

# State of Michigan



## What Every Driver Must Know



Ruth Johnson, Secretary of State

November 2011



Dear Michigan Motorist:

There are nearly 7 million licensed drivers and 10 million registered vehicles in Michigan, which means our highways and roads are busy places. Ensuring motorists have the skills and knowledge to drive safely and responsibly is one of the best ways to remain safe on the road.

I am pleased to offer this latest edition of *What Every Driver Must Know*. In it, you will find information about driver's licenses, teens and driving, common traffic rules, signs and signals, what to do in emergencies, and much more. Whether you are a novice driver or have years of experience behind the wheel, this booklet can be a helpful guide.

Driving requires your full attention. Distractions such as cell phones, texting, tuning the radio, and eating should be avoided when you are behind the wheel. Please make sure that you and your passengers remain safe. Obey all traffic laws, make sure everyone is buckled up or in an appropriate child safety seat, and never drink and drive. Michigan is a great state with many different opportunities for travel, recreation, and fun. Please drive safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth A. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ruth Johnson

Secretary of State

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# Introduction

*What Every Driver Must Know* contains information about operating a motor vehicle safely on Michigan roads. Although this publication includes information about many Michigan traffic laws, it is not meant as a legal document or as a substitute for the Michigan Vehicle Code. Information in this publication is subject to change.

## For more information about Secretary of State services and programs:

- Visit our website at [www.Michigan.gov/sos](http://www.Michigan.gov/sos)
- Contact the Department of State Information Center at (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424)
- The official Secretary of State Twitter feed is available at [www.twitter.com/Michsos](http://www.twitter.com/Michsos)
- Visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Michigansos](http://www.facebook.com/Michigansos)

The Michigan Department of State Information Center telephone number, SOS website, and other helpful resources are also found on the back cover.

Please remember that driving is a privilege and not a right. Drivers must drive responsibly and safely, obey traffic laws, and never drink and drive. Finally, make sure that you and your passengers are properly buckled up — it's the law!

## Before you read further, consider these facts about driving in Michigan. In 2009:

- 290,978 motor vehicle crashes were reported. Deaths numbered 871 and 70,931 people were injured.
- Of all fatal crashes, 27.9 percent occurred at intersections.
- Alcohol was involved in 277 fatal crashes.
- Three out of five accidental deaths for young people ages 15 -24 were due to motor vehicle crashes.
- Accidental death for children in motor vehicle crashes routinely outpaces the next two most frequent causes: fire and drowning.
- The percentage of all pedestrian fatalities that occurred at crossings other than intersections was 30.6.
- Excessive speed was a factor in 13.2 percent of drivers in fatal crashes.

2009 Quick Fact

Michigan Traffic Crash Data — Michigan Department of State Police/Office of Highway Safety Planning

# 1 Michigan Driver's License Information

You must be licensed to operate a motor vehicle on public streets and highways. This chapter provides information about the requirements and procedures for obtaining and renewing a Michigan driver's license. The licensing procedures and requirements differ depending on an applicant's age. All applicants must meet requirements listed under General Licensing Requirements.

## Michigan Residents

To be considered a resident, you must reside in Michigan and have established that you are legally present in the state.

### New Michigan Residents

Under state law, the Department of State is prohibited from issuing an original standard driver's license or state identification card to anyone who is not a legal resident of the state.

If you have recently moved to Michigan and have a valid driver's license or state identification card from another state, these can be used in the interim until your state residency is established. Once residency is established, please visit a Secretary of State office to apply for a Michigan driver's license or state ID card.

You must also pass a vision test and pay a fee. No other test is required if you are surrendering a valid out-of-state or Canadian operator's license. An application for a Michigan driver's license other than an operator's license, such as a chauffeur's license or Commercial Driver License, may require additional testing and a background check.

The Department of State will contact your previous home state to obtain your driving record, which then becomes part of your Michigan driving record. If your previous driver's license is suspended or revoked, you must contact your previous state to clear any outstanding issues before your application for a

Michigan license will be accepted. Once your application for a Michigan license is accepted, your current out-of-state driver's license will be invalidated and returned to you because Michigan law permits drivers to hold only one valid driver's license at a time.

## General Licensing Requirements

You must meet certain requirements before a Michigan driver's license can be issued. If you are age 18 or older and have never been licensed, you are not required to take driver education to obtain a license, although it is strongly recommended.

*Teenagers under age 18 are required to successfully meet the requirements of Michigan's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) program before they can be licensed. This requirement is waived if you have had a license from another state for more than a year. For more information, please turn to the section about GDL.*

The requirements for obtaining a license will vary depending on the type of license, group designator, or endorsement.

You will not be issued a license if you have never been licensed in Michigan, any other state or country, and you have two or more convictions for moving violations on your driving record within the three years before the date you apply. To be eligible to reapply, you must wait until you have no more than one conviction on your driving record within the three years before the date you reapply.

### **If you are age 18 or older, before you can get a Michigan driver's license you must present proof of:**

- A Social Security Number: A Social Security card or other Social Security Administration (SSA) document containing your name and Social Security number or a letter of ineligibility from the SSA.
- U.S. Citizenship or Legal Presence: A certified copy of your birth certificate, a valid, unexpired U.S. passport or Certificate of Citizenship; or legal presence if not a U.S. citizen, such as a Permanent Resident Card or an Employment Authorization Card.

\*A certified copy of your birth certificate must have a raised seal and have been issued by a government unit in the U.S. or U.S. territory.

- **Identity:** A U.S. marriage license, U.S. school records, or photo ID issued by a federal or Michigan government agency.
- **Michigan Residency:** A utility bill, bank statement, paycheck stub with your employer's address, tax assessment, or professional license. At least two documents will be required.

In addition, you must:

- Pass a vision test and meet health standards set by the Secretary of State's office.
- Pass a knowledge test.
- Pay the appropriate license fee.
- Complete a minimum 30 days of practice driving on a Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP).
- Pass a driving skills test. The driving skills test will be administered by an independent testing organization approved by the Department of State.

If you have a valid driver's license from another state, the written knowledge and driving skills tests as well as the 30-day practice requirements may be waived. The Department of State will contact your previous home state to obtain your driving record, which then becomes part of your Michigan driving record.

If you meet the requirements listed on this page, you will be issued a temporary operator's permit after paying the appropriate fees. Your driver's license will be mailed to you.

In some instances, because of medical conditions or other reasons, restrictions may be placed on your driver's license. If any special licensing conditions are required, these conditions or restrictions will be printed on the driver's license.

Drivers licensed for the first time will be placed on probation for a minimum of three years. Please refer to information about Michigan's Probationary License Program in this booklet.

## **The Driver's License Process**

### **Providing Your Social Security Number**

State and federal laws require the Department of State to collect Social Security numbers to verify U.S. citizenship or legal presence and to assist in child support collection. A letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration must be presented if you do not have a Social Security number and wish to obtain a standard license or ID card. The letter can be no more than 30 days old.

All Social Security information will be verified.

For questions about Social Security or to replace a lost Social Security card, contact the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 (voice), (800) 325-0778 (TTY), or visit its website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

### **Providing Proof of Legal Presence**

A standard driver's license or state ID card will not be issued unless valid proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence in the U.S. is provided. Some of the documents that may be provided as proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence include a certified copy of your birth certificate with a raised seal that was issued by a government unit in the U.S. or U.S. territory, a valid, unexpired U.S. passport or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization, a Permanent Resident Card, or an Employment Authorization Card.

The first and last names and date of birth on the legal presence and identity documents should match. If your current legal name is different from the name on your birth certificate or legal presence document, you must show legal proof of the name change, such as an original marriage license, divorce decree, or court order.

### **Providing Proof of Identity**

You must also provide proof of identity when applying for a driver's license or state ID card. Only original documents will be accepted. Photocopies or facsimiles cannot be used. More than one document may be required.

## **Providing Proof of Residency**

Before your driver's license or state ID card application can be processed, you must present proof that you are a Michigan resident. At least two documents must be presented. Acceptable documents include a utility bill, credit card bill or account statement issued within the last 90 days, pay stub, earnings statement, mortgage, rental or lease agreement, or an insurance policy.

Residency documents in a family member's name may be used if the family relationship can be established by other forms of documented proof.

## **Physical Standards**

The Secretary of State office staff will ask you a few general health questions as part of the screening procedure. Your application may be denied pending additional medical information should there be any question about your physical condition and your ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.

## **Vision Test**

You will be given a vision test to determine if your vision meets minimum standards. If corrective lenses, such as glasses or contact lenses, are needed to pass the test, your driver's license will show you must wear them while driving. If you fail the vision test, your eye-care specialist must complete a vision statement documenting that you meet the vision standards.

A favorable vision statement means a driver's license may be issued. If the vision statement documents that you do not meet the vision standards, your driver's license application will be denied.

Sometimes special driving limitations, such as "daylight driving only," will be required based on the vision statement and other information acquired by the Department of State.

## **Knowledge Test**

If you have never been licensed, you will be given a knowledge test to determine how well you know Michigan traffic laws and safe driving practices. Applicants age 18 or older will be given this test at the Secretary of State office when applying for a Temporary Instruction Permit. Teens in the Graduated

Driver Licensing program must pass a knowledge test as a part of the Segment 1 driver education class.

If you are required to take a knowledge test for your original operator's or chauffeur's license, arrive at the Secretary of State office at least one hour before closing to allow sufficient time to complete the test.

If you have difficulty speaking or reading English, branch office staff will provide a list of available foreign language interpreters. Knowledge tests are also available in many languages. Please contact the Department of State Information Center at (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424) in advance to obtain a list of interpreters. Hearing-impaired customers can request a sign language interpreter in advance of a branch office visit or may use an interpreter they know.

### **Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP)**

A Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP) allows you to practice driving with a licensed adult for up to 180 days. A TIP is issued if you are age 18 or older and:

- You have never been licensed.
- Your license expired more than four years ago.
- You hold an expired out-of-country driver's license from a country other than Germany or Canada.

If your driver's license is expired for less than four years, a TIP may not be required.

Before obtaining a TIP, you must present proof of a valid Social Security number or a letter of ineligibility, U.S. citizenship or legal presence in the U.S., identity, and Michigan residency. You must also pass vision, written knowledge, and road sign tests. You must practice driving with a licensed adult for at least 30 days before you are eligible to apply for a Michigan driver's license. The 30-day practice period is waived if you have previously had a driver's license. You must pass a driving skills test before a driver's license will be issued.

### **Driving Skills Test**

You will need to take a driving skills test if:

- You are applying for a Level 2 License under Graduated Driver Licensing.

- You are age 18 or older, have never been licensed and are applying for an original driver's license.
- Your last driver's license has been expired for more than four years.
- You hold a driver's license from a country other than Germany or Canada.

The driving skills test may be waived if you are converting a driver's license issued by another state, Canada, or Germany.

Eligibility requirements for taking a driving skills test differ depending on your age.

If you are under age 18, you must have:

- Completed Segment 2 of Graduated Driver Licensing.
- Logged at least 50 hours of supervised driving, including 10 hours at night.
- Held a Level 1 License for at least six months.
- Not had any convictions, civil infractions, license suspensions or at-fault crashes during the 90-day period immediately preceding your driving skills test and application for your Level 2 License.

If you are age 18 or older, you must:

- First obtain a Temporary Instruction Permit before taking a driving skills test. You may be required to complete a 30-day practice period.

Driving skills tests are administered by independent third-party testing organizations approved by the Department of State. A list of approved third-party testing organizations is available at all Secretary of State offices and from the Department of State website. Be sure to ask the third-party testing organization you choose about its pricing policies before scheduling your test. The Department of State does not set driving skills test fees or pricing policies.

Applicants who are hearing impaired or not fluent in English may use an interpreter during the driving skills test. (Interpreters are not allowed during the skills testing for a commercial

driver's license.) The interpreter will be required to present photo identification to the examiner and may only interpret the instructions as the examiner gives them. Lists of approved sign language and foreign language interpreters are available through the department. Applicants may also bring their own interpreters. For more information, please call (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424).

The first part of the driving skills test requires you to pass a series of off-street, closed-course maneuvers, followed by an on-road driving skills test. After passing the first part, you must then pass an on-road driving test to receive your driving skills certificate. The driving skills test includes urban, expressway, rural highway, and residential driving.

Complete study information is provided in the Department of State publication *Driving Skills Test Study Guide* available at any Secretary of State office, or on the Department of State website. You should review this study guide thoroughly before taking the driving skills test.

## **Restricted License Due to Disability or Illness**

When applying for an original or renewal driver's license, you may be requested to provide a Physician's Statement of Examination. A vision statement may be requested in some cases. A physician licensed in Michigan or another state must complete the physician's statement. A physician's statement is required if the Department of State has reason to believe you have had a fainting spell, blackout, seizure, or other loss of consciousness in the preceding six months. For a chauffeur or commercial driver's license, you must not have had any blackouts, fainting spells, or seizures within the last 12 months.

A physician's statement is also needed for any physical or mental infirmity, impairment, disability, or disease that may affect your ability to drive safely. A physician must accurately describe your condition, including any disability or illness, and any medications you have been taking. The form must be returned within 45 days to the Michigan Department of State, Lansing, Michigan 48918-1601. Department of State Traffic Safety Division will review the physician's statement to determine if you meet Michigan's physical and mental standards.

- If a physician's statement does not indicate a physical or mental impairment is present, and if all other standards are met, an unrestricted driver's license may be issued.
- If a physician's statement indicates a serious physical or mental condition at the time you renew your driver's license, you will be required to attend a driver re-examination. The re-examination will evaluate your ability to operate a motor vehicle safely. Every effort will be made to help you keep your driver's license and continue to drive safely. If you have such a condition and are renewing your license, please begin the renewal process several weeks before your license expires to allow adequate time for processing.
- If a restricted driver's license is issued because of a disability or illness, a periodic driver re-examination may be required.

## Changing Information on Your License

Make sure your driver's license shows your correct name and residential address. If you need to change your name on your driver's license, you must first change your name with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Present your proof of name change along with your valid driver's license to the SSA. Allow at least three business days for the Social Security Administration website to update, before visiting a Secretary of State office. At the Secretary of State's office, present your license and proof of the name change, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or legal name change document. The name change will be processed and a new driver's license will be issued for a fee.

Michigan law requires that your driver's license address correspond to your residence and match the address on your voter identification card. You may submit a change of address either at a Secretary of State office or by mail. If you are submitting a change of address at a branch office, bring your driver's license. Your driver's license will be updated with your new address. There is no charge for this service.

You may also submit a change of address by mail. Change-of-address forms are available on the Department of State website. Complete the form and mail it to the address provided.

When you submit a change of address, the procedures for updating your voter registration address will also be explained. Your driver's license may be suspended or revoked if you fail to change your address with the Department of State.

## **The Decision to Give Up Driving**

Choosing to give up your privilege to drive can be a difficult decision. When you finally decide to "leave the driving to someone else," return your driver's license to a Secretary of State office, where you may obtain a state identification (ID) card.

A state ID card is used in place of the driver's license for identification purposes. For complete information about obtaining a state ID card, visit our website.

## **Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)**

Under Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), teen drivers under age 18 must complete two segments of driver education instruction and meet the requirements for each of the three GDL licensing levels. Driving privileges are increased at each new licensing level as the teen driver gains greater skill and confidence. Graduated Driver Licensing requirements, driving privileges, and driver education requirements are outlined on pages 17-21. Parents or legal guardians of teen drivers will find additional information in the booklet *Michigan's Graduated Driver Licensing: A Guide for Parents*. This publication is available on the Department of State website, at Secretary of State offices by request, and is distributed by driver education providers.

## **Driver Education Certification**

Teens may enroll in driver education at age 14 years, 8 months. To participate, students must meet Michigan's physical and mental health standards for operating a vehicle safely. The driver education component of Graduated Driver Licensing consists of two segments of instruction. These segments provide information about traffic safety, basic vehicle operation, and laws and regulations, as well as on-the-road driving experience. For additional information about GDL, please visit the Department of State website.

## Parental Consent and Support

The Department of State is working with parents to help ensure teen drivers become safe and courteous drivers. As a parent or legal guardian, you are often the best judge of your teen driver's progress, skill, and maturity behind the wheel. Involvement from you is crucial to the coaching, learning, and driving experience of your teen driver so he or she becomes a safe driver. Although Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) requires teens to complete 50 hours of supervised driving, you are encouraged to provide supervision beyond this minimum.

The Department of State will notify you by letter if your teen driver is convicted of violating the terms of his or her GDL license or failing to display a valid GDL license.

You also have the legal right to request that your teen be held at a certain GDL level, dropped back a level, or have all driving privileges canceled if you believe your teen is not ready to handle certain driving responsibilities. Forms for changing the status of your teen's GDL driving privileges are available at any Secretary of State office. GDL ends for all teens at age 18.

## Graduated Driver Licensing Summary

### Driver Education—Segment 1

Graduated Driver Licensing requires drivers under age 18 to complete two segments of driver education. Segment 1 must include:

- 24 hours of in-class instruction.
- Six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction.
- Four hours of observation time.

**A teen must be 14 years, 8 months old to enroll in a Segment 1 driver education course.**

Once a teen successfully completes Segment 1, a green Michigan Department of State Segment 1 Certificate of Completion is issued by the driver education provider. The certificate of completion is not a permit to drive and may not be used as a driver's license. The certificate of completion, along with identification and proof of the teen's Social Security number, must be presented when applying for the Level 1 License at a Secretary of State office.

## Level 1 License

After the driver education instructor issues the **green** Segment 1 certificate, the teen and parent or legal guardian should go to a Secretary of State office to apply for a Level 1 License without delay. The green Segment 1 certificate is **not** a license to drive. Any delay in obtaining the Level 1 License may adversely affect a teen's advancement through the GDL program.

A teen must be at least 14 years, 9 months old to apply for the Level 1 License. A parent or legal guardian must accompany the teen to sign the application. The parent or legal guardian must sign the application or the teen driver will not be issued a Level 1 License. Signing indicates parental/legal guardian approval for licensing of a minor.

The Level 1 License is a paper license. No photograph will be taken until the Level 2 License is issued.

**To obtain a Level 1 License, the teen and a parent or legal guardian must go to a Secretary of State office and present proof of:**

- A Social Security Number: Such as the teen's Social Security card, W-2 form or a pay stub, OR a letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration.
- U.S. Citizenship or Legal Presence: Such as the teen's certified birth certificate or valid U.S. passport, a Permanent Resident Card, or an Employment Authorization Card.
- Identity: Such as the teen's driver education certificate, school record or yearbook.
- Michigan Residency: Such as the teen's high school report card or bank statement. At least two documents will be required.
- A green Michigan Department of State Segment 1 Certificate of Completion.

The teen must meet the Department of State vision and health standards. A parent or legal guardian must be present to sign the Level 1 License application, granting approval.

**With a Level 1 License, the teen driver may only drive while accompanied by a licensed parent, legal guardian, or designated adult age 21 or older.**

## **Driver Education—Segment 2**

Segment 2 of driver education consists of six hours of classroom instruction. Driver education instructors may also provide some on-the-road driving instruction, although it is not required.

**To enroll in a Segment 2 driver education course, the teen must have:**

- Held a valid Level 1 License for at least three consecutive months.
- Completed at least 30 of the mandatory 50 hours of parent-teen driving, which includes two of the 10 hours of nighttime driving.

When the teen successfully completes Segment 2, a white Michigan Department of State Segment 2 Certificate of Completion will be issued by the driver education instructor. This certificate will be required to apply for the Level 2 License.

## **Level 2 License**

A teen will advance from a Level 1 License to a Level 2 License if he or she meets all of the requirements, including a driving skills test. Teens must complete both Segment 1 and Segment 2 of the driver education course to qualify for a Level 2 License and must have held a Level 1 License for at least six months.

Teens cannot have a moving violation resulting in a conviction or civil infraction determination, or been involved in an at-fault crash during the 90-day period immediately preceding application. The Level 2 License requires the teen to be photographed.

**To obtain a Level 2 License, teens and their parent or legal guardian must go to a Secretary of State office and present proof of:**

- Age – the teen must be at least 16 years old. (The Level 1 License is acceptable proof.)

- Social Security Number: Such as the teen’s Social Security card or a letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration.
- U.S. citizenship or Legal Presence: Such as the teen’s certified birth certificate or valid U.S. passport, a Permanent Resident Card, or an Employment Authorization Card.
- Identity: Such as the teen’s driver education certificate, school record or yearbook.
- Michigan Residency: Such as the teen’s high school report card or bank statement. At least two documents will be required.
- The skills test certificate, verifying the teen has passed a driving skills test given by a third-party testing organization approved by the Department of State.
- Proof that the teen has had a Level 1 License for at least six months. (If the Level 1 License has been lost, please refer to the “Duplicate License” section in this chapter for information about replacing a lost license.)
- The white Michigan Department of State Segment 2 Certificate of Completion.
- A log or other record documenting the teen’s 50 hours of supervised driving with a licensed parent, legal guardian, or designated adult age 21 or older. Graduated Driver Licensing requires 10 of the 50 hours of supervised driving to be completed at night.

A teen with a Level 2 License:

**1.) Shall not operate a motor vehicle between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. except when:**

- Driving to or from or in the course of employment;
- Driving to or from an authorized activity (see below); or
- Accompanied by a parent or legal guardian or a licensed driver age 21 or older designated by the parent or legal guardian.

**2.) Shall not operate a motor vehicle at any time with more than one passenger in the vehicle who is less than 21 years old except:**

- When the additional passengers are immediate family members;
- When driving to or from or in the course of employment;
- While going to or from an authorized activity (see below); or
- When accompanied by a parent or legal guardian or a licensed driver age 21 years or older designated by the parent or legal guardian.

Authorized activity means any of the following:

- A school or a school-sanctioned event or activity. School means a public or private school, including a home school.
- A sporting event or activity, or extracurricular event or activity, that is not school-sanctioned but is part of an official sports league or association or an official extracurricular club, or is paid for as a service offered by a business specializing in those events or activities or training for those events or activities.
- A class or program of vocational instruction offered by a college, community college, nonprofit association, or unit of government, or by a business specializing in vocational training.
- An event or activity sponsored by a religious organization that is tax-exempt under federal law.
- Transporting an individual in need of immediate emergency care or personal protection to a health care professional, hospital, police station, domestic violence shelter, or public safety location.

### **Level 3 License**

A teen will automatically advance to a Level 3 License if he or she is age 17, meets all driving requirements, and has parental

authorization. This authorization is granted when the parent or legal guardian signs for the teen's Level 2 License. If the parent does not authorize automatic advancement to a Level 3 License, the teen will remain at Level 2 until the parent accompanies the teen to a Secretary of State office and grants authorization, or until the teen turns age 18.

