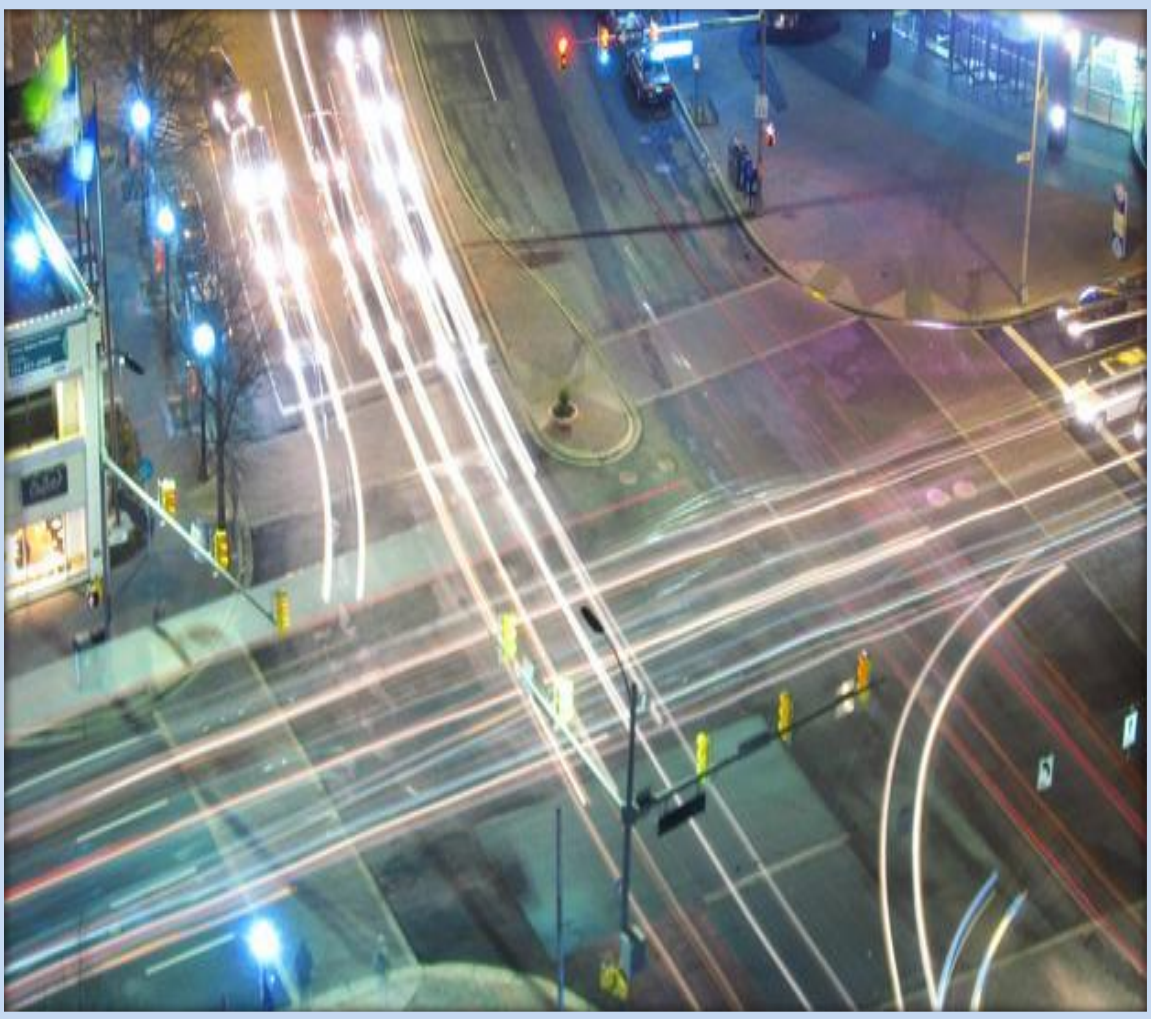
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

DRIVER MANUAL



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THE "VISION ZERO" APPROACH TO TRAFFIC SAFETY

The District is committed to protecting the lives of those traveling on city roads. Vision Zero represents the city's goal of reducing traffic fatalities to zero. Traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable.

What is "Vision Zero"?
Vision Zero is a multinational road traffic safety project aimed at achieving a highway system with no fatalities or serious injuries in road traffic. It started in Sweden in 1997 and has been implemented internationally in Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. U.S. cities with plans in the development pipeline include; Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington DC. The core principle of the vision is no one should be killed or seriously injured within the road traffic system, and implementation plans are typically structured around four key areas:

- Safety Data
- Education & Outreach
- Enforcement
- Engineering & Infrastructure

Why "Vision Zero"?
Traffic is a deadly threat and Washington, DC is seeking to reduce the number of serious and fatal injuries by designing a comprehensive program that improves traffic safety while decreasing injuries and fatalities. Any loss of life is unacceptable and one death on District city streets is unacceptable!

Developments in the District
The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is tasked with coordination and management of the District's highway safety program through partnerships with law enforcement, judicial personnel, private sector organizations, and community

advocates. DDOT works together with key partners to create a safe and efficient transportation system that has zero traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. A key deliverable of this important work is the DC Department of Transportation Highway Safety Plan which has identified five Critical Emphasis Areas (CEA's) to improve traffic safety and decrease fatalities.
These five areas are:

- High-Risk Drivers
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety
- Engineering/Facilities Infrastructure
- Special Vehicles
- Special Target Areas

With aggressive performance goals and a comprehensive action plan that seeks to reduce traffic fatalities, the District is committed to increasing efforts towards zero fatalities and making the streets safe and convenient for all road users.

Challenges to Safe Driving

Being a safe driver takes a lot of skill, experience, responsibility, and judgment. Not only is it one of the most complex things people do, but it is also one of the few things people do regularly that can injure or kill us.

Safe driving requires the ability to foresee danger and make allowances for the mistakes of others, especially when approaching intersections and crosswalks. Additionally, drivers have a responsibility to be generally healthy, emotionally fit to drive, and ensure any vehicle being used is in good operating condition for their own safety and the safety of others. Two major risk factors that threaten driver and public safety are Distracted and Impaired Driving.

Distracted Driving

Distracted Driving is a dangerous epidemic and, among its many definitions, it can be described as any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. An estimated 400,000 people are injured each year in crashes involving distracted drivers. While we may not think of the items listed below as distractions, it is important to note all distractions endanger driver, passenger, bicycle and bystander safety. Common distractions include:

- Eating and drinking
- Using a cellphone or smartphone
- Texting
- Grooming
- Reading
- Using the navigation system
- Adjusting the radio, CD player, or MP3 player
- Talking to passengers

Impaired Driving

Operating a motor vehicle while you are affected by alcohol, legal or illicit drugs, and sleepiness are all part of what is known as Impaired Driving. Not only is impaired driving extremely dangerous, but it can also lead to serious fines and even jail. Studies show alcohol-impaired driving accounts for about one-third of all traffic-related deaths, and drugs are involved in about 18% of traffic-related deaths. A few key points:

- **Impacts of Alcohol –** factors affecting blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels
    - How quickly you drink
    - Body weight
    - Food in the stomach
    - Alcohol concentration
    - Medications
    - Fatigue, stress and mood

- **Drowsy Driving –** operating a motor vehicle while being impaired due to lack of sleep. Sleep deprivation is a major cause of motor vehicle crashes. Many people do not realize sleep deprivation affects driving just as much, and sometimes more, than alcohol. Studies have proven "rolling down the windows or turning up the music" have little to no effect on alertness, while coffee or other caffeine supplements provide only a short-term energy boost. Getting adequate "sleep" is the best way to prevent drowsy driving.

Drivers should make it a daily priority to get sufficient sleep, refuse to drive when sleep-deprived, and pull off the road to a safe location when sleepy.

Sharing the Road

Whether you are driving your car, truck, SUV, a commercial vehicle, riding your motorcycle, biking, or walking, you share the road with other vehicles and drivers. The road has many users and each user has to ensure they follow certain road rules, laws, and privileges to ensure safety and proper traffic flow.

Drivers

Typically when we think of drivers, we only consider individuals operating automobiles. However, the definition must be expanded to include, bicycles, buses, motorcycles, light trucks, commercial vehicles, and essentially any vehicle that does not operate on rails. Using this expanded definition helps to broaden the scope of traffic safety and the importance of sharing the road. In 2013 alone, there were 5.7 million motor vehicle crashes, over 32,000 motor vehicle-related fatalities, and 2.3 million people injured in the United States. Drivers should always be aware of traffic flow and surroundings, forecasting any decisions that may need to be made. Pay special attention to bicyclists and pedestrians when driving and apply the safety tips below.

- **Vehicle Safety for Bicyclists**
  - **Give bicycles at least 3 feet of space**
  - **Look for bicyclists before opening doors**
  - **Yield to bicyclists when turning**

- **Vehicle Safety for Pedestrians**
  - **Always yield and grant the right-of-way**
  - **Yield to pedestrians when turning**
  - **Use caution when approaching intersections and crosswalks**
  - **Never pass a stopped vehicle at a crosswalk**

Pedestrians

A pedestrian can be defined as any person who may travel by foot, wheelchair, stroller, walking, running or jogging. On average in the US, a pedestrian is killed every 2 hours and injured every 8 minutes in traffic crashes. Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable users of the road and, due to their small size and lack of experience with traffic rules, children are at greater risk of injury or death from traffic crashes. Pedestrian safety tips to remember:

- **Cross the street at crosswalks and intersections**
- **Increase your visibility and make sure drivers see you**
- **It's safest to walk on a sidewalk**

Bicyclists

On average in the US, more than 700 people lose their lives each year in bicycle/vehicle crashes. That comes out to just under two people every day. In 2013, over 66,000 bicyclists were injured in vehicle crashes. While bicycling is a healthy, inherently safe activity, there are risks associated with riding a bicycle and sharing the road with other vehicles. Bicycles have the similar roadway rights as vehicles, and to ensure safety, bicyclists should:

- Follow the rules of the road
- Stop at red lights and stop signs
- Always wear a helmet
- Watch for opening doors when passing cars
- Do not ride on sidewalks in downtown areas

In summary, Vision Zero requires the efforts of drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians to share the roadway and use the rules of the road. As a soon-to-be District driver, we are counting on you to do your part to keep us all safe!

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Introduction

This manual provides information on safe driving rules and practices all drivers should know. This manual provides information on all aspects of driving. Be sure to read the entire manual carefully. If you do not read and study this manual, you will not pass the knowledge test required for obtaining a DC driver license. You will not be permitted to refer to this manual while taking the examination.

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle or motorcycle on public roadways in the District of Columbia is required to have a driver license. You are required to have a DC driver license within 30 days of moving to the District of Columbia.

You may obtain a DC driver license if you:

- Are at least 17 years old (learner permit at age 16);
- Are able to submit proof of full legal name, date of birth, social security number and two (2) proofs of DC Residency;
- Have successfully completed the knowledge test, skills road test, and vision screening;
- Have parental/guardian consent if under age 18;
- Surrender any driver license or identification card previously held;
- Have not had your license suspended, revoked, or denied;
- Comply with medical requirements;
- Have no outstanding debt to the District of Columbia or unpaid fines for moving traffic violations in other jurisdictions.

This manual will provide information needed to drive a non-commercial vehicle (passenger car). If you want a license to drive a commercial vehicle, you will need to read and study the Commercial Driver License (CDL) Manual. If you want a license to drive a motorcycle, you will need to read the Motorcycle Operation Manual, in addition to this manual.

Driver License Examination Process

Driver Knowledge Examination

The driver license knowledge examination can be taken at any DMV service center. The examination may be available in the following languages:

English	Arabic
Spanish	Portuguese
French	Japanese
Vietnamese	Russian
Mandarin	Tagalog
Korean	Cantonese
Amharic	Thai
German	

The examination is also available in audio or visual with touch screen response.

The standard examination will be a computerized test consisting of 25 questions. A passing score consists of at least 20 correct answers (80%). If you are between the ages of 16 – 20 years old, you will be placed in the Graduated Licensing Program also known as GRAD (Gradual Rearing of Adult Drivers). The GRAD examination will be a computerized test consisting of 30 questions. A passing score consists of at least 24 correct answers (80%). There will be a $10 fee charged each time you take the knowledge test.

The knowledge test is designed to check your knowledge of traffic laws, rules of the road, motor vehicle laws, and safe driving practices. The information you will be tested on is in this guide.

Sample questions for Class D driver license:

1. If a traffic signal is green and a police officer signals you to stop, you should:
    A. Obey the traffic officer
    B. Obey the traffic signal
    C. First obey the traffic officer, then the signal
    D. Do what the vehicle in front of you does

2. The best way to tell if you are permitted to pass other vehicles is to see if:
    A. There is a flashing green light
    B. The road ahead is straight
    C. The vehicle ahead signals that it is OK to pass
    D. There are solid or broken lane markings

3. When on a short entrance to an interstate where there is no acceleration lane, you should:
    A. Enter the far right traffic lane and speed up to the flow of traffic
    B. Use the shoulder of the main road to get up to the speed of traffic
    C. Speed up on the entrance only after you have found a gap in traffic

Answers: 1-A, 2-D, 3-C

Foreign Nationals that possess a valid out-of-country or out-of-state driver license that would like to obtain a DC driver license will be required to take and pass the knowledge and eye examinations.

If your DC driver license has been expired for more than 365 days, you must take and pass the knowledge test or DC online traffic school course. If your DC driver license has been expired for more than 545 days, you will be required to take and pass the knowledge test and skills road test. If your driver license is revoked, upon being reinstated, you will be required to take and pass the knowledge test and skills road test.

If you are obtaining or renewing a DC driver license and you are 70 years or older when your driver license expires, you must have your physician complete the Mature Driver section of the DC Driver License or Identification Card Application, certifying based on their medical diagnosis, you have the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

If you fail the driver knowledge test, you will not be allowed to re-test until 72 hours after the failed test. If you fail your knowledge test six (6) consecutive times, you will not be allowed to re-test until twelve (12) months from the first failed test date.

