STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

DRIVER'S

Licensing Handbook

Revised 10/2010

West Virginia dmv

Keeping West Virginia on the move.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

5707 MacCorkle Avenue, SE

Charleston, WV 25317

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

For Vehicle Title, License Plate, Driver's License issues, or for General Information

(304) 926-3499 / (800) 642-9066 | Hearing-Impaired - (800) 742-6991

Other Important Telephone Numbers (Area Code 304)

Driver's License *926-3801*
Commercial Driver's License *926-3801*
Point System *926-2505*
Student Attendance *926-2505*
Unpaid West Virginia Tickets *926-2505*
Unpaid Out-of-State Tickets *926-2505*
Driving Records *926-3802*
Compulsory Insurance *926-3802*
Driving Under the Influence *926-2506*
Driving Under the Influence "Interlock" *926-2507*

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CALL NOW! 1-866-2MAKE-IT

(1-866-262-5348)

WHERE TO TEST OR APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE

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

DMV REGIONAL OFFICE LOCATIONS

Beckley
107 Pinecrest Drive
Beckley, WV 25801

Charles Town
24 Ruland Road
Kearneysville, WV 25430

Clarksburg
105 Platinum Drive, Suite D
Bridgeport, WV 26330

Elkins
1029 N Randolph Avenue
Elkins, WV 26241

Flatwoods
295 Skidmore Lane
Sutton, WV 26601

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

Huntington
801 Madison Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701

Kanawha City
5707 MacCorkle Avenue, SE
Suite 400
Charleston, WV 25317

Lewisburg
148 Maplewood Avenue
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Logan
428 Main Street
Logan, WV 25601

Martinsburg
1438 Edwin Miller Blvd.
Martinsburg, WV 25401

Moorefield
410 S Main Street
Moorefield, WV 26836

Morgantown
1525 Deckers Creek Blvd.
Morgantown, WV 26505

Moundsville
400 Teletech Drive, Suite 100
Moundsville, WV 26041

Parkersburg
3001 Dudley Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Point Pleasant
1408 Kanawha Street
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

Princeton
198 Davis Street
Princeton, WV 24740

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

Spencer
115 Church Street
Spencer, WV 25276

Weirton
Municipal Plaza, Suite 100
Weirton, WV 26062

Welch
92 McDowell Street
Welch, WV 24801

Williamson
225 E 3rd Avenue
Williamson, WV 25661

Winfield
116 Liberty Square
Winfield, WV 25526

ADDITIONAL DRIVER TESTING LOCATIONS:

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

WV State Police Barracks
2600 Eoff Street
Wheeling, WV 26003

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

The driver examination program provides fundamental education in traffic safety and allows you to match your driving ability with accepted standards for safe driving.

West Virginia dmv

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www.dmv.wv.gov

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DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pedestrian: *Any person traveling on foot*

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER I
DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION

Who Must Be Licensed?

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

Who is Exempt?

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

Who Can Be Denied a License?

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

Documents for Issuance of Permit, Graduated Driver's License (GDL), License, or Identification Card

The DMV requires several different documents for the issuance of licenses and identification cards.

The chart shown to the right has a list of acceptable documents that a U.S. citizen can use to obtain a license or identification card. You will need at least one of the documents listed to prove your identity in addition to your original, signed Social Security card.

If you are an immigrant, refugee, or have been refused a Social Security card, please refer to pages 3 and 4 for more detail on identifying documents and proof of residency.

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS for U.S. CITIZENS
Original or Certified Copy of Birth Certificate *Hospital birth certificates are unacceptable*
US Passport *Only an original, valid, current, or legally extended are acceptable*
WV Driver's License or Identification Card *Must be valid or expired 6 months or less*
U.S. Service Identification Card *Must be valid & accompanied with a Photo Privilege Card (DD 1173)*
DOD IDDD-2 Military Photo Identification Card *Must be valid, original, active duty, retiree, or reservist*
Form N-550, or N-570 *Certificate of US Naturalization*
Form N-560 Certificate of United States Citizenship

Social Security Card

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

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

- *Medicare Card issued to the applicant*
- *A Military Identification card issued to the applicant or an original certified copy of the Military discharge form DD214*
- *A W-2 Form with the applicant's employer's name and identification number and the applicant's name, number, and Social Security number (not more than 18 months old)*

Residency Requirement

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

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

The chart on the right lists acceptable documents to use as proof of West Virginia Residency. If you are a new resident in the state you will be required to provide two forms of residency. If you are applying for a *Graduated Driver's License (GDL) please see the section titled School Driver Eligibility Certificate on Page 3. All renewals are required to provide one document.

All applicants for the Graduated Driver's License age 18 or younger are required to provide the current School Eligibility Certificate as one of the documents required. If the applicant is under 18 years of age and has completed school, a Diploma or GED Certificate are acceptable in lieu of the School Eligibility Certificate. More information is provided in the following section:* ***School Driver Eligibility Certificate*

PROOF OF WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENCY
Current Utility Bill with WV Address *No more than 60 days old*
Tax Records indicating a WV Address *Property tax receipt or bill*
Residential Lease Agreement *For a West Virginia Residence*
Mortgage Documents for a WV Address *Or proof of WV home ownership*
Homeowners Insurance Documents *for a WV Residence*
W-2 Form with a WV Address *Must be no more than 18 months old*
Concealed Weapons Permit with WV Address *Must be current*
Current School Eligibility Certificate* *Required for applicants under the age of 18 applying for a GDL*
A Valid Motor Vehicle Registration Card *Must be in the name of the applicant and issued by the DMV with a WV Address*
WV Voters Registration Card
Proof of Receipt of WV Public Assistance
WV Homestead Tax Exemption
WV DMV Affidavit of Residency

School Driver Eligibility Certificate

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

First-Time Applicants

Any first-time applicant for an instruction permit, driver's license, or identification card must present the following: a Social Security card or an acceptable alternative as listed on page 2, one item from the identification documents table on page 1, and two proofs of residency from the proof of WV residency table on page 2.

An applicant under the age of 18 applying for their GDL is required to meet the school enrollment requirement as listed under the *School Driver Eligibility* section above in addition to providing: a Social Security card or an acceptable alternative as listed on page 2, one item from the identification documents table on page 1, two proofs of residency from the proof of WV residency table on page 2, a School Driver Eligibility Certificate, and DMV Form 23. The school driver eligibility certificate can be used as both proofs of residency, provided it shows a physical address for the student. If the certificate has a PO Box listed for the student, you will need to provide an additional two forms of proof of WV residency as outlined on page 2.

If the applicant has had a name change, proper documents are required to verify the name change such as a certified marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court-ordered name change.

Immigrants

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

- *A form I-551 Alien Registration Receipt Card*
- *A valid Temporary I-551 stamp on Foreign Passport (with English translation) or on INS Form I-94*
- *Valid re-entry permit Form I-327*

Additional Requirements include:

- *Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security Card*
- *Two (2) proofs of WV residency*

Non-Immigrants

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

- *Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security Card*
- *Two (2) proofs of WV residency*
- *A valid foreign passport*
- *A form I-94*
- *A visa issued by the United States, if the applicant is from a nation whose citizens are required by the United States to obtain a visa*
- *All original documents to verify status and length of authorized stay*
- *A form I-20 and written verification of attendance at the school listed on form I-20 if the applicant's status is F-1 or F-2*
- *Written verification from an employer, if the applicant's status is H1-A, H1-B, H-3, or H-4*
- *A form DS 2019 and written verification of attendance at the school listed on form DS 2019 if the applicant's status is J-1 or J-2*

Refugees

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

- *Social Security card or a letter from the SSA denying the issuance of a Social Security card*
- *One (1) form of WV residency*
- *A Form I-94 showing grant of refugee status*
- *A Reception and Placement Program Assurance Form*
- *Written verification of identity and WV residency presented by an employee of a sponsoring organization approved by the United States Department of State to resettle refugees in WV*

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

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

New Residents

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

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

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

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

In-State Change of Address

If you have an in-state change of address, you are required by state law to update your driver's license within twenty (20) days of the change. You will need to bring in one item from the list on page 2 from the proof of WV residency chart as well as your current license, or one of the acceptable forms of ID from the chart on page 1.

Renewing

To renew a driver's license, you must present one of each of the identity and residency documents noted on pages 1 and 2 of the handbook. If your license has been expired for more than six months, you are required to retest and apply as a first-time applicant. If your Social Security number is not in the DMV data system you are required to provide your Social Security card before a new license will be issued. If you do not have your Social Security card you may present one of the following: a Medicare card issued in your name that contains your Social Security number as well as your signature, a Military Identification card showing your Social Security Number military status of active, retired, reserve, or dependant in the United States Military, an original or certified copy of the Military Discharge Form DD 214 with the Social Security number, or a Wage and Tax Statement Form (W-2) not more than 18 months old. An applicant who is not a citizen of the United States shall present all documents required by the Division to verify his or her legal status in the United States, proof of identity, and proof of residency in this state. If your Social Security number is incorrect in the DMV data system, you must provide your Social Security card.

Duplicate License

To obtain a duplicate license, you must present one document from the table of identification documents on page 1 and one document from the proof of WV residency from the table on page 2 of the handbook. If you are under the age of 18 and are applying for a duplicate license, you need a valid school driver eligibility form. If your Social Security number is not in the DMV data system, or is wrong, you must provide your Social Security card before a new license will be issued. An applicant who is not a citizen of the United States shall present all documents required by the DMV to verify his or her legal status in the United States, proof of identity, and proof of residency in this state.

Expired License

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

Changes to Birth Date, Name, Gender, and/or Social Security Number

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

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

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

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

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

A court order specifying a change of name always supersedes a birth or marriage certificate.

A Word About the "Problem Driver Point System"

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

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

Graduated Driver's License (GDL)

Level 1 Permit (Instruction Permit)

The Level 1 License (Instruction Permit) allows you to learn how to operate a motor vehicle with a licensed adult driver over the age of 21. To obtain a Level 1 Instruction Permit, you must be at least 15 years old, pass a vision screening, pass a knowledge test, have a valid school driver eligibility certificate from your county school board, and the permission (DMV Form 23) of your parent or legal guardian indicating permission for issuance of the Level 1 permit. Parental consent is not required for married applicants under the age of 18; however, you must present a certified copy of your marriage certificate.

Each time you apply and test for the Level 1 permit, you must show a certified birth certificate issued by a state or governmental agency of the U.S. that is responsible for the collection of vital records. You must also show a Social Security Administration issued Social Security card signed by you and a valid School Eligibility Certificate. No cell phones, PDA, Blue tooth devices, electronic devices, etc. will be permitted in the exam room. Only the applicant taking the test is allowed in the exam room.

