Maine
Driver's License Manual



Secretary of State, Shenna Bellows

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SECTION 1

Your Driver's License

Introduction

A driver's license brings new freedom and independence – and also a solemn responsibility.

Everyone on or near the road – from the driver or cyclist next to you to the person walking on the sidewalk – is counting on you to pay attention to your driving. You must always be prepared for the possibility that you will need to stop, swerve, speed up or slow down to avoid a collision. That means you need to have your full attention on the road and always be fit to drive.

Your life, your passengers' lives and the lives of other motorists, cyclists and pedestrians depend on your ability to drive safely. If you are impaired by drugs or alcohol, or if you're texting or paying attention to anything other than your driving, you are putting lives at risk.

Devastating and deadly accidents are all too common, and often caused by someone who is breaking the law. What you don't hear as much about are all the crashes that are avoided by drivers who are alert, sober, responsive and who follow the rules of the road.

The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles was established in 1905 out of concern for public safety as the age of the automobile began. Today, it's hard to imagine the dangers of the that time when there were more horses than cars on the roadways. For more than 100 years, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) has been dedicated to our mission to promote safety on Maine's roadways by qualifying and licensing drivers, along with maintaining records of driver history, vehicle ownership and vehicle registration. This manual is designed to prepare you with the knowledge and skills you need to operate a motor vehicle safely and obtain a driver's license.

Earning your driver's license is only the beginning, though. Please remember that the skills, behaviors, and rules of the road you are learning today are more than just the answers to a test. Safe driving is a life-long commitment and one that you must reaffirm every time you get behind the wheel.

As you take your first steps toward earning your license to operate a motor vehicle, I encourage you to promise yourself that you will be fit to drive every time you get behind the wheel. We wish you success in earning your driver's license, and enjoyment of all the freedom and opportunities that it will bring in your lifetime.

Take Care,

Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Acquiring a Maine Driver's License

Driving a motor vehicle on public highways in Maine is a privilege and a serious responsibility. The ability to drive a car, truck or motorcycle widens your horizons. It allows you to work, visit friends, and enjoy your leisure time.

A motor vehicle used unwisely or carelessly, can be fatal. Thousands of people die each year in the United States because of motor vehicle accidents. To obtain your driver's license you must know the rules of the road and how to safely drive a car or other vehicle in traffic. Being a safe, intelligent driver takes time and effort, but the process only begins when you get your license.

Who Needs a Maine Driver's License?

- Any resident of the State who wishes to operate a motor vehicle in Maine. New residents who hold a valid driver's license from another state must surrender that license and apply for a Maine driver's license within 30 days of establishing residency in this state.

Who Does Not Need a Maine Driver's License to Operate a Motor Vehicle in Maine?

- Any resident who has a valid learner's permit may drive if they are accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 20 years of age and has held a valid license for a minimum of 2 years. The licensed driver must occupy the seat adjacent to the driver with the learner's permit.
- Any non-resident who is at least 16 years of age and who has a valid operator's license or learner's permit issued by his or her home state.
- Any military personnel possessing a valid military license operating a military vehicle.

How Do You Obtain A Permit in Maine?

- You must be at least 15 years of age.
- If under 18 years of age you must complete an approved driver education course.
- To obtain a learner's permit you must successfully complete a driver knowledge written examination. A learner's permit is generally valid for 2 years. It allows a person to operate a vehicle when accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 20 years of age and has held a valid license for 2 years. The accompanying operator must be licensed to drive the class of vehicle(s) being operated.
- Use of a mobile telephone or handheld electronic devices are prohibited by law when driving in Maine.
- Written exams and visual screenings are offered on a scheduled basis at all Motor Vehicle branch offices. Two forms of identification are required. An example, for instance, could be a birth certificate and social security card. Although your social security number will not be displayed on your license, it must be provided upon application or renewal for a license. Birth certificates or Passports are required from applicants up to and including age 22 to determine date of birth. Photocopies of birth certificates must have an embossed seal or stamp of an issuing agency. Notarized copies are not acceptable.

Types of Driver's Licenses and Driver's Permits

License Classification (Types of Vehicles)
Maine has 3 classes of driver's licenses.

- Classes A and B: Class A and B licenses are commercial vehicle licenses and are distinguished by the size and weight of the vehicle to be driven. A Class A license covers any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds provided the gross vehicle weight rating or gross weight of the vehicle or vehicles' being towed is more than 10,000 pounds. Class B covers any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating or gross weight. Holders of a Class A or B license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles in Classes B and C.
- Class C: Class C is the standard license classification issued to most motor vehicle operators. A Class C license covers any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that does not meet the definition of Class A or B. A Class C license is a commercial driver's license only if it carries a hazardous material, tanker and/or passenger (bus) endorsement. Holders of a Class C license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles in that class.

Separate study manuals are available to use for study purposes when applying for a commercial driver's license or motorcycle endorsement.

School buses, passenger buses and motorcycles are not a separate class, but their use requires a special endorsement and an examination for those specific vehicles.
NOTE: School bus license applicants must be 21 years of age or older and have at least one year of licensed driving experience. Additionally, any individual convicted of an O.U.I. offense within the preceding ten-year period is ineligible to receive a school bus operator's license.

Mopeds may be operated on a license of any class. A motorized bicycle or tricycle may only be operated by a person who possesses a valid license of any class, an appropriate learner's permit or a license endorsed for a motorcycle or moped.

Required Noncommercial License Tests

How Do You Obtain A Driver's License?

- Be at least 16 years of age and have completed an approved driver education course.
- Be at least 18 years of age if you have not completed an approved driver education course.
- Before a person under 21 years of age can apply for a road test, that person must have held a learner's permit for 6 months from the date of issue of the learner's permit and must complete a minimum of 70 hours of driving, including 10 hours of night driving, while accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 20 years of age and has held a valid license for 2 years. The 70 hours of practice driving must begin after issuance of the

permit. The parent, stepparent, guardian, or spouse must certify the person's driving time on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State. When a person has no parent a stepparent, guardian, spouse, or an employer may certify the driving time.

- Successfully complete a road test. When ready to take the road test you will mail the road test request form or driving log that was issued to the Motor Vehicles main office in Augusta. You will then be scheduled for a road test at a testing location nearest to your residence. Bring your learners permit and appointment notice with you to that scheduled appointment. Drivers must furnish their own vehicle, properly registered (bring registration) and inspected, for the road test. You must be accompanied by a licensed operator who is in possession of a valid driver's license. During the winter months, it is possible that weather conditions could cause the cancellation of your scheduled exam. Applicants scheduled for a road test on a day experiencing snow and/or icy conditions can elect to be rescheduled at no fee. Applicants selecting this option can call (207) 624-9000, ext. 52119.
- A person under 18 years of age who has been issued a Maine driver's license may not: operate a motor vehicle while using a mobile telephone or handheld electronic devices; operate a motor vehicle between the hours of 12 a.m. and 5 a.m.; carry passengers other than immediate family members unless accompanied by a licensed operator who has held a valid license for 2 years, is at least 20 years of age, is occupying a seat beside the driver and is licensed to operate the class of vehicle operated by the driver. Immediate family member means grandparent, step grandparent, parent, stepparent, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister, child, stepchild, spouse, analogous family members as may be connected via the operation of a family foster home and when living with the immediate family, foreign exchange students, court appointed wards of an immediate family member and a child whose parent is deployed for military service and is under the guardianship of an immediate family member.

These restrictions are in effect for a period of 270 days from when road test was passed. Any violation of the conditions of these restrictions will result in a license suspension and a 270-day extension of the restrictions which may extend beyond the 18th birthday.

The first license issued to a new applicant under 21 years of age is **provisional** for a period of two years but only one year for persons at least 21 years of age or older when receiving that first license. If a person is convicted of a moving violation that occurred while operating with a provisional license, the license will be suspended for 30 days. Second and third offenses involve more severe penalties.

What Will the Tests Include?

- The written test measures your understanding and knowledge of traffic laws, regulations, driving skills and vehicle handling, as well as your ability to identify and understand highway signs. Special emphasis is placed on understanding Maine's drinking and driving laws.
- The vision screening will measure your visual acuity (how clearly you see) and your peripheral vision (how far you can see to either side while looking straight ahead).

- During the actual road test an Examiner will always be assessing your ability to maintain control of your vehicle. Proper control must be maintained when driving forward or backward, turning left or right, or driving straight ahead. You will also be evaluated on how well you observe and react to other road users and pedestrians, as well as traffic signs, signals, and conditions. You will not be asked to do anything that is extraordinary or illegal.

Note: The road test will not be given until all other tests have been successfully completed.

Who Must Take the Examinations?

- Those applying for an initial license must take all examinations.
- Anyone changing their license classification must take all required examinations. Special tests are administered for those wishing to operate a motorcycle, bus, or school bus. Additional endorsements may be added to a license following the successful completion of all pertinent written and vision tests.
- Applicants with a valid out-of-state license may have the written and road tests waived.

Out of State License or Driving on an Existing License

Message for Those Transferring their Out-of-State License to a Maine Non-Commercial Driver's License

- You must be at least 16 years of age to apply for a Maine license.
- If you are 16 or 17 and hold a valid out-of-state license, you may be required to provide evidence of completion of an approved driver education course prior to the issuance of a Maine license.
- Any out-of-state license must be surrendered at the time of issuance of the Maine license.
- You will need to apply for a Commercial Driver's License if you expect to operate:
    - A combination of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds, if the gross vehicle weight rating or gross weight of the vehicles being towed is more than 10,000 pounds.
    - A single motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds or such a vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross weight not more than 10,000 pounds.
    - A vehicle carrying hazardous materials in a quantity requiring placarding by Federal DOT regulation.
    - A vehicle designed to carry over 15 passengers including the driver.
- A written test is not required if you are applying for a passenger car license.
- Any misstatement on the license application will result in the immediate revocation of your license and your privilege to operate in the State of Maine. Furthermore, court action may be taken against you for any misstatement.
- The Secretary of State shall not accept the application of any minor under the age of 18 years for an operator's license or instruction permit unless signed by a parent or legal guardian having custody of the minor or by the spouse of the minor provided the spouse is of the age of 18 years or older. Any person who has signed the application of a minor

for an operator's application or learner's permit may thereafter file with the department a notarized written request that the license or learner's permit of said minor, so granted, be suspended.

- You are responsible for abiding by the Maine Motor Vehicle Laws and must become familiar with the Maine Driver's License Manual.

Driver License Renewal

Information about Your Driver's License

When you have passed the required tests, you may purchase a picture license which is valid until your sixth birthday following the date of issue of the license or your fourth birthday following the date of issue of the license if you are age 65 or older. *You must show proof of lawful presence and legal residency at the time of photo license processing*. If you are under 18 years of age, you must bring a parent or legal guardian with you to sign for the issuance of your picture license, which will be mailed to you after processing. You should carry your license with you at all times when driving. You must show your license to any police officer who asks to see it. It is illegal to lend your license to anyone else.

Altering a License: Changing information on a driver's license carries severe penalties which may include the loss of your license.

Lost License: If your license is lost or destroyed you must notify the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and apply for a duplicate copy of the license. Once notified, the Bureau will forward the information and material needed to apply for and process a duplicate license.

Renewing Your Driver's License*:* About 45 days before a driver's license expires, a renewal notice is mailed to the driver's most recent address on file at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. If you do not notify us of any address change, you may not receive a renewal notice. It is unlawful to drive a motor vehicle with an expired license.

Change of Name or Address*:* If your name or address changes from that given on your license, Maine law requires that you notify the Bureau of Motor Vehicles within 30 days of the change.

Loss of Driving Privileges

Maintaining Your Driver's License

Remember, having a driver's license is a privilege that can be taken away at any time if you drive inappropriately.

Secretary of State's Authority

The Secretary of State has the authority to impose restrictions on your driver's license when it appears necessary. One of the more common restrictions is the requirement that a licensee who has corrective lenses must wear them while driving. Restrictions apply also as to time of day and location of use. Driving in violation of any restrictions is unlawful.

The Secretary of State may require you to appear for a license examination or hearing at any time, even after you have been issued a driver's license. The Secretary may also require you to furnish a statement from your doctor regarding your physical or mental condition.

The Secretary of State is authorized to suspend your license upon receipt of a written adverse report of your driving from a law enforcement officer or other member of the public.

Suspension of a Minor's License or Permit

Any person who has signed the application of a minor for an operator's license or instruction permit can, thereafter, file, with the Secretary of State, a notarized written request asking that the minor's license or instruction permit be suspended.

License Penalties and Suspension

The Secretary of State and the courts have a great deal of authority in suspending your operator's license. Driving is a privilege, and only those who prove themselves to be safe may retain that privilege.

Your Driver's License May Be Taken Away by Revocation or Suspension

Revocation: While rarely used, it means that your license and driving privilege is formally terminated and you would have to apply for a new license at the end of the revocation period.

Typical offenses requiring revocation are:

- Vehicular Manslaughter. Revocation for at least 5 years. If alcohol is involved revocation is permanent.
- Habitual Offender. Revocation for at least one year.

Suspension: Suspensions temporarily withdraw driving privileges. A person whose license has been suspended will not be allowed to drive until a written notice of reinstatement is received.

Typical offenses requiring suspension are:

- Failure to file required insurance.
- Failure to appear in court for a traffic citation.
- Operating Under the Influence (O.U.I.).
- Administrative License Suspension.

Administrative License Suspension

Rules for administrative license suspensions relating to demerit point accumulation, convictions and adjudications are the most commonly utilized tool for the control of driver behavior in Maine.

Suspension Periods for Designated Convictions

The license or privilege to operate of any person convicted of eluding a police officer, passing a roadblock or street racing may be suspended for a period of up to 90 days.

Any person who is convicted of operating after suspension may have their license suspended for a period of 60 days.

Persons convicted of the following offenses may have their licenses suspended for a period of 30 days:

- Failure to stop for a police officer
- Leaving the scene of an accident (bodily injury)
- Operating alone on a permit
- Operating without a license (criminal offense)
- Passing a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing
- Speeding by 30 miles per hour or more over the speed limit
- Altering a license or registration certificate
- Loaning a license
- Unlawful use of a license
- Displaying a suspended license
- Falsifying an application for registration or license
- Giving false information to a police officer

Using False Identification to Obtain Liquor

This law requires a court to suspend the driver's license of any person, not yet 21 years of age, who is adjudicated of the offense of using false or fraudulent credentials to obtain liquor or gain entrance into a drinking establishment. The court is given discretionary authority to suspend the license for 30 days for a first offense and is required to suspend the license for 90 days for a second offense and one year for any subsequent offense. The Secretary of State is obligated to impose the suspension for second and subsequent offenses. The offense will carry six demerit points.

Suspension for Demerit Point Accumulation: The Maine Point System

By law, the Secretary of State is required to adopt rules establishing a uniform system of assigning demerit points for persons convicted of certain motor vehicle traffic offenses.

Once certain point levels are reached (currently 6 points), a warning is issued by the Secretary of State, and if the point total reaches 12 points or more the driver's license will be suspended. Points will be erased from a driver's record when they become one year old.

When a suspension occurs, a driver is entitled to a hearing by the Secretary of State's office. The hearing examiner may continue, modify, or rescind the earlier action taken. The person under suspension may be represented by an attorney at any hearing and the hearing decision may be appealed to Superior Court.

Eluding a Police Officer

Eluding a police officer is a serious offense. Anyone, after being requested or signaled to stop, who attempts to elude a law enforcement officer by driving a vehicle at a reckless rate of speed, resulting in a high-speed chase between the operator's vehicle and any law enforcement vehicle using a blue light and siren, is guilty of a Class C crime. If any person suffers any serious bodily injury because of the operator's attempt to elude a law enforcement officer, that operator commits a Class B crime.

Leaving the Scene of an Accident

Increase in classification for the offense of leaving the scene of a bodily injury accident from a Class D to a Class C crime, if the accident resulted in serious bodily injury or death and the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly failed to stop at the scene of the accident.

Violation Free Credit

The violation free credit system awards one point for each calendar year free of convictions or suspensions. One is permitted to accumulate up to four violation free credit points.

Continuing Driver Education

The Maine Driving Dynamics Course is an approved five-hour program designed to increase knowledge of driving hazards and the techniques to avoid these hazards. The focus is on the prevention of collisions despite adverse conditions and unsafe actions of other drivers. The course also emphasizes the dangers associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs in association with driving.

Successful completion of a Maine Driving Dynamics Course or other approved driver improvement course will deduct three points from a driver's point total. Anyone may, even with no record, receive credit for successful completion of this course, but points will be deducted only once in any twelve-month period.
Courses are conducted by trained instructors whenever and wherever there is sufficient demand. The courses are often part of the local adult and continuing education program. For further information please call the Bureau of Highway Safety at (207) 626-3840.

120 Day Suspension

Any person whose license has been suspended three times within a three-year period by the Secretary of State or by a court may be subject to a further suspension for a period up to 120 days.

Mandatory Suspensions

In addition to the discretionary powers of the Secretary of State, there are certain violations which require total mandatory suspension with no exceptions and no "work" license option. A few are listed below (for the full list, refer to M.R.S.A. Title 29-A).

- Failure to answer to a motor vehicle summons to court. Whenever a person fails to appear in court on the day specified, or fails to pay any related fine, the license will be suspended until the appearance is made or the fine is paid.
  This is one of the most common reasons for suspension. Fines **must** be paid.
- Operating under the influence, blood level 0.08% or over, or refusal to submit to a blood alcohol test require mandatory suspensions of varying terms (see Section on Alcohol).
- Driving to Endanger: Suspension for at least 30 days
- Illegal transportation, possession, or consumption of liquor by a minor in a motor vehicle: Suspension for at least 30 days.
- Illegal transportation of drugs by a minor in a motor vehicle: Suspension for at least 30 days.
- If you are responsible for accident damage and do not have liability insurance, license and registration must be suspended until proof of insurance is filed with the Secretary of State.

Revocation of a driver's license for certain crimes

This law requires the Secretary of State to revoke indefinitely the driver's licenses of individuals convicted of designated criminal offenses when the individuals used a motor vehicle to commit the offense and the operation of the vehicle caused, or created a substantial risk or fear of serious bodily injury. The designated criminal offenses, including convictions, are assault, aggravated assault, elevated aggravated assault, criminal threatening, and reckless conduct. The license revocation periods are three years for Class A, B or C crimes, two years for a Class D crime, and one year for a Class E offense.

Other Suspensions at Discretion of the Secretary of State

The license of any person whom the Secretary of State determines is incompetent to drive, e.g., adverse physical or mental impairments, may be suspended without a hearing, provided the Secretary of State has reviewed all available evidence.

Incompetence relative to physical or mental handicaps is determined in accordance with established rules (Chapter 3 of the Maine Functional Ability Profiles booklet, as amended), Physical, Emotional and Mental Competence to Operate a Motor Vehicle.

Any person whose license is suspended may request a hearing, but the suspension may remain in effect pending such a hearing.

A judge has discretionary authority to suspend the driver's license of any person found in contempt for failing to pay a fine in any criminal or civil violation proceeding. A judge may order a driver license suspension for offenses unrelated to the operation of motor vehicles.

Section 1 practice questions:

1. Who can file a request with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to suspend the license or instruction permit of a minor?
2. The illegal transportation of liquor by a minor carries a minimum suspension of how many days?
3. How many classes of driver's license are issued in Maine?
4. What are demerit points?
5. Name the violations of traffic laws which, upon conviction, carry automatic 90-day suspensions.

6. According to Maine law how many days do you have to inform the BMV of a name or address change?

SECTION 2
State Laws and Rules

Owning and Maintaining a Motor Vehicle

Just like having a driver's license, owning a motor vehicle carries many responsibilities. Motor vehicles operated on Maine's public roadways must be registered, insured, and well maintained.

Titling Your Motor Vehicle

A motor vehicle must have a title before it can be registered in Maine.

1. What is a title?

A title is a legal document which identifies ownership of a motor vehicle.

2. Why do I need a title?

To prove ownership and to show any liens (debts) on your vehicle.

3. How do I apply for a title?

If the vehicle is purchased from a Maine auto dealer, the dealer will furnish you with the blue copy of the title application which must be presented at the time of your first registration. If the vehicle was not purchased from a Maine auto dealer, a title application must be completed by you and submitted with the prior certificate of title or manufacturer's certificate of origin, properly transferred to you.

4. Who is the title given to?

If you are the owner and have no lien holder you will receive the title. If you have borrowed money to pay for the car, the bank or credit union that lent you the money will get the title.

5. Where do I keep the certificate of title?

In a safe place; never in the vehicle

6. What vehicles do not need a title under the title law?

Vehicles more than 25 years old, motorcycles with an engine size less than 300 cc and trailers with an unloaded weight of 3,000 pounds or less.

7. What should I do if my title is stolen, lost, destroyed, or mutilated?

You should make application at once for a duplicate title. Send in your mutilated or illegible Certificate of Title with the application and proper fee.

Note: If you have any questions regarding title information, please call 207-624-9000

Registering Your Vehicle

If you own any motor vehicle, mobile home, trailer, or semi-trailer driven on Maine roadways, you must register it.

1. How do I register a vehicle in Maine?

Payment of the excise tax to a municipal tax collector is the first step in registering your motor vehicle. An excise tax must be paid on all types of vehicles except semi- trailers. The amount of excise tax due depends upon the age and factory list price of the vehicle being registered. The excise tax receipt, in turn, serves as your registration application. The back of the white copy of the registration must be completed and signed before a registration can be issued. If you are less than 18 years of age a parent or guardian must also sign the registration form.

2. Where is a motor vehicle registration issued?

After payment of the excise tax, your registration and plates may be obtained by visiting any of the Motor Vehicle Branch Offices or by mailing your application and the correct fee to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, 29 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333. Most Maine municipalities issue registrations and plates as well. Check with your municipality to see if they are a participant in the state's municipal agent program.

3. How much does a motor vehicle registration cost?

The registration fee for a passenger vehicle is $35.00. A registration remains valid for one year from the month it is issued. The fee for pick-up trucks with a maximum gross vehicle weight of 6,000 pounds is also $35.00. The registration fee for larger trucks increases as the registered gross weight increases.

4. Do I need to apply for a Maine title so I can register?

At the time of first registration, an application for title must be submitted for a vehicle that is 25 years old or newer.

5. Is payment of sales tax required?

When registering any vehicle for the first time in Maine your registration application must be accompanied by a "Use Tax Certificate". This form is used to determine if any Maine sales tax is due. Any sales tax due must be paid at the time of first registration. These forms may be obtained

from any Bureau of Motor Vehicles Office or from a municipal tax collector. If the vehicle to be registered was purchased from a Maine auto dealer, the dealer will furnish you with the sales tax form, which must be presented at the time of first registration. If you have any questions concerning sales or use tax, you should contact the Sales Tax Division of Maine Revenue Service at 207-287-2336.

6. How soon after moving to Maine must I register my vehicle?

Maine law requires that a Maine motor vehicle registration must be applied for within 30 days once residence in the state of Maine is declared or established.

Insuring Your Motor Vehicle

Maine law requires every owner and operator of a motor vehicle to maintain motor vehicle liability insurance and to present evidence upon request of a law enforcement officer. Any vehicle you are operating must be insured even though you are not the owner. Therefore, you should verify and carry evidence of insurance in the vehicle. Maine law also requires Maine motorists to show evidence of insurance when you register a motor vehicle.

Acceptable forms of evidence of insurance include: a motor vehicle insurance card, a letter from an insurance company or agent showing that the vehicle is covered by a liability insurance policy, an insurance binder or an insurance policy that has a summary document that describes the vehicle insured, the name of the insured, the amount of insurance (must meet Maine's minimum liability requirements), the type of insurance coverage and the period the vehicle is covered (effective and expiration dates).

Failure to produce evidence of insurance when required can result in a charge of uninsured operation and suspension of license and registration privileges. If you are adjudicated of failure to produce evidence of insurance, you will be required to file proof of financial responsibility through an SR-22 insurance certificate or face suspension of your license and registration privileges. It is a crime to display evidence of insurance that is fictitious or altered.

If an uninsured motorist causes an injury or property damage of $1000 or more, they may not operate a vehicle until proof of financial responsibility or proper insurance have been shown. In addition, if a court judgment is obtained, driving and registration privileges are suspended until such judgment is satisfied.

***Uninsured Motorist Coverage*:** By law, all automobile liability policies written in Maine include "uninsured motorist" coverage. This protects the insured for bodily injury damages up to the limits of the Maine Financial Responsibility Law with higher limits optional.

***Assigned Risk*:** Any individual unable to procure insurance coverage through regular channels for whatever reasons can obtain coverage through the Maine Automobile Insurance Plan. All insurance companies selling automobile insurance in Maine are required by law, to participate in this shared market.

Inspecting Your Motor Vehicle

All motor vehicles bearing a Maine registration must have a current Maine inspection before being operated on any public way. These inspections must be done at an official inspection station once a year. Check with any of these stations for details. Failure to have a current inspection sticker could mean a fine and loss of points on your driver's license. Motorcycles must have a valid inspection sticker. A police officer may conduct a vehicle safety inspection at any time. In fact, Maine occasionally uses legal roadblocks for just that purpose.

Note: A motor vehicle safety check is also part of the driver examination. Examinations will not be given if vehicles do not pass the regular examination criteria, or if any doors are inoperative, seats are not securely fastened to the floor of the vehicle, or if the glove compartment door is not securely fastened in a closed position.

These are the major items that are subject to examination which must meet State inspection standards before your vehicle can pass inspection:

- **Vehicle Identification Number** - (VIN) The VIN must not be changed, removed, or hidden from view.
- **Rear View Mirror** - Must not be cracked, broken, clouded or have sharp edges.
- **Horn** - Must be loud enough to hear from 200 feet away.
- **Windshield Wipers** - Wipers and blades must be in good working condition
- **Defroster** - Fan must work and defroster must blow heated air on the windshield.
- **Turn signals, headlights, rear lights, stop lights, and plate light** - All lights must work properly, and all lenses must be of the proper color and type.
- **Brakes** - Your vehicle must have a foot brake and a parking brake. The foot brake must be able to stop the vehicle within 30 feet when the vehicle is going 20 miles per hour. The parking brake must be able to hold the vehicle on a hill.
- **Windshield and Windows** - Must not be cracked, broken, clouded, or blocked.
- **Steering and Front End** - Parts must be in good working condition and not worn.
- **Exhaust System** - All parts must be free of holes, leaks and must not make excessive noise.
- **Fuel System** - All parts must be free of holes and leaks.
- **Tires** - Must have 2/32 of an inch tread and be free of cuts, tears, or other dangerous conditions. For commercial vehicles of 10,000 pounds G.V.W., 4/32 of an inch tread is required.
- **Registration Plates** - All issued plates must be attached to the vehicle and easy to read.
- **Body or Chassis** - All parts must be present and free of rust, sharp edges, or other defects.
- **Speedometer-Odometer** - Must work properly and not be tampered with or changed.
- **Fuel Inlet** - Must not be changed in any way.
- **Catalytic Converter** - Must be properly installed and not changed in any way.

Maintaining Your Motor Vehicle

Ensuring that your car is in proper working order may help you to avoid an accident or breakdown. A car in good shape can give you an extra safety margin when you need it.

While you may need a mechanic to correct the problem, you can perform the safety check yourself.