Vision Screening

To screen your vision, you will be asked to look into a machine and read lines of characters to the DMV representative. This screening determines whether your eyesight and peripheral vision meet the District's standards to safely operate a motor vehicle. It is not a medical examination. If you fail the vision screening, you are required to submit and Eye Report from your eye care professional. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses to pass the vision screening, you must wear them when you drive, and your license will show this restriction.

If you have had corrective vision laser surgery, a doctor's certification is required to remove the corrective lenses restriction from your driver license.

Road Skills Test

The Road Skills driving test will include maneuvers, driving in traffic, your ability to use turn signals, safely controlling the vehicle and parallel parking. The road skills test will be administered on DC roads. A $10 fee will be charged for each Road Skills test.

The Road Skills test is generally waived if you possess a valid out-of-state license for the same class of license and are converting to a DC driver license. If your DC driver license has been expired for more than 545 days, you will be required to take and pass the knowledge and skills road test examinations.

Road Skills tests are scheduled by appointment only. To schedule a driver license road test appointment with the DMV, you must possess a valid learner permit. You may schedule your road test appointment online at www.dmv.dc.gov or by calling 311.

Failure to cancel a scheduled road skills test within two business days will result in a $30 cancellation fee. This fee will not be charged if you cancel your road skills test prior to two business days or if the DMV cancels your road skills test. You may cancel a road test by calling 311.

On the day of your schedules road test you must:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before your appointment;
- Arrive in a vehicle that fulfills the vehicle requirements;
- Bring your valid learner permit;
- Be accompanied by a licensed driver 21 years or older;
- Bring a vehicle that has valid registration and proof of insurance; and
- Wear your seat belt.

If you are in the GRAD program (age 16 – 20), bring your completed Certificate of Eligibility for Provisional License w/conditions form.

If you have a learner permit and drive yourself to your road skills test without being accompanied by a licensed driver 21 years or older, you will not be able to take your test. If you fail your road skills test, you will not be allowed to retest prior to 72 hours after the failed test. If you fail the road skills test six (6) consecutive times, you will not be allowed to retest until twelve (12) months from the first failed test date.

The **vehicle** used to take the road skills test must:

- Have a hand emergency brake located between the seats. In lieu of a hand emergency brake located between the seats, the vehicle may have a second steering wheel and/or brake located on the passenger side or any other emergency safety device that is in easy reach of the Driver License Examiner;
- Have a current registration from any state;
- Have a motor vehicle liability insurance card or the policy;
- The card/policy must identify the vehicle and include the expiration date;
- Display a valid inspection sticker (if required in the state where the vehicle is registered);
- Display a front and rear license tag (if required in the state where the vehicle is registered);
- Have properly functioning brake lights, signals, horn, and driver/passenger windows and doors;
- Have a rear view mirror and two side view mirrors properly placed;
- Have a windshield with no cracks or debris, providing an unobstructed field of vision and nothing hanging from the rearview mirror;

- Have tires that are in good condition and properly inflated. Spare (donut) tires are not acceptable;
- Rental vehicles are allowed for road tests only if the person taking the test is listed on the rental contract as an approved driver of the rental vehicle with proper insurance coverage; and
- Have no service or warning lights illuminated on dashboard, including low gas.

Your road test may be cancelled for one or more of the reasons listed:

- The examiner believes he or she would have trouble reaching the brake or otherwise stopping the vehicle in an emergency;
- There is inclement weather or other circumstances beyond DMV's control that make the road dangerous; or
- You and your vehicle have not met all of the road test requirements.

Types of Driver Licenses & Permits

Learner Permit

If you are under the age of 21, you must operate under the Gradual Rearing of Adult Drivers (GRAD) Program. The GRAD program permits novice drivers (16 – 20 years of age) to safely gain driving experience before obtaining full driving privileges. A learner permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle when supervised by another driver who is 21 years or older, has a valid full driver license, and is seated next to you in the passenger front seat. To obtain a leaner permit you must be at least 16 years old, pass the knowledge test and vision screening. If you are under the age of 18, you must also have a parental consent form signed by your parent/guardian. The learner permit is valid for one year. If you are in the GRAD program and your learner permit expires before you are able to move to the provisional license stage, you must renew your learner permit within 365 days after expiration to avoid taking the knowledge test again.

Provisional Driver License

To obtain a provisional driver license you must be at least 16 years, 6 months old. You must have held a valid learner permit for at least 6 months and have no pointable moving violations. You must provide a signed 40 hours Certification of Eligibility for Provisional License form certifying that you have at least 40 hours of driving experience accompanied by a licensed driver(s) who is 21 years or older and who has a valid full license. You must take and pass the road skills test. The provisional license is valid for one year and is renewable. Prior to age 18, you are not allowed to operate a vehicle for compensation.

Full Driver License

Once you have held your provisional driver license for at least 6 months you must:

- Have no pointable moving violations for 12 consecutive months;
- Practice night driving for at least 10 hours, provide a signed Certification of Eligibility for Full Driver License form certifying that you have completed at least 10 hours of night driving experience accompanied by a licensed driver(s) who is 21 years or older and who has a valid full driver license, you may then be issued a full driver license.

If you are not required to participate in the GRAD program, once you have completed all of the requirements for the learner permit you must take and pass

the Road Skills test and my then be issued a full driver license. With a regular driver license you may operate vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) less than 26,001 pounds for non-commercial use, motor-driven cycles, and passenger vans seating up to fifteen (15) passengers. To maintain the driver license you must remain a safe and responsible driver.

Gradual Rearing of Adult Drivers (GRAD) Program

GRAD Permissible Driving Hours

Learner Permit
Must be accompanied by a driver 21 years or older
Everyday, 6:00am – 9:00pm

Provisional License
September – June
Monday – Thursday, 6:01am – 10:59pm
Friday – Sunday, 6:01am – 11:59pm

July & August
Everyday, 6:01am – 11:59pm

Full license with conditions between the ages of 17 – 18 years old
September – June
Monday – Thursday, 6:01am – 10:59pm
Friday – Sunday, 6:01am – 11:59pm

July & August
Everyday, 6:01am – 11:59pm

You can operate a motor vehicle during GRAD restricted hours if you are driving to or from work, a school-sponsored activity, religious or an athletic event, or related training session in which you are a participant, sponsored by the District of Columbia, a civic organization, or another similar entity that takes responsibility for the minor, or if accompanied by the holder of a valid driver license who is 21 years of age or older, wearing a seat belt, and occupying the passenger seat beside you.

At age 21, GRAD drivers are released from the program. During the learner permit stage, once you are age 21, you may immediately schedule a road test appointment. No driving certification form or six (6) months holding period is required.

During the provisional license stage, once you are age 21, you may visit a DMV service center to obtain a full driver license. No driving certification form or six (6) months holding period is required.

GRAD Program Restrictions

Learner Permit:
You CANNOT drive alone. You must be accompanied by and under the instruction of a driver who is 21 years or older, has a valid full driver license, and is seated next to you in the passenger front seat. Driving hours are restricted for learner permit holders. You and your passenger must wear seatbelts at all times. You may not operate a motor vehicle for compensation. You may not operate a commercial vehicle. You may not use a mobile phone or other electronic device (with or without hands free accessories) while driving. You may not drive with other passengers in the vehicle.

Provisional License for drivers 16 ½ - 20 years old:
You can drive alone. You can drive with one (1) passenger that is the holder of a valid full driver license who is 21 years of age or older, occupying the passenger front seat next to you and is wearing a seat belt, and any other passenger who is your sibling, child, or parent. You and your passengers must wear seatbelts at all times. Driving hours are restricted for provisional license drivers. You may not operate a motor vehicle for compensation if under the age of 18.

Full License with Conditions (Under age 18):
You can drive alone. If you are under 18 years old, you can drive with no more than two (2) passengers under age 21. This restriction does not apply to passengers who are your siblings or child. If you are under 18 years old, you may not operate a motor vehicle other than a passenger vehicle or motorized bicycle used solely for the purposes of pleasure and not for compensation. You and your passengers must wear seat belts at all times. If you are under 18, your

parent/legal guardian is notified of your GRAD violations. Driving hours are restricted for full license drivers between the ages of 17 – 18 years old.

GRAD Program Enforcements

Learner Permit Stage:
If you are under 18, your parent/legal guardian is notified of your GRAD violations. Any pointable moving violation for which you admit to, have been found liable for, or convicted of will extend the amount of time you must wait to apply for a provisional license. You must be free of any pointable moving violation for which points were or could be assessed for six (6) consecutive months before graduating to the provisional license stage. During your learner permit stage, if 8 points or more have been assessed against you or you have violated any GRAD program restrictions, you will be subject to a ninety (90) days suspension of your learner permit and payment of a reinstatement fee.

Provisional License Stage:
If you are under 18, your parent/legal guardian is notified of your GRAD violations. Any pointable moving violation that you admit to, have been found liable for, or convicted of will extend the amount of time you must wait to apply for a full license. You must be violation free for twelve (12) consecutive months before graduating to the Full License with conditions stage. During your provisional license stage, if you violate any GRAD program restrictions, you will be subject to a thirty (30), sixty (60), or ninety (90) days suspension of your provisional license depending whether it is your first, second, third or more violation of GRAD program restrictions. These penalties are in addition to any other penalty that may be applicable. Additionally, like any other driver, you will be automatically suspended if your point total reaches 10. After suspension, you will be required to pay a reinstatement fee to reinstate your provisional license.

Other Services

Organ Donor

People who choose to become organ and tissue donors see donation as a way to make a difference in the world. Advances in medical science make it possible through the transplantation of human organs to restore individuals to health. One donor can save the lives of up to eight people and enhance the lives of up to fifty others.

Did you know?

- People of all ages and medical histories can be donors, even those with diabetes, hepatitis, or other health conditions
- There are no charges to the donor's family or estate for costs related to the organ donation process
- Most major religions in the US support organ and tissue donation
- Donation does not prevent the option of an open-casket funeral
- Organ and tissue recovery happens only after all life-saving efforts have been exhausted and death has been legally declared

How to sign up?

In the District of Columbia, if you are 18 years or older, you can indicate your intent to donate on your driver license application by checking the "Yes" box to the organ/tissue donation question.

It is always important to tell your family and significant others that you wish to be a donor so they can serve as your advocate and speak on your behalf at the time of your death. In addition, you should share your wish to be a donor with your physician, faith leader, and attorney.

For more information contact:

- US Department of Health and Human Services at www.organdonor.gov
- Donate Life America at www.donatelife.net or 1-866-BE-A-DONOR.

Selective Service System
You can register for Selective Service with the DMV while obtaining your DC driver license. DC DMV will register males between the ages of 18-25, with the Selective Service unless you choose to use the waiver form to opt-out of registering via the DC DMV driver license application process.

For more information contact:

Registration Information Office
Selective Service System
Data Management Center
P.O. Box 94638
Palatine, IL 60094-4638
Phone: 847-688-6888
TTY: 847-688-2567
www.sss.gov

Register to Vote
If you are a US citizen and 18 years or older before the next election, you can indicate you intent to register to vote or update registration information on your driver license application by checking the "Yes" box to the registration question and complete the DC Voter Registration Form.

To register to vote in the District of Columbia you must:

- be a U.S. citizen;
- be a D.C. resident;
- be at least 18 years old on or before the next election;
- not be in jail for a felony conviction;
- not have been adjudged "mentally incompetent" by a court of law; and
- not claim the right to vote anywhere outside D.C.

You should receive your voter registration card within three (3) weeks of completing the application.

For more information contact:

- Board of Elections and Ethics at www.dcdoee.org or 202-727-2525.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- The driver and all passengers in a vehicle must wear a seat belt
- You must be hands-free while driving with a cellular phone in the District of Columbia
- Residents are required to update change of address with the Department of Motor Vehicles within sixty (60) days
- Insurance must be maintained as long as the vehicle is registered. Lapse in coverage is subject to fines. Do not cancel insurance until your vehicle tags are surrendered to DMV.
- If stopped by law enforcement while driving a motor vehicle in the District of Columbia, you will be responsible for providing your valid driver license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Failure to comply may result in a fine and/or arrest.
- Drivers receive point for certain moving violations, whether the violations occur in the District of Columbia or in other states. DMV will assess points if you are found liable at a hearing, failure to pay a ticket within the time required, are convicted in court of a traffic violation, or you pay the ticket (payment is an admission of liability). The number of points you will receive depends on the type of violation.
- Points will stay active on your driving record for two years
- If you maintain a valid DC driver license for a full calendar year without obtaining pointable moving violations, you may be eligible to receive a Good Point on your driving record
- If you accumulate 10 or 11 points, your DC driver license will be suspended and you will lose your driving privileges for a period of ninety (90) days. Your driving privileges are suspended until they have been officially reinstated.
- If you accumulate 12 or more points, your DC driver license will be revoked and you will not be eligible for reinstatement for six months. Your driving privileges are revoked until they have been officially reinstated.
- If you are convicted of certain criminal traffic violations in DC, including driving while intoxicated or driving under the influence, your minimum revocation period is 6 months for the first offense, 2 years for the second offense, and 3 years for the third or subsequent offense. Your driving privileges are revoked until they have officially been reinstated and the reinstatement fee is paid.

- Your driver license and vehicle can be suspended for failure to pay child support
- Your driver license can be revoked if you are convicted of a non-driving related drug offense
- Having something attached to or hanging from the rear view mirror while driving is against the regulations of the District of Columbia

Driver Information

Be In Shape to Drive

Driving is one of the most complex things that people do and it is not always easy to be a safe user of the roadway. Driving is also one of the few things people do regularly that can injure or kill us.

Being a safe driver takes a lot of skill, experience, responsibility, and judgment. This task is even more difficult when learning to drive. The motorist' ability to drive safely depends on the ability to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while on drugs, being generally healthy, and being emotionally fit to drive.

DC DMV – The Drive to Excellence

The DC DMV is committed to providing excellent customer service, promoting safe driving environment and protecting customer interests.

Driving Privilege

Driving a motor vehicle in the District of Columbia is a privilege and not a right. Your driver license grants you the privilege to operate a motor vehicle on roadways safely and responsibly.

Obtaining a False or Forged Identification Card, Driver License or Permit

The law states that if you attempt to secure a false or fraudulent identification card, driver license or permit, or knowingly possess a false or fraudulent identification card, driver license, or permit, you may be subject to a fine or imprisonment.