The vision and written tests are administered by driver examiners at DMV designated locations. After you pass the required tests, the driver examiner will approve your application for processing. To qualify for a driver's license in WV you must have at least 20/40 vision in one eye.

If you are under the age of 18, the WV State Board of Education requires that you provide proof of enrollment in a school certified by the local school board. The expiration date of the document will be 30 days from the date of issuance. During the summer break, the School Driver Eligibility Certificate is valid if dated on or after June 1, and is valid until the beginning of the next school term. When the new school year begins, a new school driver eligibility certificate must be obtained. The proof of enrollment includes certification that you are enrolled in a general education development (GED) program and making satisfactory progress or possess a certificate of completion for the program or are enrolled in a secondary school of this state or any state.

Level 1 Instruction Permit Requirements:

- *You must be at least 15 years of age.*
- *You must have written consent from a Parent or Legal Guardian on DMV Form 23.*
- *You may only drive with a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old in the right front passenger seat.*
- *You may only drive between the hours of 5:00 am and 10:00 pm.*
- *You may only have two (2) additional non family passengers in addition to the supervising, licensed adult driver.*
- *Two convictions will result in revocation of your permit (for 90 days).*
- *ZERO Tolerance: You may not have any measurable amount of alcohol in your system while operating a motor vehicle.*
- *You must require all occupants to adhere to the safety belt law.*
- *The fee for a knowledge test is $5.00 for each 2 attempts.*
- *The fee for a Level 1 permit is $5.00.*
- *You may not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system*

A Level 1 permit is nonrenewable. If you surrender your Level 1 permit, for any reason, you will be required to complete the examination process, maintain the Level 1 permit for 180 consecutive days, conviction-free, resubmit all identity, residency, and school driver eligibility certificate documents prior to reissuance. A Level I permit will be issued up to the applicant's 18th birthday, and will expire on the 18th birthday. However, to allow sufficient time to complete the Road Skills Examination, a 30-day grace period (beyond the applicant's 18th birthday) will be allowed. An applicant with a Level 1 permit that is expired and is within the 30-day grace period and wishes to take the skills test but cannot provide the expired permit, will then be required to take the knowledge test for the issuance of a new permit prior to taking the skills test. The knowledge test and the skills test can be taken in the same day.

Level 2 License (Intermediate License)

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

- *Be at least 16 years of age.*
- *Have a minimum of 180 consecutive days of conviction-free driving at Level 1 immediately preceding the date of your Level 2 application.*
- *Pass a road skills test (a maximum of three attempts to complete)*
- *Have a parent or legal guardian certification (log sheet) of a minimum of 50 hours behind the wheel, including the minimum of 10 hours at night or complete a driver's education course approved by the West Virginia Department of Education.*

- *Have a current School Driver Eligibility Certificate*
- *Have identification and Residency documents as outlined on pages 1 and 2*
- *Not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system.*

When you meet all these requirements, you will be issued a Level 2 license. The Level 2 license has certain restrictions that will apply to allow you to gain experience operating a motor vehicle, but with limitations to promote safe use of your motor vehicle. Level 2 drivers may drive without a supervising, licensed adult driver who is age 21 or older between the hours of 5:00 am and 10:00 pm. Level 2 drivers must drive with a supervising, licensed adult driver who is age 21 or older between the hours of 10:00 pm and 5:00 am. The exceptions to this rule are when the licensee is participating in, going to, or returning from: (1) lawful employment; (2) a school-sanctioned activity; (3) a religious activity; or (4) an emergency situation that requires the licensee to prevent bodily injury or the death of another. A Level 2 driver may not operate a motor vehicle during his/her first six months of level 2 status with any (0) non family members under the age of 20 as a passenger and may not operate a motor vehicle with more than one (1) non-family member under the age of 20 as a passenger during the second six months of Level 2. As with Level 1 drivers, Level 2 drivers may not operate a motor vehicle with any measurable alcohol in their system and must require all occupants to follow the seat belt law. If you surrender your Level 2 GDL for any reason and are under the age of 18, you must start over with a Level 1 permit. Each time you apply and test for the Level 2 permit, you must show a certified birth certificate issued by a state or governmental agency of the U.S. that is responsible for the collection of vital records. You must also show a Social Security Administration issued Social Security card signed by you, a valid School Eligibility Certificate, the 50 hour driving log, as well as all documentation required for licensing as listed on page 3 paragraph 2 under *First Time Applicants*. No cell phones, PDA, Blue-tooth devices, electronic devices , etc., will be permitted in the exam room. Only the applicant taking the test is allowed in the exam room.

Levels 1 & 2 GDL Violations and Convictions

Convictions at Level 1 and Level 2 result in penalties that may include suspending or revoking your driving privilege. These penalties reflect the importance of safe driving.

Level 1 Instruction Permit

- *You must be conviction-free for 6 months in order to graduate to a Level 2 Intermediate License. With each conviction the 6-month window starts over from the date of the conviction.*
- *Under a Level 1 Permit, two convictions will result in the revocation of your license for 90 days. When 90 days are up you will be required to re-apply and retest for your Level 1 License.*

Level 2 Intermediate License

- *You are required to be conviction-free for 12 months prior to graduating to a Level 3 License. If you receive a conviction, the 12-month conviction-free period will start over again at the point of that conviction.*
- *Level 2 licensees are required to enroll in a driver improvement program upon the first conviction. Failure to enroll in a driver improvement program will require the driver to remain at the Level 2 stage until the age of 18. The second conviction for a moving violation requires the revocation of your driving privilege until you are 18 and you will be required to retest as a first time applicant.*

Drivers under the age of 18 with a Level 1 permit or Level 2 license may not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless the cell phone is used for contacting a 9-1-1 system as stated in WV State Code §17B-2-3a(F). If a citation is issued for the use of a cell phone on a Level 1 permit or Level 2 license, you must begin the conviction-free time period over (Level 1 - 6 months; Level 2 - 12 months).

Criminal penalties for violating GDL restrictions are:

| ***1st Offense*** • *$25 Fine* | ***2nd Offense*** • *$50 Fine* | ***3rd Offense*** • *$75 Fine* |

Level 3 License

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

License Color-Coding

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

| ***Under 18*** • *Red Background* | ***License 18 to 20*** • *Blue Background License* | ***21 and over*** • *Landscape Background License* |

Regular (Non-GDL) Instruction Permit

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

License Restrictions

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

LICENSE RESTRICTIONS

CODE	DESCRIPTION OF RESTRICTIONS	CODE	DESCRIPTION OF RESTRICTIONS
1	Artificial Limbs	D	Daylight Driving Only
2	Corrective Lenses	I	Interlock
3	Automatic Transmission	S	Spinner Knob
4	Mechanical Signals	K	CDL/ Intrastate only/Under 21
5	Hand Controls	L	Vehicle Without Air Brakes
6	Outside Mirrors	M	Class B or C Bus Only
7	Corrective Lenses & Outside Mirrors	N	Class C Bus Only
9	Other *(DMV may impose others not listed above)*	P	Power Steering & Brakes

Motorcycle Licenses

Motorcycle Instruction Permit

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

- *Any person 16 or older may apply for an instruction permit. Any person under the age of 18 must have first completed the requirements for a Level 2 Intermediate Drivers License or a class E drivers license before being eligible for a motorcycle instruction permit.*
- *Pass a 25-question motorcycle knowledge examination with a grade of 80% or better.*
- *Present Identity and Residency documents (listed on pages 1&2).*

Motorcycle Endorsement (F Endorsement)

In order to add a Motorcycle Endorsement (F) to a driver's license, you must begin by obtaining a Motorcycle Instruction Permit. Once you have your Motorcycle Instruction Permit, you have two options to obtain your F Endorsement: Pass a motorcycle road skills test given by a DMV driver examiner or complete the West Virginia Motorcycle Rider Education Program.

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

Motorcycle-Only (Class F License)

In order to obtain a Class F (Motorcycle Only) license, you must begin by obtaining a Motorcycle Instruction Permit. Once you have obtained your Motorcycle Instruction Permit, you must pass a motorcycle road skills test given by a driver examiner of the DMV or complete the West Virginia Motorcycle Rider Education Program

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

Motorcycle Rider Education Class

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

Drive for Five

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

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

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

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

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

LICENSE FEES

GRADUATED LICENSE LEVELS I - III

Minimum Age	Type of License	Expiration	Fee
15	Level One	18th Birthday (+30 day grace Period)	$5.00
16	Level Two	Until age 18	$5.00
17	Level Three	Until age 20	$2.50 per year or .50¢ for a motor voter

INSTRUCTION PERMIT

Minimum Age	Type of License	Expiration	Fee
16	Motorcycle* Instruction Permit	90 Days from Issuance	$5.00
18	Instruction Permit	90 Days from Issuance	$5.00

STANDARD CLASSES "E" & "F" LICENSES

Minimum Age	Type of License	Fee	Expired Fee
18	Driver's License Classes "E" or "F"	$2.50 per year or .50¢ for a motor voter	$5.00
	Duplicate License	$5.00	

**Must have met the minimum qualifications of Level Two*

Carry Your License

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

Organ Donor Program - You may become an organ donor by checking "YES" on your renewal application, and by doing this you agree that the DMV may furnish your personal information to organ donation groups. Tell your family you want to be a donor or your wishes may not be carried out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOCUMENTS TO KEEP IN YOUR VEHICLE

Just as you need to carry your license with you while operating a motor vehicle, you will need to keep your valid proof of insurance as well as current registration card with you. If you are stopped by a law enforcement officer for a moving violation, you will be required to show this proof in addition to your license. More detail on insurance and registration is provided on page 14.

CHAPTER II
DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

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

School Attendance for Minors

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

How to Refer an Unsafe Driver

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

Division of Motor Vehicles, Medical Section
PO Box 17030
Charleston, WV 25317

Telephone: (304) 926-0729

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

Re-examination of Drivers

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

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

Accidents

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

Compulsory Insurance

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

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

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

The DMV may verify the insurance information which you provide when you obtain or renew your vehicle registration. The DMV may also ask you to verify that you have current insurance in effect. The insurance company you list may be contacted to verify that you were insured. DMV will be utilizing an electronic insurance verification program in the near future which will enhance the ability to identify uninsured motorists. If the company does not verify your insurance information and you are unable to prove otherwise, you may be subject to a penalty fee, suspension of your driver's license, as well as your vehicle registration plate.

If the DMV receives a ticket or crash report indicating that you did not have insurance you may be subject to a penalty fee, suspension of your driver's license, as well as your vehicle registration plate. Your first offense may result in a $200 penalty fee. Repeat offenses of no insurance will result in enhancement of the driver's license suspension period. Reinstatement of your driver's license and/or registration plate will require current proof of insurance and payment of mandatory reinstatement fees.