Vehicle Maintenance

Make note of the condition of the following items whenever you drive:

- **Headlights** - Replace burned out bulbs and clean dirty lenses that can cut your night vision by more than half.
- **Signal and Brake Lights** - Replace bulbs or fuses when necessary. If these lights don't work properly you will not be able to communicate with other drivers.
- **Windows and Windshields** - Keep the glass clear, inside, and out, to reduce glare and ensure good visibility.
- **Tires** - Look for signs of worn treads and check air pressure when tires are "cold" (before you've driven very far). If your tires aren't in good shape, you'll have less control, use more gas and risk a tire blow-out.
- **Brakes** - Check to see that the pedal stays well above the floor when you step on it. Listen for scraping and squealing and be aware if your vehicle is pulling to one side when braking.
- **Steering** - If your steering wheel turns two inches or more without moving the vehicle it has too much play and you may not be able to turn fast enough to avoid a collision.
- **Windshield Wipers** - Check the wiper blades for wear and for tension on the windshield. Keep the windshield fluid bottle full and use a fluid with antifreeze in the winter. If these items are not functioning properly, your visibility will be severely limited.
- **Exhaust System** - If you hear loud noises or rattles or notice rust on the muffler or tailpipe, you should have the exhaust system checked by a mechanic. A leaky muffler improperly discharges poisonous fumes. Carbon monoxide is a deadly, odorless gas found in the exhaust of all gas-powered engines which causes weariness, headaches, dizziness, nausea and ringing in the ears. Prolonged inhalation of carbon monoxide can be fatal.
- **Vehicle Emissions** - A person may not operate a gasoline-powered motor vehicle on a public way if the motor vehicle emits visible smoke, other than water vapor, in the exhaust emission for a period more than 5 consecutive seconds.
- **Gauges** - Make sure that all your gauges are in good working order. These can serve to notify you of potentially serious problems with your vehicle, such as overheating or loss of oil pressure.
- **Suspension** - Push down on the front and rear of your vehicle. If it bounces more than twice, you may need new shocks. When shocks are worn you may have difficulty staying in your lane when driving through curves in the road.

On a regular basis, you should also check or have checked:

- Oil level
- Engine coolant
- Transmission fluid
- Brake fluid level
- Fan belt tightness and wear.

Maintaining your vehicle with frequent oil changes (every 3,000 - 5,000 miles) and periodic engine tune-ups will serve as prevention against many common motor vehicle problems as well as maximizing your car's performance.

Tools and Supplies

It is advisable to equip your car with the following items in the event of a breakdown or emergency:

- Owner's manual
- Spare tire
- Tire jack
- Lug wrench
- First aid kit
- Blanket
- Flashlight
- Road maps

Excessive Sound System Noise

A person may not operate a sound system in a vehicle on a public way at a volume that is audible at a distance greater than 25 feet and that exceeds 85 decibels or that is greater than is reasonable with due regard to the location of the vehicle and the effect on persons in proximity to the vehicle. Violation of this law is a traffic infraction and will be assessed $50 for a first offense, $100 for a 2nd offense and $150 for a 3rd or subsequent offense.

Section 2 - Practice Questions:

1. What is a title and how do you apply for one?
2. How often should I have my vehicle inspected?
3. What tax must be paid prior to registering a motor vehicle?
4. Will I need liability insurance when I register my motor vehicle?
5. Where and how do I register my motor vehicle?
6. What are some of the emergency supplies I should always have in my vehicle?

SECTION 3
Ready to Drive

Driving is one of the most dangerous things that you will ever do. It is very important for you to be in good health and make good choices when you drive. Here are some ways to be a safer driver:

Vision and Hearing

You must be able to see clearly when you drive. It is very important that you can read all traffic signs from a distance. You must see clearly so that you can quickly react to problems. If you cannot see clearly, you cannot be a safe driver.

You should have your eyes checked regularly by an optometrist and always follow their recommendations. Do not wear sunglasses or tinted glasses at night as they will reduce your, critical, nighttime vision.

Most of what you do behind the wheel is based on what you see. Good eyesight means:

- Seeing clearly: If you cannot see clearly you will have difficulty judging distances and spotting potential trouble. If so, you won't be able to react as quickly as you should.
- Good side vision: You need to see out of the corner of your eye. This lets you spot vehicles coming up on either side of you while your eyes are on the road ahead.
- Judging distance: You can see clearly and still not be able to judge distances. Good distance judgment is important in determining how far you are from other vehicles.
- Good night vision: Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble at night. Some cannot see things in a dim light. Others may have trouble with the glare of headlights. These challenges can put a driver at risk.

Have your eyes checked every year or two by a trained professional. You may never know about bad side vision or bad distance judgment unless your eyes are checked on a regular basis.

Hearing is more important to driving than many people realize. Your hearing can warn you of danger - the sound of horns, a siren, screeching tires. Sometimes you can hear a vehicle in a blind spot area that you cannot see. Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice them. Drivers who know they have hearing problems can learn to adjust. They can lean more heavily on their sight. Even people with good hearing cannot hear well if the radio is blaring. Keep the radio turned down and do not wear headsets or ear buds while driving.

Fatigue

You are fatigued when you are physically or mentally tired. It can be caused by physical or mental strain, illness, or lack of sleep. Remember, when you're tired, you can't drive as well as you do when rested. Fatigue can affect your focus. Fatigue can also make your mind and body slow down so decisions are slower and harder to make and you tend to get upset more easily. You may not react as quickly as you need to if a car suddenly stops in front of you. Do not drive if you are overly tired because you do not want to fall asleep while driving.

Wake Up to the Facts

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that each year as many as 240,000 accidents are related to sleepiness at the wheel. And in a recent survey, 25% of surveyed drivers reported having fallen asleep while driving, while one in twenty reported having had a crash due to falling asleep or being drowsy while driving. What's more, these crashes can be very serious. And here's an even more sobering thought; like driving under the influence of alcohol, drowsiness severely impairs your driving ability.

You Can't Fight Off the Sandman

Most of us believe we can control when we fall asleep. But the reality is that sleep is **not** voluntary. You can't shake it off with caffeine. You can't stave it off with loud music. And you can't hold it off simply by cracking the window for fresh air. The fact is that if you're drowsy at the wheel it's possible to fall asleep briefly and never even know it; these "micro-sleeps" or brief naps last only four to five seconds but when you're cruising along at 55 miles an hour, the tiniest nap can be fatal.

Catch Up on Your Sleep Before It Catches Up with You.

If you feel like you're not getting enough sleep, you're not alone. It's estimated that 30% to 50% of us aren't getting the amount of sleep our bodies require. The result is a "sleep debt" we owe ourselves. And the only way to erase this debt is to get more sleep. So don't be fooled by feeling alert just before you plan to drive, because as soon as you get behind the wheel and relax, your sleep debt may take over and put you in serious danger of falling asleep.

How Much Sleep Does Your Body Really Need?

Everybody has a biological need for a certain amount of sleep. It's possible you may be able to get by with as little as 6 hours. But you could be someone who requires as much as 10 hours of sleep. How can you know? For starters, you shouldn't have to rely on an alarm clock to wake you every morning; if you're getting enough sleep, your brain will wake you automatically. Here's another way to tell: do you sleep later during weekends or doze off when you're sitting up? If you do, your body is telling you something. And you owe it to your health and safety to listen by getting more sleep.

Give It a Rest for Safety

Here are some tips to help assure you arrive safely.

- Make sure you get plenty of sleep the night before leaving on a trip. Plan to drive only during the time you are normally awake. And never try to push through to your destination rather than pulling off the road and finding a safe place to rest.
- Avoid driving during your body's "downtime". Take that needed break and find a safe place to sleep between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Talk with your passenger if you have someone along for the trip to keep your mind stimulated. Trade off driving duties to allow one another to rest.

- Make sure both people in the front seats are awake. A driver who needs rest should go to the back seat, buckle up and nap. Why? When the objective is to always remain alert, it doesn't help if the person next to you is sawing logs.
- Schedule a break every two hours or 100 miles but stop sooner if you're experiencing any of the danger signs of fatigue and take a short 15 to 20-minute refresher nap.
- Check the labels on your medicine. Some medicine will cause drowsiness.
- Do not drink alcohol and drive.
- Do not take other drugs when you drive.

The Danger Signs of Drowsiness

- You must make a conscious effort to keep your eyes open.
- You want to prop your head up.
- You can't stop yawning.
- You don't remember driving the last few miles.
- You keep drifting from your lane.
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts.

If you experience even one of these symptoms, you're headed for trouble so pull off the road and find a safe place to take that needed short nap.

The best way to avoid fatigue is to get plenty of rest.

Driver Distractions

A distraction is anything that takes your mind or body away from driving. Distractions can cause crashes, injuries, and deaths. Not looking at the road or taking your hands off the steering wheel is dangerous. Anything that takes your mind away from driving is a hazard.

Try to prevent distractions before driving by turning off cell phones, setting navigation systems, eating, and grooming before you leave, and securing all loose items.



When driving:

- Do not talk on the phone and do not text.
- Don’t argue with passengers.
- Do not eat while driving.
- Be sure children are safely buckled up.
- Keep pets in a pet carrier, not loose in the vehicle.
- Eliminate things that take your mind away from driving. It is your job to drive your vehicle safely.

We live in a 24-hour-a-day, information-driven society in which instant communications is an accepted part of life. Data shows that 91% of Americans have a cell phone, and text messaging has increased over 2,200% in the last five years!

Instant communications can make businesses more efficient, increase productivity and bring other benefits to society, including rapid response to emergencies. However, the use of communication devices in moving vehicles can distract the driver's attention from the primary task of driving and lead to crashes as critical and as devastating as those caused by impaired driving or other dangerous driving behavior.

Distracted driving may now be the single largest contributing factor to traffic crashes.

An in-cab driving study of commercial truck drivers by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute indicated that by far the most dangerous distraction observed was texting. The study revealed that truck drivers who texted while driving had 23 times the risk of being involved in a crash or a near-crash incident.

Laws that prohibit cell phone use and texting have an impact on safety, but stopping the senseless crashes and deaths that distractions can cause is best accomplished by changing driver behavior.

To manage or eliminate distractions, it's important to understand the three distinct types:

Visual distractions that cause the driver to look away from the road and view something unrelated to driving, such as billboards, accident scenes, street signs and other external stimuli.

Manual distractions in which the driver removes one or both hands from the steering wheel or other driving control to perform a non-driving task, such as eating, drinking, adjusting mirrors, tuning the radio, or programming a GPS.

Cognitive distractions are mental thoughts and feelings (anger, anxiety, worry, etc.) that distract the driver and divert attention from the road.

While the news media and regulators have focused primarily on the dangers of texting and hand-held cell phone use in moving vehicles, other types of distractions are equally dangerous. *Nearly all accidents involve a combination of two or even all three types of distractions!*

Short glances at vehicle instrumentation, mirrors, installed communication devices, or other technology can be done safely if these scans are limited to less than one second and are related only to the driving task. In the rush to be on time for a pick-up or delivery deadline or to get ahead of traffic congestion we may make the sometimes-fatal mistake of attempting to multi-task behind the wheel.

Using a Cellular Telephone in Your Vehicle

When properly used cellular phones enhance driver safety and provide a mobile alert network for the community. To help ensure car phone users drive safely please follow the commonsense advice offered below.

- Recognize that driving requires your full attention.
- Pull off the road before dialing.
- Have your vehicle fitted with a hands-free or speaker phone.
- Ask a passenger in the car to place the call for you.
- For emergencies, tell the operator whether you are reporting a medical or police emergency, your exact location, and whether there appear to be injuries.
- Put portable phones in their cradles so they do not become projectiles in a crash.

A person who has not attained the age of 18 years is specifically prohibited from operating a motor vehicle while using a mobile telephone or handheld electronic device. A violation of the statute is considered a traffic infraction.

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving is dangerous. Aggressive driving includes speeding, following too close, unsafe lane changes, not signaling when you turn, and not obeying traffic controls (stop signs, yield signs, traffic signals, rail crossing signals, etc.)

Aggressive driving can harm you and others.

Don't get angry when other drivers make mistakes or act rude. Be patient and courteous to others.

Keeping Fit to Drive

Driving is one of the most complex things that people do. To do it well takes a lot of skill and judgment. When you are a new driver it will take all the ability you have to drive safely. If anything happens to lower that ability you will not drive as well. Your ability to drive is affected by:

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs are contributing factors in about 40% of all fatal crashes. Your chance of being in a crash is much greater if you drink or use drugs when driving. When learning to drive in Maine, one of the most important things to bear in mind is this: OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE IN MAINE IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT - those who fail to drive in a safe and prudent manner will be denied that privilege. In other words - if you misbehave behind the wheel, you ***WILL*** **BE SEVERELY PENALIZED.**

ONE OF THE SUREST WAYS TO LOSE YOUR LICENSE IS TO DRINK AND DRIVE.

Alcohol is a drug. It is the most used and abused drug in America today; alcohol can and has ruined the lives of untold millions. If you have been drinking, DON'T DRIVE. If you will be driving, DON'T DRINK!

To discourage drinking and driving, Maine has enacted one of the nation's toughest operating under the influence (OUI) laws. In fact, the chance of arrest and punishment is higher in Maine than in most other states!

REMEMBER: If you value your life and the lives of others, and the thought of either a criminal record or time in jail does not appeal to you - *DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!*

If you are under 21

It is illegal for those of you who have not reached the age of 21 to consume, purchase or transport any alcoholic beverage. Therefore, you may not drive after consuming any amount of alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs affect your ability to see what is happening around you. They slow your reaction to dangers and delay your reflexes.
If you are convicted of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence, you will:

- lose your driver's license for at least one year
- receive a stiff fine
- possibly spend some time in jail
- be required to pay a license reinstatement fee
- be required to complete an alcohol and other drug education, evaluation and treatment program
- if you have passengers under the age of 21 with you, your license will be suspended for an additional 180 days

Effect of Alcohol and other Impairing Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs will affect:

- *Your judgment* – Your ability to solve problems.
- *Your vision* – Your most important driving sense is your vision. Alcohol and drugs blur your vision and slow your ability to focus. They cause double vision. They reduce your ability to judge distance, speed, and movement. Vision is impacted at .02 BAC for all drivers.
- *Color Distinction* – Reduces your ability to see different colors.
- *Your reaction time* – Alcohol and other drugs lower your ability to react to danger.

Do not drive if you have consumed alcohol or other drugs. You begin losing your driving skills with the first drink. With one or more drinks you could be arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Never let someone else drive if they have been drinking.

How Drinking Impairs Driving

Driving an automobile is not the easy, carefree task as many would have you believe. Driving requires constant decision making and is, by its very nature, difficult and dangerous. Good Driving Requires:

- **Good Judgment** - Good judgment is the ability to think clearly and to make quick decisions, including proper evaluations of time, space, and distance. Alcohol impairs good judgment. The more a driver drinks, the more rapidly their judgment goes from bad to deadly.
- **Good Perception** - Good perception is the ability to see clearly and be visually aware of what is going on around you while driving. The ability to see well becomes even more important at night since normal vision is reduced by 50% because there is not enough light for your eyes to function properly. Drinking severely diminishes good perception. For instance:
    - Alcohol relaxes the eye muscles and thus reduces your ability to see when there is a sudden increase in light, such as when the headlights of an oncoming car are in your eyes. It normally takes about seven seconds for your eyes to recover from headlight glare so at 55 miles per hour that is almost the length of two football fields! The eyes of drinking drivers take significantly longer to adjust to that same glare.
    - Alcohol also affects your ability to identify objects to the side when looking ahead. After consuming alcohol, you have a reduced ability to see merging, passing or parked vehicles, and/or pedestrians or bicyclists on the side of a road.
    - Additionally, alcohol decreases your ability to judge how close or far away another vehicle or object is.
- **Emotional Control** - Having control over one's emotions enables the sober driver to use good judgment while driving. As a depressant, alcohol gradually shuts down more and more areas of the brain. As time passes, drinkers become less and less rational, more easily saddened, upset or angry and thus more likely to take risks while driving.
- **Alertness, Concentration, Coordination and Reaction Time** - Alcohol also interferes with the brain's ability to react and to concentrate. A driver who has consumed alcohol is more apt to fall asleep at the wheel or drive off the roadway. Moreover, the more a person drinks, the less control they have over coordinating body functions and movements.

Simply put, a person who has been drinking is more likely to:

- Drive too fast or too slow for prevailing conditions;
- Fail to dim headlights for oncoming traffic;
- Pass improperly - leaving insufficient clearance, taking too long, or swerving too much;
- Make frequent lane changes;
- Fail to remain in the center of the lane;
- Overshoot and/or disregard traffic signals;
- Lose alertness and adaptability in emergencies; and
- Take too long to brake.

WARNING: Worse yet, as your sight, reflexes, coordination, and judgment diminish with each sip of alcohol, you become less and less aware of it. You even develop a false sense of well-being and confidence. In short, you become a menace to yourself and everyone else on or near a roadway and you don't even realize it!!

GOOD DRIVERS DON'T DRINK!

Your likelihood of a car crash increases with each drink! Your chances of an accident increases as your BrAC rises:
Alcohol Level (See Pages 3-9 & 3-10)
0.05grams ..... 1 times
0.10grams ..... 6 times
0.15grams ..... 25 times

Over 50% of all fatally injured drivers have an alcohol level of .06 grams per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath.

Myths Concerning Alcohol

Beer vs. booze. Some people think that if they drink beer, they are consuming less alcohol than those who drink mixed drinks. They are wrong! There is approximately the same amount of alcohol in a 12 oz. can of beer as there is in a 1 oz. shot of 100 proof hard liquor or a 4 oz. glass of table wine (or a 10 oz. wine cooler).

"People get drunk only from switching drinks." WRONG! Switching doesn't usually make much of a difference. People get drunk from drinking too much. Period!

"People are friendlier when they have been drinking." WRONG! Statistics show that roughly one-half of all murders are alcohol-related, as are one-third of all suicides.

"Few women abuse alcohol" WRONG! Alcohol abuse does not discriminate. Women are just as likely to abuse alcohol as men.

Sobering up. Because everyone's liver oxidizes alcohol at a constant rate, nothing but time will sober you up. Drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, or exercising will only result in a wide awake, wet, or sweating drunk!



Alcohol and the Law

KNOW THE LAW: THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF MAINE'S OPERATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (OUI) LAW

Immediate Suspension by Secretary of State

If you are the operator of a motor vehicle and are driving with an alcohol level of 0.08 grams per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath, you are guilty of a criminal offense of operating under the influence (see description below). You will, in most instances, be promptly arrested and taken off to jail. Following your arrest and based solely on the police report and an alcohol level test result, the Secretary of State will immediately suspend your license. This suspension takes place prior to any court appearance, so while you are waiting for your appearance before a judge, you won't be driving!

Breath Alcohol Concentration

Breath alcohol (BrAC) is simply a precise way of recording the percentage of grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath concentration. It is expressed in grams and measured by chemical analysis. BrAC is determined by the amount of alcohol consumed, the time required by the body to rid itself of alcohol, and the person's weight. The body eliminates alcohol at a constant rate that cannot be changed.
Note: *Any* amount of alcohol is likely to impair your driving ability.

Alcohol Level Testing

There are two types of tests which can be used to measure alcohol level: The **Breath or Blood** test. These tests are designed to measure the quantity of alcohol in a sample of blood or breath. The results of such testing may be used as evidence in court and are fully accepted in all courts as accurate. Under current Maine law, the police officer will administer a breath test (either a Sobermeter or an Intoxilizer) unless the officer determines that it is unreasonable for such a test to be administered. If the breath test is not administered, the driver will be required to submit to a blood test which may be administered by a physician of the driver's choice if the physician is reasonably available.

"Implied Consent" What is it All About?

It is important for Maine drivers to remember that a driver's license is not a basic "right" guaranteed under our Constitution. It is a privilege that is issued and may be withdrawn at the discretion of the State.

Stated briefly, when you operate a motor vehicle in Maine you automatically consent to a test at any time the authorities wish to administer it. You will not be forced to take such a test, but your driver's license will be immediately suspended if you refuse. The suspension will be for a period of up to six years by the Secretary of State. It is an administrative suspension - that means no court action is necessary. **In addition, testimony of the arresting police officer regarding your driving performance can result in an OUI conviction even without the alcohol test results to back it up!**

The law further requires any operator of a motor vehicle to submit to a chemical test to determine drug concentration if there is probable cause to believe the driver operated a motor vehicle while under the influence of a drug other than alcohol.

The administrative suspension issued by the Secretary of State remains in effect even if you are later found innocent of OUI. Also, if you are found guilty based on the police officer's testimony, your refusal to take a test will be considered as an aggravating factor by the judge and another OUI suspension will be tacked on, so you will have a much longer penalty than if you had submitted to the test.

Remember, a test can also protect you. If you are not legally intoxicated, the test will show it.

If you are Convicted of Operating under the Influence or Operating with an Excessive Alcohol Level

1st Court Conviction If you are convicted of OUI and your alcohol level is 0.08 to 0.14 grams per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath:

- you will receive a mandatory fine of at least $500.00, $600.00 with refusal
- you lose your license for at least 150 days
- you must pay a license reinstatement fee
- be required to attend an alcohol and other drug education and treatment program

Or

If you are convicted of OUI and your alcohol level is 0.15 grams per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath or more; or you are traveling 30 mph or more over the speed limit; or you attempt to elude an officer of the law; or you refuse to take an alcohol level test; or you have a passenger under the age of 21 in the vehicle:

- you will spend at least 48 hours in jail (96 hours if you refuse a test)
- lose your license for at least 150 days
- pay a license reinstatement fee
- and be required to attend an alcohol and other drug education and treatment program

Any additional OUI offenses will result in more severe penalties. Also, all 2nd and subsequent OUI offenders will have to demonstrate proof of liability insurance before being allowed to have their license reinstated. Maine offers an ignition interlock program for OUI offenders. Contact the OUI Section (207) 624-9000 ext. 52104 for additional information.

There are no provisions whatsoever for a work or limited license during the minimum period of suspension for an OUI conviction. Offenders are initially absolutely prohibited from driving!

Conditional Licenses

When a person convicted of OUI applies for reinstatement of their license, they are issued a license under the condition that they do not operate a vehicle with any amount of alcohol in their system.

Additional Suspension:

A suspension period of 275 days must be added to the OUI or refusal suspension if a passenger under the age of 21 was in the vehicle.



After the first OUI conviction, the reinstated license is conditional for one year. After a second or subsequent conviction, it is conditional for ten years.

A conditional licensee will have their driver's license suspended for one year, without preliminary hearing, if operating a motor vehicle with any amount of alcohol.

A conditional licensee will have their driver's license suspended for the same suspension periods which apply to 2nd or 3rd OUI convictions if operating with 0.08 grams or more of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood or 210 liters of breath or higher.

A conditional licensee will have their driver's license suspended for a period of two years for any refusal to submit to an alcohol test, a penalty which will be added to any suspension previously handed down for an OUI conviction.

Other Impairing Drugs and Driving

Many drugs besides alcohol affect your ability to drive. These drugs can have the effect that alcohol does, or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs. The word "drug" commonly refers to prescription medications, over-the-counter remedies, as well as illegal substances. The use of an over-the-counter medication or a prescription drug does not constitute a defense in court. When alcohol and other drugs combine in the body, the risk of having a traffic accident becomes even greater.

Over-the-Counter Drugs

Over-the-counter drugs for headaches, colds, and allergies or for calming nerves can make you drowsy. Pep pills, “uppers” and diet pills can make you nervous, dizzy, and unable to focus. Some allergy remedies, cough syrups and cold pills which you can buy without prescription contain codeine, alcohol, antihistamines, or bromides which can affect driving. They can also affect your vision. Check the label before you take an over-the-counter drug. If you are not sure if it is safe, ask your doctor or pharmacist about side effects.

Prescription Drugs

Some prescription drugs can affect you just as alcohol does. Check the label before you take a drug. If you are not sure if it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

1. **Amphetamines.** Amphetamines are used as stimulants, but they can decrease one's ability to concentrate and cause hallucinations. Also, when the effect wears off, one is likely to be very tired and depressed.
2. **Tranquilizers.** These drugs can cause dizziness or drowsiness when combined with alcohol. They can cause heart failure, dangerously lower blood pressure, and cut off the flow of oxygen to the brain.

3. **Barbiturates.** Barbiturates are sedatives used primarily to help one to sleep. Excessive use can produce drowsiness, confusion, lack of coordination, tremors, and difficulty in thinking clearly.
4. **Marijuana.** Studies show that users of marijuana have more arrests for traffic violations than other drivers. Use of marijuana can cause drowsiness and inability to judge time and space. Also, some users report that they tend to concentrate on only one object at a time, ignoring other objects around them.

Illegal Drugs

Hard drugs. Hard drugs such as morphine, opium, cocaine, and heroin are narcotics. These drugs have the power to make users completely unaware of, or indifferent to, their surroundings. Other side effects include dizziness, incoherence, nausea and vomiting. Illegal drugs can affect your reflexes, judgment, vision, and alertness just like alcohol.

Combining Alcohol and Other Drugs

The Drug-Alcohol Mix. Many times, worse than alcohol or drugs used alone is the use of alcohol and drugs at the same time. The combined influence of these two substances can produce dangerous effects on the mind and body, often resulting in death.

Never drink when you are taking other drugs. Drugs can increase the effects of alcohol. They can also add effects of their own. You should not drink alcohol or use drugs and then drive.

It is extremely dangerous to drive under the influence of any drug, legal or otherwise. If you are convicted of driving in this condition you will be subject to the same punishments as those for driving under the influence of alcohol. Additionally, being found in possession of illegal drugs or illegal transportation of drugs by a minor may result in severe penalties.

Vehicle Seizure

A person arrested for operating under the influence or operating after suspension if the suspension was for a previous OUI or OUI offense, is subject to vehicle seizure and payment of any towing and storage fees as well as a fine and jail time. This means that you could lose not only your freedom, but your vehicle as well.

Drivers Involved in Fatal Accidents

- Every driver involved in a fatal motor vehicle accident or an accident where a death is likely to occur must submit to a chemical test. Failure to do so will result in a one- year license suspension.
- If the Secretary of State is satisfied that a driver, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, negligently operated a motor vehicle in such a manner as to cause the death of any person, the Secretary of State shall immediately suspend that operator's license for at least 1 year. This suspension will be consecutive to any suspension imposed for refusal to submit to a chemical test.

- Moreover, a conviction for vehicular homicide in criminal court will result in an extended prison term and a revocation of your driver's license for at least 5 years. If you were under the influence of intoxicants at the time of the offense, your license will be revoked permanently.

Open Container Law

The operator of a vehicle on a public way
is in violation of law if the operator or a passenger in the passenger area of the vehicle consumes alcohol or possesses an open alcoholic container.

Exceptions:

- The operator or a passenger possesses an open alcoholic beverage container in a vehicle not equipped with a trunk if the open alcoholic beverage container is located behind the last upright seat of the vehicle or in an area not normally occupied by the operator or passenger.
- A passenger transported for a fee consumes alcohol or possesses an alcoholic beverage container in a vehicle designed for the for-hire transportation of passengers other than a taxicab.
- A passenger possesses an open alcoholic beverage container, or a passenger consumes alcohol in the living quarters of a motor home, trailer, semi-trailer or truck camper.
- The operator or the operator's employer holds a valid off-premise catering license and alcohol is being transported either to or from a catered event.

REMEMBER: Any conviction of OUI Results in a Criminal Record!!

Operating Under the Influence is Costly, in Fact One Drink Over the Legal Limit Could Cost Well Over $7,000:

Towing Charges	$50.00
Bail bond	$40.00
Lawyer	$2000.00
Fine	$500.00
Alcohol Education course	$300.00
3-Year Insurance Surcharge	$4000.00
Loss of Work Time (Jail)	$300.00
License Reinstatement Fee	$50.00
Total	$7240.00

Special Notice for Teenagers and Young Adults

The leading cause of death for young people in the United States (ages 16 to 24) is alcohol related automobile accidents. Approximately 8,500 young adults are killed and an additional 40,000 are crippled or disfigured every year due to drinking and driving in this country.

Remember, alcohol is a drug, a drug which has damaged or destroyed the lives of tens of millions of drinkers and their families. **Alcohol is the Most Dangerous and Widely Used Drug in the United States Today.**

Though one or two drinks may make some people feel livelier, alcohol is a depressant and the more you take in, the more your brain is put to sleep. Once absorbed into your blood stream, alcohol travels to all parts of your body. An abusive drinker is likely to have many serious physical problems because of excessive use of alcohol.