If the parent has authorized the teen to automatically advance to a Level 3 License and the teen has successfully met all licensing requirements, the Level 3 License will be automatically mailed to the teen.

### **To obtain a Level 3 License, the teen must:**

- Be at least age 17.
- Have driven at Level 2 for at least six months.
- Have completed 12 consecutive months of driving without a moving violation, an at-fault crash that resulted in a moving violation, a license suspension, or a violation of a Graduated Driver License restriction.

A Level 3 License grants full driving privileges. Graduated Driver Licensing ends for all teens at age 18.

## **Probationary Program**

New drivers, including teen drivers under Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL), are placed on probation for a minimum of three years. The probationary period is a way for the Department of State to monitor the driving performance of new drivers. Probation is a separate program from GDL, but works like GDL to encourage new drivers to reduce their crash risk and drive safely.

## **Traffic Violations While on Probation**

Each traffic violation posted on your driving record during probation will result in a contact by the Department of State. If your driving record shows unsafe driving behavior, including speeding, stop sign violations, and crashes, you may be required to undergo a driver assessment re-examination. At a driver assessment re-examination, a restriction, suspension, or combination of both may be imposed on your license.

Probationary licensing controls will also extend the time a young driver holds a Graduated Driver Licensing Level 1 or 2 License. Teen drivers on probation may face a re-examination, which could result in license restrictions or suspension, if cell phone use was found to be a contributing factor in a crash or traffic violation. The purpose of probationary licensing controls is to reduce the risk of a traffic crash and encourage safe driving.

## **Ending Probation**

To complete probation, you must drive the last 10 months of your probationary period without receiving any tickets or driver's license suspensions, or causing any crashes. Failure to do so will automatically extend your probation until you can demonstrate you are a safe driver by remaining violation and crash free for a 10-month period.

The first two years after probation are called post probation. You are subject to a driver re-examination during this time if you have nine or more points and an alcohol-related ticket or crash, or other at-fault crash.

Points placed on your driving record during probation or post probation are not automatically erased when probation and post probation end. Points remain on your driving record for two years from the conviction date. If you have 12 or more points on your driving record, you will be required to attend a driver assessment re-examination, regardless of whether those points were issued during probation or post probation.

For additional information about probation, visit the Department of State website.

## **Other Licenses and Endorsements**

Most Michigan drivers will only need an operator's license. However, professions such as taxi driver, school bus driver, or commercial truck driver require special licensing and endorsements.

### **Chauffeur's License**

You must be at least age 16, have completed driver education, and passed a chauffeur's license knowledge test before a chauffeur's license can be issued. A chauffeur's license is required if you:

- Are employed for the principal purpose of operating a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or more.
- Operate a motor vehicle as a carrier of passengers or as a common or contract carrier of property.
- Operate a bus, school bus, taxi, or limousine.

Drivers operating single vehicles or vehicles in combination with a GVWR or Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) of 10,000 pounds or more must also meet Michigan's Commercial Driver License (CDL) requirements. Drivers must be at least age 18 to drive in Michigan and at least age 21 to drive across state lines or to transport hazardous materials in amounts that require the vehicle to be placarded. Drivers must also have the appropriate medical card or medical waiver. If a CDL group designator or endorsement is required, it will be added to the chauffeur's license.

Certain operations are exempt from requiring a chauffeur's license, including operating a motor vehicle for a volunteer program when you only receive reimbursement for the vehicle's operating costs; operating a motor home for personal use; or, if you are a parent, shuttling students to and from school and school-related events. For more information, please refer to the brochure *Your Michigan Chauffeur License* available at Secretary of State offices or from the Department of State website.

## **Commercial Driver License**

Before you can operate commercial motor vehicles of the types listed below, you must be at least age 18, have been suspension free for 36 months before the date of application, and have the appropriate Michigan Commercial Driver License (CDL) group designation on your driver's license. Drivers between ages 18 and 21 can operate a commercial vehicle only in Michigan. You must be at least age 21 to drive a vehicle across state lines or to transport hazardous materials in amounts that require the vehicle to be placarded. A commercial vehicle endorsement will be required in addition to a group designation when operating double trailers, tank vehicles, vehicles carrying hazardous materials, commercial buses, and school buses.

Drivers applying for or renewing a standard CDL with a hazardous materials endorsement must provide proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence and undergo federal background and fingerprint checks. For more information about the hazardous materials endorsement requirements, visit the department's website or refer to the *Michigan Commercial Driver License Manual*.

You must provide proof of your Social Security number and possess the appropriate medical card or medical waiver. Knowledge, vision, and skills tests are also required. You will need a CDL with the proper group designation to operate the following vehicles:

### **Group A:**

- Combination vehicles that tow trailers or other vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,001 pounds or more when the gross combination weight rating is 26,001 pounds or more.

Unless certain restrictions or additional endorsements apply, the Group A designation allows the operation of Group B and Group C vehicles.

### **Group B:**

- A vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more.
- May tow trailers or other vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or less.

Unless certain restrictions or additional endorsements apply, the Group B designation allows the operation of Group C vehicles.

### **Group C:**

- Vehicles designed to transport 16 or more persons (including the driver) or that carry or tow hazardous materials in amounts requiring placards (and the HazMat endorsement) that fall under the following GVWR:
  - Less than 26,001 pounds.
  - Less than 26,001 pounds towing trailers or other vehicles.

## CDL Temporary Instruction Permit

A CDL Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP) allows you to practice driving only under the supervision of a CDL driver licensed with the appropriate group designation for the type of commercial vehicle you are operating. A CDL TIP may be obtained if you have been suspension free for the 36 months before making an application and after passing all the required knowledge tests. A CDL TIP is valid for 180 days from the date of issue. There is no minimum time you must have a CDL TIP before taking the skills tests.

All CDL applicants must show a valid Michigan operator or chauffeur photo driver's license, along with the appropriate CDL TIP before taking their CDL skills test. If the applicant is converting to a chauffeur-based driver's license, a "clipped" Michigan operator photo driver's license with the temporary chauffeur's permit is acceptable.

All out-of-state CDL applicants must wait until they receive their Michigan operator or chauffeur photo driver's license to take the CDL skills test. Skills tests are administered by third-party testing organizations—public or private entities authorized by the Department of State. A list of approved third-party testing organizations is available at any Secretary of State office or from the Department of State website.

## Additional CDL Information

Contact a Secretary of State office for information about specific CDL exceptions for active duty military (including the National Guard), firefighters, police officers, and farmers. Applicants may request a copy of the *Michigan Commercial Driver License Manual* from any Secretary of State office or download a copy from the Department of State website. The CDL manual contains all the information needed to study for your CDL written and skills tests.

For information about other commercial driver qualifications, including the physical/medical requirements contact:

## Interstate Operation

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  
315 W. Allegan St., Room 205  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 377-1866  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

## **Intrastate Operation**

Michigan Center for Truck Safety  
Suite 2  
1131 Centennial Way  
Lansing, MI 48917  
(800) 682-4682 (Lansing office)  
(800) 469-7364 (Upper Peninsula office)  
[www.truckingsafety.org](http://www.truckingsafety.org)

## **Trucks and Commercial Buses**

Michigan Trucking Association  
1131 Centennial Way  
Lansing, MI 48917  
(517) 321-1951  
[www.mitrucking.org](http://www.mitrucking.org)

## **School Buses**

Michigan Department of Education  
Grants Coordination and School Support  
P.O. Box 30008  
Lansing, MI 48909  
(517) 373-1806  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

## **Moped License**

If you have a valid operator's or chauffeur's license, you are allowed to operate a moped on public roadways. If you do not have a valid operator's or chauffeur's license and are at least age 15, you may apply for a moped license at a Secretary of State office. You are not eligible for a moped license if your operator's or chauffeur's license is suspended, revoked, or denied. For more information, obtain a copy of the brochure *Riding A Moped Safely* at a Secretary of State office or from the Department of State website.

## **Motorcycle Endorsement**

To operate a motorcycle on public roads, you must have a valid Michigan driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement.

The fee for the motorcycle endorsement is added to your driver's license fee.

To obtain a motorcycle endorsement you must:

- Pass a motorcycle knowledge test at a Secretary of State office.
- Complete a motorcycle safety course approved by the Michigan Department of State OR pass a motorcycle skills test administered by a third-party testing organization approved by the Department of State.
- If you fail the skills test twice, you must present proof of passing an approved motorcycle safety course.
- If you are age 16 or 17, you are required to complete a motorcycle safety course.

A motorcycle Temporary Instruction Permit (TIP) is issued if you are at least age 16 and hold a valid Michigan Graduated Driver License Level 2 or Level 3. You must also pass a written test and pay a fee to obtain a motorcycle TIP. Applicants ages 16 and 17 must present proof of enrollment in, or completion of, a motorcycle safety course. This requirement may be waived if you have a valid license or endorsement to operate a motorcycle from another state.

A motorcycle TIP is valid for 180 days. When using a motorcycle TIP, you must be under the constant visual supervision of a licensed motorcycle operator at least age 18. While using a motorcycle TIP, you may not carry passengers or operate your motorcycle at night.

For more information about motorcycle safety classes, motorcycle endorsements, or third-party testing organizations, obtain a copy of the *Michigan Motorcycle Operator Manual* from a Secretary of State office or visit the Department of State website.

## **Recreational Double R Endorsement**

A “recreational double” is a pickup truck pulling a fifth-wheel trailer designed for recreational living purposes, with a second trailer attached to the rear of the fifth-wheel trailer. The pickup

truck must have a towing rate equal to, or greater than, the total weight being towed. The total length of the combination cannot exceed 65 feet.

To operate a recreational double, you must have an “R” endorsement on your driver’s license. Anyone age 18 or older with a valid driver’s license may apply for this endorsement at a Secretary of State office. A knowledge test is required. There is no skills test.

Drivers holding a Group “A” CDL with a “T” double trailers endorsement can operate a recreational double without the “R” endorsement. (Triple trailers are not permitted in Michigan.) For more information, obtain a copy of the brochure *A Recreational Double Endorsement* at a Secretary of State office or visit the Department of State website.

## **Renewing Your Michigan Driver’s License**

### **The Renewal Process**

A driver’s license is usually valid for four years and expires on your birthday in the year shown on the license’s upper right corner. If you are under age 21, your driver’s license expires on your 21st birthday.

To remind you to renew your driver’s license, the Department of State sends a renewal notice about 45 days before expiration. The renewal notice is sent to the address listed on department records. Do not let your driver’s license expire unless you will no longer be driving. Driving without a valid license is illegal.

If you renew your operator’s license after its expiration date, you will pay a late fee in addition to the regular renewal fee.

A driver’s license will not be renewed if your driving record shows six or more unpaid parking tickets, or if your driver’s license has been suspended or revoked. A renewal application may also be denied if you have failed to provide a valid Social Security number or letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration and proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence.

When renewing your driver’s license at a Secretary of State office, a vision screening will be given. A new photograph will also be taken.

Cash, checks, and money orders are accepted at all Secretary of State offices. PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers also accept Discover and MasterCard at the counter – a nominal service fee

is charged. Find the Secretary of State office nearest you by using the department’s Branch Office Locator on its website.

## **Convenient Renewal by Mail**

You are eligible to renew your driver’s license by mail if your last renewal was completed at a Secretary of State office, the Department of State has your verified Social Security number, you do not hold a Commercial Driver License, and you are not listed on the sex offender registry. If your renewal notice states “You cannot renew your license by mail,” you must renew at a Secretary of State office.

Renewal by mail is easy. Payment must be made by check, money order, or Discover, Visa, or MasterCard. To register to vote, or update a voter registration, complete and return the form enclosed with your renewal application.

After renewing by mail, your next driver’s license renewal must be completed at a Secretary of State office.

If your physical or mental condition has changed and affects your ability to drive since you last renewed, you must renew your license in person at a Secretary of State office. Your physician may have to complete a Physician’s Statement of Examination form attesting to the impact your condition has on your driving ability. This form is available on the Department of State website. Plan to renew at least two weeks before your current license expires. If your operator’s license is expired at the time you renew, you will be assessed a late fee in addition to the regular renewal fee.

If you have a Commercial Driver License (CDL), you cannot renew by mail. You must go to a Secretary of State office for a vision test and to have your eligibility checked through state and national driver records. A hazardous materials endorsement may not be renewed or transferred from another state until you successfully complete federal background record and fingerprint checks. Please visit the Department of State website for more information, including a list of agencies providing the fingerprint check.

Motorists with a CDL whose driving privilege has been suspended, revoked, canceled, or denied in Michigan or any other state will not be able to renew their CDL until the matter is resolved.

## Special Renewals

**Duplicate License:** If your driver's license has been lost, destroyed, mutilated, or is illegible, apply for a duplicate at a Secretary of State office. Identification documents are required to issue a replacement license, such as certified birth certificates, U.S. or Canadian passports, marriage licenses, and photo identification cards issued by a Michigan governmental agency. Only original or certified documents will be accepted. Photocopies and facsimiles are not adequate proof. If your license will expire within a year, your application for a duplicate license will be processed as a renewal.

**Early Renewals:** A driver's license may be renewed up to 12 months early at a Secretary of State office if you are unable to renew it on time for any reason.

**Out-of-State Renewal by Mail:** If you are a Michigan resident temporarily residing out of state and cannot return to Michigan to renew your driver's license, you may renew it by mail or choose to get a special driving permit, depending on the circumstances of your particular situation.

The permit is valid for up to 180 days after your license expires or for two weeks upon your return to Michigan, whichever comes first. However, you are advised to immediately renew your driver's license at a Secretary of State office after returning home.

To request a special driving permit application form, please provide the following information in writing: your first, middle, and last names; date of birth; driver's license number; home and out of-state addresses; and length of time expected to be out of Michigan. Mail your request to the Department of State at:

**Michigan Department of State  
Out-of-State Resident Services  
7064 Crowner Drive  
Lansing, Michigan 48918-1502  
Telephone: (517) 322-1473**

**License Lost While Out of State:** If you are out of state and lose your driver's license, you may request a temporary extension permit good for 180 days that allows you to drive back to Michigan. As soon as you return, you should immediately

apply for a new driver's license at a Secretary of State office.

To request the special driving permit, please follow the instructions for obtaining a permit under Out-of-State Renewal by Mail.

**Military Personnel and Dependents:** If your Michigan driver's license expires while you are on active duty in the U.S. military, it remains valid until 30 days from the date of your next leave, or until 30 days after your discharge, whichever comes first. Military personnel driving on an expired license should carry their active duty identification card, leave, or discharge papers.

If you are on duty out of state, you may renew your driver's license using out-of-state renewal by mail procedures.

Michigan residents in the military who are stationed in Michigan must renew their driver's license using the same procedures in-state drivers follow. The driver's license of a military dependent is not granted the extension allowed for military personnel. However, a dependent's license may be renewed by mail if it was not renewed by mail the last time.

A late fee is not collected when military personnel stationed out of state on active duty renew their Michigan operator's license. The expired operator's licenses of civilians and military dependents are subject to a late fee upon renewal.

A late fee is not collected when military personnel stationed out of state on active duty renew their Michigan operator's license. The expired operator's licenses of civilians and military dependents are subject to a late fee upon renewal.

## **Driving in a Foreign Country**

For most travelers planning a vacation or business trip abroad, a Michigan driver's license or a Michigan driver's license with an International Driving Permit is sufficient to drive in a foreign country. AAA and the National Automobile Club (NAC), an affiliate of the American Automobile Touring Alliance, are the two organizations authorized by the U.S. Department of State to issue International Driving Permits.

To obtain an International Driving Permit, you must be at least 18 years old and have a valid driver's license. International Driving Permits are valid for one year and accepted in more than 150 countries. They are not a substitute driver's license, but a

supplemental document providing a translation of your driver's license information. International Driving Permits are not valid in the country that issued them. Contact your local AAA branch office or visit the NAC website at [www.nationalautoclub.com](http://www.nationalautoclub.com) and click on Sitemap for more information.

## **Obtaining a German Driver's License**

If you plan to live in Germany for one year or more, you may take advantage of the driver's license reciprocity agreement Michigan has with Germany. The reciprocity agreement allows Michigan residents to waive many or all of the requirements for obtaining a German driver's license.

To obtain a German driver's license, submit the following to the American Embassy in Germany:

- Official identification such as an identity card, passport, or local residency certificate.
- A recent photograph.
- Your Michigan driver's license translated into German.
- A statement written and signed by you stating your Michigan driver's license is valid.

If you wish to obtain a driver's license issued in a country that does not have a reciprocity agreement with Michigan, you must fulfill all of that country's requirements before the license will be issued.

## 2 Voter Registration, Organ Donation, and State Identification Cards

The Department of State oversees many areas involving traffic safety issues, automobile and other vehicle registrations, and licensing issues. This chapter provides information about several programs not directly related to motor vehicles, such as voter registration and organ donor programs.

### Voter Registration Information

You must be registered to vote to participate in local, state and federal elections. Eligible residents may register at a Secretary of State office.

If you are applying for, renewing, or updating information on your driver's license or state ID card, you also will be provided with an opportunity to register to vote.

To register to vote you must be:

- A U.S. citizen.
- At least 18 years old on or before election day.
- A resident of Michigan and the city or township where you wish to register to vote.

In addition to Secretary of State offices, you may register by mail or at your local county, city, or township clerk's office. You must register at least 30 days before the election. If you move within your city or township, you must change the address on your voter registration. If you move to another city or township, you must register to vote in that jurisdiction to remain eligible to vote.

The Department of State will enclose a voter registration application with your renewal notice if you are eligible to renew your driver's license by mail. To register, fill out the voter

registration form and send it with your driver's license renewal form. If you are already registered and your address has not changed, you do not need to mail the voter registration form supplied with your driver's license renewal notice.

Michigan's mail-in voter registration form may also be printed from the Department of State website.

If the address you provide on a voter registration application does not match the residential address on file with the Secretary of State, your driver's license or state ID card will be updated to match your voter registration.

## **Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donor Program**

Michigan residents have the opportunity to make a profound impact on the well-being of others by joining the Michigan Organ Donor Registry. Adding your name to the state registry of people willing to donate their organs, eyes, and tissue will be the first step toward someday becoming a hero.

It is critical that you give serious consideration to the question of donation because it truly is a matter of life and death. About 3,000 very ill people in Michigan are waiting for an organ transplant to save their lives. Tragically, some will die before an organ becomes available. Thousands more are waiting for the gifts of sight and mobility offered through cornea and tissue donations.

Donation and transplantation are modern-day miracles. Donors are able to give their lungs, kidneys, heart, liver, pancreas, and sometimes intestines, to patients whose lives will be tragically cut short without a transplant. Tissue donors help people with severe injuries recover and experience a better quality of life. Corneas help the blind, or nearly blind, to see again.

Everyone is a potential donor regardless of age or medical conditions. Donors have ranged in age from newborns to people older than 100 years. Transplant doctors evaluate all potential donors and then decide what can be used to help others.

Donation is free, it does not interfere with open-casket memorials and, for most people, it is an opportunity to help others in desperate need with a priceless gift that saves and enhances lives. All major religions approve of organ donation (or leave the decision up to the individual); most view it as a person's final act of compassion for others.

When you join the donor registry, you receive a red heart emblem for the front of your license, indicating your decision that you want to help others through donation. It is always a good idea to share your decision with your family and to explain why it is important to you.

For more information about organ, tissue, and eye donation, go to the Department of State website at [www.Michigan.gov/sos](http://www.Michigan.gov/sos) or contact:

**Gift of Life Michigan**

**(800) 482-4881; [www.giftoflifemichigan.org](http://www.giftoflifemichigan.org)**

**Michigan Eye-Bank**

**(800) 247-7250; [www.michiganeyebank.org](http://www.michiganeyebank.org)**

## **State Identification Cards**

A state identification (ID) card can be issued to any eligible resident, regardless of age. You may not have a state ID card and a Michigan driver's license unless your license has been restricted, suspended, or revoked.

You will need to provide proof of your citizenship or legal presence, identity, residency and Social Security number (or present a letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration).

Your state ID card expires four years from your last birthday and may be renewed by mail. Under Michigan law, a state ID card is as valid as a driver's license for identification purposes.

For more information about obtaining a state ID card, please visit our website.

# 3 Your Michigan Driving Record

Michigan maintains a driving record for every driver. The driving record contains information the Department of State is required to maintain, such as moving violations, traffic crashes, and alcohol-related convictions. Drivers with unsatisfactory records may be required to attend a driver re-examination, face possible loss of their license, and pay reinstatement fees. Safe drivers benefit by having a reduced risk of traffic crashes and serious injury, as well as lower insurance rates. Driving safely in Michigan matters.

## Your Driving Record

Driving is a privilege. Once you obtain a driver's license, you must continually show that you have the skill and knowledge to drive safely, or your driver's license may be restricted, suspended, or revoked. The Department of State has access to accident information reported by law enforcement as well as for moving violations and certain drug crimes from the courts. Your driving record will include information about civil or criminal moving violations and at-fault crashes. The Department of State is also notified of any traffic crashes, convictions, and findings of responsibility in other states. Convictions from other states will appear on your Michigan driving record along with any points assessed according to Michigan's point system. You may purchase a copy of your own driving record for \$8 at any Secretary of State office.

Most convictions stay on your driving record for at least seven years. Certain convictions and licensing actions stay on your driving record for at least 10 years. A conviction for a fatality remains on your driving record permanently. As of Oct. 31, 2010, a drunken or drugged driving conviction remains on your driving record permanently.

Under Michigan's Driver Privacy Protection acts, personal information on your driving record is private and is not released

to the general public unless there is a permissible use as prescribed by law. Personal information includes your name, address, driver's license number, and similar information. Some examples of permissible uses include insurance rating, automobile recalls, and driver verification for car rental companies.

## Traffic Tickets

When a uniformed law enforcement officer driving an official police vehicle signals you to stop, you must pull out of traffic and stop safely as soon as possible. The officer may stop you for a variety of reasons. For example, your vehicle may have defective equipment or match the description of a stolen vehicle, or the officer may have an emergency message for you or may believe you committed a traffic violation. You must be able to show your driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance to the officer.

## Michigan's Point System

Under Michigan law, some traffic violations are civil infractions, while others are misdemeanors or felonies. Depending on the violation and how it is resolved, you may be fined, referred to a special program or, in the most serious situations, sent to jail. In most cases, if you do not take care of a traffic ticket, your driver's license will be suspended. Any traffic tickets for moving violations received while your license is suspended will result in additional suspensions on your driving record and payment of a reinstatement fee.

Each time you are convicted of a traffic violation, you will have to pay certain court fines and costs. In addition, points may be posted to your driving record.

