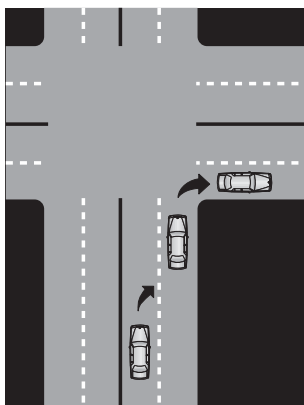
One-Way to Two-Way



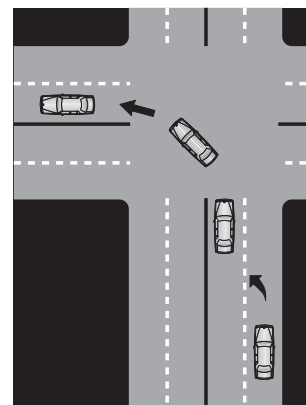
One-Way to One-Way



Two-Way to One-Way



Right Turn



Left Turn

## **Changing Direction**

Sometimes it is necessary to turn your vehicle around to proceed in the opposite direction. However, it is against the law to turn your vehicle around near a curve, near the crest of a hill where you cannot be seen by another vehicle approaching within 500 feet in either direction, or where signs prohibit turning.

## **Backing Up**

Before backing, check completely around your vehicle for people or some other obstacle. You should look to the front, sides and rear and continue to look to the rear while backing. Do not depend on your mirror. Back slowly into the proper traffic lane.

It is not advisable to back up while in a traffic lane, except for backing into a parallel parking space.

Never back across other traffic lanes or through an intersection.

## **Parking Maneuvers**

Many accidents happen because vehicles have not been properly or carefully parked. By following a few simple rules, you can reduce the chances of your car being hit by another vehicle.

Vehicles must always be parked in the same direction as the movement of traffic on that side of the street.

Avoid double parking. It is illegal and discourteous. Make certain your vehicle is completely off the traveled portion of the road.

Whenever you park and leave your car, you must turn off the engine and set the parking (emergency) brake. Lock your vehicle and take your keys. Getting out of your car on the street side can be dangerous. Always look carefully for bicycles, motorcycles or larger vehicles that might be passing. The drivers may not see you in time to keep from hitting your open door, or you.

## **Prohibited Parking (§17C-13-3, W. Va. State Code)**

Stopping, standing or parking is not allowed (except to avoid a conflict with other traffic or to obey a law, police officer or a traffic signal) in the following locations:

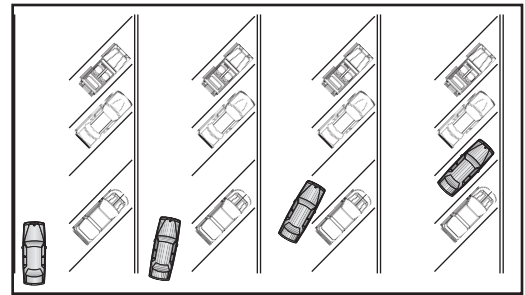
- \* On a sidewalk
- \* In front of a public or private driveway
- \* Within an intersection
- \* Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
- \* On a crosswalk
- \* Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection
- \* Within 30 feet of any stop sign or traffic control signal

- \* In front of a wheelchair ramp or curb cut
- \* Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing
- \* Beside or opposite any street excavation or obstruction where stopping, standing or parking would obstruct traffic
- \* On the traffic side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of the street (double parking)
- \* Upon any bridge or other elevated structure or in a highway tunnel
- \* Within 20 feet of any mailbox served by a carrier using a motor vehicle for daily deliveries
- \* Upon any controlled-access highway
- \* Any place on any highway where the safety and convenience of the traveling public is endangered
- \* Any place where official signs prohibit parking. A curb in a no-parking zone may be painted in yellow.

**Angle Parking (§17C-13-4, W. Va. State Code)**

When entering a parking space on your right, signal your intention to park and slow down.

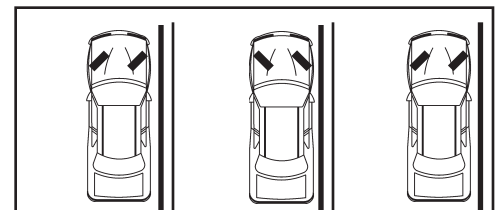
- \* Remain parallel to the curb, at least five feet out from the parked cars
- \* Steer sharply to the right when your car’s front end is even with the rear of the parking space. Slowly pull into the space midway and center.
- \* Straighten the wheel and continue forward until the front wheel barely touches the curb



While the actual parking procedure is easy to do, backing out from this position can be hazardous. Do not just rely on your rear view mirror. If your vision is blocked, move back cautiously, watching for a pedestrian or vehicle that might suddenly appear. Remember, do not back across the center line.

**Parking on Hills**

- 1) **Down hill** - Turn wheels to curb
- 2) **Up hill** - (With Curb)-Turn wheels from curb
- 3) **Up hill** - (No Curb)-Turn wheels right



If you park or stop on a grade, turn the front wheels to the curb side of the highway so the car will not roll. Be sure to set the emergency or parking brake. To reinforce the parking brake in an automatic-shift car, put the selector shift in park. In a standard shift, use reverse on a downgrade or upgrade.

## Parallel Parking (§17C-13-4, W. Va. State Code)

When you parallel park on a two-way street, park so the right-hand wheels are parallel to and within 18 inches of the right curb. When parallel parking on the left side of the road, wheels should be within 18 inches of the left curb. Park in the direction of the traffic. Make sure your vehicle is centered in the parking space.

1. Choose a space large enough for your car. Signal and stop even with the front car, about two feet out from it.
2. Make sure you will not interfere with traffic, then turn your front wheels all the way to the right and back slowly toward the curb. Look behind you-do not rely on your rear view mirror.
3. When your front bumper is opposite the rear bumper of the car ahead, quickly turn your steering wheel all the way to the left. Back slowly toward the car behind you without touching it. You should be about 6" from the curb. Do not park more than 18" from the curb.

4. Straighten your front wheels and pull into final parking position. Center the car in the space.

When exiting the parallel parking space, always signal to let others know your intentions and make sure traffic is clear before pulling back onto the roadway.

## Following Distance

Following too closely causes most rear-end collisions. The space ahead of your vehicle is the space easiest to control. This space cushion is called the following distance. You must consider the speed of the traffic and condition of the road to allow yourself enough following distance to stop when necessary. Also make sure to allow yourself enough stopping distance in an emergency situation.

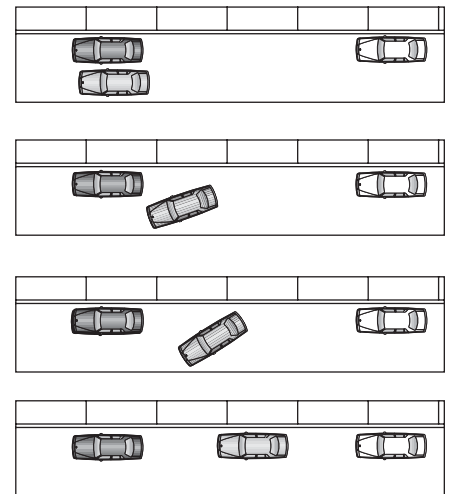
The best way to assure proper following distance is to use the three- to four-second rule.

To use the three- to four-second rule, choose a fixed object on the road ahead, such as a signpost, tree, overpass, bridge abutment, etc. Under normal daytime conditions, when the vehicle ahead passes that object, begin to count "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three." If you reach the same object before you finish saying "...one thousand three," you are driving too closely.

If it is dark or raining, the distance should be at least four seconds.

If there is ice or snow, stay at least six seconds behind the vehicle in front. Refer to Chapter VI – Defensive Driving – Snow and Sleet for more information concerning appropriate following distances.

You should also refer to Chapter VI – Defensive Driving – Light Conditions and Rain concerning headlight usage and the term "overdriving your headlights."