Moreover, you can have fun, relax, and enjoy life without drinking. Ultimately, whether you choose to drink is up to you. You must, however, be aware that it is ***illegal*** for you to buy alcohol if you are less than 21 years of age. Furthermore, it is ***illegal*** for you to transport alcohol in a motor vehicle unless in the scope of employment or at the request of a parent or guardian. It is illegal to transport illegal drugs in a motor vehicle at any time.

If you are ever found to be operating a motor vehicle with any amount of alcohol in your blood (or refuse to submit to the blood or breath test) **you will lose your driver's license for at least one year,** and if convicted of OUI, receive a fine and possibly a jail sentence.

NOTE: Regarding Maine's OUI laws, all licenses issued to minors (people under 21 years of age) are considered provisional and subject to immediate suspension until the individual attains the age of 21.

IN ADDITION

- A criminal record has seldom ever been considered an asset when applying for a job, college entry, military service, or credit.
- Overall costs associated with OUI offenses (i.e. fines, increased insurance charges, court costs) are, in most instances, much more prohibitive for teenagers than they are for older, more financially secure adults - $7,240.00 is a lot harder to come by for someone who is either unemployed or making minimum wage.

Over half of the young people killed in alcohol related crashes were not the ones who were drinking! Protect your future.
Don't drink and drive, and *don't* ride along with anyone who has.
Get home safe so call a taxi - catch a bus - call a friend or relative!

Could you live with yourself if you killed or injured someone while driving after drinking? When you drive, you are responsible for the safety of your passengers, other drivers on the road, and pedestrians. You can protect your family and friends not only by not drinking and driving yourself, but by encouraging others to do likewise.

MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION: CHOOSE LIFE!!

Emotions

Emotions can affect your ability to think. They affect your ability to see and respond to hazards as well. It is more difficult to drive well when you are worried, excited, afraid, angry, or sad.

Ways to deal with your emotions:

- Give yourself time to cool off. Take a short walk or a nap. Stay off the road until you feel more in control.
- Give yourself extra driving time. Leave early.
- Have someone else drive.

Your Health

Any health problem can affect your driving ability such as a bad cold, infection, or a virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough, or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not "up to par" let someone else do the driving.

With short-term illnesses, you must decide for yourself if you can safely drive. With long-term conditions that could affect your driving the Bureau of Motor Vehicles will share in that decision. The driver's license examiner can help you decide when and how you may safely drive and whether you need any special equipment. Many people with long-term medical conditions or disabilities are licensed to drive in Maine.

Medical conditions and disabilities that are evaluated include, but are not limited to:

- Conditions that affect alertness: For example, diabetes, heart problems, epilepsy, and severe lung disorders may reduce alertness. However, if the condition is shown to be stable and well controlled you may be licensed to drive in Maine.
- Physical disabilities: Many people drive with, for example, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, amputation of limbs, paralysis, or Parkinsonism. Some people will need additional training and perhaps special equipment on the vehicle which may result in a restriction on a license.
- Vision and hearing problems

If your medical condition has changed, or you have started to use special equipment, a driving evaluation may be required. An examiner will need to assess your driving abilities to determine if you can continue to handle the vehicle safely and retain your license.

Section 3 Practice Questions:

1. What is the BrAC level which denotes operating under the influence (O.U.I.) in Maine for people under 21 years of age.
2. What is the legal BrAC level for determining O.U.I. in those aged 21 and older in Maine?
3. What does "implied consent" mean?
4. What drug is the most damaging and widely used in the United States today?
5. True or false? An O.U.I. offense could cost you more than $7,000.
6. List the three distinct types of driving distractions?

SECTION 4
Before You Drive

Adjusting Your Seat

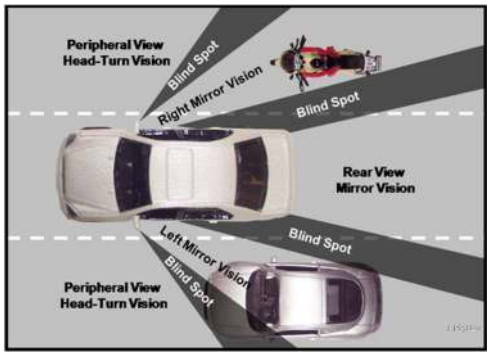
Sit straight up with your back against the seat and feet on the floor. Adjust your seat and mirrors so you can clearly see all around the vehicle. You should be sitting so you can easily reach the foot pedals. Proper seat adjustment will allow you to comfortably reach the steering wheel while leaving enough space for airbag deployment in a crash. Here are some general rules to follow when adjusting your seat:

- Adjust the seat so that you are high enough to see the road. If the seat is too low, use a seat cushion. Don't move the seat so far forward that you can't steer properly.
- You should be able to move your foot easily from the brake to the gas pedal while keeping your heel on the floor.
- The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than your shoulders but should also be below your chin level.
- Leave 10 inches between your chest and the steering wheel because of the airbag. Do not lean the seat back.
- Your head rest should contact the back of your head above the level of your ears.

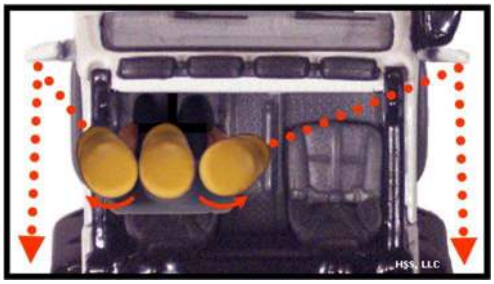


Adjusting Your Mirrors

- Adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the rear window. If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set for the time of day you are driving and use it to guard against glare from the headlights of cars behind you. Adjust the rearview and side mirrors before you start driving because in heavy traffic, when you really need them, you won't have time to adjust them.



Adjust outside mirrors to give maximum view to the side and rear. Here's how to adjust your outside mirrors. To set the left side mirror, rest your head against the closed left window. Set the mirror so you can barely see the rear left edge of your vehicle.



- To set the right-side mirror, lean to the right so your head is directly below the rearview mirror. Set the mirror so that you can barely see the right side of your vehicle.

Using Safety Belts

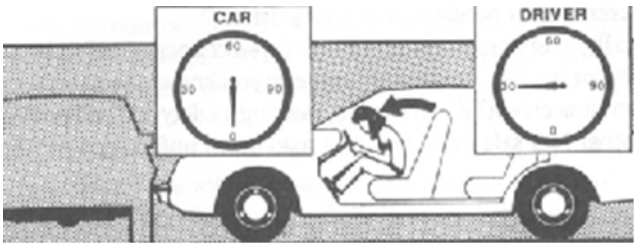
Always fasten your safety belt. Everyone in your vehicle must have a fastened safety belt or child safety seat. Safety belts reduce injuries and deaths in crashes. They keep you from being thrown from the vehicle. Your chances of surviving a crash are up to five times greater if you stay inside the protection of your car.

In Maine it is against the law to drive without wearing a safety belt.



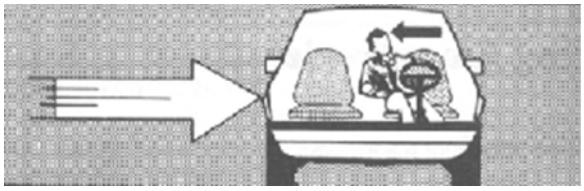
You're in better shape to handle an emergency if you are wearing safety belts. If you wear a lap belt your chances of coming out of a collision alive are about twice as good as if you do not. If you are wearing both lap belt and shoulder strap your chances are three to four times as good. They keep you from being thrown from the car. Safety belts also help the driver control the car. Here's how:

- They keep you from moving around on the seat at sudden stops and turns. They keep you behind the wheel no matter what happens. You can't control your car if you slide from behind the wheel.
- They slow your body down with your car. If you are not wearing safety belts and have a collision, here's what happens:



Your car stops but you keep going at the same speed you were traveling, until you hit the dashboard or windshield. At 30 MPH, this is like hitting the ground from the top of a three-story building.

- They help you to stay alert by keeping you from slouching while you drive. They also help to keep you from getting tired by cutting down on the effort needed to keep your body in the seat as the car bounces and turns.



If you were struck from the side, the impact could push you across the seat. Safety belts keep you in position so you can control the car.

The only way that safety belts can do all these things is if they are buckled. There is no time to buckle them when an emergency happens. You must do it before you start the car.

NOTE: Approximately 45,000 people die in motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. each year. Such crashes are the primary cause of death for people between the ages of 1 and 34. Statistically, every citizen has a one in three chance of being in a serious accident in his or her life. When used properly lap and shoulder belts can reduce the risk of a serious or fatal injury by 40-55%.

Despite these statistics, more than half of all adult Americans don't buckle up. Young people are even less likely to do so, it's estimated that less than a quarter of all teens use safety belts.

To wear the safety belt properly:

- Wear the shoulder harness across your shoulder and chest. Adjust the shoulder strap so it is snug but just loose enough to let your fist go between the belt and your chest. The shoulder harness should **not** be under your arm or behind your back. This can cause internal injuries during a crash.
- Keep the lap belt tight, but comfortable, across your lap and hips. Make sure it is below your stomach and rests on your hip bones. This will help keep you from sliding out of the safety belt during a crash.
- If you wear safety belts like this, they will be comfortable, and they will give you plenty of protection.



Safety belts should be worn even if you have air bags. Many vehicles are now equipped with airbags which will inflate upon frontal impact. Airbags give you extra protection when the front of your vehicle hits, or is hit by, an object. You must also use your safety belts to gain full protection during a crash.

Air Bags

Air bags work along with safety belts. In a crash, air bags and safety belts help keep your head and upper body from hitting the steering wheel or dash. Safety belts and air bags will help protect you during a vehicle crash. Safety belts hold you in place during a collision. Always wear safety belts, even if you have air bags.

Read your owner's manual for specific information about your air bags.

Keeping Children Safe

Make sure child safety seats are used correctly. All children age 12 and under must be in the back seat. Never place a rear-facing child safety seat in front of an active passenger air bag. To ensure that children ride safely, remember these rules.

- Read your vehicle owner's manual and child restraint directions for specific information. The safety seat should be held properly in place by the vehicle's safety belts and the child should be correctly buckled in the child safety seat.

- The back seat is the safest place for a child of any age to ride. Infants, under age 2, should always ride in the back seat facing the rear. Those two years and older front facing.
- Make sure everyone is buckled up. Unbuckled occupants can be hurt or killed by an airbag.
- 12-year old and younger should always ride in the rear seat.
- Children near airbags are at risk, particularly those in rear-facing child safety seats. Never place an infant in the front seat of a car with a passenger side airbag.
- All drivers or front seat passengers, especially short, pregnant, or elderly ones should sit as far back as possible from the steering wheel or dashboard.

Use of safety belts - passengers, operators.

1. Definitions.

- "Child safety seat" means a child safety seat that meets the standards described in the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.
- "Federally approved child restraint system" means a child passenger restraint system that is designed to elevate a child to enable that child to properly sit in a federally approved lap and shoulder belt system and that meets the requirements of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

2. Children under 55 pounds. When a child who weighs less than 55 pounds is being transported in a motor vehicle that is required by the United States Department of Transportation to be equipped with safety belts, the operator must have the child properly secured in a child safety seat.



3. Passengers less than 18 years of age.

- The operator shall ensure that a child who weighs at least 55 pounds but less than 80 pounds and who is less than 8 years of age is properly secured in a federally approved child restraint system.
- The operator shall ensure that a child who is less than 18 years of age but more than 8 years of age or who is less than 18 years of age and more than 4 feet, 9 inches in height is properly secured in a seat belt unless that child is required to be secured in a child restraint system or in a child safety seat.
- The operator shall ensure that a child who is less than 12 years of age and who weighs less than 100 pounds is properly secured in the rear seat of a vehicle, if possible.

4. Other passengers 18 years of age and older; operators. When a person 18 years of age or older is a passenger in a vehicle that is required by the United States Department of Transportation to be equipped with seat belts that passenger must be properly secured in a seat belt. The operator of a vehicle that is required by the United States Department of Transportation to be equipped with seat belts must also be secured in a (the operator's) seat belt.

5. Exceptions.

- A rural mail carrier of the United States Postal Service is not required to be secured in a seat belt while engaged in the delivery of mail.
- The operator of a taxicab or a limousine is not responsible for securing in a seat belt a passenger transported for a fee.
- A newspaper delivery person is not required to be secured in a seat belt while engaged in the actual delivery of newspapers from a vehicle or performing newspaper delivery duties that require frequent entry into and exit from a vehicle.

Section 4 Practice Questions:

1. In Maine children and adults up to what age are required to wear safety belts or be secured in a safety seat when riding in an automobile?
2. True or false? Seat belts help you to stay alert.
3. Approximately how many people die each year in motor vehicle accidents in the United States?
4. True or false? If your vehicle has air bags then the use of safety belts is <u>not</u> required.
5. True or false? When used properly, lap and shoulder belts can reduce the risk of a serious or fatal injury by 40-55%.
6. Why is it recommended that the driver should set their seat back so there is at least 10 inches of space between their body and the steering wheel?

SECTION 5

Getting Started

Starting the Engine



Check your owner's manual for how to start the vehicle. Be sure the vehicle is in "P" (park). To start the engine, apply the brake, turn the ignition to the on position to check the lights and gauges (fuel level, ABS, air bags, etc.). Turn the ignition switch to start (engage the engine), turn on the low beam headlights, and lock the doors.

Moving Forward

Put the vehicle in "D" (drive). Check ahead and check for traffic to the sides and behind. Signal and then gradually accelerate. The top of your foot should be on the gas pedal while your heel remains on the floor.

Basic Operating Procedures: Manual Transmission

The key to smooth clutch operation is learning to sense the friction point. This is the point when, as you let up the clutch pedal, the engine and the transmission engage. As you continue to let up the clutch, you must match the forward (or backward) motion of the car with an increase in pressure on the gas pedal.
Follow these steps to put the car in motion:

1. Press the brake pedal with your right foot. With your left foot, press the clutch pedal to the floor.
2. Shift into first gear.
3. Release the parking brake.
4. Switch on your turn signal to indicate the direction you plan to move.
5. Check for traffic in your rear-view and side-view mirrors. Look over your shoulder to check blind spots.
6. Slowly let the clutch up to the friction point. Remember to look towards the roadway and not down at your feet or hands!
7. Move your right foot from the brake to the accelerator.
8. As you press down gently on the accelerator, slowly let up the clutch pedal all the way.

If the car jerks forward, you either released the clutch abruptly, or you pressed too hard on the gas pedal. If the car lurches and the engine stalls, you've not fed the engine enough gas.

How can you use each forward gear?

Your selection of gears depends on the power and speed you need for various driving tasks. First gear gives the power needed to set a car in motion. Second gear lets you go 15 to 25 mph, depending on the horsepower of the engine and on whether the transmission is a 3,4, or 5-speed. You can also use second gear to start on ice or drive in heavy snow. Third gear, in cars with 3-

speed transmissions, is generally used for all speeds over 25 mph. If a car has a 4- or 5-speed transmission and a small engine, third is used at speeds up to 30 or 40 mph. Use of fourth gear is for driving above 35 mph on a flat roadway. When driving uphill, you may need to achieve 40 mph or more before shifting to fourth or fifth gear.

Shifting to a higher gear

1. Accelerate to a speed appropriate for the gear you want to be in.
2. Press the clutch pedal to the floor.
3. Release the accelerator.
4. Shift to the next higher gear.
5. Press again on the accelerator. Release the clutch pedal part way.
6. Let the clutch pedal up all the way while continuing to accelerate.

Downshifting

There are several reasons to downshift: to gain power, accelerate, steer effectively, slowing the car on a down slope (except when the road is slippery), and to slow down or stop. To shift to a lower gear, follow these steps:

1. Release the accelerator. (If you also want to slow down, press the brake pedal)
2. Press the clutch pedal to the floor.
3. Shift to the next lower gear. (A sudden decrease in speed may require you to shift to an even lower gear - as when braking sharply and downshifting from fourth gear to second)
4. Release the clutch pedal to the friction point while pressing down on the accelerator as necessary.

Holding the car in place

Learning to move a manual shift car forward after stopping on an uphill grade takes practice. To keep the car from rolling backward:

1. Set the parking brake.
2. Press the clutch to the floor, and shift into first gear.
3. Let the clutch pedal up to the friction point and press gently on the accelerator.
4. Release the parking brake as you begin to feel the car pulling forward.
5. Press the accelerator as you let up the clutch pedal.
6. Accelerate in first gear until you have gained enough speed to shift into second gear.

Stopping

Check your mirrors for traffic to the rear. Move your foot to the brake pedal. Press steadily and smoothly until your vehicle comes to a stop. If in a manual transmission vehicle, you will also depress the clutch while coming to a stop.

Signaling When You Slow Down or Stop Unexpectedly

Your brake lights let people know that you are slowing down. If you are going to stop or slow down at a place where another driver doesn't expect it, tap your brake pedal three or four times quickly in order to signal your intention to the driver behind you.

Steering

Always turn the steering wheel in the direction you want to go. This works whether you are going forward or in reverse.

Hand Position

Place your hands on the steering wheel and imagine that it is a clock. Put your hands at 9 and 3 or 8 and 4 to avoid injury from an air bag deployment and for best control. Grip the steering wheel firmly but gently. Use your fingers, not the palms of your hands when steering. Keep your thumbs up along the face of the steering wheel. To maintain better vehicle control never hold the inside of the wheel when driving.

Backing

To safely back up:

- Check behind the vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects are hard to see from the driver's seat.
- Start the vehicle. Apply the brake and shift to reverse. Grasp the steering wheel at 12 o'clock with your left hand. Put your right arm on the back of the passenger seat and look through the rear window. Your mirrors do not show the area directly behind your vehicle and a back-up camera provides a limited view so do not depend solely on your mirrors or a back-up camera while backing.



- Back slowly. It is harder to steer while backing. Steer in the direction you want the rear of the vehicle to move. If turning while backing, make quick checks to the front and sides. Back no faster than a slow walk. Continue looking to the rear until you are fully stopped.



Because it is hard to see while you are backing, try to do as little backing as possible. Avoid backing into traffic. When entering a driveway or parking space, back into it unless signs forbid it. That way you will be going forward when you pull out.

Conservation

Avoid excessive idling. The average car uses a cup of gas every six minutes when idling. When you stop or start the car, don't idle for more than one minute. Driving slowly for the first few minutes is a more efficient way to warm the motor. Idling wastes an estimated 6 billion gallons of fuel each year. It creates pollutants that are linked to cancer; heart and lung diseases, such as asthma; as well as impaired brain development in children and cognitive decline in older adults. Many states, counties, and municipalities (including some in Maine) have ordinances limiting idling.

Section 5 practice questions:

1. Why is it recommended that you grip the steering wheel at the 3 and 9 position?
2. True or false? The rule of turning the steering wheel in the direction you want to go only applies when going forward.
3. How should you communicate to drivers to the rear when you will be slowing down or stopping unexpectedly?
4. True or false? Your entire foot should be used when applying the gas pedal.
5. When idling the average car uses how much gas every 6 minutes?
6. When backing your vehicle how fast should you go?

SECTION 6

Rules of the Road

Operating a Motor Vehicle

Driving a motor vehicle is a serious responsibility and rules and guidelines alone are not sufficient to make you a good driver. While respect for the law is essential, to be a good driver you must also possess an accommodating attitude toward others as well as an ample sense of responsibility.

Traffic laws and procedures are designed to prevent accidents and to keep traffic moving. Obeying these guidelines always will go a long way toward making you a safe and prudent driver. There is, however, some risk involved in all driving. To minimize this risk, you should rely not only on the law, but on paying careful attention to everything going on around you.

The following sections summarize traffic laws and prudent driving practices and procedures.

Yielding Right-Of-Way

Right-of-way rules tell you and other drivers how to proceed. When there are no signs, symbols, or police present set rules will determine who has right-of-way when two or more streets come together. They also cover other situations.

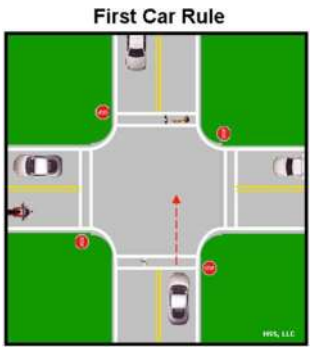
Even though right-of-way rules have the force of law, a good driver never depends exclusively on them for safety. A driver who has the right of way should use it sensibly, never insist on it. Never assume that you have the right-of-way. Always look at the situation and think about your own safety.



Yield the right-of-way to:

- At a 4-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first gets to go first (of course all vehicles must stop).
- If two cars approach an intersection at the same time from opposite directions and one driver is signaling for a turn, the right-of-way belongs to the car going straight.
- The driver on your right at a four-way stop has the right-of-way if both of you arrive at the same time beside each other.

- Cars entering from a private drive or road must yield to any vehicle or pedestrian on a public way. If you are entering a street or highway you must do so without interfering with other traffic.



- Drivers already on an interstate highway, if you are on the entrance ramp, have the right-of-way.

- Wait for all moving traffic to pass when starting from a parked position.

- Do not pass any vehicle that has stopped for pedestrians in a crosswalk.

- If two cars enter an uncontrolled intersection at about the same time, yield to the car on your right.

- When approaching an intersection, yield the right-of-way to vehicles which have already entered the intersection.

- When entering a traffic circle, the vehicle which is already in the circle has the right- of-way.

- You must yield to emergency vehicles approaching from any direction when they are sounding a siren and emitting a flashing light. You must immediately drive to the right side of the roadway, clear of any intersection, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed. Failure to do so is a Class E crime.

- Motor vehicle operators turning left must yield to bicycle and roller ski operators approaching from the opposite direction, and may not turn left under those circumstances unless they can do so safely and without interfering with bicycle/roller ski operation.

When to yield the right-of-way for waiting pedestrians:

- When pedestrians are in a marked crosswalk and there are no traffic lights or police at the intersection.
- When the car is turning a corner and the pedestrians are crossing with the light.
- When the car is crossing a sidewalk. Cars coming out of driveway or alley must stop before the sidewalk and wait for pedestrians and traffic.
- Always yield the right-of-way to school children crossing a street.

Traffic Controls

Traffic controls include traffic signals, signs, and road markings. They also include directions from law enforcement, highway workers and school crossing guards. An operator may not drive a motor vehicle through a parking area to avoid obeying the requirements of a traffic control device.

Traffic Signals

Traffic lights are usually at intersections. They are red, yellow, and green from top to bottom. If traffic lights are horizontal, the red light is on the left, the yellow light is in the middle and the green light is on the right. Some locations have single green, yellow or red lights.



GREEN Traffic Light: **GO.** You may go through with caution if the way is clear of traffic and pedestrians.

YELLOW Traffic Light*:* **Caution.** The light is about to change to red. Begin to slow down. A yellow light clears the intersection before the light turns red.

RED Traffic Light*:* **STOP.** You must stop before entering the intersection. You must wait behind any stop line or crosswalk until the light turns green. A right turn at a red light is permitted, after stopping, unless posted otherwise. Vehicles making a right turn on red must yield to pedestrians and all vehicle traffic.

Flashing YELLOW Traffic Light – Slow down and proceed with caution. Be prepared to stop for any traffic. Flashing yellow lights can also be found at construction areas and on some vehicles as well as at some intersections.

Flashing RED Traffic Light –Stop and look both ways before entering the intersection. Sometimes flashing red lights mark a railroad crossing. Sometimes those crossings have gates or barriers. Stop and wait until the flashing light stops and barriers are raised before proceeding.

Lighted Arrows

The color of the lighted arrow means the same thing that it does in a traffic light.

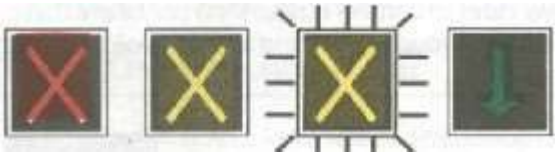
A red light with a green arrow means you may go cautiously in the direction of the arrow, yielding to all other vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

A steady yellow arrow clears the turning traffic at an intersection before the light turns red.

A steady green arrow pointed upwards means you may go straight ahead.

A steady red arrow means traffic making the turn indicated by the arrow must stop until the arrow changes to green.

When there is more than one traffic light obey the one that is directly over your lane.



Lane Use Control Lights: Special overhead lights are sometimes used to indicate which lanes of a highway may be used at certain times:

Steady Red "X": Do not drive in this lane.
Steady Yellow "X": Clear this lane, signal is about to change to red.
Flashing Yellow "X": This lane may only be used for a left turn.
Green Arrow: You may use this lane.

Traffic Signs

Traffic signs tell you about rules, hazards, and road locations. They also give highway directions and show where road services are.

Warning Signs - These signs warn of danger ahead. They are usually diamond shaped. They are usually yellow with black lettering or symbols. Some common signs:


Intersection Ahead


Side Road Ahead


T-Intersection Ahead



No Passing Zone


Curvy Road Ahead


Right Curve


Divided Highway Begins


Divided Highway Ends


Lane Ends


Merging Traffic


Added Lane


Traffic Signal Ahead


Stop Sign Ahead


Sharp Curve Ahead



Advisory Speed Around Curve


School Zone


Pedestrian Crossing



Share the Road with Bicycles


Bicycle Crossing


Slippery When Wet

Railroad Crossings - Most railroad crossings have signs or signals. Some common ones:



- A round yellow warning sign with an "X" symbol and black "RR." The sign cautions you to slow down, look and listen for a train or railroad vehicle. Be prepared to stop.



- A white, X-shaped sign with "Railroad Crossing." If a train or railroad vehicle is coming you must stop behind the stop line or before the tracks.
- At crossings with more than one track the number of tracks may be posted. Not all crossings with more than one track have these signs so always look for more than one track, train, or railroad vehicle at each crossing.



When crossing railroad tracks, look both ways and cross the tracks quickly. Do not stop on the railroad tracks. If a train is crossing, wait until the train is well down the track before you drive ahead. If there are lights and gates, wait until they show it is safe to cross. If you must stop for traffic or a signal near a railroad crossing, wait at the stop line before the tracks (not on the tracks).

Work Zone Signs - Are orange diamond or rectangular shaped signs with black letters or symbols. These signs warn you of work zones and people working on or near the road. The warnings include workers ahead, reduced speed, detours, slow moving road machinery or surface changes.



Flagger Ahead



Workers Ahead



Road Construction Ahead



One Lane Road Ahead

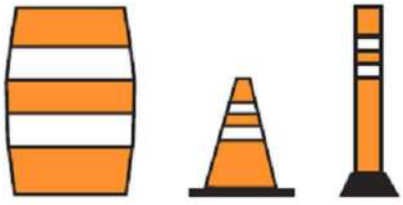


Detour

A flagger may direct traffic in a work zone. You must do as the flagger directs.

Barriers keep you from entering closed roads or other areas where there is danger. If there is a short-term traffic signal, stop at the white line (if there is one.)





Barrel

Cone

Tube



Barrier



Road Closed

Slowdown in work zones and be ready to stop quickly. Do not tailgate. Fines for speeding in a work zone are doubled.

Regulatory Signs - These signs are square, rectangular, or may have a special shape. They are white with black, red, or green letters or symbols. These signs tell you about traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking, and other special situations. Some signs have a red circle with a red slash across the symbol. This means you cannot do certain things.

Common regulatory signs are:



No Left Turn



No Right Turn



No U-Turn



Straight



Left Turn Only



Straight or Turn Right



Speed Limit Signs - These black and white signs indicate the legal speed if conditions are ideal.