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

Point System

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

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

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

You may have three points deducted from your record by completing an approved eight hour defensive driving class. Motorists are only eligible for this point reduction once every two years. Only specific courses are approved for this point reduction. If you take a class without approval from the DMV or take the class prior to the points appearing on your record, you will not be eligible for the point deduction. For more information you may contact the DMV at 1-800-642-9066. The most common point bearing offenses are listed on the following page.

POINT SCALE

OFFENSES	POINT VALUES
Fleeing from an Officer	8
Speeding in a School Zone	6
Reckless/Careless Driving	6
Property Damage Only, Hit and Run or Leaving the Scene	6
Speeding 15mph Over the Speed Limit	5
Speeding 10mph - 14mph Over the Speed Limit	3
Passing Violation	3
Failure to Yield Violation	3
Failure to Obey Traffic Light	3
Failure to Obey Stop Sign	3
Hazardous Driving	3
Driving Left of Center	3
Driving Too Fast for Conditions	3
Failure to Maintain Control of Vehicle	3
Careless Driving	3
Driving the Wrong Way on a One Way Street	3
Littering	3
Improper Lane Violation	3
Failure to Observe a Safety Zone	3
Failure to Follow a Police Officer's Instructions	3
Driving on the Wrong Side of the Road	3
Speeding 5mph - 9mph Over the Speed Limit	2
Following Too Closely	2
More than 3 Passengers in the Front Seat	2
Improper Turning	2
Improper Backing	2
Improper Signal or No Signal	2
All Other Moving Violations Not Listed Above	2

Driving in Other States

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

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

Failure to Comply with In-State Citations

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

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

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

Fraudulent Use of Driver's Licenses

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

Mandatory License Revocation

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

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

Driving While License Is Revoked or Suspended

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

All suspension/revocation transactions and reinstatements must be handled in person at the Division of Motor Vehicles, 5707 MacCorkle Avenue, SE, Charleston, WV 25317 or by mail through PO Box 17030, Charleston, WV 25317.

CHAPTER III
DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

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

DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!

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

Under Age Drinking and Driving

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

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

Designated Driver

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

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

Knowing Your Limits

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

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

Other Drugs

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

Implied Consent and the Chemical Test

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

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

Penalties for Driving Under the Influence

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

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

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

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE

Don't Drink and Drive!

OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OFFENSE	FINES	JAIL	MINIMUM REVOCATION PERIOD
ZERO Tolerance - Under 21 with ANY Measurable Alcohol 1st Offense	$25 - $100	-	30 Days*
ZERO Tolerance - Under 21 with ANY Measurable Alcohol 2nd Offense	$100 - $500	24 Hrs.	60 Days or until 18th Birthday, (whichever is greater)*
DUI - Alcohol or Drugs w/BAC <.15 or knowingly permitting 1st Offense	$100 - $500	Up to 6 Mo.	15 Days*
DUI - Alcohol or Drugs w/.15 or > 1st Offense	$100 - $1000	2 Days - 6 Mo.	45 Days*
DUI - With Implied Consent 1st Offense	$100 - $500	24 Hrs. - 6 Mo.	45 Days*
DUI - With Child Endangerment	$200 - $1000	24 Hrs - 12 Mo.	60 Days*
DUI - With Body Injury	$200 - $1000	24 Hrs. - 12 Mo.	60 Days*
DUI - With Death • Misdemeanor	$500 - $1000	90 Days - 12 mo.	1 Year*
DUI - With Death • Felony	$1000 - $3000	2 Yrs. - 10 Yrs.	1 Year*
DUI 2nd Offense	$1000 - $3000	6 Mo. - 12 Mo.	1 Year*
DUI 3rd or Subsequent Offense	$3000 - $5000*	1 Yr. - 3 Yrs.	1 Year*

**Minimum revocation periods are based upon participation in the WV Alcohol Test and Lock Program (Interlock). Participation in the Interlock program may be an option for some DUI offenders. For others, it is a mandatory requirement depending on the type of offense. Interlock is a mandatory requirement for any offender whose license is revoked for two or more alcohol related offenses within a ten-year period and for any offender whose license is revoked for an offense where the BAC was .15 or higher. Participation periods vary depending on type and number of offenses. Individuals revoked for driving under the influence of a controlled substance or drugs are not eligible to participate in this program and must serve the minimum revocation period of 6 months and up to life, depending on the number of previous DUIs.*

CHAPTER IV
EXAMINATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

A Message From Your Examiners

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

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

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

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

Vision Screening

All persons, whether new applicants or renewals, will have to pass the vision screening. If your vision is 20/40 or better using both eyes, either with or without conventional corrective lenses, and you show no serious visual defect, you will pass the vision screening. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision may also be checked. Special lens arrangements, including but not limited to bi-optic or telescopic lenses, may not be utilized to satisfy the visual acuity standards. See your eye care professional if you have any doubts about your vision before you apply or renew to avoid delays.

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

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

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

Knowledge Examination

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

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

Audio versions of the knowledge examination are available for the reading impaired. In order to take the audio test the applicant must have previously attempted the written examination and failed at least twice. The test is administered with headphones. The same information covered in the written exam is covered in the audio exam, therefore the same rules apply. Employees of the DMV are not to read the test to you, re-word the information, or provide additional help explaining questions that would not be supplied to applicants taking the written exam. Headsets are limited and you may have to wait if you are requesting to take the audio test.

DUI Awareness Cards

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

Vehicle Check

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

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

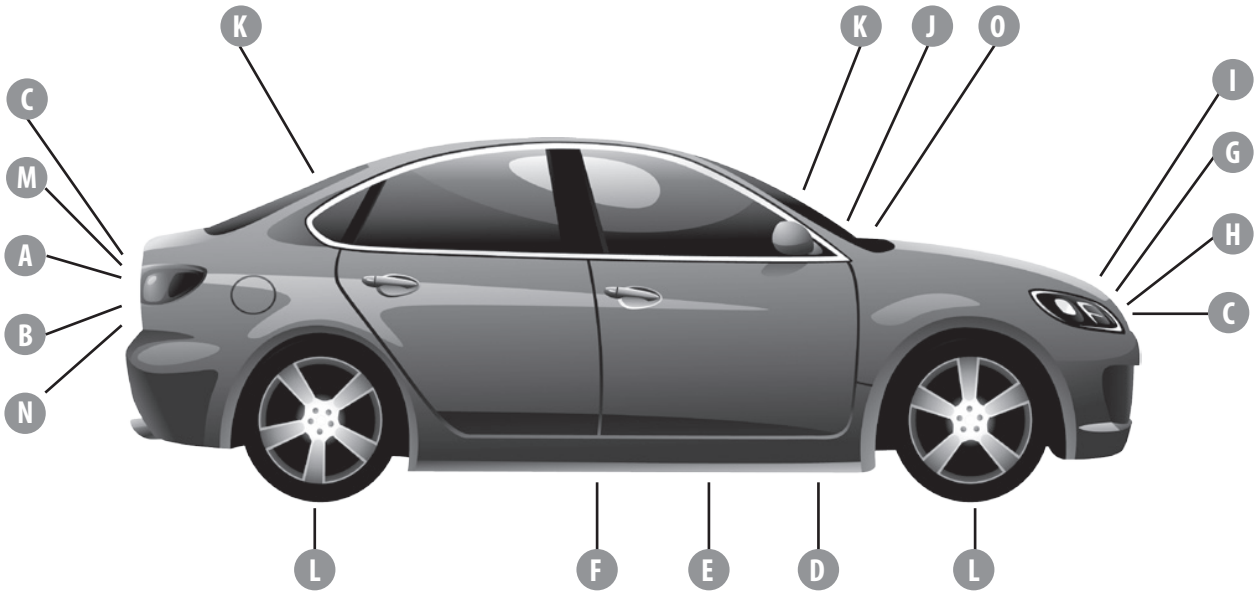
The examiner cannot give the driving test unless your car is in safe condition and legally equipped. The applicant must know the location and function of all safety equipment, including the parking/emergency brake. Failure to locate or demonstrate the use of this equipment will result in the applicant failing the road test.

Illegal Equipment

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

EQUIPMENT TEST COMPONENTS

ALL FEATURES MUST BE FULLY FUNCTIONAL



- **A** ***Back-Up Lights***
- **B** ***Break Lights***
- **C** ***Directional Signals***
- **D** ***Foot Brake***
- **E** ***Parking/Emergency Brake***
- **F** ***Exhaust System***
- **G** ***Hazard Lights***
- **H** ***Headlights***
- **I** ***Horn***
- **J** ***Motor Vehicle Inspection Sticker***
- **K** ***Safety Glass***
- **L** ***Tires***
- **M** ***Tail Lights***
- **N** ***Registration Light***
- **O** ***Windshield Wipers***

Driving Examination

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

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

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

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

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

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

Retest Information

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

EXAMINATION NOTES

How To Prepare For Your Driver's Test

Basic Vehicle Control Skills Test

During the test, you may be tested on a subset of the following Basic Control Skills exercises:

- *Left Side Parallel Park*
- *Right Side Parallel Park*
- *Forward Two-Point Turnabout*
- *Reverse Two- Point Turnabout*
- *Three-Point Turnabout*

With a parent, guardian, or friend who is properly licensed and over the age of 21, practice these exercises in a safe place, such as a parking lot or residential area until you can correctly complete them. Try practicing the exercises in a variety of vehicles and locations. These exercises are shown on the following page.

Instructions

The examiner will give you detailed instructions for completing the test exercises and you will be given the opportunity to ask questions.