Road Signs

You must be able to read and explain all highway signs. The knowledge test consists of several local and highway signs and the DMV examiner will check to see if attention to the signs is paid during the driving test.

Traffic Laws

Traffic laws are intended to prevent accidents and keep traffic moving. If you violate the law, you can cause accidents, slow traffic or be ticketed and/or fined.

Four Major Components of Driving

1. **Looking and Seeing**
2. **Thinking and Deciding**
3. **Letting Others Know What You Are Going To Do**
4. **Making a Decision**

Looking and Seeing

You look with your eyes but see with your mind. Keeping an alert mind to what is going on around you will prepare you for the important decisions you must make when you drive.

Thinking and Deciding

After you see what is important, you must think about it and decide what to do. If you are interested in your own safety and the safety of others, you will decide what to do on the basis of least risk. Notice that we said the least risk. All driving involves some risk. The smart driver quickly sizes up the situation, realizes that there are several different things he/she might do and decides to do thing that involves the least risk.

Letting Other Know What You Are Going To Do

Other drivers and pedestrians on the road must know what you are going to do if they are to keep out of your way. You let them know through hand signals, turn signals, headlights, brake lights, and by the position of your vehicle.

Making a Decision

When you have decided what you are going to do, you must do it using all your driving experience and skills.

Obeying Traffic Laws

You must obey all of District of Columbia's traffic laws. You have a responsibility to obey road sign, traffic signals, lane markings, orders of police officers, and in emergency situation the direction of firefighters.

General Laws

- You must know the general laws
- You commit a misdemeanor or felony when you disregard any traffic law or fail to do something required by the law
- You must obey the instructions of a police officer even though they may be contrary to laws, signs, signals, and markings. Such instructions may be necessary to keep traffic moving safely.
- You must not try to evade a traffic signal or road sign by leaving the road and traveling across private property

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving is a form of reckless driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has estimated that aggressive drivers cause 2/3 of all fatal crashes and are responsible for nearly 35% of all crashes.

A person may be guilty of aggressive driving if they do any of the following:

- Pass traffic lights with steady RED indication
- Overtake and pass vehicles
- Pass on right
- Change lanes swiftly
- Follow too closely
- Fail to yield right-of-way
- Exceed maximum speed limit

What causes aggressive driving?

- Crowded roads
- Being in a hurry
- Road work
- Stress from other areas of life
- Dangerous driving attitudes
- Selfishness

How to avoid becoming an aggressive driver:

- Plan ahead
- Obey the speed limit
- Identify alternative routes

- Just be late
- Be a courteous and patient driver

How to protect yourself from aggressive drivers:
- Get out of the way and let an aggressive driver pass
- Don't challenge them
- Avoid eye contact
- Always be a courteous driver

Help prevent aggressive driving:
- Report incidents of aggressive driving to the police
- Set an example for younger passengers

Reckless Driving

A person is guilty of reckless driving if he drivers a motor vehicle:
- With a willful disregard for the safety of people or property; or
- In a manner that indicates a willful disregard for the safety of people or property

Negligent Driving

A person is guilty of negligent driving if he or she drives a motor vehicle in a careless or imprudent manner that endangers any property or the life of any individual.

Drag Racing

You must not engage in any vehicle race, speed exhibition, or speed contest including those commonly known as drag races on any public street, road, or highway.

Accidents

In accordance with the law, there are certain duties to be performed when you are involved in an accident. The main duties of any driver involved in an accident are to:

- **Stop**
- **Remain:** As close to the scene as possible until you have aided any injured person and identified yourself. If possible, move your car away from the line of traffic.

- **Aid any injured person:** You must render assistance to any person injured in the accident. Depending on the extent of the injury, assistance in most instances is accomplished by calling for an ambulance. Normally, you should not attempt to move a person who is unconscious or seriously hurt.
- **Identify yourself:** Drivers involved in accidents must give their name, address and the registration information of the vehicle they are driving. Upon request, show your driver license to the other person(s) involved in the accident. If no one is in condition to receive the information and no police officer is present, you must, as soon as possible, report this information to the nearest police department.
- **Provide insurance information:** You must give the name and address of your insurance company, the name and address of the local agent or local office, and your policy number or other identifying number.
- **Leave written notice:** If an unattended vehicle or other property is damaged, an attempt must be made to locate the owner. If the owner cannot be located, a written notice giving the identifying information listed above must be left in or on the damaged vehicle or property in a conspicuous and secure place.
- **Make required report:** Any motor vehicle accident in which you are involved should be reported to your insurance company.

Duty of a Motorist Striking a Domestic Animal with a Motor Vehicle

If you should strike and injure a domestic animal with a motor vehicle, you should immediately notify the police department having jurisdiction in the area where the accident occurred. The police will contact the proper agency to obtain medical care for the animal.

Safe Driving Practices

Keep your mind on driving, obey the laws and be courteous to other highway users. Although you may obey the traffic laws, you can still be involved in a traffic accident. Other drivers may not obey traffic laws, or they may not be alert, or their vehicles may be in poor mechanical condition. To be a safe driver, you must be alert, foresee danger and make allowances for the mistakes of others. This section suggests safety practices that will help you avoid accidents or, when unavoidable, to reduce their severity.

To insure your safety, basic safety rules are very important:

- Look over the condition of the outside of the vehicle – inspect tires, look for loose objects, leaks, etc.;
- Adjust the seat;
- Adjust mirrors;
- Properly fasten seat belts;
- Insert key and start engine;
- Before starting off, think how adverse conditions, such as light, weather, road and traffic conditions will affect your trip; and
- Check vehicle brake lights and signals before you drive

Turning

Safe turning requires planning:

- Make up your mind well in advance of reaching the turning point. Last minute decisions often cause accidents.
- Move into the proper lane well before you need to make the turn. The faster the traffic flows, the sooner you should get in to the proper lane.
- Look behind you and to both sides. Signal your intention as required by law before changing lanes. (see Driving Rules p. 54)
- Slow down to a reasonable turning speed but do so gradually. The only exception is when you are leaving the interstate other limited-access highway. (see Interstate and Other Limited Access Highways p. 38)
- Make the turn according to the law

Backing

Backing a motor vehicle requires skill and good judgment. Watch for children walking, running, or playing on toy cars or tricycles. In most conditions, it is safe to back up provided you turn your head and look back out the rear window and check both side view mirrors. Don't depend on the one rearview mirror alone. Never back up fast or far; instead, find a way to turn around. Never back out or into an intersection; instead, turn into a side street and turn around there or drive around the block. If you use a driveway to turn around, it is safer to back into it and drive out than vice versa. Back out of angled parking spaces carefully.

Use of the Horn

Sound your horn only to warn a pedestrian, cyclist or the driver of another vehicle in the event of an emergency. The horn is not intended to take the place of brakes. Never use the horn in a posted "Quiet Zone" unless in an emergency. Do not use your horn to alert a motorist, cyclist or pedestrian of your approach in a non-emergency situation. A loud horn can cause a cyclist to lose control.

Starting from a Garage or Driveway

- Watch for nearby vehicles or pedestrians
- Move carefully to join traffic at the proper speed
- When you must back out, be sure to look behind your car first. You may need to leave your car to be sure there is nothing in your way.
- Watch carefully behind the vehicle through the mirrors and by turning your head to look out the window while you are backing up
- Stop before entering the street and look again before proceeding

Hand Signals under Special Conditions

Use hand signals in addition to your turn signals when the sun is shining brightly and when vehicles immediately behind you obscure your turn signal.

Crowding Inside the Vehicle

Never let passengers or parcels crowd you while you are driving. Never let anything in the vehicle obstruct your vision in all directions. Having something attached to or hanging from the rear view mirror while driving is against the regulations in the District of Columbia.

Pets

Keep pets away from you as you drive. Do not let them sit on your lap or get fresh air from the driver's side window. Never leave a pet unattended in your vehicle.

Loose Objects

Loose objects, particularly those on the front dash board and the rear window shelf, can become projectiles in an accident. Put loose objects in the trunk or on the floor, since even objects on seats can fly up and strike you or another passenger. A falling object, such as a bag of groceries, may startle you and make you take your eyes off the road or your hands off the steering wheel. Keep objects off the floor that would interfere with the brake or gas pedals.

Driving Pass Parked Cars

When driving pass parked cars watch out for opening car doors, pedestrians (especially children) stepping out or running from between cars and bicyclists.

Driving Conditions

When to Reduce Speed

You must slow down when:

- Coming to an intersection, railroad grade crossing, curve, or the crest of a hill;
- Near playgrounds and schools, or where children are playing;
- Traveling upon any narrow or winding roadway;
- There is danger to pedestrians; and
- Weather or highway conditions, or your own condition, require slower speeds for safety. Never drive so slowly as to interfere with other vehicles moving at normal speeds. Drivers who block or hinder other traffic by driving too slowly can cause accidents.

Wet Pavements

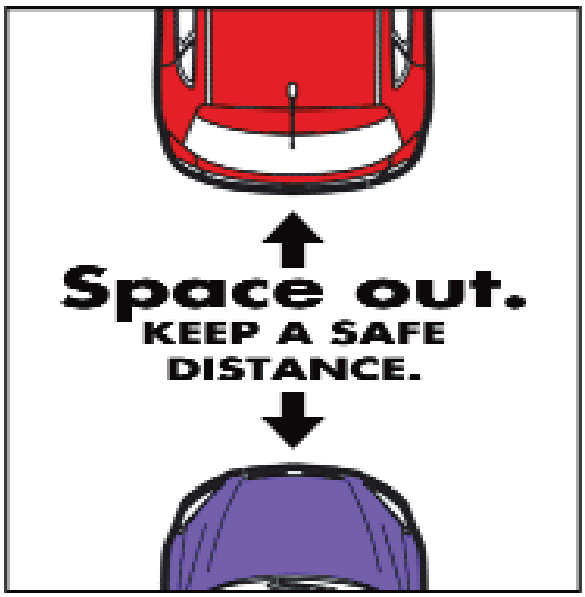
Wet pavements are far more slippery than dry pavement. When the road is wet, it is much more difficult to hold the road on curves and it takes a longer distance to stop. Be especially careful at the beginning of a light rain; the mixture of oil and water on the pavement is particularly dangerous. The oils and other vehicle fluids have not been washed away yet as they would after a rain of several hours. Similarly, watch out for wet leaves on pavement in the autumn.

Hydroplaning and Flooding

At speeds up to 35 miles per hour, most tires with tread will “wipe” the road surface the way a windshield wiper cleans the windshield. As speed increases, the wiping action of the tires becomes less effective and tires start to ride on a layer of water just as with a water ski. This is called “hydroplaning”.

When this happens, you cannot brake, accelerate, or properly turn. As soon as you feel any loss of control, take your foot off the gas pedal and hold the steering wheel firmly in the direction you intend to go. Allow your vehicle speed to decrease until you regain complete control of the vehicle.

Flooding can occur during heavy rainfall. Flash floods can come rapidly and unexpectedly. They can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall. Do not drive through flooded areas. If you see a flooded roadway ahead, turn around and find another route to get to your destination. Be cautious, especially at night when visibility is limited. If six inches of water reaches the bottom of a vehicle, it may cause loss of control or possible stalling. Two feet of moving water can carry away most vehicles including sports utility vehicles and pickup trucks. Even if the water appears shallow enough to cross, do not attempt to cross a flooded road. Water can hide dips, or worse, floodwaters can damage roadways by washing away the underlying road surface. If there is no other route, proceed to higher ground and wait for the water to subside.



Following Distance

Leave as much space between your vehicle and one ahead as you possibly can to allow for a sudden stop. Most rear-end collisions are caused by following too closely. Watch the car ahead of you when it passes a reference point, such as a sign or overpass. Then count "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four". If you pass the same spot before you are finished counting to one thousand four, you are following too are following vehicles which stop often (buses, post office vans) you should allow more following distance than usual. When driving in bad weather, you should increase the distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you to four or five seconds.

Remember don't cut trucks off. It takes much more time and distance for a truck to stop.

Three to Four Second Following and Stopping Distance Rule

The distance in which you can stop your vehicle is important in helping you to choose a safe driving speed. The following can be used as a rough guide, but your actual stopping distance will depend upon many factors, including:

- The length of time it takes a driver to see and recognize that there is a dangerous situation
- The length of time it takes from the perception of danger to the start of braking – 3-4 seconds
- Type and condition of the pavement
- Percentage of grade of roadway
- Kind and condition of tire treads
- Vehicle design and condition of shock absorbers
- Type and condition of brakes
- Direction and speed of the wind

Stopping distances are based on tests made by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The driver reaction time is based on a reaction time of 3-4 seconds.

Distracted Driver Syndrome

The Problem

Driving is a risky activity. Each year, more than 40,000 people are killed in motor vehicle accidents and over three million people are injured. Research indicates that in more than 50 percent of all accidents, driver inattention was a contributing factor. How does driver distraction affect driving performance? Driving instructors estimate that a driver makes 200 decisions for every mile of driving. If you are mentally solving business or family problems while driving, you are adding to the total workload in your brain. If you take your eyes off the road

for three to four seconds, your vehicles travels the length of a football field if you are going 55 miles per hour.

Other factors, such as fatigue, weather and traffic conditions, can increase the negative impact of distractions on driving ability. We've all seen them – people driving down the road reading the newspaper, putting on make-up or concentrating on a cell phone conversation. Those are the most obvious examples of driver distraction. What may surprise many people is the number of other things we do in our cars that take attention away from the vital task of driving.