Stop Sign - A stop sign has eight sides (octagon) and is red with white letters. You must stop behind the stop line or crosswalk if there is one. If there is no crosswalk or stop line, stop at the point nearest the intersection to enable you to see approaching traffic on the intersecting roadway. The stop must be made before any portion of your vehicle has entered the intersection. If it is a four-way stop, wait your turn. In all cases you must wait until it is safe before proceeding. Look for vehicles and pedestrians and, if any are present, yield the right-of-way.



Yield Sign - A yield sign is a red and white down-pointing triangle with red letters (some old signs may still be yellow with black letters). It means you should slow down to wait for traffic to clear on the road you are entering or crossing. You must slow and yield to traffic or pedestrians that have the right-of-way before proceeding.



Shared Center Lane- Left Turn Only – This sign marks a lane that is only for left turning vehicles. It is not for through traffic or for passing other vehicles. Traffic travelling in either direction may use this lane.



One-Way Street -Traffic moves only in the direction of the arrow. Do not turn in the opposite direction of the arrow. Never drive the wrong way on a one-way street.

If you see police directing traffic, do as they direct. Police have authority to direct all traffic and pedestrians as needed. It is illegal to refuse or fail to obey police orders. You can lose your license for trying to flee or escape a police officer. When police are not present, traffic signals and signs have the authority of law. It is unlawful to remove or deface traffic signs.

Guide Signs **-** These signs are square or rectangular and are green, brown, or blue. They advise you of intersecting roads. They help direct you to cities and towns. They mark points of interest. They can also help you find hospitals, service stations, restaurants, and hotels.







Route Number Signs - The shape and color of route number signs indicate the type of roadway: interstate, U.S., state, city, county, or local road. When planning a trip, use a map or GPS to determine the route. During the trip, follow the route signs to prevent from getting lost in an unfamiliar area.



Interstate Route



U.S. Route

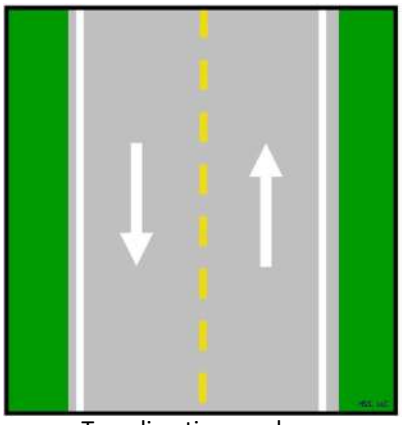


State Route

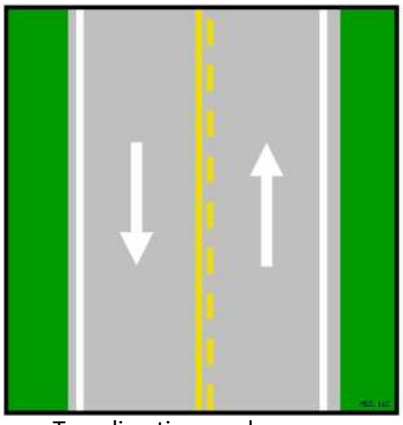
Pavement Markings

Marks painted on the road give you directions or warnings. They divide lanes and show where you may pass other vehicles or change lanes. They also mark turn lanes and cross walks. They show where to stop for signs or traffic signals.

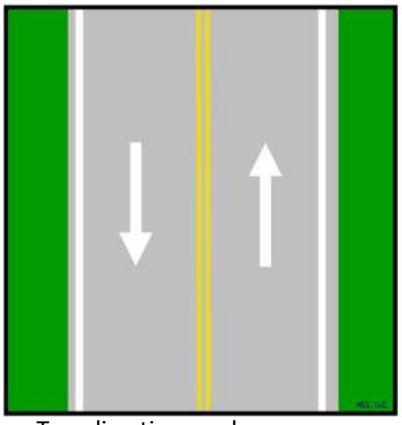
Yellow Lane Markings



Two direction roadway, passing permitted

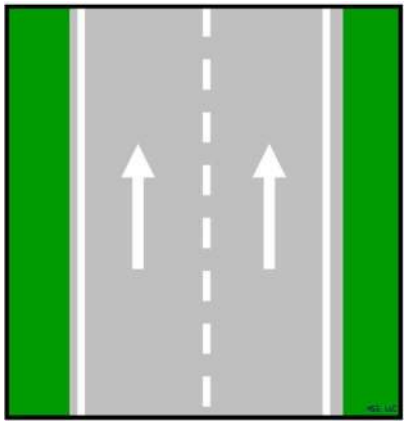


Two direction roadway, passing permitted when dashed line is on your side



Two direction roadway, passing prohibited in both directions

White Lane Markings



One direction roadway, passing permitted

Use of Lanes

Different traffic lanes should be used for different purposes, there are correct lanes for through traffic, passing and turning.

Lanes for Through Traffic: During ordinary driving, drive in the lane that has the smoothest flow of traffic - the least stopping and starting. Smooth driving allows you to keep more distance between yourself and other drivers. It also helps save gas.

If there are three or more lanes going in one direction, the middle lane, or lanes, is usually the smoothest. The left lane is for drivers who want to pass or turn left. The right lane is used by drivers who go slower or who are entering or turning off the road.

If a road has only two lanes in one direction, the right lane generally has the smoothest traffic flow. However, some roads have special left turn lanes at intersections. This helps keep traffic moving smoothly in both directions.

Lanes for Passing: In general, you should pass on the left. Passing on the right can be dangerous because other drivers don't expect it. Cars on the right side are also more difficult for other drivers to see.

- Never pass a vehicle by driving off the pavement or main traveled portion of the roadway.
- Never pass a vehicle using a lane designated by an official sign or traffic control device that limits the use of the center lane to turning only.

Never pass another motor vehicle on the right side except:

- When the car you are passing is making a left turn and there is room for two or more lanes to move in the same direction.
- When the car you are passing is in the left lane on a street or highway with two or more marked lanes for traffic to move in the same direction.

Lane Restrictions

On any section of the Maine Turnpike or Interstate-95 that consists of three lanes in either direction, trucks, including truck tractors, but excluding pickup trucks may only operate in the two farthest right-hand lanes.

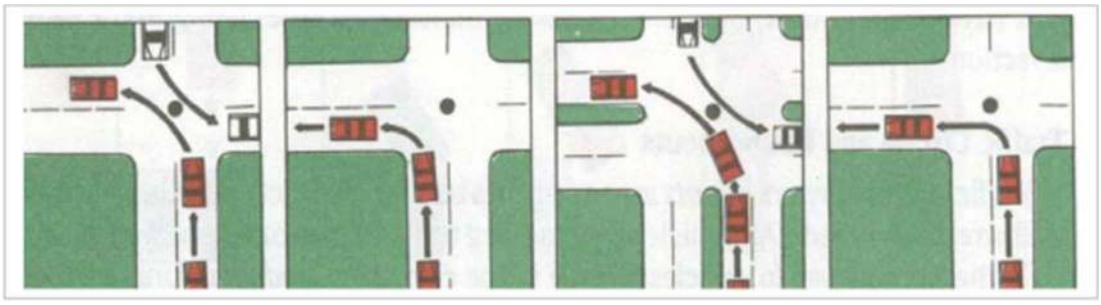
Lanes for Turning: The safest way to turn is by crossing as few lanes of traffic as you can. Here are two rules to help you:

Start from the lane closest to where you want to go. If you are turning left approach in the lane closest to the center line, pull out toward the midpoint of the intersection and wait with wheels straight, until it's clear to turn. Keep just left of the midpoint as you turn and turn into the leftmost lane going in your direction. For right turns, start from the rightmost lane and keep as close to the curb as possible throughout the turn.

When making: Left Turns

1. From two-way to two-way street.
2. From one-way to one-way street.
3. From divided to divided highway.
4. From two-way to one-way street

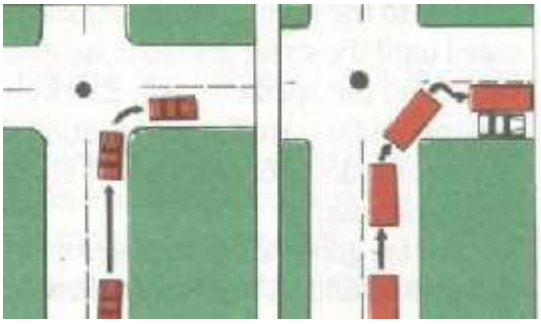
1. 2. 3. 4.



Right Turns

1. Cars
2. Larger Vehicles

1. 2.



Turn into the lane that is closest to the lane from which you came. When making a left turn, turn into the leftmost lane going in your direction whether on a divided highway, 2- way or one-way street. When making a right turn, turn into the rightmost lane going in your direction.

When making a left turn from a one-way street, you must set up close to the left curb or edge of roadway. If you need to move into another lane, make the lane change only after you have finished your turn and when traffic is clear.

Don't turn the wheels before you make the turn. If you are struck from behind, you may be pushed forward into oncoming traffic.

If you have already started through an intersection you should keep going. If you have started to make a turn you should follow through as last second changes can cause accidents. If you have made a mistake, go on to the next intersection and work your way back to where you wanted to go.

Sign and Road Markings

Many streets have signs that show what each of the lanes is to be used for:



Cars in left lane must turn left. Cars in right lane must go straight or turn right.



Cars in left lane may turn left or go straight. Cars in center lane must go straight. Cars in right lane must turn right.

Solid white lines painted on the roadway separate lanes of traffic going in the same direction that have different uses. They also discourage changing lanes. Broken white lines simply indicate multiple lanes going in the same direction and they allow safe lane changes.

Crosswalks and Stop Lines

Crosswalks show where pedestrians may cross the road. At a stop sign or traffic signal, you must stop behind the stop line or crosswalk. If crosswalks are not marked, then you must stop before the intersection close enough to see approaching traffic. If there is a stop line before the crosswalk, you must stop at the stop line.

Here are common crosswalk signs and markings.

Crosswalks
Crosswalks are special areas set aside for people to cross the street. They are often marked with yellow or white lines. There may be warning signs.
Most crosswalks are at intersections, but sometimes they are in the middle of a block.
Be alert for school zones in the country as well as in town. You must stop when the school crossing guard directs you and remember to always yield the right-of-way to any schoolchildren crossing the street.



Pedestrian Crossing / School Zone



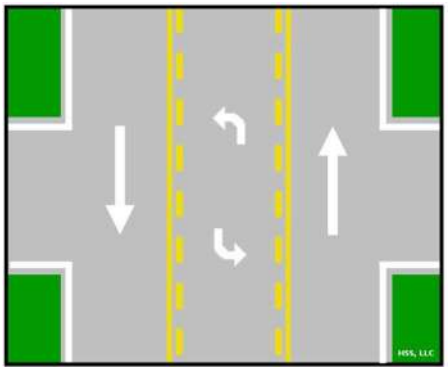
Stop Lines

Stop lines are usually painted on the roadway at a distance from an intersection to give pedestrians a walkway in front of stopped cars. Stop your car before the painted stop lines.

When turning a corner, watch for people who are about to cross the street. Remember, if you have a green light, the light may also be green for them. You must yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk, marked or unmarked.

A person who is **blind** or **visually impaired** may use a white cane as a means for safe and independent travel. This person may also be led by a guide dog. In either case, this person always has the right of way. If you see anyone in the roadway with a white cane or guide dog, stop at least 10 feet away and wait until the person is out of danger. An operator who fails to yield the right-of-way to a visually impaired pedestrian is liable for a traffic infraction with a minimum $50 and maximum $1,000 fine.

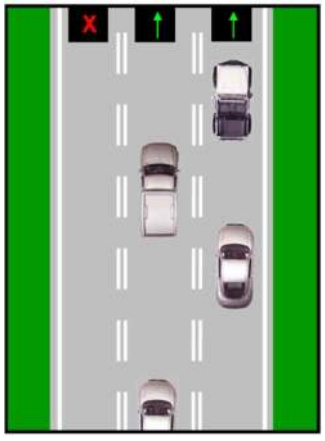
Other Lane Controls



Shared Center Left Turn Lane

On many streets where it is hard to make a left turn safely, there is a shared left turn lane located in the middle of the roadway. When using a shared left turn lane check your mirrors and for vehicles ahead, signal left and check your left blind spot. Steer smoothly into the shared left turn lane, when traffic is clear, make your left turn.

Reversible Lanes



A reversible lane may be used during rush hours. The lanes may have double dashed yellow lines to either side. Signals above the lanes show which lane is safe to travel. Some travel lanes are designed to carry traffic in one direction at certain times and in the opposite direction at other times. Before entering the lane, check to see which lanes can be used at that time. A green arrow means you can use the lane. A red X means you cannot use the lane.

Section 6 practice questions:

1. At a four way stop, who has the right of way?
2. What does a red line through a red circle mean?
3. What is the difference between a solid white line on the roadway and a broken one?
4. When about to move into a shared left turn lane are you required to check the blind spot area before moving into the lane?
5. When approaching an intersection that has a stop line and/or a crosswalk where should you stop?
6. When making a turn onto a roadway with multiple lanes going in your direction which lane should you initially turn into?

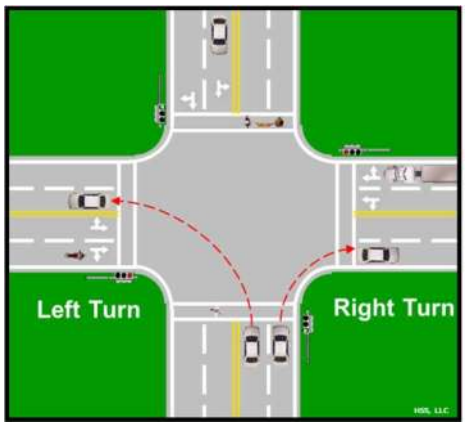
SECTION 7

General Driving

Turning

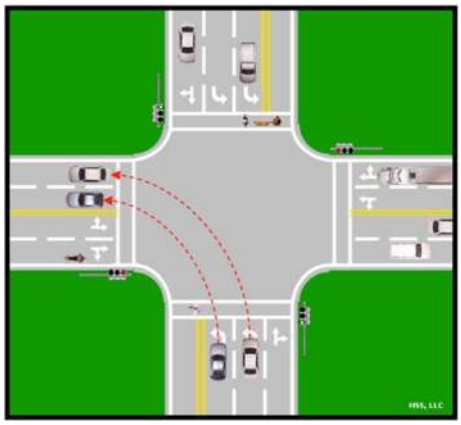
When turning:

- Check for traffic controls, pedestrians, and other vehicles. Signal your turn.
- Enter the closest lane in the direction you want to go.
- Look as far as you can through the turn.
- Accelerate smoothly and make sure your signal cancels.



Right turns

- Do not swing wide to the left before a right turn.
- Always turn right from the rightmost portion of your lane.



Left turns

- Yield to oncoming traffic.
- Always turn left from the leftmost portion of your lane.

Multiple left or right turn lanes

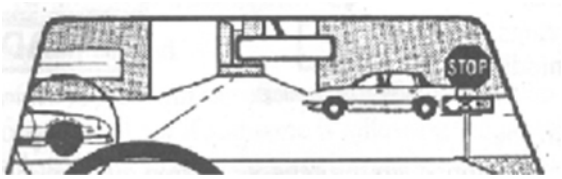
- Enter the same lane from which you are turning.
- Stay in that lane until the turn is finished.
-

Intersections

An intersection is any place where roads meet, so that one line of traffic meets or crosses another. It includes:

- Cross streets and side streets,
- Freeway entrances,
- Driveway and shopping center entrances.

Here are some of the rules to follow anytime you approach an intersection.



Make sure you look both ways, even when you cross a one-way street (Someone might be going the wrong way).

At all intersections slow down and search for:

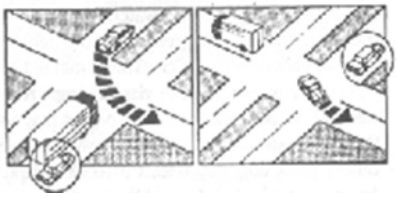
- traffic controls,
- oncoming traffic and cross traffic,
- pedestrians and bicyclists,
- road conditions, and
- objects that block your view.

Do not rely on others to obey traffic signals or signs. At an intersection, look left and right, even if other traffic has a red light or stop sign because someone may run either one. They may not yield the right of way when required so be prepared to do so to avoid a crash.

Before moving after a stop, check for traffic and bicyclists. Look left, then right, then left again before you enter the intersection. When a light turns green, make sure your path of travel is clear and there is no cross traffic.

Never think that another driver will give you any extra space. Do not turn into a lane just because an oncoming vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn after they pass you or they may have forgotten to turn their signal off.

Make sure you have a good view. If your view of a cross street is blocked by buildings, trees, a fence or a row of parked cars, edge forward slowly until you can see.


Don't start to turn yet! Wait until traffic clears.

If a line of cars in one lane is blocking your view of another lane, wait until the cars pass. If you try to look by edging the front of your car into the other lane, you may get hit.

Traffic Circles and Roundabouts

A traffic circle is a circular intersection. Traffic circles or *roundabouts* are sometimes built at intersections of heavily traveled streets and roads. All vehicles approaching traffic circles or *roundabouts* must yield the right- of-way to vehicles already in the circle or *roundabout* unless otherwise directed by a police officer or by traffic control devices. Enter a roundabout by proceeding to the right around the raised center island (counterclockwise). Raised pavement on the inside of the circle enables trucks to negotiate around the small island, while vehicles stay in the outer travel lane. At large traffic circles, called rotaries, vehicles also proceed to the right or

counterclockwise around the center island at a slow rate of speed until the street desired is approached. Drivers must yield the right-of- way to a vehicle on the operator's left. Exit from the circle or *roundabout* is then made by making a right turn. Extreme caution should be used when entering and leaving traffic circles or *roundabouts* and strict attention to highway signs and pavement markings is necessary.

If you are going to be turning from a rotary circle within two exits, it is suggested that you should be in the right most lane (This applies unless otherwise indicated by road markings on pavement or traffic signs specifying the lane to be used. When using traffic circles:

- Slow down to enter the circle. This sign warns you that there is a traffic circle ahead.
- Yield to the traffic in the circle.
- Enter a traffic circle to the right and follow the lane lines.
- Signal your exit.





Changing Lanes

When changing lanes:

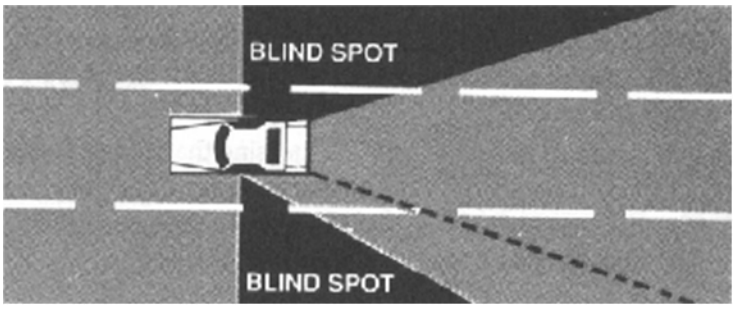
- Check your mirrors.
- Check your "blind spot" by turning your head and looking over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move. Blind spots are areas around your vehicle caused by headrests and door pillars that block your vision. Blind spots are also areas that are not covered by your mirrors.
- Whenever you change lanes, give the correct signal and look over your shoulder in the direction you are about to move to make sure you do not get in the way of a vehicle that is already there. ***Never rely solely on your rearview mirrors when making a lane change.***
- Find a gap in traffic, signal, and then look again before changing lanes. Adjust speed and move into the other lane. Cancel your turn signal after completing a lane change.

Changing lanes includes:

- Changing lanes from one lane to another on a roadway,
- Entering a freeway or a highway from an entrance lane,
- Entering the roadway from the curb or shoulder of the road.

Here are some important things to do when you check for traffic behind you:

- Glance in the rearview and side mirrors. Make sure that nobody is preparing to pass you.
- Look over your left or right shoulder. Look towards the side you will be moving. Be sure no one is near the left (or right) rear corner of your car. These areas are called "blind spots" because your mirrors do not cover these areas. You must turn your head and look.
- Be alert for motorcycles or bicycles.
- Check quickly. Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. The vehicle ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking behind.
- No matter what kind of car you have, or how well you adjust your mirrors, there are still blind spots so never rely solely on your mirrors. It is the car you don't see that is the most dangerous.
- Check all lanes. Someone in another lane may plan to move into the same spot you do.
- Always signal what you intend to do at least 100 feet before making a change.



Expressway driving

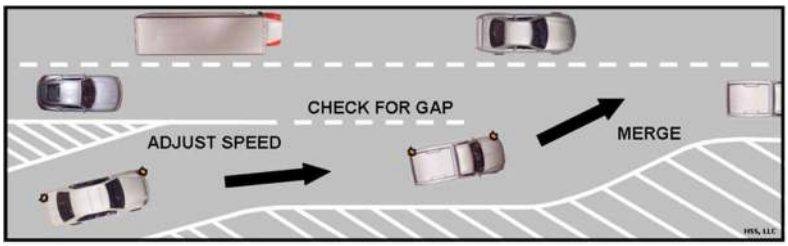
Entering a Multi-lane Highway

While expressway driving involves the same basic skills as driving on a secondary road, the increase in speed makes caution even more crucial. The severity of an accident increases dramatically at higher speeds!

- Communicate by using your left turn signal.
- Most expressways are reached by an entrance ramp and an acceleration lane. The acceleration lane, which varies in length, enables you to get up to the speed of traffic before merging into the regular lanes.
- Find a gap in traffic and merge left. Before merging, use your rear-view mirror and look over your shoulder to ensure that the way is clear.
- Cancel your turn signal once entry is complete.

  Some entrances to some expressways do not have acceleration lanes. In this case you should stop before entering, wait for a break in the traffic and then speed up and merge.

Proceed carefully as cars which are already on the expressway are traveling very fast and do not have to yield to you. Do not impede the flow of traffic by pulling into the lane before you have built up enough speed.



Expressway passing

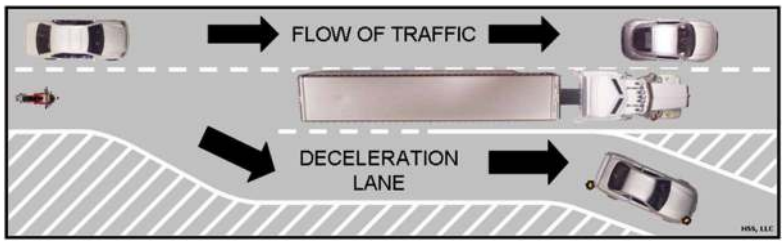
You should always be in the right-hand lane unless you are passing. Do not pass on the right or pass on the shoulder of the roadway.

Sudden movements at high speeds are very dangerous. Use your mirrors and check over your shoulder to make sure that the way is clear before passing. Mirrors alone are not sufficient due to "blind spots". If a car is directly behind you in an adjacent lane, it will not be visible in the side mirrors. Always notify other vehicles of your intent to pass by using the appropriate blinker.

Safe passing depends on cooperation between drivers. Don't speed up when being passed. Pass as quickly and safely as possible. Do not stay alongside another vehicle any longer than you must. Don't cut in too soon after passing someone. Make sure you can see the entire passed vehicle in your rearview mirror before moving back to the right lane. Never cruise along in the blind spot of the vehicle next to you.

Exiting a Multi-lane Highway

Get into the right-hand lane well before reaching the exit. Signal your intent to exit. Don't slow down on the main expressway, rather, start slowing down as soon as you enter the deceleration lane and continue slowing at the beginning of the exit ramp. Slow down to the posted speed on the ramp or you may have difficulty getting around sharp curves. Make sure your signal cancels.



Stopping on an expressway

Never stop on an expressway unless it is an emergency. If an emergency should occur, use the proper signal, and pull off the pavement as far as the shoulder permits. Raise your hood to signal your need for assistance. Under no circumstance should you ever back up, walk or stand on the traveled portion of the expressway.

Expressway Hypnosis

Traveling for long distances on straight roads may make you drowsy or unaware of what is happening around you. This is an extremely dangerous situation; concentration is vitally important whenever you are behind the wheel. Make every effort to stay alert on the highway:

1. Keep the interior of the car cool.
2. Constantly scan the road ahead of you.
3. Talk to your companion or listen to music.
4. Vary your speed slightly from time to time.

At the first sign of drowsiness you must act and don't try to fight it. Pull over at the nearest rest stop or service area and either walk around and stretch, take a nap, or if possible, change drivers. Don't depend on stay-awake drugs which are likely to make your driving even more hazardous.

Passing (non expressway):

Space to Pass

Whenever you pass another car on a two-lane road you must enter a lane that belongs to oncoming cars. Therefore, it's important to watch for other vehicles. Signal, and then pass when the way is clear.

At highway speeds of 50 to 55 mph, you need from 10 to 12 seconds to complete a pass safely.

You must judge whether or not you have enough room to pass whenever you approach (1) an oncoming car, (2) a hill or a curve, (3) an intersection, or (4) a roadway obstruction.

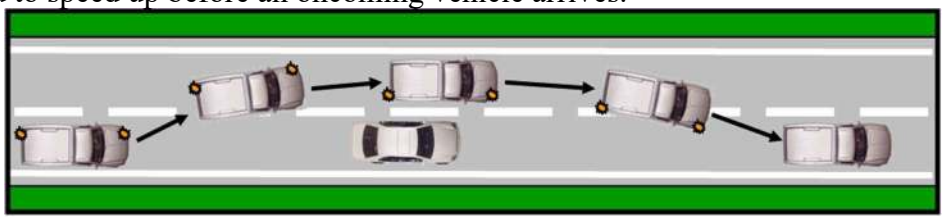
To pass:

- Check for oncoming traffic.
- Check your mirrors and check over your shoulder for vehicles following or passing you.
- Signal.
- Steer into the passing (left) lane.
- Adjust speed.
- Wait until you can see the entire passed vehicle in your rearview mirror.
- Signal and check over your shoulder before returning to the right lane.
- Steer into the right lane, adjust your speed and cancel your turn signal.

When being passed:

- Stay in your lane.
- Hold a steady speed to allow the pass to occur.

  If the passing vehicle changes their mind, and decides to drop back behind you, you may need to speed up before an oncoming vehicle arrives.



Never pass:



- If there is an oncoming vehicle. At highway speeds you will travel over 800 feet in 10 to 12 seconds. So will an oncoming car. That means you need over 1600 feet or about one-third of a mile to pass safely (use your odometer to get to know what this distance looks like). It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming cars or motorcycles one-third of a mile away. They don't seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A car far enough away seems to be standing still. In fact, it may be too close for you start a pass.
- If your view is blocked by a curve or hill. Any time your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume that there is an oncoming car just out of sight. Therefore, you should treat a curve or a hill as you do an oncoming car. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.
- At intersections. Do not pass where someone is likely to enter or cross the road. Passing is dangerous at intersections, crossroads, and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people and cars is blocked by the car you are passing.
- When approaching a railroad crossing or bridge

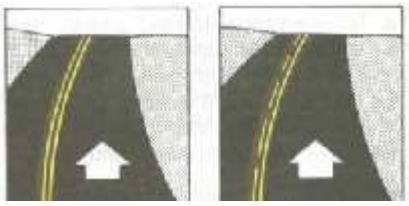
Lane Restrictions. Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other road users to move over into your lane. You might lose your space for passing due to:

- People or bikers near the road,
- A narrow bridge,
- A patch of ice, broken pavement, or something on the road.

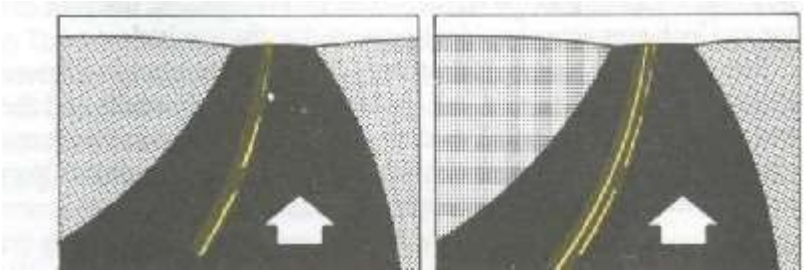
Space to Return. Don't pull out to pass unless you know you have enough space to return. Don't count on having enough time to pass several cars at once. And don't count on other drivers to make room for your return.