Scoring

Turn Signals - *When performing an exercise you must use the correct turn signal when turning, backing, and also to enter or exit an area. Each time you fail to use or improperly use your turn signal it will count as an error. If your turn signal cancels automatically make sure to reactivate it when necessary.*

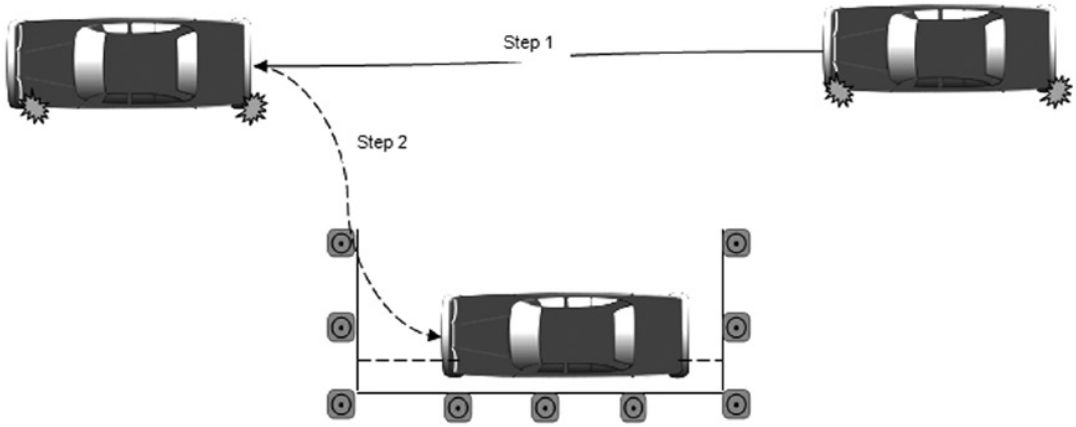
Head/Traffic Check(s) - *When performing an exercise it is important to check traffic prior to entering or exiting a roadway. You must make sure that it is safe to perform the exercise and that the road way is clear in both directions before entering, backing into traffic or leaving the exercise area. Points will be deducted if you do not use head/traffic checks during all positions of the driving test.*

Changing Direction - *When performing an exercise, you will be assessed points if you have to reverse your direction by either pulling forward after backing or having to put the vehicle in reverse after driving forward to gain a better position.*

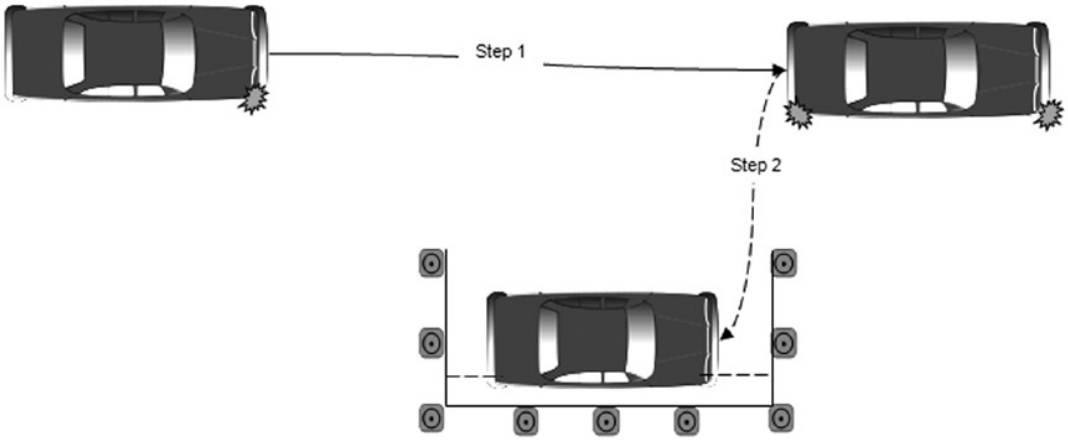
Exercises

Left Side or Right Side Parallel Park – *This exercise demonstrates your ability to parallel park a vehicle. This is an essential skill for parking. Parallel parking is one of the best indicators that you have the basic skills necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle. Basic skills needed for this exercise consist of visual skills, judgment of space, use of mirrors, turn signals, steering, braking, and acceleration control.*

Left Side Parallel Park

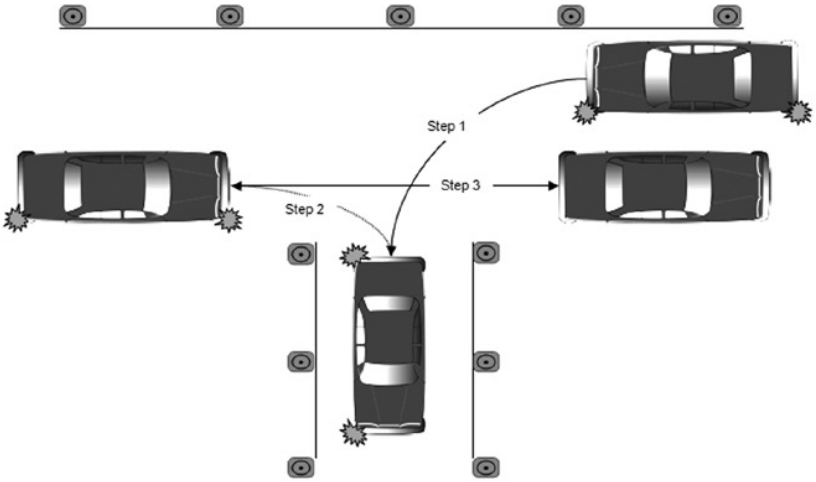


Right Side Parallel Park

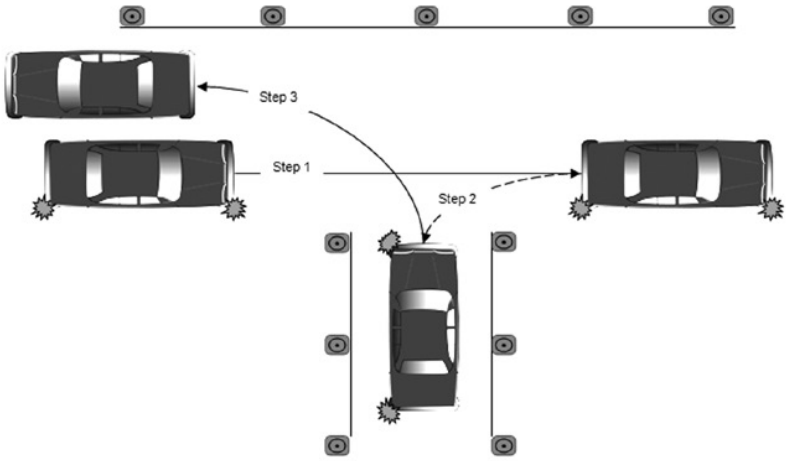


Forward Two-Point, Reverse Two-Point, and Three-Point Turnabouts - *These exercises demonstrate your ability to execute turnabouts. Basic skills needed for these exercises consist of backing skills, visual skills, judgment of space, steering skills, use of mirrors, turn signals, braking, and acceleration control.*

Forward Two-Point Turnabout

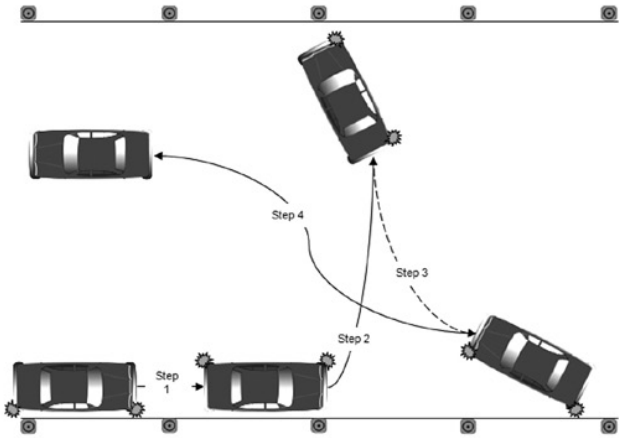


Reverse Two-Point Turnabout



Three-point Turnabout - *During your road test you will be asked to drive forward to the right side of the three-point turnabout area and stop your vehicle. You will be asked to execute a three-point turnabout and then drive forward into the roadway area where you started the exercise. Basic skills needed for this exercise consist of visual skills, judgment of space, use of mirrors, turn signals, steering, braking and acceleration control*.

Three-Point Turnabout



Automatic Failures

- *Accumulating excessive points*
- *Moving a cone, barrel, or flag*
- *Jumping curb during any part of the driving test*

BE PREPARED FOR YOUR TEST: PRACTICE FIRST

Practice these exercises with a parent/guardian or friend, who is properly licensed and over the age of 21, in safe areas such as a parking lot or residential area until you can correctly complete them.

Try practicing the exercises in a variety of vehicles and locations so you are confident and well-practiced for your driver's test.

Road Test

You will drive over a test route that may have a variety of traffic situations. Directions will be given to you, and you will be allotted plenty of time to do what the examiner has asked. You will not be asked to do anything that is illegal or unsafe. At all times during the test, you must drive safely and responsibly. During the driving test, the examiner will be scoring you on specific driving maneuvers as well as on your general driving behavior.

How You Will Be Tested

Turns

- **You have been asked to make a turn. As you approach the turn -** *Check traffic in all directions. Use the correct turn signal, brake smoothly and evenly, and safely get into the correct lane needed for the turn.*

- **If you must stop before making the turn because of traffic, signals, or signs -** *Smoothly come to a complete stop without skidding behind the stop line, crosswalk, or stop sign. A safe gap when stopping behind another vehicle is to stop where you can see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead of you. Keep the front wheels aimed straight ahead.*

- **When ready to turn** - *Check traffic in all directions. Keep both hands on the steering wheel during the turn. Maintain smooth, even acceleration. Always yield to pedestrians and other traffic. Keep checking your mirror to make sure the vehicle does not hit anything on the inside of the turn. Do not move into oncoming traffic or drive over the curb. Keep the vehicle in the proper lane.*

- **After Turn** - *Make sure you finish completing the turn in the correct lane and that your turn signal has cancelled. Accelerate to the speed of traffic, use your turn signal, check your blind spots by looking over your shoulder (head check), check your mirrors and move into the right-most lane when it is safe to do so (if not already there).*

Intersections

- **As you approach an intersection -** *Check traffic thoroughly in all directions. Brake smoothly and evenly and maintain lane position.*

- **When stopping at an intersection -** *If necessary, come to a complete stop behind any stop signs, signals, sidewalks, or stop lines. If stopping behind another vehicle, always maintain a safe gap. You should be able to see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead of you.*

- **When driving through an intersection -** *Check traffic thoroughly in all directions. Keep both hands on the wheel and slow down and yield to any pedestrians or traffic in the intersection. Do not change lanes while proceeding through the intersection.*

- **Once through the intersection -** *Continue checking mirrors and traffic behind you. Accelerate smoothly. If there are multiple lanes of traffic, accelerate to the speed of traffic, use your turn signal, check your blind spots by looking over your shoulder (head check), check your mirrors and move into the right-most lane when it is safe to do so (if not already there).*

Urban Area Driving

During this part of the test, you are expected to make regular traffic checks, check cross traffic, and maintain a safe following distance. Your vehicle should be centered in the proper lane (right-most lane) and you should keep up with the flow of traffic, but not exceed the posted speed limit.

Lane Changes

During multiple lane portions of the test, you will be asked to conduct a lane change to the left and a lane change to the right. You should make necessary traffic checks first by looking in your mirrors and checking your blind spots by looking over your shoulder (head check). Make sure you use the correct turn signal and smoothly change lanes when it is safe to do so. Cancel your turn signal upon completion of the lane change and check traffic.

Curves

When approaching a curve, check traffic thoroughly in all directions. Before entering the curve, reduce your speed so further braking is not required in the curve, and keep vehicle in the lane. Continue checking traffic in all directions, maintaining a safe speed through the curve, and follow posted warning signs.