- Eating, drinking beverages, or smoking
- Changing the radio, CD, or tape
- Shaving, putting on make-up, or engaging in other personal grooming tasks
- Engaging in intense, complicated, emotional, or lengthy conversations on cell phones or with passengers
- Reading a road map, newspaper or taking notes
- Focusing attention on children or pets, especially those who are being rowdy
- Retrieving unsecured cargo or objects
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle without first adjusting the mirrors and seat, selecting entertainment options and locating the lights, turn signals and windshield wipers
- Using cellular phones

Fatigue

Driving for long distances may make you drowsy or unaware of what is happening. Being drowsy is the first stage of falling asleep. Being unaware of what is happening is known as "highway hypnosis". It is caused by monotony – the sound of the wind, the tires and the steady hum of the engine. Take these precautions to avoid "highway hypnosis":

- At first signs of drowsiness, do something positive. Don't just sit there and try to fight it.
- At the first rest or service area, pull off the highway and either take a nap, stretch a bit, take a break, or, if possible, change drivers
- Don't depend on "stay-awake" drugs. They are apt to make your driving even more hazardous.
- Keep the interior of the car as cool as possible
- To overcome highway hypnosis, make an effort to stay alert
- Keep shifting your eyes from one area of the roadway to another, near and far left and right. Avoid staring straight ahead.
- Shift your position in the seat
- Talk to your companion or listen to the radio
- Vary your vehicle's speed slightly from time to time

Danger Signs of Drowsy Drivers

- Your eyes close or go out of focus by themselves
- You have trouble keeping your head up
- You can't stop yawning
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts
- You don't remember driving the last few miles
- You missed your exit
- You keep driving out of your lane
- Your speed becomes variable

If you become tired or sleepy while driving, it is best to rest, or, if possible, change drivers. Being tired dulls your mind and slows down your reactions, making driving hazardous. Keep in mind that lives are at stake.

Concentration

Concentration is essential for safe driving. Driving is a full-time job. You should be constantly aware of the road and the other vehicles around you. Keep alert and you may be able to foresee an accident and avoid it. While you are driving, do not adjust the radio, read, apply makeup, shave or use a cell phone without a

hands-free device. Constantly check the position of vehicles behind you, as well as those beside and ahead of you.

Emotions Affect Your Driving

If you are upset or angry, take some time to calm down before driving, or let someone else drive. You would be better off not driving at all when you are emotionally upset. Expressing your emotions while driving is dangerous.

Cellular Phones

In the District of Columbia, you must be hands-free while driving with a cellular phone. Remember, texting while driving is never allowed!

The Solution to Distractions

Suggestions for helping you manage distractions safely:

- Secure everyone and everything before putting the vehicle into motion
- Pre-set climate controls, the radio and the cassette or CD player. Know the location of turn signals, wipers and the lights in the vehicle.
- If you will be tempted to look at the newspaper, the business report or the day planner, put them in the trunk of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination
- Don’t attend to personal grooming behind the wheel
- Don’t wait until you are driving to plan your route. Plan before you go. Leave a little earlier and you will arrive at your destination safely and with less stress.
- Postpone complex or emotional conversations on the phone or with passengers until you arrive at your destination
- If a passenger is distracting you, pull over where it is safe and legal to do so
- Don’t start driving until the situation is under control
- When you are hungry or thirsty, take a break

Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

It is anticipated that the demand on our road system will increase 40 percent by 2020 and that road capacity will only increase by 9 percent. Today's drivers are becoming increasingly frustrated on roads that routinely handle double the number of cars of 20 years ago. Rush hour traffic, the increasing number of construction sites (work zones) and traffic accidents add to the driver's frustration.

The biggest culprits include:

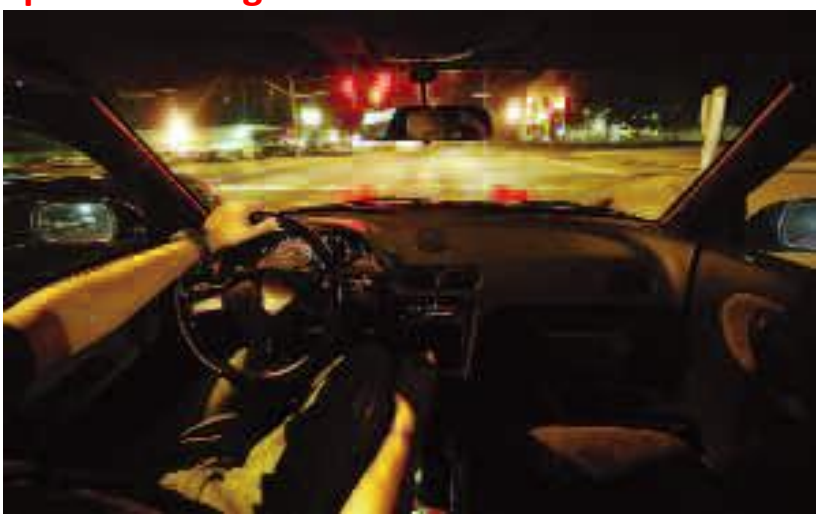
- Tailgating
- Unsafe lane changing
- Speeding
- Running red lights and stop signs

Simple Rules to Reduce Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

- Always allow extra travel time
- Do not remain behind the wheel for more than three hours at a time
- Maintain adequate distance from the vehicle in front of you so you will be able to stop in time to avoid a collision
- Always signal your intention when turning or changing lanes
- Always come to a full stop at red lights and stop signs. Do not run yellow lights.
- Let other drivers merge into traffic in an orderly fashion
- Do not block the passing lane
- Obey posted speed limits
- Concentrate on your driving – not your cell phone, stereo, passengers, or other distractions

- Use your horn, only in emergency situations to alert other drivers or pedestrians
- Never engage in inappropriate behavior such as making faces or rude, obscene gestures
- Avoid eye contact
- Extend common courtesy to other drivers at all times. All drivers must do their part in making driving a safer, less stressful and more pleasant experience.

Special Driving Situations



Night Driving

Night driving is more difficult than day driving and it is more dangerous. Per mile driven, the fatal accident rate at night throughout the nation is two-and-one-half times as high as during the day. At night, the driver does not see as far, as soon, or as much and everything has a different appearance. The glare of oncoming headlights greatly increases the difficulty of seeing what's ahead, especially for older drivers. The glare causes the pupils of the eyes to contract and it takes time for them to readjust to less intense light. To avoid the glare from oncoming headlights, glance back and forth between the side of the road and straight ahead. During this recovery, your vision may be reduced. You can make your night driving safer by:

- Keeping your speed low enough to be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead
- When approaching other vehicles, do not stare at their headlights. Use quick glances to:
  - Learn the lane position of oncoming vehicles

- Learn your own position
- Be certain of the right edge of road
- Look ahead for objects in your path
- Keep your windshield clean. With a clean windshield, the headlights on oncoming cars won't bother you as much.
- Do not wear sunglasses at night
- Stay awake and alert. Fresh, cool air will help.
- Use the road edge line for a guide. If there is no road edge line, use the center line for a guide.
- Watch carefully for highway signs. They are more difficult to see at night.
- Be especially watchful for pedestrians and stopped vehicles at night
- Do not stop on the roadway for any reason
- Carry a red warning light or flares for use when stops alongside the roadway are unavoidable
- Cut down on smoking when you are driving a vehicle with the windows closed

Winter Driving

Winter driving requires special precautions.

- Use chains, snow tires or radial tires. Chains do the most to improve traction and stopping on ice and in snow. Yet, neither chains nor radial or snow tires make it safe for you to drive on ice or snow-covered roadways at normal speeds. You must slow down.
- Chains, snow tires or radial tires must be used on designated snow emergency routes when a snow emergency is declared

- Keep windows and lights clear. Remove all ice and snow and keep it off. Keep an ice scraper in the vehicle.
- Get the feel of the roadway. Start out very slowly. Then test your brakes gently to find out how well you can stop. Start slowing down long before you come to an intersection or turn.
- Keep a safe distance. The space needed between you and the car in front of you is much greater on ice and packed snow. Snow tires, radial tires and even chains slide on ice and packed snow.
- Do not slam on the brakes
- Do not steer sharply, or change speed quickly
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. It should include the following:
  - Flares
  - First aid kit
  - Blanket
  - Kitty litter or sand – for traction on snow/ice
  - Small shovel
  - Keep your gas tank filled
  - Keep windshield fluid full

There is no such thing as a "completely safe" speed on ice and snow.
In winter weather, every city block and every stretch of highway may be different depending upon sun, shade, the amount of salting being done and other conditions. Watch ahead for danger spots. Blacktop roads [asphalt highways] can easily hide a thin layer of ice produced by melting and re-freezing (sometimes known as black ice) can cause an accident if you are not aware of the danger.

Remember: Ramps and bridges freeze first before highways and roads. Also, plowed roads may refreeze at night or have icy patches from the daylight thawing of snow. Four-wheel drive vehicles slide on ice and snow too. If you are driving a four-wheel drive vehicle, do not assume that you can drive in ice and snow the way you would on dry pavement.

Anti-Lock Brake Systems

If your vehicle begins to skid and is equipped with an anti-lock brake system, do not pump the brakes. Instead, maintain steady pressure on the brakes to regain control of your vehicle from a skid.

Skid Prevention

- Avoid abrupt changes in speed or direction. Drive as though you have an egg between your foot and the gas or brake pedal.
- Practice stopping and skid recovery in a safe area on private property at slow speed before attempting to drive on packed snow or ice
- Slow down well in advance of the stopping point
- Do not brake strongly and lock the wheels. If the wheels do not turn, you don't have control over the vehicle. Pump the brake pedals on vehicles that are not equipped with anti-lock brake systems.
- When road conditions are bad, leave earlier than you normally would to avoid having to rush

Curves

Because curves cause slipping and skidding, be careful of them, especially when traction is poor. Be more concerned about curves in wet weather, even more cautious on snow and most cautious on ice. Slow down to a safe speed before entering the curve. On a curve posted for 35 miles per hour in good weather, a safe speed may only be 20 miles per hour in wet weather and only 5 miles per hour or less on ice and snow.

Recovery from a Skid

- Don't panic and do not brake
- Immediately steer in the direction of the skid. If your rear wheels start going to the right, turn your front wheels to the right. Take your foot off the gas pedal (accelerator).

Driving in Fog

Fog can be thought of as a cloud at ground level. It forms when the temperature drops to the dew point (the temperature at which air is saturated), and invisible water vapor in the air condenses to form suspended water droplets. Fog can reduce visibility to ¼ mile or less, creating hazardous driving conditions. When it is foggy, it is best to not drive at all, but if you must, these safety precautions will help:

- Reduce your normal driving speed. Reduce speed even more when you see headlights or taillights ahead.
- The headlights may be on a vehicle being driven down the center of the roadway. The vehicle with the taillights may be stopped or barely moving on or along the side of the roadway.
- Be prepared for an emergency stop
- If the fog is so thick you cannot go at least 10 mph, pull completely off the highway or stop at a rest area, service station or other parking area
- Use low beams on headlights or, if you have them, special fog lights
- High beams often reflect back into your eyes, blinding you
- With night driving, use the road edge lines or the right side of the road for a guide. You may not see highway signs until too late. Yellow pavement markings should never be on your right side, but always on your left side.
- Yellow is used to divide opposing roadway traffic and indicate the left travel edge of the roadway. White pavement markings denote the right travel edge of the roadway.
- Leave early enough to avoid the need to hurry

Drive Defensively

Do not trust the other driver to do what you think he or she should do or what you would do in that person's place. For example, if the person's turn signal is flashing, don't assume the driver will make a turn. Plan ahead and decide what to do if the driver does not turn in the direction shown by the turn signal. Do not assume every driver will stop when there is a stop sign or red traffic light. Some drivers deliberately "run" stop signs and traffic lights. You should constantly be thinking of an "escape route" as you drive. After a few weeks of practice, this will become "second nature". If a sudden emergency arises, you will have a plan of action ready. For instance, if you see an approaching vehicle start to pass and you think that driver may not have room to get back into the proper lane, slow down and check the shoulder and nearby area. That way, you will know where you can go if necessary. Look as far ahead as you can. In this way, you may see trouble developing in front of the vehicle ahead of you that may cause the driver to swerve or stop suddenly. For example, if you notice flashing red or yellow lights on a vehicle ahead, you should look for objects or people on the road. If a collision seems inevitable, don't panic. Try to steer your way out of it. Do anything to keep from hitting another vehicle or object head-on; try to hit at an angle. If you have a choice, running your vehicle into a ditch may be preferable to hitting another vehicle.

How to Avoid Being Hit from the Rear

Rear-end collisions are the most common kind of motor vehicle accidents. As the driver of the vehicle being followed, here's what to do to lessen the chances of being hit from the rear:

- Be sure your stoplights are clean and in working order
- To keep aware of what is going on behind you, check your rear view mirror periodically
- Your back window must be clean and not fogged. Outside mirrors are helpful.
- Signal well in advance for stops, turns and lane changes
- Slow down gradually, not suddenly
- Keep pace with traffic
- If a vehicle follows too closely, slow down and let it pass

Interstate and Other Limited Access Highways

If you know how to use the interstate highways properly, they will get you where you want to go sooner, more easily and more safely. However, you must know the safety practices of the highways.

Before You Start

Are your tires in condition for high speeds? Do you have adequate oil and cooling water? Does your vehicle have any mechanical defects that may be dangerous? Do you feel in good condition to make this trip? Do you have enough fuel? Have you had enough sleep? Pre-set your navigation and review your route prior to departing. This will help you have a safe and pleasant trip.

Entering the Interstate/Highways

Interstate and other limited access highways are usually reached by an entrance ramp and acceleration or deceleration lane. The entrance ramp gets you going in the desired direction and the acceleration lane gives you the opportunity to get up to the speed of traffic. When entering an interstate, the solid painted lines that divide the entrance and the interstate should not be crossed. If there is a short entrance to an interstate, where there is no acceleration lane, you should speed up on the entrance only after you have found a gap in the traffic. In general, you should stop before entering an interstate when waiting for a break in the traffic. If entering an interstate from the left entrance, compare what you see in your mirrors with what you see when looking over your shoulder.

Leaving the Interstate/Highway

Get into the right lane well before reaching the exit, if the exit is on the right side of the highway. Don't slow down on the main highway. Start slowing down as soon as you get into the deceleration lane and continue slowing at the beginning of the exit ramp. Slow down to the posted advisory speed for the ramp or you may have trouble getting around curves. If you exit at the wrong place on an interstate, continue until you are off the exit ramp and look for a way to re-enter the interstate.

Lane Changing and Passing on an Interstate/Highway

Because of the sustained high speeds on an interstate and other limited access highways, careful lane changing and passing are essential.