## Changing Lanes

Proper lane changing rules are:

1. Check in your rear view and side mirrors.
2. Check over your left or right shoulder. Make sure no one is in your blind spot.
3. Check for other drivers who may also be moving into the same lane.
4. Signal and change lanes.
5. DO NOT change lanes in an intersection or at any railroad crossing.
6. Stay within the speed limit.

## Passing

Steps to follow for passing on a two-lane highway:

1. Make sure you are in a passing zone and observing the two-second rule for following distance.
2. Decide if passing is necessary. If you have to speed to pass, you probably do not need to pass.
3. Check ahead, to the rear and to the side, before you start to pass. Check for other dangers in the passing area, such as a narrow bridge, side road or curve.
4. Signal properly to show you intend to change lanes. Signal early enough to allow other drivers to know your intentions.
5. Move left when clear and sound your horn to alert the driver ahead that you are passing. At night you can also blink your headlights to signal that you are about to pass.
6. Signal and return to the proper lane when you see the front of the vehicle (both headlights) you have passed in your rear view mirror. Passing on the right is not permissible unless there is a lane designated for passing.

## You cannot pass safely unless:

- \* You can see far enough ahead
- \* You can return to your lane before meeting oncoming traffic
- \* Your vehicle is capable of the speed necessary to pass

Passing is **PROHIBITED** in the following places:

- \* On a curve or hill or at any place where you cannot see oncoming traffic
- \* Within 100 feet of an intersection

- \* Within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct, tunnel or underpass
- \* Within 100 feet of any railroad crossing
- \* When an approaching vehicle is within your passing area
- \* When a sign or highway marking tells you to drive on the right or not to overtake vehicles
- \* When a vehicle in front of you has stopped at an intersection to allow a pedestrian to cross
- \* When the solid yellow line is in your lane

## Right-of-Way

Courtesy is a key to safe driving and safety comes before right-of-way. At times you must yield the right-of-way to others. There are certain rules to help determine the right-of-way, but if the other driver does not follow these rules, give the right-of-way. Remember, in every situation, right-of-way is something to be given, not taken.

## Right-of-Way or Yielding Situations:

1. **Entering traffic** - When entering a public street or highway from an alley, private road or driveway, you must yield to traffic already on the roadway.
2. **Uncontrolled intersections and four-way stop intersections** - If you reach the intersection at the same time as another vehicle, yield to the driver on the right.
3. **Intersections with yield signs** - Slow down before reaching the intersection. Then yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection and to approaching traffic.
4. **Left turns** - When making a left turn, you must yield the right-of-way to oncoming traffic.
5. **Emergency vehicles** - You must yield to any emergency vehicle (ambulance, fire or police vehicle) that is sounding a siren and flashing warning lights. Pull over to the right edge of the road, clear of the intersection, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed. Keep your foot on the brake so the emergency driver knows you are stopped. Watch for other emergency vehicles before proceeding.
6. **Funeral Procession** - Although not required by law, it is a courtesy to yield to vehicles in a funeral procession. Once the lead vehicle has cleared an intersection, the rest of the procession has the right-of-way. Allow the procession to pass and do not cut in and out of the procession. You may pass a procession on an expressway.
7. **Police Officer** - Directions of a police officer overrule the message of any sign, signal or road marking.
8. **Parallel Parking**-Provide ample space to the driver in front of you who is parallel parking.

## **Sharing the Road with Pedestrians**

Vehicle-pedestrian collisions account for nearly 20 percent of traffic fatalities. Drivers must use extreme care to avoid colliding with a pedestrian, especially in areas where special hazards exist, such as school zones, bus stops, playgrounds and parks. Drivers may use their horns to warn pedestrians, if necessary.

### **Remember, pedestrians have the right of way when:**

- \* They are in a crosswalk
- \* They are crossing a sidewalk that crosses an alley entrance or driveway
- \* They are blind and are crossing the street with a white or metal cane with or without a red tip or led by a guide dog

### **Pedestrians must:**

- \* Use crosswalks at intersections
- \* Look in both directions before crossing the street
- \* When walking along a road where there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side facing oncoming traffic. Walk on the shoulder of the road, if possible.
- \* Observe and obey "Walk" and "Don't Walk" signals
- \* At night, always wear white or light-colored clothing or carry a light

Pedestrians must not walk on interstate highways or other areas where signs to that effect are posted.

## **School Bus Rules**

On all undivided highways (without a median), traffic in both directions must stop at least 20 feet from a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing. You must not pass the bus until the lights are turned off or the bus starts moving.

On divided highways (with a median you cannot cross), traffic coming toward a school bus stopped on the other side of the median does not have to stop.

You must also stop for a stopped school bus which is receiving or discharging students on school property or private property.

The fine for passing a stopped school bus is a minimum of \$50 and up to \$200.

If the identity of the driver of a vehicle that passes a stopped school bus cannot be ascertained, the owner or lessee of the vehicle in violation is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, subject to fines.



## **Tailgating**

If a check of your rear view mirror shows another vehicle following too closely, you should take the following steps to deal with the tailgater:

- \* Tap your brakes gently to flash the brake lights and warn the tailgater
- \* Slow down to encourage the vehicle to pass
- \* If all else fails, pull over, stop and let the vehicle pass

## **Headlights and Their Use**

Despite the fact that there are fewer miles driven at night, the fatal accident rate for night driving is three times greater than that for day driving. When driving at night, obey the following rules:

1. Dim your headlights within 500 feet of an approaching vehicle.
2. Dim your headlights within 200 feet of the vehicle in front of you.
3. Dim your headlights when driving on well-lighted streets.
4. Use low-beam lights when driving in fog. High beams cause the light to be reflected back into your eyes.
5. Avoid looking directly into the lights of oncoming vehicles. Look toward the right edge of the road.
6. Slow down when facing the glare from headlights of approaching vehicles.
7. Make sure you can stop within the area lighted by your headlights.
8. Use your parking lights only when you are parked.
9. Turn on your headlights from sunset to sunrise, during fog, smoke or rain or at any other time when persons and vehicles cannot be seen clearly at a distance of 500 feet. The best rule is to remember to turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing other vehicles. If you have trouble seeing them, chances are the other vehicles are having trouble seeing you.
10. Keep your headlights and taillights properly adjusted and cleaned.

## **Sharing the Road with Motorcycles**

Motorcycles are difficult to see, can often stop more quickly than cars, and can dart in front of you with no warning. For these reasons, drivers who do not pay attention cause many automobile-motorcycle accidents. Under all circumstances, motorists should expect to see motorcycles and be prepared to give them both the space and time to maneuver. Space is the key to sharing the road with motorcycles. Motorists should expect to see motorcyclists move around in their lane. Motorcyclists are entitled to and will need the entire lane to maneuver around possible hazards and traffic situations. It is wise to keep a safe minimum two-second following distance. Increase the distance time at night and under adverse weather conditions. Remember that motorcyclists will almost certainly be badly hurt or killed if they are in an accident. The following hints may help you save a life.

**Intersections** - When you are waiting at a corner, it can be very hard to see a motorcycle coming. Motorcycles can be hidden by many things such as parked cars and trees. In addition, you are normally looking for cars and trucks, not something small like a motorcycle. For these reasons, check carefully as you leave the corner and keep looking all the way across the intersection.

**Following and Passing Motorcycles** - Since motorcycles do not operate and perform the same way as cars, you should be careful when following or passing a motorcycle. Stay farther back than if you were behind a car. The motorcycle can usually slow or stop much faster than you can. When passing, go all the way into the other lane. Besides having the legal right to an entire lane, the motorcyclist may need to swerve to avoid something on the road. Once you have passed, wait until you are well down the road before moving back into the other lane.

### **Sharing the Road with Slow Vehicles**

Slow-moving vehicles, such as farm vehicles or construction equipment, are often driven on or along the highways. Regular traffic must be aware of the slow speed of these vehicles as they approach and make sure they can pass safely before making the attempt.