Traffic Signs

During the road test you will be asked to identify a number of traffic signs. They can be located anywhere on the road test. If the examiner asks you what sign you just passed, you should be able to tell the examiner.

General Driving

- **Use brakes properly -** *Do not brake harshly. Brake smoothly using steady pressure, and come to a complete stop at traffic signs and signals.*

- **Proper steering -** *Keep both hands on the outside of the steering wheel at all times, unless using other controls. Once you have completed using other controls, return both hands to the steering wheel. All methods of steering are acceptable (i.e., hand-over hand and hand-to-hand) as long as both hands are on the outside of the wheel (no palming).*

- **Proper lane usage -** *Do not put the vehicle over curbs, sidewalks, or lane markings. Complete a turn in the proper lane on a multiple-lane road (vehicle should finish a left turn from the left-most lane, the one directly to the right of the center line). Finish the turn in the right-most curb lane. Move to or remain in the right-most lane unless lane is blocked. Do not attempt lane changes at intersections. (remember by placing vehicle over curb it will constitute an automatic failure)*

- **Regular traffic checks/head checks -** *Check traffic and mirrors regularly. Check traffic and mirrors before, during, and after an intersection, turn or lane change. Also watch for hazards by searching left and right at intersections, driveways, store entrances, railroad tracks, or any other areas where traffic intersects.*

Scan and check traffic in high-volume areas where pedestrians are expected to be present. Check traffic by looking over your shoulder (head check) when necessary (i.e. lane change, merging).

Use turn signals when required. Activate turn signals at appropriate times. Do not signal too early or too late. Cancel turn signals upon completion of a turn or lane change.

- **Stopping at stop line, crosswalk, or gap -** *When stopping at a stop sign or traffic signal, do not stop over a marked stop line, pedestrian crosswalk, sidewalk, or other marker. Do not stop the vehicle in the intersection. When stopping behind another vehicle make sure you can see it's rear wheels. If there is no stop line or crosswalk, stop before your vehicle enters the intersection.*

Automatic Failures

If any of the following errors occur during the road test you will be disqualified:

- *If you score excessive points during the public road test*
- *If you do not use your safety belt*
- *If you receive a traffic citation for a moving violation, disobey signs or signals, speed, roll through stops, or ignore traffic laws*
- *If you do not yield to pedestrians or other roadway users*
- *If you are involved in an avoidable crash or if your vehicle has physical contact with other vehicles, objects or pedestrians*
- *If you commit any unsafe act or if another driver is forced to take evasive actions in order to prevent a crash*
- *If you put the vehicle over or on top of sidewalks or curbs unnecessarily*
- *If the examiner has to take control of the vehicle*
- *If you fail to wear your glasses when required*
- *If you refuse to perform any maneuver which is part of the road test*
- *If, after proceeding a short distance on the driving course, it becomes apparent you are dangerously inexperienced*
- *If you fail to follow any traffic control device or lawful direction by driver examiner*

DRIVER'S TEST SCORE OF

Driver's Name _____ Driver's Signature _____

A. STARTING
1. Fails to look around when starting ____
2. Unnecessarily fast getaway ____
3. Fails to signal properly ____

B. STOPPING
1. Fails to signal ____
2. Slows down too suddenly ____
3. Fails to check rear traffic ____

C. TURNING
1. Fails to approach in proper lane ____
2. Fails to signal properly ____
3. Fails to use mirrors ____

D. BACKING
1. Fails to look behind before and while backing ____
2. Uncertain steering when backing ____
3. Excessive speed ____

E. PARKING
1. Strikes other vehicle while parking ____
2. Climbs curb in parking ____
3. Parks too far from curb ____

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

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

H. PASSING
1. Does not await clear distance ahead ____
2. Passes car in intersection ____
3. Cuts in too quickly ahead ____

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

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

K. ATTENTION
1. Fails to notice dangerous spots. ____
2. Does not give complete attention ____
to all traffic intersections ____

L. ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHERS
1. Depends on others for safety ____
2. Inconsiderate of pedestrians ____
3. Fails to anticipate what others may do ____
4. Uncooperative ____

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

SAMPLE

CHAPTER V
TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

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

Single Message Shaped Signs

Octagon

These eight-sided signs are reserved for stop signs. These signs mean you must stop completely. Give the right-of-way to pedestrians and to all cross traffic before moving again. At a stop sign, you must stop behind any marked or unmarked crosswalk (joining sidewalks on opposite sides of the street). If there are no pavement markings or cross walks, you must stop before entering an intersection. Stop at a place where you can see traffic coming from all directions.

Triangle (upside down)

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

Pennant

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

Round

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

Pentagon

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

Slow-Moving Vehicle (right side up)

A triangular sign with a reflective red border and fluorescent orange center identifies a slow moving vehicle or a vehicle which has made an emergency stop.

Square & Rectangular Signs

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

School Zones *Business & Residential* *Open County Highway* *Interstate*

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

Lane Directions - *These signs are posted between highway lanes that are divided and placed at openings in the dividers where streets intersect with the highway. They are to remind you which side of the divider you belong on.*

No Right Turn & No Left Turn - *This sign indicates which direction you cannot turn at an intersection. These signs are used when meeting a one way street or in situations where it is unsafe to turn.*

No U-Turn Sign - *This sign means do not turn around in the middle of a street or an intersection.*

Wrong Way or Do Not Enter - *These signs warn you that traffic in that direction is prohibited. If you choose a traffic lane marked with either of these signs you will likely run into another vehicle.*

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

One Way Street - *This sign is used to tell you when a cross street has traffic running in one direction only. Usually every consecutive block runs in the opposite direction when there are one-way streets.*

Diamond & Warning Signs

These diamond-shaped signs will usually appear without explanatory words beneath them. These signs are yellow with black letters. They warn of possible danger ahead and may have symbols or written warnings. Pedestrian and school warning signs may be yellow-green with black letters.

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

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

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

Used to remind you that you are on a two-way road.

The road ahead has two-way traffic.

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

To advise you of an added lane.

Warns of hills where special care must be taken. Slow down before you start downhill.

Ahead a bridge or under-pass has low clearance. The height is shown on the sign.

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

Watch out for people walking across the road.

Traffic signal ahead.

Construction and Maintenance Signs

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

Construction and Maintenance Signs and Devices

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

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

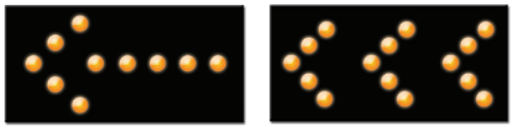
Channeling Devices

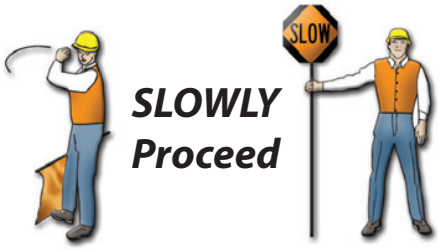
Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones, and tubes are the most commonly used devices to alert drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in highway and street work areas and to guide drivers safely through the work zone. At night they are often equipped with flashing or steady-burn lights.

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

Flashing Arrow Panels

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





Flaggers

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

Guide Signs

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

Used on main highways, these signs show distance to places and routes.

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

These signs are found on interstates and show you where the exit is, as well as the exit number.

WV & U.S. Route Markers - *Are generally black on white.*
Interstate markers - *Are red, white, and blue..*

Interstate Marker

U.S. Route Marker

WV Route Marker

Pictured on the right is an example of an interstate sign that you may find when approaching an exit further ahead. Aside from the exit number they may show the road , location , attraction, or upcoming routes and the distance from the exit.

These signs let you know what amenities are available off interstate exits .

These signs are for designated places for travelers to take a break from driving.

Some guide signs have symbols on top with a description and/or arrow below.

This large park and recreation sign is an sample of one you may see.

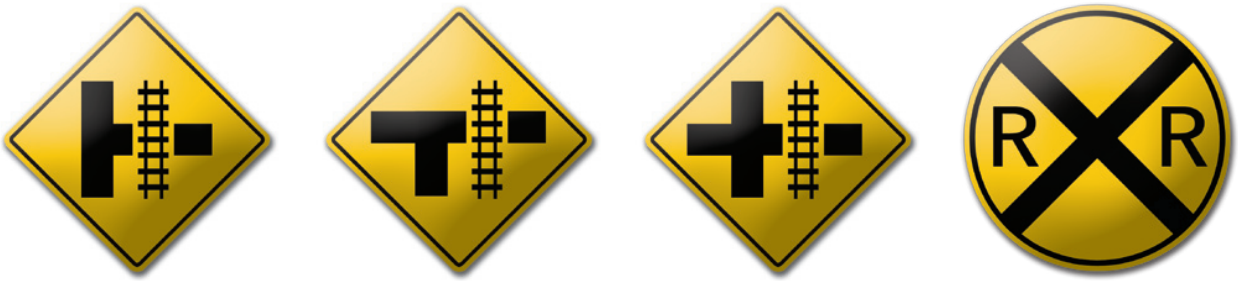
BE PREPARED: KNOW YOUR SIGNS

Not all the signs you will see are in this handbook; however, most signs are self-explanatory. The warning signs on page 34 are amongst the signs you typically see without identifying text; instead they often have pictures.

The shapes and colors of signs are a very helpful indicator as to what they are trying to tell you. Take notice the next time you are a passenger in a vehicle to all of the signs you see and what they are for. Being an observant passenger can help you to become a better driver.

Railroad Crossing Signs and Signals

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



Traffic Lights

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

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

Steady Circular Yellow - *This means that the green light is ending and will change to red. You should only drive through a yellow light if the vehicle clearance is within the intersection.*

Yellow Arrow / LEFT TURN - *This means that the green arrow is ending and will change to red.*

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

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

Intersection Flashers

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

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

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

Come to a complete stop and yield to all other traffic and pedestrians

Proceed through the intersection with caution

Lane Use Control Signals

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

Green Downward Arrow: *Traffic may use the lane under the arrow.*

Yellow X: *The lane is about to be closed or its direction is about to reverse. Move out of it as soon as you can.*

Red X: *The lane is closed or being used by opposing traffic. Do not use this lane.*

Crosswalk Signals

Crosswalk signals are traffic signals for pedestrians. If these signals are in place, pedestrians are to obey them. These lighted signs are often shown 2 ways:

Hand Symbol or DON'T WALK- *when these appear pedestrians are not to cross the crosswalk.*

Walking Man or WALK - *when these appear pedestrians are safe to cross the street inside the crosswalk lines.*

Be aware of crosswalks at intersections and in school zones. These are indicators that you are in a high pedestrian traffic zone. Being especially alert for pedestrians in these places will reduce the risk of accidents. A blind person who is on foot and using a guide dog or other service animal, or is carrying a white cane or walking stick, has the right-of-way on a highway, street, or road regardless of whether he or she is in a crosswalk or not.