Here Are a Few Tips to Help You:

- It is legal in the District of Columbia to pass on the left or on the right, but slow moving vehicles must stay in the right lane. Thus, most of your passing should be on the left. Also, you cannot pass on the shoulder of the road.
- Safe passing depends on cooperation between drivers. Do not speed up when being passed.
- Quick movements at high speeds can be fatal. Do not return to the other lane too soon after passing. You should be able to see the headlights of the vehicle through your rearview mirror before changing back into the lane.
- Always signal a lane change
- Check your blind spots by glancing over your shoulder
- Check the outside mirror or look over your shoulder toward the left rear or right rear before changing into another lane
- Never cruise in the blind spot of the vehicle ahead of you

Roundabouts

A roundabout is a circular intersection at which all traffic travels counterclockwise, always to the right, around a central island. Vehicles entering from each leg of the intersection must yield to the traffic already in the roundabout, which is coming from the left. Vehicles exit the roundabout by making a simple right turn onto the desired street or highway.

Approaching the Roundabout

When you are approaching the roundabout, decide as early as possible which exit you need to take to get into the correct lane. Reduce your speed and if possible, adjust it to meet a gap in the traffic in the roundabout.

Entering the Roundabout

Upon reaching the roundabout, yield to the traffic coming from the left. Watch out for traffic already in the roundabout, especially cyclists and motorcyclists. Do not enter a roundabout when an emergency vehicle is approaching on another lane. This will enable traffic already in the roundabout to clear in front of the emergency vehicle.

Traveling Within a Roundabout

Always keep to the right of the central island within the roundabout and travel in a counterclockwise direction around the center island. Do not stop except to avoid a collision; you have the right of way.

Where the roundabout is wide enough to allow two or more vehicles to travel side-by-side, do not overtake other vehicles. Watch out for traffic crossing in front of you on the roundabout, especially those vehicles intending to leave at the next exit. When an emergency vehicle is approaching, provide a clear path for them to turn through the roundabout.

Exiting the Roundabout

Maintain a slow speed upon exiting a roundabout. Always indicate your exit by using your right turn signal. On roundabouts having a wide roadway, watch for vehicles to your right, including bicycles, whose paths you may cross while exiting. Make sure they intend to yield before you exit. Watch for and yield to pedestrians. Do not accelerate until you are beyond the pedestrian crossing point at the exit.

Motorcyclists and Bicycles

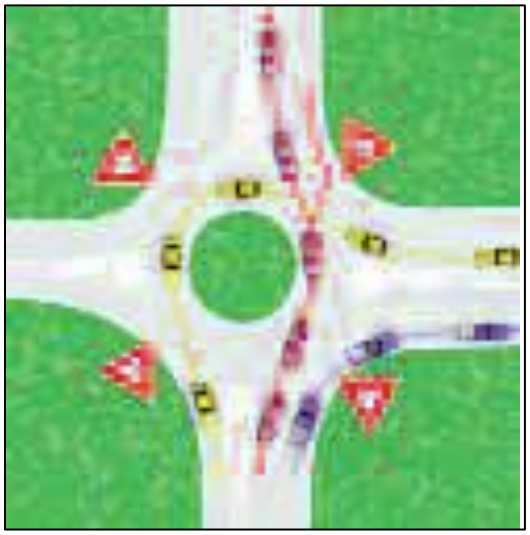
Give motorcyclists and bicyclists plenty of room and show due consideration. Bicyclists may enter the approach roadway from a bicycle lane; they will often keep to the right on the roundabout; they may also indicate left to show they are continuing around the roundabout.

Large Vehicles

Do not overtake large vehicles. Large vehicles (for example, trucks and buses) may have to swing wide on the approach to or within a roundabout. Watch for their turn signals and give them plenty of room, especially since they may obscure other vehicles. Large vehicles may need to use the full width of the roadway, including mountable aprons used to negotiate a roundabout. Their drivers should be careful of all other users of the roundabouts and, prior to entering the roundabout, satisfy themselves that other users are aware of them and will yield to them.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians have the right-of way within the crosswalks at the roundabout; however, pedestrians may not suddenly leave a curb or other safe waiting place and walk into the path of a vehicle if it is so close that it may not be able to stop.



Multiple lane roundabout:

For roundabouts with multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination. For example, to:

- Turn right at the intersection, choose the right-hand lane and exit in the right-hand lane. (Blue car)
- Go straight through the intersection, choose either lane, and exit in the lane you entered. (Red car)
- Turn left, choose the left lane, and exit. (Yellow car)

Stopping

Stopping on the traveled portion of the highway is prohibited. Stopping on the shoulder is permitted only when your car won't run or in other emergencies. When this occurs, raise the hood or tie a white cloth on the left door handle or radio antenna. Stay with your vehicle; never walk along an interstate or other limited access highway.

Backing

Do not back up on any highway, under any circumstances.

Emergencies

Brake Failure

Try pumping the brake pedal [non-ABS systems]. If this does not restore braking ability:

- Use the emergency (parking) brake
- Shift to a lower gear, if possible
- If necessary, rib sides of the tires against the side of the curb. Braking with Anti-Lock Braking Systems (ABS) are designed to prevent your wheels from locking up when braking. Whenever the vehicle's computer detects that one or more wheels are locking, ABS begins to pump the brakes for the driver at a much faster rate than the driver ever could to avoid locking. When the ABS engages, you will hear a rumble from the brakes and the brake pedal will vibrate under your foot. All the driver has to do is press down hard on the brake pedal, hold it, and steer the vehicle in the direction that you want it to go. The ABS computer is controlling which wheel is braking in order to prevent a skid.

Resist the temptation to take your foot of the brake when ABS is engaged. Maintain constant pressure on the brake pedal. Drivers should be aware that removing steady pressure from the brake pedal or pumping the brakes will disengage or turn off the ABS.

Drivers should practice using ABS and become familiar with how your vehicle reacts to sudden or emergency braking. The best place to practice is an empty parking lot.

Wet Brakes

After driving through deep water, you should test your brakes. They may pull to one side or not hold at all. To dry the brakes, put the car in low gear, drive slowly and apply the brakes lightly. Test the brakes every 200 feet, continuing until braking action returns to normal.

Windshield Wipers Fail

If your windshield wipers fail during inclement weather, open the window, put your head out the window, drive your vehicle off the roadway and STOP.

Accelerator Pedal Sticks

- Slap the accelerator pedal hard with your foot
- Shift to neutral
- Apply the brakes
- Pull of the roadway and stop

Steering Fails

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

Loss of Control – Steering and Locking Device

Never turn your vehicle's ignition to the "lock" position while the vehicle is still in motion. This will cause the steering to lock and if you try to turn the steering wheel you will lose control of the vehicle.

Headlights Fail

If the highway is lighted, get off the roadway onto the shoulder or other available space as rapidly and safely as possible. If the highway is dark, try your parking lights, your directional 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

Knowing how to fight fires is important. Fires have been made worse by drivers who did not know what to do. Here are some procedures to follow in case of fire:

Pull Off the Road

The first step is to get the vehicle off the road and stop. In doing so:

- Park in an open area, away from buildings, trees, brush, other vehicles or anything that might catch fire
- Do not pull into a service station!
- Use your cellular phone, if you have one, to notify police of your problem and location

Keep the Fire from Spreading

Before trying to put out the fire, make sure that it does not spread any further.

- With an **engine** fire, turn off the engine as soon as you can. Do not open the hood if you can avoid it. Shoot the fire extinguisher through louvers, radiator, or from the underside of the vehicle.
- For a **cargo** fire in a van or box trailer, keep the doors shut, especially if your cargo contains hazardous materials. Opening the van doors will supply the fire with oxygen and accelerate the fire.

Extinguish the Fire

Here are some rules to follow in putting out a fire:

- Know how the fire extinguisher works. Study the instructions printed on the extinguisher **before** you need it.
- When using the extinguisher, stay as far away from the fire as possible
- Aim at the source or base of the fire, not up in the flames
- Position yourself upwind. Let the wind carry the contents of the extinguisher to the fire rather than carrying the flames to you.
- Continue until whatever was burning has cooled. Absence of smoke or flame does not mean the fire is completely out or cannot restart.
- Only try to extinguish a fire if you know what you are doing and it is safe to do so

Vehicle Approaching in Your Lane

If you see a vehicle coming toward you in your lane, pull to the right, slow down, sound your horn and flash your headlights. Do not turn into the lane the vehicle has left as the driver may “wake up”, realize their mistake and turn back into their proper lane.

Stalling on Railroad Tracks

Look both ways for trains. If there is a train coming, get out of the vehicle and run along the side of tracks toward the train, to avoid being struck by the debris from the accident.

Running Off the Roadway

If you run off or are forced off the road, these rules may save your life:

- Do not panic
- Take your foot off the accelerator
- Do not jam on the brakes. Brake carefully or not at all.
- Grip the steering wheel tightly, as unusual stress on the wheel may twist it from your hand
- Do not try to get back on the roadway until you have the vehicle completely under control, (speed is reduced to 15 mph or less) and you have looked for traffic behind you and beside you. Then turn the wheels sharply toward the road. Be sure not to go across the center line of the road or into another lane.

Rumble Strips

Rumble strips are short sections of corrugated roadway which alert you with the noise your tires make when you drive over them. Rumble strips warn of possible hazards such as dangerous intersections or when one is driving too close to the roadway edge.

Tires

Look for tire problems. It is dangerous to drive with defective tires. Look for:

- Excessive wear. You need at least 4/32-inch tread depth in every major groove on front wheels. You need 2/32-inch on other wheels. No fabric should show through the tread or sidewall.
- Cuts or other damage
- Tread separation
- Dual tires that come in contact with each other or parts of the vehicle
- Mismatched tire sizes
- Radial and bias-ply tires used together on the same axle
- Cut or cracked valve stems
- Re-grooved, recapped, or re-treaded tires on the front wheels of a bus are not allowed

Wheel and Rim Problems

- Defective wheels or rims could cause an accident
- Bent or cracked rims can cause a tire to lose pressure or come off
- Rust around wheel nuts may mean the nuts are loose – check tightness
- After a tire has been changed, stop a short while later and recheck tightness of the nuts
- Missing clamps, spacers, studs or lugs mean danger
- Mismatched, bent or cracked lock rings are dangerous
- Wheels or rims that have had welding repairs are not safe

Blowouts

Blowouts are very much like running off the roadway onto a soft shoulder. If your tire blows out:

- Do not apply the brakes
- Grip the steering wheel tightly
- Signal a turn to the right and pull the vehicle safely onto the shoulder
- Decelerate and look for a safe place to drive off the road
- Wait until the vehicle is almost stopped

Flooded Engine

- Press the gas pedal to the floor and hold it down
- Turn the key in the ignition and keep it there for short intervals (10 – 15 seconds)
- When the engine starts, release the gas pedal
- Do not pump the gas pedal; it will make the flooding worse

Disabled Vehicle

- Get all four wheels off the roadway, if possible
- Turn on the parking lights or emergency flashing lights and, if available, set out flares, blinking red lights or reflective triangle
- Tie a handkerchief or white cloth to the radio antenna or to the left door handle and/or raise the hood

Right-of-Way

Laws govern the right-of-way, but never put these laws ahead of safety. The right of way means the right of one vehicle or pedestrian to proceed in a lawful manner on a highway in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian. If you have the right-of-way and others yield it to you, proceed immediately.

- You must, of course, obey stop signs; yield signs and traffic signals at intersections
- If you enter the intersection after another vehicle, you must yield the right-of-way
- If you are about to turn left at an intersection or into an alley, private road or driveway, you must yield the right-of-way to other pedestrians and vehicles until it is safe to turn
- If you are entering a public street or highway from a private road or driveway, you must stop and yield to all approaching vehicles and pedestrians
- If a traffic light turns green for you, you must still yield to pedestrians and vehicles in the intersection. Be on the lookout for red light runners.

Authorized emergency vehicles, such as police cars, ambulances and fire engines, have the right-of-way when they are giving a signal, either audible (siren) or visual (flashing light). When you hear or see a vehicle approach, you should immediately drive to the curb and stop, remaining stopped until the emergency vehicle has passed. Do not follow any fire apparatus closer than 500 feet when it is responding to an emergency.

Pedestrians Right-of-Way

All pedestrians have the right of way at street crossings in town and cities, except where traffic officers or traffic control devices control traffic. Pedestrians in a crosswalk, whether marked or unmarked, have the right-of-way except when they enter the crosswalk on a red light or against the direction of a traffic officer.

Pedestrian Signals

At some particularly busy intersections, pedestrian signals may be used in combination with normal traffic signals. Drivers must obey the normal traffic signals. Pedestrians must obey the WALK and DON'T WALK signals.

Crossing at Crosswalks

The driver of a vehicle shall come to a complete stop when a pedestrian crossing the roadway in a crosswalk is:

- On the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling; or

- **Approaching so closely from an adjacent lane on the other half of the roadway as to be in danger.** Whenever any vehicle is stopped at a marked or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection to permit a pedestrian to cross the roadway, the driver of any other vehicle approaching from the rear shall not overtake and pass the stopped vehicles. A pedestrian may not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible to yield.

Crossing at Locations Other than Crosswalks

Though it is not recommended, if a pedestrian crosses a roadway outside of a crosswalk, the vehicle must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian. Though the pedestrian does not have the right-of-way in these instances, the driver must always yield to pedestrians in these instances.

Crossing at Special Pedestrian Crossings

If a pedestrian crosses a roadway at a point where a pedestrian tunnel or overhead is provided, the pedestrian shall yield the right-of-way to vehicles approaching on the roadway. Although the pedestrian may not have the right-of-way, the driver always has the responsibility to yield to pedestrians in the intersection.

Crossing between Adjacent Intersections

Between adjacent intersections, at which a traffic control signal is in operation, a pedestrian may cross a roadway only in a marked crosswalk or after yielding the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching on the roadway.

Individuals with Disabilities

Driver should be especially alert for and yield the right-of-way to pedestrians who are deaf, or have physical disabilities that require the use of canes, crutches, walkers, guide dogs/service animals, wheelchairs, or motorized scooters. These individuals may have difficulty detecting oncoming traffic and may need extra time to cross the road. Drivers should exercise extreme care and be prepared to stop when approaching children or obviously confused or incapacitated individuals.