Signs and Markings. Yellow road markings divide lanes of traffic going in opposite directions. Many roads have lane markings that tell when you cannot see far enough to pass.

Maine law requires that you complete a pass before you reach the beginning of a no passing zone.



You should not pass when there is a solid center line on your side of the road.



You may pass if there is a broken center line on your side of the road. Pass only if there are no oncoming cars in the passing lanes.

Lane markings and signs can tell you when it is unsafe to pass. Only you can tell when it is safe to pass.



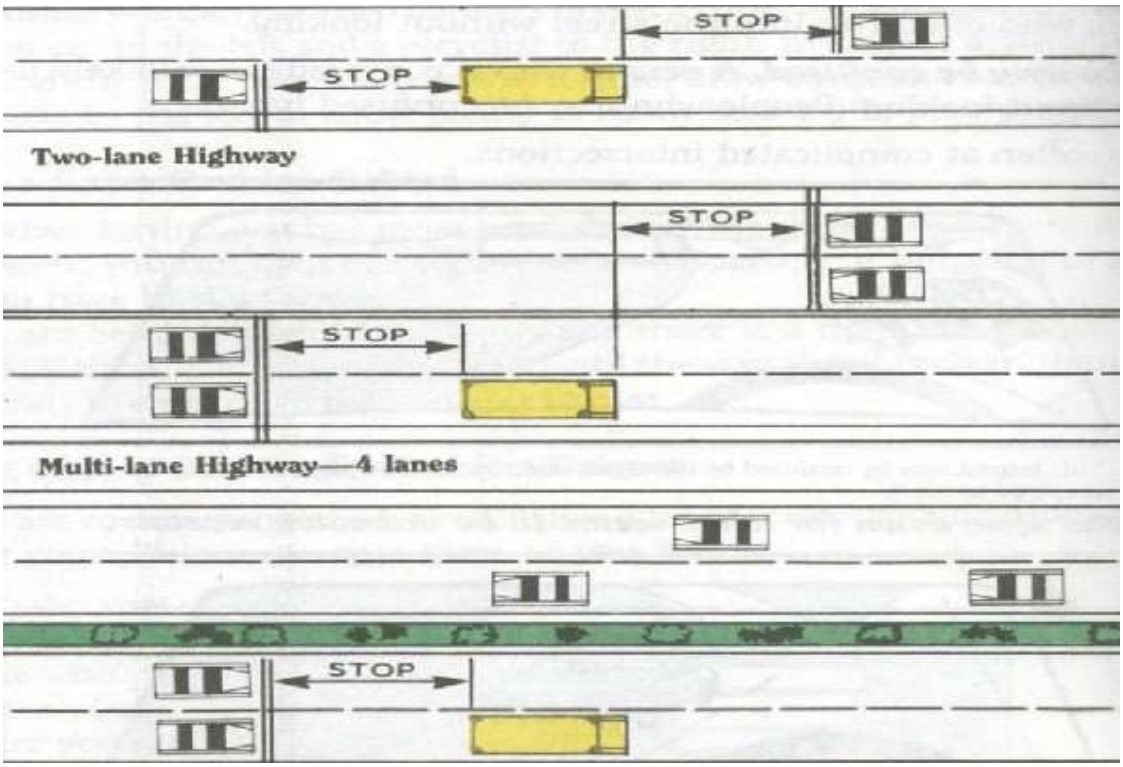
You may not pass where a yellow pennant NO PASSING ZONE sign appears on the left of the road or a rectangular white (regulatory) DO NOT PASS sign appears on the right of the road.

When passing bicyclists, slow down and give them as much space as you can. Maine law requires that there be at least three feet of space between the right side of your vehicle and the bicycle as you pass.

Rules for School Buses

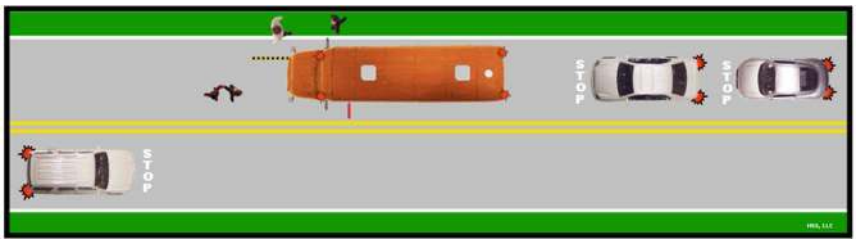
Where there are school buses, there are usually children. And children are likely to do the unexpected.

It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus with red lights flashing on school property, on any undivided highway or parking area in Maine. If you are approaching a stopped school bus from either direction, with its red lights flashing, you must bring your vehicle to a complete stop to the front or to the rear of the school bus and wait while children are getting on or off the bus. You must not proceed until the bus resumes motion or until signaled by the school bus driver to do so. **Violations carry severe penalties.**



Multi-lane Divided Highway

You must stop for a school bus with red lights flashing and/or stop arm extended. After the red lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm is no longer visible you may go ahead slowly while watching for children. If the roadway has a solid divider between you and the bus, you do not have to stop.



Parking

You must make sure that your vehicle is not a hazard when it is parked. When you park on a public road, make sure you do not get in the way of traffic. You must park parallel to the road except where angle parking lines are painted on the roadway. Leave at least two feet of space between your car and vehicles parked in front or behind.

- Always park in a marked parking area.
- Move as far away from the driving lanes as possible. If there is a roadside shoulder, pull as far onto it as you can. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can (and no more than 18 inches away)

- Make sure your car can't move. Set your parking brake and shift gears to park (first or reverse in a manual shift car).
- If you are parked on a hill: Turn wheels so that if the car moves downhill the wheels will be stopped by the curb. Or, if there is no curb, the wheels will turn the car off the road (not into traffic). Turn the wheels to the right when parking downhill or uphill without a curb. Turn the wheels to the left when parking uphill with a curb.
- Avoid traffic. Get out of your car on the curb side if you can. If you must use the street side, check for traffic behind you, especially bicycles, before you open the door.
- Secure your car. Turn off the engine and remove the key when you leave a car. If the car will be out of your sight you would be wise to lock it.

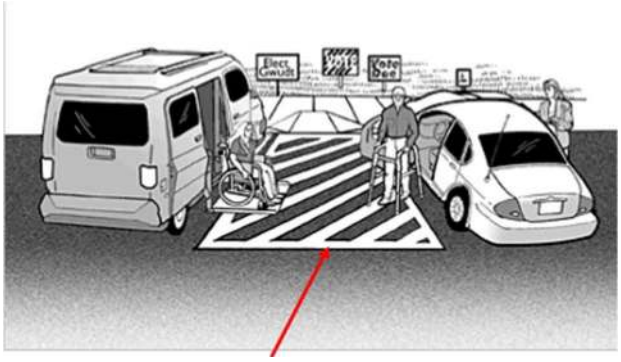
Some municipal ordinances do not allow you to park:

- In an area reserved for persons with disabilities unless you have a special parking permit or plates for the disabled ($100 Fine). In addition, State law prohibits misuse of disability plates and placards ($100 Fine).
- In a loading zone.
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- Within 15 feet of a driveway entrance to a fire station or directly across from the entrance.
- Within 15 feet of a crosswalk.
- At an entrance to a school, church, theater, hotel, hospital, or public place during hours designated.

When is it acceptable to park in a disability parking spot with an access aisle?

A person parking in a disability parking spot, with an access aisle, will utilize the aisle to enter or exit the vehicle. A disability plate or placard must be displayed.

- Used when the access aisle is needed to enter or exit the vehicle when using a platform lift or other mobility device.



Access Aisle
Parking in an access aisle is prohibited.

Misuse of an access aisle is considered a traffic infraction and subject to a fine of not less than $200.00.

For additional information regarding the issuance of disability plates and disability parking placards in the State of Maine, please contact the Bureau of Motor Vehicles at (207) 624-9000, extension 52149.



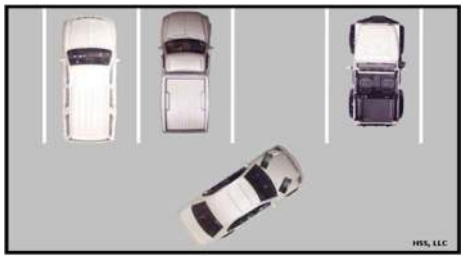
No-Parking Zones - Check for signs or painted curbs that may ban or limit parking. Some no parking zones are indicated by colored curb markings.

Perpendicular and Angle Parking

- When entering:
  - Find a parking space and check traffic.
  - Signal.
  - Center your vehicle in the parking space.
  - Move to the front of the space and stop.
- When exiting:
  - Check for traffic.
  - Continue to check traffic and back up until your front bumper clears the vehicle beside you.
  - Turn the steering wheel sharply in the direction you want the rear of your vehicle to move.
  - When your vehicle clears the parking space stop. Shift to drive and move ahead.



Angle Parking

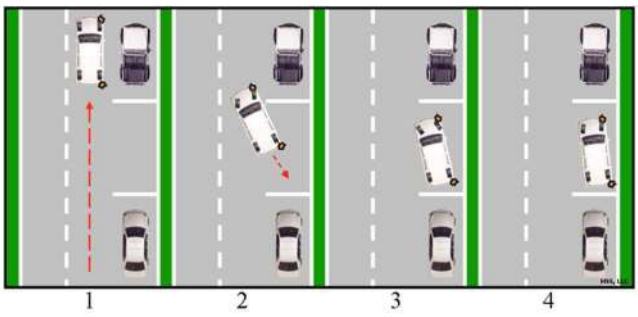


Perpendicular Parking

Parallel Parking/Offset Backing

When entering:

- Find a parking space. Check for traffic and signal.
- Pull up parallel to the vehicle you will be parking behind. Stop even with that vehicle but about 2 feet away from it.



- When traffic is clear, shift to reverse and look to the rear.
- Turn wheels sharply right, look over your right shoulder and back slowly toward the car behind.
- Continue backing until your front door passes the back bumper of the car ahead, quickly straighten the wheels and continue to back straight.
- When clear of the car ahead, turn wheels sharply left and back slowly to car behind.
- Stop before touching the bumper of the vehicle behind you.
- Turn wheels sharply right and pull forward toward the center of the parking space.
- Straighten wheels unless you are on a hill. You should be about 6 inches from the curb but not more than 18 inches away from the curb when done parking.
- Adjustments to this method, depending on the size of your vehicle, may be required but practice is always the key.

When exiting an offset or parallel parking space:

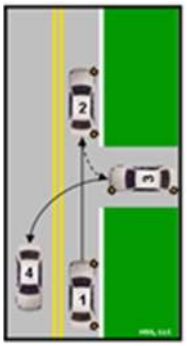
- Check traffic and apply the brake. Shift to reverse and back up close to the vehicle parked behind you.
- Check for traffic and signal. Shift to drive and move forward slowly. Steer out into the roadway.
- Make sure that the front bumper of your vehicle will clear the vehicle ahead. If not, shift to reverse and readjust.
- Move quickly into the traffic lane when the doorpost of your vehicle clears the rear bumper of the vehicle ahead of you.

Starting from a Parking Place

If parked on the right-hand side of the road, after starting your vehicle, look over your left shoulder (not through your rearview mirror only). When the way is clear give the appropriate signal and pull slowly out into the street and into the correct lane as soon as possible. Do the same from left curb, except look over your right shoulder as you enter the roadway.

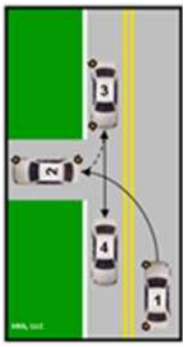
Regardless of the type of street or position, always make sure that the lane which you are about to enter is free of traffic for a safe distance.

Turning Around



Two-point Turnaround – A street, alley or driveway can be used to turn around when you cannot drive around the block.

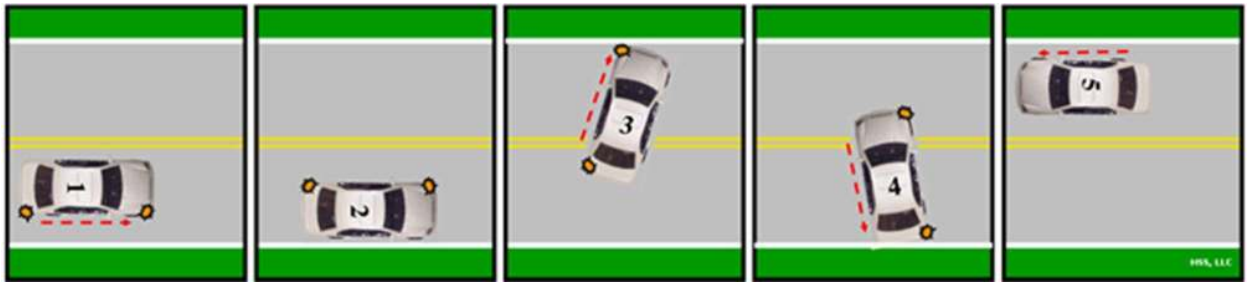
- ***Reverse Two-Point Turnaround*** – Check that there are no vehicles behind you. Signal a right turn. Drive one car length past the driveway or alley, put your right arm on the passenger seat, look back over your right shoulder and back into the driveway. Shift to drive and check for traffic. When it is clear, signal left, and then turn left into the proper lane and drive away.



- ***Forward Two-Point Turnaround*** – Check that there is no oncoming traffic and signal a left turn. Move close to the center of the road and turn into the driveway or alley. Turn as near as possible to the right side of the drive. Stop as the rear of the vehicle clears the curb or edge of the driveway. Check for traffic, signal a right turn and shift to reverse. When the path is clear, back up while turning the steering wheel quickly all the way to the right. Straighten your wheels and stop when you are centered in the lane. Shift to drive, cancel your signal, and drive away.

Three-Point Turnaround – Use this only if the road is too narrow for a U-turn. It's best to go around the block if you can. This should only be used on a two-lane road.

- Check the mirrors and signal a right turn. Stop on the right side of the road.
- Turn on your left turn signal, check traffic and check over your left shoulder. When traffic is clear, turn hard left, drive to the other side of the road, and stop.
- Shift to reverse. Check traffic and check your blind spots to both sides. When traffic is clear, turn hard right and back up to the other side of the road and stop.
- Shift to drive and turn on the left turn signal. Check traffic and blind spots. When traffic is clear, turn hard left and drive forward into the right lane heading in the new direction. Check again for traffic and cancel your turn signal.



Section 7 practice questions:

1. How should you proceed when approaching a traffic circle?
2. What procedures should you follow before attempting to pass another vehicle?
3. To change lanes safely while driving, what procedures should you follow?
4. Where is it dangerous to pass?
5. How do you determine whether or not there is enough room to pass a vehicle in front of you?
6. True or False? When attempting to pass another vehicle you should always treat a hill or curve as an oncoming vehicle?
7. Where is the driver's "blind spot" usually located?
8. True or False? When driving long distances on straight roads you should keep your vehicle as warm as possible.
9. What procedures should you follow when entering an expressway?

SECTION 8

Managing Time and Space

Driving requires skills you can only gain through practice. This section covers critical skills for safe driving.

Seeing what's Critical

As you drive you must always be constantly aware of your surroundings. You must be aware of what is ahead, to the sides and behind you. Have a search pattern for use every time you are driving.

Continual searching helps you to see hazards early. It gives you time to change speed or direction to avoid hazards. Stay alert, don't stare, and keep your eyes moving as you search for possible problems. Most of what you do while driving is a reaction to what you see.

Having Clear Windows and Mirrors

Prior sections have told you where to look. This section will tell you how to have a clear view wherever you are looking.

By law, and for safety's sake, you must be able to see clearly through all windows, the windshield, and all mirrors. To see clearly you should:

- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Carry a rag so that you can stop and clean your windshield when needed.
- Keep the washer fluid full. However, do not use washer fluid on a very cold day as the mixture may freeze on the windshield.
- Smoking while driving causes a film to build up on the glass inside the car. Clean the inside of the windows frequently if you smoke.
- Clear snow, ice, or frost from all windows and head and taillights before you start to drive.
- Don't hang things from the mirror or clutter the windshield with decals. Anything in the car that blocks a driver's vision is a violation of the law.

Wearing Glasses

If you wear glasses or contact lenses:

- If restricted, you must always wear them when you drive.
- Keep an extra pair of glasses in the car in case your regular glasses are broken or lost.

To be a good driver, you need to see well. Seeing well means:

Look ahead – Looking far ahead gives you time to plan your path. The sooner you see a problem, the more reaction time you have.

How far you look down the road depends on where you are driving. In cities and urban areas, you may not be able to see as far ahead as on a highway. Don't follow closely behind larger vehicles as they will block your vision. Give yourself space so you can see.



Suppose you are the driver looking through the windshield. You are approaching the end of the lane. If you don't change lanes soon, you may have to make a sudden lane change, or stop and wait for traffic to clear.

To avoid last minute moves, you need to look far enough ahead to see things early. One of the most common mistakes drivers make is looking in front of the car instead of up the road. An expert driver tries to keep looking 20 to 30 seconds ahead.

Looking 20 to 30 seconds ahead also helps you to control the car in another way. When you focus attention ahead, it is easier to keep your car on a steady path.

Taking in the Whole Scene/Look to the sides

Looking 20 to 30 seconds ahead doesn't mean looking at the middle of the road. It means taking in the entire scene which includes the sides of the road as well. Scanning the roadside helps you to see:

- Vehicles and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them.
- Signs warning of conditions ahead.
- Signs giving you information about places ahead and how to reach them.
- Animals. Many cars strike deer, especially in October and November. If you see a deer, sound the horn, and look for other deer following.

If you look ahead, you will be able to see important things that you may not see later, such as someone getting into a parked car. The car door might open again, or the car might suddenly move into your lane.

Roadside Areas

Whenever there is a lot of activity along the side of the road, there is a good chance that someone will cross or enter. Therefore, it is very important to look to the sides when you are near:

- Shopping centers and parking lots,
- Construction areas,
- Busy sidewalks,
- Playgrounds, schoolyards, and parks,
- Lawn and garage sales.



School Crossing

A 5-sided sign means you are in a school zone and must slow to 15 mph during recess, or when children are going to or leaving school, during school opening or closing hours (½ hour before the start of the school day to ½ hour after the end of the school day), or when school speed limit signs are flashing during school opening or closing hours.

Railroad Crossings

Look both ways as you approach a railroad crossing.

- Be alert for buses, school buses, tank trucks, etc. that must stop at all railroad crossings.
- If you must stop in heavy traffic, stop before the tracks - not on them.
- Slow down and look both ways, even if the warning sign is not flashing as it may not be working.
- If red lights are flashing, stop at least 15 feet from the crossing and wait until they go out or until you see that the way is clear in both directions. Do not drive around any railroad crossing gate or barrier.
- If you are stopped at a railroad crossing where there is more than one set of tracks, don't start as soon as a train goes by. Wait until you have a clear view down the track in both directions before you start across. Another train could be coming from the other direction.
- Don't shift a manual transmission while crossing the railroad tracks. Being in gear gives you better control on the uneven surface.

  Tracks marked "Exempt" are not used often but may be in use. Check all tracks regardless of these signs.

Look behind – You must be aware of traffic behind you. Check behind you when changing lanes, slowing down, or stopping. Check before you enter an intersection. Check your mirror often for traffic behind you - every 6 to 8 seconds. This way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast which gives you time to alter your speed or path if necessary. Additionally, you will know the cushion of space you have to the rear at all times.

You need to look behind you whenever you slow down quickly, back up, or drive down a long or steep hill.

When You Slow Down Suddenly

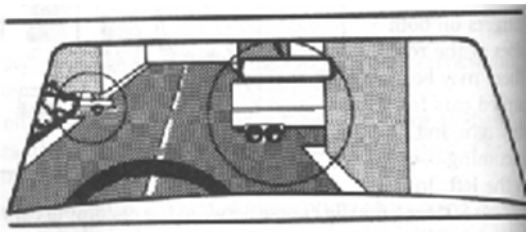
Look in the mirrors quickly before you slow down or stop. It is very important to do this when you slow down suddenly.

Here are some situations when you need to check behind before slowing:

- When you slow down for something in the road ahead that the driver behind you cannot see (for example, you come around a corner and see a car stalled in the middle of the road).
- When you are preparing to turn into a side road or driveway. (When the turn is just before a large intersection, a driver behind will not expect you to slow down where you do and may be too close behind)
- When you are stopping to pull into a parking space.
- When you are slowing or stopping for pedestrians.

Allowing a Space Cushion for Problem Drivers

There are certain people you should give a lot of room to while driving. If you are alert you will learn to spot them as you drive.



Drivers who cannot see you.

Someone who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. People who have trouble seeing you might include:

- Drivers at intersections, or driveways, whose view is blocked by buildings, trees, or other cars.
- Drivers backing out of driveways or parking spaces.
- Drivers whose windows are covered with snow or ice.

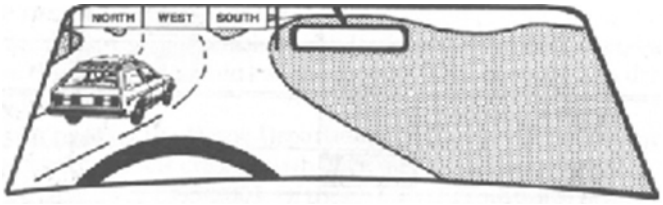


People who are distracted. Even when others can see you, allow extra room if you think they may be distracted. People who may be distracted include:

Delivery men and women.
Construction workers.
Children who often run into the street without looking.

People who may be confused. A person who is confused is very likely to make a move without looking. People who may be confused include:

- Tourists, often at complicated intersections.



This tourist may be confused by the sign and may change lanes suddenly. Be prepared to react.

Drivers who slow down for what seems to be unknown reasons.



The driver has pulled into the exit lane and then braked suddenly. Be careful because the car may swing back into your lane.

Drivers in trouble. If other drivers make a mistake, do what you can to help them out. Drivers who need help include:

- Drivers who pass as you approach a curve or an oncoming car. Slow down and let them back in your lane.
- Drivers who may be forced into your lane by a car, pedestrian, bicyclist, obstruction in the road, or narrowing of the roadway. Slow down and move to the right as much as you can.

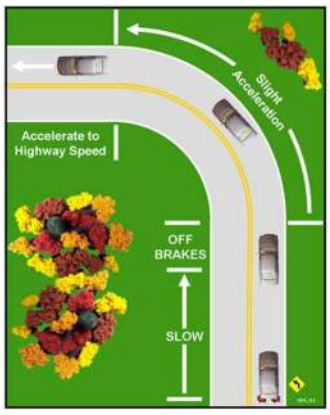
Managing Speed

Driving safely requires adjusting your speed for road and traffic conditions, keeping a safe following distance, and obeying the speed limit**.** What is a safe speed? How fast is too fast? It all depends on conditions.

When You Are Going Up a Long or Steep Hill

Check your mirrors. Drivers of trucks and buses often try to build up speed so that they can make it to the top of the next hill. If you see them early, you can change lanes.

Adjusting for Road Conditions



Curves – Always slow before entering a curve. A safe speed allows you to slightly accelerate through the curve. Slow more if traction is poor, when following other vehicles or if you cannot see the end of the curve. Hard braking in a curve can cause a skid because about two tons of vehicle is moving in a straight line with only the front tires to control the turn. If the curve is too sharp, or if you are going too fast, the tires can lose their grip and cause a skid. Bad curves are usually posted with yellow diamond shaped signs.

Sharp curve to the left.

Curve to the right



Slippery roads – Reduce speed at the first sign of rain, snow, sleet, or ice. When the roadway is slippery, it will take longer to stop, and it will be harder to turn without skidding. If the road ahead is slippery, it does not provide the grip your tires need to maintain control so on a slippery road you must drive slower than you would on a dry road.
Here are some guidelines for how much to slow the car:

- Wet road: Slow down 5 to 10 mph.
- Packed snow: Slow down to half speed.
- Ice: Slow to a crawl.

Falling or drifting snow, wet leaves, or gravel on the road may make it slippery. Some road surfaces are more slippery than others when wet.

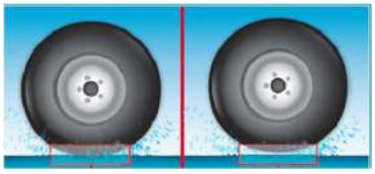
These roads are usually posted with warning signs:



You know it is important to slow down when the road is slippery. But you must watch out for when slippery conditions develop such as:

- When it starts to rain, pavement can be very slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. Also, oil may have dropped on the road surface from other vehicles. Rain makes the road slippery until the oil is washed away.

- On cold, wet days, bridges and overpasses can hide spots of ice. Be aware that bridges and overpasses tend to freeze first and dry out last.
  - When the temperature is near freezing, road ice is wet (slushy) so is more slippery than at colder temperatures.



Hydroplaning – At low speeds, most tires will wipe water from a road surface. It is like the way a windshield wiper cleans water off the window. As you go faster, your tires cannot wipe the road as well. They start to ride up on a film of water, like water skis. This is called "hydroplaning." In heavy rain, the tires can lose all contact with the road at high speeds. Balding tires lose contact at much lower speeds. In that case, a slight change of direction or a gust of wind could throw your car into a skid. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to be sure that your tires are in good condition and that you keep your speed down when the road is wet.



Flooded Roadways – Do not drive through large bodies of standing water. If the roadway is flooded, find another route.

Stopping Distance

Total stopping distance is the distance from the time you realize you must stop until your vehicle is completely stopped. Several things affect stopping distance:

- Speed – the faster you are traveling, the more time and distance it takes to stop.
- Perception time – the time it takes you to recognize you must stop. The average perception time for an alert driver is ¾ to 1 second.
- Your reaction time – the time it takes for you to react and move your foot from the gas to the brake pedal and begin braking. The average driver has a reaction time of ¾ to 1 second.
- Braking distance – the distance it takes to stop your vehicle. At 50 mph on dry pavement with good brakes, it can take about 158 feet. Adding perception time and reaction time nearly doubles this distance.

Speed Limits

Speed limits are posted on many roads. These limits are based on the condition of the road, how far you can see, and what typical traffic is like. Posted speed limits do not tell you at what speed you must drive. They only say you cannot go faster than the speed shown. If road and weather conditions make the posted speed unsafe, you must slow down.

Maximum speeds in Maine, unless posted otherwise, are:

- 45 Miles per hour outside any business or residential or built-up area of Maine.
- 25 Miles per hour in a business district, residential district, or built-up area of the state.
- 15 Miles per hour when passing a school during recess, or when children are going to or from school during the school's opening or closing hours. It is difficult to know just when

these periods are so when in doubt, use extreme care. A fine twice that of the usual fine is imposed for exceeding the posted speed limit in a school zone.

Traffic experts have studied road conditions, traffic, and accidents on the road to decide on a reasonable speed limit. It is illegal to exceed the posted speed limit. Racing on the highway and driving recklessly are not allowed. Maine law also says you must not drive so slowly that you interfere with the normal and reasonable movement of traffic except where reduced speed is necessary for safety. Some highways may have minimum posted speed limits.

What is the Road Surface Like?

The only contact your car has with the road is through the tires. And, at any time, the four tires together have only one square foot of rubber on the surface of the road. How good a grip this one square foot provides depends on the condition of the road and the tires. Many new drivers do not pay attention to road conditions. That is why new drivers have more "out of control" accidents than experienced drivers. (Also check the tread of the tires. Replace tires before they get too worn for safety.)

How Well Can You See?

If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to be able to stop. Assuming you have good tires, good brakes, and dry pavement conditions the following chart should help to determine how far ahead you should see to drive safely when traveling at certain speeds.