Slow-moving vehicles are required to display a special triangular emblem sign which means "Slow-Moving Vehicle" to warn approaching drivers.

### **A Word About Mobile (Cellular) Telephones**

Many motorists are now using cellular telephones in their vehicles as a means of feeling more safe and secure as they travel. But while you can use your car phone to report car trouble, crimes or medical emergencies, you also need to stay focused on being a safe driver. Research suggests that a driver's concentration drops 20 to 33 percent when involved in a complicated conversation. Follow these safety tips when driving and using a mobile phone:

1. Get to know your mobile phone and its features, such as speed dial and redial.
2. When available, use a hands-free device.
3. Position phone within easy reach.
4. Suspend conversations in hazardous driving conditions or situations.
5. Do not take notes or look up phone numbers while driving.
6. Dial sensibly and assess traffic conditions. When possible, place calls when you are not moving or before pulling into traffic.
7. Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations that may be distracting.
8. Use your mobile phone to call for help.
9. Use your mobile phone to help others in emergencies.
10. Call roadside assistance or a special mobile non-emergency assistance number when necessary.

West Virginia State Code §17B-2-3a(F) states, “A holder of a level one instruction permit or a level two intermediate driver’s license who is under the age of eighteen years may not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system. A law-enforcement officer may enforce the provisions of this paragraph only as a secondary action when an law-enforcement officer with probable cause detains a driver for a suspected violation of another provision of this code.”

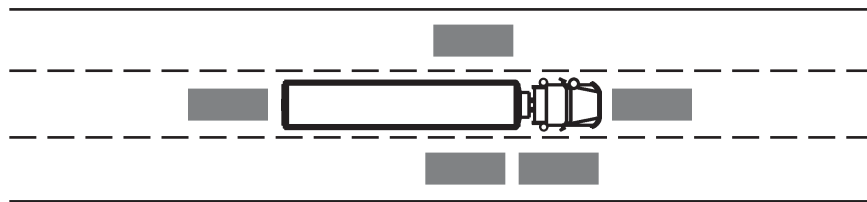
## Sharing the Road with Heavy Trucks

We depend on trucks, day and night, to bring us the things we need to live. Trucks are driven by trained, specially-licensed drivers.

Sharing the road with heavy trucks is a necessary part of road travel. Heavy trucks, typically weighing 80,000 pounds, should be respected by automobile drivers. Everyone should be aware of the differences between trucks and cars.

These include:

- \* A fully loaded tractor-trailer, traveling 55 m.p.h., needs three times the distance a car needs to stop
- \* Trucks are more difficult to maneuver, are longer and heavier and require much more room to turn
- \* Trucks have larger blind spots



### The “No-Zone”

Sharing the road safely includes knowing where not to linger when passing or driving next to a heavy truck. Typically, the larger the vehicle, the larger the blind spots.

A truck’s blind spots, the “No-Zone”, are dangerous because truck drivers can not see cars in these areas. It is impossible to completely avoid a truck’s blind spots; however, car drivers should not remain in the “No-Zone” any longer than needed to safely pass a heavy truck.

The easiest way to avoid lingering in the “No-Zone” is to look for the truck driver’s reflection in the side mirror. If you cannot see the driver’s reflection, you are in the truck driver’s blind spot. The “No-Zone” includes the following shaded areas shown in the diagram above:

- \* Directly in front of the truck
- \* Directly behind the truck
- \* Along each side of the truck

## **Truck Safety DOs**

DO recognize and respect the differences between trucks and cars.

DO share the road safely.

DO teach friends and family to share the road safely.

DO avoid lingering in the “No-Zone.”

DO give trucks plenty of room. In dry conditions, use the “two-second” rule. Follow trucks at a distance of at least two seconds. After passing a truck, give yourself at least two seconds before merging to the right.

DO give trucks at least four to six seconds of space in wet conditions.

DO give trucks extra room for right turns.

DO give trucks extra space and time for backing up.

DO call authorities if you see unsafe truck driving.

## **Truck Safety DON'Ts**

DON'T linger in the “No-Zone” when passing a truck.

DON'T underestimate the size or speed of a truck.

DON'T slam on your brakes in front of a truck.

DON'T cut off a truck in traffic or on the highway to reach your exit or turn.

DON'T tailgate a truck. At highway speeds or on wet pavement, trucks have more traction than cars.

DON'T pass a truck on the right during a turn.

DON'T forget these safety guidelines. Remember that all motor vehicles are partners in traffic safety. All of us have a responsibility to share the road safely.

## **Sharing the Road with Animal Riders**

Animal riders may use most public highways, but they may not use interstate highways. Persons riding animals have the same rights as motor vehicle users and are subject to the same rules. Drivers approaching any horse shall take every precaution to prevent frightening the horse to ensure the safety of the rider. Never sound your horn when approaching or near a horse, as this may frighten the horse and cause an accident.

## **Sharing the Road with Bicycles**

Because of the great increase in the number of bicycles on the road, drivers must be extra alert for bicycles at all times.

When passing a bicyclist, slow down, make sure he is aware of you and leave plenty of room between him or her and your vehicle. If there is no room to pass and traffic is approaching, wait until traffic has gone by before passing.

When meeting an oncoming bicyclist at night, always dim your lights. Extra care is needed during the morning and afternoon when bicyclists are traveling between home and work, school or play.

Bicyclists are expected to know and obey all traffic laws and regulations. However, whether the bicyclist is operating lawfully or not, always give him or her the benefit of the doubt.

Bicycles are small and lightweight and almost any type of collision will result in injury or death of the rider.

## **Bicyclists must:**

- \* Signal turns and stops unless both hands are required on the handlebars for balance
- \* If riding side by side, keep within a single lane and not hold up traffic
- \* Never hang onto other vehicles in any manner
- \* Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians
- \* Obey the same rules of the road as drivers of other vehicles
- \* Never carry a passenger unless an attached seat is available
- \* Never carry articles that interfere with the control of the bicycle or prevent the operator from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars
- \* Ride in the same direction as other vehicles

The following equipment is required on all bicycles:

- \* Red reflector on the rear
- \* Brakes strong enough to stop one wheel on dry, level, clean pavement
- \* Bell or other device capable of giving a signal audible for a distance of at least 100 feet (No siren or whistle is permitted).
- \* For riding after dark, a white headlight that is visible for at least 500 feet to the front

## **Sharing the Road with Joggers**

Jogging is an enjoyable sport and many studies claim it is good for your health. However, many joggers are killed each year because they are careless. If you jog, use jogging paths where provided. If you must jog on public roads, choose wide roads with good shoulders. Jog on the left facing oncoming traffic and look ahead and to the sides and listen for cars approaching you from behind, especially if they are passing other vehicles. Be ready to jump aside if necessary, and never jog after dark or in bad weather unless the area is well-lighted and you are wearing plenty of reflective clothing. When you are driving, be alert for joggers in unexpected places, such as on the top of a hill or in the middle of a curve.

## **Children at Play**

If you have children, keep an eye on them. Do not let them play or use roller skates or skateboards in or near public streets. As a driver, be extra careful in residential areas, school zones and at times and places where children are likely to be around. Teach your own children the rights and duties of pedestrians at an early age and always be extra watchful when backing in or out of a driveway for children who may have run behind the vehicle.

## **Sharing the Road with Public Buses**

While traffic does not have to stop for a public bus, please watch for passengers crossing the street as they are getting on and off the bus. Always be on the lookout for children who may not remember this rule. Use caution when passing a bus loading or unloading passengers.

## Parking for the Disabled

West Virginia law provides for designated parking spaces for disabled persons. These areas are reserved for persons having a condition which limits their ability to walk reasonable distances or those persons who routinely transport disabled persons. If you require parking for a disability, you may obtain a placard for your car window or license plate indicating your privilege. You must have a doctor certify your condition on a form provided by the DMV. The DMV will issue a placard and a wallet card after you have sent in your application. There is a \$5 transfer fee for the handicapped license plate.