Pavement Markings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

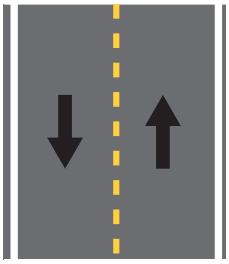
Center Left-Turn Lanes - *These lanes are reserved for left turns from either direction and are not to be used as through or passing lanes. You can recognize these lanes by the solid yellow lines nearest the through lanes and broken lines to the left of them. See figure D.*

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

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

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

A



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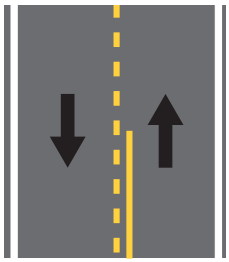

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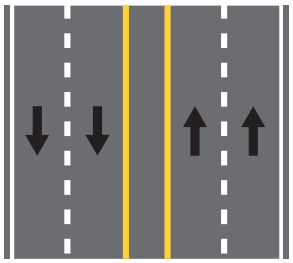

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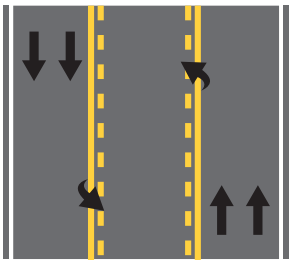

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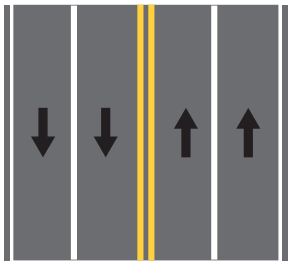


F

CHAPTER VI
TRAFFIC LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD

Basic Speed Law

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

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

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

Speed Limits

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

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

Designated speed limits, unless otherwise posted, are:

- ***Interstate -*** *Maximum Speed 70mph unless otherwise posted*
- ***Open County Highway -*** *55mph - unless otherwise posted*
- ***Business or Residential Areas -*** *25mph*
- ***School Zone (while children are present along the roadway) -*** *15mph*

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

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE:

Observe and follow speed limits.

Driving Slowly

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

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

Driving Signals

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

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

Get into the habit of signaling every time you make a change. Signal at least 100 feet before you plan to turn.

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

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE

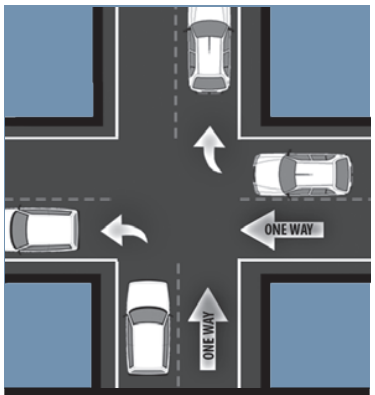
It is best to have both hands on the steering wheel. Consider the steering wheel as the face of a clock. The left hand should be placed approximately at 8 o'clock and the right hand at 4 o'clock. This placement will afford the driver maximum control of the vehicle at all times and reduce the chance that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

Turning Maneuvers

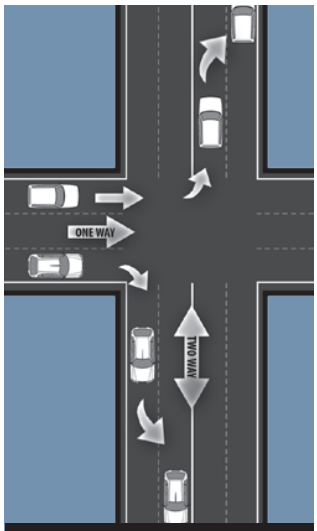
Improper turns cause many traffic accidents. Pedestrians and bicyclists are often victims of improper turns by vehicle operators. It is important that you learn and abide by correct turning procedures.

Rules for turns:

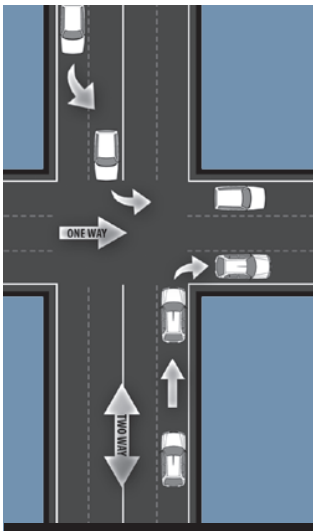
- *Prepare for the turn. Do not make decisions to turn at the last moment.*
- *Before entering the turning lane, signal, look in the mirrors and check the blind spot by glancing over the proper shoulder.*
- *Signal at least 100 feet before turning.*
- *Slow down before making turns. Do not brake while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



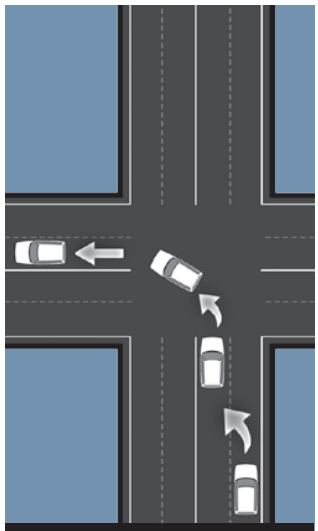
ONE WAY TO ONE WAY



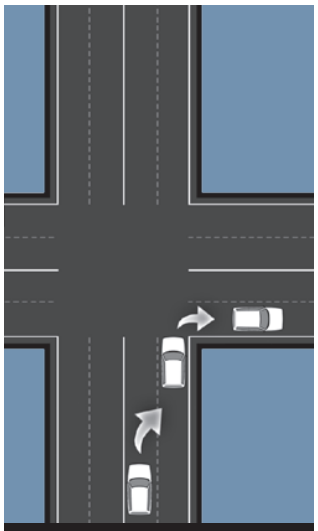
ONE WAY TO TWO WAY



TWO WAY TO ONE WAY



LEFT TURN



RIGHT TURN

Changing Direction

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

Backing Up

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

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

Never back across other traffic lanes or through an intersection.

Parking Maneuvers

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

- *Vehicles must always be parked in the same direction as the movement of traffic on that side of the street.*
- *Avoid double parking. It is illegal and discourteous. Make certain your vehicle is completely off the traveled portion of the road.*
- *Whenever you park and leave your car, you must turn off the engine and set the parking (emergency) brake. Lock your vehicle and take your keys. Getting out of your car on the street side can be dangerous. Always look carefully for bicycles, motorcycles, or larger vehicles that might be passing. The drivers may not see you in time to keep from hitting your open door, or you.*

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

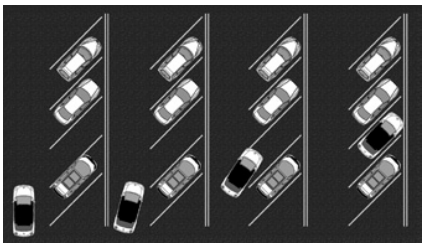
Stopping, standing or parking is not allowed (except to avoid a conflict with other traffic or to obey a law, police officer or a traffic signal) in the following locations:

- *On a sidewalk*
- *In front of a public or private driveway*
- *Within an intersection*
- *Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant*
- *On a crosswalk*
- *Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection*
- *Within 30 feet of any stop sign or traffic control signal*
- *In front of a wheelchair ramp or curb cut*
- *Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing*

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

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

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



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

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

Parking on Hills

| ***Down hill*** • *Turn wheels to curb* | ***Up hill - (With Curb)*** • *Turn wheels from curb* | ***Up hill - (No Curb)*** • *Turn wheels right* |

If you park or stop on a grade, turn the front wheels to the curb side of the highway so the car will not roll. Be sure to set the emergency or parking brake. To reinforce the parking brake in an automatic shift car, put the selector shift in park; in a manual shift use reverse on a downgrade or 1st gear on an up-grade.

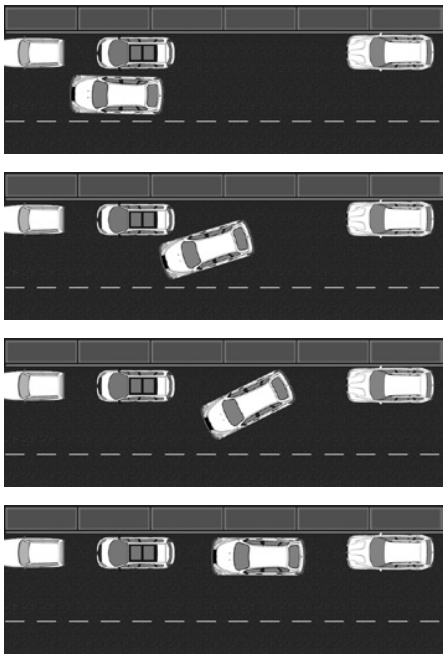
SIMPLE SAFETY RULE

Metered Parking

It is best to always keep change in your vehicle in case you need to park your vehicle in a metered parking spot. Make sure your change is easily accessible not only for convenience but for safety. If you need to remain in your vehicle for any reason while you are parked in a busy area be sure to keep your doors locked until you are ready to exit your vehicle and always be alert to your surroundings.

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

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



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

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

Following Distance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Changing Lanes

Proper lane changing rules are:

- *Check in your rear view and side mirrors.*
- *Check over your left or right shoulder (head check) to make sure no one is in your blind spot.*
- *Check for other drivers who may also be moving into the same lane.*
- *Signal and change lanes.*
- *DO NOT change lanes in an intersection or at a railroad crossing.*
- *Stay within the speed limit.*

Passing

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

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

You cannot pass safely unless:

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

Passing is PROHIBITED in the following places:

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

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

Right-of-Way

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

Right-of-Way or Yielding Situations:

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE:

DON'T RUSH. Stop and give time to those who have the right-of-way.

Sharing the Road with Pedestrians

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

Remember, pedestrians have the right of way when:

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

Pedestrians must:

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

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

School Bus Rules

School buses are responsible for safely transporting children to and from school. When approaching a bus please observe the following rules:

- *On all undivided highways (without a median), traffic in both directions must stop at least 20 feet from a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing. You must not pass the bus until the lights are turned off or the bus starts moving.*
- *On divided highways (with a median you cannot cross), traffic coming toward a school bus stopped on the other side of the median does not have to stop.*
- *You must also stop for a stopped school bus which is receiving or discharging students on school property or private property.*

The penalty for passing a stopped school bus is a minimum of 30 days driver's license suspension and a minimum fine of $150 for the first offense. Subsequent offenses have increased penalties. If the identity of the driver of a vehicle that passes a stopped school bus cannot be ascertained, the owner or lessee of the vehicle in violation is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, subject to fines.