A five-sided sign is used to warn of school crossings. Diamond-shaped signs warn of pedestrian crossings.

Sharing the Roadway with Others

The main purpose of traffic laws and rules of the road is to enable many, roadway users; motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians to share the roadways equally and fairly at all times. Roadway safety is based upon sharing the road with others.

Sharing the Road with Large Trucks

Maneuverability

Trucks are designed primarily to carry many products to and from towns and cities; they are not designed to be as maneuverable as cars. Trucks have longer stopping and accelerating distances, a wider turning radius, and weigh more. On multi-lane highways, tractor-trailers generally stay in the center lane to help the flow of traffic on and off the highway. Staying in the middle lane also increases the truck driver's options if he or she has to switch lanes in order to avoid a dangerous situation or an accident.

Passing

When passing a truck, first check to your front and rear, and move into the passing lane only if it is clear and you are in a legal passing zone. Let the truck driver know you are passing by blinking your headlights, especially at night. The driver will make it easier for you by staying to the far side of the lane.

On a level highway, it takes only three to five seconds longer to pass a truck than a car. On a downgrade, the truck's momentum will cause it to go faster, so you may need to increase your speed. Complete your pass as quickly as possible, and don't stay alongside the other vehicle. If the driver blinks the lights after you pass, it may be a signal that it is clear to pull back in.

Be sure to move back only when you can see the front of the truck in your rear view mirror. After you pass a truck, maintain your speed. Many auto/truck accidents are caused by autos making a quick lane change in front of a truck, then suddenly slowing or stopping because of traffic congestion, not allowing the truck driver time to readjust for a safe space allowance.

Following a Truck

If you're following a truck, stay out of its "blind spots", up to 20 feet in front of the cab, on either side of the tractor-trailer, particularly along the sides of the cab, and up to 200 feet in the rear.

Stay to the rear of the truck and close to the tractor on the right side. Position your vehicle so the truck driver can see it in the side mirrors, then you will have a good view of the road ahead and the truck driver can give you plenty of warning for a stop or a turn. You will have more time to react and make a safe stop. When you follow a truck at night, always dim your headlights. Bright lights from a vehicle behind will blind the truck driver when they reflect off the truck's large side mirrors. If you are stopped behind a truck on an upgrade, leave space in front of you in case the truck drifts back slightly when it starts to move. Also, keep to the left in your lane so the driver can see that you're stopped behind the truck.

If you cannot see the truck's mirrors, the truck driver cannot see you!

Do Not Hang Out In the No-Zone/Side No-Zones

Trucks and buses have blind spots on both sides. If you cannot see the drivers face on the side-view mirror, he or she cannot see you. If the truck changes lanes, you could be in trouble.

Rear No-Zones: Avoid tailgating. Unlike cars, trucks and buses have huge no zones directly behind them. The truck or bus driver cannot see your car back there. If the truck or bus brakes suddenly, you have no place to go.

Front No-Zones: Do not cut in front too soon after passing a truck or bus. Truck and bus drivers need nearly twice the time and room to stop as cars. Look for the entire front of the truck in your rear view mirror before you pull in front, and then do not slow down.

Backing up No-Zones: Never cross behind a truck that is backing up. Hundreds of motorists are killed or injured each year by ignoring trucks that are backing up. Truck drivers do not have a rear view mirror and may not see you cutting in behind them.

Truck Stopping Distance

Trucks take longer to stop. A car traveling a 60 miles per hour can stop in about 366 feet. A truck traveling at the same speed takes more than 400 feet to stop.

Right and Left Turns

Pay close attention to truck turn signals. They cannot see cars squeezed in between them and the curb. Truck drivers must make wide right or left turns so that the rear of the truck or rear of the tractor or trailer can clear the corner or any other standing obstructions. Sometimes, space from other lanes is used to clear corners. To avoid an accident, do not pass until the turning action is complete.

Bad Weather

Following or passing a heavy truck (or being passed by one) in rain or snow creates visibility problems. Splash or spray from a truck's wheels and trailer can reduce visibility to nearly zero. Whenever driving in wet weather, be sure your vehicle's windshield wipers are working and there is fluid in the washer reservoir. Be sure your headlights are on.

Some of the Most Common Mistakes to Avoid When Driving Around Trucks:

- **Do not cut off a truck in traffic or on the highway to reach your exit or turn.** Cutting into the open space in front of a truck removes the truck driver's cushion of safety. Take a moment to slow down and exit behind a truck – it will only take a few extra seconds.
- **Do not linger alongside a truck when passing.** Always pass a tractor-trailer completely and always on the left side. If you linger when passing any vehicle, your position makes it impossible for the trucker to take evasive action if an obstacle appears in the road ahead.
- **Following too close or tailgating.** Tailgating a truck or car is dangerous because you take away your own cushion of safety if the vehicle in front of you stops short. When following behind a truck, if you can't see the truck driver's outside mirrors, there is no way the truck driver can see you. If the vehicle you are following hits something in the road, you will have no time to react before it hits the front of your car.
- **Never underestimate the size and speed of an approaching tractor-trailer.** Because of its large size, a tractor-trailer often appears to be traveling at a slower speed than it is. A substantial number of car-truck collisions take place at intersections because the driver of the car does not realize how close the truck is or how quickly it is approaching.

Stopping for School Vehicles

When a school vehicle is stopping or has stopped on the roadway, and is operating the alternating flashing red lights, all vehicles must stop at least 20 feet from the front or rear of the school vehicle. No one can proceed until the alternating flashing red lights have been turned off. Drivers should continue to exercise caution once the flashing lights have been turned off. Drivers of other vehicles are not required to stop when they are on a divided highway and the school vehicle is on the other side of the divided highway.

Sharing the Road with Motorcyclists

Almost half of all fatal motorcycle accidents involve cars. In collisions with motorcycles, drivers often say that they never saw the motorcycle. Drivers of cars must always be alert for motorcycles, as their size makes them very difficult to see. Always remain alert and check your blind spot frequently to make sure that a motorcycle is not passing you. You need to be especially alert for motorcycles when turning at intersections and when pulling out from a side road or driveway. A motorcycle is entitled to use the entire lane. Because the motorcycle is very maneuverable, the operator may move from side to side within the lane to avoid obstacles. Allow ample room for the motorcycle when passing and remember it is against the law to overtake or pass a motorcycle within the same lane. Be especially careful when following a motorcycle. Maintain a safe following distance at all times, as the motorcycle can stop more quickly than cars.

Sharing the Road with Bicycles

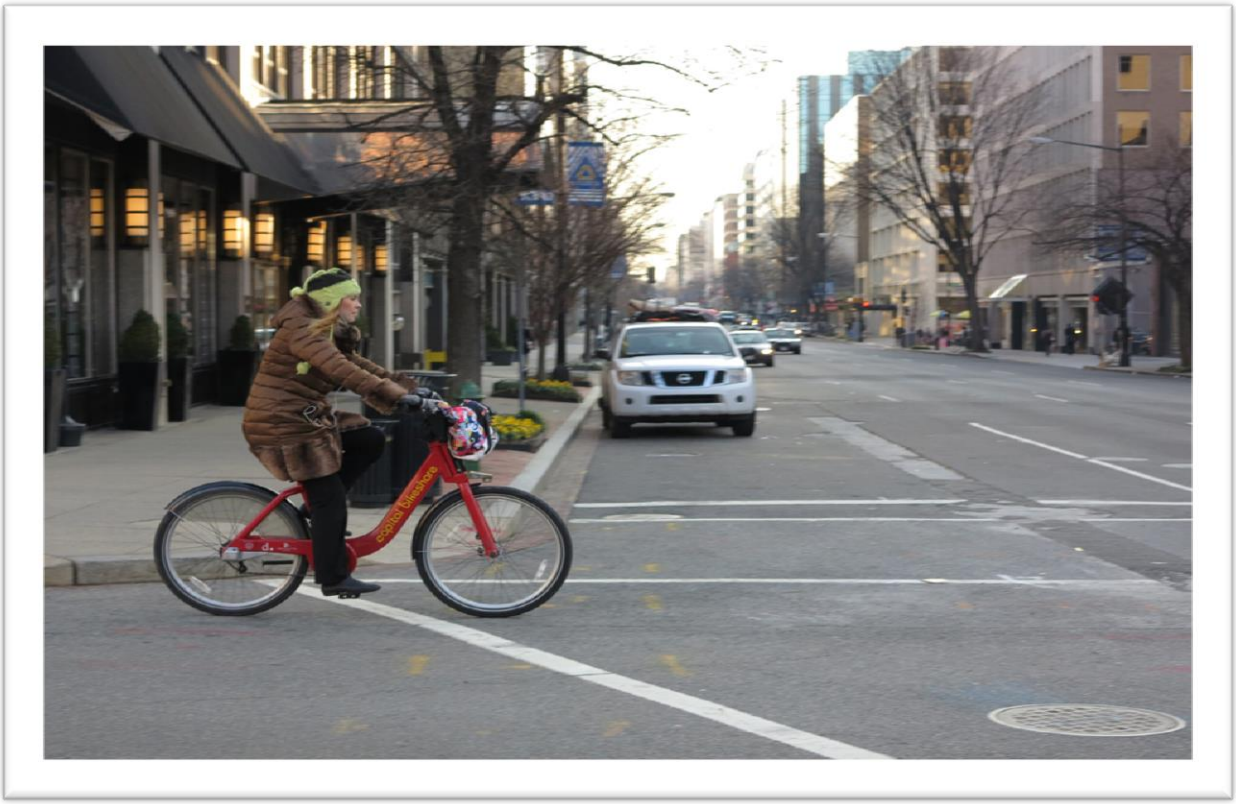
Bicycle Right-of-Way

Bicycles are treated as vehicles in the District of Columbia. Bicyclists have rights and duties like those of a motor vehicle. Motorists must yield the right-of-way to bicyclists at intersections when passing and when turning. Most bicycles do not have turn signals and their operators use hand and arm signals to alert you of their intentions.

Following a Bicyclist

As you approach a bicyclist, slow down. Avoid the use of your horn. Bicyclists can usually hear an approaching vehicle and loud noises can startle the bicycle operator, causing an accident.

Do not follow a bicycle closely. Bicycles can stop and maneuver quickly and a bicyclist can swerve or change speed to avoid a road hazard. Young bicyclists, in particular, are more likely to make surprising changes in direction.



Passing a Bicyclist

When passing a bicyclist, wait until it is safe and allow adequate clearance (usually about three feet from the side of your vehicle) and return to your lane when you can clearly see the bicyclist in your rear view mirror. Do not use your horn to alert or alarm the rider. If you are unable to safely pass, reduce your speed, follow the bicycle and wait for a safe opportunity to pass. A bicycle should be operated as close to the right side of the road as possible. However, cyclists are expected to use turn lanes. Merge safely with bicycle traffic when turning. Do not make right turns across the path of bicycle traffic. It is common for an experienced cyclist to reach speeds of 20-30 miles per hour and be closer than you think.

Sharing the Road with Streetcars

Streetcars are passenger vehicles that operate on fixed rails on public streets. The vehicles can operate in mixed traffic and /or a separate right of way. Typically the same size as an articulated bus, the streetcar holds more passengers and operates at average speeds of 25 to 35 miles per hour. Streetcar operating speeds are similar to local buses, not exceeding the posted speed limit and keeping up with the flow of traffic. Drivers should adhere to observed traffic signs and watch for moving streetcars.

Passing a Streetcar

Use extra caution when passing a stopped streetcar as passengers may be entering or exiting. When passing a stopped street car traveling in the same direction, use extreme caution, wait until it is safe, and pass on the left side of the streetcar.

Parking Along a Streetcar Route

District law prohibits parking, stopping, or standing a vehicle on or within a streetcar guide-way or adjacent to a streetcar platform. A vehicle in violation of this law shall be subject to fine and removal or impounding.

When parking along a streetcar route:

- Do not park on tracks
- Park your vehicle within the solid white line
- Check for approaching Streetcar when operating vehicle doors
- Double parking is illegal

CORQUEES PARK

Driving Rules

Keep to the Right

You should keep to the right, except when your vehicle is about to overtake and pass another vehicle or cyclist, or to make a left turn. On a two-lane or other narrow highway, you must grant the approaching vehicle one-half of the paved or improved portion of the road.

Signaling

You must use a turn signal, arm or hand signal, or both, continuously for at least 100 feet before turning. You should signal for a much greater distance and a longer time interval when traveling at a high speed. This is particularly important when changing lanes on all highways. When making a turn just past an intersection, signal once you are in the intersection.

Passing

It is preferable to pass on the left. However, in the District of Columbia, it is legal to pass on either the left or right on one-way roads, provided there is room for more than one line of traffic. It is also legal to pass on either the left or right on highways with four or more lanes.

When You Must Not Pass on Two-Lane Highways

You must not pass:

- Where the solid yellow line is on your side of the center of the roadway
- Where there are two solid yellow lines
- When passing will interfere with the safe operation of oncoming vehicles
- When approaching the top of a hill or on a curve and there is not sufficient clear view ahead
- When crossing or within 100 feet of an intersection
- When crossing or within 100 feet if a railroad crossing
- When the view is obstructed upon approaching within 100 feet of any bridge, viaduct or tunnel
- On the shoulder of the highway either to the right or the left
- When being passed by another vehicle, you must not increase your speed
- The end of a “no-passing zone” does not mean that it is safe to pass, only that it is lawful to pass when safe

Overtaking and Passing on a Two-Lane Highway

When you overtake any vehicle on a two-lane highway, pass on the left. Before you cross the center line, be certain there is time to pass and get back into the right lane before meeting a vehicle coming in the opposite direction and before a no-passing zone begins. While you are passing, if it appears that you will not have time to complete the pass before meeting oncoming traffic, slow down and return to the lane behind the vehicle you were passing. Turn on your left or right signal, depending on which lane you are entering, to inform the driver behind you and the driver ahead. When passing a vehicle, you should return to the right lane when you see both headlights of the passed vehicle in your rear view mirror. When passing a cyclist, allow a minimum of three feet clearance. Do not use your horn when passing a cyclist.