Designated areas are reserved for disabled persons. It is illegal to park a vehicle that does not display a parking card for disabled license plates or mobile placards in a designated area.



## Drivers with Disabilities

Approximately one out of every 10 persons has some type of disability ranging from very minimal to major medical impairment. Because of the variety of disabilities, no group of rules can apply in determining every person's ability to operate a vehicle safely. In order to make sure a person with a disability is capable of becoming a safe driver, certain procedures should be followed before applying for a driver's license. If you have a physical disability or medical problem that may interfere with your driving ability, you should prepare a letter explaining the situation to accompany your application.

If adaptive driving aids such as hand controls or other equipment are required to compensate for a physical impairment, you can get a list of manufacturers of driving aids from your driver's license examiner or you may contact:

WV Division of Rehabilitation Services  
Driver Education Department  
P.O. Box 1004  
Institute, WV 25112

WV Worker's Compensation Fund  
Rehabilitation Services Division  
4700 MacCorkle Avenue, SE  
Charleston, WV 25304

# CHAPTER VII

## DRIVING ON INTERSTATES

Interstate and divided highways have largely removed the chance of head-on collisions, but driving on interstates is very different.

Safe use of the interstates demands a complete awareness of a higher-speed type of driving and constant alertness by the driver.

Remember that trucks and buses entering the interstate may need extra time to adjust to traffic patterns. Be cooperative and give them extra time and space to adjust to the traffic flow.

Slower traffic should drive in the right-hand lane except when passing.

### Route Numbering and Navigation

Most highways are identified by U.S. or state route numbers. Interstate highways are identified by distinctive red, white and blue shields and are numbered according to certain rules.

- \* Even-numbered interstates run east to west
- \* Odd-numbered interstates run north to south
- \* Three-digit numbers with an even first number identify beltways or bypasses around cities
- \* Three-digit numbers with an odd first number identify spur routes

### Planning Ahead

Since interstate entrances and exits are sometimes far apart, it is important to plan your route in advance. Make sure your car is in good working condition. Before you leave, check your gas, water, oil and tires, including your spare tire. A breakdown on an interstate can cost you a lot of time and may be dangerous.

On interstates, the first guide sign for an interchange is placed well in advance of the point where you must turn off. This permits ample time to change lanes and exit smoothly. You should pay attention to the guide signs to avoid hazardous last-minute maneuvers.

It is sometimes necessary to change the number of through lanes on an interstate. Generally, it is clear where a lane is added. Where the lane is removed, the change usually occurs at a fork or an exit. This is usually indicated by a black-and-yellow panel below the green-and-white overhead guide sign.

### Entering an Interstate

Traffic enters or exits an interstate at interchanges. An interchange is the intersection of two highways at different levels (over and under) with separate connecting roads for transferring traffic from one highway to the other.

This design feature enables vehicles to cross, enter or leave either road without interfering with other vehicles. Three of the most common types of interchanges are cloverleaf, diamond and trumpet.

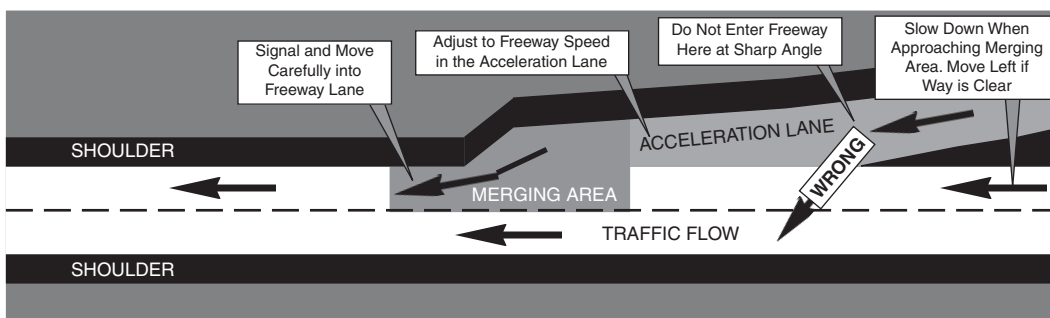


You enter an interstate by using an entrance ramp. Make sure you are using an entrance ramp. Often, an exit ramp will be next to the entrance ramp, marked with “Do Not Enter” and “Wrong Way” signs. Look for any advisory speed limit signs on the ramp. These are used if the ramp curves sharply.

About halfway on the entrance ramp, follow these steps:

1. Check interstate traffic. Take quick glances over your shoulder and to the side. Watch the vehicles in front of you entering the acceleration lane.
2. Use your turn signal.
3. Look for a gap in the approaching traffic.
4. Adjust your speed to meet that gap. As you merge, make sure you are traveling the same speed as other traffic.

Do not cut sharply to the left to enter the traffic stream. Follow the lane, merge with traffic and then change lanes.

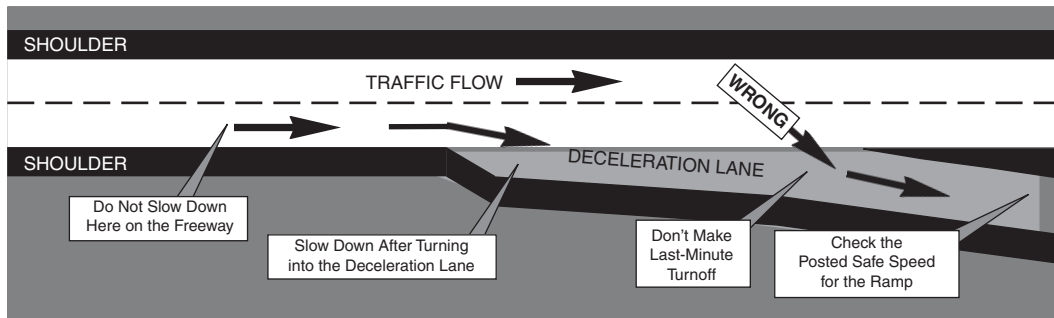


If another vehicle is ahead of you in the acceleration lane, be prepared to adjust your driving should the other vehicle slow or stop without warning. Do not stop on the ramp or acceleration lane.

If a gap in traffic is not available, it may be necessary to drive onto the shoulder beyond the end of the acceleration lane and stop. Because entering the traffic stream from a stop is hazardous, use this maneuver as a last resort.

Remember that traffic on the interstate has the right-of-way. You cannot always count on other drivers seeing you or moving over to give you room to enter.





## Exiting an Interstate

Find your exit. Look ahead for signs telling you about the exit you want and the lane you must use. Signal and move into the lane well before you have to exit. Changing lanes at the last moment risks missing your exit or causing an accident.

## Exit Lanes

Most interstate exits have a special lane for you to use to slow down before you reach the exit ramp. Never slow down on the interstate. Wait until you are in the deceleration lane, then brake gently until your speed matches the posted exit ramp limit.

## Stopping on an Interstate

Shoulders on interstates are to be used only for disabled vehicles. Do not use the shoulders for changing drivers, reading a map or other non-emergency purposes. These activities should be done in a rest area or after exiting the interstate.

Do not stop in an exit gore, the triangular area between the through lane and the exit ramp. Another driver may try to cross the gore after missing the exit and strike your vehicle.

No parking is permitted on the shoulders of interstates. Parked vehicles may be towed.

## Speeds on Interstates

You should never drive faster than the legal speed limit. Do not drive slower than 45 miles per hour on an interstate unless the weather or road conditions are bad or a lower speed has been posted. Always drive at a steady speed.

When you drive on interstates at a speed much slower than other drivers, you create a hazard. Accidents may happen because other drivers may be forced to change lanes abruptly. Always drive in the right-hand lane unless passing another vehicle.

## Adverse Conditions

In accordance with §17C-15-2 of the *West Virginia State Code*, headlights must be turned on during adverse conditions. Adjust your driving when you encounter adverse conditions. It is especially important to maintain an adequate following distance and adjust your speed to ensure the possibility of a safe stop.