STOPPING DISTANCE AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS
On Dry Level Pavement

M.P.H.	Reaction Time Distance (feet)	Braking distance (feet)	Total Stopping Distance (feet)	Total Stopping Distance in Approximate Vehicle Lengths (Vehicle Length = 16 ft.)
10	11	9	20	1
20	22	23	45	3
30	33	45	78	5
40	44	81	125	8
50	55	133	188	13
60	66	206	272	18
70	77	304	381	25

Some Things Keep You from Seeing:

- Darkness. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. Never drive so fast that you cannot stop within the distance you can see ahead with your lights. Headlights will let you see clearly only about 250 feet ahead. Therefore, if you drive faster than about 50 mph on a dark road, you are really "driving blind."
- Rain, Fog, or Snow. In a very heavy rain, a snowstorm or thick fog, you may not be able to properly see, even when you drive slowly. If this happens, pull off the road and wait until the conditions improve.

- Intersections. Trees, bushes, or buildings at intersections can block your view of cars coming from the side. You need to approach a "blind" intersection slowly enough to be able to stop if a car pulls out suddenly.
- Hills and Curves. You never know what's on the other side of a steep hill or a sharp curve. If a stalled car is there you must be going slowly enough to stop. When you come to a steep hill or curve, slow down so that you can stop if needed.
- Parked Cars. Cars parked along the side of the road block your view. People may be ready to get out of a car or walk out from between parked cars. Give parked cars plenty of room and be prepared to stop.

How Much Traffic is there?

When there are lots of cars there is less driving space; therefore, you have less time and space to react. In heavy traffic you need to reduce your speed to have time to react within the shorter space and timeframe.

Some of the places where you need to reduce speed are:

- Shopping centers, parking lots, and downtown areas. They are packed with cars and people moving in different directions at the same time.
- In heavy traffic.
- Narrow bridges and tunnels. Cars approaching each other are forced closer together.
- Toll plazas. Cars are changing lanes as they approach and leave the plazas.
- Schools, playgrounds, and residential streets.

How Fast Is Traffic Moving?

Cars moving in the same lane at the same speed cannot hit one another. Accidents tend to happen when one driver is going faster or slower than other cars on the road.

Driving in traffic: If you are going faster than traffic (even if you are keeping within the posted speed limit), you must keep passing other cars. Each time you pass another car there is more of a chance for a collision. The car you are passing may change lanes suddenly. On a two-lane road an oncoming car may appear suddenly. True, it may not be a big chance, but if you are passing one car after another, the chances begin to add up. Also, speeding does not save more than a few minutes out of an hour's drive time.

Going slower than other cars or stopping suddenly can be just as bad as speeding. Cars bunch up behind you and could cause a rear-end crash. If many cars are pulling out to pass you, even though you are driving at the posted speed, you could slow up a bit or pull over to the right side so you can be passed safely.

Entering traffic: You need skill and caution to enter a freeway safely from an access lane, and merge smoothly with the fast-moving traffic. Look for a gap, then increase speed in the entrance lane and enter the gap at highway speed.

Leaving traffic: On an expressway, do not slow down until you move into the exit lane. When you turn off a road at an intersection or driveway, try not to slow too early or go too slowly

(below 5 to 10 mph). Slowing way down or stopping will increase your chances of being hit from behind.

Reacting to slow-moving traffic: Some vehicles have trouble keeping up with the speed of traffic. When you see these vehicles ahead, adjust your speed before you reach them. Slowing suddenly is one cause of traffic accidents. Watch for large trucks and small cars as these vehicles may lose speed on long or steep hills and, when entering traffic, they take longer to get up to speed.

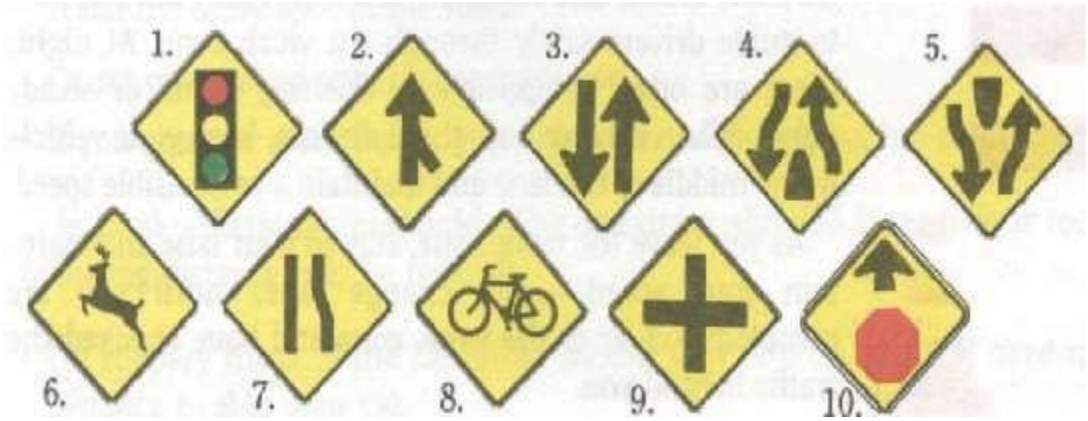
Farm tractors, animal-drawn carts and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. These vehicles have a red edged orange triangle (slow-moving vehicle sign) posted on the back of their vehicle.



Warning Signs

There are many signs that warn you of danger ahead. If you see these signs, you should reduce your speed. Then you will have time to react if there is trouble.

Warning signs are almost always yellow and shaped like a diamond. Here are some of the most common ones:



1. There is a traffic signal ahead.
2. There is another lane of traffic on the right merging with your lane ahead.
3. There is two-way traffic.
4. The divided highway ends ahead.
5. The divided highway begins ahead.
6. There is a place ahead where deer often cross the road.
7. The right lane ends ahead (merge left).
8. Bicycles or bicycle crossing ahead, pay extra attention.
9. There is an intersection ahead.
10. There is a stop sign ahead.

Managing Space

The more space you allow between your vehicle and other roadway users, the more time you give yourself to react. This is called a space cushion. Always try to maintain a safe space cushion around your vehicle.

Maintaining a Safe Cushion

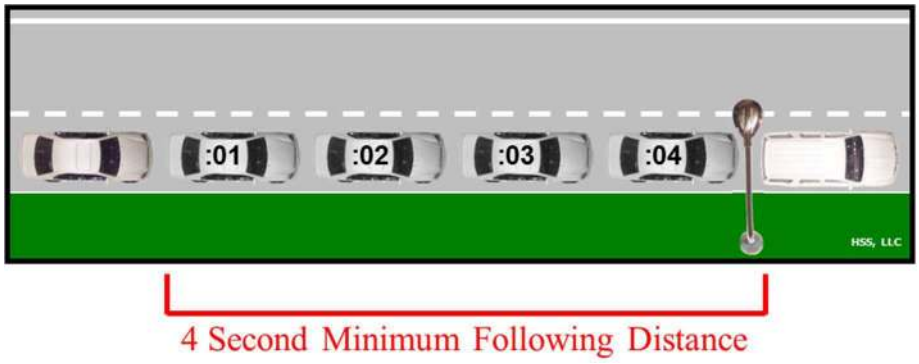
When a driver makes a mistake, other drivers need time to react. The only way you can be sure you will have enough time to react is by leaving plenty of space between your car and the cars around you. That space becomes a "space cushion" which protects you from others. In general, you should try to keep a cushion of space on all sides of your motor vehicle which should properly consider the existing speed and road conditions.

Space in Front

Following too closely limits your view of the road. It does not allow enough reaction time to avoid a collision. Keep at least 4 seconds between your car and the vehicle in front.

To determine your following distance:

- Watch when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign, pole, or any other fixed point.
- Count the seconds it takes you to reach the same point ("One-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three, one-thousand-four").
- You are following too close if you pass that point before counting 4 seconds.
- Slow down and check your new following distance. Repeat until you are following no closer than four seconds.



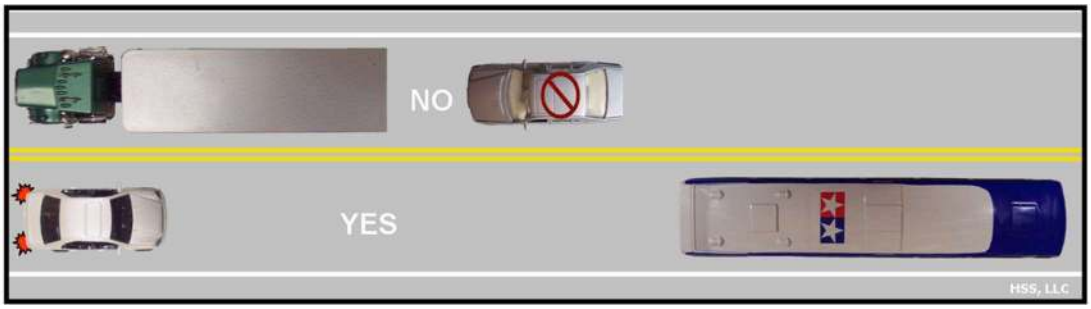
In some situations, you should allow an extra cushion. A four plus second following distance may be needed during adverse conditions.

Always increase your following distance:

- On slick roads. On slippery roads. If the car ahead should slow or stop, you will need more distance to stop your car.
- When following motorcycles or bicycles. If the cyclist should fall, you will need extra distance to avoid striking the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, metal surfaces (such as bridge gratings or railroad tracks), or on gravel.

- When the driver behind you wants to pass, slow a bit while they pass to assist the passing driver.

- When following large vehicles or vehicles pulling a trailer whose view to the rear may be blocked. The drivers of trucks, buses, vans, or cars pulling campers or trailers can't see you very well if you are too close. They could slow down suddenly without knowing you are behind them.
- When following trucks, tractor-trailers and buses, there are several things you should keep in mind:
    - Don't follow so closely that their drivers can't see you in their rearview mirrors or your view of the road ahead is blocked.
    - Trucks and buses often make wide turns, leaving an open space to their right in the process. Don't pass such vehicles on the right if there is a chance that they are making a right-hand turn.
    - Large vehicles gain a substantial amount of momentum when going downhill and often lose speed when climbing a hill. Take these factors into consideration when deciding whether to pass a large vehicle.
    - Leave space in front of you when stopped behind a truck or bus at an intersection, especially on a hill, in case the vehicle rolls back a bit before starting forward.



- At night, in fog, or in bad weather.

- When following vehicles that stop at railroad crossings, like transit buses, school buses or vehicles carrying dangerous materials. School buses and tank trucks carrying flammable liquids must stop at all railroad crossings so expect the stops and slow down early to allow plenty of room for stopping.

- When you have a heavy load or are pulling a trailer, the extra weight increases your braking distance.

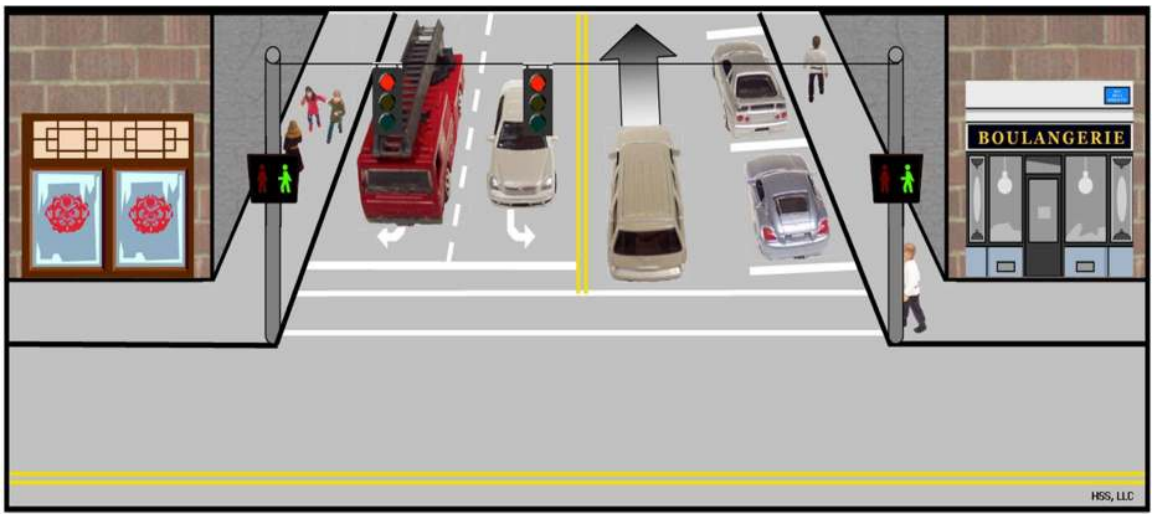
- When speeds are high.

- You should also allow a space cushion when you are stopped on a hill. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

Space to the Side

You need a space cushion to the side to have room to react to sudden moves toward your lane by other cars. A space cushion on the sides of your vehicle allows you to move right or left.

- Don’t drive alongside other vehicles on multi-lane streets as you may be in their blind spot. Driving alongside reduces the space you may need to avoid a collision if someone crowds your lane or tries to suddenly change lanes. Either pull ahead of the other vehicle or drop back.
- Don’t crowd the center line. Keep as much space as you can between you and oncoming traffic. Keep right except to pass. When you are in the lane next to the center line, there is no space for escape. And an oncoming vehicle could swerve across the center line or turn left without signaling.
- Make space for vehicles entering multi-lane roads by moving over a lane or slowing down.
- At freeway exits, don't drive alongside other cars. A driver on the freeway to your left may exit suddenly or a driver exiting may suddenly swerve back onto the freeway.
- Keep a space between yourself and parked cars. Someone may step out of a car, from between parked cars or a car may start to pull out of their parking space suddenly.
- Give more space to pedestrians, children, and bicyclists.
- When you are passed by a tractor-trailer, move to the right side of your lane. Give yourself space from the tractor-trailer as it passes.



Space Behind Affects Your Following Distance

Give yourself extra following distance before reducing speed or turning. The driver behind you has more control over the space behind you than you do. However, you can help by maintaining a steady speed and signaling in advance when you plan to slow down or turn.

If you are being followed too closely and there is a lane to your right, move over to encourage the other driver to pass. If there is no right lane, wait until the way ahead is clear, then reduce speed slowly to encourage the tailgater to pass.

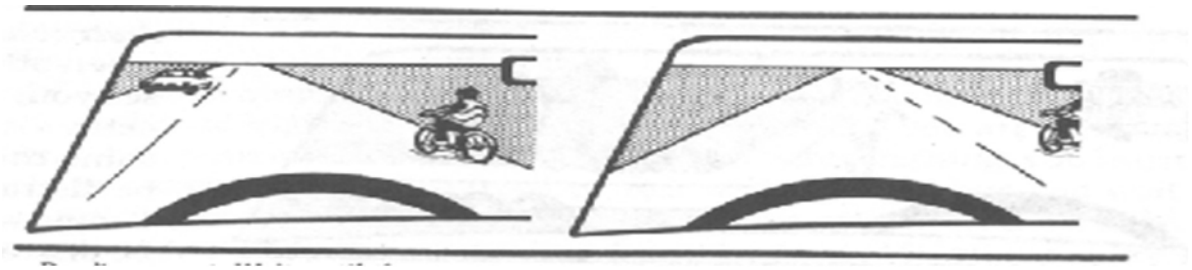
Splitting the Difference

Sometimes there will be dangers on both sides of the road. There may be parked cars to the right and oncoming cars to the left. In this case, steer a middle course between the oncoming cars and the parked cars. Split the difference.



Taking Dangers One at a Time

Sometimes you have two dangers to deal with at the same time. Suppose there is an oncoming car to the left and a bicyclist to the right. Instead of driving between the car and the bike, take them one at a time. Slow down, let the car pass, and then move to the left to allow plenty of room (three feet) as you pass the bicyclist.



Don't pass yet. Wait until the approaching car passes the bicycle.

Then pull out and pass the bicycle.

Sharing Space with Other Road Users

When you are in moving traffic, you can control the speed and position of the motor vehicle to keep a space cushion around you. When you approach a line of traffic, however, you must share space with vehicles already there. One of the biggest problems drivers have is judging how much space they are going to need.

Learn to judge how much space you must have to merge with traffic, to cross or enter traffic and to pass other motor vehicles. Remember, when you make any of these movements you must yield the right of way to the other cars. **It is your responsibility to allow enough space to keep from interfering with existing traffic.**

Space to Merge
Anytime you merge with other traffic, you need a gap of four seconds to merge safely. That will give both you and the car behind you a safe following distance. You need a four-second gap whenever you change lanes or enter a freeway from an entrance lane or merge with another road.

- Don't try to squeeze into a gap that is too small. Leave yourself a big enough space cushion.
- If you must cross several lanes, change lanes one at a time. If you stop to wait until all lanes are clear, you will tie up traffic and may cause a collision.

Space to Cross or Enter

Whenever you cross or enter traffic from a complete stop, you will need large gaps. To get moving from a full stop, you need a gap that is:

- About a half a block on city streets,
- About a full block on the highway.

To enter a lane of existing traffic, you need a little more time to complete your turn and to get up to the speed of the other cars. You need a gap that is:

- About two-thirds of a block in the city,
- About two blocks on the highway.

When you cross traffic, you need enough room to get all the way across.

- Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough to hold your car.
- If you are crossing or turning, make sure there are no cars or people blocking the path ahead or the path to the side. You don't want to be caught in an intersection with traffic bearing down on you.
- Even if you have the green light, don't start across if there are cars blocking your way. If you are caught in the intersection when the light changes, you will block traffic.
- Never assume another driver will share space with you. Don't turn just because an approaching car has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn just beyond you. Or their signal may have been left on from an earlier turn. This is likely to happen with motorcycles because their signals aren’t always self-cancelling. Wait until the other driver starts to turn before making your move.

Communicating

Accidents often happen because one driver doesn't see another driver. Or when one driver does something the other driver doesn't expect. Drivers must let others know where they are and what they plan to do by communicating. Communicating in a vehicle is done in various ways that include:

Attract attention

Use headlights – Turning on your headlights helps other roadway users see you. Besides helping you to see at night, headlights help other people see you in the daytime as well. Especially:

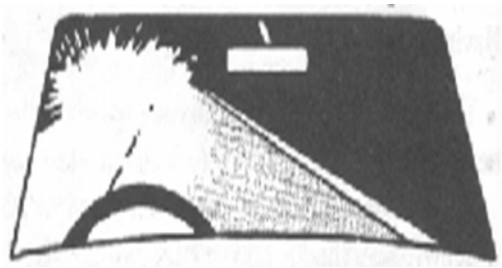
- In rain, snow, or fog. On rainy, snowy, or foggy days, it's sometimes very hard for other people to see your car. On gray days, cars seem to blend into the surroundings. By Maine law whenever visibility is too dim for you to see 1000 feet ahead or at any time when windshield wipers are in constant use you must turn on the headlights
- When it begins to get dark. If you turn on the headlights a little early-when it begins to get dark-you will help other drivers to see you. By Maine law you must have headlights on when driving anytime from sunset to sunrise.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun.
- Whenever you are moving and lights are necessary, use your headlights.
- It is not a good driving practice to operate a motor vehicle with only the parking lights on.
- Turn on the headlights whenever you have trouble seeing other cars. If you can't see them, they can't see you.
- Motorcyclists are always required to have their headlights on when operating a motorcycle on Maine roadways.

Seeing Well at Night

It is harder to see things at night, due to darkness, than during the daytime. But you can do some things to improve your nighttime visibility:

- Use the high beams whenever possible. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams. Be sure to use high beams on unfamiliar roads, in construction areas, or where there may be people along the side of the road.
- When a vehicle equipped with multiple beam road lights approaches an oncoming vehicle within 500 feet or follows a vehicle within 300 feet, the operator shall dim the headlights or switch to a low beam and shall turn off a fog auxiliary light.
- Use low beams in fog, snow, or heavy rain as light from your own high beams will reflect back on you from such precipitation and cause a glare that will affect your vision.

If a vehicle comes toward you with high beams on, and fails to dim the lights, slow down and look toward the right side of the road. This will keep you from being blinded by the other car's headlights. You should also be able to see enough of the edge of the lane to stay on the roadway until the car passes.



Do not try to "get back" at the other driver by keeping your bright lights on. If you do, both drivers will be blinded.

Use your horn – People cannot see you unless they are looking in your direction. The horn can be used to get their attention. Use it whenever it will help prevent an accident. Horns can be misused. You should not use the horn without cause or just to make an unreasonably loud noise. Tap the horn lightly; well in advance, to inform others that you are there. Try to avoid using the horn when near bicyclists or horses because the riders or horse may become startled, lose control, and veer out into the roadway. But if danger is near, don't be afraid to sound a sharp blast. Give your horn a **light** tap when:

- Pedestrians or bicyclists appear to be moving into your lane of travel
- Passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane
- A driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you

Not using your horn – Use your horn only when you need to signal other road users not just to scare others.

Signal

Always signal **before** you turn or slow down.

Signal in advance – Give others time to react. Signal when changing lanes, turning or when merging into traffic. Be sure to cancel your signal afterwards. When making a turn that is beyond a side street, do not put your turn signal on until after passing the side street.



Signal when reducing speed - Brake lights let others know that you are slowing down. Tap your brake pedal when:

- Turning off a road that does not have a separate turn or exit lane.
- Parking or turning before an intersection.

Signaling Change of Direction

Other drivers expect you to keep driving in the same direction. If you are going to change direction let others know by signaling with the blinkers or by hand. Timely signals give other drivers time to react.

Always signal before you:

- Change lanes,
- Turn at an intersection
- Enter or leave a freeway
- Enter or exit a parking lot
- Turn into a driveway

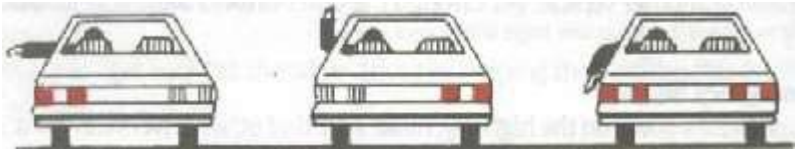
It is a good idea to also signal before you:

- Pull away from the curb or pull over to the side of the road to stop

If you do not signal, other drivers will not know what you plan to do. To make sure others do know:

- Make it a habit to signal every time you change direction. Signal even when you don't see anyone around. The car you don't see is the most dangerous.
- Signal as early as you can-at least 100 feet before any change or turn.
- Use hand signals if the turn signals are not working.
- If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, signal after that intersection. If you signal before the intersection, another driver might get the wrong idea at that intersection and pull into your path.
- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure the signal cancels.

Hand Signals



Left turn Right turn Slowing or stopping

Using Emergency Signals

If your car breaks down on the highway, make sure that other drivers can see it. Some accidents occur because a driver didn't see a stalled car until it was too late to avoid hitting it.

If you are having car trouble and must stop along the side of the road:

- If possible, pull all the way off the road so you are well out of traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers.
- If your car doesn't have flashers, use the proper turn signal.
- Lift the hood to signal an emergency.
- If you cannot get completely off the roadway, try to stop where people have a clear view of you.
- Try not to stop just over a hill or around a curve.
- Give other drivers plenty of warning. If you have emergency flares place them at least 100 feet behind the car (Large vehicles must place 3 emergency devices in specified places). This allows other drivers to change lanes if they need to.
- If you don't have emergency flares, stand by the side of the road, and wave traffic around. Use a cloth or a flag if you have it. Stay off the roadway. Don't even change a tire if it means you must stand in a traffic lane.

Keeping Your Car Where It Can Be Seen

- Drive where your car can be seen. Do not drive in another driver's blind spot.
- Try to avoid driving on either side and slightly to the rear of another vehicle for a long period of time. Either speed up or drop back to clear that lane and so you can be seen.
- When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can.

Section 8 practice questions:

1. Good drivers try to see ahead for at least how many seconds?
2. You are at a stop sign. A car approaches from the left which has its directional signal flashing indicating a right turn into the road you are about to leave. Is it safe to assume that this vehicle will make the turn?
3. True or False? You should use your low beams in fog, snow, or heavy rain.
4. What procedures should you follow when you are having car trouble and must stop?
5. What is a safe speed?
6. AT 50 MPH it takes about _____feet to stop?
7. What traffic signs are almost always yellow, and diamond shaped?
8. Unless otherwise posted at what speed should you travel when driving through a business district?
9. What should you do if you are driving along in the rain, snow or fog, and begin to have difficulty seeing either ahead, beside or behind you?
10. When following trucks, tractor trailers and buses, what driving considerations should you keep in mind?
11. True or False? The driver behind you has more control over the space directly behind you than you do.

SECTION 9

Avoiding Crashes

Emergencies and Avoiding Crashes

If you do all the things this manual says, you may never have an emergency. But no one is perfect so chances are unexpected things **will** happen. If you are well prepared, you will be able to react correctly and quickly enough to avoid an accident. When it looks as if a collision may happen, many drivers simply hit the brakes as hard as they can. This only locks the wheels, puts the car in a skid, causes you to lose control, and makes things worse.

Braking may be the right thing to do, but it is not the **only** thing to do. When that emergency occurs, if you are prepared, you may be able to avoid a crash. You have three ways to avoid a crash or reduce its impact; braking, steering, or speeding up.

Braking

The first action for most drivers is to stop. Pumping the brakes is generally the best way to stop the car in an emergency. Pumping allows the car to stop quickly while allowing you to continue steering. If you have anti-lock brakes, simply hold the pedal down firmly and let the car do the work. Many new vehicles have ABS (Anti-lock Braking Systems). An ABS braking system helps you stop without skidding. It helps to maintain steering control. Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. Rules for using ABS are:

- Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep applying pressure.
- ABS only work if you keep pressure on the brake pedal. The pedal may vibrate, and you may hear a clicking noise. This is normal.
- You can still steer with the ABS engaged.
- If the car begins to skid, quickly let up on the brake. Then quickly push it down again.
- Use this quick pumping action until the car has stopped.

Controlled braking stops the car even faster but requires more skill. You need to get a feel for the brakes and the steering. Push down the brake pedal until just before the wheels lock (if you don't have ABS), or until you feel a need for more steering control. Then, release the brakes. Repeat these moves until the car comes to a complete stop.

If your vehicle does not have ABS, refer to your vehicle's owner's manual for how to best use the brakes.

Steering

You may be able to avoid a collision by steering around a hazard. If you can see that you won't stop in time to avoid hitting something, turn away from it. Concentrate on the steering. If you can, stay off the brakes while turning. This lessens the chance of a skid, particularly if you are turning onto a soft shoulder.

To be able to turn quickly you need to hold the steering wheel correctly. Your hands must be on opposite sides of the steering wheel, at the 9 and 3 or 8 and 4 clock positions. Get used to holding the steering wheel this way all the time.

To avoid an accident, turn away from the obstacle. Once you clear it, turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction to get back in your lane but be ready to turn back again quickly if need be. This is sometimes called "swerving." To quickly steer around a problem:

- Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel.
- Steer in the direction you want to go but try to avoid other traffic.
- Once you have missed the hazard, straighten your vehicle and slow down.

Use caution when 'swerving' because many people steer away from one collision only to end up in another.

Speeding Up

Sometimes it is necessary to speed up to avoid a collision. This may happen when another car is about to hit you from the side or from behind. In a car with manual transmission, you may need to shift into a lower gear and push the gas pedal to the floor. If the car has an automatic transmission, you can do the same thing by simply pushing the gas pedal to the floor.

It is illegal for an operator to read printed material while driving a motor vehicle. Printed material does not include a map or written directions to a specific location.

Protecting Yourself in Collisions

You may not always be able to avoid a collision. Try everything you can to keep from getting hit. If nothing works, try to keep the injury from being too serious:

If you are about to be hit from the rear:

- Be ready to apply your brake so that you won't be pushed into another car.
- Brace yourself between the steering wheel and seat back.
- If your car has head restraints, press the back of your head firmly against the head restraint.