If you are driving the vehicle being overtaken, give way to the right in favor of the overtaking vehicle. Do not increase your speed until the passing is completed. You may pass on the right only when the vehicle being overtaken is making or is about to make a left turn. However, you must stay on the traveled portion of the road. You cannot drive on the shoulder of the road to pass another vehicle.

Driving on Roads with Marked Lanes

- You should stay in one lane
- You must not drive partly in one lane and partly in another
- You must not move from one lane to another unless you can do so safely
- You should signal your intention to change lanes no less than 300 feet before you do so. It is preferable to signal sooner to enable drivers ahead and behind you to take appropriate action.
- When you are driving more slowly than the traffic flow on a highway that has two or more lanes in your direction, you should move to and stay in the right lane
- If you see a vehicle stopped on the shoulder, you should slow down and move to the left part of your lane or the next lane, if available

Turns

Right Turn

- Get into the lane furthermost to the right, well ahead of the turn
- Signal your intention to turn for at least 100 feet
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks
- Be alert for vehicles ahead that are also turning right
- Yield to bicyclists traveling between you and the side of the road
- Turn into the right lane going your way
- When making a legal right turn on red, you must make a complete stop before the crosswalk prior to approaching the intersection

Left Turn

- Get into the left lane on your side of the highway well ahead of the turn
- Signal your intention to turn for at least 100 feet
- Yield to oncoming traffic including bicycles
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks
- Do not block the intersection while waiting for oncoming traffic to clear
- Turn into the left lane going your way
- Do not cut the corner or turn so wide that you get into the right lane going your way
- It is illegal to make a left turn on red in the District of Columbia

Using Your Headlights

Low Beams

Always turn on headlights when the windshield wipers are on. Use low beams when approaching or closely following other vehicles. Low beams should also be used with street lights and in fog.

- You must turn on your headlights one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise
- You must turn on your headlights at other times when you cannot see persons or vehicles on the highway clearly at a distance of 500 feet or less
- You must turn on your headlights when driving in a tunnel

High Beams

Use high beams on dark roads to see persons or vehicles ahead. You must use high beams whenever needed to see persons or vehicles ahead of you, except that:

- You must change to low beams at least 500 feet before meeting oncoming vehicles
- You must change to low beams when following a vehicle at a distance of 300 feet or less

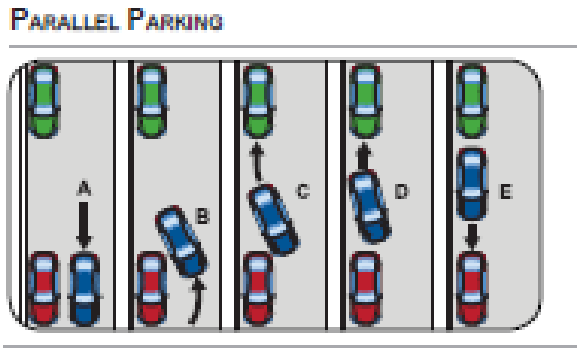
Energy Saving Tips

By driving carefully, you will get better gas mileage and save money on fuel, if you:

- Accelerate gradually
- Drive smoothly and at moderate speeds
- Anticipate stops to minimize hard braking
- Avoid unnecessary driving
- Combine trips and carpool when possible

Parking Rules

When parking your vehicle on a street, you must stop the engine, lock the ignition, remove the key and set the parking brake. It is also advisable to raise the windows, lock the doors and ensure valuables are not visible. Children, seniors, and pets should never be left inside a vehicle unattended.



Parallel Parking

When parallel parking on a two-way street, make sure the space is large enough for your vehicle and you must park parallel to and within 12 inches of the curb. Signal when approaching the space and check mirrors for traffic behind the vehicle. If the driver following you stops, he should stop several lengths behind you. However, if the vehicle behind you is following too closely, do not stop suddenly, continue driving and find another space. Stopping suddenly with a vehicle behind you may result in a rear end collision.

Steps to Parallel Parking:

A. Move forward past the space until lined up directly parallel to the vehicle parked in front, 2–5 feet away. Being too close or too far away will make parking more difficult. With your foot on the brake, shift to reverse and turn around to check for traffic and make sure the travel path is clear.

B. Release the brake, start backing up slowly, and start to make an "S" turn, turning first right and then left. Glance both forward and backward repeatedly to check the space around the vehicle while turning.

C. Once the rear of the vehicle is mostly in the space, start turning in the other direction to straighten out.

D. Adjust the vehicle's position as needed to center it in the space.

E. Check to see if the wheels are within 12 inches from the curb. If not, pull out and try again. Always check for passing vehicles and cyclists before you open your door.

When moving a vehicle from a parked position on a street, you must signal, yield the right-of-way and pull into the street when it is safe to do so.

Double parking a vehicle is prohibited because it blocks traffic and causes accidents.

Parking on a Hill

Make sure the vehicle is in park and the parking brake is properly engaged. If you have a manual transmission, leave the vehicle in gear and engage the parking brake. To prevent the vehicle from rolling into traffic, turn the front wheels as follows:

- Toward the curb when parking downhill
- Away from the curb when parking uphill

When parking your vehicle on an uphill or downhill grade with no curb, you must turn your front wheels toward the edge of the road (where the curb would be).

Parking on Highways

You must never park on the paved or traveled part of any highway unless your vehicle is disabled and cannot be moved. Pull to the right as far as possible. When you park a vehicle on the shoulder or side of any highway from sunset to sunrise or when light is insufficient to see people or objects 1000 feet away, you must turn on your hazard lights or parking lights (if the vehicle is so equipped). Never open the door of a vehicle that will impede the flow of traffic or endanger or vehicle. Instead, use the door on the curbside any person.

Stopping

Stop Means Cease Movement and No Rolling Stops

- Where there is a stop sign, you must make a full stop before the stop line, if there is one. If not, you must stop before entering the crosswalk.
- Where there is a flashing red traffic signal, you must make a full stop
- Where there is a steady red traffic signal, unless a sign prohibiting a turn is in place, you may cautiously enter the intersection and make a right turn after first making a full stop and yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists and other traffic lawfully using the intersection
- Where there is a yield sign and vehicles or pedestrians keep you from using the roadway beyond the sign, you should come to a full stop and proceed when the way is clear
- When emerging from an alley, driveway, private road or parking structure, and have to drive over a sidewalk onto a street, you must stop and yield to pedestrians, bicyclists and other vehicles prior to entering the sidewalk/crosswalk
- Before entering an intersection when the roadway beyond the intersection is blocked with traffic, you should stop and proceed through the intersection once it is no longer blocked. Don't Block the Box! Don't Block the Crosswalk!
- At a railroad crossing with lowered gates and/or flashing lights, you must stop

Stopping, Standing, Parking – Prohibited

Except when necessary to avoid a conflict with other traffic, or in compliance with the direction of a police officer or official traffic control device, do not stop a vehicle:

- In front of a public driveway
- On a sidewalk
- Within an intersection
- On a crosswalk
- Between a safety zone and the adjacent curb, or within 30 feet of points on the curb immediately opposite the ends of a safety zone unless the State Highway Administration or local authority indicate a different length by signs or markings
- Alongside or opposite any street excavation or obstruction where stopping, standing or parking would obstruct traffic

- Upon any bridge or other elevated structure upon a highway or within a highway tunnel
- At any place an official sign prohibits stopping
- In a direction that is the opposite from the flow of traffic

Do not stand or park a vehicle, whether occupied or not, when:

- In front of or within 5 feet of a private driveway, public driveway or alley
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant
- Within 25 feet in front of any flashing signal, stop sign, or traffic control signal located at the side of a roadway
- Within 20 feet of the entrance to any fire station driveway
- On a curve or the brow of a hill where solid lines indicating a no passing zone appears on the surface of the road
- At any place an official sign prohibits standing
- On the roadway side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street; this is considered double parking
- In front of any barricade or sign that has been placed for the purpose of closing a street

Do not park a vehicle, whether occupied or not, except temporarily while loading or unloading merchandise or passengers:

- Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing
- At any place where an official sign prohibits parking
- Unless you are an individual with a disability, parking in a space or zone properly marked as restricted for the use of individuals with disabilities

Traffic Rules

Turnabout

At times it may be necessary to turn your car around in close quarters; for example, during your driving test or at the end of a dead-end street.
To do this:

- Start from the extreme right side of the road. Look for other traffic and if clear, proceed forward slowly while turning the steering wheel to the left. Stop within several inches of the left curb or the edge of the street.
- Then proceed backward slowly while turning the steering wheel to the right
- Stop within several inches of the right curb or edge of the street
- Proceed forward slowly while turning the steering wheel to the left. This should complete your turnabout. If not, repeat the procedures.

Speed Restrictions

District of Columbia traffic laws provide both a general speed restriction and specific speed limits. You must obey both. No one should drive at a speed greater than is reasonable under the existing conditions, taking into account the actual and potential hazards. In every event, speed should be controlled in order to avoid colliding with any person, vehicle or other conveyance on or entering the road. No one should drive at such a slow speed they impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic except when a reduced speed is necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle or in compliance with the law. Never exceed the posted speed limit. Up to the limit, it is safest to drive at the average speed at which traffic is moving. Studies have shown that the more you depart from the average traffic speed, faster or slower, the greater your chances are of having an accident.
More accidents are caused by factors other than speed, but speed increases the severity and extent of damages and injuries.
Consider the following facts:

- Death is eight times more probable in an accident at 60 miles per hour than at 20 miles per hour
- The impact speed in a head-on collision is the sum of the speed of both vehicles. For two vehicles, each going 50 miles per hour, the sum is 100 miles per hour.
- Hitting a solid stationary object at 60 miles per hour is equal to falling off a 10-story building

Speed Limit Laws/unless otherwise posted

District of Columbia city streets is 25 miles per hour
District of Columbia alley is 15 miles per hour
District of Columbia School Zone is 15 miles per hour
On Ordinary Highways 30 – 50 miles per hour
On Divided Highways 30 – 55 miles per hour
On Interstate Highways 55 – 75 miles per hour

Speed Signs

Speed Limit Signs

Speed limit signs have black letters and numerals on a white rectangular background and are the legal allowable limits.

Advisory (Recommended) Speed Signs

Advisory speed signs have black letters on a yellow or orange background and often are shown under a warning sign. Advisory speed signs are posted along portions of highways to warn you that conditions may often make it unsafe to drive faster. Although an advisory speed sign does not have the force of law, if you exceed it and have an accident, it may be concluded that you violated the general speed restriction and may be subject to a ticket.

Other Traffic Laws

Safety Zones

Never drive through a safety zone, which is an area on a roadway marked by signs for pedestrians only. Always proceed cautiously whenever people are standing, walking, sitting or bicycling close to traffic.

Coasting

Never drive with the gears in neutral or the clutch pedal depressed longer than is needed to shift gears. If you need to react quickly, you may not be able to get the vehicle in gear.

School Crossing Guards and Traffic Control Officers

You must follow the direction of any authorized crossing guard or traffic control officer. School-crossing guards and traffic control officers, have the authority to stop, control and guide vehicular traffic. They are most commonly stationed at

locations adjacent to schools and event venues or at any other locations deemed necessary.

U-Turn

You cannot make a U-turn on a curve or hill where the vehicle cannot be seen at least 500 feet away by the driver of another vehicle proceeding in either direction. U-turns are prohibited in the District of Columbia at intersections controlled by traffic lights, or on a crosswalk adjacent to such an intersection.

Wearing of Headsets, Earphones, and Earplugs - Prohibited

A person may not wear earplugs, a headset, or earphones attached to a radio, tape player, CD player or other audio device while driving a motor vehicle. The use of earphones or earplugs for cellular phones are acceptable. Hearing aid devices are acceptable.

Vehicle Equipment

Since 1965, the U.S. Government has required that all motor vehicles offered for sale in the United States be equipped with various safety equipment and emission control devices to reduce accidents and control air pollution. Under federal and District of Columbia motor vehicle laws, it is unlawful for anyone to:

- Remove or alter any safety device or equipment which has been placed upon any motor vehicle, trailer, semi-trailer, or pole trailer in compliance with any law, rule, regulation or requirement of the United States or of the District of Columbia
- Remove, alter or otherwise render inoperable any exhaust system emission control device (i.e. catalytic converter), gasoline tank filler inlet, or crankcase ventilation device which has been installed by a manufacturer of motor vehicles produced as a 1968 or later model, if the motor vehicle is factory equipped with these devices as required by federal law or by rule of regulation

Seat Belt Law/Click It or Ticket

After the law was enacted in 1997, the District had one of the strongest, most comprehensive seat belt laws in the nation. Seat belt usage increased 24%. Injuries were prevented. Lives were saved.

It takes a few seconds to fasten a seat belt. It's so simple. Yet it can be the most significant action you can take to protect your life and those you care about.

Buckling up drastically increases your chance of surviving a crash. And it's your best weapon against a drunk, tired, or aggressive driver.

Seat Belts Must Be Worn

The District of Columbia law requires that the driver and all passengers wear seat belts in passenger cars, trucks, tractors, multi-purpose vehicles or passenger buses. A person may not operate any of these vehicles unless the operator and each occupant is wearing a seat belt.

You Will Be Pulled Over

Like many other states, District law allows police to stop a vehicle solely because its drivers and passengers are not properly buckled up.

$50 Fine and 2 Points

That's the penalty for not having your seat belt properly buckled at all times for drivers and all passengers, in front and back seats – with few exceptions. Drivers are responsible for seat belt compliance for all passengers.

Persons with Physical Disabilities

If a physician licensed to practice medicine determines and certifies in writing that the use of a seat belt by a person would prevent appropriate restraint due to a person's physical disability or other medical reason, the seat belt provisions do not apply to that person. The physician's certificate must state the nature of the physical disability and the reason that restraint by a seat belt is inappropriate. The certificate must be carried in the vehicle. A person who violates the provisions is subject to the penalties of the law.

Head Restraints

Head restraints are installed to protect from spinal injury, whiplash, which can occur when a vehicle is struck from the rear. Before starting to drive the vehicle, adjust the head rest on your seat to a position directly behind your head. This position varies with each driver, so it's important that the head rest be adjusted to provide you with maximum protection. Some vehicles have high-back seats that cannot be adjusted.