You should be particularly alert for stopped vehicles. If your vehicle becomes disabled, move as far off the road as possible, turn on your four-way flashers to indicate your vehicle is stopped and get everyone out of the car and well away from the road.

Put a flare about one car-length behind your vehicle and another about 300 feet back. Place each flare on the shoulder near the edge of the through lane.

Fog, whether in patches or a haze, can present a visibility problem. If the fog is very dense, it may be better to leave the interstate and use the slower roads to reach your destination.

If you are involved in an accident in heavy fog, try to get your vehicle off the road as far as possible. Leaving your vehicle on the road until the police arrives invites further accidents.

### U-Turns

You should never make a U-turn on an interstate. Go to the next exit to turn around before reentering the interstate. The gravel or paved crossovers in the medians of some highways are to be used only by police and emergency vehicles.

### Construction Zones

You should always be alert for construction or maintenance zones when driving on an interstate or expressway. These zones frequently require that one or more lanes be closed and may cause traffic to slow or stop. Observe and obey special speed limits, traffic control signs and flaggers.

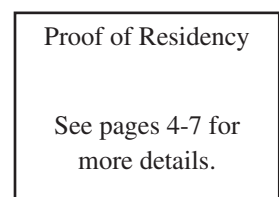
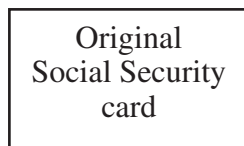
If a lane is closed, signs will be posted well in advance. You should move over to the open lane as soon as possible. Avoid waiting until the last minute to change lanes.

There are greater maximum penalties for disobeying speed or traffic restrictions in a construction zone. For your safety as well as the safety and courtesy of the workers on site, obey the posted speed limit and be extremely careful.

# Want this?



# Bring this!



# CHAPTER VIII

## DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Defensive driving means being prepared through the practice of good driving habits. It is just as easy to develop good driving habits as it is to fall into bad habits. Safety techniques begin the moment you step into the car. Start by forming good habits immediately and use them every trip, whether it is for just a few blocks or for several hundred miles.

### **Bad Driving Habits**

Bad driving habits result from laziness, impatience, inattention, arrogance and ignorance. If you display any of these bad driving habits, you must first defend against yourself.

### **Laziness**

When you learn to drive, you are taught to look for other traffic before you change lanes, drive away from the curb or get out of your vehicle on the traffic side. Always turn your head and look behind you for traffic before taking any action. Do not become lazy and look only in the rear view mirror.

Another related bad habit is failing to signal. Always signal your intention before turning, changing lanes or driving away from the curb. Allowing the combination of these bad habits to develop could be the cause of a serious accident.

### **Impatience**

Regardless of traffic, you must come to a complete stop at a stop sign or red light, even when making a right turn. Pressure from following vehicles and the absence of cross traffic may tempt you to only slow down for a stop sign.

An impatient driver speeds from stop to stop, weaves in and out of traffic and often tailgates other drivers. As an impatient driver, you may be paying close attention to what you are doing, but you do not realize you are disrupting traffic and increasing your chances of causing an accident.

### **Inattention**

As a good driver, you should sit up straight, have a firm grip on the steering wheel, be aware of where you are and pay attention to developing traffic problems.

If you relax, lean back, release your grip on the wheel and allow your attention to wander, your vehicle may also wander.

You can easily be identified as an inattentive driver if you drive with one arm out the window, talk to a passenger, gesture with one hand or pay little attention to traffic flow.

### **Arrogance and Aggressiveness**

While the impatient driver is simply in a hurry, the arrogant or aggressive driver is purposely in a hurry.

As an arrogant or aggressive driver, you compete with your vehicle because it is an extension of your ego. You have little or no respect for traffic laws or the rights of other drivers or pedestrians. Don't allow yourself to become an arrogant driver or involve yourself in competition with an arrogant driver.

## Concentration

Concentration is one of the most important elements of safe driving. The driver's seat is no place for day-dreaming, mental napping, window shopping, scenic viewing or distracting conversation. Lack of concentration can result in a driver's failure to be observant enough to avoid an accident. Driving an automobile is a full-time job.

## Light Conditions

The amount of natural or artificial light available at a given time affects your ability to see or be seen. You can have too much or too little light, which requires an adjustment in your driving to avoid an accident situation.

For example, driving east during sunrise or west during sunset could result in a condition of too much natural light. The proper use of the sun visor and wearing sunglasses in addition to a reduction of speed and an increase in your alertness would be defensive action. On bright days of summer or winter, sunglasses may also be advisable to reduce the glare from glass and chrome on other vehicles or the glare from snow.

At night and on overcast or rainy days, you will need all the light possible to see and be seen properly. Turn on your headlights. It is the law and a good idea to turn on your headlights, not just your parking lights, when it begins to get dark or any time visibility may be impaired (for example, fog, smoke, extreme cloudiness, etc.). If you turn on your headlights a little early, you will help other drivers see you. Keep your vehicle lighting system clean and in proper repair.

A common term associated with light conditions that cause accidents is "overdriving your headlights." Overdriving your headlights means driving too fast to stop safely within the distance clearly lit by your headlights.



You may also be affected by too much light at night when meeting an oncoming vehicle. Looking directly into oncoming headlights causes momentary blindness. When meeting an oncoming vehicle at night, slow down, keep to the right of your traffic lane and look well in front of your vehicle at the right edge of the road. When meeting another vehicle at night, dim your headlight beams within 500 feet of the other vehicle. When following another vehicle, dim your headlights within 200 feet of the other vehicle.



## Weather Conditions

Certain weather conditions affect the control of your vehicle by reducing your ability to start, stop and turn. Weather conditions requiring greater caution are rain, snow, sleet, high wind, fog or smoke.

### Rain

**IT IS THE LAW! Turn on your headlights** to increase your visibility. Turning on your headlights during periods of rain or reduced visibility is the SAFE thing to do.

**Wet Pavement:** Rain and wet pavements are dangerous, particularly at the start of a light rain when a mixture of oil, dirt and water form a slippery film on the road. This condition makes it harder for you to keep in contact with the road on curves and increases stopping distance. Reduce your speed to adjust to these conditions.

**Hydroplaning:** Hydroplaning takes place when you are driving on wet pavement and can cause skidding. At speeds up to 35 m.p.h., most tires will wipe the road surface the same way a windshield wiper cleans a windshield. But as speed increases, tires start to ride like water skis on a film of water. In a standard passenger car, partial hydroplaning occurs on the road at about 35 m.p.h. At 55 m.p.h., tires ride totally on top of the water. In a severe rainstorm, tires lose all contact with the road at 55 m.p.h. When this happens, there is no friction available to brake, accelerate or corner. A gust of wind, road curve or slight turn can create an uncontrollable skid.

To reduce the possibility of hydroplaning, you should:

- \* Slow down during rainstorms or when roads are slushy or have standing water
- \* Replace tires when tread wear indicators are visible. Keep tires properly inflated.

Tires with deep treads allow water to escape from under the tires and can prevent complete hydroplaning at normal highway speeds.

### Flooding

Flooded roadways are extremely hazardous to both drivers and passengers. Never attempt to drive across a flooded roadway. As little as six inches of water can float some smaller vehicles, while two feet of water will carry most away. Once a vehicle floats off the roadway into deeper water, it may roll uncontrollably while filling with water, trapping the driver and all passengers inside. In the United States, motorists trapped inside their vehicles account for nearly one half of all flash flood fatalities. In many cases, victims drive directly off the edge of an eroded road without knowing that the road is no longer there. Flooded roadways are especially dangerous at night when it is much more difficult to recognize flooding conditions.

If your vehicle stalls in a flooded roadway, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Remember it is better to be wet than dead.

### Snow and Sleet

During the winter, you should have snow tires or chains ready to put on your vehicle. However, neither will permit you to drive safely on snow or ice at normal speeds. If there is snow or ice on the road, slow down. Maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you. **It takes as much as 12 times the normal distance to stop on snow or ice as it takes to stop on dry pavement.** Be alert for danger spots. There may be ice or snow on bridges or overpasses when all other pavement is clear.