If you are about to be hit from the side:

- Brace yourself with the steering wheel to keep from being thrown against the side of the car.
- Get ready to steer quickly so that if the car spins around you can attempt to control the vehicle.

If you are about to be hit from the front:

- If you are wearing a shoulder strap, use your arms and hands to protect your face.

- If you are not using a shoulder strap, throw yourself across the seat so that you don't hit the steering column or the windshield.

Accidents

If you are involved in an accident:

- Stop your car at once and render all possible aid to any injured people and send for an ambulance if needed. Do not move an injured person unless there is another danger that would require them to be moved to safety.
- Stay at the scene until the police arrive and have questioned everyone involved.
- If you can, move your car off the road so that you do not block traffic.
- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the accident and any witnesses. Also make sure to get the names and addresses of any injured persons.
- Record the other driver's information:
    - Name and address (make sure the driver's name is the one on the license)
    - Make, model and year of car
    - Driver's license number
    - License plate number
    - Insurance company name
    - Damage to his or her car

Make note of:

- The time, date, and place of accident
- The position and direction of travel of cars and pedestrians before and after the crash
- Bad weather or roadway conditions
- Always contact the police if there is any injury. Give the police information about the accident at the time of the accident. Give just the facts.
- If a parked car is damaged, try to find the owner. If the owner can’t be found leave a note in a place where the owner can find it. The note should contain:
    - Your name and address
      Driver's license number
      License plate number
    - Date and time of accident
    - A description of property damage

If the accident involves any injuries, or property damage of $2,000 or more, the drivers must report it to the police or local sheriff. Failure to report an accident may result in criminal charges and a driver's license suspension.

Operators involved in non-reportable accidents involving injury or death of a dog, a cat or livestock must “take reasonable steps” to notify the owner, or if the owner cannot be located, local law enforcement or animal control.

Emergency First Aid

If you are involved in or come upon a personal injury accident and no one else is on the scene, you should try to help the victims. If emergency medical assistance is already on the scene, follow their instructions and pay attention to the road and traffic control officers, **not the accident.**

Here are some basic first-aid tips to use if emergency help is not immediately available:

- Don't move the victim unless absolutely necessary due to a fire or other life- threatening danger. If you must move the victim, keep the back and neck as straight as possible by putting your arms under the victim, grab ahold of their clothing and pull the victim head-first away from danger.
- If downed wires are present, don't go near them. Wait for emergency crews to handle the situation. If the wires are touching the vehicle or lying near it, warn occupants to stay inside until help arrives.
- Check to see if the victim is breathing, if not, begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), if you have been properly trained, or mouth to mouth breathing.
- You can help stop bleeding by putting pressure directly on the wound with your hand or a clean cloth, if available. Maintain pressure until help arrives. If the wound is in an arm or leg and there are no apparent broken bones, also carefully lift the limb to help slow bleeding while maintaining pressure on the wound.
- Do not put ointment or grease on burns. You may apply cold water to burns and cover them with a clean cloth.
- Do not give an injured person anything to drink, not even water.
- Cover the victim with a blanket or a coat to maintain body temperature and help prevent shock.

Skids

Skids happen when you are traveling too fast or when you brake too hard. Skids happen whenever your tires cannot grip the road. While the tires are skidding you will not be able to steer. If your vehicle begins to skid:

- Release pressure from the brake or accelerator to regain steering.
- Look where you want to go.

Drop Offs/Uneven surfaces

Drop-offs can cause crashes unless you handle them right. Don’t panic if your wheels drop off the paved road surface. Slow down gradually and then turn back onto the road.

If the right wheels of your car unexpectedly run off on to the shoulder of the road:

- Don't panic! Grip the steering wheel firmly.

- Ease up on the gas pedal.
- Don't hit the brake pedal suddenly and hard. Step on the brakes gently.
- After you've slowed down, you can steer back onto the road. Before doing so, check the road for traffic ahead and behind, then turn your wheels to reenter the road.

Vehicle Problems

There is always a chance of having something go wrong with your vehicle. You can avoid most breakdowns by following the maintenance schedule in your owner's manual. No matter how well you take care of your car, or how carefully you drive, there is always a chance that your car will fail and that you will be forced to deal quickly with both an unpleasant and unexpected situation. They can all be overcome or minimized if you know what to do. The following paragraphs note some of the more common car failures and how best to deal with them. Knowing what to do could save your life.

Brake Failure

A brake warning light tells you that your brakes are not working. Do not drive if you see this warning light. If your brakes stop working while driving:

- Pump the brake pedal rapidly and hard several times. If that doesn't work…
- Use the parking brake. Apply the parking brake slowly to avoid locking the rear wheels. Be ready to release the brake if you start to skid.
- Shift to a lower gear and look for a place to slow to a stop.
- Use your horn and lights to warn other drivers.
- If the parking brake fails, turn off the engine and look for a safe place to stop. Make sure the vehicle is parked well off the road.
- After the car has stopped, call for help. Do not drive without brakes.

Wet brakes:

- Always test the brakes after driving through deep water. The brakes may pull you to one side, or they may not work at all.
- "Dry" the brakes by driving slowly and putting your brakes on lightly for a short distance.

Tire Blowout

If a front tire blows out, your vehicle will pull hard toward the blown tire. If a rear tire blows out, the vehicle will wobble, shake, and pull toward the blown tire. If a tire goes flat:

- Don't panic or slam on the brakes.
- There may be a strong pull to the right or left.
- Grip the steering wheel firmly and steer straight.
- Slow gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal.
- Allow the vehicle to slow down by itself. Brake gently only if you must.

- Do not stop on the road. Pull off the road in a safe place and turn on the emergency flashers.

Stuck Gas Pedal

If your vehicle is speeding out of control:

- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Shift to neutral.
- Steer smoothly and gently put on the brakes.
- Find a safe place to pull off the road.
- As you bring your car to a stop, turn off the engine.
- If you cannot free the pedal so that it does not get stuck again, call for assistance and do not try to drive the car.

Breakdowns

If your vehicle breaks down, make sure that other drivers can see it. Crashes often happen because drivers do not see a disabled vehicle until it's too late to stop.

If you have a breakdown:

- Get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers.
- Warn other roadway users. Put emergency flares 200 to 300 feet behind your vehicle. Give other drivers time to change lanes or slow down.
- Call the police about the breakdown.

If your engine floods:

Engines become flooded when there is too much gas in the cylinders. This condition makes it impossible for the gas to burn.

- Press the gas pedal to the floor and hold it there. Do not pump the gas pedal.
- Turn the key and let off on the pedal when the engine starts.
- If this doesn't work, wait about ten minutes, and then repeat the above.

If your car stalls on railroad tracks:

If a train is coming and you are not having any success moving your vehicle, stop trying and get away. To avoid debris from any crash, leave your vehicle and head quickly toward the oncoming train and away from the tracks at a 45º angle. When you are safely away from the tracks, call the railroads emergency phone number (look for nearby blue sign with emergency number).

If there is an oncoming car in your lane:

- Blow your horn and flash your lights to warn the other driver.
- Brake quickly, but not so fast that you lock your wheels and lose control.
- Quickly pull off into the right shoulder or ditch. Do not drive into the left lane.

If your car battery dies:

- Attach one jumper cable to the positive terminal of the dead battery.
- Attach the other end of the cable to the positive terminal of a working battery.
- Attach the other cable to the negative terminal of the good battery.
- Attach the last clamp to the engine block of the stalled engine.
- Start the car with the good battery.
- After a bit of charging start the car with the dead battery.
- Allow both cars to run for a few minutes to more fully recharge the dead battery.
- Once the car is started, remove the clamps in the reverse order that the connections were made.
- Never smoke when jump-starting a vehicle and make sure that your eyes are protected.

If your vehicle plunges into water:

A car with windows and door closed may float from 3 to 10 minutes. The best escape route is through a window, because water pressure makes it hard to open a door. If your car has power windows, open them as soon as possible, because the water will cause a short circuit in the electrical system.

Section 9 practice questions:

1. In avoiding a collision, a driver has three options. What are they?
2. What should you do if your vehicle stalls on railroad tracks?
3. If your brakes become wet after driving through deep water, you can "dry" them by_____?
4. What is the first thing you should do when confronted by an oncoming vehicle in your lane?
5. What is the first thing you should do if you are involved in an accident?
6. True or false? Always contact the police if you are involved in an accident in which someone is injured.
7. Should you try to pull injured victims from a vehicle that has been involved in an accident?

SECTION 10

Sharing the Road

Everybody has a right to the roadway. Remember to be courteous. Communicate to let others know where you are and what you plan to do.

Pedestrians



As a driver:

- You must yield the right-of-way to any person crossing the street in a marked crosswalk.
- Always yield to pedestrians even if they are not in a crosswalk.
- When traffic-control devices are not in operation, an operator must yield the right-of- way to a pedestrian crossing within a marked crosswalk.
- Be aware of pedestrians crossing at mid-block crosswalks. They may not be marked by warning signs and road markings.
- Always yield to the vision impaired. When a pedestrian is crossing a street with a guide dog or carrying a white cane, you must come to a complete stop.
- Yield to all pedestrians even if the traffic light is green.



- You must not overtake or pass other vehicles stopped or slowing to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.
- When making a right or left turn (rarely allowed in Maine) on red, you must yield to pedestrians.
- Watch for pedestrians when driving next to parked or stopped vehicles.
- Check for pedestrians before backing, especially in parking lots.
- Slow down near playgrounds and in residential areas. Children can run out from between parked vehicles so be ready to stop quickly.
- In a school zone when lights are flashing or children are present outside, you must obey a slower speed limit. At school crossings where there is a crossing guard you must stop and yield as signaled.
- Use extreme caution where children are playing or walking.
- When crossing a sidewalk, you must yield to all pedestrians or bicyclists on the sidewalk.
- Despite all laws, you must exercise care to avoid colliding with pedestrians or bicyclists.

Bicycles

Bicycles are considered vehicles. Bicyclists must follow the same rules of the road as other vehicles. A bicyclist has the same rights and responsibilities as vehicle drivers. There are nearly 900,000 bicycles in Maine and most bicycling is done on the roadways of Maine. As a motorist

you should drive defensively around a bicyclist because the slightest mistake by you or the bicyclist could result in an injury or death. The biggest differences between bicyclists and motorists as road users are that bicycles are less visible, quieter, and do not have a protective vehicle casing around them. This means you need to look a little harder and drive a little more cautiously when encountering bicyclists.

Bicycles are hard to see in traffic. Search for them and be extra careful around them. Bicyclists have varying skill levels. A skillful rider is predictable and holds a steady line. An unskillful rider may swerve without notice, ignore traffic signs and signals, and ride without a light at night. Be ready for sudden turns by the bicyclist.

Here are some rules to help you share the road with bicyclists:

- Share the road with bicyclists; they have a legal right to its use.
- Be courteous and cautious even if it delays you a bit.
- Yield to bicyclists at intersections, just like you do for pedestrians and other vehicles.



- Yield the right-of-way when a bicycle path or bike lane crosses the road. Do not stop, park, or drive in a bicycle lane unless you are entering or leaving an alley or driveway.
- Slow and allow as much space as you can when approaching or passing a bicycle. Leave at least three feet of passing space between the right side of your vehicle and a bicyclist as you overtake them. Slow down and let a cyclist clear an intersection before you make a turn.
- Bicyclists should operate on the right portion of the way as far to the right as practical except when it is unsafe to do so as determined by the bicyclist. In some instances, it is safest for a bicyclist to "command the lane" by riding toward the center or to the left if turning.
- Bicyclists may be moving faster than you realize (experienced bicyclists can easily travel over 30 mph). They also have smaller profiles and sometimes are not noticed in traffic. Look carefully for bicyclists, especially before turning or opening a car door.
- Learn to recognize situations and obstacles which may be hazardous to cyclists, such as potholes, debris, and drain grates. Give them adequate space to maneuver.
- Anticipate bicyclists' movements. Bicyclists are supposed to signal their intentions with hand signals.
- Don’t slow or stop your vehicle suddenly as you can stop more quickly than a bicycle. By stopping quickly, you could cause a crash.
- In inclement weather, give bicyclists extra trailing and passing room, just as you would other motorists.
- Reduce your speed when passing bicyclists, especially if the roadway is narrow.
- When a road is too narrow for cars and bikes to ride safely side by side, bicycles should "take the travel lane," which means riding in or near the center of the lane.

- A driver of a motor vehicle near a person operating a bicycle may not make a right turn unless the turn can be made with reasonable safety and without interfering with the safe and legal operation of the bicycle.
- Do not use your horn close to bicycles unless there is a chance of a crash. Your horn could startle them and cause them to steer into your path.
- Watch for bicyclists entering your lane. Watch out if you see children riding bikes on the sidewalk as they may suddenly ride onto the road.
- Do not turn sharply in front of bicycles. Do not force a bicyclist off the road.
- Although bicyclists are required to ride in the direction of traffic, you should look for them riding anywhere on the road.
- Be extra careful around bicyclists when the road is wet or has sand or gravel. These things affect bicycles much more than other vehicles.
- Cooperate with bicyclists. They must use hand signals when turning and stopping. They may not be able to signal if conditions require both hands on the handlebars. Look for other clues of what they plan to do. Riders usually turn their head or look over their shoulder before changing lanes or turning.



Stop **Left Turn** **Right Turn** **or** **Right Turn**

- When parked on the street, check to the sides and rear for bicycles before you open your door. When opening the vehicle door, the "Dutch Reach" method is recommended. Using the Dutch reach method, the driver will open their door using the right hand. Using the right hand causes the body to twist left which forces the driver to look over their road-side shoulder making it easier to see oncoming bicyclists.
- Check for bicyclists in your path before backing up. Be extra cautious near schools or residential areas where riders may be present.
- Children or inexperienced adults on bicycles are often unpredictable in their actions. Expect the unexpected.

Bicycle Operation

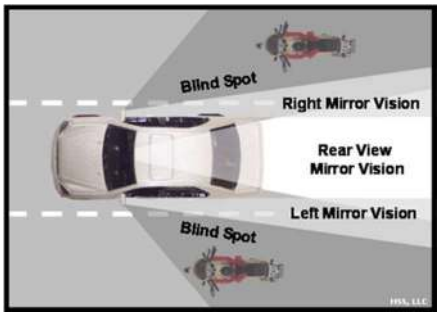
Bicyclists are vehicles and have all the rights and responsibilities of other vehicle drivers. Although a license isn't required to drive a bicycle on Maine's roadways, bicycle drivers must obey all the rules of the road. If you break any traffic laws, like riding a bike on the left side of the road, running a stop sign or traffic light, you are subject to fines.

Be sure to practice on your bicycle before entering traffic. Never ride in traffic above your skill level. When riding a bicycle follow these rules:

- **Regularly inspect and maintain your bicycle.** Bicycles, like any machine, must be properly maintained so it will perform correctly. Be safe and keep your bike tuned up or take it to a bicycle shop for inspection regularly (a professional inspection is recommended every six months.)
- **Properly secure loads.** Never hang bags or packages on your handlebars or hold them in your arms. Secure loads on a rack, in bike bags, or on a bicycle trailer. Only use back packs for light loads.
- **Wear a helmet correctly.** When worn correctly, a bicycle helmet can reduce your chances of head injury in an accident. Only use an ANSI/Snell approved helmet designed specifically for bicycling. Once a helmet has sustained any impact it should be replaced. Helmets should also be replaced if they are five years old or older or are left in a hot car. Worn correctly, a helmet should be set just above your eyebrows and is snug on your head so that it stays in place if you shake your head. If your helmet is loose or tilted back exposing your forehead it cannot adequately protect your head. All persons under 16 years of age riding on bicycles are required to wear helmets and sit on passenger seats when traversing public ways.
- Ride with traffic. Always ride on the right side of the road. Do not pass motorists on the right side. If you approach an intersection with a right turning lane and intend to continue straight, do not enter the right turn lane. Ride with the through traffic.
- Watch for potential road hazards. Always scan the road 50 to 100 feet ahead for road hazards like drain grates, potholes, railroad tracks (cross them at right angles), puddles (which may be hiding a pothole), or road debris. Slow down and allow time to maneuver around these hazards and negotiate with traffic.
- Avoid opening car doors. Give yourself three or four feet of room between yourself and parked vehicles.
- Ride in a predictable manner. Always ride straight and be predictable. Do not weave from side to side, or suddenly move out into traffic. Be alert and plan to avoid obstacles. If the road is narrow for a bicycle and a car to travel side by side, the bicyclist should occupy the lane until it is safe to move back to the right. Always check over your shoulder before changing your lane position. Never weave between parked cars.
- Signaling turns. As a vehicle driver you must always signal your intent to turn, using the hand signals illustrated earlier in this section. Look before you make a lane change or turn. Make sure lanes are clear of traffic to safely make a lane change or turn.
- Left hand turns. You may turn left as a vehicle by moving into the left lane or the left side of the travel lane. Before you maneuver, look behind for traffic, signal your turn and change lane position when clear to do so. Or, you can make a left turn in two parts by crossing straight across the intersection and then pulling over to the side. Now, when it is safe to do so, turn to your left and proceed across the intersection.
- Night equipment. A bicycle must have a front light that emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 200 feet to the front. Also, a red or amber light or reflector to the rear that is visible at least 200 feet to the rear. Reflector material is recommended on the pedals, unless the bicyclist is wearing reflective material on the feet or ankles.
- Be prepared for conditions. Always carry water and appropriate clothing when traveling by bicycle. In the rain, allow yourself extra stopping distance when you use your brakes.

Motorcycles or Mopeds

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other drivers. This section covers basic information on motorcycles and mopeds. A separate study manual is available to prepare for a motorcycle endorsement/license test. There is specific information you need to know to safely share the road with motorcycles:



- Give motorcycles a full lane. Do not attempt to share the lane. Motorcycles need space to react to other traffic.
- Motorcycles are smaller so more difficult to see. Always check your mirrors and blind spots for them.
- Before turning left be alert for motorcycles. Look carefully to the front and sides.
- Do not believe a motorcycle is turning when it has a turn signal flashing. Turn signals on a motorcycle may not self-cancel so the rider may have forgotten the signal is on.



- When following a motorcycle, stay at least 4 seconds back. When it is wet, increase the following distance. Riders may suddenly change speed or lane position to avoid potholes, gravel, wet or slick places. They may also change speed or direction because of pavement seams, railroad crossings and grooved paving. All of these can be deadly to a motorcyclist.
- Remember that scooters and mopeds travel at much lower speeds than motorcycles.

There are more and more motorcycles on the road. They have as much right to the road as cars. Give them as much space as you would give a car. When you pass a motorcycle, give it a whole lane. Don't try to squeeze past in the same lane. The motorcyclist moves from side to side quickly, to see and be seen, and to avoid objects on the road.

Motorcycles give their riders no protection. Therefore, they are involved in nearly 10% of all motor vehicle deaths, although they make up only 4% of the vehicles on the road.

In many motorcycle accidents, drivers of other vehicles are at fault. Drivers turning left in front of an oncoming motorcycle cause many of the accidents. They fail to see the motorcyclist, or they think the motorcycle is going slower than it really is.

Wait for an oncoming motorcyclist to pass before turning left.

Large Vehicles

Over 250,000 crashes occur between cars and large vehicles each year. A few simple precautions will help prevent problems between cars and large vehicles, such as trucks and buses. Bus and truck drivers face special challenges because of the large size and weight of their vehicles. Many crashes could be avoided by keeping the following points in mind:

- Large vehicles are bigger and harder to handle than a car.
- Larger vehicles have much larger blind spots than cars. Drivers of large vehicles rely mostly on their mirrors to gather information on what is beside and behind them. Even though trucks and buses have many mirrors, there are still areas around the vehicle which the driver has difficulty seeing. Some of these areas are impossible to see and are known as blind spots. All vehicles have blind spots, even automobiles, but with large vehicles there are many such areas and they may be rather large.
- Never attempt to pass behind a truck or bus that is backing.
- If you cannot see the mirrors of the large vehicle ahead of you, the driver probably can't see you so stay out of the blind spots.
- They take more space to speed up, stop and turn.
- The weight of large vehicles means that the speed of these vehicles might sharply increase or decrease according to the terrain. This change in speed is much greater for large vehicles than automobiles. The speed of a large vehicle might drop sharply when the vehicle is going uphill; this same vehicle might often gain speed quickly when starting downhill. The basic rule about space, however, still applies so avoid actions which take space from the driver of a large vehicle which they need to operate safely.
- Stopping distances are much greater for heavier vehicles than for automobiles. Be sure that there is plenty of room between you and large vehicles that are traveling behind you. Always leave plenty of space between you and vehicles ahead of you when being followed by a large vehicle. This will give you plenty of time to react as well as the driver of the large vehicle behind you should something unexpected occur.
- Never pass or pull in front of a large vehicle that is already slowing or stopping. The driver has based their braking ability on the space ahead. If you suddenly pull in the lane, you have compromised the driver's braking ability and could cause an accident.
- Another challenge arising from the size of trucks and buses is that of making turns. Right turns can be especially difficult. Many times, large vehicles will be forced to swing to the left before turning to the right. This is necessary to clear the sidewalk or any objects, such as a telephone pole, that may be on the side of the road. Drivers of automobiles must be watchful for this maneuver and avoid driving into the turning path of the truck or bus.

- Watch for the positioning of the larger vehicle and the path the vehicle seems to be taking. Also watch for directional signals of the large vehicles. Many times, the signal may be the only indication that the vehicle is about to turn right when it seems to be moving left.

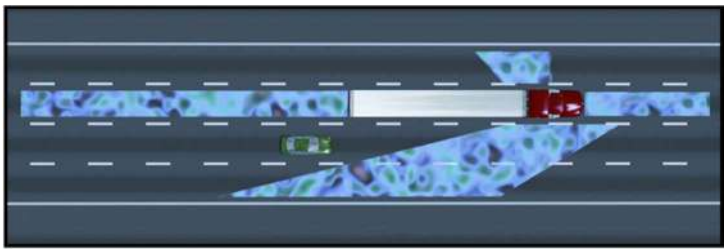




The No-Zone

The No-Zone is the area around larger vehicles that is in the driver's blind spots. These blind spots are on the sides, rear and front.

- ***Side No-Zones*** – Large trucks and buses have big No-Zones on both sides. A trucks largest blind spot is on the right side. It starts behind the cab and goes the length of the truck. If you cannot see a driver's face in the side view mirror, they cannot see you. Do not drive alongside a large vehicle any longer than you must. If the driver needs to swerve or change lanes suddenly you could collide.



- ***Front No-Zones*** – Because they are so big and heavy larger vehicles take longer to stop than cars. A loaded truck at 55 mph takes at least 335 feet to stop. That's more than 1 ½ times the stopping distance a car would need. Never merge in front of a moving larger vehicle or change lanes too closely in front of them. When passing, make sure you can see the whole front of the vehicle in your rear-view mirror before pulling back into the lane the larger vehicle occupies.



- ***Rear No-Zones*** – Large vehicles have huge blind spots-up to 200 feet behind them. If you are too close, the driver cannot see your car and you cannot see what is ahead of you. Some driver's "draft" off a large vehicle. This is the practice of following so closely behind a truck thinking the wind drag created by the truck will pull your car along. Do not do this. Not only does it not work but it is extremely dangerous. Stay to the left in your lane so the driver can see you in their side mirror. When stopped behind a large vehicle on a hill, leave space between your car and the larger vehicle and be aware that the large vehicle may stall or roll backwards as they pull forward which may cause a collision with your car.



Turning and Oncoming Large Vehicles

Watch for large vehicles' turn signals and give them lots of room. Large vehicles sometimes swing wide to the left to clear a curb on a right turn. Avoid a crash by not turning until the larger vehicle has finished its turn.



Keep in mind:

- Avoid wind blast when you meet a truck by moving as far as you can to the rightmost portion of your lane.
- Many crashes with large vehicles occur at intersections. Drivers often misjudge the vehicle's speed before turning left. If you are not sure about the speed of an oncoming truck it is safer to wait until they have gone by before turning. The truck may be going faster than you think and it also takes much longer for a larger vehicle to stop.
- Stop lines at intersections are designed to give larger vehicles more turning space. Always stop behind the stop lines.
- Do not cut in front of a truck in traffic. Do not try to beat a truck into a single-lane construction zone. Trying to save a few seconds could cost you your life.

Maintaining Space

- Just as with automobiles, the space requirements of large vehicles are much greater when road conditions are bad. Remember when driving in poor weather conditions or when visibility is limited to give large vehicles an extra margin of space on all sides. When the road conditions are poor, forcing the driver of a large vehicle to use the brakes can lead to skids or jackknife situations.
- Most professional drivers understand the dangers of excessive braking when the roads are slick; the drivers of automobiles should remember to avoid actions which will force the bus or truck driver to use their brakes any more than necessary under such conditions. This is simply another way of giving large vehicles the extra space they need to operate safely.
- When you are immediately behind a large vehicle, do not follow too closely (tailgate). A good rule to follow is that if you cannot see the mirrors of the large vehicle you are following, you are too close and, in the driver's blind spot. If you follow too closely it also limits your visibility of the road ahead. If the driver of the large vehicle should have to stop quickly, you will be at risk.

- Always dim your headlights when following a large vehicle at night. Bright lights will reflect off the mirrors of the large vehicle and make it difficult for the driver to see the road ahead.

Passing

- Before passing a large vehicle be sure to check ahead, behind and in the direction you will move. This is necessary to be sure that you have enough room to complete the maneuver.
- Never pass unless in a legal passing zone and don't pass if you must speed in order to complete the maneuver.
- When you have passed a truck or bus, do not pull back into the lane until you can clearly see the front of the vehicle in your rearview mirror. Also, be sure to check your blind spot by looking over your shoulder before returning to the right lane.
- Because of the size of large vehicles, at highway speed the vehicle will push a cushion of air to the side and rear. When a large vehicle is passing you, stay as far to the right of your lane as possible until the vehicle is clear. This rule also applies when a truck or bus is approaching you from the opposite direction.
- Do not speed up when a large vehicle passes you. Maintain your speed or slow down slightly to allow the larger vehicle to pass.
- When the roads are wet, it is a good idea to have your windshield wipers on before large vehicles pass you. These vehicles tend to create a lot of spray which can severely diminish your ability to see the road ahead.

Emergency Vehicles

Emergency vehicles have sirens, flashing lights and special horns to help them move through traffic. Make room for ambulances, fire trucks, police cars, and other emergency vehicles. These vehicles often move at high speeds and use lights and sirens to clear the way for themselves. At such times, this requires that you pull over to the side of the road and stop. If you are at an intersection, get out of it before you pull over. It is unlawful to follow within 500 feet of any fire truck responding to a fire alarm.







You must yield to an emergency vehicle when the flashing lights and siren are on. Pull over to the edge of the road and stop so they may pass. Avoid blocking intersections.

Police/Traffic Stops

If you are pulled over by the police:

- Move to the right side of the road. Make sure you are in a safe spot.
- Stay in the vehicle unless asked to get out.
- Turn off your engine. Turn on your hazard flashers. At night, turn on your inside lights so the officer can see inside the vehicle. Roll down your window so that you and the officer can talk.
- Remain calm. Keep your safety belt fastened. Ask your passenger(s) to do the same. Keep your hands on the steering wheel.
- The officer may ask for your license, insurance card or vehicle registration. Tell the officer where they are located and reach for them slowly with one hand on the wheel.
- Answer the officer's questions.
- Never try to run from the law. Many fatal crashes result from police chases.

Move-Over Laws

When you encounter an emergency vehicle that is stopped on the roadside you must slow and yield the right-of-way. If possible, move over to the next lane. If a lane change is not safe, slow down and use caution as you drive by the emergency vehicle.

Slow Moving Vehicles

Watch for slow moving vehicles, especially in rural areas. A fluorescent or reflective orange and red triangle displayed on the rear indicates that the vehicle is moving less than 25 mph. Use caution when you see a slow-moving vehicle and be sure it is safe before you pass.