Tailgating

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

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

Headlights and Their Use

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

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

Sharing the Road with Motorcycles

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

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

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

Sharing the Road with Slow Vehicles

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

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

Cellular Phones

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

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE

Always pay attention to the "Big Picture."

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

Sharing the Road with Heavy Trucks

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

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

These include:

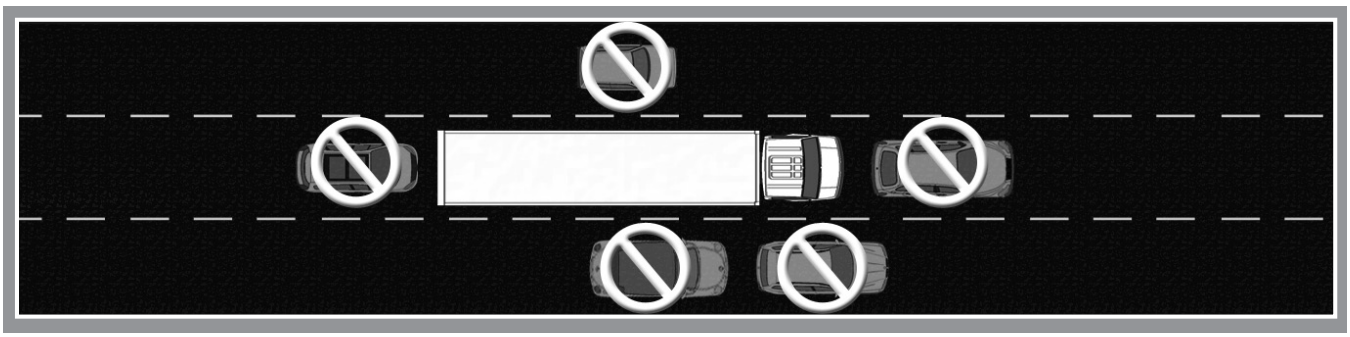
- *A fully loaded tractor-trailer, traveling 55 mph, needs three times the distance a car needs to stop.*
- *Trucks are more difficult to maneuver, are longer, heavier, and require much more room to turn.*
- *Trucks have larger blind spots than cars.*

The "No-Zone"

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

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

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



Safety *DOs*
Recognize and respect the differences between trucks and cars.
Share the road safely.
Teach friends and family how to share the road safely.
Avoid lingering in the NO-ZONE.
Give trucks plenty of room. • In dry conditions use the two-second rule. After passing give two seconds before merging to the right. • In wet conditions give at least four to six seconds of space.
Give trucks extra room for right turns.
Give trucks extra space and time for backing up.
Call authorities if you see unsafe truck driving.
Remember that ALL motor vehicles are partners in traffic safety.
Safety *DON'Ts*
Never linger in the NO-ZONE.
Never underestimate the size or speed of a truck.
Never slam on your brakes in front of a truck.
Never cut off a truck in traffic or on the highway to reach your exit or turn.
Never tailgate a truck.
Never pass a truck on the right during a turn.

Sharing the Road with Animal Riders

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

Sharing the Road with Bicycles

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

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

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

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

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

Bicyclists must:

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

The following equipment is required on all bicycles:

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

Sharing the Road with Joggers

When you are driving, be alert for joggers in unexpected places such as curves, on the top of a hill or around a corner. Also be aware of high jogging traffic in places such as parks or jogging paths.

Children at Play

As a driver, be extra careful in residential areas, school zones and at times and places where children are likely to be around. Teach your own children the rights and duties of pedestrians at an early age and always be extra watchful when backing in or out of a driveway for children who may have run behind the vehicle.

Sharing the Road with Public Buses

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

Parking for the Disabled

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

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

Drivers with Disabilities

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

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

WV Division of Rehabilitation Services

Driver Education Department
PO Box 1004
Institute, WV 25112

(304) 766-4920

CHAPTER VII
DRIVING ON INTERSTATES

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

Safe use of interstates demand a complete awareness of high-speed driving and constant alertness by the driver.

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

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

Route Numbering and Navigation

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

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

Planning Ahead

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

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

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

Entering an Interstate

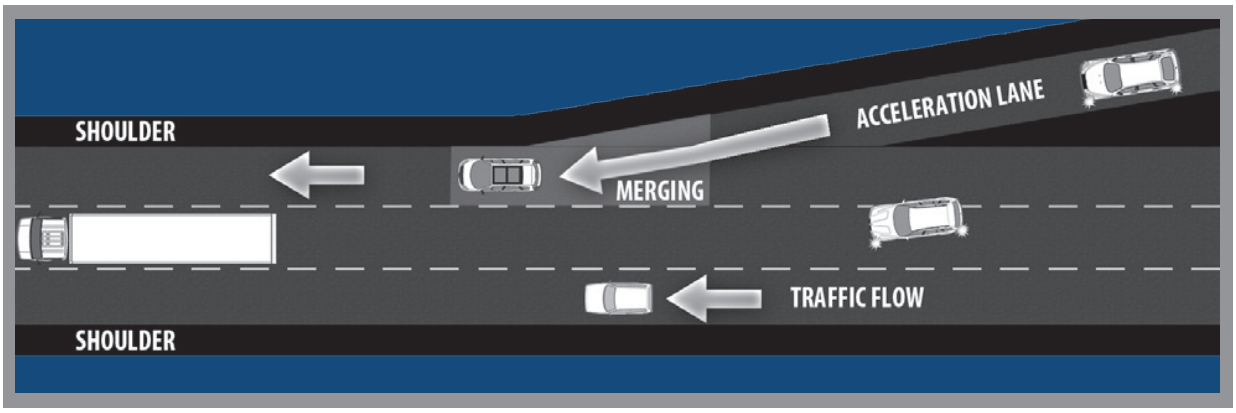
Traffic enters or exits an interstate at interchanges. An interchange is the intersection of two highways at different levels (over and under) with separate connecting roads for transferring traffic from one highway to the other.

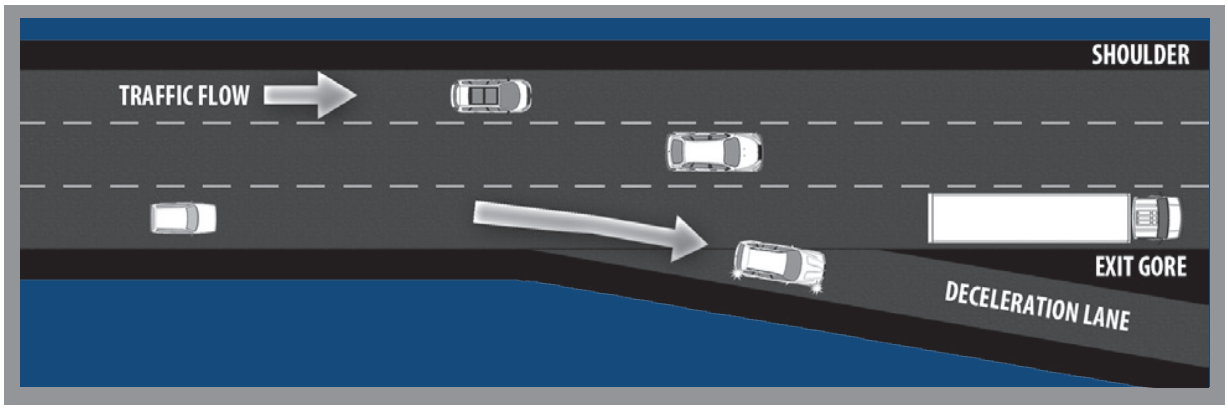
This design feature enables vehicles to cross, enter, or leave either road without interfering with other vehicles. Three of the most common types of interchanges are cloverleaf, diamond, and trumpet.

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

About halfway on the entrance ramp, start taking these steps:

- *Check interstate traffic. Take quick glances over your shoulder and to the side. Watch the vehicles in front of you entering the acceleration lane.*
- *Use your turn signal.*
- *Look for a gap in the approaching traffic. Adjust your speed to meet that gap.*
- *As you merge, make sure you are traveling the same speed as other traffic.*
- *Do not cut sharply to the left to enter the traffic stream. Follow the lane, merge with traffic and then change lanes.*
- *If another vehicle is ahead of you in the acceleration lane, be prepared to adjust your driving should the other vehicle slow or stop without warning. Do not stop on the ramp or acceleration lane.*
- *If a gap in traffic is not available, it may be necessary to drive onto the shoulder beyond the end of the acceleration lane and stop. Because entering the traffic stream from a stop is hazardous, use this maneuver as a last resort.*
- *Remember that traffic on the interstate has the right-of-way. You cannot always count on other drivers seeing you or moving over to give you room to enter.*





Exiting an Interstate

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

Exit Lanes

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

Stopping on an Interstate

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

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

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

Speeds on Interstates

You should never drive faster than the legal speed limit. Do not drive slower than 55 mph on an interstate unless the weather or road conditions are bad or a lower speed has been posted. Always drive at a steady speed.

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

Adverse Conditions

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

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

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

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

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

U-Turns

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

Construction Zones

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

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

SIMPLE SAFETY RULE

Pay attention at all times and always observe the signs posted, as well as the directions of flagmen in and around construction zones. They will help you to get where you need to go, and indicate the appropriate speeds for the conditions.

In construction zones the route is often different, the road is often rougher, and there is often large equipment and busy people working in close proximity to your vehicle. They are hard at work maintaining roads or building new structures and are counting on you to help keep them safe by being a cautious and courteous driver.

CHAPTER VIII
DEFENSIVE DRIVING

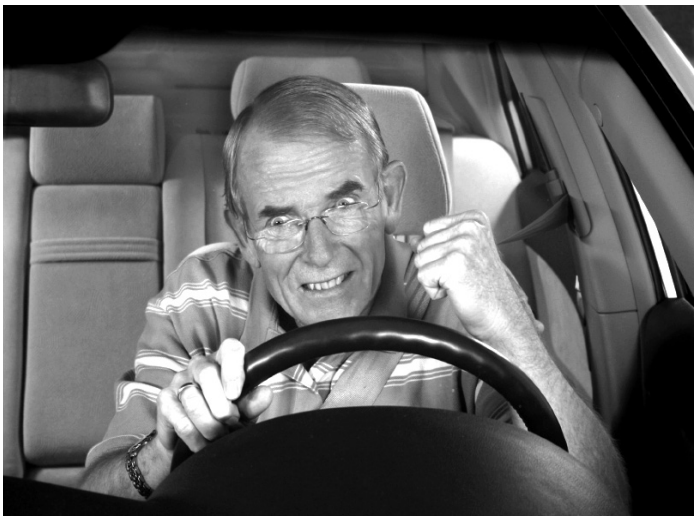
Defensive driving means being prepared through the practice of good driving habits. It is just as easy to develop good driving habits as it is to fall into bad habits. Safety techniques begin the moment you step into the car. Start by forming good habits immediately and use them every trip, whether it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

Bad Driving Habits

Bad driving habits result from laziness, impatience, inattention, arrogance, and aggressiveness. If you display any of these bad driving habits, you must first evaluate your behavior and adjust accordingly to be a safe driver.