Keep all windows clear of ice and snow. Keep your windshield wipers and defroster in good working condition. Never start driving until all windows are clear and completely defrosted.

When you stop or slow down on ice or packed snow, always apply the brakes gently and smoothly. On very slippery surfaces, pump the brakes, applying and releasing them several times until you have the vehicle under complete control. Always be sure to release the brakes at the first hint the wheels are slipping. **Newer cars may have anti-lock brakes, which require a different braking technique.** Follow the braking instructions in your owner's manual if your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock brakes.

When starting on snow or ice, keep your engine speed low. Accelerate slowly and smoothly. If your car has a manual transmission, let the clutch out slowly and always shift smoothly. Once you have started, get the feel of the road by applying the brakes while driving slowly to determine how slippery the road is. Adjust your speed to the conditions.

### **High Winds**

Be alert for strong winds which can down power lines and trees and blow debris into your path. Crosswinds on the road can also be strong enough to force your vehicle into the oncoming traffic lane or off the roadway.

### **Fog and Smoke**

Fog is an extremely hazardous driving condition. Smoke from factories, forest fires and burning leaves can produce similar conditions.

If you must drive in fog or dense smoke conditions, you should:

- \* Reduce speed
- \* Be alert and prepared for an emergency stop
- \* Use your low-beam headlights
- \* Use your windshield wipers to remove moisture
- \* Pull off to the side of the road and stop. If the fog or smoke impairs your vision, leave your lights on and also turn your hazard lights on.

### **Road Conditions**

Road conditions primarily involve the road's construction. Road conditions to consider are curves, hills, pavement width, multiple lanes, road surfaces, poorly marked or unmarked roads, shoulders and drop-offs.

### **Vehicle Conditions (State Inspection Law)**

You cannot safely drive 10 feet or 10 miles in an unsafe vehicle. West Virginia requires a yearly inspection of all vehicles to ensure they are in safe driving condition.

Your vehicle must be checked at an inspection station displaying an official state inspection station sign. When your vehicle passes the state inspection, a sticker showing the month and year for your next inspection is placed on your windshield. It is against the law for you to remove this sticker.

It is up to you to keep your vehicle in proper driving condition. Common vehicle defects that cause accidents are faulty tires, brakes, lights, windshield wipers, defrosters, mufflers and exhaust system, horn, mirrors and unusable seat belts.

## **Driver Conditions**

Make sure you are physically and mentally ready to drive. Some of the most common driver conditions affecting the safe operation of a vehicle are fatigue, alcohol, emotional state and defective eyesight or hearing.

### **Fatigue**

Fatigue may be caused by lack of sleep or driving too long. Being tired dulls your mind and slows your reaction time.

If you are alone and become tired, pull off the road and rest. If there are other licensed drivers in the car, change drivers as soon as one driver becomes tired. If you are on a long trip, take a 10-minute rest break at least every two hours. This rest break should be spent outside of the vehicle (walk around, get a cup of coffee or a soft drink). Rolling your window down, turning your radio on or singing can reduce the monotony of driving.

### **Emotional States**

Sometimes you may experience emotional states of anger, worry or fear. You should attempt to control these emotions and gain self control before driving.

## **Traffic Conditions**

Various elements can affect traffic conditions, including vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Also affecting traffic conditions are the following:

**Time of Day:** Rush hours are times when traffic is congested and drivers are in a hurry. Rush-hour traffic is usually inbound to metropolitan areas between 7 and 9 a.m. and outbound from these areas between 4 and 6 p.m. Rush hours in industrial areas usually occur during changes in work shifts.

**Day of Week:** Rush-hour traffic is heaviest during weekdays. During weekends you will encounter drivers who are making longer trips and driving longer hours.

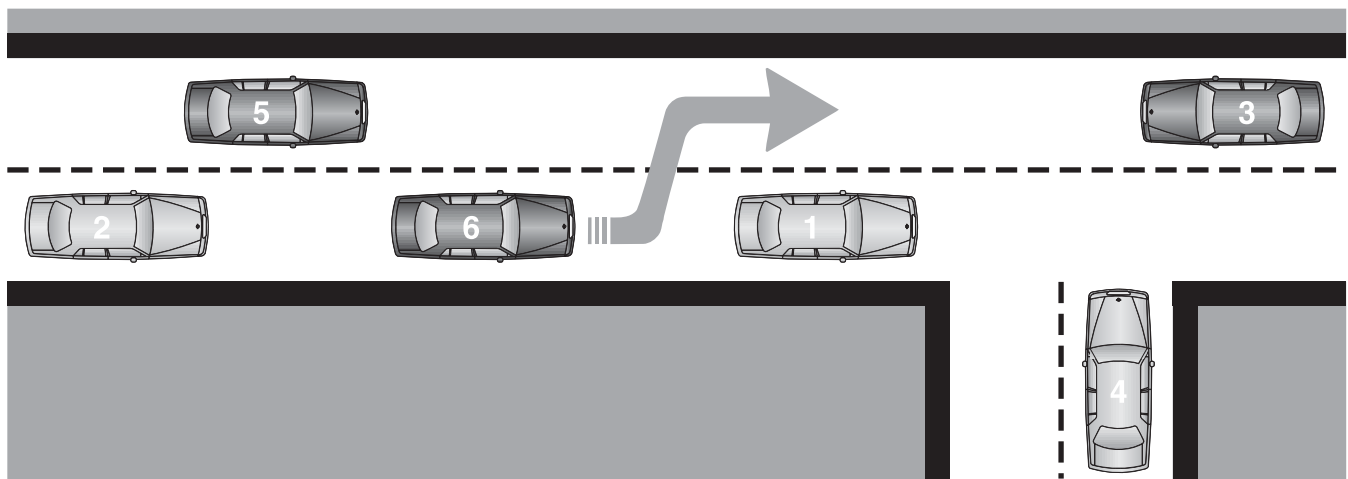
**Time of Year:** Summer months are associated with an increase in traffic due to vacation travel. Holiday weekends also increase traffic volume. Watch out for drivers who are tired or in a hurry. Holiday periods also produce an increase in the number of drunk drivers on the roadway.

**Surrounding Area:** When driving in rural areas, you will encounter slow-moving farm machinery, hazards from stray livestock and game animals and motorists driving at higher rates of speed. When driving in urban areas, you will encounter more pedestrians, bicycles, intersections and stop-and-go traffic.

**Types of Vehicles:** A defensive driver is always aware of the number of heavy trucks and buses present in traffic. These vehicles can cause problems in passing and slow traffic on hills and grades.

## Traffic Situations

The following traffic situations involve positions another vehicle can take in relation to your vehicle prior to an accident.



*Note: You are driving vehicle number 6.*

**1. Vehicle Ahead:** You must always be aware that the vehicle ahead of you may stop suddenly and without warning. If you have not allowed enough following distance, the result may be an accident. To avoid this situation, you should stay alert, anticipate that the driver ahead may make a sudden stop and maintain a safe following distance.

**2. Tailgating Vehicle:** The tailgating vehicle behind you is another situation that may cause an accident. You have a responsibility to the driver following you to signal whenever you make a change in your driving pattern. What you do can affect the other driver, especially if you slow down or stop suddenly. See Chapter IV.

**3. Oncoming Vehicle:** The driver of an oncoming vehicle may cross into your lane for many reasons. The driver may be asleep, drunk, distracted, recovering from a drop off the pavement, turning, attempting to pass another vehicle or avoiding a pedestrian or other obstacle. There is also the possibility the driver may come into your lane while rounding a curve.

**4. Vehicle at an Angle:** This situation exists at intersections, driveways and entrances and exits to parking lots. Learn the traffic laws and obey signs and signals that control traffic in these locations.

**5. Vehicle Passing You:** Other drivers will pass you for various reasons, but you should not view being passed as a challenge. Many sideswipe and run-off-the-road accidents result from being passed.