- ***Farm machinery*** – Watch for farm equipment moving across the road or driving on state highways in rural areas. Pass with care. Remember that the driver may not see or hear your vehicle.



- ***Animal drawn vehicles and horseback riders*** – Animals driven, ridden, or led along the side of a roadway are easily frightened by passing vehicles. They are usually even less predictable than people in their reactions, tending to rear, swerve or stop suddenly when startled. The alert motorist can prevent accidents by anticipating potentially dangerous situations and slowing down and proceeding cautiously when approaching or passing animals. You may have to share the road with horse drawn vehicles or horseback riders. They have the same right to the roadway as a motorist does. They must follow the same rules as vehicles do. Pass with care. Do not use your horn or "rev" the engine when near an animal as this may scare them and cause a crash. It is against the law to purposefully frighten any animal being ridden, driven, or led on or near a public way. Watch out for left turns into fields and driveways. Warning signs may be posted in areas where you are likely to find horse drawn vehicles and horseback riders. Be alert when in these areas.





Section 10 practice questions:

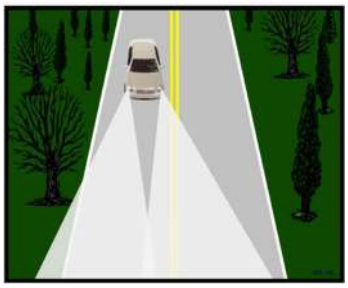
1. When encountering bicyclists, how should you drive?
2. True or False? Bicyclists are vehicle drivers and have all the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles?
3. When passing a bicyclist, how much room should you give?
4. When encountering an emergency vehicle that has its' emergency lights and siren activated what is a motorist required to do?
5. How many 'no zones' are there around a large truck?
6. When are you required to yield to pedestrians crossing the street?

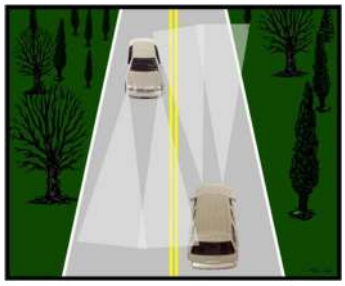
SECTION 11

Special Driving Challenges

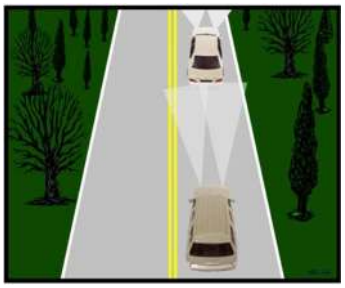
Night Driving

Driving at night is harder and more dangerous than driving in daylight. The distance you can see is limited. Some tips for driving at night are:





- Use your high beams if there are no oncoming vehicles. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams.
- Dim your high beams for oncoming traffic. If an oncoming vehicle does not dim their headlights, look towards the right side of the roadway. This helps you to avoid being temporarily blinded by oncoming headlights.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle.
- In fog, rain, or snow, use your low beams to avoid glare. Some vehicles are equipped with fog lights.
- Avoid looking directly into the headlights of other vehicles. Instead keep scanning the roadway around your vehicle.
- Search well ahead of your headlight beams. Looking for dark shapes in or near the roadway.



- Glance to the right and left to check the edges of the pavement and for possible hazards to the sides.
- Do not wear sunglasses or colored lenses at night or on cloudy days. Tinted or colored lenses reduce the light you need for good vision.
- Increase your following distance by at least a second at night. Add at least two seconds for night driving on unfamiliar roads.

Work Zones

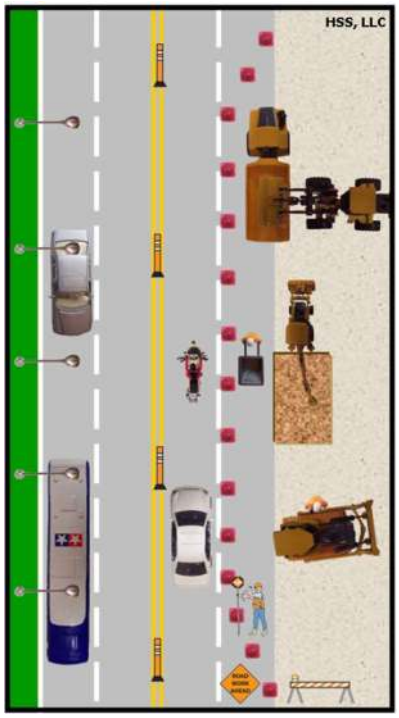
You probably have noticed construction and maintenance projects on the state's public road system, work that is being done to improve and repair our roadways. Because closing a road and detouring traffic adds expense and travel time, the work must go on while traffic passes through the work site or in nearby lanes.Work zones may involve lane closings, detours and heavy equipment moving on or near the road.







Watch out for signs, cones, barrels, large vehicles, and workers in work zones. Always slow down even if no workers are visible as narrow lanes and rough pavement can be a hazard.





Flashing Arrow Panels: Large flashing or sequencing arrow panels may be utilized if a lane ahead is closed. Prepare to slow down and move into the lane indicated.





Construction Warning Signs: These signs are posted to alert drivers of road construction or maintenance activity ahead. They also serve to guide a motorist safely through or around the work site. These signs are black symbols or lettering on an orange background and are often diamond shaped.



Channeling Devices: Barricades, vertical panels, concrete barriers, drums, and cones are the commonly used devices to guide drivers safely through a work zone. When driving near these devices, keep your vehicle in the middle of the lane and maintain a responsible speed. As you leave the work zone stay in your lane, maintain your speed, and don't change lanes until you are completely clear of the work zone.



Flaggers: Flaggers wear high visibility vests, shirts or jackets and use a stop/slow paddle and hand signals to control traffic through the work zone. Usually a flagger is stationed on each end of the work zone to let the two directions of traffic alternately travel through the work zone. Be patient and always obey the signals of a flagger. They normally wear orange vests, shirts or jackets and use red flags or paddles to direct traffic safely through the work zone and to allow workers or construction vehicles the opportunity to cross the road. It's very important to be patient and obey the signals of a flagger.

In a work zone:

- Slow down, increase your following distance and be prepared to stop.
- Be very careful when driving through a work zone at night even if no workers are there.
- Stay well away from workers and construction vehicles.
- Obey the posted work zone signs until you see an "End Road Work" sign.
- Expect delays, plan for them, and leave early so you can finish your trip on time.
- Use a different route to avoid work zones if possible.

Rural Roads

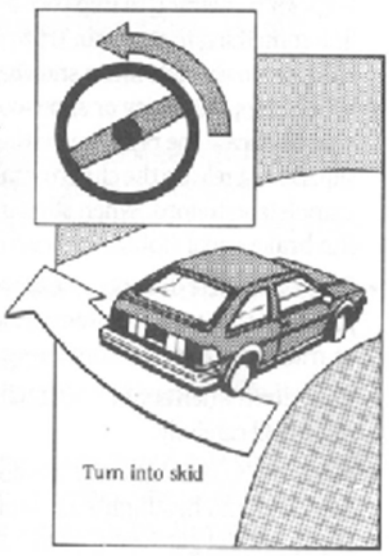
Driving on rural roads can be dangerous. Stay alert, watch for warning signs, and obey the speed limit. Some problems and driving hazards are unique to rural roads:

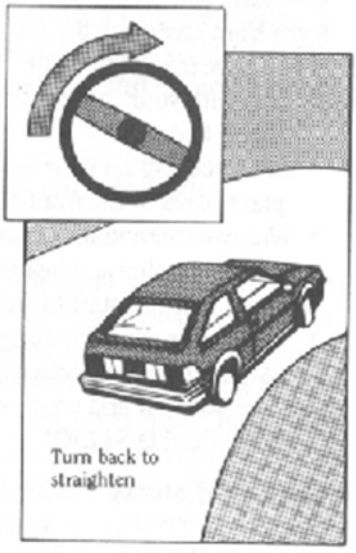
- *Gravel or Dirt* – There is less traction on gravel or dirt roads. Slow down and increase your following distance as these surfaces may cause a skid when stopping your vehicle.
- *Narrow roads* – Rural roads are narrower and may have ditches or drop offs instead of shoulders. Slow down and center your vehicle in your lane. Look for oncoming traffic that may be in or crowding your lane.
- *Narrow bridges and single lane bridges* – When crossing a single lane bridge the first driver to the bridge has right-of-way. Take turns when crossing the bridge.
- *Open Bridge Gratings or Steel Bridges* – Reduce your speed, increase your following distance, and keep a firm grip on the steering wheel.
- *Limited view* – Wooded areas, crops growing in fields next to a roadway and steep hills can block your view. In these areas, slow down and be ready to stop.
- *Uncontrolled intersections* –These intersections can be very dangerous as they lack traffic lights, stop or yield signs. Approach them with caution. Slow down and be ready to stop for crossing or oncoming traffic indicating a turn.

Hazardous Driving Conditions

Winter Driving

Winter driving has its own special hazards which call for extra driving skills. On slippery roads, the important points to safe driving are slower speeds, gentler stops and turns, and increased following distances. The following are guidelines for safe winter driving.





- Make sure that your car is in good mechanical condition before the bad weather hits; breakdowns during storms are especially problematic. Getting a tune-up is an important first step in winterizing your car, it should ensure that your car is in good working order and maximize its fuel efficiency. Additionally, make sure that your tires are in good condition, or have snow tires put on. Also, ask your mechanic to check your antifreeze, water hoses, exhaust system, battery charge and brakes. Make sure that your oil is of sufficient weight to perform in the winter and that your battery terminals are clean.
- Although it is important not to begin driving before your engine is warmed up, don't warm it too much. Thirty seconds is usually enough time to allow your engine to idle. Even a cold engine will warm up faster when being driven than when left to idle for long periods of time. When it is extremely cold, drive at slower speeds for a few miles.
- Get the feel of the road. Try the brakes occasionally while driving slowly. Determine just how slippery the road is and adjust your speed accordingly. Never slam on the brakes; this can cause your wheels to lock and throw you into a skid.

How to steer out of a skid
Stay off the brake. If you brake hard, your wheels will lock and that makes the skid worse.

Turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the car to go as this will line the front of the car up with the back.

As soon as the car begins to straighten out, turn the wheel back the other way so that the car won't over correct.

If you fail to turn the wheel back, you will start a new skid.
Continue to correct your steering, left and right, until you recover completely from the skid.

Look for something to stop you. If you can't control your car on a slippery surface, try to find something to stop you. Try to get a wheel on dry pavement or on the shoulder of the road, or slowly edge into a snowbank or some bushes.

- When stopping on icy or snow-covered roads, pump brakes on and off very gently. Be sure to release the pressure on the brake at the first hint that the wheels are starting to slip. Do not release the clutch or take the vehicle out of drive until the vehicle has almost completely stopped. When stopping a car with anti-lock brakes, simply press firmly on the brake pedal (follow instructions in owner's manual).
- Follow at a safe distance. Keep well behind the vehicle ahead of you, giving yourself plenty of room to stop. Remember that on snow or ice it takes three to twelve times as much distance to stop your car as it does on dry pavement.
- Slow down when approaching hills and curves. Make turns gradually, moving the steering wheel carefully.
- Keep the windshield and windows clear. Make sure that your windshield wipers, defroster, and headlights are working and that you have plenty of wiper fluid.
- If you should get stuck, don't spin your wheels. Keep them as straight as possible, shovel snow out from around them and use traction mats, sand, or cat litter to provide extra traction. If you still can't pull out, rock the vehicle by going back and forth from reverse to drive and you should be able to roll out.

If you must wait for help:

- Stay with your car. Most deaths occur when people leave the car, get lost, and freeze to death.
- Put a red flag on your radio antenna or driver's door handle and, if available, place flares to the front and rear of your car.
- Wrap any passengers and yourself in blankets or any warm clothing which is handy.
- Run the engine and heater until the car is warm, and then shut it off. Repeat this when you start to feel cold again.
- Crack your windows slightly to allow a supply of fresh air and keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Keep yourself and your passengers as active as possible. DO NOT LET ANYONE GO TO SLEEP.

Prepare for winter by placing the Following Items in Your Vehicle:

- Shovel
- Flares and a red flag for your antenna
- Ice Scraper
- Jumper Cables
- Bag of Sand
- Warm clothing and footwear

Operators of vehicles under 10,000 pounds shall “take reasonable measures” to prevent snow or ice from falling off their vehicle while driving

Fog

The best rule during foggy conditions is to avoid driving. If you must drive, you should:

- Reduce your speed and always be prepared to stop your vehicle within the limits of your vision, even if those limits are not more than a few feet.
- Turn your headlights on. Put them on low beam to prevent the glaring reflection of your own lights in the fog.
- Look for road edge markings to help guide you.
- If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, pull off the road and stop, using your emergency flashers. Wait until visibility improves as it is dangerous to creep along at 5 or 10 miles an hour.

Rain

Wet roads can be as dangerous as icy roads, so always reduce your speed during wet road conditions. When roads are wet you will need more distance for stopping and you may skid when turning sharply.

Roads are more dangerous at the start of a light rain when road oil and water mix to form a greasy film on the road.

Rain also creates vision problems. Be sure to keep your windshield wipers and defroster in good condition.

Make sure you are clearly seen by turning on your headlights.

Signal all turns and begin braking well in advance so other drivers will know what you are planning to do.

"Hydroplaning", which can cause skidding, can take place when you're driving on wet roads. At lower speeds, most tires will "wipe" the road surface, the same way windshield wipers clean the windshield. But, as your speed increases, the tires can't "wipe" the road as well and start to ride up on a film of water just as a water skier does.

In most cars, hydroplaning may begin at speeds as low as 30 to 40 MPH and the severity increases with any increase in speed to a point that your tires may be totally riding on a film of water. In a bad rainstorm, the tires may lose all contact with the road at 50 to 60 MPH. If this is the case, there is no friction for braking, accelerating, or cornering. Under these conditions a gust of wind, a curve, or a slight turn of the steering wheel could cause a skid.

To reduce the chances of hydroplaning, you should: slow down during rainstorms, replace tires as soon as they become worn and keep tires properly inflated.

Flooded Roadways

Flooded roadways are extremely dangerous to both drivers and passengers. NEVER ATTEMPT TO DRIVE ACROSS A FLOODED ROADWAY. As little as six inches of water can float some small cars. Two feet of water will carry away most vehicles. 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, nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are people who become trapped in their vehicles. In many cases, victims drive right off the edge of an eroded roadway without knowing that the road is no longer there. Flooded roadways are especially dangerous at night when it is more difficult to recognize the flood dangers. If your vehicle stalls in a flooded roadway, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Remember it's better to be wet than dead.

Night Driving Reminder: Use extra caution.

The fatal accident rate for night driving is nearly three times greater than for daytime driving, even though there are fewer miles driven at night. It's good practice to drive slower at night because overall visibility is much more restricted due to the darkness.

Wildlife Safety

It happens all the time. In Maine, cars and trucks crash into moose and deer thousands of times every year. It **is** that big of a problem. Of course, most people are delighted to see a beautiful white-tailed deer or a majestic bull moose, but few people know how to handle a head-on encounter with Maine's largest and wildest creatures. Collisions with deer increase in the autumn, peaking in November - during breeding season. But wildlife collisions can happen any time of the year.

May and June are Peak Moose Collision Months!
Collisions with moose increase dramatically in the months of May and June. Autumn incidents are also common but don't let your guard down as wildlife crashes can happen during all 12 months a year.

Tip: Deer eyes reflect light from headlights very well but because moose are so much taller, drivers typically won't see their eyes reflected in the headlights. This makes moose even harder to see when it is dark so gives you less time to avoid a collision. Watch for the reflective eyes of deer and the silhouette of the moose.

From Dusk to Dawn
While wildlife collisions can happen at any time of the day, moose and deer are most active between dusk and dawn as they tend to travel at night. So be especially alert after sunset because dark colored animals can be very difficult to see until they are right in front of your vehicle.

Warning Signs Mean Business
The locations for Maine's moose and deer crossing signs are chosen based on where there are high concentrations of wildlife and where collisions are a problem.

"Herd" the One About the Traveling Moose?
Moose and deer often travel in small groups. If you see one animal cross the road, you can bet that there are more animals nearby that may cross as well.

The Moose Standoff
If you see a moose standing in or near the roadway you must **use extreme caution**, especially during mating season which runs from August through October. When spotting a moose in or near the roadway you should:

- Slow Down
- Do not try to drive around a moose
- Stay in your vehicle. Do not get out to observe or to chase the wildlife off the road. By getting out of the car you could put yourself or other drivers at risk. Moose can be unpredictable and may attack you or your vehicle
- Give moose plenty of room and give them time to wander off the road.

What if a Crash is Unavoidable?
If a crash with an animal is imminent, apply the brakes and steer straight. Let up on the brakes just before impact to allow the front of your vehicle to rise slightly while trying to hit the tail end of the animal. This can reduce the risk of the animal striking the windshield area and may increase your chances of missing the animal. Duck down to protect yourself from windshield debris.

Carrying Passengers and Freight

No passenger type vehicle should carry a load which extends over the sides of the vehicle beyond the line of the fenders on the left side, or extends more than six inches beyond the line of the fenders on the right side of the vehicle. You must not drive a vehicle if it is so loaded, or when there are more than 3 persons in the front seat so that your view is obstructed to the front or to the sides, or so that the load interferes with your use of the vehicle controls. Don't let passengers sit on the hood, roof or trunk of a moving vehicle.

No person may ride in a camp trailer, mobile home, semi-trailer, utility trailer or trunk of a vehicle while it is being driven or moved on any highway.

When a passenger, under 19 years of age, is transported in a pick-up truck, that passenger must ride in the passenger compartment of that pick-up truck unless the passenger under 19 is a:

- Worker or trainee, including agricultural worker or trainee, engaged in the necessary discharge of their duties or training or is being transported between work or training locations.
- Licensed hunter being transported to or from a hunting location.
- Participant in a parade.

- A passenger secured in a seatbelt in a manufacturer-installed seat located outside the passenger compartment.

A person driving an open vehicle, including pick-up trucks and convertibles, may not transport a dog in the open portion of that vehicle while on a public way unless the dog is secured in a manner that prevents the dog from falling, jumping or being thrown from the vehicle. Exceptions are when a dog is being transported by a farmer or farm employee for the performance of agricultural activities requiring services of the dog, or a hunting dog at a hunting site or that is being transported between hunting sites by a licensed hunter.

Section 11 practice questions:

1. When operating your vehicle on ice or snow, it takes _____to _____times as much distance to stop your vehicle as it does on dry pavement.
2. What is "hydroplaning" and how should it be handled?
3. What are the two peak moose collision months in Maine?
4. When stopping on icy or snow-covered roads how should you apply your brakes?
5. How should you approach an uncontrolled intersection?
6. Construction warning signs are what color?

SECTION 12

Test Your Knowledge

Select (a, b, or c) that best answers the question.

1. Alcohol and other drugs:
   a. Reduce your judgment
   b. Increase your reaction time
   c. Improve your ability to focus

2. A yellow dashed line on your side of the roadway only means:
   a. Passing is prohibited on both sides
   b. Passing is permitted on both sides
   c. Passing is permitted on your side

3. If you arrive at a four-way intersection controlled by stop signs at the same time as another driver, you should:
   a. Continue through the intersection
   b. Yield the right-of-way to the driver on your right
   c. The driver on your left should go first

4. Which sign warns a divided highway begins?

a.  b.  c. 

5. This road signs means:
   a. Right curve
   b. Curvy road ahead
   c. Sharp curve ahead



6. Regulatory signs are:
   a. Green
   b. Yellow
   c. White

7. If a pedestrian is crossing in the middle of the street, not at a crosswalk (also known as jaywalking), even if it is illegal, you:
   a. Must stop for them
   b. Do not have to stop for them
   c. Should honk your horn at them

8. Motorcycle operators have the right to:
   a. Use a complete traffic lane
   b. Share a traffic lane with a vehicle
   c. Use the shoulder of a roadway

9. When approaching or passing a bicyclist you should:
   a. Slow down and allow as much space as possible
   b. Sound your horn to alert your presence
   c. Speed up and quickly pass the bicyclist

10. When driving at night use your high beams when:
    a. Fog, rain or snow is present
    b. Following another vehicle
    c. There is **no** oncoming traffic approaching

Correct Answers: 1. a; 2. c; 3. b; 4. a; 5. c; 6. c; 7. a; 8. a; 9. a; 10. C

Appendix A

Typical Reasons for Road Test Refusals

The examiner may refuse the road test for:

- Vehicle non-compliance with the Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection criteria (inspection sticker has expired).
- Front seats not available for examiner or are not properly secured to the floor of the vehicle.
- Vehicle improperly equipped (for climatic conditions) e.g. snow treads or chains.
- Glove compartment not properly secured.
- Applicant refuses to remove pets from vehicle.

Road Test Information
The duty of the examiner is to render an impartial decision covering all phases of the road test.

During the road test the examiner will observe and evaluate your ability to operate and control a motor vehicle with sufficient skill and knowledge to be a safe and competent driver on the highways of the State of Maine, whether it be driving forward or backward, maintaining your proper lane position, turning left or right or driving straight ahead. You will also be evaluated on how well you observe and react to other road users and pedestrians, as well as traffic signs, signals, and conditions. You will not be asked to do anything that is extraordinary or illegal.

The reason for road test disqualification can vary depending on road conditions, traffic and the applicant's judgment and ability to cope with situations that arise during a road test, as well as driving habits.

Residency/Lawful Presence Requirements

A license may not be issued to a person unless acceptable documentary evidence of the person's residence or domicile in this State is presented. The Secretary of State may exempt from the requirements someone who has established, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, that the person is on active duty in the United States Armed Forces, the spouse or child of a person on active duty in the United States Armed Forces or a student enrolled in a university, college or school within the State.

Acceptable documentary evidence of a person's residence or domicile in this State must include the Applicant's name and the physical address of the person's residence or domicile in the State. A post office box or other mail drop address is not sufficient. Acceptable documentary evidence includes, but is not limited to:

1. A tax return, W-2 form or paycheck stub.
2. A utility bill or a letter from a utility company showing application for service.
3. A contract to which the applicant is a party; or

4. A document issued by a governmental entity.

A person who is unable to provide acceptable documentary evidence as outlined above, may meet the requirements of the statute by either:

1. Submitting the affidavits of 2 individuals who have a personal or professional relationship with the person and knowledge of the person and the person's residence or domicile, which may include a shelter, in this State. A single affidavit signed by a parent or guardian of a minor making an application is sufficient to meet the residency requirements. The affidavit is a sworn statement and a false statement by the affiant constitutes false swearing, which is a violation of Title 17-A Section 452. The Secretary of State shall provide forms for the completion of affidavits (available at any Bureau of Motor Vehicles branch office or online at http://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/forms); or
2. By taking an oath or affirmation before the Secretary of State (or his designee), swearing to the person's residence or domicile which may include a shelter.

An applicant who supplies false information pursuant to this statute makes a material misstatement of fact described in MRSA 29-A Section 2103 and is subject to the penalties under that section.

You cannot obtain or renew a driver's license or non-driver identification card unless you provide acceptable valid documentary evidence of legal presence in the United States. To establish evidence of legal presence you must present a legible, unexpired, valid document from the list as follows:

A. Birth Certificate - must be a certified copy from a State Office of Vital Statistics or equivalent agency showing the individual was born in:

1. A State of the United States,
2. District of Columbia,
3. Puerto Rico after January 12, 1941,
4. Virgin Islands after January 16, 1917,
5. Guam after April 11, 1899,
6. American Samoa after February 15, 1900,
7. Swains Island after March 3, 1925, or
8. Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands after January 8, 1978.

B. Passport or Passport Card from the United States
C. Consular of Report of Birth Abroad, Certificate of Report of Birth or Certification of Report of Birth
D. Certificate of Naturalization,
E. Certificate of U.S. Citizenship,
F. United States Citizen Identification Card,
G. Identification Card for a Resident Citizen in the U.S.

H. American Indian Card, or
I. Northern Mariana Identification Card.

Acceptable alternative documents for a person born in the United States may include:

1. A certified letter from a jurisdiction listed above stating that no birth record exists. The letter must include the person's name, date of birth, the years covered by the search for a birth record, and that there is no birth record on file; and
2. A document issued by the United States or a jurisdiction listed above, showing the name, date of birth and the birth occurred in a jurisdiction listed above, including military discharge records, census records, and school records; or
3. At least one of the following:
    a. Baptismal certificate, religious record or tribal record showing name, date of birth and that the birth occurred in a jurisdiction listed above.
    b. A hospital birth certificate showing name, date of birth and that the birth occurred in a jurisdiction listed above.
    c. A doctor's record of birth showing name, date of birth and that the birth occurred in a jurisdiction listed above, or
    d. A newspaper or insurance files showing name, date of birth and that the birth occurred in a jurisdiction listed above.

Persons born outside the United States claiming citizenship through one United States citizen parent may present:

1. person's foreign birth certificate,
2. proof of citizenship of parent, and
3. evidence of the applicant's legal relationship to parent

Persons born outside the United States claiming citizenship through two United States citizen parents may present:

1. person's foreign birth certificate,
2. parent's marriage certificate or evidence of the applicant's relationship to the citizen parents, and
3. proof of parent’s citizenship

Non-Citizens. A person not claiming citizenship may present the following documents to establish evidence of legal presence in the United States:

A. Permanent Resident Card or Resident Alien Card,
B. Memorandum of Creation of Record of Lawful Permanent Residence,
C. Arrival/Departure Form I-94 or foreign passport with the notation "Processed for I-551" or I-551 Alien Documentation and Identification System (ADIT) stamp,
Temporary Resident Card,
D. Reentry Permit,
E. Employment Authorization Card,

F. Travel Document or Refugee Travel Document,
G. An Arrival/Departure card, Form I-94 stamped or endorsed.
H. Notice of Action or other official notification showing the period of admission,
I. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) (Form I-20) or (DS-2019) properly endorsed or stamped,
J. Letter, order, appellate decision, Arrival/Departure Form I-94 or foreign passport stamped with Section 207 Refugee, Section 208-Asylee, Section 212(d)(5) Parolee, or Cuban/Haitian Entrant, Section 243(h), Section 241(b)(3), or Conditional Entrant,
K. Arrival/Departure Form I-94 or Canadian passport coded S13,
L. Letter or tribal document establishing person is an American Indian born in Canada,
M. Letter, order, appellate decision or Arrival/Departure Form I-94 showing a grant of asylum,
N. An approved or pending application for asylum,
O. An approved or pending application for temporary protected status, or letter or order granting temporary protected status or deferred enforced departure,
P. Letter, order, appellate decision or Arrival/Departure Form I-94 showing a grant of withholding of deportation, withholding or removal, suspension of deportation, cancellation removal, deferral of removal or Convention Against Torture relief,
Q. Pending application for status as a special immigrant juvenile,
R. Letter or notice acknowledging person as victim of crime pursuant to Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, certification letter from United States Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, or letter or notice showing person has a prima facie case as a self-petitioning spouse pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act,
S. Letter, notice, or order of the Board of Immigration Appeals or a federal court granting a stay of deportation or removal,
T. Letter or notice showing a grant of deferred action or Order of Supervision or similar status,
U. Any other documents issued by the United States Department of Justice or Homeland Security, including predecessor or successor federal agencies with responsibility for implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which indicates legal presence in the United States.

A driver's license or non-driver identification card issued to a non-citizen may be issued for a period less than the terms described in statute.

A. A credential will not be issued if the authorized period of admission is less than 120 days.
B. A credential will expire on the date indicated as the expiration date of the authorized period of admission.
C. If the authorized period of admission is duration of status, the issued credential will expire four (4) years from date of issuance.
D. If the authorized period of admission is neither, duration of status nor indicated by a specific date, the issued credential will expire 120 days from the date of issuance.