Under Michigan's point system, each traffic violation has a point value, which is set by law in the *Michigan Vehicle Code*. Points are placed on your driving record only after you have been convicted or found guilty of, or responsible for, a moving violation. Points placed on your driving record remain there for two years from the date of conviction. The system used to post points to your driving record is separate from the points assigned by an insurance company to determine your rate. If you believe there are extenuating circumstances for the ticket you received, these must be submitted when you appear in court.

The Department of State cannot set aside a court conviction. The following shows the points for some traffic violations.

### **Points for Some Traffic Convictions\***

#### **Six Points:**

- Manslaughter, negligent homicide, or other felony involving use of a motor vehicle.
- Operating while intoxicated or operating with any presence of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine.
- Failing to stop and give identification at the scene of a crash.
- Reckless driving.
- Refusal to take a chemical test.
- Fleeing or eluding a police officer.
- Failure to yield causing death or injury of emergency responder, construction worker, or person operating implements of animal husbandry.
- Moving violation causing injury or death.

#### **Four Points:**

- Drag racing.
- Impaired driving.
- Under age 21 with any bodily alcohol content.
- 16 mph or more over the legal speed limit.
- Failure to yield/show due caution for emergency vehicles.
- Moving violation resulting in an at-fault collision.

#### **Three Points:**

- Careless driving.
- Disobeying a traffic signal or stop sign or improper passing.
- 11 through 15 mph over the legal speed limit.

- Failure to stop at railroad crossing.
- Failure to stop for a school bus or for disobeying a school crossing guard.

### **Two Points:**

- 10 mph or less over the legal speed limit.
- Open alcohol container in vehicle.
- All other moving violations of traffic laws.
- Refusal of Preliminary Breath Test (PBT) by anyone under age 21.

\*Please note that snowmobile and off-road vehicle (ORV) alcohol-conviction points are placed on a driving record and may result in licensing action against your driving privileges even though the violation happened while operating a snowmobile or ORV. More information is provided in Chapter 11, on pages 122-127.

### **Basic Driver Improvement Course**

Effective Dec. 31, 2010, if you are convicted of certain traffic violations, you may be eligible to attend a Basic Driver Improvement Course (BDIC). The BDIC is optional and may only be used once to keep points off your driving record.

Instruction may take place in a classroom, online, or both. Course providers set the fee for their classes. All course providers are approved through the Department of State.

The Department of State will determine BDIC eligibility and notify you by mail. A listing of BDIC providers is available on the department website. You must successfully complete the BDIC within a specified timeframe, otherwise, points will be placed on your driving record and the violation made available to insurance companies.

### **Michigan's Driver Responsibility Law**

In an effort to promote greater traffic safety, Michigan enacted the Driver Responsibility Law to deter potentially dangerous driving behavior, thereby saving lives. The Driver Responsibility Program calls for monetary sanctions for drivers who:

- Accumulate seven or more points on their driving record (Category 1 offenses)
- Are convicted of specific qualifying offenses (Category 2 offenses)

Only driving offenses with arrest or incident dates on or after Oct. 1, 2003, are counted. Category 1 offenses are for moving violations and include speeding, improper turns, and following too closely.

The Driver Responsibility fee is based on the number of points on the driving record, with a minimum of seven points required before a fee is assessed. The fees begin at \$100 and increase by \$50 for each additional point above seven points.

7 Points \$100	8 Points \$150	9 Points \$200
10 Points \$250	11 Points \$300	12 Points \$350
13 Points \$400	14 Points \$450	15 Points \$500

Drivers assessed a fee under Category 1 are assessed only once per year. Drivers will be assessed each year in which seven or more points show on the record.

Category 2 offenses carry their own Driver Responsibility fee independent from the number of points on the driving record. Drivers convicted of these offenses are assessed a Driver Responsibility fee of \$150, \$200, \$500 or \$1,000 for two consecutive years. The amount is determined by the type of offense.

For example:

- Drunken driving or operating while intoxicated (OWI) - \$1,000
- Reckless driving - \$500
- No proof of insurance - \$200 (May be waived if proof can be provided before the court date that insurance was valid at the time of the traffic stop.)
- Drove while license expired - \$150

Points from Category 2 offenses and convictions are not counted toward the point total for Category 1. Multiple Driver Responsibility fees are assessed if a driver is convicted of multiple offenses under Category 2.

The second year's fees will be assessed on the anniversary date of the first year's fees. Failure to pay results in an indefinite suspension of the driver's license. Fee assessments apply to both licensed and unlicensed drivers. As with other suspensions, a \$125 reinstatement fee is required before the license is restored.

## **Obtaining a Copy of Your Driving Record**

You may obtain a copy of your own driving record through the mail by submitting the form, *Requesting Your Own Record*, BDVR-153, to the Michigan Department of State Record Lookup Unit. Forms are available at branch offices, from the Department of State website, and the Record Lookup Unit.

A certified copy of your own driving record may be purchased at any PLUS Office or SUPER!Center for \$8. You will be required to show your driver's license when requesting your driving record - no form is necessary.

If you do not have a Record Lookup account with the Department of State and you want to obtain a record other than your own, you must submit your request on the *Michigan Department of State – Record Lookup Request* form, BDVR-154. Information is released according to the Driver Privacy Protection acts. You must have a permissible use as defined by law to obtain personal information in a record. If you do not have a permissible use for obtaining personal information, you will receive an edited record revealing only public record information. Each record is \$7 and must be paid for in advance with a check, money order, or Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit card. A certified copy is available for an additional \$1.

Please mail or fax record request forms to the:

**Michigan Department of State  
Record Lookup Unit  
7064 Crouner Drive  
Lansing, MI 48918-1540  
Telephone: (517) 322-1624  
Fax: (517) 322-1181**

# 4 Losing Your Privilege to Drive

The privilege to drive is often taken for granted, but you may lose this privilege for a variety of reasons. Motorists who repeatedly drive while drunk or with a suspended license may automatically lose their privilege to drive. Motorists with a health condition who may pose a safety threat to themselves or others on the road may be required to appear for a driver re-examination. This chapter provides information about the Department of State's Traffic Safety Division, driver assessment re-examinations, how driving sanctions can affect your driver's license, the Graduated Driver Licensing program, probation, and post probation.

## Licensing Actions

### Driver's License Restrictions, Suspensions, and Revocations

Your driver's license may be restricted, suspended, or revoked depending on the situation. With a restricted license, you may only drive under the terms and conditions listed on the restricted license. If your license is suspended, your driving privileges are taken away for a period of time, ranging from days to years. A revoked license means you have lost all driving privileges. With a revocation, you must wait one to five years before you are eligible to request a hearing with the Administrative Hearings Section of the Legal and Regulatory Services Administration to have your driver's license restored.

### Mandatory Licensing Actions Required by State Law

Michigan law requires the Department of State to automatically restrict, suspend, or revoke your driver's license for certain violations. For example, stealing motor fuel, reckless driving, drunken driving, and refusing to submit to a breath test will all result in mandatory restrictions, suspensions, or revocations.

## Licensing Actions Imposed by the Department of State

The Department of State Traffic Safety Division may also impose driver's license restrictions, suspensions, and revocations after a driver assessment re-examination. The actions taken against your driver's license will depend on a number of factors, including the type of violation or unsafe driving behavior involved, your driving record, and your willingness to comply with the recommendations and requirements made in the assessment.

## Driver Assessment Re-examinations

The Department of State Traffic Safety Division conducts driver re-examinations under the *Michigan Vehicle Code*. The Department of State may conduct a re-examination if there is reason to believe you are unable to operate a motor vehicle safely because of health reasons or for violating the restrictions on a driver's license, crash involvement, or an unsatisfactory driving record. If you are a probationary driver or in the Graduated Driver Licensing program, you may be required to attend a driver re-examination after only one or two violations. The purpose of the driver re-examination is to discuss driving performance, determine the appropriate licensing controls to reduce driving risk associated with this performance, and encourage improvement. Licensing controls may include restrictions, suspensions, revocations, or a combination of these actions.

## The Driver Assessment Re-examination Process

The purpose of the driver assessment re-examination is to assess your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle and determine if any licensing controls or further review is necessary.

Michigan law allows for a driver re-examination based on one or more of the following criteria:

- The Department of State has reason to believe that you are incompetent to drive a motor vehicle or have a physical, visual, or mental condition that makes it unsafe for you to operate a motor vehicle.
- You have been involved in a fatal accident.

- You have been involved in three or more traffic crashes resulting in personal injury or property damage within the past two years.
- You have accumulated 12 or more points within a two-year period.
- You have been convicted of violating the restrictions, terms, or conditions of your license.

If you are required to attend a re-examination, a driver analyst will review your driving record and discuss your driving behavior with you. If your license is restricted, suspended, or revoked as result of the re-examination, you will be apprised of your appeal rights and license reinstatement information. A re-examination held due to medical issues will require you to pass several tests, including a vision, written, and on-road exams. You may also be required to present current medical, vision, or psychological information about yourself.

## **Teen Drivers, Probationary Drivers, and Re-examinations**

Probationary drivers and teens with a Graduated Driver License may also be required to attend a driver assessment re-examination based on the violations posted to their driving records. Depending on the nature of the violation, a license may be restricted or suspended for up to a year.

The parent or legal guardian of GDL drivers will be notified if their teen drivers violate certain conditions of the GDL license. Any suspension action taken against a teen's GDL license may delay advancement to the next GDL level.

Licensing controls may also extend probation. Safe driving not only reduces the risk of a traffic crash or violation, but it helps ensure that a teen or new driver will successfully complete GDL or probation on time.

## **Losing Your Privilege to Drive – A Note for Teens**

Michigan law deals harshly with teens who make bomb threats or file false reports about them. Teens convicted of this serious felony face several sanctions, including delayed entry into driver education and loss of their driving privileges. There is no appeal granted under the law.

- Individuals less than 14 years old will be prohibited from taking driver education until they are 16 years old and may not be issued their first Graduated Driver License until they are 17 years old.
- Individuals 14-to-20 years old who are unlicensed will be prohibited from taking any driver education and may not be issued a driver's license for three years from their conviction date.
- Individuals 14-to-20 years old who are licensed will have their driver's license suspended for one year, followed by a restricted license for up to two years.

# 5 Substance Abuse and Driving

When you drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive, you endanger your life as well as the lives of your passengers and other motorists. Each year, thousands of people are killed or permanently disabled because someone drove under the influence of alcohol or other chemical substances. Michigan takes a strong stand against drivers who abuse substances and drive. This chapter provides information about drinking and driving, penalties for breaking the law, and the state's tough Repeat Offender laws.

## Drinking or Using Drugs and Driving is Illegal

Drink or use drugs and drive, and the results can be deadly. Several hundred people die every year in Michigan from alcohol- or drug-related crashes. The courts, law enforcement, state and local governments, as well as a number of private agencies, are working together to reduce and prevent the thousands of injuries and deaths that result from drunken driving in Michigan.

Under Michigan law, it is illegal to drive:

- While intoxicated, or visibly impaired, by alcohol, illegal drugs, and certain prescribed medications.
- With a Bodily Alcohol Content (BAC) of 0.08 or greater (operating while intoxicated) or with a BAC of 0.17 or greater.
- With any amount of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine in your body.

If you are under age 21 it is against the law:

- To drive with a Bodily Alcohol Content of 0.02 or greater, or have any presence of alcohol other than that consumed at a generally recognized religious ceremony.
- To buy, possess, or consume alcoholic beverages. You may transport alcohol in a vehicle only when

accompanied by an adult age 21 or older. If you are caught with alcohol in your vehicle and there is no adult accompanying you, you can be charged with a misdemeanor, whether you are on the road or in a parking lot.

It is best to never drink and drive. If you plan on drinking, select a designated driver ahead of time who is not going to drink. You can also ask someone else to give you a ride, call a taxi, use public transportation, or seek other assistance. If someone you know has been drinking or using drugs, do not let him or her drive. Find a designated driver, call a taxi, or insist that the person use public transportation. Never ride with anyone who has been drinking or using drugs. If necessary, take away a person's car keys and offer him or her a place to sleep. Be sure drivers are completely sober before they get behind the wheel.

## **Effects of Alcohol**

Driving requires concentration, motor skills, common sense, and a concern for the safety of everyone on the road. Alcohol affects people differently. Mixing drugs or medications with alcohol can be particularly dangerous and even deadly, especially behind the wheel.

The effects of alcohol are the same whether you drink beer, wine, or whiskey. A 12-ounce can of beer, 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 1.5-ounce shot of whiskey all contain the same amount of alcohol. Drink a standard serving of any of these and the effects will be the same to your body. Your judgment and self-control will be affected. Drinking even one drink can impair your ability to drive, slow your reaction time, dull your concentration, and cause visual problems. Many people mistakenly believe that coffee, a cold shower, exercise, or fresh air can sober them up. The only thing that sobers you up is time.

## **Illegal or Street Drugs and Medications**

Because everyone's metabolism is different, it's difficult to predict how medications and drugs will affect the body. Drugs and medications can be as dangerous as alcohol when mixed with driving. Illegal or "street" drugs are sold without a prescription and are particularly dangerous because users do not always know the contents, purity, or possible effects of these drugs.

Prescription and nonprescription medications may also contain substances that can adversely affect your ability to drive safely. It is illegal to drive while impaired or under the influence of prescribed and over-the-counter medications. Some drugs such as antihistamines, which are found in many cold remedies and allergy preparations, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and pain relievers may cause drowsiness. Diet pills, “stay awake” drugs, and other medications with stimulants such as caffeine, ephedrine, and pseudoephedrine may cause excitability or drowsiness. Effects may also vary depending on the combination of drugs.

Know the contents and potential side effects of any drugs you are taking and be sure it is safe to drive when using them. Please be aware that it is against the law to operate a motor vehicle with any presence of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine. For more information, consult your physician or pharmacist.

## **Recognizing Drivers Who Have Been Drinking or Using Other Drugs**

It is possible to recognize drivers who may have been drinking or using other drugs. They may:

- Weave within their lane.
- Wander from one lane to another.
- Run off the pavement.
- Stop too quickly or slowly.
- Drive too quickly or slowly.
- Go through stop signs or other signals.
- Drive on the wrong side of the road.

These signs do not always mean that the driver has been drinking or using drugs, but they do require your full attention. If you observe a dangerous situation, do not become personally involved. Get an accurate description of the vehicle and license plate number. Call 911, the local Michigan State Police post, or a telephone operator for police help. You are most likely to encounter other drivers who have been drinking or using drugs at night or early morning, particularly from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m.; on

the weekends, especially late Friday and Saturday nights; on holidays; or near bars and other businesses that sell alcohol.

When you see someone you suspect of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, put as much distance as possible between yourself and that driver. Think twice about passing him or her. Let the driver pass you, especially when he or she is approaching rapidly. The driver's actions may be uncertain. Stay alert. It is possible that the same driver may be met further down the road.

## Anti-Drunken and Drugged Driving Laws

Anti-drunken and drugged driving laws require swift and sure action and stiff penalties for drunken drivers. The laws:

- Require courts to decide drunken and drugged driving cases within 77 days after an arrest or after an arrest warrant is served, whichever is later.
- Require a mandatory six-month driver's license suspension even for a first conviction of driving while intoxicated. A driver may be eligible for a restricted license after serving 30 days of the suspension.
- For a conviction of operating with a Bodily Alcohol Content (BAC) of 0.17 or greater:
  - A driver's license suspension for one year; eligible for a restricted license after 45 days with installation of an ignition interlock device.
  - Imprisonment up to 180 days.
  - A fine of not less than \$200 or more than \$700.
- For a second conviction of drunken or drugged driving within 7 years, require a fine of not less than \$200 or more than \$1,000, and one or both of the following:
  - Imprisonment for not less than five days or more than one year.
  - 30 to 90 days of community service.
- Include a felony for a conviction for drunken or drugged driving that causes death.

- Include a felony for a conviction for drunken or drugged driving that causes a serious injury to another.
- Require fines for a conviction of driving while a driver's license is suspended or revoked of up to \$500 for a first offense, and \$1,000 for an additional offense.
- Do not allow hardship appeals for habitual alcohol or drug offenders.
- Require a reinstatement fee of \$125 if your driver's license was suspended, revoked, or restricted. This fee is separate from the reinstatement fee needed for any other driving violations.
- Require payment of a Driver Responsibility fee of \$500 to \$1,000 for two consecutive years.

## **Preliminary Breath Test**

When stopped by a law enforcement officer for suspicion of driving while intoxicated, you may be asked to take sobriety tests including a Preliminary Breath Test (PBT) at the roadside to determine whether you are under the influence of alcohol. If you refuse to take the PBT, you will be charged with a civil infraction and fined up to \$100 plus court costs. Persons under age 21 who refuse to take the PBT will receive two points on their driving record. Even if you take the PBT, you must still take the evidentiary chemical test (blood, breath, or urine test).

## **Michigan's Implied Consent Law**

If arrested, you will be required to take a chemical test to determine your Bodily Alcohol Content (BAC) or to ascertain whether there are drugs in your body. Under Michigan's Implied Consent Law, all drivers are considered to have given their consent to this test. If you refuse to take the test, six points will be added to your driving record and your license will be suspended for one year. Please be aware that suspension of a license is automatic. This is a separate consequence from any subsequent convictions resulting from the traffic stop.

If you are arrested a second time in seven years and again unreasonably refuse the chemical test, six points will be added to your driving record and your license will be suspended for two years.

If you unreasonably refuse to take the test, or if the test shows your BAC is 0.08 or greater, your driver's license will be destroyed by the officer, and you will be issued a paper driving permit that allows you to drive, provided your license was valid at the time of your arrest, until your case is resolved in court.

### Types of Charges:

- Operating While Visibly Impaired (**OWVI**) means that because of alcohol or other drugs in your body, your ability to operate a motor vehicle was visibly impaired.
- Operating With a Bodily Alcohol Content of 0.17 or more means the bodily alcohol content of your body was 0.17 or greater.
- Operating While Intoxicated (**OWI**) means the alcohol or drugs in your body substantially affected your driving ability so you could not operate a motor vehicle safely, or your bodily alcohol content was 0.08 or greater.
- Operating With Presence of Drugs (**OWPD**) means operating a vehicle with the presence of any amount of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine.
- Under Age 21 Operating With Any Bodily Alcohol Content means having a BAC of 0.02 or greater but less than 0.08, or any presence of alcohol other than that consumed as part of a generally recognized religious ceremony.

### Commercial Drivers and Alcohol

While many of the drunken driving charges are the same for commercial drivers as other motorists, there are some important distinctions. When operating a commercial vehicle:

- The threshold for an Unlawful Bodily Alcohol Content offense is 0.015. Commercial drivers with a UBAC of 0.015 will be placed out of service for 24 hours.
- A UBAC of 0.04 or greater but less than 0.08 will result in CDL suspensions or revocations, depending on the number of offenses.

Commercial drivers with one offense for operating a commercial or noncommercial vehicle while drunk will have their CDL suspended for one year; three years if they are transporting hazardous materials. A second or third offense will result in a revocation of their CDL for a minimum of 10 years. Their operator or chauffeur driver's license may also be suspended or revoked. For more information, please refer to the Department of State's *Michigan Commercial Driver License Manual*.

## **Teen Drivers and Alcohol**

Drivers between ages of 16 and 20 are typically the least experienced drivers on the road. When alcohol is added to their inexperience, the results can be even more deadly. Male teenage drivers with a bodily alcohol content between 0.05 and 0.10 are 18 times more likely than a sober, male teenage driver to be killed in a single vehicle crash. Female teenagers are 54 times more likely to be killed than a sober counterpart. Any involvement with alcohol by teenagers can result in the loss of their license. Simply possessing any alcoholic beverage, whether in a motor vehicle or not, can result in a license suspension for a teenager.

For information about licensing actions for drivers under age 21, please see the Zero Tolerance section on pages 59-60.

## **Anti-Drug Laws**

Michigan law requires driver's license suspensions for drug convictions, even if you were not driving at the time of the offense. Even the possession, manufacture or distribution of drugs may result in a driver's license suspension. If there are no prior drug violations, your driver's license is suspended for six months. No restricted license is allowed for the first 30 days. One or more prior drug convictions in seven years means your driver's license will be suspended for one year. No restricted license is allowed for the first 60 days. The driver's license reinstatement fee is \$125. This fee is separate from the reinstatement fee required for any other driving activity.

## **Repeat Offender Laws**

Michigan's Repeat Offender laws are designed to get tough with drivers who repeatedly drive drunk or while on a suspended license. Under the laws, you are a repeat offender if you have:

- Two or more alcohol- or drug-related convictions within seven years.
- Three or more convictions for driving while your license is suspended or revoked in seven years.
- Three or more alcohol- or drug-related convictions within 10 years.

## **Penalties Under the Repeat Offender Laws**

If you are arrested as a repeat offender, the law enforcement officer destroys the metal license plate of the vehicle you are driving, whether you own the vehicle or not. A temporary paper license plate is issued allowing the vehicle to be legally driven. A new metal license plate cannot be issued until your case is resolved in court.

Sanctions under the Repeat Offender laws include additional driver's license suspensions or revocations, metal license plate confiscation, vehicle immobilization or forfeiture, registration denial, the use of ignition interlock devices, and mandatory substance abuse treatment. Repeat offenders who cause an accident resulting in a long-term injury or death are charged with a felony and face thousands of dollars in fines and years in jail in addition to other penalties.

When drivers are convicted of a third drunken driving violation, or receive a fourth additional suspension because they drove while their license was suspended or revoked, these repeat offenders are subject to registration denial.

Registration denial prevents the repeat offender from purchasing, renewing, transferring, or replacing a license plate. Registration denial includes any vehicles that are registered, co-registered, leased, or co-leased by the repeat offender. During registration denial, it is a crime to attempt to purchase, lease, or obtain a vehicle. Unless a circuit court order is requested and issued, a repeat offender may not transfer a vehicle to any family member if that vehicle is carrying a temporary plate, is immobilized, forfeited, or subject to registration denial. Registration denial continues until the repeat offender is authorized to obtain a driver's license or has served all of the additional suspensions.

Please refer to the chart following this section for more information about offenders convicted of multiple alcohol or Driving While License Suspended (DWLS) offenses.

# Consequences for Alcohol, Drug, and Driving-While-License-Suspended Offenses

## Alcohol/Drug Violations

### **First Offense: Operating With A Bodily Alcohol Content of 0.17 or greater**

Sanctions:

- One or more of the following:
  - \$200 to \$700 fine.
  - Up to 180 days in jail.
  - Up to 360 hours of community service.
- Driver's license suspension for one year; eligible for restricted license after 45 days with installation of an ignition interlock device.
- Possible vehicle immobilization.
- Alcohol rehabilitation program required for at least one year.
- Six points on driving record.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

### **First Offense: Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)/ Operating With Presence of Drugs (OWPD)**

Sanctions:

- \$100 to \$500 fine and one or more of the following:
  - Up to 93 days in jail.
  - Up to 360 hours of community service.
- Driver's license suspension for 30 days, followed by restrictions for 150 days.
- Possible vehicle immobilization.
- Six points on driving record.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWI.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWPD.