To avoid the possibility of an accident with a vehicle passing you, check your rear view mirror frequently, know what is going on around you, slow down and keep as close to the right side of the road as possible, making it easier for the other vehicle to pass.

**6. When You Pass:** There is nothing wrong with passing if it is done legally, smoothly, skillfully and with consideration. However, passing puts wear and tear on your vehicle, increases fuel consumption and can involve you in a head-on, sideswipe or run-off-the-road accident. Exceeding the speed limit when passing is illegal. If you have to speed to pass, you probably do not need to pass.



## **There are 10 steps to passing another vehicle safely:**

1. Keep a safe following distance.
2. Check oncoming traffic.
3. Check the traffic behind your vehicle.
4. Signal lane change.
5. Move to the left lane.
6. Accelerate.
7. Warn other drivers by blowing your horn and/or flashing your lights.
8. Signal lane change.
9. Move right when you see the front headlights of the vehicle you passed in your rear view mirror.
10. Maintain safe legal speed.

On interstate highways, you should drive in the right-hand lane except when passing another vehicle.

## **Safety Equipment**

**Safety Belts-It is the Law** - Everyone in a passenger vehicle must wear a federally approved safety belt. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all passengers are buckled into their safety belts. The only legal exception is for persons 18 years or older who are riding in the back seat of a vehicle. In some cases, an exception to this rule may be issued for medical reasons and proof of such a condition may be required of the driver.

Statistics show that wearing safety belts reduces by 45 to 50 percent the chances of injury or death resulting from collisions. A safety belt spreads crash forces over the strongest parts of the body and helps occupants to “ride down” a crash. The lap belt should be worn so that it fits snugly and comfortably over the lower part of the hips. This will allow for normal bending of the body. Shoulder belts, which fit across the shoulder, should be worn with the lap belts for additional restraint and protection of the upper body.

When safety belts are used properly, they will keep you from being thrown forward or out of the car. They also keep you in the proper driving position when driving on bumpy or twisting roads.

**Child Safety Seats** - West Virginia law states “Every driver who transports a child under the age of 8 years in a passenger automobile, van or pickup truck other than one operated for hire shall, while the motor vehicle is in motion and operated on a street or highway of this state, provide for the protection of the child by properly placing, maintaining and securing the child in a child passenger safety device system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards: Provided, That if a child is under the age of 8 years and at least 4’-9” tall, a safety belt shall be sufficient to meet the requirements of this section.”

For more information about child safety seats and safety belts, please call the Governor's Highway Safety Program at (304) 558-6080.

**Head Restraints** - Head restraints are designed to reduce the chance of whiplash injury in rear-end collisions. If adjustable, they should be positioned to fit against the back of your head, not your neck.

**Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS)** - The anti-lock brake system (ABS) is one of the more popular safety features in new automobiles. When used properly, the ABS is a safety feature which provides drivers with the ability to maintain control over their vehicles while coming to an abrupt stop.

The ABS is designed to prevent wheel lockup in the event a motorist must come to a quick stop. When applying the brake in a vehicle that has an ABS, the driver must continue to steer the vehicle while pushing hard on the brake. This requires a new way of thinking for many motorists. For years, motorists were taught to pump the brake to avoid wheel lockup and loss of control; however, in a vehicle equipped with an ABS, pumping the brake will only reduce the system's ability to bring the car to a quick, safe stop. In fact, a driver can lose all brake force by pumping ABS brakes.

One misconception concerning the effectiveness of the ABS is that it will stop a vehicle in a much shorter distance than regular brakes. This is only partially true. In fact, in the event of a sudden stop, the ABS will improve performance by only about 10 percent at best.

Motorists should understand the ABS and all other safety equipment features of the vehicle they are operating. Remember, the ABS is an effective feature to help reduce the risk of wheel lockup and loss of control in the event of a sudden stop. However, it does not provide "Super Brakes" allowing a vehicle to stop on a dime under all circumstances, and motorists should not take risks they otherwise would not.

**Air Bags** - Almost all new cars are equipped with dual (driver and passenger-side) air bags as a safety feature. Starting in 1998, all passenger cars were required to have dual airbags and in 1999 all new light trucks were required to have dual air bags.

The purpose of dual air bags is to protect both the driver and front passenger of a vehicle in the event of an accident. Over the past several years, air bags have been credited with saving thousands of lives. However, drivers and passengers should understand the precautions that must be taken to allow air bags to be a safety feature and not a danger that could cause fatal or serious injury or both.

## **Safety Precautions**

To begin with, the driver and all passengers should have their seat belts secured at all times. It is important to note that a majority of those killed by air bags were not wearing their seat belts. Second, the driver should hold the steering wheel from the side so that his/her hands and arms are not between the air bag and his or her body. Also, both the driver's seat and the front passenger's seat should be slightly tilted backward with as much distance from the air bag as possible. This will allow room for the air bag to deploy before making contact with front-seat occupants.

## **Risk Reduction for Infants and Toddlers**

If a vehicle is equipped with a passenger-side air bag, under **NO** circumstances should an infant in a rear-facing safety seat be placed in the front passenger seat. When there is no other mode of transportation, several steps must be taken. First, the child's safety seat must be a forward-facing seat. Next, the child must be

properly secured in the safety seat. Finally, the passenger side seat should be pushed all the way back, to maximize the distance between the child and the air bag.

Again, it is recommended that all children 12 and under should be buckled and placed in the rear seat. Younger children should also be correctly seated in a child safety seat.

## **Steps to Safe and Happy Driving**

### **1. Roll 'em up!**

Keep your car doors locked and the windows up when driving or when parked.

### **2. No free rides!**

No matter how innocent or needy they may appear, hitchhikers can mean bad news. Avoid them.

### **3. Know your car!**

Familiarize yourself with your car's safety equipment, such as headlights and hazard lights, door locks, and spare tire, before leaving home. Always fasten your seat belt.

### **4. Hide your valuables!**

Lock purses, wallets, luggage, and valuables in the trunk or glove compartment.

### **5. See the light!**

Should you become lost, do not pull over on the side of the road to study your map or directions. Instead drive to the nearest well-lit, populated, public place such as a service station or restaurant. And be sure to lock your car and take the keys with you.

### **6. Ready, check, go!**

Always park in well-lit areas and make sure you have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. Before entering, be sure to check inside and underneath your car.

### **7. Make the call!**

In the rare event you feel you are being followed, proceed to a well-lit populated area and call the police. In most areas throughout the United States, the police may be called by dialing 9-1-1.

# CHAPTER IX

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

### Check Before Driving:

**Brakes** - Push the pedal down. It should not go more than halfway to the floor. The pedal should feel like it is hitting something hard. If it feels spongy, air bubbles may be in the brake line. Push down and count to 10. If the pedal keeps going down, you may have a leak in the braking system. Check the parking brake by setting it firmly. If the vehicle moves easily in drive or first gear, the parking brake needs adjustment.

**Leaks** - Check under the vehicle frequently for signs of oil, coolant, brake fluid or transmission leaks.

**Under the Hood** - Check the battery, engine oil, radiator (only when cool), power steering, brake master cylinder, belts and hoses. When checking under the hood, do not smoke or use any flames.

**Tires** - Check tires for proper pressure, abnormal wear patterns and adequate tread depth. To assure safe operation, tires should be inflated to the manufacturer's recommended pressure. A minimum of 1/16 inch tread depth is required.

**Lights** - Check all exterior lights once a month.

**Windshield Washers and Wipers** - Check wiper blades at least once a year and keep wiper fluid container full.

**Interior Warning Devices** - Make sure all warning lights are working properly.

### Blowouts

A blowout is a sudden collapse of a tire, thus, a blowout can throw the vehicle out of control. To regain control, hold tightly to the steering wheel, steer straight ahead and ease up on the accelerator. Do not brake until the vehicle is under control. Then pull all the way off the road into a safe area.

If it is impossible to get off the road immediately, you should continue driving slowly with your emergency flashers on. Under-inflated tires are one of the most common causes of blowouts, so be sure to check your tires for air often.