Laziness

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



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

Impatience

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

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

Inattention

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

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

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

Arrogance and Aggressiveness

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

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

Concentration

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

Light Conditions

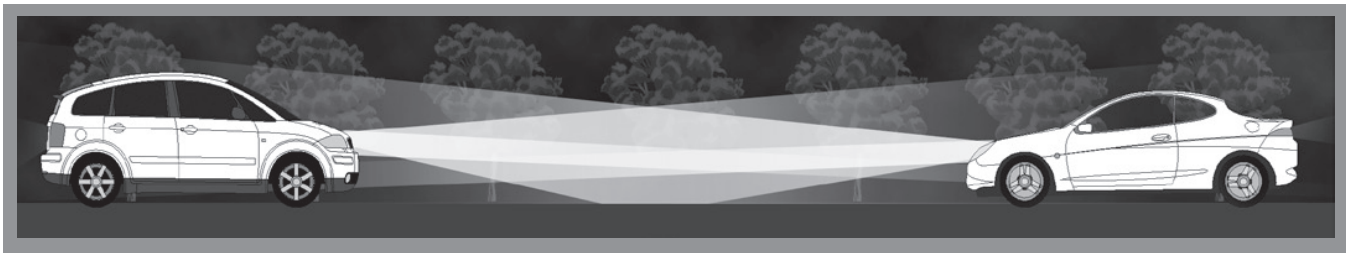
The amount of natural or artificial light available at a given time affects your ability to see or be seen. You can have too much or too little light, which requires an adjustment in your driving to avoid an accident situation.

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

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

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

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



Rain

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

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

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

To reduce the possibility of hydroplaning, you should:

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

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

Flooding

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

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

Snow and Sleet

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

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

When you stop or slow down on ice or packed snow, always apply the brakes gently and smoothly. In a vehicle equipped with anti-lock brakes, you maintain the ability to steer while braking. However, in a vehicle without anti-lock brakes you cannot steer unless you pump the brakes, applying and releasing them several times until you have the vehicle under complete control. Always be sure to release the brakes at the first hint the wheels are slipping.

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

High Winds

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

Fog and Smoke

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

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

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

Road Conditions

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

Vehicle Conditions (State Inspection Law)

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

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

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

Driver Conditions

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

Fatigue

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

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

Emotional States

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

Traffic Conditions

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

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

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

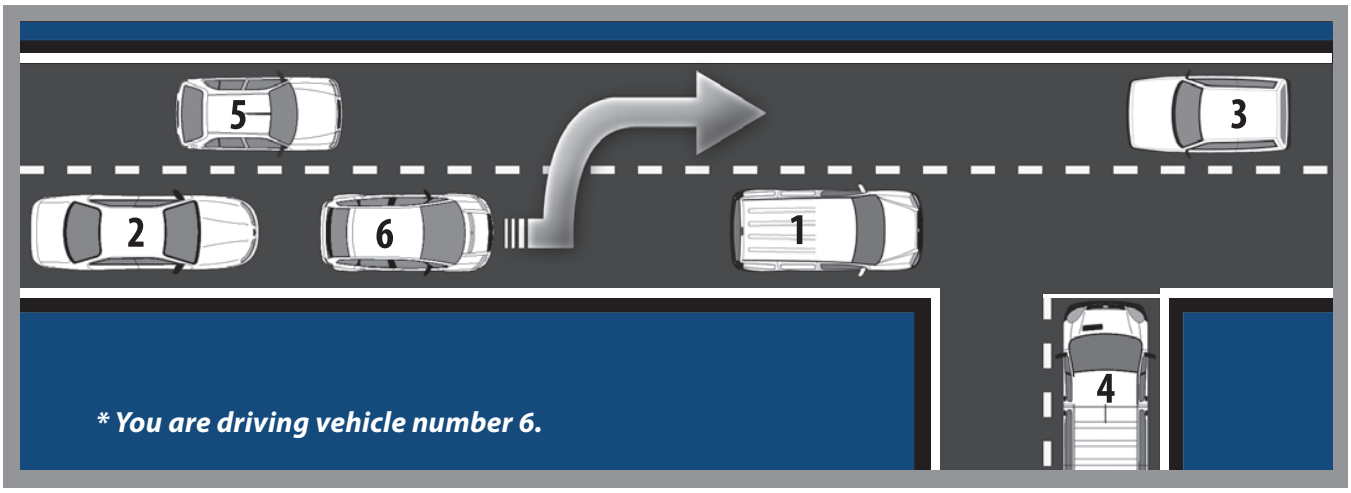
- **Time of Year -** *Summer months are associated with an increase in traffic due to vacation travel. Holiday weekends also increase traffic volume. Watch out for drivers who are tired or in a hurry. Holiday periods also produce an increase in the number of drunk drivers on the roadway.*

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

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

Traffic Situations

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are 10 steps to passing another vehicle safely:

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

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

Safety Equipment

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

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

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

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

For more information about child safety seats and safety belts, please call the Governor's Highway Safety Program at (304) 926-2509.

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

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

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

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

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

Air Bags - *Starting in 1998, all passenger cars were required to have dual airbags and in 1999 all new light trucks were required to have dual air bags.*

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

With airbags, the driver and all passengers should have their seat belts secured at all times. It is important to note that a majority of those killed by air bags were not wearing their seat belts. Second, the driver should hold the steering wheel from the side so that his/her hands and arms are not between the air bag and his or her body; the safest placement is right hand at 4 o'clock and left hand at 8 o'clock. Both the driver's seat and the front passenger's seat should be slightly tilted backward with as much distance from the air bag as possible. This will allow room for the air bag to deploy before making contact with front-seat occupants.

Risk Reduction for Infants and Toddlers

If a vehicle is equipped with a passenger-side air bag, under NO circumstances should an infant in a rear-facing safety seat be placed in the front passenger seat. When there is no other mode of transportation, several steps must be taken. First, the child's safety seat must be a forward-facing seat. Next, the child must be properly secured in the safety seat. Finally, the passenger side seat should be pushed all the way back, to maximize the distance between the child and the air bag.

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

7 SIMPLE STEPS TO SAFE AND HAPPY DRIVING

1. **Roll 'em up!** - *Keep your car doors locked and the windows up when driving or when parked.*

2. **No free rides! -** *No matter how innocent or needy they may appear, hitchhikers can mean bad news. Avoid them.*

3. **Know your car! -** *Familiarize yourself with your car's controls and safety equipment.*

4. **Hide your valuables! -** *Lock purses, wallets, luggage, and valuables in the trunk or glove compartment.*

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

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

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

CHAPTER IX
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Check Before Driving:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blowouts

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

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

Brake Failure

If your brakes fail:

- *Pump the brake pedal quickly.*
- *Shift to a lower gear and look for a place to slow down and stop off the roadway. Use your horn and lights to warn other drivers.*
- *Use the parking brake, but hold the brake release so you can ease up on the brake if the rear wheels lock and cause a skid.*

Overheating Engine

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

Skids

If your car begins to skid, stay calm. Do not use your brakes unless you are in danger of hitting something. Concentrate on steering out of trouble.

To steer out of a skid:

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

Stuck Gas Pedal

If your gas pedal sticks:

- *Concentrate on steering and keep your eyes on the road.*
- *Try to free the pedal with your foot. If this does not work, push in the clutch or shift into neutral.*
- *Use your brakes, stop at the nearest safe place, and turn off the ignition.*

Wheels Off the Road

If you run off the road you should:

- *Grip the steering wheel tightly.*
- *Stay on the shoulder and ease off the accelerator.*
- *Brake gently and slow gradually.*
- *After speed has been reduced, check behind you, as well as ahead for traffic.*
- *Turn your wheels sharply onto the pavement.*
- *As soon as your wheels hit the edge of the pavement, turn them the other way to keep your car from heading across the highway.*

Steering Fails

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

Headlights Fail

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

Fire in Vehicle

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

Vehicle Approaching in Your Lane

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

Stalling on Railroad Tracks

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

Oil Pressure Light Comes On

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

Dead Battery

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

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

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

Automobile Emergency Kit & First Aid Kit

It is always important to be prepared in case of an emergency. Weather, accidents, and breakdowns can all affect whether or not you can continue to drive your vehicle. In a case where you find yourself stranded, being prepared can make a world of difference. Below you will find some suggested items for your automobile emergency and first aid kits.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Basic Emergency Kit	The Basic First Aid Kit
Battery Powered Radio with Extra Batteries	Assorted Safety Pins
Flashlight with Extra Batteries	Triangular Bandages
Cell Phone Charger	Sterile Gauze Pads
Jumper Cables	Self Adhesive Bandages
Signal Flares	Scissors
Blanket(s)	Tweezers
Critical Prescription Medications	Hand Sanitizer
Basic Tool Kit	Tylenol / Aspirin / Ibuprofen
Chemical Grade Fire Extinguisher	Antacids
Properly Inflated Spare Tire & Jack	Latex Gloves
Quick Energy Snacks	Sunscreen
Maps of the Area	Petroleum Jelly or Lubricant
Compass	Mild Soap
Swiss Army Knife / Multi-tool	Peroxide
Bottled Water	Moistened Towellettes

First Aid

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

- *Stay calm and do not move the victim unless there is danger of further injury.*
- *Try to determine how seriously the victim is injured. Give first aid in the following order:*

  1. Control bleeding

  2. Restore breathing

  3. Treat for shock

  4. Protect broken bones

****Keep the victim lying down and comfortable. Administer first aid if you think a delay in emergency care could result in death or further injury.***

Good Samaritan Law

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

If You are Involved In An Accident

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

IMPORTANT ACCIDENT RULE

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

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

WEST VIRGINIA COURTESY PATROL

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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

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

What should I do if I need assistance?

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

Got the Message?

GHSP
WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM
5707 MacCorkle Avenue, SE • Charleston, WV 25317
304-926-2509

NOTES

UNLAWFUL DISPOSAL OF WASTE

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

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

RECYCLE
YOUR VEHICLE WASTE!

How does operating a car or truck endanger the environment?

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

Many auto part retailers and gas stations with service areas recycle used oil for free. Leaving used tires with a tire retailer will ensure proper disposal. Some auto repair shops will recycle used antifreeze for a small fee. Battery retailers are required by law to recycle old batteries upon request. To learn more about car and truck waste, call the West Virginia Office of Environmental Remediation at 1-(800)-322-5530.

West Virginia dmv

Keeping West Virginia on the move.

1-800-642-9066 www.dmv.wv.gov