## **First Offense: Operating While Visibly Impaired (OWVI)**

### Sanctions:

- Up to \$300 fine and one or more of the following:
  - Up to 93 days in jail.
  - Up to 360 hours of community service.
- Driver's license restriction for 90 days (180 days if impaired by controlled substance).
- Possible vehicle immobilization.
- Four points on driving record.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

## **Second Offense Within Seven Years: Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)/Operating With Presence of Drugs (OWPD)**

### Sanctions:

- \$200 to \$1,000 fine and one or more of the following:
  - Five days to one year in jail.
  - 30 to 90 days community service.
- Driver's license denial and revocation for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization 90 to 180 days unless vehicle is forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- Six points on driving record.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWI.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWPD.

## **Second Offense Within Seven Years: Operating While Visibly Impaired (OWVI)**

### Sanctions:

- \$200 to \$1,000 fine and one or more of the following:
  - Five days to one year in jail.
  - 30 to 90 days community service.
- Driver's license denial and revocation for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization 90 to 180 days unless vehicle is forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- Four points on driving record.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

## **Third Offense Within 10 Years (Felony): Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)/Operating With Presence of Drugs (OWPD)**

### Sanctions:

- Driver's license denial and revocation for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization one to three years unless vehicle is forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- Registration denial of all owned and leased vehicles.
- Six points on driving record.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWI.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years for OWPD.

## **Third Offense Within 10 Years (Felony): Operating While Visibly Impaired (OWVI)**

Sanctions:

- Driver's license denial and revocation for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization one to three years unless forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- Registration denial.
- Four points on driving record.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

### **Heidi's Law**

Michigan's Repeat Offender laws require tough sanctions for motorists convicted of two or more alcohol- or drug-related offenses within seven years or three or more alcohol- or drug-related offenses within 10 years. However, if a third or subsequent drunken or drugged driving violation occurred more than 10 years after any previous convictions, the court had to count the current violation as a first offense when considering criminal sanctions.

Because of a concern that chronic repeat offenders could face lighter sentences simply because more than 10 years had passed since their last conviction, the state enacted Heidi's Law. Heidi's Law requires felony penalties for a third or subsequent drunken or drugged driving offense regardless of when prior offenses occurred. It also requires the Department of State to maintain certain drunken or drugged driving violations on a driver's record for life.

Under Heidi's Law, licensing and plate sanctions are treated as a first offense for motorists with three or more drunken or drugged driving convictions if more than 10 years has elapsed since the last violation. Vehicle sanctions include plate confiscation, vehicle forfeiture, and immobilization. Licensing sanctions are restrictions, suspensions, and revocations.

### **Third Offense in a Lifetime (Felony): Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) / Operating With Presence of Drugs (OWPD) / Operating While Visibly Impaired (OWVI)**

Criminal Sanctions:

- \$500 to \$5,000 fine and either:
  - One to five years in prison.
  - Probation with 30 days to one year in jail.
- 60 to 180 days community service.

### **Alcohol Offenses Causing Injury or Death**

#### **First or Second Offense Causing Death/Serious Injury (Felony): Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)/Operating While Visibly Impaired (OWVI)/Operating With Presence of Drugs (OWPD)**

Sanctions:

##### **Death**

- Up to 15 years in prison or a \$2,500 to \$10,000 fine or both.

##### **Injury**

- Up to five years in prison or a \$1,000 to \$5,000 fine or both.

##### **Emergency Responder Death**

- Up to 20 years in prison or a \$2,500 to \$10,000 fine or both.

##### **Death/Injury/Emergency Responder Death**

- Driver's license revocation and denial for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization up to 180 days unless forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

## Open Intoxicants in a Motor Vehicle

Sanctions:

- Up to a \$100 fine.
- First offense—no action is taken against driver’s license.
- Second offense—driver’s license is suspended for 30 days/restricted for 60 days.
- Third offense—driver’s license is suspended for 60 days/restricted for 305 days.
- Alcohol screening may be required.
- Two points on driving record.

### Alcohol Offenses Involving Young Drivers

#### First Offense: Zero Tolerance (Under Age 21)

Sanctions:

- Up to \$250 fine and/or
  - Up to 360 hours community service.
- Driver’s license is restricted for 30 days.
- Four points on driving record.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

#### Second Offense Within Seven Years: Zero Tolerance (Under Age 21)

Sanctions:

- Up to \$500 fine and/or
  - Up to 60 days community service.
  - Up to 93 days in jail.
- Driver’s license suspension 90 days. Any prior drunken driving conviction results in a minimum one-year driver’s license revocation.
- Four points on driving record.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

## **Person Under 21 Purchase/Consume/Possess Alcohol**

### Sanctions:

- First offense—\$100 fine, no action is taken against driver’s license.
- Second offense—\$200 fine, driver’s license is suspended for 30 days/restricted for 60 days.
- Third offense—\$500 fine, driver’s license is suspended for 60 days/restricted for 305 days.
- Community service may be required.
- Alcohol screening may be required.

## **Person Under 21 Transport or Possess in a Motor Vehicle**

### Sanctions:

- Up to a \$100 fine.
- First offense—no action is taken against driver’s license.
- Second offense—driver’s license is suspended for 30 days/restricted for 60 days.
- Third offense—driver’s license is suspended for 60 days/restricted for 305 days.
- Alcohol screening may be required.
- Community service may be required.
- Two points on driving record.
- Vehicle can be impounded up to 30 days.

## **Use Fraudulent ID to Purchase Liquor**

### Sanctions:

- Up to a \$100 fine, 93 days in jail, or both.
- 90-day driver’s license suspension.
- Alcohol screening may be required.

## **Driving-While-License-Suspended Violations**

### **First Offense: Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

- Up to \$500 fine, up to 93 days in jail, or both.
- Mandatory like additional suspension.
- Mandatory additional 30-day suspension if convicted of driving while suspended due to failure to pay tickets or appear in court; reinstatement fee due.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

### **Second Offense Within Seven Years: Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

- Up to \$1,000 fine, up to one year in jail, or both.
- Mandatory additional suspension.
- Vehicle may be immobilized for up to 180 days.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

### **Third Offense – Must Have Two Priors Within Seven Years (Misdemeanor): Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

- Mandatory additional suspension.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilized 90 to 180 days.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**Fourth offense – Must have three priors within seven years (misdemeanor): Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

- Same as for third offense.
- Registration denial of all owned and leased vehicles if conviction generates a fourth or more additional suspension.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**Fifth Offense – Must Have Four Priors Within Seven Years (Misdemeanor): Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

- Mandatory additional suspension.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilized one to three years.
- Registration denial of all owned and leased vehicles if conviction generates a fourth or more additional suspension.
- \$500 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**First and Second Offense Causing Death/Serious Injury (Felony): Driving While License Suspended (DWLS)**

Sanctions:

**Death**

- Up to 15 years in prison or a \$2,500 to \$10,000 fine or both.

**Injury**

- Up to five years in prison or a \$1,000 to \$5,000 fine or both.

**Emergency Responder Death**

- Up to 20 years in prison or a \$2,500 to \$10,000 fine or both.

### **Death/Injury/Emergency Responder Death**

- Driver's license revocation and denial for one or five years.
- License plate confiscation.
- Vehicle immobilization up to 180 days unless forfeited.
- Possible vehicle forfeiture.
- \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

# 6 Seat Belts, Safety Seats, and Air Bags

Click It or Ticket: Under Michigan’s seat belt and child-safety restraint laws, a law enforcement officer may stop a vehicle if the driver and occupants are not properly buckled up. Please review the information in this chapter and obey these laws.

## Buckle Up — It’s the Law!

Michigan law requires:

- All front seat passengers to be buckled up (including the driver).
- All passengers under age 16 to be buckled up, in all seating positions.
- All children under age 8 to be in an approved child safety seat or booster seat, in all seating positions, unless 4 feet 9 inches or taller.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that seat belts save over 13,000 lives every year and that buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

- Be responsible – make sure all passengers are properly buckled up.
- Even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags, they are not a substitute for wearing a seat belt.
- Everyone in the vehicle will be safer when seat belts are worn correctly – shoulder belt across the middle of the chest away from the neck, with the lap belt worn low across the hips, below the stomach.
- Drivers exempt from using a seat belt because of a medical condition must carry a doctor’s statement.

## Protecting Children and Teens

Since the Michigan Child Passenger Protection Law was enacted, use of child restraints and safety belts has increased, while deaths and injuries have decreased. However, many people use child restraint devices improperly. Make certain both the child safety restraint and your child are properly buckled before you drive.

### Law Sets Special Requirements

Michigan's child passenger safety law mandates that:

- Children under age 8 and less than 4 feet 9 inches tall must be properly secured in a child restraint system in accordance with the child restraint and vehicle manufacturer's instructions and federal safety standards.
- Children under age 4 to be positioned in a rear seat if the vehicle is equipped with a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under age 4, then they may be positioned in the child restraint system in the front seat.
- A child in a rear-facing child restraint system may only be placed in the front seat if the front passenger air bag is deactivated.
- Young people under age 18 are prohibited from riding in the open bed of a pickup truck traveling more than 15 mph. The law allows exceptions for vehicles used by farmers, construction workers, the military, in parades, and by authorized emergency and rescue personnel.
- Removing a child from a car seat to nurse while the vehicle is moving is prohibited.

Never hold a child on your lap or buckle a child with another passenger into one seat belt. Always insist children buckle their seat belts before starting the engine.

Assistance with child safety seat installation is available at many community agencies, such as local public health departments. Avoid buying secondhand seats as they may not meet federal safety standards, may not work properly, or may

have missing parts or instructions. And, if there is a recall, you may not receive notification.

## Air Bags

Air bags are designed to provide vehicle occupants with extra protection in a crash. Depending on the make and model, today's vehicles may have air bags in a variety of locations, including the steering wheel, dashboard, roof columns and door panels. Sensors within the vehicle determine when an air bag will deploy based on the type and severity of the crash. For the best protection always wear a seat belt, even in vehicles equipped with air bags. Seat belts remain the best protection in rollover, side impact, and rear-end crashes.

- A child in a rear-facing child restraint system may be placed in the front seat only if the front passenger air bag is deactivated.
- Parents are encouraged to seat all children ages 12 and younger in the rear seat of the vehicle to avoid potential injury from an air bag in the event of a crash.
- It is recommended that drivers sit with at least 10 inches between the center of their breastbone and the center of the steering wheel.
- If you are pregnant, it is recommended that you wear your seat belt with the lap portion of the belt correctly positioned over the hips (not the stomach) and the shoulder portion across the chest. Sit as far back as possible from the air bag.



# 7 Signs, Pavement Markings, and Signals

Signs, pavement markings, and signals are all ways of communicating. They provide information about regulations, highway routes, directions, places of interest, and cautions. They include regulatory, warning, and guide signs. This chapter presents important information about signs, pavement markings, and signals. Obeying signs, traffic signals, and markings will help to keep you safe.

## Signs

### Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs that control moving traffic are always red and white or black and white. “Do Not Enter,” “Wrong Way,” “Yield,” and “Stop” are examples of signs with red backgrounds. Regulatory signs that control parking may be green and white.

The yield sign indicates a driver must slow down and give way to all traffic and pedestrians.



The shape of this sign indicates stop. Stop and give the right-of-way to pedestrians and all cross traffic before moving forward. You must stop behind a marked or unmarked crosswalk that joins sidewalks on opposite sides of the street, or behind a marked stop line. If there is no pavement marking or crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection, where traffic coming from all directions is visible.



A red circle with a line through it always means “no,” such as “no entry.”

This sign means do not turn around in the middle of a street or an intersection.



These two signs are sometimes used together and mean do not pass. The yellow pennant sign will be posted on the left side of the road. The white sign will be posted on the right side.

This sign follows the do not pass sign. It is on the right side of the road. It marks the end of a no-passing zone. You may then pass when it is safe to do so.



This sign means traffic in the right lane must turn right. Traffic in the second lane should either continue driving straight or turn right. A similar sign may be used for left-turning traffic.

This sign means no right turn. If the arrow points to the left, the sign means no left turn.



This sign informs or warns not to drive across the median (divider strip) or emergency crossover of a freeway. It is against the law for anyone to cross a freeway median—except for law enforcement, emergency,

or maintenance vehicles. To change directions on a freeway, drive to the next exit, get off, and re-enter the freeway in the other direction.



This sign directs traffic to the right of an obstruction.

This sign is posted over a highway lane that is used only for making a left turn. Traffic from both directions will be using this lane. Never use a turning lane as a merge lane to pull out into traffic or to overtake and pass other vehicles.



Located at intersections, this sign means do not turn until the light turns green.

This type of sign shows the maximum speeds allowed on a freeway, weather permitting.



### Warning Signs

Signs like this provide advisory speeds at freeway exit and entrance ramps. They show the maximum recommended safe speed to drive on a ramp in ideal weather conditions.

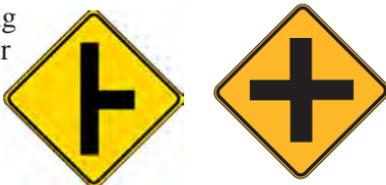


These signs warn of a curve or sharp turn ahead. If the curve is too sharp to drive at the posted speed limit, an advisory speed sign is attached to indicate the fastest recommended speed in ideal weather conditions. Slow down before entering the curve.



If the speed limit is not posted before a curve, judge how sharp the curve is and change speed accordingly. If you cannot see around a curve, slow down more than normal. When driving around a curve, the vehicle will tend to move to the outside of the curve.

These signs show an upcoming side or cross road. Look for other vehicles entering or leaving the roadway.



This sign is posted where two lanes come together to form one lane.

This sign means prepare to yield ahead



These signs mean a lane ends ahead, and a driver must merge into the proper lane. However, yield the right-of-way to vehicles already in the left lane, or in the right lane in the case of a “lane ends merge right” sign.





This sign shows the road ahead has two-way traffic.

This sign indicates that a driver is approaching a roundabout intersection. When an advisory speed panel is posted below the sign, slow down to the recommended speed.



This sign shows the lane use for a roundabout. The left lane is for traffic traveling left and through the intersection. The right lane is for traffic traveling right and through the intersection.

This sign warns of a steep hill. You may need to slow down at the top or change to a lower gear.



This sign cautions that a section of the roadway may be more slippery when weather conditions are bad. Make sure to slow down when the road is wet or icy.

This sign marks a traffic island or obstruction. Drive to either side.



This sign is used to remind drivers that they are going from a divided highway to a two-way roadway.

This sign means that school children may be crossing. Slow down and watch for them. Traffic controls near school areas may include school crosswalk lines, stop lines, curb markings, word and symbol markings, special school speed limits, and school crosswalk signs.



Watch for adult crossing guards and student safety patrols helping children cross streets safely.

Vehicles must stop for crossing guards with a stop sign upraised, and may not continue until the crossing guard has moved completely out of the intersection.

These warning signs alert drivers that bicyclists or pedestrians may enter or cross the road and to drive with caution.



This sign informs or warns you that a bridge or underpass is ahead with a clearance of only 12 feet, 6 inches. Know the height of the vehicle and load.



This sign means no trucks allowed.

This sign means prepare to stop ahead.



## Slow-Moving Vehicles

This sign on the back of a slow-moving vehicle is a warning to slow down. It means the vehicle cannot travel faster than 25 mph. Do not get impatient if behind one of these vehicles. The driver will usually try to pull over to the side whenever possible to prevent traffic back-ups.



## Guide Signs

Guide signs, including those for motorist services, parks, and public recreation areas, tell what is available ahead. Some show distance, destination, and direction.



## Route Markers

Route markers identify highways by number and symbol as part of national, state, or local systems.

Limited-access interstate freeway sign



U.S. highway sign

State highway sign



County route marker



## Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are white or yellow and, like highway signs, warn, regulate, and inform drivers.

White lines separate traffic lanes moving in the same direction. They include:

- **Broken white lines:** On roadways that have more than one lane moving in one direction, broken white lines separate traffic lanes. Drive between these lines. Never straddle them.



- **Solid white lines:** Solid white lines mark the right edge of the road. Often called fog lines, solid white lines help you stay on the road at night or in bad weather. Passing to the right of another vehicle by crossing a solid white line that marks the right edge of the roadway is prohibited, even if the shoulder is paved.

Solid white lines are also used to separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. When solid white lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, crossing a solid white line is not recommended. These white lines may designate sharp curves, freeway acceleration and deceleration lanes, and other parts of the road where lane changes are considered dangerous.

A double solid white line is used to show a travel path where driving in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line, but crossing the line is prohibited.

These lines are used to separate traffic for safety reasons such as bicycle ways, pedestrian ways, or where one lane of traffic is usually traveling at a higher speed than the other lane:

- **Crosswalk lines:** Solid white lines mark many pedestrian crosswalks. When these lines are used, they go all the way across the pavement. Crosswalks are also indicated by white stripes placed on the road in the direction of traffic. Crosswalks are placed at intersections and, sometimes, between intersections. Stop the vehicle behind the crosswalk line.
- **Stop lines:** Wide white lines painted across a traffic lane mark where you must stop the vehicle at intersections. This keeps the vehicle out of the way of pedestrians and cross traffic. If there are no stop lines or crosswalks, stop the vehicle before entering the intersection. You should be able to see traffic from all directions.
- **Directional Arrows:** Wide white arrows painted down the center of the traffic lane indicate the direction that the vehicle must travel. In the graphic provided, the arrow pointing to



the left indicates that all vehicles in this lane must turn left. The next lane may only go straight. The right lane may go straight or turn right. Always check for traffic and pedestrians before proceeding or completing your turn.

Yellow lines separate vehicle traffic lanes moving in opposite directions. They include:

- **Broken yellow lines:** A single broken yellow line usually marks the centerline of a two-way roadway where a vehicle may pass if it is safe.
- **Solid yellow lines:** If a solid yellow line is on your side of the centerline of a roadway, do not cross over it to pass. On a four-lane divided roadway or a one-way road, a solid yellow line usually marks the left edge of the pavement. A double solid yellow line down the middle of a two-lane roadway means that passing is not allowed for vehicles traveling in either direction.
- **Center lane, left-turn-only:** Many roads have a left-turn only lane to help traffic flow more smoothly. Each outside edge of this lane is marked with a solid yellow line with broken yellow lines on the inside edges. Left turns must be made from within this lane, and may be made from either direction. Using this lane to pass other vehicles or as a merge lane is both dangerous and illegal.

Yield lines are typically found at roundabout intersections and mid-block crosswalks and help regulate the flow of traffic. When yielding to traffic, make sure to stop behind the yield lines. There are two types of yield lines:

- **White triangular symbols:** When you see white triangles painted across a traffic lane, be prepared to stop and yield to traffic.
- **Dashed white lines:** Dashed white lines painted across a roundabout's traffic lane indicate you should yield to traffic.

## Signals

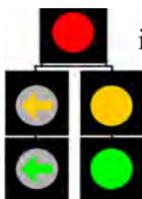
Traffic signals control traffic at intersections. It is illegal to drive across public or private property, such as a store parking lot, to avoid a traffic-control device. Combinations of traffic signals, signs, pavement markings, and other traffic-control devices may be used at railroad crossings, schools, street and highway construction, and maintenance operations. Pedestrian signals control pedestrian traffic. Always give the right-of-way to pedestrians.

### Traffic Control Signals



A red light means stop. It is at the top of a traffic signal in Michigan. Stop the vehicle behind a crosswalk or stop line. A yellow light means the green signal has ended and the signal is about to turn red. You are required to stop on a yellow light. If you cannot stop safely, do not speed up but drive cautiously through the intersection. A green light means proceed cautiously after checking for pedestrians and vehicles. If a traffic light is not

working at an intersection, and there are no law enforcement officers or alternate traffic signal devices present to control the flow of traffic, you should follow the basic right-of-way rules. These include yielding to vehicles that reach the intersection before you, to those on your right if you reach the intersection at the same time, and when turning left, giving right-of-way to oncoming traffic.



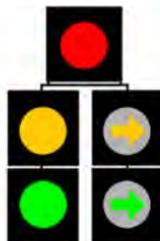
(Left Turn)

The 5-section head signal, or “doghouse signal,” is used to regulate left and right turns at intersections.

This type of signal has a red light on top, a green and yellow turn arrow, and a green and yellow light. When the green

and yellow light. When the green arrow is lit, turning drivers have a “protected turn,” meaning all oncoming or conflicting traffic is stopped. When the green light is

lit, turning drivers may complete their turn when oncoming traffic has cleared.



(Right Turn)

When either the yellow light or yellow arrow is lit, the signal is changing from green to red and drivers must stop if they have not already entered the intersection or cannot

safely stop. If they have already entered the intersection, they must proceed through their turn with caution after making sure traffic is clear.



A flashing red light means come to a full stop. Proceed when the road is clear.

A flashing yellow light means proceed carefully through the intersection. Scan across traffic in both directions.



A steady green arrow means you may proceed with caution in the direction of the arrow if the way is clear. Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in the intersection. Traffic coming toward you should stop.

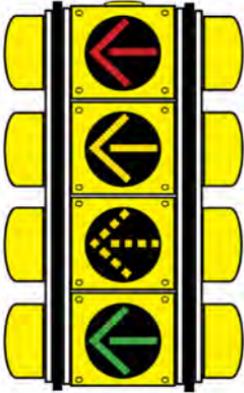
Research from the Federal Highway Administration shows that by reconfiguring the signal arrows used for left turns, traffic moves more efficiently through intersections and the chances for crashes are reduced.

The flashing yellow arrow left-turn signal head has four separate lenses. The lens at the top is a solid red arrow. The next signal below it is a solid yellow arrow, then a flashing yellow arrow, and finally, a solid green arrow at the bottom. Each arrow specifies what actions are permitted. This signal will be standard throughout the United States.

A solid red arrow means you must stop. You cannot turn until the signal changes.

A solid yellow arrow warns you that the left turn signal is about to change to red. If you are approaching the intersection, you must stop. However, if you are already within the intersection and there is no conflicting traffic present, you may complete your left turn.

A flashing yellow arrow allows you to turn left when oncoming traffic, which has a green light, is clear. Be sure that there is an adequate gap in the oncoming traffic and that there are no pedestrians or bicyclists crossing before making your turn.



A solid green arrow indicates that oncoming traffic is stopped and you may turn left. Proceed with caution. At intersections equipped with vehicle-detection cameras or in-pavement sensors, this sequence may be skipped if there are no left-turning vehicles.

## Railroad Crossings

Traffic control systems for railroad crossings include all signs, signals, markings, and illuminated devices that permit safe and efficient movement of both rail and highway traffic. Trains cannot stop at railroad crossings. It is much harder and takes much longer for a train to stop, up to a mile in most cases. It could be fatal to ignore a signal or try to cross in front of a train.

When approaching a railroad crossing that does not have a signal or a gate, slow down and look both ways. This is good advice even if a signaled crossing does not indicate a train is coming.

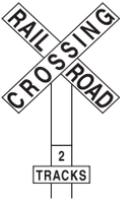
This sign warns of a railroad crossing ahead. If a train is coming, all vehicles must stop no more than 50 feet or less than 15 feet from the tracks.



If there is more than one set of tracks, check carefully for other trains that may be coming. Do not cross the tracks until all trains have passed. When the road is snow covered, proceed over tracks with enough speed so you will not get stuck. Avoid changing gears while crossing the tracks.

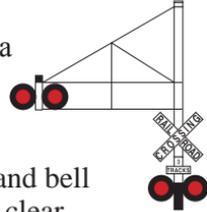
When you see devices that warn of railroad crossings and possible oncoming trains:

- Slow down and be ready to stop.
- School buses, vehicles carrying passengers for hire, gasoline trucks, and other vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop and make sure no train is coming, even if there is no stop sign or railroad crossing signal.
- If there is a stop sign at the crossing, you must stop whether or not a train is coming.
- Be careful not to get “trapped” on railroad tracks by a line of vehicles backed up by a traffic signal.

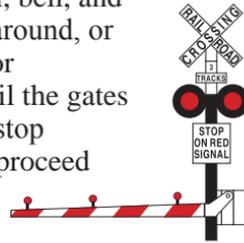


This railroad sign means slow down. Do not cross the track(s) without checking in both directions for a train. Be sure tracks are clear for a safe distance. If there are two or more tracks, the number will be indicated.

This railroad-crossing signal has a bell and flashing red lights to warn that a train is coming. Stop when the bell is ringing and the lights are flashing. Once the train has passed, do not proceed until the lights and bell have stopped and you are sure that all tracks are clear.



This railroad crossing has a sign, signal, bell, and gate to stop traffic. Do not drive through, around, or under any crossing gate while it is down, or being raised or lowered. Stop and wait until the gates are raised, signals stop flashing, and bells stop ringing. Once the train has passed, do not proceed until the lights and bell have stopped and you are sure that all tracks are clear.



## Construction and Maintenance

Warning signs in construction, maintenance, or other designated work areas are diamond-shaped with black lettering on an orange or yellow background.

A combination of signs, signals, lighting devices, markings, barricades, routing, and hand-signaling devices may be used around road construction, maintenance, and surveying operations and utility work.

Construction and maintenance signs may mean part of a lane, an entire lane, or the whole road is blocked.

These signs are also used when work is being done adjacent to the roadway, on shoulders, or in ditch areas.



Construction zones can be for a short period of time or last one or more construction seasons. Drivers are made aware of such zones by signs posted in advance.

Be aware of the warning sign messages and obey them as directed. Watch and drive defensively to avoid problems. Be patient and everyone will travel through construction zones safely. Watch carefully for construction workers or moving equipment.

Construction workers also have the authority to direct traffic in work zones, and their directions should be followed even if they conflict with an existing traffic control device.

When going through a designated work area, pay attention to the posted speed limits. For most construction, maintenance, or surveying activities, the speed limit is 45 mph unless posted differently. Work zones may limit speeds to 45 mph where workers are present, yet allow traffic to return to the normally posted speed when workers are absent. This allows traffic to move at full speed when safe to do so while requiring motorists to watch for workers and slow down when construction in a work zone is active. **Fines are doubled for all moving violations in work zones.**

In addition, motorists caught speeding in construction zones face increased points on their driving records. Under the law, motorists will be assessed:

- 3 points for speeding 10 mph or less over the posted limit.
- 4 points for speeding more than 10 mph but not more than 15 mph over the limit.
- 5 points for speeding more than 15 mph over the limit.

Motorists who have accumulated 12 or more points in a two-year period will be required to undergo a driver assessment re-examination.

Motorists causing injury or death to any person in a work zone are subject to fines of up to \$7,500 and imprisonment of up to 15 years.

## **Pedestrian Signals**

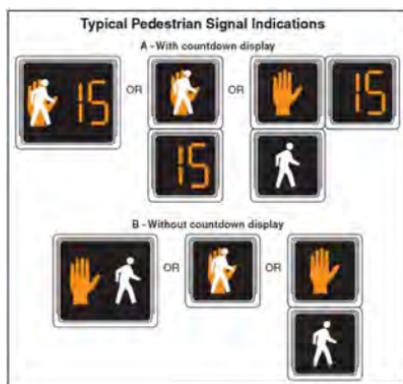
Pedestrian signals are used to control the movement of people at specific crossing points along the road or at an intersection. The white symbol of a walking person means “walk,” and a

red upraised hand means “do not walk.” Some use the words “WALK” and “DONT WALK.”



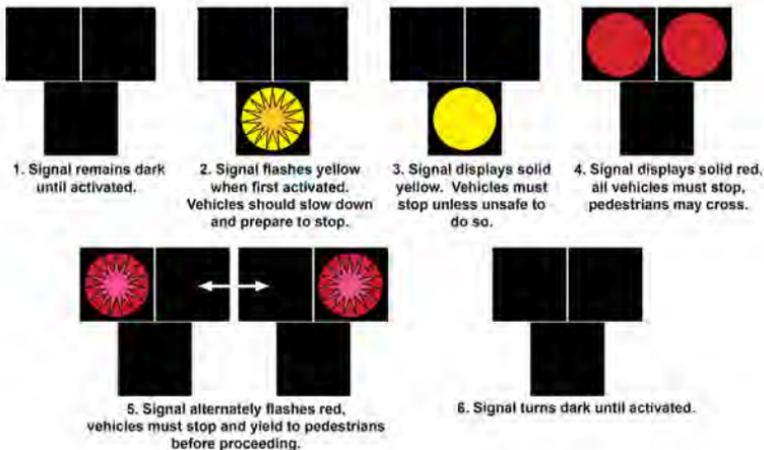
Two Section Types

Pedestrian signals may include an audible or visual “countdown” indicating how much time is left before the signal changes.



Do not start crossing a road when either the upraised hand or the DONT WALK images are flashing. If you are partway across and the signal changes to a flashing mode, complete your crossing. Drivers should be cautious when pedestrians are present, especially when turning. Traffic islands help separate moving traffic or guide traffic and also provide safety for pedestrians.

## Sequence for a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (HAWK Signal)



Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon signals (known as “HAWK” signals) are a new crossing device to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians. There are six steps to the HAWK signal sequence:

1. Dark – The signal stays dark until activated by a pedestrian. Motorists should proceed with caution when the signal is dark.
2. Flashing Yellow – The signal will flash yellow once it is activated. Motorists should slow down and be prepared to stop.
3. Steady Yellow – Stop. If it is unsafe to stop, motorists may proceed with caution.
4. Solid Red – Motorists must stop and remain stopped.
5. Alternately Flashing Red – Motorists must stop and proceed only when clear.
6. Dark – Signal sequence is completed and HAWK signal turns dark until activated again.

# 8

## Basic Skills, Laws, and Safety

This chapter provides information about basic skills, laws, and safety, with tips for preparing to drive, controlling speed, signaling, yielding, turning at intersections and at red lights, using lanes, passing, freeway driving, parking, and using cruise control. Safe driving requires that you understand and use these basic skills.

### Some Basic Driving Tips

The following tips can help you drive safely.

- Concentrate on your driving. A momentary distraction can lead to a crash. Do not allow tasks such as talking on a cell phone, texting, using a GPS, tuning the radio, searching for a compact disc, or eating distract your attention from the road.
- Drive defensively.
- Obey all traffic control devices and traffic laws.
- Be courteous to others.
- Communicate your intentions by using your turn signals or hand-and-arm signals.
- Be aware and keep alert. Even though you follow the laws, realize others may not.
- Recognize that you share the road with others whether they are walking, bicycling, or driving.
- Avoid looking at any one thing for more than a few seconds.
- Watch for vehicles coming from alleys or parking places when driving in a business district.
- Always give yourself enough time and space to do what you need to do safely. Never follow another vehicle too closely.

- Be more careful and increase your following distance at night, during bad weather conditions, rush hour, during maneuvers such as lane changes, and when approaching intersections.
- Do not drive when you are tired.
- Always obey a law enforcement officer's orders or directions. An officer's directions take priority over a traffic light or stop sign.

## Preparing to Drive

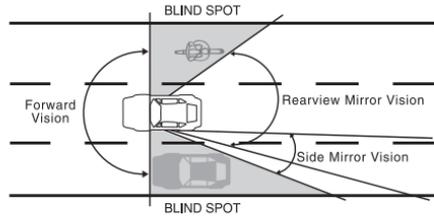
Before operating a vehicle:

- Check for clean headlights, taillights, and brake lights. Make sure all lights and turn signals work properly.
- Clean the windshield and windows.
- Check the tires for proper air pressure and for any possible damage.
- Check in front and behind the vehicle for objects, animals, or people in your path.

Before starting the engine:

- Make sure you are positioned comfortably in the driver's seat.
- Make sure you and all passengers, including children, are properly buckled up.
- Check mirrors and check again for anything in your path. As a driver, you have at least two blind spots or areas around your vehicle that you cannot see in your rearview or side-view mirrors—to the left rear and right rear of the vehicle. Make sure the inside rearview mirror is properly adjusted so you can see the center of the road and any traffic behind the vehicle. Adjust the left outside mirror to see the left edge of the vehicle when seated in a normal driving position. If there is a right outside mirror, adjust it to permit a clear view of the right rear edge of the vehicle.

- Turn your head to check the blind spots before every lane change. You cannot get rid of blind spots, but can make them smaller by properly adjusting the mirrors.



- Know the type of braking system installed in your vehicle. If it has antilock brakes, be sure to read and follow the instructions in the owner's manual.

## Controlling Your Speed

Michigan's Basic Speed Law means you must drive at a "careful and prudent" speed in all driving conditions. You must drive at a speed that always allows you to stop within the clear distance ahead. This speed is never faster than the posted speed limit. Depending on conditions, it may be slower than the posted speed limit. Anticipate trouble ahead. Be ready to stop safely.

### Speed Limits

Watch for and obey regulatory speed signs. The following summarizes some of the standard speed limits defined under the Michigan Vehicle Code:

- 15 mph – In mobile home parks and some municipal parks.
- 25 mph – In platted subdivisions (showing boundaries, streets, easements, and other features of surveyed lots) and condominium complexes. Watch for signs when driving through business districts, county, state and federal parks, on roads adjacent to parks and playgrounds, and in school zones as posted speed limits vary.
- 45 mph – In a work zone if posted. If a work zone is not posted for 45 mph, then the speed limit is the normal speed limit for that area.
- 55 mph – Unless otherwise posted, on all streets that are not designated freeways and on all highways.

- 70 mph maximum/55 mph minimum – On all freeways unless posted otherwise. School buses and trucks are restricted to 60 mph. On freeways with speed limits lower than 70 mph, school buses and trucks are restricted to 55 mph.

## **Give Yourself Time and Space to Stop**

Your stopping distance can be affected by fatigue, how well you pay attention, the type and weight of your vehicle, the condition of your tires and brakes, the type of road surface, and the weather. Try to estimate how much time and space you have for stopping on either dry or wet pavement.

A three- to four-second following distance is required. When the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign or any other stationary point, calculate the time it takes you to reach the same spot by counting “one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three.” You are following too closely if you pass the mark before you finish counting for three seconds. When speeds are increased, or during adverse driving conditions, increase your following distance up to six seconds.

Wet pavement requires more stopping time and space. To make a smooth stop, increase pressure on the brake pedal gradually and just before you stop, reduce the pressure.

## **Look Down the Road 12 Seconds**

This rule means always look ahead of the vehicle about 12 seconds worth of travel time down the road. To estimate this distance, choose a fixed object near the road ahead and begin counting, “one-thousand one, one thousand two...” until the front of your vehicle passes the object. If you have not counted to “one-thousand twelve,” you should be looking farther ahead.

A defensive driver anticipates problems ahead and is prepared to react in time. Keep a safe distance behind another vehicle. Under poor or slippery driving conditions, allow even more time.

## **Signaling**

Signaling is a legal requirement and a courtesy. Before stopping, turning, or changing lanes, see if it is safe. Communicate to other drivers by giving the required signal, either using your left hand and arm, or your vehicle’s turn signal. Signal at least 100 feet ahead of where you plan to turn. In heavy

traffic or on freeways, signal sooner so drivers behind you have time to adjust their speed.

The proper hand-and-arm signals are:

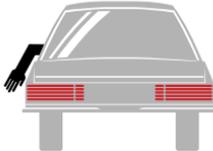
Left arm and hand bent up for a right turn.



Left arm and hand straight out for a left turn.



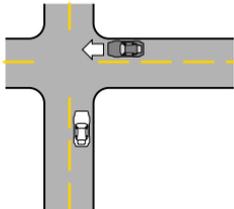
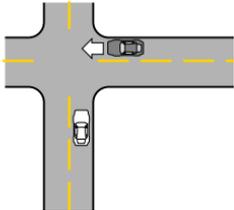
Left arm and hand bent down for slow or stop.



### Yielding

Most crashes occur at intersections. Always remember—any time you are not sure what other drivers are going to do, let them go first.

- When approaching intersections without traffic signals or signs, or four-way stop intersections, yield to the driver on the right if you reach the intersection at the same time as another vehicle. Yield to any vehicle that reaches an intersection before you.
- When making left turns, you must give the right-of-way to pedestrians and oncoming traffic.
- When approaching an intersection with a yield sign, slow down before reaching the intersection, and then yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection and to cross traffic. Stop if necessary.



## Yielding in Other Circumstances

Before entering an intersection, always check cross traffic. Prepare to stop and yield the right-of-way to a vehicle or bicycle coming from the left or right, or to pedestrians in the intersection.

- You must also yield when directed by a uniformed law enforcement officer and when directed by flag people at construction sites.
- You must yield for vehicles in a funeral procession.
- You must stop and yield the right-of-way when entering a highway from an alley, private road, or driveway and before turning on a red light.
- When entering a roundabout, you must yield the right-of-way to drivers already in the roundabout and obey all traffic signs.
- When entering an intersection at sunrise or sunset, use extra care as other drivers may have difficulty seeing you.
- You must yield to emergency vehicles, approaching from any direction or if stopped, when their lights are flashing. Time is critical in an emergency situation. Pulling over and allowing emergency vehicles to reach their destination as quickly and safely as possible may save a life. Never stop in a roundabout for emergency vehicles. Exit the roundabout before pulling over to the right side of the road.
- You must also yield whenever you are approaching or passing a stopped waste collection, utility service, or road maintenance vehicle with its lights flashing.
- When at intersections, watch for oncoming motorcycles, bicycles, and other small vehicles. Because of their size, it is difficult to judge their distance and speed. After a crash, it is not uncommon for motorcyclists or bicyclists to report that the other drivers looked right at them but still failed to *see* them. As an automobile driver, be on the alert for motorcycles, bicycles, and other small vehicles, and give them plenty of time and extra room.

## Turning at Intersections

Crashes at intersections result in more traffic fatalities and serious injuries than on any other segment of the road. As you approach an intersection, look for traffic signals and lane markings.

- Look and plan ahead. Be alert for pedestrians and vehicles that may disregard a red light and proceed through an intersection without stopping. Allow time and space to make your turn safely.
- When turning left at an intersection, check cross traffic and yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians.
- When turning right at an intersection, check the road you are turning onto for pedestrians and other vehicles.
- After turning left onto a one-way street, stay in the left lane until you can change lanes safely.
- Keep alert as smaller vehicles approach the intersection, such as motorcycles, bicycles, and mopeds. Because of their size, it may be difficult to judge their distance and speed. Protect these riders by being courteous and allowing them to clear the intersection before beginning your turn.
- If you come to an intersection where you cannot see clearly because of trees or buildings, stop at the intersection and edge forward slowly.
- If you have entered an intersection when the signal light changes, complete your turn as soon as traffic clears. Do not try to back up in an effort to avoid blocking the intersection.

## Right Turns on Red Lights

Unless a sign tells you “no turn on red,” you may turn right at a red light after coming to a complete stop. You must yield to pedestrians and approaching traffic. Make sure to look to your left, front, and right for any oncoming traffic, motorcycles, bicycles, or pedestrians before starting your turn. Then turn carefully.

## Some Left Turns on Red Lights

Unless a sign tells you “no turn on red,” you may turn left on a red light when entering a one-way street from another one-way street, but you must first stop and yield to cross traffic.

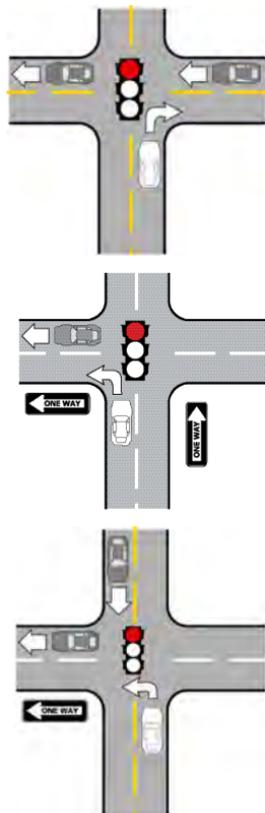
You may also make a left turn from a two-way street onto a one-way street with traffic going in the same direction as the turn. Yield first to pedestrians and approaching traffic.

## Passing

When passing other vehicles, always check your rearview and side-view mirrors for any overtaking traffic. Use your turn signal to indicate your intentions. Check blind spots by turning your head to see if you can safely move from your lane without interfering with traffic. It is illegal to exceed the speed limit or use the shoulder of the road to pass. When about to pass a vehicle on a divided highway, move into the passing lane well before passing. When passing a pedestrian or a slow-moving vehicle, such as a bicycle, farm equipment, or a horse and buggy, allow adequate room so that the person or vehicle is not endangered.

## Passing on the Left

On a two- or three-lane road with traffic moving in both directions, you may pass on the left when overtaking another vehicle if there are no signs or other markings prohibiting



passing, and it can be done safely. Passing another vehicle on the left is prohibited when:

- You must cross a solid yellow line.
- There is a “no passing” sign.
- Approaching a hill or curve where your view is obstructed.
- Your view is obstructed within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct, or tunnel.
- Oncoming traffic is close enough so you would interfere with the safe operation of the approaching vehicle or the vehicle being passed.
- You cannot see clearly ahead.
- When the center lane of a three-lane road is marked for left turns only.

When passing or preparing to pass another vehicle by using the center lane of a three-lane road, always use extreme caution. Approaching vehicles may also be preparing to pass. If you and an approaching vehicle move into the center lane at the same time, a serious crash could occur. If the center lane is marked for left turns only, using this lane for passing or merging is prohibited.

After passing another vehicle, return to the right lane when there is enough room to return safely. One rule of thumb is to return to your lane when it is possible to see both headlights of the vehicle you passed in the rearview mirror.

Remember to allow extra room when pulling a trailer. Do not try to pass more than one vehicle at a time or follow too closely when another vehicle is passing slower traffic.

A driver being passed on the left must give way to the passing vehicle. Do not increase speed until the other vehicle has completely passed.

## **Passing on the Right**

When two or more lanes of traffic are moving in the same direction, passing other vehicles in either lane is allowed. However, slower moving vehicles should always stay in the lane farthest to the right except when preparing to make a left turn.

When driving in the right lane, passing another vehicle should be done cautiously, as the driver of the other vehicle may not see you and may turn into your path. Passing on the right of another vehicle by crossing the solid white line that marks the edge of the roadway is prohibited, even if the shoulder is paved or a bike lane is present. It is also illegal to use a right-turn lane for passing.

## Passing Parked Vehicles

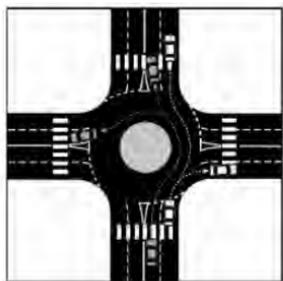
When driving past parked vehicles, watch for vehicles that may pull out in front of you. Look for clues, such as a person in the driver's seat, exhaust coming from a tailpipe, illuminated brake lights, a flashing turn signal, illuminated backup lights, or at parallel parking areas, a vehicle's front wheels turning out. Watch for a vehicle door being opened in front of you. Also, watch for pedestrians or bicyclists trying to cross the road between parked vehicles.

## Passing Vehicles in Slow-Moving Traffic Lanes

In some areas with a long or steep grade, a slow-moving traffic lane may be provided to allow vehicles that are unable to maintain the speed limit to travel without blocking traffic.

These slower-moving vehicles should move into the designated traffic lane, allowing other vehicles to pass them in the second lane.

## 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 right turn onto the desired road.

Approaching the roundabout:

- Slow down before entering a roundabout.



- Look for roadside signs and pavement markings to direct you into the correct lane **before** entering the roundabout.
- As you approach the yield line, look to your left before proceeding into the roundabout.
- When an appropriate gap in traffic appears, enter the roundabout and merge with the flow of the other vehicles. Never make a left turn to enter a roundabout – this will place you in front of oncoming traffic.

#### Traveling in a roundabout:

- Always stay to the right of the center island.
- Vehicles within the roundabout have the right of way.
- Do not stop within a roundabout unless it is the only way to safely avoid a collision or other danger.
- If an emergency vehicle is heard or seen approaching, do not stop. Exit the roundabout, pull over to the right and stop, allowing the emergency vehicle to pass.
- Avoid changing lanes in a multiple-lane roundabout. Move into the lane you need before entering the roundabout.
- Give special consideration to trucks, trailers and other large vehicles. Avoid passing or driving next to large vehicles, as they may need more than one lane to navigate through the roundabout.
- When entering or exiting a roundabout, watch for pedestrians crossing the street.

#### Exiting the roundabout:

- Maintain a slow speed.
- Indicate your exit by using your right turn signal.
- Do not accelerate until you are beyond the pedestrian crossing at the exit.

## Freeway Driving

Freeways are our safest roads. Traffic flows in the same direction. There are no stops or intersections. Pedestrians, small motorcycles of 124 cc or less, mopeds, bicycles, all-terrain vehicles, and slow-moving vehicles are not allowed on freeways.

An entrance ramp allows traffic to enter the freeway. Often, an exit ramp will be next to the entrance ramp. Look for “Do Not Enter” and “Wrong Way” signs and speed limit signs. The entrance ramp usually merges into an acceleration lane allowing you to increase your speed to match freeway traffic speed.

Signal and check for freeway traffic by using the vehicle’s rearview and side-view mirrors and quick glances over your shoulder. Choose a safe space to enter and then merge into traffic. Traffic on the freeway has the right-of-way. Do not count on other drivers to let you in.

- On a two-lane freeway, drive in the right lane except when passing, exiting to the left, allowing another vehicle to merge onto the freeway, when the lanes are fully occupied with heavily congested traffic, or when emergency vehicles or construction workers are on the shoulder.
- On a freeway with three or more lanes of travel in the same direction, you may drive in any lane, however, if driving at or near the minimum speed limit, drivers should stay in the lane with the slower moving traffic. A commercial vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, a truck tractor, or a combination vehicle with a trailer must stay in either of the two lanes farthest to the right, unless otherwise designated.
- Merge signs are placed near freeway entrances to alert you to traffic entering the freeway. Always watch for vehicles merging onto the freeway. Adjusting your speed or moving safely into another lane will allow drivers to enter the freeway smoothly and safely.
- Always watch for drivers who suddenly slow down when approaching an exit or swerve into the exit lane unexpectedly.

## Leaving a Freeway

Most freeway exits have a special deceleration lane to slow down in when exiting the freeway. Look ahead for exit ramp signs you want and the lane you must use. Check in front, behind, and to the side for traffic. Signal your intention early and then move into the proper lane.

Avoid slowing down on the freeway when exiting. Wait until you are fully in the deceleration lane before reducing your speed, and then slow down gradually. Many ramps have sharp curves, so it is important to obey the posted exit ramp speed limit.

If you miss your exit ramp, never back up, turn around, or use a median crossover. Instead, drive to the next exit. Get back on the freeway and return to the exit you want. Never use the crossover lane in the median. It is only for emergency and Michigan Department of Transportation vehicles.

## Fatigue

One of the greatest dangers in freeway driving is fatigue. On long trips you can become sleepy or hypnotized by the constant hum of the wind, tires, and engine. If necessary, let someone else drive. Do not rely on coffee or “stay awake” drugs.

If you feel tired, stop and rest for a 10-minute break at least every two hours. Pull off the highway at the next exit. Find a motel or rest area and relax.

If you must drive, keep shifting your eyes from one area of the road to another. Keep checking the mirrors. Look at objects near and far, left and right.

## Cruise Control

Cruise control is best suited for use in rural areas where there is not much traffic. Set the cruise control at or below the posted speed limit. This steady pace saves gasoline and allows for acceleration to pass slower moving vehicles without blocking the left lane for extended periods. Acceleration does not cancel the cruise control setting—depressing the brake pedal will.

Using cruise control in heavy traffic, near large numbers of exit and entrance ramps, or when roads are slippery from rain, snow, or ice is not recommended. This could require the constant resetting of the cruise control to the point you are distracted, increasing your risk of being involved in a crash. Most vehicle

manufacturers do not recommend using cruise control when towing heavy loads.

## Parking Your Vehicle

Crashes sometimes occur because people did not park their vehicles properly. Whenever you park and leave your vehicle, always turn off the engine and set the parking brake. Take the keys and lock your vehicle. Do not rely on the transmission to hold your vehicle in place. Exiting your vehicle into the street can be dangerous. Watch for bicycles, motorcycles, mopeds, or other vehicles that might be passing. Check the mirrors before opening the door for traffic that may not see you. When returning to your vehicle, face oncoming traffic as you approach the driver's side.

## Parking on a Hill

To park on a hill, turn the tires so that if the unattended vehicle starts to roll, it moves into the curb. Always use the parking brake. You cannot expect the transmission to hold your vehicle on a hill.

## Parking Violations

Communities may pass parking ordinances for local streets that are stricter than state law. Signs will be posted at the city limits. The owner of a vehicle parked illegally is responsible for any parking tickets. If the vehicle is being leased, the person leasing it is responsible. The following is a partial list of “no parking laws.”



## Never Park:

Never Park:

- Where “no stopping,” “no standing,” “no parking,” and “no parking at any time” signs are posted.
- Within 500 feet of a fire or a crash.
- In a space reserved for the disabled, unless you are properly using a disability license plate or placard.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.

- Within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street or, when marked, within 75 feet of the driveway on the other side of the street.
- Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing.
- In front of any driveway, alley, theater, emergency exit, or fire escape.
- Next to a road where you block the view of drivers turning at an intersection.
- More than 12 inches from the curb or against the flow of traffic. This means the curb should never be more than 12 inches from your vehicle when parked.
- Within 30 feet of a stop sign, traffic light, or flashing beacon, including a warning sign.
- In a lane of a highway outside city or village limits if there is a highway shoulder.
- On a bridge or overpass, under a bridge, or in a tunnel.
- On a sidewalk or in front of a public or private driveway.
- Within an intersection, crosswalk, or designated bike lane.
- Within 20 feet of a marked crosswalk, or 15 feet of an intersection if there is no crosswalk.
- On the street-side of a legally parked vehicle (double parking).
- In a manner that obstructs delivery of mail to a rural mailbox.

## Children Left in Unattended Vehicles

Under Michigan law, it is illegal to leave children less than 6 years old unattended in a vehicle if the amount of time or circumstances in which they are left poses an unreasonable risk of harm or injury. Parents or guardians who leave their children in a vehicle under the supervision of someone age 13 or older who is not legally incapacitated are not in violation of the law.

Make sure your children are safe from harm if you must leave your vehicle. And, do not forget about your pets. Pets left alone in vehicles may also suffer injury or harm.

## How to Reduce Auto Theft/Carjacking

Auto theft costs motorists millions of dollars each year. Be aware of your surroundings, especially who is around your vehicle, whether you are driving or leaving your vehicle in a parking lot. When parking your vehicle, park in a well-lighted lot, close all windows, keep expensive goods out of sight and locked up, remove the keys, and lock the vehicle. Consider buying a vehicle alarm. To report auto theft, telephone the police. Then telephone HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) at (800) 242-HEAT.

In a carjacking, one or more people take a car from the owner by force. Sometimes, they stage a minor rear-end incident called a “bump and run” at a traffic light or stop sign. When you get out to inspect the damage, one person robs you while the other steals your vehicle. If you are confronted with this situation, stay in your car. Wait for police or drive to an area where help is available. If you are threatened, prepare to drive on.

### Other Safety Tips

- Keep your vehicle in good working condition.
- Have your vehicle identification number (VIN) chemically etched on the car window and main parts to help prevent your car from being stolen for parts.
- Alarms and interlocks to prevent other kinds of car theft can also discourage amateur carjackers.
- Tell people your route and estimated time of arrival at your beginning and ending stops.
- When driving, keep doors and windows locked. Stay alert for danger. If available, take freeways rather than streets through high-crime areas.
- Close a sunroof at night and in high-risk areas.
- Do not get out to fix a flat tire. Try to drive slowly to a service station or store with a well-lighted parking lot and telephone for service.
- Choose the safest route to any destination.
- Park as close to that destination as possible.
- Always have keys ready when returning to the car. Be aware of your surroundings and people who appear to

be in the wrong place, seem suspect, or whose demeanor makes you uncomfortable. While you are still outside the car, check the interior for possible intruders.

- If someone acting suspiciously approaches your vehicle, try to drive away or sound the horn.
- In case of danger, stay inside the locked car.
- If you are in trouble, use a cell phone if available.
- If a carjacker wants the vehicle, give it up without a fight. A car can be replaced, but personal safety is priceless. Stay calm. Get a good description of the carjackers.

## **Tall Loads and Low Bridges - Bridge Hits and Damages**

A bridge hit is when a vehicle, its load, or equipment collide with a bridge or an overpass. Every year, these structures are damaged by vehicles or their loads that were too tall to pass safely underneath.

- Bridge hits are dangerous because the driver may be killed or seriously injured.
- An accident may cause the death of another driver or member of the public.
- You may be liable for the costs of bridge damage, examination, and repair.
- You may be prosecuted for traffic offenses.

Save lives by knowing or doing the following:

- Know the height and width of your vehicle and its load.
- Do not assume that the heights posted at bridges and overpasses are correct. Repaving or packed snow may have reduced the clearance since the heights were posted. Know your route and check the height of bridges before beginning your trip. Resources such as the Michigan Truck Operators' Map can help you plan your route.

# 9 Sharing the Road Safely - Be Courteous!

Drivers of all ages need to be concerned with traffic laws, courtesy, and safety. This chapter reminds you that you share the road with a variety of traffic such as commercial trucks, emergency vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, bicyclists, and pedestrians. It is important to be patient with all who use the road. The material presented here will also help you understand how to drive in a manner that reduces the risk of a traffic crash and the risk of road rage.

Safe driving involves more than learning the basics of operating a vehicle and memorizing the rules of the road. Safe driving also requires good judgment and reflexes, experience, patience, and common sense.

A young driver's understanding and judgment may not be as well developed as an experienced driver's. Middle-aged drivers may grow complacent about their driving ability after years of driving. Older drivers have years of experience on the road, but may face challenges brought about by losses in vision, hearing, attentiveness, decision-making ability, or reaction time. Research indicates older drivers can improve their driving ability through additional training, enabling them to maintain their driver's license while driving safely. Some communities offer driving skill programs for older drivers.

## Distracted Driving

Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests that distracted driving plays a significant role in traffic crashes. In 2009, 5,474 people were killed (16 percent of total fatalities) and an estimated 448,000 people were injured (20 percent of total injuries) in crashes in which distracted driving is believed to have played a role.

While these numbers are significant, they may understate the size of the problem since identifying the distraction and its role in a crash can be difficult.

Most drivers understand the responsibility of getting behind the wheel and avoiding risky behaviors. Distracted drivers who drive “in a careless or negligent manner likely to endanger any person or property” or “in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property” are subject to prosecution under Michigan law.

Texting while driving is illegal in Michigan and this includes reading, typing, or sending a text message. Exceptions are in place for reporting crashes, crimes, or other emergencies. Drivers face a fine of \$100 for a first offense and \$200 for subsequent violations. No points are assessed and convictions are not posted to a person’s driving record.

Anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, or your mind off your driving can be a big problem. Studies show that your brain cannot give full attention to more than one activity at a time. Even seemingly simple tasks such as tuning a radio can be risky, especially in bad weather or heavy traffic. In the estimated quarter of a second it takes the brain to shift attention between two tasks, a car going 65 mph covers 24 feet.

Here are some ways you can minimize in-vehicle distractions:

Before driving:

- Designate a front-seat passenger to serve as a “co-pilot,” rather than fumble with maps or navigation systems. If you are driving alone, map out destinations in advance.
- Be familiar with equipment in the vehicle. Practice performing basic functions such as adjusting the temperature or radio settings without taking your eyes off the road.
- Preprogram your favorite radio stations for easy access and arrange tapes and CDs in an easy-to-reach spot.
- Ensure all children are comfortable and properly buckled up. Teach them the importance of good behavior and remaining buckled up while in a vehicle. Do not underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to them in the car.

- Complete any personal grooming before you start driving or after you reach your destination.

While driving:

- Give priority to the task of driving. A momentary distraction can lead to a crash. Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Avoid using cell phones, texting devices, navigation systems, and other electronic gadgets.
- If you must use a cell phone, the best practice is to make your call while your vehicle is safely parked.
- Do not take notes, read, or look up phone numbers.
- Avoid involved, stressful, or confrontational conversations.
- If you can't avoid eating, choose easy-to-handle items and make sure all drinks are secured in cup holders.
- Take a break if you find yourself “lost in thought” or tired.

## **Tips for Sharing the Road When Driving**

When driving, you'll share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, trucks, farm tractors, and road repair and snow removal equipment. Keep the following guidelines in mind when driving:

- Be alert and use extra care when sharing the road with pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, and mopeds. They are small and hard to see. Keep in mind that children are especially unpredictable in their movements and may be hard to spot due to their small size.
- Watch for delivery and commercial vehicles that make frequent stops. Allow more following distance than usual.
- Check your vehicle mirrors and look over your shoulder for approaching traffic when pulling into traffic from curbside parking or driveways.

- Be alert and listen for all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles and watch for signs warning of trails and crosswalks along the roadway.

## Pedestrians

As a driver, watch out and always yield the right-of-way to people walking, jogging, biking, crossing a street in the middle of a block, or darting from between parked vehicles. Watch for them when entering a street from a driveway or alley, at stop signs, traffic signals, roundabouts, crosswalks, and intersections.

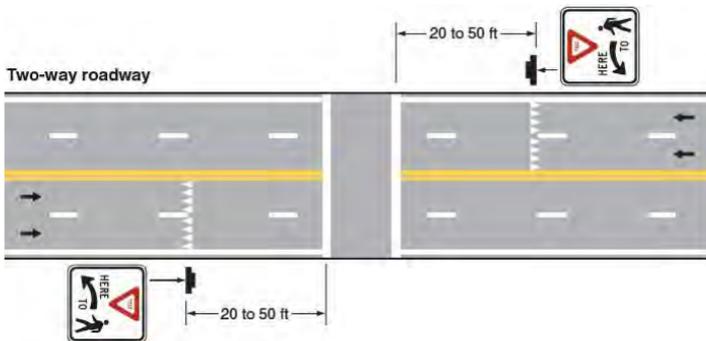


Take extra care when people with disabilities are crossing the road. Be on high-alert for children entering the street when driving near schools, playgrounds, or residential neighborhoods.

After a traffic light turns green, yield to people crossing a street or vehicles that may still be turning in front of you or crossing the intersection. Even if traffic lights or crosswalks are not present, drivers must still yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway. Never attempt to pass any vehicle that has stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross. Drivers must take every possible precaution to avoid a collision with pedestrians.

Motorists are cautioned that pedestrians are likely to cross in the middle of the block, whether or not a crosswalk is present.

Mid-block crosswalks provide pedestrians with safe crossing along roadways at places other than intersections. A yield line is sometimes used to indicate the location where drivers should stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.



Mid-block crosswalk

When there are no sidewalks, pedestrians should walk on the side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Parents should teach their children this, but drivers must watch for pedestrians.

Be alert for joggers running along roadways. Joggers should wear reflective clothing, use sidewalks or roadway shoulders, and avoid jogging at night, dawn, dusk, or during bad weather. Joggers, like other pedestrians, should be on the side of the road facing oncoming traffic.

## Blind Pedestrians

Michigan law requires you to stop or yield the right-of-way when you see a pedestrian with a white cane or guide dog. Only the blind may carry white canes. Avoid honking the horn or revving the engine; these noises are distracting and cover important audible cues used by the blind. Also avoid blocking designated crosswalks. This makes it especially difficult for a visually impaired or blind person to cross the street. It is also an inconvenience for others attempting to cross and violates the rule of always yielding to pedestrians.

## Emergency Vehicles

Yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle that is approaching from any direction or has stopped when it is displaying flashing warning lights, sounding a siren or other audible warning, or both.

An authorized emergency vehicle includes:



- Ambulances, fire department and police vehicles, privately owned vehicles of volunteer or paid fire fighters if authorized by the chief of an organized fire department, privately owned motor vehicles of volunteer or paid members of a life-support agency licensed

by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs if authorized by the life-support agency.

- A vehicle owned and operated by a federally recognized, nonprofit, charitable organization that is used exclusively for assistance during that emergency.



- A tow truck or wrecker with a flashing, rotating, or oscillating red or amber light that is clearly marked and readily recognizable as a vehicle used to assist disabled vehicles.

Failure to yield or exercise due caution when passing a stopped emergency vehicle is a civil infraction. In addition, it is a felony to injure or kill emergency personnel for failure to yield or exercise due caution when passing a stationary emergency vehicle. For more information about the points given for traffic convictions involving emergency vehicles, please refer to pages 38, 58, 62 and 63.

### **When you see a stopped emergency vehicle:**

- Slow down and move over a lane if possible. If traffic or other conditions prevent you from changing lanes, you must slow down and proceed with due caution.

### **When an emergency vehicle is approaching:**

- Pull over to the edge of the roadway, clear of intersections, and stop.
- Remain there until the emergency vehicle has passed. Watch for others. There may be several other emergency vehicles.
- Keep a foot on the brake so the brake lights let emergency vehicle drivers know you have stopped.
- Stay at least 500 feet behind any moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights and sounding a siren.
- Never pass a moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights unless directed to do so by the emergency vehicle driver or a law enforcement officer.

## Sharing the Road with Commercial Vehicles



When a commercial vehicle such as a truck or a bus collides with smaller vehicles, people in the smaller vehicles are much more likely to be severely injured or killed. Motorists should understand the following about commercial vehicles:

- Commercial vehicle drivers cannot stop or maneuver their vehicles as easily as a passenger vehicle. They take longer to stop. A passenger vehicle traveling at 55 mph can stop in about 130 feet to 140 feet. A commercial vehicle traveling at the same speed takes 400 feet to stop.
- Commercial vehicle drivers may not be able to see vehicles alongside or close behind their commercial vehicles. Commercial vehicles have deep blind spots behind and on both sides. Stay out of their blind spots.
- Commercial vehicles need room to make right turns. They may swing wide to the left to safely negotiate a right turn.
- When you see a commercial vehicle with its right turn signal on at an intersection, know that the truck is going to make a wide right turn. Do not try to pass on the right-hand side or you might get squeezed between the truck and the curb. Stay behind trucks making right turns.

The factors above are the result of size and weight differences between the two types of vehicles, but vehicle size and weight do not cause crashes—drivers do. Remember to:

- Keep a safe distance behind a truck or bus. Following a commercial vehicle too closely greatly increases the chances of a rear-end collision. When your passenger vehicle is right behind a commercial vehicle, the driver cannot see it and it severely limits what you can see on the road ahead. Extend the distance between your vehicle and a commercial vehicle as weather or road conditions deteriorate.

- You increase the chances for a crash the longer you drive in the blind spots of commercial vehicles. A good rule of thumb is if you cannot see the commercial vehicle driver in the truck's side mirror, then the driver cannot see you.
- When following a commercial vehicle, observe its turn signals before trying to pass. Cutting in between a commercial vehicle and the curb or shoulder to the right may result in a crash. If the commercial vehicle appears to be starting a left turn, wait and verify which way the driver is signaling before passing on the right.
- Signal intended lane changes or turns well in advance. Never cut off a truck or bus, force it to slow down, or stop suddenly.
- Be careful when passing a truck or bus. Often, commercial vehicle drivers cannot see you. Allow enough time and distance to pass safely.
- Avoid passing or driving adjacent to larger vehicles in a roundabout.
- Always pass commercial vehicles legally on the left side and maintain a consistent speed when passing. Be sure you can see the entire cab of the truck in your rearview mirror before signaling and pulling in front of the commercial vehicle.
- Never cross behind a commercial vehicle that is preparing to back up or is backing up. Remember, most trailers are eight and a half feet wide and can hide a car completely, preventing the truck driver from even seeing your vehicle.
- Stay behind white stopping lines. White stopping lines are there for a reason. If you stop past the line, commercial vehicles will not be able to complete their turns without hitting you.
- When merging onto the freeway, commercial vehicles may not be able to move over, so match the flow of traffic as closely as possible, pick your spot, and go.

- When exiting the freeway, leave space between you and the vehicle behind you. Plan your move early and always signal your intentions as soon as possible.
- Be even more careful passing a truck with a trailer. Often, a driver must swing out to the left or right before making a turn. The driver may not see you and could force you off the road.
- Slow down if a truck or bus is passing you, especially during bad weather. Splash or spray from their tires can reduce visibility. Start your wipers before the vehicle passes.
- At night, use low beam headlights when following a truck or bus.

## Tips for Motorcycle Operators



Motorcycle operators have the right to use a full traffic lane. Sometimes they may be forced from one side of the lane to the other by strong winds or a bumpy road.

It is important to remember that, because of the motorcycle's smaller size, motorcycles appear to be farther away than they really are, making it hard for other motorists to judge their speed. Any crash between a larger vehicle and a motorcycle almost always injures or kills the motorcyclist.

Motorcycle operators should use hand and arm signals even with their motorcycle's turn signals. For more information, obtain a *Michigan Motorcycle Operator Manual* from a Secretary of State office or visit the Department of State website.

## Tips for Safe Motorcycling

- Get properly trained. Take a motorcycle safety course. More than 60 percent of all fatal motorcycle crashes involve riders who do not have a motorcycle endorsement, a valid driver's license, or both.
- Get your "CY" motorcycle endorsement on your license before you ride. It is the law.

- Choose a motorcycle that is suited to your size, experiences, and skill level.
- Both the motorcycle operator and passenger must wear an approved, properly fastened safety helmet. The safety helmet must meet U.S. Department of Transportation standards and be properly labeled.
- For protection, all motorcycle riders should wear gloves, reflective clothing, jackets and pants that cover arms and legs completely, and sturdy boots or shoes high enough to cover ankles. Bright colors and reflective materials will increase your visibility.
- When riding at 35 mph or more, motorcycle operators must use shatterproof goggles, a face shield, or windshield for eye protection. Eye protection is always recommended.
- About 30 percent of all motorcycle fatalities involve alcohol or drugs. Riding sober is the best way to keep safe on the road. Alcohol and drugs – including certain over-the-counter medications – can adversely affect your driving.

## **Tips for Sharing the Road with Motorcycles**

- It is illegal to drive beside a motorcycle in the same traffic lane. However, two motorcycle riders may drive side by side in the same lane.
- Always treat motorcycle operators with courtesy.
- Leave plenty of extra space between your vehicle and a motorcycle ahead. Motorcycles can usually stop in shorter distances and may suddenly swerve to avoid obstacles.
- Pass as you would another vehicle, but not so fast or so close that your tires throw dirt or stones into the rider's face, or a draft from your vehicle blows the motorcycle about.
- Before changing lanes, check to see if a motorcycle is in the space where you plan to move. After you pass, look again before you move back into the other lane.

Many motorcycle-vehicle crashes happen when drivers fail to check their blind spots before turning, changing lanes, backing up, or parking.

- When at intersections, watch for oncoming motorcycles and other small vehicles. Their smaller size makes it difficult to judge their distance and speed. Always exercise caution at intersections and allow motorcycles or other small vehicles to clear the intersection before beginning your turn.
- The single headlight or taillight of a motorcycle can blend into the lights of other vehicles. A single light in traffic may mean a motorcycle.
- When making left turns, be alert for possible oncoming motorcycles.
- Some motorcycles do not have self-canceling turn signals. So watch for clues such as motorcycle operators or passengers turning their heads to look behind, or motorcycle operators beginning to lean or tilt their vehicles.
- When coming up behind a motorcycle, slow down sooner than you would for other vehicles. Leave plenty of space.
- When pulling out of a side street, remember that an oncoming motorcycle is probably much closer and coming much faster than it appears.

## Tips for Moped Operators

Much of the advice for motorcyclists also applies to moped operators. Moped operators must follow the same traffic rules as other motorists.

All mopeds driven on public roads must be registered. A moped is defined by law as a motor vehicle with two or three wheels that:

- Produces 2.0 horsepower or less.
- Has an engine that does not exceed 50 cc piston displacement.

- Does not have a gearshift.
- Has a top speed of 30 mph or less on a level surface.

Vehicles exceeding any of the above criteria must be registered and titled as a motorcycle. Other types of vehicles, such as electric scooters, “pocket rockets,” and mini-choppers, may fit the definition of a moped or a motorcycle but cannot be registered if they lack all of the vehicle equipment required by law to drive on public roads.

### Tips for Safely Riding a Moped

- Moped operators under age 19 **must wear** a U.S. Department of Transportation approved and properly fastened safety helmet. A safety helmet is strongly recommended for all adult moped operators.
- Ride defensively and expect the unexpected. Be aware of other vehicles, bicyclists, joggers, pedestrians and animals on or crossing the road.
- Ride on the right edge of the road, out of the flow of traffic when possible.
- Perform a safety check before riding your moped. Make sure all equipment is in good working order.
- Never drive a moped on a freeway, sidewalk or bicycle path.
- Carrying passengers is illegal – even if your moped has a passenger seat.
- Never allow anyone without a valid moped or driver’s license to operate your moped.

### Tips for Sharing the Road with Mopeds

- Always treat moped operators with courtesy.
- Leave plenty of extra space between your vehicle and a moped ahead. Mopeds may suddenly swerve to avoid obstacles.
- Be cautious when passing a moped. Do not pass so fast or so close that your tires throw dirt or stones into the

rider's face or a draft from your vehicle blows the moped about.

- Before changing lanes, check to see if a moped is in the space where you plan to move. After you pass, look again before you move back into the other lane.
- When at intersections, watch for oncoming mopeds and other small vehicles. Their smaller size makes it difficult to judge their distance and speed. Always exercise caution at intersections and allow mopeds or other small vehicles to clear the intersection before beginning your turn.
- When making left turns, be alert for possible oncoming mopeds.
- When coming up behind a moped, slow down sooner than you would for other vehicles. Leave plenty of space.

## Tips for Bicyclists



Bicycling is a form of transportation that many people choose to use for both economic and health benefits. Bicyclists may legally ride on Michigan roads, except limited access freeways, and have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. Respect the right-of-way and share the road with bicyclists. They are vulnerable. Both bicyclists and drivers need to share responsibility for avoiding conflicts and communicate intentions while using the roadway.

## Tips for Safe Bicycling

- Always ride in the same direction as other traffic. Never ride against the flow of traffic.
- Obey all traffic laws, including traffic signs, traffic signals and lane markings.
- When riding on the road, stay as far to the right as practical.
- Ride predictably in a straight line of travel.

- Ride defensively and assume that other drivers do not see you.
- Wear a bicycle safety helmet and light colored or reflective clothing.
- Use the appropriate hand signals when turning, slowing or stopping.
- When entering a roundabout, ride in the center of the lane, traveling at or near the speed of circulating traffic. Bicyclists may also walk their bicycles through the intersection using the roundabout’s pedestrian crosswalks.
- If riding at night, a front white headlight and rear red reflector are required by law.

For more information, please refer to *What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know* and *What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know* published by the League of Michigan Bicyclists.

## **Tips for Sharing the Road with Bicyclists**

- Be courteous to bicyclists and share the road safely with them.
- Do not follow bicycles closely. They can stop and maneuver quickly. Be prepared for a bicyclist to swerve to avoid a road hazard.
- When parking your vehicle, check your mirrors before opening your door. Opening a vehicle door in the path of a bicyclist is dangerous and illegal.

### **When passing a bicyclist:**

- If there is oncoming traffic, slow down and wait to pass when traffic clears.
- Do not attempt to “squeeze by.” Leave sufficient space between you and the bicyclist – at least 3 feet is recommended between your side mirror and the bicyclist. Allow more space, at least 5 feet is recommended, for higher speed roads or if a group of bicyclists is present. When driving a larger vehicle, leave extra room to accommodate for extended wheel

wells, mirrors or other equipment that can interfere with a bicyclist.

- Check carefully for bicyclists in your blind spots by glancing over your shoulder and using your rear and side view mirrors, use your turn signals and allow adequate room to pass.
- Return to the lane when the bicyclist can clearly be seen in the rearview mirror.
- A fast moving vehicle creates a lot of airflow and draft around it. Be mindful that your vehicle's "wind blast" can startle or even knock a bicyclist off balance, increasing the risks of a crash.
- Avoid blasting the horn, as loud noises can surprise the bicyclist and may cause a crash.

### **When turning and at intersections:**

- Watch for oncoming bicyclists and other small vehicles. Their smaller size can make it difficult to judge their distance and speed.
- At intersections, treat bicyclists the same as any other vehicle, yield as appropriate especially when they are turning left in front on you.
- Before turning right at an intersection, into a driveway, or pulling off the road, check for bicyclists coming up from behind on the shoulder of the road or in a bicycle lane. As appropriate, yield and allow them to pass before turning. Do not overtake a bicyclist and turn right unless it is safe to do so.
- Obey all lane markings. Do not use a bicycle lane as a passing or turning lane.

## The Segway Scooter (Electric Personal Assistance Mobility Devices)

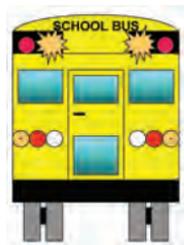
The Segway Scooter is an upright, self-balancing, two-wheeled device that is powered by an electric propulsion system. To operate the scooter, riders stand on the scooter's platform using handlebars for support and shift their weight to propel, steer, and stop. The Segway has a top speed of 15 mph.

Under Michigan law, Segway scooters must follow many of the same regulations involving bicycles and mopeds, including yielding right-of-way to pedestrians and prohibiting the scooter's use on sidewalks or roads if bicycle paths are available. Segway scooters cannot be used on roads with a speed limit of more than 25 mph. In addition, passengers are not allowed on Segway scooters and drivers must not carry any packages, articles, or objects that prevent them from keeping both hands on the scooter's handlebars. If the Segway scooter is ridden at night, it must be equipped with the same lights and reflectors as required on bicycles.

Michigan law also allows local municipalities to post signs in business districts or along waterfronts to further regulate the operation of Segway scooters based on the safety, health, and welfare of their residents. The Department of State does not title or register Segway scooters. For more information about the law and any local ordinances, please contact your local law enforcement agency.

## School Buses: What do the Flashing Lights Mean?

### When the Yellow Overhead Lights are Flashing



- When the YELLOW overhead lights are flashing, prepare to stop.

## When the Red Overhead Lights are Flashing



- When the RED overhead lights are flashing, stop at least 20 feet from the school bus.
- Remain stopped until the flashing red lights are turned off or the bus resumes its travels.

## When the Yellow Hazard Lights are Flashing



- When the YELLOW hazard lights are flashing, **proceed with caution**.

It is not necessary to stop for a school bus stopped on the other side of a divided highway where the road is separated by a barrier, such as a concrete or grass median, island, or other structures that separate the flow of traffic. Use extra care around buses and in school zones. Children are small and hard to see and may dart into the street or out from around parked vehicles.

Fines for failing to stop for a school bus are double what would normally be assessed for a moving violation.

Increased fines and imprisonment may result for violations resulting in injury or death.

## Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

Watch for aggressive drivers. Aggressive drivers run stop signs and red lights, speed, tailgate, weave their vehicles in and out of traffic, pass on the right, and may make improper hand gestures. They sometimes yell at you, honk their horns, or flash their headlights. You must watch for these drivers because their actions place them and other motorists at an increased risk for traffic accidents. We have all seen aggressive drivers. They disregard their own safety as well as that of others. Do not be an aggressive driver. Be courteous and aware of the traffic around

you. Take a moment to think about the driving behaviors that bother you. If you drive in the same manner, your behavior probably annoys other drivers.

Avoid the following behaviors:

- **Merging improperly.** Failing to merge smoothly disrupts the flow of traffic. Always try to merge smoothly when entering the expressway or turning from one road to another. If you see a driver making an ill-advised merge or turn, slow down and give him or her room. Getting angry will not help and your anger could adversely affect your judgment, resulting in a traffic crash. A driver may be wrong, but how important is it to prove you are right? Do not risk injury or death because you feel you have been wronged when driving. It is much wiser to back off and allow the driver to merge.
- **Driving slowly in the left lane.** Use all lanes properly and obey the speed limit. If you are using the left-hand lane to pass slower traffic and someone tailgates you, move back into the right-hand lane when it is safe to do so and allow the faster traffic to move ahead. Driving in the left-hand lane and allowing traffic to build up behind you increases the chances aggressive drivers may take careless risks attempting to get around you.
- **Tailgating.** This is another aggressive-driver trait. If another driver tailgates you, pull over and let him or her pass. It is much better to have these unsafe drivers in front where you can see them rather than having them driving on your rear bumper.
- **Gestures.** Never gesture at other drivers when you become angry. If another driver is gesturing to you when you have made a driving error, let him or her know you are sorry. Everyone makes mistakes. Returning gestures or becoming angry will not correct your mistake. It will only serve to make both of you angrier and increase the risk of confrontation or a traffic crash. Don't let yourself become a victim of road rage.

Always remember that safe driving is affected by your driving attitude and your ability to control your stress and anger.

# 10 Emergencies and Special Situations

This chapter suggests ways to handle emergencies and special situations. Remember, driving requires complete attention. Unexpected events can happen very quickly, leaving little time to react. Plan ahead.

## Emergencies

- Never stop on a freeway except for an emergency. If you must stop, turn on the emergency hazard flashers, slow down gradually, and pull all the way off the pavement as soon as safely possible.
- When stopped, always be alert for approaching and passing vehicles and stay well off the roadway. Raise the hood, tie a handkerchief on the radio antenna, driver-side door handle or mirror, then lock the doors and wait for assistance. If you must leave your vehicle, close the hood and lock the vehicle.
- When traveling alone or with children at night, it may be a good idea to stay in the vehicle with windows closed and doors locked. It is dangerous and illegal to walk on a freeway.
- If your vehicle's hood opens while driving, slow down while looking through the windshield between the hood and dashboard or out the window for a place to stop safely.
- Carry a flashlight, flares, or warning triangles to warn other drivers of a disabled vehicle at night. Put flares at least 100 feet behind the vehicle at the side of the road. Additional flares placed beside and 100 feet ahead of the vehicle add more protection.

## Braking

Under normal stopping situations, all brake systems are applied the same by applying a steady firm push on the brake

pedal. Under extreme conditions, such as on snow, ice, or in an emergency stop on dry pavement, antilock brake systems work differently than other brake systems. In a vehicle with antilock brakes, apply the brake with hard firm pressure from the start and maintain this pressure until you have stopped. You may feel or hear vibrations or pulsations, this is normal.

In a vehicle without antilock brakes, apply the brakes just hard enough to not lock the wheels. If the wheels do lock, release pressure and apply the brakes again. This method of braking is sometimes referred to as “threshold” or “controlled” braking.

## Skids

When driving on snow or a slippery road, slow down gradually. Test the vehicle’s brakes lightly to get a feel for the road. Most skids happen when a driver tries to turn at too high a rate of speed or stop suddenly on slippery pavement.

To prevent a skid in vehicles with standard brakes, use steady pressure on the brakes without locking them. This method allows the wheels to turn, maintaining steering control. If the vehicle has full antilock brakes, maintain brake pressure and steer.

## To Steer Out of a Skid

If the vehicle begins to skid, remain calm and do the following:

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Turn the front wheels only enough to keep them pointed in the direction you want to go and no farther.
- Be prepared for a secondary skid in the opposite direction.
- Again, turn the wheels in the direction you want to go. Then straighten the wheels to bring the vehicle under control.

## Driving in Bad Weather

Preventive maintenance prior to the winter season is the best way to ensure safe travel. Regularly check fluid levels such as power steering, brake, windshield washer, and oil.

Make sure the antifreeze is strong enough to prevent freezing of the engine and fresh enough to prevent rust. In cold weather, you may also want to change the windshield washer fluid to one containing an antifreezing agent.

Leave extra time and drive more slowly when it is foggy, raining, or snowing and conditions are hazardous. Allow greater following distance in bad weather. In cold weather, bridges and underpasses freeze before the road does.

## Rain

- When it begins to rain, the roads are most slippery during the first half-hour. This is because oil dropped from passing vehicles has not been washed away. Be especially cautious at intersections where oil deposits may be heavier. Slow down and allow at least twice the normal following distance.
- Brakes may become wet after driving through deep water or during heavy rain. Test them, as they may pull to one side or the other, or they may not hold at all. Slow down and gently push on the brake pedal until the brakes work properly again.
- It is possible to lose control of the vehicle on a wet road because the tires ride on top of the water. This is called hydroplaning. This can happen if the vehicle's tires are worn, tire pressure is low or when driving too fast.
- When it is foggy, drive slowly. Turn on the low beam headlights. Be ready for a fast stop. If the fog becomes so thick that you cannot see at all, pull off the pavement and stop. Turn on the four-way emergency flashers and wait until the fog lifts.



## Using the Headlights

The distance you can see ahead is reduced at night, so driving is more dangerous.

- Headlights must be turned on one half-hour after sunset until one half-hour before sunrise, and at other times when visibility is reduced. Use low-beam headlights when it is foggy, raining, or snowing during the day. If you are having trouble seeing other vehicles, they will have trouble seeing you. Turn on your headlights whenever you are in doubt.
- Headlights must be turned on any time there is not enough daylight to see people and vehicles clearly at 500 feet. When the law requires vehicles to have their headlights on, it is illegal to use only the parking lights.
- You should be able to stop within the clear distance you can see ahead. When driving at night, it is most important to drive within the range of the headlights.
- It is illegal to use or even flash high-beam headlights within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle. Also, dim lights for pedestrians and cyclists.
- If oncoming drivers do not dim their headlights, keep your eyes on the right edge of the road ahead. Do not look straight at oncoming headlights. The glare may blind you for several seconds. A dirty windshield will make headlight glare worse.
- Do not use high beams when driving behind other vehicles. The reflection of bright lights in a driver's rearview mirror can be distracting.

## If an Oncoming Vehicle is in Your Lane

- If there is time, tap the horn to warn the other driver.
- Brake hard, but do not lock the wheels in a vehicle that is not equipped with antilock brakes.
- Look for an escape route on the right edge of the road.

- Try not to go to the left since the other driver may see you and return to his or her proper lane.
- Try an emergency stop in your lane only if there is enough room and you cannot pull off the road.
- If you cannot stop before hitting another vehicle, try to steer around the vehicle. Do not turn more than needed to avoid a crash.

## When Involved in a Crash

- Stop and remain at the scene.
- Help secure medical aid for the injured.
- Vehicles involved in traffic crashes that do not result in serious injury or death shall be moved from the main roadway by the driver or passenger with a valid driver's license if the vehicle can be driven and it is safe to do so.
- Notify the police if there are injuries or property damage exceeding \$1,000.00.
- Exchange names, addresses, driver's license numbers, and registration and insurance information with the other driver(s) involved.
- Leaving the scene of an accident could result in fines, imprisonment, or both

## The Vehicle/Deer Collision

About 60,000 vehicle-deer crashes take place in Michigan each year, and officials suspect that as many as half of all such crashes may not be reported. Vehicle-deer crashes are costly. The average crash results in \$2,100 in damages, usually to the front end of the vehicle. Total annual costs for vehicle-deer crashes statewide are estimated at \$130 million.

If you do hit a deer, report it to local law enforcement, the county sheriff's office, the State Police or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. They also can provide a permit to keep it.

Your best defense is to:

- Stay aware, awake, alert, and sober.

- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are your best defense in any collision.
- Be especially alert in fall and spring, but keep in mind that vehicle-deer crashes can occur at any time of the year.
- Watch for deer crossing signs.
- Slow down if you see one deer. Deer frequently travel in groups. Chances are there are others nearby.
- Be especially alert for deer at dawn and dusk.
- Do not rely on gimmicks. Flashing your high-beam headlights or honking your horn will not deter deer.

If a crash with a deer is unavoidable:

- Do not swerve.
- Brake firmly.
- Hold onto the steering wheel with both hands.
- Come to a controlled stop.
- Steer your vehicle well off the roadway.

Motorcyclists are advised to:

- Be alert for deer whenever you ride. Deer crashes happen in urban, suburban and rural areas.
- Slow down. Decreasing speed gives you more time to spot an animal and react.
- Cover the brakes to reduce reaction time.
- Use high beam headlights and additional driving lights when possible.
- If riding in a group, spread out riders in a staggered formation. If one rider hits a deer, this will lessen the chance that other riders will be involved.
- Wear protective gear at all times.

## Other Safety Tips

- Never turn the ignition to the “lock” position while your vehicle is in motion. This will cause the steering to lock. Once the steering locks, if you try to turn the steering wheel, you will lose control of the vehicle.
- Never leave keys in the car or ignition.
- Make sure there is enough gas.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Is there a police or fire station nearby, open service station, or other open business to get help should you need it?
- Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.

# 11 Snowmobiles, ORVs, and Watercraft — Some Facts to Know

Michigan provides many recreational opportunities for snowmobiles, off-road vehicles (ORVs), and watercraft with its extensive network of trails and more than 11,000 lakes. With so many outdoor enthusiasts enjoying Michigan's trails and waterways, we offer this special chapter on snowmobiles, ORVs, and watercraft. Additional information is available on our website at [www.Michigan.gov/sos](http://www.Michigan.gov/sos) or the Department of Natural Resources website at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr).

## Snowmobiles

You may register your snowmobile at any Secretary of State office. All snowmobiles used on public lands must display a three-year registration decal and an annual Snowmobile Trail Permit sticker. Snowmobile trail permits are required for both residents and nonresidents. The registration decal and trail permit are not required for snowmobiles used on private land. Agents of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), including sporting goods stores, local retailers, snowmobile dealers, department stores, and resort motels, sell trail permits. Visit the DNR website, [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr), for the location nearest you. The website also has information about Michigan laws regarding snowmobile operation as well as guides to the snowmobile trails.

## Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs)

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issues all ORV decals. The decals are valid for one year. All ORVs operated on public lands must display a valid ORV decal except in special circumstances. Please contact the DNR for more information.

Some communities in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have recently enacted laws allowing ORVs to travel

on the road. Check with local law enforcement for information specific to your community.

## **Snowmobiles, ORVs, and Alcohol**

Michigan's tough stand against drinking and driving includes snowmobiles and ORVs in an effort to reduce the risk of injury, death, or damage to personal property. Any violations and points you receive for drinking while operating a snowmobile or ORV are placed on your driving record. Points added to your driving record may result in your driver's license being suspended or revoked, preventing you from driving any motor vehicle in Michigan. Fines and penalties increase with additional convictions.

You may also be denied an original Commercial Driver License and an original Driver Training Instructor License.

## **A Summary of Snowmobile (SM) and ORV Crimes**

### **First conviction: Operating While Impaired (OWI)**

Sanctions:

- (ORV) Up to 12 days of community service.
- (SM) Up to 45 days of community service.
- (SM, ORV) Up to 93 days in jail.
- (SM, ORV) Fines up to \$300.
- (SM, ORV) May not operate SM/ORV for 90 days to one year.
- (SM, ORV) Four points added to driving record.

### **Second conviction within seven years: Operating While Impaired (OWI)**

Sanctions:

- (ORV) Up to 12 days of community service.
- (ORV) Up to one year in jail.
- (ORV) Fines up to \$1,000.
- (ORV) May not operate ORV for six months to 18 months.

- (SM) 10 days to 90 days of community service and jail up to one year or up to 90 days community service and jail for two days to one year.
- (SM) Fines from \$200 to \$1,000.
- (SM) May not operate SM for six months to two years.
- (SM, ORV) Four points added to driving record.

**First conviction: Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Operating Under the Influence of Drugs (OUID)/Unlawful Bodily Alcohol Content (UBAC)**

Sanctions – one or more of the following:

- (ORV) Up to 12 days community service.
- (SM) Up to 45 days of community service.
- (SM, ORV) Up to 93 days in jail.
- (SM, ORV) Fines from \$100 to \$500.
- (SM, ORV) May not operate SM/ORV for six months to two years.
- (SM, ORV) Six points added to driving record.
- (SM, ORV) \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**Second conviction within seven years: Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Operating Under the Influence of Drugs (OUID)/Unlawful Bodily Alcohol Content (UBAC)**

Sanctions:

- (ORV) Up to 12 days community service.
- (SM) 10 days to 90 days of community service and jail up to one year or up to 90 days community service and jail for two days to one year.
- (ORV) Up to \$1000 fine.
- (SM) Fines from \$200 to \$1,000.
- (ORV) May not operate ORV for one to two years.
- (SM) Revocation of SM operating privileges.

- (SM, ORV) Six points added to driving record.
- (SM, ORV) \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**Any conviction – causing serious injury (felony): Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)**

Sanctions:

- (SM, ORV) Up to five years in jail or fines from \$1,000 to \$5,000 or both.
- (SM) Revocation of SM operating privileges.
- (SM, ORV) Six points added to driving record.
- (SM, ORV) \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

**Any conviction – causing death (felony): Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)**

Sanctions:

- (SM, ORV) Up to 15 years in jail or fines from \$2,500 to \$10,000 or both.
- (SM) Revocation of SM operating privileges.
- (SM, ORV) Six points added to driving record.
- (SM, ORV) \$1,000 Driver Responsibility fee for two consecutive years.

## Watercraft

All watercraft on Michigan waters, including privately owned lakes and waterways, must be registered except:

- Watercraft 16 feet or less, propelled by oars or paddles, and not used for rental or commercial purposes.
- Nonmotorized canoes and kayaks not used for rental or commercial purposes, rafts, surfboards, sailboards, and swim floats, regardless of length.

- Watercraft registered in another state and used only temporarily in Michigan.

For most watercraft, the registration fee is based on the length of the watercraft. All registrations expire on March 31 in the third year of issuance.

### **A Note About Personal Watercraft**

Personal watercraft (PWC) are a popular form of recreation on Michigan's lakes and rivers. To operate a PWC in Michigan, the following age requirements are in effect:

- If you were born after Dec. 31, 1978, you must have a boating safety certification to operate a PWC.
- You must be at least age 14 to operate a PWC.
- No child under age 12 may operate a PWC. However, children ages 12 and 13 may operate a PWC **if all of the following apply:**
  - The child is accompanied solely by the parent or legal guardian.
  - Both the child and parent or guardian have a boating safety certificate.
  - The PWC is equipped with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch that is attached to the parent or guardian.
- **Beginning October 2011**, the age requirements for operating a PWC change:
  - You must be at least age 16 to operate a PWC.
  - No child under age 14 may operate a PWC.
  - Children ages 14-15 may operate a PWC if they are accompanied by a parent, guardian or designated adult age 21 or older, OR if they are operating the PWC within 100 feet of a parent, legal guardian or designated adult age 21 or older.

## A Summary of Watercraft Crimes

By operating a vessel on Michigan waters, you have consented to be tested for alcohol or drugs if arrested by a law enforcement official.

### **Operating While Intoxicated (OWI)/Operating Under the Influence of Drugs (OUID)**

Sanctions:

First conviction

- May not operate a watercraft for six months to one year.

Second conviction within seven years

- May not operate a watercraft for one to two years.

Third conviction within 10 years

- Revocation of watercraft operating privileges.

### **Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Unlawful Bodily Alcohol Content (UBAC)/Operating Under the Influence of Drugs (OUID)/Combined OUIL/UBAC/Combined OUIL/OUID**

Sanctions:

First conviction

- May not operate a watercraft for one to two years.

Second conviction within seven years

- May not operate a watercraft for two years.

Third conviction within 10 years

- Revocation of watercraft operating privileges.

### **Operating Under the Influence of Liquor (OUIL)/Operating Under the Influence of Drugs (OUID) (causing injury—felony)/OUIL/OUID (causing death—felony)**

Sanctions:

- Revocation of watercraft operating privileges.

# 12

## **Titles, Insurance, Registrations, and License Plates**

Vehicles are required to be titled, registered, insured, and display a valid license plate to operate on Michigan roadways. The Department of State provides a variety of ways Michigan motorists may easily complete these requirements. In this chapter, you will find information on how to register and keep your motor vehicle legal.

### **Title Certificates**

A title is a legal document that shows who owns certain property. In Michigan, motor vehicles, trailer coaches, trailers weighing 2,500 pounds or more empty, off-road vehicles, pickup campers, mobile homes, and watercraft 20 feet and over or with a permanently affixed engine must be titled.

### **New Residents**

New Michigan residents must *immediately* title and register their vehicles at a Secretary of State office and turn in the titles or other proofs of ownership from their previous home state. “Resident” means every person who resides in this state and establishes that he or she is legally present in the United States.

### **Buying a Vehicle in Another State**

If your vehicle was purchased in another state, submit the assigned title or proof of ownership when applying for Michigan title and registration. Tax will be due on either the purchase price or the retail value of the vehicle, whichever is greater. However, credit may be given for taxes paid in another state.

### **Buying a Vehicle from a Dealer**

When you buy a new or used vehicle from a licensed Michigan dealer, the dealer provides all forms and ownership documents, collects the fees and taxes, files the title application with a Secretary of State office within 15 days from the date of

delivery, purchases or transfers the license plate, and provides copies of all paperwork.

By law, the dealer must immediately provide a copy of each document you sign at the time of signing. Never sign any blank documents or sign a document without reading it carefully.

## **Buying a Vehicle from an Individual**

When buying a vehicle titled in Michigan from an individual, all owners named on the face of the title must sign the title assignment as sellers. The title assignment must show the name and address of the purchasers, the name and address of the sellers, the date of sale, the current mileage reading, and the selling price. The seller must either keep a photocopy of the reassigned title or a bill of sale (record of sale) with the buyer's name, address, driver's license number, purchase price, date of sale, and buyer's signature as proof that ownership of the vehicle changed.

The title transfer must be filed with the Department of State within 15 days from the date of the sale to avoid a late fee. If the title shows there was a lien (loan) on the vehicle, you need to get a discharge of lien from the lending institution shown on the title. Submit the discharge form with the title.

By law, you may drive an unregistered vehicle to the first place of storage (usually home) within three days of purchase. You must carry the properly assigned title and use the most direct route.

## **Tax Liability**

Although the Department of State collects use tax when the title is transferred, the final determination of the tax owed on vehicle transfers is made by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

Use tax is due on the purchase price or the retail value of the vehicle, whichever is greater.

If the Department of Treasury determines the tax liability differs from the amount collected with the title transfer, you must pay the difference plus interest. Additional penalties, including criminal prosecution, may apply.

## **Use Tax Exemption for a Relative**

Michigan law grants an exemption from use tax when the buyer and seller have a qualifying relationship limited to spouse; mother, stepmother; father, stepfather; brother, stepbrother; sister, stepsister; child, adopted child and stepchild; grandparent; grandchild; legal ward; and legally-appointed guardian with a certified letter of guardianship.

## **Relationships that Do Not Qualify for a Tax Exemption**

Relationships that do not qualify for a tax exemption include all in-laws (for example: father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law), aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, step-grandparents, step-grandchildren, former spouses, and common-law relationships unless the common-law marriage took place before Jan. 1, 1957.

## **Supporting Your Claim**

Anyone claiming a use tax exemption based on a family relationship may be requested by the Michigan Department of Treasury to produce documents supporting the claim. Documents supporting your claim must show the relationship of the new owner to the previous owner.

It is not the responsibility of Secretary of State offices to verify claims, so you do not need to have supporting documents with you when you transfer the title. For additional tax exemption information please contact the Michigan Department of Treasury at (517) 636-4730.

## **Odometer Statement**

Under federal and state law, the mileage for most motor vehicles must be recorded when assigning a title. Vehicles 10 years old or older are exempt. The seller enters the mileage reading in the indicated area of the title assignment and states whether the mileage is actual, not actual, or whether the odometer has rolled over.

Buyers should compare the declared mileage with the mileage shown on the odometer.

## Selling a Vehicle

Complete the seller's portions of the title assignment by entering the vehicle mileage, the buyer's name and address, date, and selling price. If more than one owner is named on the front of the title, each person must sign his or her full name as seller. Have the buyer enter his or her name, address, and signature in the buyer's portion of the title assignment. Alterations on a title void it. Give the buyer the release form if a lien (loan) is shown on the title.

Under Michigan's Abandoned Vehicle Law, you are required to either accompany the buyer to a Secretary of State office to complete the title transfer or maintain a record of the sale for not less than 18 months. The record of sale, which serves as proof that the vehicle ownership has changed, can be a photocopy of the reassigned title, a bill of sale or other document with the buyer's name, address, driver's license number, and signature as well as the purchase price and date of sale.

Maintaining a record of sale for any vehicle you sell ensures you will not be held liable if it is ever abandoned.

Keep the license plate. You may be able to transfer it to your next vehicle. Never leave the license plate on the vehicle or let the buyer use it. If you are selling the vehicle to a family member, the plate can be transferred with the vehicle to the new owner. Contact your insurance company to cancel coverage on the sold vehicle.

## Insurance Required

Owners of passenger vehicles and trucks must purchase Michigan no-fault insurance before registering the vehicle. Motorcycles must also be insured, but are not required to carry no-fault insurance. Out-of-state insurance policies cannot be used to meet Michigan insurance requirements for registering a vehicle. The Department of State will not issue or renew the vehicle's license plate if you do not have proof of insurance.

Keep proof of insurance in your vehicle or carry it with you whenever you drive. Under the Driver Responsibility Law, you will be ticketed for no proof of insurance if you cannot produce your insurance certificate when asked by a law enforcement officer. The court may dismiss the citation if you can prove

before the appearance date that your vehicle was properly insured at the time you were ticketed.

If a false certificate of insurance is shown to a law enforcement officer, the plate will be canceled and you may be sentenced up to one year in jail and fined up to \$1,000.

## Registration

All motor vehicles and trailers used on Michigan roads must be registered and display valid license plates. To register a motor vehicle, provide proof of Michigan no-fault insurance and either the previous registration or proof of ownership.

When renewing a license plate, you will receive a new registration certificate. Keep the registration with you or in your vehicle. You will be asked to show the registration and proof of insurance if stopped by a law enforcement officer. **If the vehicle is used commercially, sign the registration in the space provided.**

Your license plate, including a personalized plate, for your automobile, motor home, pickup, motorcycle, or van expires on your birthday.

Trailers and trailer coaches are issued a permanent, nontransferable trailer plate based on the unit's weight.

You also have the option to buy a Recreation Passport when purchasing or renewing a vehicle registration. A Recreation Passport gives you access to all state parks and state-owned public boat sites.

The Passport costs \$10 for vehicles and \$5 for motorcycles. You will be issued a special tab with a "P" on it and a new registration with the words "Recreation Passport" as proof of purchase. There is no separate state park sticker. Your Recreation Passport expires when your vehicle registration expires and may be renewed each year.

## Low-Speed Vehicles

A valid driver's license is required to operate a low-speed vehicle. A low-speed vehicle is a four-wheel motor vehicle whose maximum speed is at least 20 mph but not more than 25 mph. They are subject to regular titling and registration requirements, and all traffic laws. They may be operated on public roads having a speed limit of 35 mph or less and are allowed to cross roads with higher speed limits.

## License Plate Renewal Forms

### Providing Proof of Insurance

If your insurance company has electronically verified your vehicle insurance coverage with the Department of State, you will find either a nine-digit personal identification number (PIN) or the phrase “insurance verified electronically” in the lower-left corner of your registration renewal notice. Proof of insurance is not required for renewals with a PIN or “insurance verified electronically.”

If the insurance coverage on your vehicle could not be verified, your renewal notice will have the phrase “Proof of insurance required” in the lower-left corner. You may renew by mail or at a branch office by providing proof of insurance and your registration renewal notice.

### Renewing Online or at a Self-Service Station

You can renew online at **[www.ExpressSOS.com](http://www.ExpressSOS.com)** or at a Self-Service Station if your renewal notice has a PIN or the phrase “insurance verified electronically” on it. Visit the Branch Office Locator at the Department of State website for a list of Self-Service Station locations.

To renew online or at a Self-Service Station, follow the easy instructions in your renewal notice. You can also submit a change of address when renewing online. For any other changes, please visit a Secretary of State office to renew.

Payment is by Discover, Visa, or MasterCard. A nominal processing fee may be charged. If renewing online, your new registration and tab will be mailed within 14 business days to the address on file with the department. If renewing at a Self-Service Station, your new registration and tab are issued immediately.

### Renewing by Mail

Renewing by mail is a convenient way to renew. You should receive a license plate renewal notice in the mail about 45 days before your license plate expires. Please make sure all information is correct. Indicate address changes on the renewal notice. In the envelope provided, return your renewal notice, payment, and proof of Michigan no-fault insurance (if your

renewal notice does not contain a PIN or the phrase “insurance verified electronically”). Payment is by check, money order, or Discover, Visa, or MasterCard. A nominal processing fee may be charged.

If you did not receive a license plate renewal notice, you may still renew at a Secretary of State office with your current registration and proof of insurance. All branch offices accept cash, checks, and money orders as well as Discover and MasterCard at the counter – a nominal processing fee is charged for credit card use.

If you no longer own the vehicle or plate, destroy the renewal notice.

## **License Plates Stay with the Owner**

When you buy a license plate for your vehicle, the plate stays in your name. If you sell the vehicle, keep your license plate and registration. However, if you sell the vehicle to a family member, the plate can be transferred with the vehicle to the new owner.

After selling a vehicle, you may also transfer its plate to another vehicle you own. You will need to visit a Secretary of State office to complete the plate transfer.

Permanent trailer plates cannot be transferred to another trailer.

## **Personalized License Plates**

Personalized license plates are available in the standard white, Spectacular Peninsulas, veteran and military service, university, patriotic, and special cause versions. The Department of State’s online *Plate It Your Way* program allows you to check the availability of a personalized plate before going to a branch office to order it. *Plate It Your Way* saves you time and makes it easy to design the personalized plate you want. Personalized plates cannot be ordered online; they must be ordered in person at a branch office. Personalized plates may be renewed each year for the annual registration fee plus a yearly service fee, which is used for litter cleanup along state roads.

## **Specialty and Fundraising License Plates**

The Department of State offers a variety of license plate styles. Choices include the standard white plate, Spectacular

Peninsulas plate, and several plates recognizing veterans, ex-prisoners of war, and members of the National Guard and Military Reserve.

The Department of State also offers fundraising license plates to raise money for the Northern Michigan Olympic Education Center, Michigan's 15 state-supported universities, the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts of America, and the following six state-supported causes: agricultural heritage, children, lighthouses, veterans, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

### **30- and 60-Day Permits**

The Secretary of State issues 30- or 60-day temporary permits if you want to move an unlicensed vehicle. Bring proof of ownership, such as a title or previous registration, and proof of Michigan no-fault insurance. These permits cannot be issued for a vehicle used to transport passengers for hire or for transporting goods, wares, or merchandise commercially.

# 13 Disabilities and Parking

This chapter provides information on disabilities and parking. Laws for parking vehicles and issuing disability parking placards and license plates are intended to allow persons with ambulatory disabilities or blindness easier access when conducting business, shopping, or enjoying the many attractions Michigan offers. All drivers must be aware of Michigan's disability parking laws, which are enforced by local municipalities.

## License Plates for Individuals with Disabilities

If you have a disability that significantly limits your ability to walk, or are legally blind, you can obtain a disability license plate at no extra cost. The license plate allows you, or someone driving your vehicle while transporting you, to park in any disability parking space.

A household member may also apply for a disability license plate if he or she is responsible for providing your transportation.

Disability license plates are also issued to facilities serving and transporting persons with disabilities. Disability license plate applications may be printed from the Department of State website and are available at Secretary of State offices. Your physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner must certify your disability license plate application.

## Reduced Fee Registration for Certain Vans

Under state law, if you use a wheelchair and own a van with a disability license plate, or if someone in your household owns the van and uses it to transport you, then the standard vehicle registration fee is reduced 50 percent.

## Disability Parking Placards

A disability parking placard allows you, or someone transporting you, to park in any disability parking space. Use the placard to park in a disability parking spot when you are in a vehicle that does not have a disability license plate.

Never loan your placard to someone else – the placard is issued in your name for your use only.

The Department of State issues two types of disability parking placards. A temporary disability parking placard is issued for up to six months, usually to people who are temporarily disabled because of injury such as a broken leg, surgery, or a medical condition that is expected to improve. A temporary placard may not be renewed when it expires. A new application must be completed before another placard can be issued.

A permanent disability parking placard is issued for four years to people with a disability that is medically not expected to improve. A permanent placard may be renewed for an additional four-year period at any Secretary of State office. This renewal can be done up to 45 days prior to a placard's expiration. No additional application needs to be completed.

Applications for disability parking placards are available at Secretary of State offices, by calling (517) 322-1473 or from the department's website. Your physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner must complete and sign the application before you submit it to the Department of State.

Do not drive with a disability placard hanging from your rearview mirror. This reduces your ability to see clearly. Display the disability placard after parking your vehicle and remove it before driving.

## Free Parking

Free parking is offered to persons with severe disabilities and requires the use of a free parking sticker.

A person with a disability must have a valid driver's license to qualify for a free parking sticker.

Free parking at public ramps and parking meters is limited to those people who have the free parking sticker attached to their disability placard.

Free parking is issued only if a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or chiropractor certifies that the person with a disability lacks the manual dexterity to put coins in a meter, cannot walk more than 20 feet, or cannot access a meter due to use of a wheelchair or other device.

Persons with a disability who qualify for free parking must display a disability placard with the free parking sticker attached. A disability license plate alone does not qualify for free parking.

## Disability Parking Spaces

It is illegal to park in a disability parking space if you do not have a valid disability license plate or parking placard, even if you have a disability. It is also illegal to park in a disability parking space – even with a disability license plate or placard – if none of the occupants in the vehicle have a disability.



## Van Accessible Parking

Van accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces. This provides space for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp, allowing the person with a disability room to exit and enter the vehicle. For this reason, it is extremely important not to park within the painted area of the van accessible parking space, including the access aisle (painted area on either side of the disability parking space). Doing so may prevent the person with a disability from exiting or entering the vehicle.



Under state law, law enforcement or a governmental agency designated by law enforcement may issue tickets and tow away vehicles of drivers who:

- Park, stop, or stand in a disability parking space.
- Park in a defined access aisle or access lane adjacent to a van accessible disability parking space.
- Park in a manner that interferes with a ramp or a curb cut used by persons with disabilities.

## Penalties for Misuse of a Disability License Plate or Parking Placard

Improper use, forging, or copying of a disability license plate or parking placard may result in a fine of up to \$500.

Misuse of a disability license plate or placard deprives a person with a disability the use of a parking space. Not only is this a great inconvenience for people with disabilities, it may prevent them from conducting their business.

## Pregnant Mother Parking Permits

“Pregnant mother” parking permits are issued as a courtesy by businesses and private industry for the convenience of their customers. The Department of State **does not** issue these permits. Pregnant mother parking permits are nonbinding and are not recognized under state law.

**Test Your Safe Driving Knowledge**  
**What Every Driver Must Know**  
**Selected Questions from the Michigan Driver**  
**Education Classroom Competency Test**  
**(Correct answers may be found on p. 146)**

1. City driving is more dangerous than expressway driving because of the:
  - a. Lower speed limits.
  - b. Narrower driving lanes.
  - c. Cross traffic and pedestrians.
  - d. Worse road conditions in bad weather.
  
2. You come to an intersection with a flashing red light. You must:
  - a. Slow down and drive carefully through the intersection.
  - b. Turn either right or left since the road is blocked ahead.
  - c. Stop at the intersection and wait for a flashing green light.
  - d. Stop at the intersection, then proceed as traffic allows.
  
3. You are driving in the right lane on an expressway. You should probably move into the left lane when:
  - a. Traffic is heavy but moving steadily.
  - b. The weather is bad and roads are slippery.
  - c. Traffic is slow in your lane and cars are in the left lane.
  - d. Traffic is light and cars are merging onto the express-way from the right
  
4. Before turning left, it is important to:
  - a. Sound your horn.
  - b. Yield to oncoming vehicles.
  - c. Swing to the right side of your lane.
  - d. Wait until oncoming traffic has a red light.

5. When entering an expressway behind several other vehicles, it is MOST important to:
  - a. Keep your eyes on the vehicle in back of you.
  - b. Adjust the position and speed of your vehicle to the flow of traffic.
  - c. Stay as close as possible to the vehicle in front of you.
  - d. Cancel your turn signal.
6. To reduce the effects of headlight glare at night, you should look:
  - a. Straight ahead.
  - b. Over your shoulder.
  - c. At the center of the road.
  - d. To the right edge of the road.
7. You are coming to an intersection with a yellow flashing light. You should:
  - a. Stop and wait for the light to change.
  - b. Make a U-turn; the intersection is closed.
  - c. Drive carefully through the intersection.
  - d. Prepare to stop; the light is about to turn red.
8. When changing lanes, you can check your blind spot by:
  - a. Using the inside rearview mirror.
  - b. Using the outside rearview mirror.
  - c. Using both inside and outside rearview mirrors.
  - d. Turning your head and looking over your shoulder.
9. When approaching a work zone with a “45 Where Workers Present” sign, drivers should:
  - a. Slow down immediately.
  - b. Maintain the posted speed limit and slow down to 45 mph where workers are present.
  - c. Merge to the right lane.
  - d. All of the above.

Answers:

1 (c); 2 (d); 3 (d); 4 (b); 5 (b); 6 (d); 7 (c); 8 (d); 9 (b)

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The Michigan Department of State thanks the following organizations and agencies for their assistance with this latest revision of *What Every Driver Must Know*: AAA Michigan, Office of Highway and Safety Planning, Pedestrian and Bicycle Action Team of the Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Commission, Pupil Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Michigan Department of State Police.

**SOS-133 (Rev. 11/11)** PA 300, 1949 as amended;  
(300,000 @ \$.17 per copy, total \$50,931.76)

**Notes:**

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The Department of State website is designed to put information and access at your fingertips. Michigan residents can now conduct a wide range of business with the Department of State from the comfort of their homes.

- Visit [www.Michigan.gov/sos](http://www.Michigan.gov/sos) for information about Department of State services, programs, documents, and forms.
- The official Secretary of State Twitter feed is available at [www.twitter.com/Michsos](http://www.twitter.com/Michsos)
- Visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Michigansos](http://www.facebook.com/Michigansos).

## The online, no-wait Secretary of State! — [www.ExpressSOS.com](http://www.ExpressSOS.com)

Renewing your registration online is quick and easy. The Department of State offers the ability to renew cars, trucks, motor homes, boats, jet skis, and other watercraft online. You can renew online 24 hours a day, seven days a week at [www.ExpressSOS.com](http://www.ExpressSOS.com)

License plate renewals are also a snap at a Department of State Self-Service Station, available at PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers. If you have Discover, Visa, or MasterCard and your renewal notice has a personal identification number (PIN) or the phrase “insurance verified electronically” printed on it, you can simply scan, pay, and go.

Residents may also renew by mail. Look for instructions about all of the renewal options in the brochure enclosed with your renewal notice. License plate tabs and watercraft decals will arrive by mail within 14 business days.

## About Our Branch Offices

- All Secretary of State offices accept cash, checks, or money orders.
- Discover and MasterCard credit and debit cards are accepted at the counter at all Secretary of State offices. A nominal processing fee is charged.
- Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday. Please note: Offices located in some larger cities are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday.
- PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday.
- SUPER!Centers offer Saturday hours from 9 a.m. to noon.
- Small offices may close for a lunch hour, and all offices are closed on state holidays.
- Visit the Department of State Branch Office Locator at [www.ExpressSOS.com](http://www.ExpressSOS.com) for information about office locations, hours, and services. Click on “Get Started” and then select Branch Office Locator.

## Access for Disabled Individuals

Individuals with a disability will find Secretary of State offices in compliance with standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need accommodation or have been denied services, telephone (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424). Hearing-impaired customers may access the department’s telephone number by calling the Michigan Relay Center at (800) 649-3777.

## Sign Language Interpreters

Customers can request Ameslan (American Sign Language) interpreters in advance of an office visit or may use an interpreter they know. The Department of State compensates sign language interpreters. For more information, please contact the department at (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424), through the Michigan Relay Center at (800) 649-3777.

## Foreign Language Tests

Original driver’s license tests are available in many foreign languages, with English and Spanish versions available on audiotape.

**For general information not listed above, please call the Michigan Department of State Information Center at (888) SOS-MICH (767-6424). Hearing-impaired customers may access the department’s telephone number by calling the Michigan Relay Center at (800) 649-3777.**



[www.Michigan.gov/sos](http://www.Michigan.gov/sos)