### Brake Failure

#### If your brakes fail:

- \*Pump the brake pedal quickly

- \*Shift to a lower gear and look for a place to slow down and stop off the roadway. Use your horn and lights to warn other drivers.

- \*Use the parking brake, but hold the brake release so you can ease up on the brake if the rear wheels lock and cause a skid

### Overheating Engine

You can prevent overheating in slow-moving traffic by shifting into neutral and racing your engine briefly during stops. This will speed up the fan and water pump. If the warning light or gauge shows the engine is overheating, pull off the road and turn the engine off. Do not remove the radiator cap until the engine is cooled.

### Skids

If your car begins to skid, stay calm. Do not use your brakes. If you are in danger of hitting something, pump the brakes gently. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, consult your owner's manual for braking instructions. Concentrate on steering out of trouble.

### **To steer out of a skid:**

\*Take your foot off the gas pedal

\*Turn your steering wheel in the direction of the skid. If the rear of your car is skidding to the right, turn to the right. Turn left for a skid to the left. Your vehicle may now start to skid the other way. Again, turn your wheels in the direction you want to go. Straighten wheels to bring vehicle under control.

### **Stuck Gas Pedal**

If your gas pedal sticks:

\*Concentrate on steering and keep your eyes on the road

\*Try to free the pedal with your foot. If this does not work, push in the clutch or shift into neutral

\*Use your brakes, stop at the nearest safe place and turn off the ignition

### **Wheels Off the Road**

If you run off the road you should:

\*Grip the steering wheel tightly

\*Stay on the shoulder and ease off the accelerator

\*Brake gently and slow gradually

\*After speed has been reduced, check behind as well as ahead for traffic

\*Turn your wheels sharply onto the pavement

\*As soon as your wheels hit the edge of the pavement, turn them the other way to keep your car from heading across the highway

### **Steering Fails**

If you suddenly lose steering control, ease up on the accelerator. If your vehicle continues to stay in your lane on the roadway, wait until it slows down and then gently apply brakes to avoid changing direction. If your vehicle starts off the road or toward a pedestrian or another vehicle, apply brakes quickly, using maximum pressure.

### **Headlights Fail**

If the highway is lighted, get off the roadway onto the shoulder or other available space, as soon and safely as possible. If the highway is dark, try your parking lights, your direction signals, or your emergency flashers and get off the roadway. If all lights fail, stay on the roadway and slow down enough to pull off the roadway safely.

### **Fire in Vehicle**

If smoke comes from under the hood, get off the roadway and turn off the ignition. If no chemical fire extinguisher is available, use dirt or sand to smother the fire. Do not use water because burning gasoline will float on water and spread the fire. If the fire gets out of control, move at least 100 feet away from the vehicle since the gas tank may explode.

### **Vehicle Approaching in Your Lane**

If you see a vehicle coming toward you in your lane, move to the right, slow down, then sound your horn and flash your headlights. Do not turn into the lane that the vehicle has left, since the other driver may "wake up," realize his mistake and turn back into his proper lane.

## **Stalling on Railroad Tracks**

Look both ways for trains. If no train is coming and your vehicle has a manual gearshift, put it into low gear and use the starter to move the car off the tracks. If there is a train coming, get out of the vehicle and run along the side of the tracks, towards the train to avoid being struck by the debris from the crash.

## **Alternator Light Comes On**

If possible, keep driving until you reach a service station if your alternator light comes on. Turn off all unnecessary lights and electrical accessories. Watch the temperature, oil pressure and warning lights.

## **Oil Pressure Light Comes On**

Get the vehicle off the road and immediately turn off the engine. Check the engine oil level and add oil if needed.

## **Dead Battery**

If your car has a dead battery, be careful if jump starting it from another vehicle's battery. Follow the rules listed below or consult your owner's manual.

- \*Take off the vent caps from both batteries and put a cloth over the open vent wells
- \*Turn off lights, heater, air conditioner and radio
- \*Connect the positive post of the dead battery to the positive post of the live battery
- \*Connect the negative post of the live battery to the engine block or frame of the vehicle with the dead battery

Make sure the two vehicles are not touching, then start the vehicle giving the jump. After letting it run for a few minutes, start the other vehicle. Take off the jumper cables in the opposite order and replace the vent caps. If battery acid should get on your skin, eyes or vehicles, wash off immediately with water.

## **Automobile Emergency Kit**

The following items should be carried in your vehicle: a working flashlight, warning flares or reflectors, jack, lug wrench, basic tools, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and jumper cables. In cold climates you should include emergency tire chains and heavy blankets.

## **First Aid**

About 2 million persons are injured in traffic accidents each year. Many of these injuries eventually result in death because proper first aid was not given. The following are general rules for giving first aid:

- \*Stay calm and do not move the victim unless there is danger of further injury.
- \*Try to determine how seriously the victim is injured. Give first aid in the following order:
  1. Control bleeding;
  2. Restore breathing;
  3. Treat for shock;
  4. Protect broken bones.
- \*Keep the victim lying down and comfortable.

Administer first aid if you think a delay in emergency care could result in death or further injury.

## **Good Samaritan Law**

No one, including those licensed to practice medicine or dentistry, who in good faith gives emergency care at the scene of an accident, without pay, is liable for any civil damages as the result of any act or omission in giving emergency care.

## If You are Involved In An Accident

1. Stop immediately.
  - \*Turn off the ignition to prevent the danger of fire
  - \*Protect the scene by using flares, flagman or other means to prevent further accidents
2. Render aid to the injured.
  - \*Do not move the injured unless absolutely necessary
  - \*Send for necessary aid (ambulance and/or law enforcement)
  - \*Keep spectators away from the injured
3. If you are involved in an accident resulting in injury or death of any person or property damage of \$500 or more, you must notify the nearest law enforcement agency.
4. The following information should be exchanged by persons involved in traffic accidents:
  - \*Name;
  - \*Address;
  - \*License plate number;
  - \*Driver's license;
  - \*Motor vehicle insurance information.

**Important:** *Do not stop at an accident scene unless you are involved or can render assistance. Unnecessary stopping creates additional hazards at the scene.*

If you strike an unattended vehicle, try to locate the owner. If that is not possible, leave a written notice containing your name, address, license plate number, driver's license number, motor vehicle insurance information and circumstances of the accident.

## WEST VIRGINIA COURTESY PATROL PROJECT OVERVIEW



The West Virginia Courtesy Patrol (WVCP), operated by the West Virginia Citizens' Conservation Corps (WVCCC) via the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) provides two equally important benefits to the state. First, it reduces the number of individuals on welfare in the state of West Virginia. This is done through the employment and continuing education of 133 former welfare recipients as Courtesy Patrol Operators (125) and Dispatchers (8). Secondly, this program benefits the traveling public, both using our interstate highways and corridors for tourism and local commerce.

The WVCP assists stranded motorists, removes hazards from the roadway thereby reducing the chance of secondary accidents, provides gas or directions, changes a flat tire, and in general, works to enhance the safety of our state's highways. The Courtesy Patrol works alongside the State Police, 911 Centers, and other emergency and highway personnel to ensure and enhance safety on West Virginia's highways.

### What should I do if I need assistance?

- Pull off of the highway as far as possible.
- Keep your doors locked and be aware of who pulls up behind you.
- The Courtesy Patrol can be reached by dialing 1-888-359-3683 or \*77.
- The Courtesy Patrol drivers are in white pickup trucks with easily identifiable blue and gold reflective Courtesy Patrol logos and a flashing orange bar light on top of the vehicle.
- The drivers have identification badges and wear a reflective orange or green vest with their blue and gold trimmed uniform.
- The driver will approach you on the passenger side of the vehicle if at all possible.







We're not taking any more excuses.

**CLICK IT OR TICKET**



**BUCKLE UP  
SEATBELTS SAVE LIVES**



**Department of Transportation  
Division of Motor Vehicles**

**Governor's Highway Safety Program**

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