Child Safety Seats

In the District of Columbia, the operator of a motor vehicle may not transport any child less than 3 years of age unless the child is properly secured in a child safety seat in the back seat of the vehicle.

Air Bags

Air bags are important safety devices. They work best when drivers and passengers are properly secured by lap and shoulder belts and are sitting as far back as possible. Most air bags are designed to inflate in a moderate-to-severe frontal accident. Some accidents at lower speeds may result in injuries, but generally not the serious injuries that air bags are designed to prevent. Lap and shoulder belts should always be used, even in vehicles with air bags.

To increase the lifesaving capabilities of air bags:

- Always wear safety belts properly, using lap and shoulder belts
- Pregnant women should place the lap portion of the safety belt under the abdomen as low as possible on the hips and across the upper thighs
- Sit as far away from the steering wheel as practical; try to maintain 10-12 inches from the steering wheel hub to chest
- Children age 12 and under should ride buckled up in a rear seat, in a child safety seat or seat belt appropriate for their age and size
- Infants should never ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag
- If it is impossible for you to follow these safety tips, it might be better for the air bags to be turned off. People who fall into one of the following risk groups should consider installing an air bag on-off switch.
    - Those who must transport infants riding in rear-facing infant seats in the front passenger seat
    - Those who must transport children under the age of 12 in the front passenger seat
    - Drivers who cannot change their customary driving position and keep 10 inches between the center of the steering wheel and the center of their breastbone
    - Those individuals whose doctors recommend that, due to their medical condition, the airbags pose a special risk that outweighs the risk of hitting their head, neck, or chest in an accident if the air bag is turned on

Work Zones

A work zone is an area along a highway where construction, maintenance, or utility work is occurring. Because work zones often are unexpected and sometimes hinder the smooth flow of traffic, they can present a challenge to even the most skilled drivers. It is important for the drivers own safety and the safety of pedestrians and workers that drivers use great care when approaching and

passing these sites. Special work zone traffic signs and other devices are set up in advance of where the work actually is taking place and continue beyond the work area. The zone may be either stationary (a bridge is being widened) or maybe a mobile operation that moves down the road slowly from time to time pavement striping or patching.

Usually, temporary devices such as fixed or portable signs, changeable message signs, arrow panels, pavement markings, and/or channeling devices (cones, drums, barricades, barriers, etc.) are installed to guide traffic safely through the zone. Traffic warning signs in work zones usually are ORANGE.

When approaching or driving through a work zone stay alert for changing traffic patterns and slowing or stopped traffic. Stopped traffic may be hidden around a curve or over a hill. Pay close attention to traffic signs and other devices, such as cones, drums, barricades, barriers, or markings, that are placed to safely guide you through the work zone. Obey the directions of the police and flaggers.

- When you see signs indicating lane closures ahead, prepare to move from the closed lane
- Watch for slower speed limits
- Observe what other drivers are doing and avoid sudden moves. Do not weave from lane to lane. Brake gradually to give drivers behind you ample time to slow down. Keep up with the flow of traffic.
- Be alert for unusual pavement surface conditions, such as rough surfaces, metal plates, uneven pavement between lanes, and drop-offs at the pavement edge. They can make it more difficult for you to control your vehicle. Gradual, controlled movements are best under these circumstances.
- Maintain a reasonable speed and spacing between vehicles. You may have nowhere to go if you are traveling too fast or following too closely and the vehicle in front of you suddenly slows or stops.
- Be patient and considerate of workers and other road users. At times, traffic in work zones must be stopped. This usually happens when traffic from opposite directions must take turns using a single lane, when workers or equipment must enter the lane of traffic, or where some work task might be dangerous to passing vehicles. Then, temporary traffic signals might be installed or police stationed to direct traffic. More often, trained and certified flaggers with STOP/SLOW paddles are used to stop, slow, and/or direct traffic through work zones.

EXIT 1
NORTH
1
395
NORTH
14th Street
National Mall
Capitol Hill
Verizon Cntr
Nationals Park

Signals, Signs and Markings

Regulatory Signs

These signs tell drivers of the speed limit and other laws and regulations. Speed limits may be reduced in work areas.

Warning Signs

Warning signs are used to alert drivers to unusual or potentially hazardous conditions in or near work zones. Most signs used in highway and street work areas are orange and diamond-shaped.

Channeling Devices

Barricades, cones and drums are the most commonly used devices to guide drivers safely through work areas. At night they may be equipped with warning lights for improved visibility.

Changeable Message Signs

These electronic signs, which can display a variety of messages pertaining to road conditions, traffic problems, emergency situations, special events, etc., are often used to alert motorists to special conditions within work zones.

Arrow Panels

Arrow panels are used both during the day and at night to give advance warning and directional information to tell drivers where it is necessary to move into another lane to the right or left.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals apply to everyone who is walking, driving or riding a bicycle on a street or highway. Failing to obey the signal's message is a major cause of accidents. The driver of a vehicle approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic control device may not drive across private property, such as gas stations, store parking lots etc., or leave the roadway for the purpose of avoiding the instructions of a traffic control device.

Traffic signals are usually red, yellow and green from top to bottom, or left to right. At some intersections, there are single red, yellow or green lights. Some traffic signals are steady, others flash. Some are circular, and some are arrows. The law requires that if the traffic lights or controls are out of service or malfunctioning when you approach and intersection, you must come to a stop as you would for a stop sign. You must then proceed according to the rules of right of way, unless you are directed to proceed by a traffic officer.

Steady Red Signal

Stop. Come to a complete stop before reaching the intersection, at the stop line, if there is one. If not, you must stop before entering the crosswalk and remain stopped as long as the signal is red. You may turn right at a red signal after coming to a complete stop, unless there are signs posted at the intersection, which reads, "No Turn on Red." When turning on a red signal, you must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists, and all other traffic. It is illegal in the District of Columbia to make a left turn on red.

Steady Yellow Signal

This means that the signal is changing from green to red. Its purpose is to provide time for approaching traffic to stop safely and to clear other vehicles from the intersection before the light turns red.

Steady Green Signal

Proceed with caution after you have checked first to see that other vehicles have cleared the intersection. When it is safe to proceed, you may enter the intersection to go straight ahead or turn unless a sign or additional signal prohibits the turn. You must yield to pedestrians and vehicles already in the intersection.

Steady Red Arrow Signal

Stop. Come to a complete stop before reaching the intersection, stop line or crosswalk for the direction indicated by the arrow. Remain stopped as long as the arrow signal is red.

Steady Yellow Arrow Signal

Like the steady yellow signal, the yellow arrow means that the signal is changing from green to red. Its purpose is to provide time for approaching traffic to stop safely and to clear other vehicles from the intersection before the light turns red.

Steady Green Arrow Signal

Proceed with caution in the direction the arrow points. Remember that you must yield to all pedestrians and vehicles already in the intersection.

Flashing Red Signal

You must come to a complete stop, yield to all other traffic and to pedestrians. Proceed when the way is clear.

Flashing Red Signal at Railroad Crossing

Flashing red signals, which may be accompanied by bells, warn you that a train is coming. You should stop and wait for it to go by and check to make sure another train is not approaching on another track.

When approaching a railroad crossing that does NOT have any warning system (such as flashing lights or gates), it's important to slow down, look and listen for any sign of an oncoming train and then stop before the tracks if there is one coming. Trains are always moving much faster than they appear from a distance so drivers should never try to beat one out. Markings on the road, consisting of a white "X" and the letters "RR", alert you that you are about to cross railroad tracks and need to watch for trains, which can't stop quickly.

Flashing Yellow Signal

You must slow down and proceed with caution.

Multiple Signals

The signals are used to allow traffic to make left turns with a green light.

Lane Use Signals

The signals are used to control traffic flow by reversing lanes direction during different hours of the day. The lanes and their directions may be marked with signs and signals. You must never drive in a lane under a red "X" signal. You are

permitted to drive in a lane under a green arrow signal. A steady yellow “X” signal means a driver should move out of the lane as soon as safely possible. A flashing yellow “X” signal means that a driver is permitted to use the lane for a left turn. It is likely that you will be sharing the lane with left-turning vehicles coming from the opposite direction.

Identifying Signs by Colors and Shapes

Identify signs by shapes and colors as well as by the words, numbers, or the symbols on them.

SIGN COLORS

The color of a roadway sign can tell you at first glance what kind of information it has to offer.

Red

Stop, yield, do not enter, or wrong way

Yellow

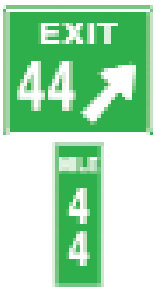
General warning of what to expect ahead, such as school or pedestrian crossings

White

Regulatory sign, such as speed limit or parking instructions

Orange
Construction and maintenance work area warning

Green
Guide information, such as distance or direction



Blue
Motorist services

Brown
Recreational and cultural interest areas

SIGN SHAPES

The shape of a traffic sign can tell you as much about the sign's message as its color. In poor visibility conditions, such as heavy fog, you may be able to make out only the shape of a sign.

Octagon: Stop

The octagonal (eight-sided) shape always means stop. You must come to a complete stop at the sign, stop line, pedestrian crosswalk or before entering an intersection.

Triangle: Yield

Slow down, or stop if necessary, and give the right of way to vehicles crossing your path.

Diamond: Warning

These signs warn you of special conditions or hazards ahead. You may have to slow down, so be ready.

Rectangle: Regulatory or Guide
Vertical signs are generally used to give instructions or tell you the law. In the horizontal position, the signs may give directions or information.

Pentagon: School and School Crossing
The pentagon (five-sided) shape warns you of school zones and marks school crossings.

Round: Railroad Warning
Black on yellow is used only to warn that there is a railroad crossing ahead.

INTERSTATE
695
TO
INTERSTATE
395
Capitol Hill

Regulatory Signs

Stop

When you come to a stop sign, you must make a complete stop at the stop line. If there is no stop line, stop before the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before the posted stop sign. Before proceeding, you must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian or bicyclist that may be in the crosswalk. After ensuring the crosswalk is clear, cautiously proceed to make sure the roadway is clear of vehicles before proceeding through the intersection.

Yield

Slow down as you approach a yield sign. Look to the left, look to the right, and then look back to the left. You must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian, bicyclist or vehicle. You may proceed when you can do so safely.

Speed Limit

These signs are used to regulate traffic. This particular sign tells you the maximum speed limit for the stretch of roadway where it is posted.

Parking

There are many signs that restrict parking.

Overhead Lane Use

These signs are used where turning movements are required or where unconventional turning movements are permitted from specific lanes at an intersection.

High Occupancy Vehicle

This sign means the lane or lanes indicated are reserved for buses and vehicles with the minimum number of occupants specified on the sign.

Sharp Right Turn

There is a sharp turn to the right in the road ahead.

Right Curve

There is a curve to the right ahead.

Sharp Right and Left Turns

The road ahead turns sharply right, then left.

Warning Traffic Signs

Most warning signs are black and yellow and most are diamond shaped.
Slow down and watch for other signs and signals that may follow.

Stop Sign Ahead

Slow down and be ready to stop at the stop sign ahead.

4-Way Stop

This sign means there are four STOP signs at the intersection. Traffic from all directions must stop. The first driver to stop is the first driver to go. Other drivers must wait their turn. You also may see 3-WAY, 5-WAY or ALL-WAY signs.

Signal Ahead

Slow down and be ready to stop at the signal ahead.

Yield Sign Ahead

Slow down and be prepared to stop at the yield sign or adjust your speed to the flow of the traffic.

Winding Road

The road ahead is winding with a series of curve or turns. Adjust your speed.

Side Road

A side road enters the highway from the right. Adjust your speed so you can see any vehicles entering or exiting from the side road.

Crossroad

Another road crosses the highway ahead. Be alert for cross traffic and regulatory signs or signals.

No Passing Pennant

The pennant-shaped, no-passing sign supplements the regulatory DO NOT PASS sign. The pennant is located on the left side of a roadway and points to beginning of a no-passing zone.

Exit Advisory Speed

The maximum safe speed for an entrance or exit.

Merge

Merging traffic from the right is just ahead.

School Crossing

School Crossing, Slow Down, Prepare to Stop, if pedestrians are present.

“T” Intersection

The roadway ends ahead. Slow down and prepare to stop or yield before turning.

Advisory Speed

This is the maximum safe speed for a certain stretch of highway and is posted under other warning signs. Slow down to the advisory speed shown.

“Y” Intersection

You must bear either right or left ahead. Slow down and stay alert to the flow of traffic.

Divided Highway Begins

Keep to the right

Merge Left

The Right Lane Ends Ahead

Divided Highway Ends Ahead

Steep Hill Ahead

Bicycle Crossing/Bike Path

Drive with Caution

Roadway Slippery When Wet, Reduce Speed

The first half hour of rain is the most hazardous.

Route Markers

Animal Crossing

The animal pictured on the sign is common in this area; watch for this species crossing the road particularly during dusk, dawn and night-time hours.

Turn Signals, Emergency Signals and Hand Signals

You must use hand signals or directional signals to show that you are about to turn. Turn signals are required when changing lanes or overtaking a vehicle. It is against the law to use your directional signals to tell drivers behind you that they can pass. Hazard lights should be used while your vehicle is stopped or disabled on the highway or shoulder during emergency situations. Bicyclists use hand signals to notify other drivers of their maneuvers.

Pedestrian Crossing

Pedestrian Crossing; Look and be prepared to stop, if pedestrians are present.

Slow Moving Vehicle

Two-Way Traffic

No-Right Turn

No U-Turn

Do Not Enter

The interstate system has route markers in the shape of a shield. The top carries the legend INTERSTATE in white letters on a red background. The bottom is blue with the route number in large white letters.

United States Numbered Routes (other than interstate routes) are marked with a sign of black numbers on a white background of the familiar U.S. shield.

State Routes are marked with a sign of black letters on a white rectangular background.

DC Route

DC 295, also known as the Anacostia Freeway, is a freeway in the District of Columbia, and currently the only numbered route in the District that is not an Interstate Highway or U.S. Highway.

Notes: