

## **A Message to Massachusetts Motorists from the Registry of Motor Vehicles**

Dear Motorist,

The MassDOT Registry of Motor Vehicles is pleased to provide you with this updated Driver's Manual. The manual is a helpful guide and a reminder that a driver's license is a privilege, and with that comes the responsibilities of understanding and following the laws, and keeping you and other drivers safe on the road.

In addition, the RMV is taking important steps since the Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency in March 2020 to complement the work that has been underway for months across state government to keep residents safe and healthy. Certain processes have changed, and continue to change, due to the pandemic, so please check the RMV's web-site ([Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv)) for the most up to date information.

Please read the rules of the road in order to prepare for your road test and a lifetime of safe driving, bicycling, and walking. Some of the important points in the manual include:

**Hands-Free Electronics While Driving** - Massachusetts law prohibits operators of motor vehicles from using any electronic device, including mobile telephones, unless the device is used in hands-free mode. Drivers are not permitted to hold or support any electronic device. Teen drivers are not allowed to use any electronic devices, even in hands-free mode. Fines and other penalties will be imposed for violators of the "hands-free law." See page 68 for more information.

**Out-of-State Violations** - Out-of-state motor vehicle violations impact your record just as if they occurred in Massachusetts. Do not ignore them. If you fail to pay or appear in another jurisdiction for a violation, the RMV will take action against you when learning of these events. See page 48 for more information.

**REAL ID** - Beginning October 1, 2021, you will need a REAL ID, or other acceptable ID such as a valid passport, to fly within the United States. See page 2 for more information.

It's important that you stay up to date on changes aimed at increasing safety for all. One way to stay connected is to look for updates to this manual online. We are proud to offer the Driver's Manual as a fully accessible PDF on our website, [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv). In addition to English, the manual is currently available online in Spanish.

The RMV looks forward to serving you because, together, we can keep our roads safe.

For the latest RMV news, follow the RMV on Twitter @MassRMV.

# **Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

## **Sharing the Road**

### **A User's Manual for Public Ways**

Most public ways, including urban streets, country lanes, main roads, secondary roads, and suburban or rural roads, are meant to be shared by all of us. "Us" includes pedestrians, persons riding on bicycles or motorcycles, persons riding in passenger vehicles or buses, and persons operating commercial motor vehicles or trailers, or combinations of those vehicles. Some ways, such as Interstate highways and expressways, are designed exclusively for use by motor vehicles and trailers traveling at high speeds. Other public ways are specifically designed for slower speeds or for travel by lighter vehicles and may restrict or prohibit certain vehicles. Public ways come in various lengths and widths with various features: one-way, two-way, multiple lanes, High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (HOV), center dividers, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and hard or soft shoulders. However the public way is laid out, it is meant to be used by people and the various types of vehicles that may propel them along if they are not on foot.

Although the bulk of this manual provides information about the use of public ways for motor vehicles and trailers, the goal of the RMV in producing it is to make all users of public ways aware that our public streets and roads are meant to be shared except where the law provides for limited uses. Bicycling and walking may be used in conjunction with transit, so always pay attention.

#### **Sharing the Road with Bicycles:**

In recent years, to further promote safe interactions on our roads between bicycles and motor vehicles, several new or amended laws have taken effect. These expand the rights of bicyclists and make it easier to cite them for their own traffic violations. They also place new legal responsibilities on motorists.\* The changes should help ensure that bicyclists have a safer riding environment. The changes enforce stricter standards on motorists to be alert and careful in the presence of bicycles. For a brief description of these changes, see page 79 and 109.

#### **Attention Motorists:**

Bicyclists have a legal right to use all public roads in this state except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted. Like motorists, they are also required to know and obey traffic laws and regulations. Both bicyclists and motorists need to understand the laws. As a motorist, you need to understand and appreciate that bicyclists are far more vulnerable to injury and death when forced off the road and when in collision with a motor vehicle. Drivers need to know and respect bicyclists' rights and safely share the road with them. You also need to know your own legal responsibilities when driving in the presence of bicycles.

\* Chapter 525 of the Acts of 2008; Sections 3 & 11 of Chapter 26 of the Acts of 2009; and Chapter 65 of the Acts of 2009 (which took effect on 1/1/2011).

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*This document is published by the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. While it contains a great deal of information about RMV policies and state laws, it is important to note that this is **not** a legal document. Every effort is made to present the most accurate, error free, and up-to-date information. However, RMV policies and fees change from time to time, as do laws governing motor vehicles.*

*The RMV will make every effort to post information about changes to the fees, policies, procedures, or laws referenced in this Driver's Manual that may affect your ability to obtain a Learner's Permit, Driver's License, or Identification Card. Relevant changes will be posted on the RMV's website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). If you do not have access to a computer, you may call the RMV's Contact Center at 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA) or 800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes). Or, you can call 877-RMV-TTDD if you are deaf and hard of hearing.*

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has changed a great deal since its inception in 1903. There are now nearly five million licensed drivers in our state. And today, more than ever, the Agency is committed to increasing efficiency and improving customer satisfaction through technology and innovative initiatives.

Enhanced computer technology continues to strongly impact customer service. Through the RMV's website (Mass.Gov/RMV) you can start certain license/ID card transactions and conduct such transactions as scheduling a road test, paying your road test/license fees, renewing a registration, renewing a license or Massachusetts ID Card, ordering a special plate, paying a traffic citation, ordering a duplicate license/ID, ordering a duplicate title, changing your address, verifying the issuance of a driver's education certificate, checking the status of a registration or title, changing your organ donor status, or canceling plates. You can also download forms, view this *Driver's Manual*, and learn the latest "rules of the road." Over the Internet, the RMV also invites you to ask questions and offer suggestions for improving RMV services.

To encourage you to avoid unnecessary trips to a service center, the Agency wants you to process some transactions over the phone; you can replace a lost license, pay a citation, order a driving record, schedule a road test, and make a reservation to visit a service center. By mail, you can conduct some title and registration transactions. Through the Electronic Vehicle Registration program, participating automobile dealers and insurance agents can issue new plates and perform registration transfers and renewals.

The RMV will continue to explore other ways to improve its relationship with you, such as through our partnership with AAA which allows AAA members to process certain RMV transactions at AAA branches.

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## How to Use This Manual

For *new drivers*, this manual is a useful tool for understanding the licensing process and for studying the rules of the road. For *experienced drivers*, this manual offers more than the procedure for obtaining a learner's permit. It provides valuable information on RMV policies, changes to driving laws, and safe driving tips. Keep this manual in your vehicle and refer to it whenever you have a question.



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## Warning of Unofficial Websites Mimicking the Massachusetts RMV Website

Massachusetts residents looking for the RMV (Registry of Motor Vehicles) website or trying to do RMV transactions online should make sure they are using the “official” RMV website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv).

Several similar-looking, third-party websites, not connected with the RMV, have fooled RMV customers by seeming to offer RMV services and/or RMV information. These “mimic” sites are often reached by customers using online search engines. **DO NOT BE FOOLED!** RMV customers should be extra careful and avoid any “mimic” websites that charge fees to perform RMV services online or to provide basic RMV information or forms. Some of these websites may even contain printed disclaimers of a connection to the RMV on their site.

It is also smart to avoid any site that uses the phrase “Department of Motor Vehicles” or the letters “DMV”. That phrase and the abbreviation “DMV” are NOT used in relation to the Registry of Motor Vehicles in Massachusetts. Remember: [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv).

If you rely on any driver license or motor vehicle-related information these websites provide, access any services they claim to offer, or pay a fee to them for an alleged “service” (whether online or by mail), **you are doing so at your own peril**. The information they provide may not be correct and your personal and financial information may not be safe in the hands of the operators of these “mimic” websites.

The RMV is proud of the fact that its customers can perform at least 40 different transactions safely and securely on the “official” RMV website and can also obtain much invaluable “free” information. For example, all of the information from the current RMV “Driver’s Manual” is available for free (a \$5 value) just by clicking on and opening the online version from “Forms and Manuals” rather than buying a copy.

And, the RMV’s “site policies” (located at the bottom of RMV web pages) explain how the RMV uses and protects your personal and financial information when you provide it to the RMV. Please note that the **RMV cannot be responsible** for the content or actions taken by third-party “mimic” websites.

# Obtaining Your License

If you are a Massachusetts resident (or even a non-resident), you must have a valid driver's license to operate a motor vehicle on any public road, highway, or other way permitting access to the public.

Through the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issues five license classes with various privileges and restrictions to residents of Massachusetts. Class A, B, and C licenses, which are known as commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), allow you to operate large vehicles, like trucks and buses. The Class D license, which is most common, is for passenger vehicles, vans, and small trucks. The Class M license allows you to operate motorcycles.

## CHAPTER 1

### REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards (License/ID)

To get or renew any driver's license, ID card, or learner's permit, you need documentation showing United States citizenship or lawful presence as required by federal and state law. You need to choose either a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card. The cost is the same for both card types (see *License/ID Fees* section).

#### ***October 1, 2021: What You Need to Travel is Changing***

Beginning October 1, 2021, you will need a REAL ID, or other acceptable ID such as a valid passport, to fly within the United States or enter certain federal buildings.

A REAL ID Card issued by Massachusetts is compliant with the federal REAL ID Act of 2005. This type of license or ID Card can be used to access certain federal facilities and to board flights within the United States. If you have a passport or other acceptable ID, you may never need a REAL ID. More information about REAL ID can be found at [Mass.Gov/ID](https://www.mass.gov/id).

A Standard Massachusetts Card may be a driver's license or ID Card. A Standard Massachusetts Driver's License offers the same driving privileges as a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License. However, after October 1, 2021, it will NOT be an acceptable form of identification for the federal purposes mentioned above.

If you have a Standard Massachusetts Card, you will need to show a passport or alternative form of federally acceptable identification to board a domestic flight or access certain federal facilities after October 1, 2021. The Transportation Security Administration publishes a list of alternative forms of identification at [tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification](https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification).

All driver licensing requirements (age, operator fitness, and written and road testing) are the same for both card types and they both require proof of lawful presence in the United States. The documentation and application requirements are different for the two card types. They also look different, with different markings and words printed on the face of the cards. See *Appendix D* for images of the card types. There is more information on the specific document requirements and card lengths later in this chapter.

You may hold only one driver's license or ID Card at a time.

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### Who Needs a Massachusetts License?

All Massachusetts residents need to obtain a valid Massachusetts license in order to operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts. See *Appendix D* for color images of licenses issued by the Massachusetts RMV.

#### ***Out-of-State/Out-of-Country Residents***

**Out-of-State U.S. Residents:** A U.S. resident, who is at least 16 years of age and lives outside of Massachusetts, may drive in Massachusetts using a valid out-of-state driver's license issued by his/her state/territory of residence. This rule applies to licensed visitors and

travelers from other U.S. states and territories and to residents of nearby states who commute to work in Massachusetts.

**Out-of-Country U.S. Residents:** Effective July 2018, Massachusetts Law (Ch. 90, Section 10) was amended to allow certain validly licensed drivers of other countries to operate validly registered motor vehicles in Massachusetts. The country that issued the license must enforce standards for motor vehicle operation equivalent to Massachusetts (as determined by the RMV).

If you are a visitor from another country, you may drive private passenger vehicles in Massachusetts if you are over 16 and have a valid (not suspended or revoked) driver's license issued by your home country to operate the same type of vehicle. If the foreign license is not printed in English or does not contain English translations of the important information fields on the license, a translation into English will be needed.

See *Appendix A* for more information on the requirements for out-of-country residents.

Whether you have a U.S. or foreign driver's license, you must have your valid out-of-state or out-of-country driver's license in your possession when driving in Massachusetts. If an English translation of a foreign license is required, you should also have that available with the foreign license. A violation of Section 10 is a criminal violation and a first offense is subject to a fine of \$500.

**Moving to Massachusetts:** If you become a resident of Massachusetts, you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license to retain your driving privileges. There is no grace period. For the procedure for converting your out-of-state or out-of-country license, see the *Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction* section. Note: All applicants for a Massachusetts driver's license or ID card are subject to the lawful presence requirement.

### ***Licensing Rules for Military Personnel***

If you are in active military service and want to drive in Massachusetts, you must have a valid driver's license from your home state. If you are a permanent resident of the Commonwealth, you must have a valid Massachusetts license. Following are exceptions:

- If you are returning from active duty outside the United States and have a driver's license issued by a branch of the Armed Forces based in another country, you may drive with that license in Massachusetts for up to 45 days.
- If you have a Massachusetts driver's license that expired during your active service, you may use that license to operate a motor vehicle for up to 60 days after your honorable discharge from military service. If you choose to exercise this option, you must carry your expired license and proof of your discharge with you when you drive.

**RMV Contact Center: 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)**

**800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email [AskRMV@state.ma.us](mailto:AskRMV@state.ma.us)**

**The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).**

**Contact Center Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m.**

**Internet Address: [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)**

## **Who is Eligible for a Massachusetts License?**

Anyone who is a Massachusetts resident, is at least 16 years old, and has not had a driver's license or the right to operate revoked may apply to begin the process of obtaining a Class D or Class M License at any RMV Full Service Center (see *Appendix C* for a list of locations).



Massachusetts law changed in 2016 to comply with the REAL ID Act. Massachusetts now requires lawful presence in the U.S. for at least 12 months.

A driver's license is normally issued for 5 years. A license can be issued for a period of less than 5 years if an applicant's authorized lawful presence (as established by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) is for a shorter period. The minimum acceptable period of lawful presence is 12 months. However, an applicant who can prove that he/she meets the minimum 12 month period can be issued a license even if he/she will only be present for a shorter period. The license fee will be prorated if it is less than 5 years.

### ***Age Requirement***

No person under the age of 16 may drive in Massachusetts. This is true even if you have a driver's license (or learner's permit) issued in a state or U.S. territory or another country that allows operation of a motor vehicle by a person less than 16 years of age.

- To apply for a Class D (passenger vehicle) or a Class M (motorcycle) learner's permit, you must be at least 16.
- You can obtain a learner's permit at age 16, but you may not receive a Class D or a Class M driver's license until you are at least 16 1/2 and have had your permit in good standing for six consecutive months and have completed a driver education training program approved by the RMV.

**Note:** You must be at least 18 years old to apply for a Commercial Driver's License (Class A, B, or C).

### ***Parental Consent***

Customers applying for permits, licenses, or identification cards who are under age 18 (minors) must obtain written consent from a parent, a legal guardian, a social worker, or a boarding school headmaster. For a learner's permit, or identification card, a person gives written consent by signing the back of the permit / license / ID application.

If the person signing the back of the application is not a parent, documentation of the person's guardian status must be shown at the time of the permit / ID application and, for a license, at the time of the road test. **Forging a signature may result in license suspension or revocation.**

### ***Facial Image Policy***

All applicants for a learner's permit, driver's license, identification card, liquor identification card, or disability placard must have their photo-image captured by the RMV.

This is to ensure that the image contained on the issued document and in the RMV's database is the actual image of the person who provided the identification information to the RMV when applying for the document. It is also to aid law enforcement officers in the proper identification of the person whose image is contained on the document.

The captured image must be a straightforward looking view of the applicant. All of the applicant's facial features must be visible (e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, etc.). The appearance must provide a clear view of the applicant's face as a whole. A solid or transparent facial cover (scarf, veil, eyeglasses/sunglasses, goggles, surgical or dust mask, etc.) is not acceptable. Eyeglasses, including reading or prescription glasses, are not allowed,



even if the applicant normally wears them. A hat or other head cover is not acceptable, but if worn for medical or religious reasons, it may be allowed if it does not hide any facial features. Natural facial hair and hairpieces may be acceptable unless the overall effect disguises the person's true facial appearance or facial features are obscured. Permanent facial tattoos are acceptable but temporary tattoos are not. Bluetooth headsets are not acceptable.

**Chapter 428 of the Acts of 2006 prohibits the RMV from taking a photo-image for a license or ID if the applicant is wearing eyeglasses.**

### ***Massachusetts Driver's License Limited to Massachusetts Residents***

By law, a Massachusetts driver's license or ID card (except for a Liquor ID card) can only be issued to a resident of Massachusetts. Licenses cannot be issued for the convenience of business persons or tourists from other states or countries who may be here temporarily or to non-residents who own property or temporarily live in Massachusetts but maintain their legal residence outside the state. To obtain a license, you must meet all the requirements for a driver's license under the law, including the requirement that you be lawfully present in the U.S. and be a legal resident of Massachusetts.

**Massachusetts law requires those convicted of sex offenses to register with their local police departments. For more information, call 1-800-93-MEGAN.**

### ***Vision Screening Requirements***

Testing your vision is a necessary part of ensuring that you are capable of operating a motor vehicle safely. An RMV clerk will screen your vision when you apply for a learner's permit or driver's license. You will be screened for visual acuity, color vision, and peripheral vision. If you normally wear contact lenses or corrective lenses to see at a distance, then you must wear them during the vision screening examination.

To be eligible for a Class D or M license, your vision must be at least 20/40 visual acuity in your better eye (corrected) and at least 120 degrees of horizontal peripheral vision (both eyes together) for a full license. If your corrected vision is between 20/50 and 20/70 in the better eye, you may be eligible for a daylight only license. If you fail the vision screening examination, decline to take the examination, or are unable to take the vision screening examination, you may submit an original RMV Vision Screening Certificate that your ophthalmologist or optometrist has completed. The RMV may accept this Vision Screening Certificate in lieu of the vision screening examination to demonstrate compliance with the minimum vision standards to obtain a driver's license.

#### **Drivers With Monovision**

Monovision is a method of visual correction (either through surgery or by contact lens) that allows for the use of one eye for distance vision and the other eye for near vision. If you have monovision, you may have trouble with the RMV's vision screening examination. A Vision Screening Certificate (VSC), completed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist and indicating you are visually qualified to safely operate a motor vehicle, can be accepted in place of the vision screening examination.

**You can download the Vision Screening Certificate from the RMV's website (Mass.Gov/RMV) or pick up a copy at many eye-care providers.**

For information on other physical qualifications necessary to hold a Massachusetts driver's license or for more information regarding the voluntary reporting procedure for medical conditions, please call Medical Affairs at 857-368-8020 or refer to the *Medical Restrictions* and *Surrendering Your License* sections. You can also visit the Medical Standards webpage (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/medical-standards-for-passenger-class-d-and-motorcycle-class-m-drivers-licenses>).

**Driving Record Verification**

When you apply for a permit or license, or renew a license, you will be required to provide a list of the states you have been licensed in for the past ten years, as well as all out-of-state license numbers you have had. The RMV's licensing computer system checks your name, birth date, Social Security Number, and any out-of-state driver's license numbers with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS), which stores information about license suspensions and revocations for drivers in all 50 states. If your record matches PDPS, you will not be allowed to continue the application process until all out-of-state suspensions or convictions are resolved.

Massachusetts is part of the State-to-State program, which checks valid driver licenses and state issued ID cards issued by other participating states. State-to-State will cancel any driver's license or state issued ID card issued by the other participating state when a Massachusetts license or ID Card (excluding a Liquor ID) is issued.

**License Classes**

The table below summarizes Massachusetts license types. A Massachusetts driver's license is valid for a maximum of 5 years and expires on your birthday. However, your first license

Massachusetts Driver's Licenses	
License Class	Vehicles Permitted
A	Any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, provided the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class A license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Class B, C, and D.)
B	Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. (Holders of a Class B license may, with appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Class C and D.)
C	Any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that does not meet the definition of Class A or Class B, but is either designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, or is required to be placarded for hazardous materials under 49 CFR 172.500 or any other federal regulation. (Holders of a Class C license may operate all vehicles within Class D.)
D	Any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that does not meet the definition of Class A, Class B, Class C, or Class M. (Typically passenger vehicles such as cars, SUVs, or family vans).
M	Any motor vehicle defined as a motorcycle in M.G.L. c. 90, § 1.

will expire on your fifth birthday following the date of issue. Temporary or limited term licenses are valid for less than 5 years and do not expire on your birthday. Your driver's license is considered a primary form of identification, showing proof of identity, residence, age, and signature. You can renew your license up to one year before its expiration date.

- A Class A license can have all endorsements.
- A Class B license can have all endorsements except for Combination and Doubles/Triples.
- A Class C license can only have HAZMAT, Tank, School Bus, and Passenger endorsements.
- If you pass a CDL road test in a vehicle equipped with air brakes, you will be permitted to operate a vehicle with air brakes.
- Transporting school-aged children and/or operation of a 'school bus' requires special authority.

In addition to listing your personal information, a license or an ID issued to you by the RMV features an image of your photo and signature, which is stored on the RMV's central computer.

Vertical licenses and identification cards with the words "Under 21" printed on them are issued to anyone who obtains or renews a license or identification card while under the age of 21. If you renew your license or ID card before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical license or ID card. This license or ID card will remain valid to expiration, even after you turn 21. A horizontal license may be obtained after your 21st birthday.

## **Commercial Licenses (Class A, B, or C)**

For information on commercial licenses (CDLs), refer to the Massachusetts Commercial Driver's License Manual, which is available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

Unless otherwise exempted by Federal Regulations, any operator of a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) weighing more than 10,000 lbs., must have in his or her possession a valid U.S. Department of Transportation Medical Card or a valid Medical Waiver Card issued by Medical Affairs.

## **School Pupil Transport (Eight or fewer passengers)**

If you transport school-aged children, you must have a separate license or special endorsement. A *Guide to School Pupil Transport Vehicles (7D)* is available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

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## **Endorsements**

Endorsements may be added to Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) for an additional fee. They indicate if you are qualified to operate certain vehicles or carry certain cargo or passengers. For example, if qualified, you may add a hazardous materials (hazmat) endorsement or a school bus endorsement to a Class A, B, or C license. Endorsements cannot be added to a Class D, M, or D/M license. An endorsement expires when the license expires.

**For information on Commercial vehicle restrictions or endorsements, see the CDL Manual.**

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## **Restrictions**

Restrictions are limitations placed on your driving privileges. Your driver's license may be issued with various restrictions, which are indicated by code letters on the front and back of your license.

## List of Restrictions

The RMV may apply any of the following restrictions to a license:  
(list effective March 26, 2018)

- 2** Medical Log / Glucose Required
- A** Use with Certified Driving Instructor Only
- B** Corrective lenses
- C** Mechanical Aid
- D** Prosthetic Aid / Personal Medical Aid
- E** CMV Automatic Transmission
- G** Daylight Only
- H** Limited to Employment
- I** JOL Limited / Other
- J** Other
- K** CDL - Intrastate Only
- L** CDL - Vehicles without Airbrakes
- M** CDL - Except Class A Bus
- N** CDL - Except Class A & B Bus
- O** CDL - Except Tractor/Trailer
- P** No Passengers in CMV Bus
- Q** Class D Automatic Transmission
- R** Bioptic Telescoping Lens
- S** Proof of Blood Sugar Level
- T** Ignition Interlock
- U** 3 Wheeled Motorcycle
- V** Medical Variance
- W** Intrastate Medical Waiver
- X** CDL - No Cargo in CMV Tanker
- Y** Restrict to 14 Passenger Capacity
- Z** CDL - Air Over Hydraulic

## Medical Restrictions

Medical Affairs, which reviews license applications listing physical or mental conditions that may affect a driver's abilities, may issue driving restrictions related to your current medical condition. For example, if you pass the driver's license vision test by wearing glasses or contact lenses, your driver's license will be issued with a "Corrective Lenses" restriction (code letter B) and you must wear your corrective lenses when you drive. If you need a mechanical aid or prosthetic device (adaptive equipment) to operate a motor vehicle, Medical Affairs will issue your license with restriction(s). It considers license applications on a case-by-case basis, and you may be required to provide a physician's letter for medical clearances or special driving-related equipment.

**If you develop a medical condition that affects your ability to drive, you must report the condition to the RMV. Please call Medical Affairs at 857-368-8020.**

## ***Junior Operator Restrictions***

The Junior Operator restriction (code letter I) is added to the licenses of all operators under age 18. For a complete description of the Junior Operator Law and driving restrictions for operators under 18, see the *Junior Operator License Law* section later in this chapter.

## **Massachusetts IDs**

For people who do not have a Massachusetts driver's license, the RMV can issue a Massachusetts ID, which looks similar to a driver's license, but does not extend any driving privileges. Massachusetts IDs are official forms of identity, signature, and age that are accepted in the Commonwealth. You cannot hold a Massachusetts ID and a license at the same time. A Massachusetts ID can be either a REAL ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Card.

You can apply for a Massachusetts ID by making a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center. To obtain a Massachusetts ID, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 14 years old
- Be a Massachusetts resident
- Not hold a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or any other jurisdiction
- Prove lawful presence in the U.S.

A Massachusetts ID expires every five years or at the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first).

See *Appendix D* for color images of identification cards issued by Massachusetts.

**Massachusetts IDs and Liquor IDs are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.**

**At the service center, you will receive a receipt that includes your personal information, image, and signature. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted for travel as a state-issued photo ID.**

## **Liquor IDs**

For people who do not have a Massachusetts driver's license, the RMV can issue a Massachusetts Liquor ID, which looks similar to a driver's license, but does not extend any driving privileges. By law, (M.G.L. Chapter 138, Section 34B) you cannot hold a Liquor ID and a Massachusetts license at the same time.

The identification requirements are different for a Liquor ID than those for a driver's license or a Massachusetts ID. A Liquor ID card can be issued to Massachusetts residents, as well as to residents of other states or other countries. You do not need to prove lawful presence in the U.S. for a Liquor ID.

You can apply for a Liquor ID by making a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center. To obtain one, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Not hold a valid Massachusetts Driver's License

A Liquor ID is valid for five years and cannot be renewed. If you need a Liquor ID for more than five years, you should reapply in person upon the expiration of the existing Liquor ID.

See *Appendix D* for color images of identification cards issued by Massachusetts.

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## Acceptable Identification to Purchase Alcoholic Beverages in Massachusetts

State law (M.G.L. Chapter 138, Section 34B) provides licensed alcohol sellers and their agents and employees with some legal protection if it is found that alcohol was served to an underage person and it is also found that the server reasonably relied on:

- (1) A valid Massachusetts Driver's License (REAL ID Card or Standard Massachusetts Card)
- (2) A valid Massachusetts Liquor ID Card
- (3) A valid Massachusetts ID Card issued under M. G. L. Chapter 90, Section 8E (REAL ID Card or Standard Massachusetts Card)
- (4) A valid passport issued by the United States government (including a U.S. Passport Card) or by the government, recognized by the U.S. government, of a foreign country
- (5) A U.S. issued Military ID card

**Note that out-of-state and out-of-country licenses and ID cards are not on this list and alcohol servers may refuse to accept such licenses or ID cards.**

## Identification Requirements

The federal REAL ID Act established minimum standards that states must follow when issuing and producing driver's licenses and ID cards. On October 1, 2021, the federal government will require that individuals present a license or ID marked as a REAL ID, or other federally acceptable form of identification, to board domestic flights or enter certain federal facilities. Visit [Mass.Gov/ID](https://www.mass.gov/ID) for up-to-date REAL ID information in Massachusetts.

To apply for a permit, license, or ID card, you must provide identification documents. These required documents will be different for REAL ID Cards, Standard Massachusetts Cards, and Liquor IDs. See the *Document Requirements Chart* for more information.

The identification documents must be from the list of *Acceptable Forms of Identification* (see page 12) and must be satisfactory to the RMV. You need to provide the required identification for each different type of document you apply for, even if you already have a Massachusetts permit, license, ID, or liquor ID.

# Document Requirements Chart

All Driver's License and Massachusetts Identification Card applicants must present the following:

<b>REAL ID Driver's License/ID Card (valid for federal purposes)</b>	<b>Standard Driver's License/ID Card (not valid for federal purposes)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 document that proves your Social Security Number (SSN) OR an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94</li> <li>1 document that proves your lawful presence in the U.S. / date of birth</li> <li>2 documents that prove your Massachusetts residency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SSN must validate electronically OR provide an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94</li> <li>1 document that proves your lawful presence in the U.S. / date of birth</li> <li>1 document that proves your Massachusetts residency</li> </ul>

All Liquor ID applicants (21 years of age or older) must only present the following documents:

- 1 document that proves your Social Security Number (SSN) OR an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94
- 1 document that proves your date of birth

Additional documentation may be required for the following services:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Additional Documentation</b>
Out-of-State Permit Conversion from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Out-of-State Permit</li> <li>Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Out-of-State License Conversion from Canada, Mexico, or a U.S. Territory (including Puerto Rico)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Out-of-State License Conversion (if you do not have the Out-of-State License)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptable photo ID from the list of acceptable documents</li> <li>Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Name Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For a REAL Driver's License/ID Card, a legal document proving the name change (for example, a marriage license, divorce decree, or court documentation)</li> <li>For a Standard Driver's License/ID Card, a completed license/ID application</li> </ul>
Date of Birth Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptable document from the lawful presence/date of birth list</li> </ul>

An I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [CBP.Gov/i94](http://CBP.Gov/i94)

A "Denial Notice" must be acceptable to the RMV. See page 16 for more information.

Save time by starting your application online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv). Completing all the information in the application and indicating which documents you will bring will help ensure your transaction is successful.

**You must also produce your social security number (SSN) that the RMV can verify with the Social Security Administration (SSA) as having been issued to you.** The RMV cannot issue a permit, license, or ID card if an SSN does not verify. If you do not have an SSN, you must apply for one at the SSA. If you are denied an SSN, you will be issued a “Denial Notice” by the SSA which explains why you cannot obtain an SSN. The “Denial Notice” must be dated and cannot be altered or be more than 60 days old. If you present a “Denial Notice” instead of a valid SSN, you must also present the following:

- Proof of your current visa status
- An I-94 Record of Arrival & Departure (either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [CBP.Gov/i94](https://www.cbp.gov/i94))
- Your current non-U.S. Passport

**All documents must be originals unless otherwise indicated. Photocopies will not be accepted. Laminated documents are not acceptable.**

Identification requirements are subject to change at any time.  
Visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv) for the most current information.

**Note 1:** Foreign diplomats and other foreign government officials, their family members, and personal assistants/employees who have been issued a U.S. Department of State driver's license are not eligible to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license.

**Note 2:** If your visa includes additional forms, such as F1 and F2 or M1 and M2, both of which require an I-20, that form must be submitted as well.

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## Acceptable Forms of Identification

On the next few pages are the types of documents the RMV will accept to prove identity.

A document cannot be used to prove more than one requirement.

### ***Documents to prove Social Security Number (SSN) Requirement***

For a REAL ID Card, one document must be from this group. For a Standard Massachusetts Card, you must have an SSN that validates with SSA or an SSN Denial Notice with Passport, VISA, and I-94. For a Liquor ID, one document must be from this group:

- SSN Card (cannot be laminated)
- W-2 Form (One W-2 cannot be used for both the Massachusetts residency and SSN requirements. Two different W-2s from different employers can be used for both requirements.)
- SSA-1099 Form
- Non-SSA-1099 Form
- A pay stub with the applicant's name and full SSN on it (One pay stub cannot be used for both the Massachusetts residency and SSN requirements. Two different pay stubs from different employers can be used for both requirements.)
- SSN Denial Notice with Passport, VISA, and I-94



**Note:** For a document to prove SSN, it must show your full nine-digit SSN. None of the numbers can be masked.

### ***Documents to prove Lawful Presence/Date of Birth***

For a REAL ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Card, one document must be from this group. For a Liquor ID, one document must be from this group. All immigration documents must prove lawful presence for a minimum of 12 months.

- Valid, unexpired U.S. passport or Passport Card

**If your U.S. Passport was issued within the last six months, please bring your certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate.**

- Certified copy of a birth certificate filed with a State Office of Vital Statistics or equivalent agency in the individual's state of birth

**A Puerto Rican birth certificate will only be accepted for identification if it was issued on or after July 1, 2010. For more information on the Puerto Rican birth certificate law, visit the [Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration website](#).**

- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) issued by the U.S. Department of State, Form FS-240, DS-1350, or FS-545
- Valid, unexpired Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551) issued by DHS or INS
- Temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport
- Unexpired employment authorization document (EAD) issued by DHS, Form I-766, or Form I-688B
- Unexpired foreign passport with a valid, unexpired U.S. visa affixed accompanied by the approved I-94 form documenting the applicant's most recent admittance into the United States

**A non-US passport must contain a current visa and be presented with an I-94 Record of Arrival and Departure, unless you have a Permanent Resident Card or other change in status. The I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [CBP.Gov/i94](#)**

**For applicable customers who have a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) or Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019), documentation verifying the applicant's most recent admittance into the United States must be shown.**

- Certificate of Citizenship, Form N-560, or Form N-561, issued by DHS
- Certificate of Naturalization issued by DHS, Form N-550, or Form N-570
- Re-Entry Permit (I-327) - **For Standard license/ID only**
- Refugee Travel Document (I-571) - **For Standard license/ID only**

**For a REAL ID, if your current name doesn't match the one that appears on your lawful presence document(s), you must prove the legal name change with an acceptable document. A marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court document all qualify. If you have multiple name changes, you must provide documentation for each change.**

## ***Documents to prove Massachusetts Residency***

For a REAL ID Card, two documents must be from this group. For a Standard Massachusetts Card, one document must be from this group.

### **Massachusetts RMV- issued documents (can use one from the options below):**

- Current License, Massachusetts ID Card, or Learner's Permit (Liquor ID not accepted)
- RMV-issued correspondence dated within 60 days and received via US mail (including License/Registration reminders)

### **State/Federal/Municipal/City/Town/County agency-issued documents:**

- 1st class government-issued mail dated within 60 days
- Current MA-issued Professional License
- Medicaid Statement dated within 60 days
- Current Firearms Card
- Jury Duty Summons dated within 60 days
- Court correspondence dated within 60 days
- Property Tax for current year
- Excise Tax for current year

### **Bills:**

- Utility Bill (electric, telephone, water, sewer, cable, satellite, heating) dated within 60 days
- Credit Card Statement dated within 60 days
- Medical/Hospital Statement dated within 60 days
- Insurance bill (auto, medical, home, rental)
- Cell Phone Bill dated within 60 days

### **Lease/Mortgage:**

- Current Lease/Mortgage or similar rental contract
- Mortgage statement dated within 60 days

### **Financial-related documents:**

- Bank Statement (savings or checking account) dated within 60 days
- W2 Wage and Tax Statement from immediate prior year (One W-2 cannot be used for both the Massachusetts residency and SSN requirements. Two different W-2s from different employers can be used for both requirements.)
- Current Pension Statement (401K, 457, SEP, etc.)
- Current Retirement Statement
- Pay stub dated within 60 days (One pay stub cannot be used for both the Massachusetts residency and SSN requirements. Two different pay stubs from different employers can be used for both requirements.)
- Current SSA Statement
- Current Installment Loan Contract (Car Loan)

**School-issued documents:**

- Official School Transcript for current year
- Official letter from school (proof of enrollment) dated within 60 days
- Tuition Bill for current year
- Certified School Record for current year

**Insurance-related documents:**

- Auto Insurance Policy for current year
- Renter's Insurance Policy for current year
- Homeowner's Insurance Policy for current year

**Alternative Residency Affidavit:**

- For applicants under the age of 18 only

**Note:** For a document to prove residence, it must state the residential address. A.P.O. Box is not acceptable proof of residency. Documents mailed "in care of" are not valid for proof of residency.

**Note:** It is not the function of RMV employees to advise you about which documents to present. No specific type of document on either list is required or preferred. In following these policies and procedures, RMV employees apply the same eligibility requirements to all applicants equally, without regard to race, sex, creed, national origin, or English speaking ability. The issuance of a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card is not a determination of whether or not a person has legal or illegal immigration status. That is the responsibility of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

***Translation Required Policy***

If you present a document that is not written or printed in the English language, the RMV may require the document to be accompanied by a translation that is certified by one of the following:

- A bilingual teacher at an accredited Massachusetts college, university, or private language school
- A bilingual notary public
- The local consulate for the document's country of origin
- The American Translators Association (the national association of professional translators and interpreters)

If translated by a teacher or consulate, the translation must be printed on the letterhead of the consulate, college, university, or private language school and it must be properly formatted. Visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) to see the acceptable format. If translated by a notary, the translation must have the notary's official seal.

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**Social Security Numbers and License Numbers**

You must have a valid Social Security Number (SSN) to apply for any permit, license, or ID, including a replacement or a renewal. When you submit an application at an RMV Service

Center, the Registry will attempt to validate the SSN you provide against computer records at the Social Security Administration (SSA). If you do not have an SSN, you may request an application for one by calling 1-800-772-1213 or visiting [SSA.Gov/ssnumber](https://ssa.gov/ssnumber).

If you are not a citizen and do not have an SSN, you should apply for one at a Social Security Office as soon as possible. If you are denied an SSN, you may still qualify for a Massachusetts driver's license or ID if you can meet the other identification requirements. However, to prove that you applied for an SSN, you must present the written Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old) the SSA provided you, which informed you that you were not eligible for an SSN, and a non-US passport, visa, and I-94. The I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [CBP.Gov/i94](https://cbp.gov/i94)

**For information on obtaining an SSN, call 1-800-772-1213. To obtain a replacement SSN, visit [SSA.Gov](https://ssa.gov)**

### ***RMV May Refuse an Unacceptable SSN Denial Notice***

**The RMV reserves the right to not accept any Social Security Denial Notice that does not appear to be genuine, that is more than 60 days old, or which appears to have been altered, or is incomplete, or that indicates the application for an SSN has not been properly completed.**

A Denial Notice from the SSA which indicates that the applicant has failed to properly complete the application process will be treated by the RMV as an unacceptable Denial Notice. An application for a Learner's Permit, Driver's License, or ID card that is accompanied by an unacceptable Denial Notice will not be accepted. Evidence of failure to properly complete the SSN application process includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide documents required as part of the SSN application process, including failing to provide evidence of class admission, and failing to comply with a request by the SSA to visit an SSA office for an in-person interview.

### ***"SA" and "S" License Numbers***

The RMV requires your SSN to confirm your identity and to maintain your license and driving records. The SSN cannot be displayed on your driver's license, vehicle registration, or state issued ID card (due to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004). The RMV license system will assign computer generated numbers beginning with an "SA" or an "S" followed by numbers equaling a total of nine characters on your license/ID card.

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## **Documents and Applications that Cannot be Accepted**

The RMV reserves the right to not accept any application if it has a good faith reason\* to believe any of the following:

- Any document presented is not genuine or has been altered, defaced, or rendered unreadable to such an extent that it cannot be relied on.
- Any document contains a photograph or photoimage of the applicant that bears little or no resemblance to the applicant.
- The applicant is not the individual represented in the application and supporting documents.
- The applicant does not satisfy the requirement for SSN, lawful presence/date of birth, or Massachusetts residency.

- The applicant has presented an SSN that does not validate as being issued to him/her, or was not obtained in a lawful manner from the U.S. Social Security Administration.

\*A “good faith reason” is one that is based on objective facts and observations, such as statements from the applicant, or information obtained from usually reliable sources.

The Registry will initiate electronic checks for most identification documents with national and state databases. This process provides validity responses back to the RMV within seconds for the vast majority. However, some checks will require additional time for research or may be subject to manual review. This does not mean that your transaction has been denied. It simply means the verifying information is not readily available and additional time is required. These cases are generally resolved within three to five business days, but in rare occasions may be up to twenty days. Your Customer Service Representative will provide you with additional instructions.

### ***Review of Documents and Applications that are Not Accepted***

If one or more of the documents you present when applying for a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card is not accepted and your transaction is not processed because you do not have other acceptable documents with you, you have several options, as described in the next section.

### ***Initial Decision and Your Options***

After reviewing your documents, if the RMV Service Center Representative rejects your documents, or if your documents do not pass the electronic check, you may choose to correct the problem, such as by obtaining the appropriate documents and returning later with a new application. You may also seek further review by a supervisor. If the electronic checks require additional time for research, the Customer Service Center Representative will provide you with additional instructions. If the RMV cannot process your application, you will be provided a form indicating the reason(s). This is the Application Status Letter. You may appeal the RMV's final decision within ten days of a Standard Massachusetts Card being denied.

### ***Appeals***

Please be advised: The Registry has changed its method of reviewing documents. On March 26, 2018, the RMV began electronic checks for most identification documents. This process provides verification within seconds for the majority of documents. However, some checks will require additional time for research. This does not mean that your transaction has been denied. It simply means the verifying information is not readily available and additional time is required. These cases are generally resolved within three to five business days. You will be provided with additional instructions by your Customer Service Representative. You may appeal the RMV's final decision if denied.

You must file any appeal within ten days after you received a written denial from the RMV. Any additional time required by the informal review does not extend the ten-day period. A formal appeal may be filed only with the Board of Appeals on Liability Policies and Bonds at the address below with a check or money order for \$50.

**Board of Appeal on Motor Vehicle Liability,  
Policies and Bonds Division of Insurance**  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 810, • Boston, MA 02118  
617-521-7794 • [State.Ma.US/DOI](http://State.Ma.US/DOI)

To obtain a form online to appeal a decision of the RMV to the Division of Insurance's Board of Appeal, go to *State.Ma.US/DOI* and enter "appeal form" in the search box.

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## Penalties for Presenting Fraudulent Documents

Severe penalties are imposed on a person who violates the law in obtaining or possessing a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card. Following is a brief description of some of those penalties.

- Whoever loans or knowingly permits his or her license or learner's permit to operate motor vehicles to be used by any person, or whoever makes false statements in an application for such a license or learner's permit, or whoever knowingly makes any false statements in an application for registration of a motor vehicle, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$20 nor more than \$200 dollars or by imprisonment for not less than two weeks nor more than two years or both (MGL c.90, §24).
- Whoever falsely makes, steals, alters, forges, or counterfeits or procures or helps another falsely make, steal, alter, forge, or counterfeit a learner's permit, a license to operate motor vehicles, or an ID card or whoever has or uses such a permit, license, or ID card may be punished by a fine of not more than \$500 or imprisonment in a state prison for up to five years or in a jail or house of correction for not more than two years (M.G.L. c.90, §24B).
- Anyone who falsely impersonates the person named in the application for a license or learner's permit, or anyone who procures or helps another to falsely impersonate the person named in the application, or who uses a name other than his or her own to falsely obtain such a license, or whoever possesses or uses a license or permit to operate a motor vehicle that was obtained in such a manner shall be subject to the penalties described in MGL c.90, §24B. Whoever is convicted of a violation of MGL c.90, §24B, shall also have his or her license, or right to operate, suspended for a minimum of one year.
- Any person who swears or affirms falsely in regard to any matter or thing respecting which an oath or affirmation is required by the RMV or by MGL c. 90 shall be deemed guilty of perjury (MGL c.90, §28). In addition, falsification of any information provided to obtain, renew, transfer, or upgrade a driver's license or learner's permit may result in a suspension of driving privileges.

## License/ID Fees

*Learner's permit exam fee - \$30.00*

The learner's permit exam fee covers the cost of processing your application and administering your learner's permit exam. If you fail the exam or your permit expires, you will be charged this fee again for another examination.

*Road test fee - \$35.00*

The RMV charges a flat fee for any license application. This fee covers the cost of processing your application and scheduling a road test. If you fail the road test, do not appear for the road test, are rejected by the examiner, or cancel your appointment with less

than 72 hours notice, you will still be charged the \$35 fee, which must be paid prior to a new test being booked. For more details on road testing, see the *Taking the Road Test* section later in this chapter.

*License issue/renew fee - Class D - \$50.00*

*License issue/renew fee - Class M - \$50.00*

The RMV charges a driver's license fee so it can issue a tamper-resistant, Class D or Class M license. Fees for licenses issued for less than five years will be prorated based on length of issuance.

*Duplicate or amended license - \$25.00*

The RMV charges a fee for any change that results in the reissuance of a license.

*Out-of-state conversion fees*

Class A\* - \$140.00

Class B\* - \$140.00

Class C\* - \$140.00

Class D\* - \$115.00

\*To add motorcycle privileges (Class M) to any of these license classes, you must pay an additional \$3.00 per year. The Class M privilege will expire the same time as the existing license. If your license is eligible for renewal when you add the Class M privilege, it may be best for you to renew the license at the same time.

Class M only - \$115.00

Class D or M permit conversion - \$30.00

*Massachusetts ID issue/renew fee - \$25.00*

If you have surrendered your license voluntarily, there is no fee for a Massachusetts ID (See the *Surrendering Your License* section of this chapter for more information).

*Liquor ID issue fee - \$25.00*

*Duplicate or amended Massachusetts ID or Liquor ID - \$25.00*

**All fees are subject to change at any time. All license fees are non-refundable.**

**Disabled Veterans do not pay any fees for driver's license transactions if they have Disabled Veteran plates or if they have qualified for Disabled Veteran plates with Medical Affairs.**

## **The Junior Operator License Law**

Any motor vehicle operator or motorcyclist between the ages of 16 1/2 and 18 is considered a Junior Operator. The Junior Operator Law has several requirements and restrictions that significantly affect the operation of a motor vehicle by a person who has a Junior Operator's License (JOL). The basic purpose of the law is to provide new drivers supervised opportunities in which to develop good driving skills, while keeping those drivers free of the possible distractions caused by friends under age 18 who are present while the drivers are behind the wheel.

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## Requirements to Obtain a JOL

An applicant for a driver's license between ages 16 1/2 and 18 must comply with several requirements to obtain a JOL:

- Have a valid learner's permit for at least six consecutive months before taking the road test. (Any suspension will invalidate the permit and the six months will start to run anew when the suspension is lifted.)
- Maintain a clean driving record for at least six consecutive months before taking the road test.
- Successfully complete an RMV-approved driver education and training program, which includes 30 hours of classroom instruction; 12 hours of in-car, behind-the-wheel training; and six hours of in-car experience observing other student drivers.
- Complete at least an additional 40 hours of supervised, behind-the-wheel driving as shown by a certified statement provided by a parent or guardian.

The RMV will accept 30 hours of driving supervised by a parent or guardian if the applicant completed a driver skills development program.

- A parent or guardian must participate in two hours of instruction on the driver's education curriculum (unless they have participated within the past five years).
- Pass a final exam to have a driver's education certificate electronically filed with RMV.

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## JOL License Restrictions

The following restrictions apply to all Junior Operators:

- You may not operate a motor vehicle within the first six months after receiving your JOL while any person **under age 18** is in the vehicle (other than you or an immediate family member), unless you are accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years old, has at least one year of driving experience, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and is occupying a seat beside you.

**General Rule:** The passenger restriction that applies to you as a JOL holder under age 18 is lifted once you complete the six-month period (or the portion that applies to you) or you reach age 18, whichever occurs first.

The six-month passenger restriction period will stop running, temporarily, during any suspension. When your JOL is reinstated, you will still have to complete the remainder of the six-month restriction period that existed at the beginning of the suspension period, unless you have already turned 18.

**See Chapter Two for a list of the penalties and fees you will face for violating any of these restrictions.**

- As the holder of a JOL, you may not operate a motor vehicle between 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless you are accompanied by one of your parents or your legal guardian. If you are found operating a motor vehicle in violation of this restriction, you may be charged with operating a motor vehicle without being licensed. This is a criminal violation.

**Note:** The law states that between 12:30 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. and between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., the provisions of the law shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies only when a Junior Operator of a motor vehicle has been lawfully stopped for a violation



of the motor vehicle laws or some other offense. This is called "secondary enforcement." However, it is still illegal for you to operate during those times without a parent present in the car.

- If you violate the passenger restriction or the night restriction, you will be subject to a license suspension of 60 days for a first offense, 180 days for a second offense, and one year for subsequent offenses. For a second or subsequent offense, you will also be required to complete a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course. The law requires the RMV to impose this suspension in addition to any other penalty, fine, suspension, revocation, or requirement that may be imposed in connection with a violation committed at the time you were violating the passenger or night restriction.
- You may not operate a motor vehicle that requires a **commercial driver's license** (CDL).
- You will be suspended for one year if you are under 18 when you have committed certain driving offenses and alcohol or drugs were involved (180 days if age 18 to 21), **in addition to any penalty assessed by a court or other law.** (For details, see the *License Suspension or Revocation* section of Chapter Two.)
- You will be ineligible for a full license until you have completed the period of suspension imposed while operating with a JOL and you reach age 18.
- You will face additional suspension periods of one year for a first drag racing offense and three years for a subsequent offense. For a first speeding offense, you will be suspended for 90 days; for a subsequent offense, you will be suspended for one year.
- You may not use any mobile electronic device (see *Safe Driving Law* section of Chapter Three) for any reason while operating a motor vehicle. The only exception is for reporting an emergency.

## Applying for a License

You must obtain a learner's permit before you can apply for any license (This manual specifically outlines the procedures for obtaining a Class D or a Class M license). To get a learner's permit, you must complete an application, present identification, pay a fee, pass a vision exam, and pass a learner's permit exam. Your learner's permit does not become a license until you pass the road test and have paid all license fees. If your learner's permit expires, you must re-take the learner's permit exam and pay the required fees.

If you are a new Massachusetts resident and have an out-of-state driver's license, you may be eligible to convert your license without testing. For information on license conversion and foreign license policies, see the section *Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction*.

**Save time by starting your application online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv). Completing all the information in the application and indicating which documents you will bring will help ensure your transaction is successful.**

## Getting a Learner's Permit

You must be at least 16 years old to apply for a Class D or M learner's permit. The learner's permit exam that you must take tests your understanding of Massachusetts motor vehicle laws and safe driving practices. A learner's permit gives you permission to drive while you practice your driving skills and prepare for your road test. A permit is valid up to two years.

When applying for a learner's permit, you can prepay your license and road test fees at that time. You can also use the "Pay My Road Test and/or License Fees" transaction on Mass.Gov/RMV to pay these fees before or after you take the road test. If fees have been paid, your driver's license will be automatically sent to you, and you will not need to visit an RMV Service Center after passing the road test.

**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

To earn your learner's permit, take the following steps:

1. Study all of the information contained in this manual.
2. Complete a learner's permit application, make a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center, and submit the application at the service center. This application can be completed online at Mass.Gov/RMV to save you time when you visit a service center. If you are under 18, you must have your parent or guardian sign your application.

In completing the application, you will be required to disclose whether you have a physical, mental, or medical condition or are taking any medications that might affect your ability to operate a motor vehicle.

3. Meet all of the RMV's identification requirements (see the *Identification Requirements* section).
4. Pay a \$30 learner's permit exam fee, which covers the cost of your exam.
5. Have your photo-image and signature captured electronically.
6. Pass a vision test at the service center or submit an RMV vision screening certificate from your medical practitioner.
7. Pass a learner's permit exam based on information in this manual.

Learner's permit exams can be taken in the service center when you submit your application. They are also available online (in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin) at Mass.Gov/RMV after you submit your application. If you pass the exam online but cannot print the permit, you can call the RMV Contact Center at 857-368-8110. The RMV will print the permit and mail it to you in 5-7 business days.

**A learner's permit is a document that grants conditional driving privileges. This document is not intended to be used as an identification document for travel. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.**

## ***Learner's Permit Exam Procedures***

Each learner's permit exam has 25 multiple-choice questions. Topics covered on the exam include alcohol misuse, suspensions, and JOL violations, as well as rules of the road and identifying road signs. To pass the exam, you must answer 18 questions correctly within the allotted time of 25 minutes.

RMV Full Service Centers have automated testing stations (ATS), which are easy-to-use videoscreen kiosks that use a computer program to deliver learner's permit exam questions visually. The learner's permit exam is available in multiple languages (for a Class D or M

permit) through the ATS. You have about one minute to answer each question. The ATS lets you practice with sample questions before beginning the actual exam.

**You must study the contents of this manual to be able to pass the learner's permit exam.**

Driver's Manuals and other reference materials cannot be used during the learner's permit exam and are not allowed in the testing area. You also are not allowed to wear or use any electronic device (including electronic optical devices), regardless of the purpose of the device. Audio devices or headphones cannot be used or worn, unless they are being used for taking an audio exam. Hats cannot be worn (unless for medical or religious reasons).

Usage of a Driver's Manual, other reference material, or electronic device during the learner's permit exam is considered cheating.

If you are caught cheating on an exam – or trying to cheat – you will fail and you will not be allowed to hold any type of driver's license or permit for 60 days. In some cases, you may also be subject to further investigation.

### ***Foreign Language Tests***

If English is not your primary language, you may ask to take the learner's permit exam in a foreign language. The RMV currently offers Class D and M learner's permit exams in a variety of languages. Class A, B, and C learner's permit exams are only available in English.

**Class D and M learner's permit exams are available in the following languages:**

**Arabic • Armenian • Burmese • Cambodian (Khmer) • Chinese (simplified) • Chinese (traditional) • Farsi • French • German • Greek • Gujarati • Haitian/Creole • Hindi • Italian • Japanese • Korean • Laotian • Polish • Portuguese (Brazilian) • Russian • Serbo-Croatian (Latin) • Somali • Spanish • Tagalog/Filipino • Thai • Urdu • Vietnamese**

### ***Audio Exams***

Audio exams are available through the ATS. This feature allows you to hear an automated voice read the test questions and possible answers through headphones connected to the ATS. Audio exams are available in all the languages listed above for Class D and M exams, and in English only for CDL exams (per federal regulation). The time limit for Class D and M audio exams is 25 minutes.

Anyone can choose to take an audio exam. The exam does not need to be scheduled in advance and you do not need to present any additional documentation to be eligible.

If you want to use the audio feature for your exam, you should bring a set of headphones with you to the RMV Service Center. Every ATS has a splitter on the bottom left of the machine with a universal connection for headphones. All headphones with a 3.5 millimeter headphone mini-jack (including Ipod headphones) will work with the ATS.

### ***Alternative Exam Options***

If you have a cognitive or physical disability that would prevent you from taking a standard learner's permit exam, you may request an alternative extended time, paper, or person-to-person oral exam. To request an extended time or paper exam, you must speak to the RMV Service Center Manager when you visit the service center.

To request a person-to-person oral exam, please call 857-368-8105 and leave a message that includes your name, your telephone number, the specifics of your request, and the service center where you would like to take your exam. You will then be contacted by a Registry employee who will help you schedule an exam.

Person-to-person oral exams are only available in English at this time.

For person-to-person oral exams, you must provide the manager with written documentation that confirms the nature of your disability. This documentation may be a Doctor's or Social Worker's letter, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or a letter from a school on official letterhead. You will also need to provide all of the required identification documents (see *Identification Requirements* section).

A person-to-person oral exam will only be provided if it has been scheduled in advance by calling the number on the previous page. Extended time and paper exams do not need to be scheduled in advance and do not require additional documentation.

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## Driving With Your Permit

You must carry your learner's permit whenever you drive until you earn a Junior Operator's License or a full driver's license.

A Class D learner's permit allows you to drive a passenger vehicle with the following limitations:

- You must be accompanied by a licensed operator who occupies the passenger seat next to you and is at least 21 years old, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and has at least one year of driving experience.
- If you are under 18, you may not drive between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who is a validly licensed operator with at least one year of driving experience.

A Class M learner's permit allows you to operate a motorcycle with these limitations:

- You may not carry a passenger.
- You can drive only during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset).
- You must wear a US DOT standard helmet.
- You must wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield unless the motorcycle you are driving has a windshield or screen.

With a Class D or Class M learner's permit, you may operate motor vehicles in another state as long as doing so does not violate that state's laws.

**See Chapter Two for a list of the penalties and fees you will face for violating any of these restrictions.**

## Driver's Education

The RMV requires drivers under age 18 to take professional driving lessons at a local high school or driver school. Professional driving instruction can help you become a more skillful, knowledgeable driver, and it can increase your chances of passing the Class D or Class M road test on your first try. Another benefit of learning to drive through a licensed school is the ability to use a school vehicle for your road test and a school instructor as your test sponsor.

All professional driver schools in Massachusetts, including public and private high schools, must be licensed and monitored by the RMV. Visit the RMV website to locate a driver school and see if there have been any enforcement actions taken against the school. More information can be found at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

You can also obtain information on driving instruction by contacting your local high school.

**If you doubt a driver school's credentials, ask to see a license certificate, which the RMV issues.**

To apply for a Class D or M driver's license when you are between 16 1/2 and 18 years old, you *must* complete a driver's education program, pass a final exam, and have a driver's education certificate electronically on file with the RMV from a licensed driver school or a high school program that is approved by the RMV. The fact that you have fulfilled this requirement will be available on your RMV computer record at the time of your road test.

You must also complete 40 hours of supervised driving (30 hours if you completed a driver skills development program), and your parent or guardian must participate in two hours of the driver's education curriculum (unless he/she already attended in the past five years).

**Driver Education Certificate Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889**

If you recently moved to Massachusetts and had already completed a driver's education program in another state, you should mail your original out-of-state driver's education certificate, a \$15 check payable to MassDOT, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above. Verification will be made with the state that originally issued your driver's education certificate. If the other state's requirements meet or exceed Massachusetts' requirements, a new driver's education certificate will be electronically filed with the RMV. Once this is done, you may book your road test.

**To convert an out-of-state driver's education certificate, the program you completed must meet or exceed Massachusetts minimum requirements for classroom and in-car instruction. If you have any questions, call the RMV Contact Center.**

## **Taking the Road Test**

The next step toward earning your Massachusetts driver's license is taking a road test with an RMV examiner. Whether you are applying for your first license or completing a license conversion that requires a road test, you must have a learner's permit to schedule a test. Road test procedures are described in the following pages.

If you are obtaining a motorcycle license, or adding a motorcycle class to your Massachusetts driver's license, you do not have to take a road test if you have successfully completed the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP), approved by the RMV.

For a Class D license, you are not allowed to attempt more than six road tests in a 12-month period. For a Class M license, if you fail two road tests, you must enroll in and successfully complete a beginner rider course before you can schedule another test.

## ***Scheduling a Road Test***

Road tests may be scheduled online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). See the *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* and *Identification Requirements* sections for information on the types of licenses and what documentation is required.

**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

Road tests can also be scheduled by calling the RMV Automated Service Line at 866-MASSRMV (866-627-7768).

For information on road tests for vehicles with ignition interlock devices, see the *Ignition Interlock Devices* section in *Chapter Two*.

You may cancel or reschedule your road test online or through the RMV Contact Center. There is no additional fee if you give more than 72 hours notice.

If you fail a road test, you must wait at least two weeks before taking another one.

**Road tests are scheduled close together; you must be on time for your test. If you are late for your appointment, you will not be tested and you will be required to pay the road test fee.**

All fees must be paid before you can schedule a new road test.

## ***Massachusetts Rider Education Program***

The Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) is designed to reduce the number of motorcycle related fatalities and injuries by increasing the availability of Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) approved training courses for motorcycle riders and to increase awareness and education for both riders and other drivers. If you successfully complete an MREP course, you do not need to take an RMV Class M road test.

After passing the MREP course, to receive a motorcycle license, you must either:

- 1) Show lawful presence for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License on-line or in person with a reservation at a Service Center
- 2) Complete our "Get Ready" application on-line for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License and make a reservation to visit a Service Center where a license can be issued regardless of pre-pay (see *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* section)

**If you are under 18 years old, the MREP basic rider course is required to obtain a Class M license. You must also have a driver's education certificate.**

For information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call 857-368-2903 or visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

**The RMV has a Motorcycle Manual. This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). Study this manual if you want to get a Class M learner's permit or add a motorcycle class to your Class D license.**

## ***Policies on Cancellations and Fees***

When a public school system cancels classes for weather-related reasons, road tests scheduled in that school system's community may be canceled at the discretion of the RMV. Road tests will be canceled automatically when the Governor declares a state of emergency. If the Governor declares an emergency in a particular region, only road tests in that region will be canceled.

Road Test Examiners may also cancel road tests when weather conditions are considered unsafe. To determine if your road test has been canceled, please visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/RMV) for posted notifications or call the RMV's Contact Center. In any of the preceding cases, you may schedule a new road test at no additional fee. However, you *will* be charged the road test fee if you...

- Fail the test
- Are unprepared for the test
- Are refused the test because your vehicle fails to pass the examiner's inspection
- Do not bring a qualified sponsor
- Fail to appear for or are late for your test
- Cancel or reschedule your test with less than 72 hours notice

## ***Being Prepared for the Road Test***

Road test videos are available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/RMV) in the road test section. These videos will help you prepare for the road test and show you what to expect during the test.

On the day you take your Class D road test, you must fulfill several requirements:

1. Have a completed road test application, and have your parent or guardian complete the parental consent section if you are under age 18.

In completing the application for the road test, you will be required to disclose whether you have a physical, mental, or medical condition or are taking any medications that might affect your ability to operate a motor vehicle. If you do, prior to taking a road test, you must submit medical clearance, from your physician, to an RMV Service Center Manager. The Road Test Examiner will review your application and either approve it or forward it to Medical Affairs for appropriate review.

2. Have your printed learner's permit.
3. Bring a qualified sponsor (see the *Sponsor Requirements* section).  
Note: A sponsor is not required for a Class M road test.
4. Provide an acceptable, properly equipped, legally registered vehicle to use in your test (see the *Passenger Vehicle Requirements* section). **Note: During the Covid-19 state of emergency, road test vehicles are provided by the RMV (except for vehicles with ignition interlock devices or adaptive equipment).**

**If you are under age 18, you must maintain a clean driving record for the six consecutive months immediately preceding the date you apply for the test. You will not be able to take the test if you...**

- Have experienced any surchargeable incidents (e.g., at-fault crashes, moving violations) under Massachusetts law or the law of another state

- Have had your permit suspended for committing drug or alcohol related motor vehicle violations
- Have been convicted for violating any drug or alcohol related laws in Massachusetts or another state

Note: Even if you had a clean driving record for six consecutive months immediately preceding the date you first booked the road test, if the RMV receives notice of an event that would cause the six-month clean driving period to be interrupted between the date the test was booked and the date of the test itself, you will not be allowed to take the road test when scheduled. A new clean driving record of at least six months will have to be established, unless you reach 18 years of age prior to that time.

For a Class M road test, you must bring your printed learner's permit, a completed license application form, and a properly equipped, legally registered motorcycle, but you are not required to bring a sponsor. If you are under 18 years old, you are not eligible for an RMV Class M road test and must complete the MREP basic rider course to get a Class M license.

### ***Sponsor Requirements***

For a Class D license, including a JOL, you need a sponsor for your road test, even if you have a valid foreign driver's license. When you arrive at the test location, you must be accompanied by a licensed operator who...

- Is at least 21 years old
- Has had at least one year of driving experience
- Has a valid driver's license issued by his or her home state. Holders of foreign driver's licenses are not eligible to be sponsors.

**If you are not accompanied by a sponsor, you will not be given a Class D road test.**

### ***Passenger Vehicle Requirements***

**During the Covid-19 state of emergency, road test vehicles are provided by the RMV.**

**To be acceptable to the examiner, the vehicle you bring to the road test must meet all requirements in this section.**

In general, the vehicle you use for your Class D road test should be safe and in good working order. You must show your vehicle registration to the examiner and the vehicle must be properly inspected. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your vehicle is unsafe. In addition to being safe, your vehicle must have these features:

- Adequate seating so that the examiner may sit next to you and your sponsor may sit in the rear seat behind the driver. You may not use a vehicle that does not have a seat for your sponsor. Sponsors may not sit in the bed of a two passenger pickup truck.
- An accessible parking brake so the examiner can make an emergency stop. It is up to the individual examiner to determine if the parking brake would be accessible to him or her in an emergency. To help ensure that brake access will not be a problem, you should bring a vehicle to the test that has a centrally located parking brake. If you have any questions about whether a vehicle is acceptable, you should take it to the scheduled road test location on the business day prior to the scheduled test.

If you are prevented from taking the road test only because the examiner determined



that he/she could not access the braking system, you will not be charged a fee for that scheduled test.

Driving instruction vehicles must have a second foot brake for instructors or examiners and must display proper signage.

**In some larger vehicles, like certain minivans, the parking brake is too far from the examiner to be easily accessible in an emergency. These vehicles are *not* suitable for road tests and may be rejected by the examiner.**

- If your test vehicle is registered out of state, you must show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.  
A policy or a certificate that lists coverage limits serves as proof of a vehicle's insurance.
- If you are renting the vehicle you are using for your road test, you must show your examiner your rental agreement and a letter from the rental company, on its letterhead, that authorizes you to use the vehicle for a driver's license road test. You are not required to provide this information for leased vehicles.

A vehicle cannot be used for a road test if one of its tires has been replaced by a "donut" (limited use spare) tire.

### ***Road Test Policy for Vehicles with Dealer, Farm, and Repair Plates***

You cannot take a road test in a passenger vehicle that is registered with a "dealer" plate unless you can prove, to the satisfaction of the examiner, that you are the dealer, or spouse of the dealer, or a salesperson who works at the dealership. A vehicle with a farm plate can be used, if acceptable to the examiner, but only if the applicant can prove, to the satisfaction of the examiner, that the applicant is a member of the family or an employee of the farmer. If displaying a farm plate, the vehicle cannot be a passenger vehicle, but may be a pickup truck with an acceptable rear seat for a sponsor. You will not be allowed to take a road test in a vehicle with a repair plate.

### ***Passenger Vehicle Test Procedures***

**Road test videos are available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv) in the road test section. These videos will help you prepare for the road test and show you what to expect during the test.**

You should arrive approximately 15 minutes early for your scheduled road test appointment. If you are late, you may not be able to take your road test.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your vehicle to ensure that it is properly registered, that all equipment is in good working order, and that the vehicle provides a safe, adequate, and clean seat for the examiner and easy access to the brake.

During your Class D road test, you must prove you have the skills and abilities needed to operate most private passenger vehicles, small trucks, vans, and SUVs. Most newer vehicles are equipped with "specialized features", such as backing sensors, back-up cameras, automatic parallel parking, and GPS-guided independent operation. These features substantially assist a driver with certain driving, parking, or backing skills. These devices will not need to be disabled. However, your driving skills and abilities without relying only on these specialized features will be tested. If adaptive equipment for a legitimate medical condition is installed in the vehicle and necessary for operation, or if you need to use specialized features, a "mechanical/software aid" restriction will be added to a license.

After the examiner inspects and approves the vehicle, the driving test will begin. Only you, the examiner, and your sponsor are allowed in the vehicle during the test. The examiner will sit in the seat next to you; your sponsor must sit in the rear. **No children or pets are allowed.** Service animals are allowed. If the examiner so authorizes, a language interpreter may also be allowed in the vehicle. You and your sponsor/interpreter are not allowed to converse unless authorized by the examiner.

**Note: During the Covid-19 state of emergency, sponsors are not allowed in the vehicle.**

The examiner's goal is to observe your driving performance. During a road test, you should be prepared to demonstrate your ability to...

- Use hand signals
- Start the engine
- Start and stop the vehicle
- Parallel Park
- Back the vehicle approximately 50 feet
- Make left - right turns
- Start, stop, and turn the vehicle on a hill
- Turn around between curbs (three point turn)
- Enter and leave intersections
- Recognize and obey traffic signs, lights and signals, and other rules of the road
- Use good driving sense

In addition to judging your overall driving skills, the examiner will note how well you follow general good-driving procedures, including whether you...

- Use good driving posture, with both hands always placed properly on the wheel
- Drive in the proper lane and look carefully and signal properly before changing lanes
- Maintain enough distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you
- Always drive at safe speeds to comply with speed limits and varying traffic conditions
- Properly yield the right-of-way
- Are generally aware of your actions and particularly those of other drivers

### ***Motorcycle Requirements***

In general, the motorcycle you use for your Class M road test should be safe and in good working order. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your motorcycle is unsafe.

In addition, you must show the examiner...

- Your printed learner's permit
- Your motorcycle's registration document
- A valid inspection sticker

If your motorcycle is registered out of state, you will have to show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts' minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.

A policy or a certificate that lists limits of coverage serves as proof of the vehicle's insurance.

As a motorcycle operator, you must also...

- Wear a helmet that meets or exceeds US DOT standards.  
State law requires your helmet to comply with the US DOT's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218.  
Helmets that meet this standard will be labeled with stickers on the inside and outside.
- Wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield, unless your motorcycle has a windshield or a screen.

**For information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call 857-368-2903 or visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).**

### ***Motorcycle Test Procedures***

You should arrive approximately 15 minutes early for your scheduled motorcycle road test appointment. If you are late, you may not be able to take your road test.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your motorcycle to ensure that it is registered, inspected, and insured properly and that all equipment is in good working order.

**Road Test Waiver Available:** The RMV road test for a Class M motorcycle license may be waived if you can prove that you have successfully completed a course of motorcycle instruction known as the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) as approved by the RMV. If you are under 18 years old, you are not eligible for an RMV Class M road test and must complete the MREP basic rider course to get a Class M license.

As a pre-road test, the examiner will assess your knowledge of motorcycle equipment and controls. For the road test, the examiner will observe your ability to operate a motorcycle. Your road test will consist of the following riding skills:

- "Figure eights" and 360° circles in both directions without your feet touching the road
- Normal starts and stops
- Driving in traffic
- Crossing intersections
- Making turns

If you take a Class M road test on a three-wheeled motorcycle or on a motorcycle with a sidecar, you will be limited to operating such a vehicle and a "U" restriction will be printed on your license.

**The RMV has a Motorcycle Manual. This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is only available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). Check it out for important information you need to get a motorcycle license and to be a safer rider.**

### ***Deaf and Hard of Hearing Road Tests***

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can schedule a road test by calling 1-877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833). Describe your request, the location where you would like to take your road test, and include your phone number, residential address, and e-mail address. The Driver Licensing Department will then contact you to book the road test. Once the test is booked, they will contact the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to arrange for an interpreter.

Before the start of the road test, the examiner will explain the elements of the test and how to effectively communicate during the test. You and the interpreter will also be provided with a written description of the road test and the required elements to review before starting the test.

If you have any questions during the road test, you will be allowed to pull over to the side of the road (when safe to do so) and communicate with the examiner.

### ***Common Reasons for Failing a Road Test***

- You were at fault in a crash with another motor vehicle, pedestrian, or object.
- You were driving in a way that may have caused a crash or in a way the examiner considered dangerous.
- You violated a motor vehicle law, rule, or regulation.
- You demonstrated a lack of experience safely operating a motor vehicle.
- You refused to follow or drove contrary to the examiner's instructions.

**Note:** The RMV has a zero tolerance policy for violent or abusive conduct by road test applicants and sponsors.

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## **Receiving Your New License**

To avoid visiting an RMV Service Center after you pass your road test, you can either pay your road test and license fees at the time you schedule the test, or you can pay online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://Mass.Gov/RMV) using the "Pay My Road Test and/or License Fees" transaction.

If you pass the road test, have prepaid for your license, have proven lawful presence, and have no outstanding obligations, the examiner will stamp your learner's permit and it will become a temporary license, valid up to 60 days. The RMV will manufacture your new, permanent photo-image license and mail it to you. If you are over the age of 20, but still have a photo on file from when you were under 20, you will need to make a reservation to visit a service center to obtain your license.

If you pass the road test and have not prepaid for your license, within 60 days, you must either pay online or make a reservation to take the permit with the road test results indicated to a service center. Please note, however, that if you pay online and do not visit a service center, you will not receive a temporary license. (Note: If you do not pay within 60 days of passing your road test, you may be required to retake the road test at your expense.)

A license cannot be issued until you either:

- 1) Show lawful presence for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License on-line or in person at a Service Center
- 2) Complete our "Get Ready" application on-line for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License before making a reservation to visit a Service Center where a license can be issued regardless of pre-pay (see *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* section).

**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

If your permanent license does not arrive in the mail within two weeks, please call the RMV Contact Center.

Whenever you operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts, the law requires you to carry a valid driver's license on your person or within easy reach inside your vehicle.

Massachusetts driver's licenses are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.

At the service center, you will receive a receipt that serves as a temporary license and provides proof of driving privileges while the permanent license is being manufactured. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.

## Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction

To retain driving privileges, out-of-state or foreign-licensed drivers must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license upon becoming a Massachusetts resident. If you currently carry a valid license from another state, a U.S. territory, Canada, Mexico, or certain select other foreign countries, you may be eligible to submit your license for conversion, but you will need to meet the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Identification Requirements* section.) If your license does not contain a photo, you will be required to provide additional documentation.

**All applicants who convert a license must surrender that license in order to receive a Massachusetts license.**

**Note:** If you present any document that is inconsistent with the concept of your being a resident of Massachusetts (such as B1 or B2 or other short term visa status, or an expired visa status or documents showing an out-of-state residence), you will not be considered a resident and an application for a Permit, License, or Mass ID will be denied. Massachusetts law requires proof of lawful presence in the U.S. for a minimum of 12 months (see *Who is eligible for a Massachusetts License* section). You may be eligible for a Liquor ID.

The table on the next page summarizes the requirements for license conversion. License conversions require that you pay all application, testing, and license fees, regardless of whether you must take an exam. In most cases, if you hold a license from a foreign country, you will need to pass both the learner's permit exam and the road test.

**Massachusetts requires proof of lawful presence for a minimum of 12 months, even if the state you are converting your license from does not require this.**

## Requirements for New Residents

Place of Issue	License Status	Learner's Permit Exam	Road Test	Driving Record
Out-of-State	Valid or expired less than one year			
	Expired more than one year	✓	✓	
14 U.S. Territories, Canada, or Mexico	Valid or expired less than one year			✓
	Expired more than one year	✓	✓	✓
Other Foreign Countries	Valid license (with English translation if needed)	✓	✓	

### Out-of-State Conversions

If you have an out-of-state Class D or M license that is current or has been expired for less than a year, you may transfer it to a Massachusetts issued license if you meet the RMV's identification and eligibility requirements. Your out-of-state license must indicate that you hold **full driving privileges** in that state.

Your right to operate will be verified through the Commercial Driver License Information System (CDLIS) and the National Driver Register (NDR) to determine if it is suspended, revoked, canceled, withdrawn, or disqualified in any state or the District of Columbia.

An out-of-state license that indicates **a limit on the customer's right to operate, due to drug, alcohol, or habitual traffic offender violations or similar activity** may NOT be transferred to a Massachusetts issued driver's license and you may not be eligible for a Massachusetts issued license. If a restriction is present on your license, you may need to provide a driving record so that the RMV can establish your eligibility for a Massachusetts issued license. You may also need to provide additional documentation of your eligibility for a Massachusetts issued license to address any medical restrictions that may be present on your out-of-state license.

If you have a restriction for Corrective Lenses, the results of the RMV vision test or submission of a Vision Screening Certificate will determine whether or not you receive the same restriction on your Massachusetts issued license.

If it is determined that you do not qualify for a Massachusetts issued license, you have a right to appeal a decision of the Registry to the Board of Appeal on Motor Vehicle Liability Policies & Bonds (see *Appeals* section on page 17).

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## Junior Operator License Conversion

License Conversion for a Junior Operator requires that you provide a certified copy of your driving record from the state you are leaving, in addition to meeting the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Identification Requirements* section.) You must also have a Massachusetts driver's education certificate electronically on file with the RMV (see *Driver's Education* section) and you must log an additional 40 hours of supervised driving (30 hours if you completed a driver skills development program) as shown by a certified statement provided by a parent or guardian.

You will be subject to all of the provisions of the Massachusetts JOL law (See the *Junior Operator License Law* section). The only exception is the period of time you will be subject to the passenger restriction, which depends on your driving record. If your record indicates you have had a valid license for a full six months, without suspension or revocation, you will not be subject to the passenger restriction.

**To convert an out-of-state driver's education certificate, the program you completed must meet or exceed Massachusetts minimum requirements for classroom and in-car instruction. If you have any questions, call the RMV Contact Center.**

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## Permit Conversion

Class D and M Learner's Permits may be converted to an equivalent Massachusetts issued permit if you meet the RMV's identification requirements (See the *Identification Requirements* section). To be eligible for conversion, the out-of-state permit must have been issued less than two years ago. You must also provide a certified driving record (not more than 30 days old).

If you are under 18 years old, your parent must sign the permit application. You will not be required to take the learner's permit exam; however, you will need to pay the applicable fee. A converted permit will be dated to reflect the issue date of the original permit in order to meet the six month experience requirement for applicants under 18. The Massachusetts issued permit will expire two years from the adjusted issue date or at the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first).

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## Conversions from a U.S. Territory, Canada, or Mexico

When converting a permit or license from one of the 14 U.S. Territories, Canada, or Mexico, you must meet the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Out-of-State Conversion section of the Identification Requirements chart*.) You must submit an original certified driving record from your home territory or country. Driving records must be no more than 30 days old. See the *Translation Required Policy* section on page 15 for the policy for foreign language documents.

An original certified driving record is required from the 14 U.S. Territories, Canada, and Mexico because the driving records of those jurisdictions are not available for electronic review by the RMV through the Problem Driver Pointer System.

The 14 U.S. Territories consist of the following:

American Samoa • Baker Island • Guam • Howland Island • Jarvis Island • Johnston Atoll •  
Kingman Reef • Midway Islands • Navassa Island • Northern Mariana Islands • Palmyra Atoll •  
Puerto Rico • U.S. Virgin Islands • Wake Islands

Source - The Worldfact Book (U.S. CIA-2004)

A Puerto Rican birth certificate will only be accepted for identification if it was issued on or after July 1, 2010. For more information on the Puerto Rican birth certificate law, visit the [Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration website](#).

## Conversions from Certain Select Foreign Countries

The RMV has entered into reciprocal arrangements with South Korea (The Republic of Korea), the Republic of France, Taiwan (The Republic of China), and the Federal Republic of Germany to convert valid passenger vehicle licenses issued by these countries to former residents who have relocated to Massachusetts and who are authorized by their Visa status to remain for at least one (1) year in the U.S. These reciprocal arrangements were entered into following requests from the individual governments.

The RMV may issue a Massachusetts issued license to a qualified driver based on the arrangements with each individual country. Please see the information for license conversion from these countries on the RMV website in the *Converting a Foreign License* section.

These arrangements will also allow a former resident of Massachusetts to convert his/her valid Massachusetts passenger vehicle license to a license of the same class upon relocating to one of these countries and meeting the qualifications. Former residents of Massachusetts moving to one of the identified countries should contact the country's driver license issuance agency for applicable information.

## Other Foreign Licenses

If you hold a driver's license from any country other than the United States, a U.S. Territory, Canada, Mexico, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Republic of France, Taiwan (Republic of China), or the Federal Republic of Germany, you must take both the learner's permit exam and road test. Unless a reciprocal agreement already exists (see above), a visitor from a foreign country cannot convert to a Massachusetts license. Only a resident of Massachusetts can obtain a Massachusetts license.

If you become a legal resident of Massachusetts after having entered the U.S. in a Visa status, you must apply for a Massachusetts driver's license to retain your right to operate a motor vehicle. You need to present proof of lawful presence in the U.S. for a minimum of 12 months (see *Who is Eligible for a Massachusetts License* section). You may be eligible for a license even if you have less than 12 months of lawful presence still remaining at the time of application.



## Renewing Your License

It is your responsibility to renew your driver's license before the expiration date and you must inform the RMV and the U.S. Post Office of any address change. **As a license holder, you are solely responsible for its safekeeping, renewal, and replacement.** Please check the expiration date printed on your license and remember to renew before this date. The RMV offers an Internet feature that allows you to verify your license status and your renewal options online.

Your Massachusetts driver's license is valid for five years, unless it is your first license which expires on your fifth birthday after the date of issue, or until the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first). You may renew your license up to one year before the expiration date. If your license expired more than two years ago, you will be required to take a learner's permit exam and road test.

**Eligible customers may renew their licenses online two straight renewal periods** and must renew in person every third renewal period (once every 15 years). To be eligible, your license photo must be less than 14 years old.

### **You are not eligible to renew online if:**

- You hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL)\*
- You need to change your name
- You do not have an SSN
- You are 75 years of age or older
- You have outstanding obligations
- Your lawful presence cannot be verified electronically
- You are requesting a first time issuance of a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License
- You have a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License marked "Limited Term"

\*The RMV has made a change allowing CDLs with NI certification to be renewed online.

Visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) for more information.

If you are not eligible to renew online, make a reservation to visit any full service or limited service RMV Service Center (see *Appendix C* for locations and business hours). Each time you renew, you will have to pass a vision screening test and supply your SSN or updated Social Security Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old).

**Please note that at RMV Limited Service Centers (as opposed to RMV Full Service Centers), you can pay your renewal fee by check or credit card only.**

Massachusetts driver's licenses are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.

If you renew your license in a service center, you will receive a receipt that serves as a temporary license and provides proof of driving privileges while the permanent license is being manufactured. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.

If a new photo is required, but your appearance has been temporarily changed due to medical treatment, you can obtain a duplicate license and keep your current photo for one year if you present certification from a licensed physician. You will then need to renew your license with a new photo after one year.

**Turning 21?** If you choose to renew your Driver's License before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical license with the words "Under 21" printed on it. However, if you renew your license on or after your 21st birthday, you will receive a standard horizontal license that does not have the words "Under 21" printed on it.

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## SSN Verification on Renewal

Approximately six months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will attempt to confirm your Social Security Number with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The RMV will run a computer check through the SSA to ensure that the SSN you provided to the RMV is the number that has been issued to you. If we are told it is not, you will receive a letter from the RMV informing you that license renewal is not possible until you resolve the SSN problem with the SSA.

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## Driving Record Check on Renewal

Approximately two months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will run a check of your license status in other jurisdictions. The RMV will run a computer check of your name, birth date, and SSN with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS). If you are identified as a suspended or revoked driver in that system, you will not be allowed to renew your license until the matter is resolved. You will be notified by letter of your non-renewal status.

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## Other Reasons for Non-Renewal

In addition to the reasons previously stated, if you have outstanding parking tickets, unpaid excise taxes, outstanding warrants, outstanding E-ZPass, Pay-by-Plate, or other tolling violations, abandoned vehicles, or unpaid fines for evasion of a fare on a vehicle or ferry owned or operated by the MBTA, you will not be able to renew your license. The RMV will notify you by letter if you are not eligible for license renewal due to any of these problems. For detailed information on reasons for non-renewal, see *Chapter Two, Keeping Your License*.

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## Renewals for Military Personnel

Military personnel are not required to renew their Massachusetts driver's licenses during active service. However, you may wish to renew your license during your military service. In such cases, the RMV will issue a photo license or a special nonphoto driver's license, depending upon the circumstances, if you are stationed outside Massachusetts.

**You are not required to renew your Massachusetts license while you are in active military service.**

You can only request a nonphoto driver's license by mail. To order a nonphoto license renewal, for military personnel and their dependents, mail your request, the renewal fee (see the *License Fees* section), and a copy of your military ID to the address on the next page. A nonphoto driver's license will be mailed to you, if you are located outside Massachusetts. In any correspondence, include your out-of-state address and phone number.

Unless you have already been issued a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, renewals for military personnel can only be a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License.

**The Driver Licensing Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889**

## Temporary Extensions

If you are temporarily out of Massachusetts and cannot return home before your driver's license expires, you may ask the RMV to grant you a temporary extension. A temporary extension is valid for 60 days after the expiration date of your license and can be granted one time only. To request a temporary extension, call the RMV Contact Center or write to the RMV's main office at the address listed below. In any correspondence, be sure to include your name, license number, out-of-state address, and telephone number.

**Customer Assistance Bureau, Registry of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02203-5889**

## Replacing Your License

### Duplicate License

To apply for a duplicate of your photo-image license, simply log on to [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv) or call the RMV's Contact Center, request a duplicate, and pay the \$25 duplicate fee by VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express.

If you request a duplicate for a license obtained before the implementation of REAL ID, but don't prove lawful presence for a REAL ID Massachusetts License or a Standard Massachusetts License, the replacement license will be an exact copy of your current card (not REAL ID or Standard).

If you request an amended license, you will need to prove lawful presence of at least 12 months to obtain a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, or meet all of the requirements for a REAL ID Massachusetts License.

**All fees are subject to change at any time. All license fees are non-refundable.**

### Replacements for Military Personnel

Active members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who wish to obtain duplicates of their licenses can simply send letters of request stating whether their licenses were lost or stolen to the address listed below and include copies of their military IDs.

For military personnel and their dependents, duplicate licenses are free.

**The Driver Licensing Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889**

## Surrendering Your License

If you become unqualified to operate a motor vehicle safely due to a physical or mental condition or simply wish to cease driving for other reasons, you may voluntarily surrender your license by making a reservation to visit any RMV Full Service Center or by mailing the license to Medical Affairs.

Medical Affairs, Registry of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889

If you choose to give up your license, it will not negatively affect your insurance and there is no fee. When you give up your license, the RMV will give you a free Massachusetts Identification Card. If you want your license back, you may need to give the RMV medical documents. You may also need to take a competency road test. You will not need to pay to get your license back unless it expired. If it did expire, you will need to pay the normal renewal fee.

## Renewing Your Massachusetts Identification Card

It is your responsibility to renew your ID Card before the expiration date and you must inform the RMV and the U.S. Post Office of any address change. **As an ID Card holder, you are solely responsible for its safekeeping, renewal, and replacement.** Please check the expiration date printed on your ID card and remember to renew before this date. The RMV offers an Internet feature that allows you to verify your ID card status and your renewal options online.

Your ID Card is valid for five years, unless it is your first ID Card which expires on your fifth birthday after the date of issue, or until the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first). You may renew your ID Card up to one year before the expiration date or up to four years after the expiration date.

**Eligible customers may renew their ID Cards online two straight renewal periods** and must renew in person every third renewal period (once every 15 years). To be eligible, your ID Card photo must be less than 14 years old.

You are not eligible to renew online if:

- You need to change your name
- You do not have an SSN
- Your lawful presence cannot be verified electronically
- You are requesting a first time issuance of a REAL ID Massachusetts ID Card
- You have a REAL ID Massachusetts ID Card marked "Limited Term"

If you are not eligible to renew online, visit any full service or limited service RMV Service Center (see *Appendix C* for locations and business hours). Each time you renew, you will have to supply your SSN or updated Social Security Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old).

**Please note that at RMV Limited Service Centers (as opposed to RMV Full Service Centers), you can pay your renewal fee by check or credit card only.**

If a new photo is required, but your appearance has been temporarily changed due to medical treatment, you can obtain a duplicate ID Card and keep your current photo for one year if you present certification from a licensed physician. You will then need to renew your ID Card with a new photo after one year.

**Turning 21?** If you choose to renew your ID Card before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical ID Card with the words “Under 21” printed on it. However, if you renew your ID Card on or after your 21st birthday, you will receive a standard horizontal ID Card that does not have the words “Under 21” printed on it.

## Change of Address or Name

If you hold a Massachusetts learner's permit or driver's license or ID, the law requires you to notify the RMV of any address change within 30 days of the change. Go to [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/RMV) to complete the transaction online, call the RMV's Contact Center, or make a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center and give your new address. You should also notify the U.S. Post Office of any address change within 30 days. When you give the RMV your new address, you can write your new address using permanent ink on the back of the license or ID in the area provided, or you can pay \$25 to obtain a duplicate license with your new address.

**You must notify the Social Security Administration any time you change your name.**

If you change your name, you must report the change promptly to the RMV so that all your license and vehicle records can be updated. Also, you must obtain a new driver's license bearing your new name and signature. This transaction costs \$25 and must be done in person by making a reservation to visit a service center. Your full legal name, including full middle name, must be recorded as shown on your passport, birth certificate, or documents demonstrating lawful presence. For a REAL ID Card, you must present a legal document as proof of your name change (such as a marriage license, a divorce decree, or a court document). For a Standard Massachusetts Card, no documentation is required.

## Change of Gender Designation

If your gender identity no longer matches the gender designation printed on your Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card, you can change your gender designation using a license application. If you have also changed your name, it should be indicated in the Change of Information section of the license application. A duplicate card costs \$25. You must turn in your license or ID containing the other gender designation.

You do not need to provide proof of sex reassignment surgery, an amended birth certificate, or proof of a court-approved name change.

Your gender will appear in the "sex" field of your credential as either M, F, or X.

## Voter Registration

If you are legally eligible to vote, you can register when you conduct a permit, license, or ID transaction with a reservation at a full service or limited service RMV Service Center. All licensing transaction forms contain a section in which you can indicate if you wish to register to vote or update your current voter registration.

**You must be a U.S. citizen and at least 16 years old to register to vote.  
You must be at least 18 years old to be eligible to vote.**

If you are registered and change your address, your information will be forwarded first to the Secretary of State's Central Voter Registry and then to your local election office, which will send you a confirmation notice in the mail.

**For more information on registering to vote or the election process, call the State Election Line at 1-800-462-VOTE or 617-727-2828.**

## Veteran's Indicator

If you are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces and were honorably discharged, you can choose to have the word "Veteran" printed on your license or ID card. The Veteran's Indicator can be added when you apply for, renew, or order a duplicate permit, license, or ID card. There is no additional fee for the Veteran's Indicator. If your license or ID card is not eligible for renewal, you can obtain a free duplicate with the Veteran's Indicator. Regular transaction fees apply for other transactions. One of the following documents must be presented as proof of honorable discharge in person with a reservation at an RMV Service Center:

- A DD-214 that indicates honorable discharge
- A DD-215 that indicates honorable discharge
- An Honorable Discharge form

The information on the form must be typed (not handwritten).

## Organ and Tissue Donor Program

When you apply for a Massachusetts driver's license or identification card, you will have the opportunity to become an organ and tissue donor. By registering as an organ and tissue donor with the RMV, you will be entered into the Massachusetts Donor Registry, which is legal consent for donation. However, you should also share your decision to donate with your family and friends so that they know about your decision to become an organ and tissue donor.

**You can register as an organ donor, or change your organ donor status, anytime on [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv).**

Even if you are currently a registered donor, you still need to check "yes" on question one of the license or ID card renewal form in order to remain in the donor registry.

**If you have any questions, please contact one of the organ donor organizations listed on the next page.**

**For more information on organ and tissue donation:**

**Visit [neds.org](http://neds.org) or [unos.org](http://unos.org)**

**Call New England Organ Bank at 1-800-446-6362**

**Call LifeChoice Donor Services at 1-800-874-5215**

Every day, 17 people in the United States die waiting for organ transplants. Currently, there are over 120,000 total patients waiting for an organ transplant in the United States. Thousands more await life enhancing tissue transplants.

**When you use the Internet to renew your license or ID, or order a duplicate license or ID, you will have the choice to give \$2 to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registration Fund. This \$2 will be added to the renewal or duplicate fee.**

**Note:** The RMV is required by law to provide certain information identifying organ and tissue donors to federally-designated organ procurement organizations and other federally registered non-profit eye and tissue banks serving the Commonwealth.

### **Organ Donor FAQs** (*see [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) for more FAQs*)

- Q. What does the heart symbol on my license/ID represent?
- A. It indicates that you are in the Massachusetts Donor Registry and have consented to organ/tissue donation.
- Q. Can I be an organ/tissue donor if I don't have the heart symbol on my license/ID?
- A. Yes. You can register as an organ/tissue donor anytime on [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). You don't need to get a new license/ID. Your license/ID won't have the heart symbol, but your name will be in the Donor Registry's database. When it is time to get a new license/ID, the heart symbol will then be printed on it.
- Q. What is the Massachusetts Donor Registry?
- A. The Donor Registry is a database that contains the names of everyone who has signed up to be an organ and tissue donor at the RMV. The database is checked (via computer) when necessary. This eliminates the need to look for a donor card or a license that could be misplaced or lost.
- Q. Do you need to carry a donor card with your license (in addition to the heart symbol)?
- A. No, you do not need to carry a donor card if you have the heart symbol on your license. The heart symbol indicates that you are in the Massachusetts Donor Registry and have consented to organ/tissue donation. The Donor Registry is checked whenever an individual becomes a potential candidate for donation.
- Q. Will it cost my family anything if I donate organs/tissues?
- A. Organ and tissue donation is completely free. A donor's family is not charged.





# Keeping Your License

Driving in Massachusetts is a privilege. It is not a right. You earn driving privileges by passing a learner's permit exam and a road test. These tests prove that you can operate a motor vehicle safely and within the law. Once you have earned your driver's license, you are responsible for your actions as a driver.

The RMV tracks your history as a driver. This is called your **driving record**. It lists three types of events that can cause you to lose your driving privileges:

- Civil motor vehicle infractions
- Criminal violations
- Motor vehicle crashes where you are found to be more than 50 percent at fault

This chapter explains these three events. It also explains how the law works and how to avoid losing your driving privileges.

## CHAPTER 2

The RMV must sometimes suspend or revoke your driver's license. These situations are described in this chapter. A suspension or revocation means that your driving privileges are taken away. It can be for a specific amount of time or it can be indefinite. (See the *License Suspension or Revocation* section later in this chapter.)

You cannot renew an expired license if you have unpaid parking violations, unpaid excise taxes, outstanding court warrants, outstanding E-ZPass/Fast Lane violations, or Tobin Bridge violations. (See the *Reasons for License Nonrenewal* section later in this chapter.)

## Motor Vehicle Violations and Penalties

When you break a motor vehicle law, you may receive a citation. A citation may require you to pay a fine, lose your driving privileges, appear in court, or go to jail. Major traffic law violations are criminal offenses. Examples are driving while intoxicated or leaving the scene of a crash. They carry strong penalties and could cause you to lose your license. You can also lose your license by getting several traffic violations. These include driving above the speed limit or failing to obey traffic signals.

Motor vehicle violations can be civil or criminal. The following sections explain the differences between the two types. For many violations, the penalties may be stronger if you have a Junior Operator's License, you are under 21, you are a repeat offender, or you are driving with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

**Depending on the violation, you may get more than one penalty. These may include a fine, loss of license, and/or a prison sentence.**

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### Civil Motor Vehicle Infractions

Civil violations, such as not obeying traffic signals or speeding, are noncriminal. They can usually be settled by paying fines. If you get a citation from a police officer for a civil motor vehicle infraction (CMVI), you must pay the required fine or request a hearing to dispute it. You have 20 days to do this. Every fine for a CMVI that comes from Chapter 89 or 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws will have an added \$5 public safety surcharge.

If you request a hearing, you must pay a \$25 filing fee to the RMV. You can either send your payment with the citation when you request a hearing, or you can pay online or by mail when you receive a letter from the RMV indicating that you owe the fee. If the citation was issued after September 22, 2017 and you are found NOT RESPONSIBLE by the court for ALL violations on the civil citation, the \$25 filing fee will be refunded.

If you do not respond to a citation within 20 days, you will be found responsible and charged a large late fee. Failure to pay the citation and late fee will cause your license to be suspended. When you pay a fine, you accept responsibility for that violation. Your driving record will show responsibility if you pay the citation by mail, request a hearing and are ordered by a court to pay the fine, or fail to respond to the citation within 20 days.

The RMV records all moving violations in Massachusetts on your driving record. Moving violations can increase your motor vehicle insurance rate (see *Chapter Six*). They may also cause your license to be suspended.

Parking violations are not CMVIs. They are handled by the city or town that issued the citations or tickets. If you do not pay the violation, you will not be able to renew your driver's license or vehicle registration.

You can pay for moving violations using a credit card. Call the RMV Contact Center or visit the RMV website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). Or you can mail the payment to:  
RMV Citations - Processing Center, PO Box 55890, Boston, MA, 02205-5890

Speeding Violations

The beginning of *Chapter Four* explains the speed-limit laws in Massachusetts. The lowest penalty for driving above the speed limit is a \$105 fine. If you drive more than ten miles per hour (mph) over the speed limit, you must pay an extra \$10 for each mph you were traveling above the first ten. For example, if you drive 73 mph on a highway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph, you would get a \$185 dollar fine. By law, all fines for speeding violations include a \$50 surcharge. The entire surcharge goes to the Head Injury

Treatment Services Trust Fund.

Speeding is often a factor in motor vehicle crashes that cause serious head injuries. The Legislature created this trust fund to treat people with head injuries. An additional \$5 public safety surcharge is also added to all speeding violations.

Your Speed	73 mph
Speed Limit	55 mph
	18 mph over the limit
First 10 mph	\$105
Next 8 mph (8 x 10) =	\$80
	\$185 total fine

Work Zones

If you are caught speeding in a posted work zone, the speeding fine is **doubled**.

Your license will be suspended for 30 days if you are found guilty for three speeding violations in a 12-month period. If you have a Junior Operator's License, a 1st offense will cause a 90-day license suspension. Further offenses will cause a one-year license suspension.

Criminal Violations

Criminal motor vehicle violations are serious offenses. If you commit a criminal motor vehicle violation, you may be arrested immediately, your vehicle may be towed, your license may be taken away, and you may be sent to jail until you go to court. If you are convicted of a criminal motor vehicle offense, the court will set any fine or prison term.

Criminal motor vehicle offenses include driving with a suspended license, operating under the influence (OUI), and leaving the scene of a crash. The *License Suspension or Revocation* section of this chapter has tables that list the penalties for many criminal motor vehicle offenses.

A police officer may arrest you and you may face criminal charges if you refuse to...

- Give your name and address
- Give the name and address of the person who owns the vehicle
- Show your driver's license
- Show a valid registration certificate for the vehicle
- Sign your name in front of the officer

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## Out-of-State Violations

Out-of-state motor vehicle violations impact your record just as if they occurred in Massachusetts.

- Do not ignore out-of-state violations. Failure to pay or appear in another jurisdiction for a violation will impact your license status and right to operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts.
- Out-of-state violations result in some or all of the following penalties: immediate suspension or revocation of your driving privileges until your obligations are met; payment of reinstatement fees; increased insurance premiums; required driver retraining classes; and/or a mandatory suspension period.
- The RMV applies Massachusetts suspension penalties for out-of-state violations. In some cases, the Massachusetts penalty may be stricter than the penalty imposed by the other state.
- If your driving privileges are suspended, you must present proof to the RMV that you resolved your out-of-state obligations, and pay a reinstatement fee (minimum of \$100) to Massachusetts before your Massachusetts license can be reinstated.

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## At-Fault Crashes

Your driving record is also affected if you are at fault in a motor vehicle crash. You are more than 50 percent at fault for a crash if your insurance company...

1. Finds you at fault according to one of the 19 Standards of Fault. These are listed at the end of *Chapter Six*. One example is causing a crash while driving on the wrong side of the road. Another example is crashing into another vehicle from behind.  
*and*
2. Has paid more than \$1000 for collision, limited collision, or damage to someone else's property or has paid more than \$1000 for bodily injury (if there is no collision or damage to someone else's property over \$1000 from the same incident).

All at-fault crashes you are charged with are listed on your driving record. At-fault crashes and motor vehicle violations count toward possible license suspension.

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## Surchargeable Events

Motor vehicle violations and at-fault crashes are called surchargeable events. Each surchargeable event counts toward a possible license suspension. Most out-of-state traffic convictions count as if they took place in Massachusetts.

**If you are found guilty for three speeding violations within a 12-month period, your license will be suspended automatically for 30 days. The 12-month period starts when you either pay or are found guilty for the first citation.**

**A Junior Operator license (for drivers under age 18) will be suspended for 90 days for a first speeding citation and one year for any later citation. For a first drag racing citation, a Junior Operator license will be suspended for one year. A later drag racing citation will cause a three year suspension.**

**If you have three surchargeable events within a two-year period, your license may be suspended.** The RMV will send you a letter telling you to complete a Driver Retraining course (see the next section). You must complete the retraining course within 90 days or your license will be suspended until you complete the course.

**If you have seven surchargeable events within a three-year period, your license will be suspended automatically for 60 days.**

Surchargeable events also affect your motor vehicle insurance. The Merit Rating Board runs the Safe Driver Insurance Plan (SDIP). Under SDIP, your insurance premium is determined by your driving record. If you are a safe driver, your rate may go down. Your rate will increase if you are convicted of moving violations, or if you are more than 50 percent at fault in a crash (see *Chapter Six* for more information).

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## Driver Retraining Course

If you get three or more surchargeable events on your driving record within a two-year period, you *must* complete the Massachusetts Driver Retraining Course. If you do not, your license will be suspended. This course does not teach driving skills. It helps you learn to change your driving behavior.

**To enroll in a Driver Retraining course, call the National Safety Council at 1-800-215-1581.**

After you are told by the RMV that you have three or more surchargeable events, you will be sent a driver retraining information packet. This packet has information about the course, the fees, and how to enroll. The eight-hour retraining program is held at many locations throughout the state. It is two four-hour sessions. However, one eight-hour Saturday session may be available in your area.

Completing the Driver Retraining course does *not* remove offenses or surcharges from your driving record. It also does *not* replace any other requirements. For example, if you were convicted of drunk driving, you may also have to complete an alcohol treatment or education program.

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## Driving Records

An attested copy of a Massachusetts Public Driving Record is suitable for official purposes and is stamped to indicate it is an authentic RMV document. An attested copy of a driving record can be issued in all RMV Service Centers, by phone, by mail, or by the Court Records Department at 136 Blackstone Street, Boston MA. The cost of an attested driving record is \$20. You can pay this by check, money order, or cash in a service center, or by VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express over the Internet or by phone. To order by phone, call the RMV Contact Center. To order by mail, send a written request with your name, date of birth, driver's license number, Massachusetts address, and check or money order to the address below. If you do not need the driving record to be attested, you can order an unattested driving record for \$8 (this option is only available over the Internet).

Checks or money orders must be payable to MassDOT. Make sure your name, address, and driver's license number are printed on your check. If you live out of state, please indicate where you want your driving record mailed.

In fall of 2016, sections of Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2016 took effect limiting the public release

of certain drug offense information, as well as expired warrant and child support information, that previously displayed on Public Driving Records. For information on accessing an RMV document containing these offenses, call Court Records at 857-368-8195 or visit Court Records in-person at the Haymarket RMV Service Center, 136 Blackstone Street, Boston MA.

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

**Driver Control/ Court Records, Registry of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 55896 Boston, MA 02205-5896**  
If you order a driving record by mail or phone, it may take ten business days to get it.

## License Suspension or Revocation

The Registry of Motor Vehicles can suspend or revoke your driver's license. This can be done by Massachusetts law or when you are seen as a threat to public safety. Some motor vehicle violations require your license to be suspended or revoked immediately. Your license can also be suspended or revoked if you commit a number of moving violations or if you are at fault in a number of crashes.

### Reasons for License Suspension

The RMV **must** sometimes suspend or revoke a driver's license. The charts in this section show when a suspension is mandatory. The RMV can also choose to suspend or revoke a license in the following cases:

- Immediate threat — If the RMV believes that your driving is an immediate threat to public safety, it can suspend your learner's permit or driver's license immediately.
- Improper operation — If you have operated a motor vehicle improperly, the RMV can suspend your driving privileges.
- Fake ID — Even if you are not convicted, the RMV can suspend your driving privileges for six months (or one year after a conviction) for the following offenses:
  - Transferring, altering, or defacing a license/ID
  - Making, using, carrying, selling, or distributing a false license/ID
  - Using somebody else's license/ID
  - Furnishing false information to obtain a license/ID

### Other Reasons for License Suspensions

Since a driver's license is a privilege and not a right, the RMV is also required by law to suspend a driver's license for some reasons not related to driving. For example, your license will be suspended if you:

- Have failed to pay required child support
- Have an outstanding arrest or default warrant
- Have failed to register as a sex offender
- Have been convicted of certain drug trafficking offenses
- Have failed to pay Massachusetts income tax
- Have made a bad payment to the RMV (for example, you paid with a check that was later rejected or you paid with a credit card and later canceled the payment with the bank)

**If your license was suspended for a bad payment, you must pay the original fee, a license reinstatement fee, and a \$15 fee to clear your bad payment. You can make a reservation to pay at any RMV Full Service Center. You must either use cash or a certified bank check payable to MassDOT.**

### *Mandatory License Suspensions (18 Years and Older)*

Situation	Explanation	Suspension Period	Fee to Reinstate
<b>Three Speeding Violations</b>	Three speeding violations/ responsible findings within any one-year period.	30 days	\$100
<b>Three Surchargeable Events</b>	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable crashes that total three surchargeable events within a two-year period.	Must complete Driver Retraining course within 90 days or license will be suspended indefinitely until course is completed	\$100
<b>Seven Surchargeable Events</b>	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable crashes that total seven surchargeable events within a three-year period.	60 days	\$100
<b>Habitual Traffic Offender</b>	A total of three major moving violations or any combination of twelve major or minor moving violations within a five-year period.	Four years	\$500
<b>Out-of-State Suspension</b>	License has been suspended or revoked in another state.	Until the out-of-state suspension is resolved	\$100

**If you have questions about...**

- **Child support**, contact the Department of Revenue's Child Support Office at 1-800-332-2733.
- **Registering as a sex offender**, contact the Sex Offender Registry Board at 978-740-6503.

### ***Out-of-State Suspensions***

Out-of-state suspensions or revocations affect your Massachusetts license. Your license **will be suspended** in Massachusetts until any out-of-state suspension or revocation is cleared. When your license is reinstated in the other state, you must bring either a reinstatement letter or a current driving record from that state to any RMV Full Service Center. You may also need to give additional information. Your reinstatement letter or driving record cannot be over 30 days old.

Each U.S. state must tell the Massachusetts RMV about any traffic offenses you commit there. **These offenses will be treated as if they happened in Massachusetts if they are a "like" offense.**

**To determine a "like" offense, the RMV will look at what the other state's law prohibits. It does not matter if the other state chose to assess a higher or lower penalty, or treat the offense as a civil or criminal infraction.**

**The RMV must apply Massachusetts suspension rules to out-of-state violations, even if the offense did not cause a suspension in the other state.**

### **When Your License Is Suspended or Revoked. . .**

If the RMV suspends or revokes your driver's license, you *must* stop driving immediately. You have lost your driving privileges. It is illegal for you to operate any motor vehicle.

# Mandatory PERMIT Suspensions

Junior Operators Only (16 1/2 to 18 years)

Violation	Suspension Period	Reinstatement Requirements	Fee to Reinstatement
Conviction for Driving Without a Licensed Driver (c. 90, §8B)	60 days— first offense 180 days— second offense One year— subsequent offenses	All offenses require you to retake the learner's permit exam. Second offense requires a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.	\$100
Conviction for Driving During the Night Restriction (c. 90, §10) (c. 90, §8B)	60 days— first offense 180 days— second offense One year— subsequent offenses	All offenses require you to retake the learner's permit exam. Second offense requires a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.	\$100
Conviction for Speeding (c. 90, §17) (c. 90, §17A) (c. 90, §18)	90 days— first offense One year— second or subsequent offense	All offenses require a new learner's permit exam.	\$100
Conviction for Drag Racing (c. 90, §17B)	One year— first offense Three years— second or subsequent offense	All offenses require a new learner's permit exam and a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course. In addition, you may be required to take a State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) course.*	\$500-first offense \$1000-second or subsequent offense
Conviction for the Use of a Mobile Electronic Device (text or phone) (c. 90, §8M)	60 days— first offense 180 days— second offense One year— subsequent offenses	First offense requires a \$100 fine, a new learner's permit exam, and a Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course. The fine is \$250 for a second offense and \$500 for a third offense.	\$100
Conviction for Negligent Operation and Injury from Mobile Phone Use (c. 90, §24)	180 days— first offense One year— second or subsequent offense	Second and subsequent offenses require a new learner's permit exam.	\$500

**Note:** In addition to any other penalty required by law, Massachusetts General Laws chapter 90, section 24p requires that any Junior Operator who is convicted of Operating Under the Influence (OUI), Operating to Endanger, Leaving the Scene of a Crash, Drinking from an Open Alcohol Container, OUI with Serious Bodily Injury, Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle, Reckless/Negligent Operation, Loaning/ Allowing Another to Use Your License or Learner's Permit, or Motor Vehicle Homicide will face a 180 day suspension (in addition to any other suspension required by law) for a first offense, or a one year suspension for any subsequent offense. This additional suspension only applies to Junior Operators, and only in cases in which they did not already receive an additional suspension for failing or refusing a breath test.

**In addition to the penalties listed, your parent or guardian will be notified of the suspension.**



# Mandatory LICENSE Suspensions

Junior Operators Only (16 1/2 to 18 years)

Violation	Suspension Period	Reinstatement Requirements	Fee to Reinstatement
Conviction for Violating the Passenger or Night Restriction (c. 90, §8) (c. 90, §10)	60 days— first offense 180 days— second offense One year— subsequent offenses	Second and subsequent offenses require a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course. Third and subsequent offenses require a new learner's permit exam and road test.	\$100
Conviction for Speeding (c. 90, §17) (c. 90, §17A) (c. 90, §18)	90 days— first offense One year— second or subsequent offense	All offenses require a new learner's permit exam, a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course, and a new road test. In addition, you may be required to take a State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) course.*	\$500
Conviction for Drag Racing (c. 90, §17B)	One year— first offense Three years— second or subsequent offense	All offenses require a new learner's permit exam, a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course, and a new road test. In addition, you may be required to take a State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) course.*	\$500-first offense \$1000-second or subsequent offense
Conviction for Driving Negligently or Recklessly/ Operating to Endanger (c. 90, §24)	180 days— first offense One year— second or subsequent offense (within a three year period)	Second and subsequent offenses require a new learner's permit exam and a new road test.	\$500
Conviction for the Use of a Mobile Electronic Device (text or phone) (c. 90, §8M)	60 days— first offense 180 days— second offense One year— subsequent offenses	First offense requires a \$100 fine, a new learner's permit exam, a Driver Attitudinal Retraining Course, and a new road test. The fine is \$250 for a second offense and \$500 for a third offense.	\$100
Conviction for Negligent Operation and Injury from Mobile Phone Use (c. 90, §24)	180 days— first offense One year— second or subsequent offense	Second and subsequent offenses require a new learner's permit exam and a new road test.	\$500

**Note:** In addition to any other penalty required by law, Massachusetts General Laws chapter 90, section 24p requires that any Junior Operator who is convicted of Operating Under the Influence (OUI), Operating to Endanger, Leaving the Scene of a Crash, Drinking from an Open Alcohol Container, OUI with Serious Bodily Injury, Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle, Reckless/Negligent Operation, Loaning/Allowing Another to Use Your License or Learner's Permit, or Motor Vehicle Homicide will face a 180 day suspension (in addition to any other suspension required by law) for a first offense, or a one year suspension for any subsequent offense. This additional suspension only applies to Junior Operators, and only in cases in which they did not already receive an additional suspension for failing or refusing a breath test.

\*A Massachusetts JOL License or Permit holder that commits certain categories of motor vehicle violations is required under law to complete the SCARR program. Drivers may also be mandated to complete SCARR as assigned by a specific court. A Junior Operator will only be required to take the SCARR course one time. Visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) for more information.

For more information on, or to register for, a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course or a State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) course, visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) and click on “Teens and Parents.”

### *Criminal Offenses and Suspensions*

Criminal Conviction	Suspension Period	Fee to Reinstatement
Operating a motor vehicle with a suspended or revoked license	60 days–One year	\$500
Operating a motor vehicle without the owner's authority / larceny of a motor vehicle	One–Three years	\$500
Leaving the scene of a crash when a person is injured	One–Two years	\$500
Leaving the scene of a crash involving property damage	60 days–One year	\$500
Operating to endanger	60 days–One year	\$500
Motor vehicle homicide	15 years–Lifetime	\$500
Vehicular manslaughter	15 years–Lifetime	\$500
Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs	One year (first) Two years (second) Eight years (third) Ten years (fourth) Lifetime (fifth)	\$500 (first) \$700 (second) \$1200 (third) \$1200 (fourth) N/A
Any drug trafficking related conviction (except a Class D substance) (Operation of a vehicle is not required)	One–Five years	\$100
Defacing real or personal property, spraying paint or applying stickers or other graffiti (Operation of a vehicle is not required)	One year (or delay of one year in obtaining a License)	\$100
Drag racing (by drivers over the age of 18)	30 days-180 days	\$500 - \$1,000
Negligent Operation and Injury from Mobile Phone Use	60 days–One year	\$500

Many of the offenses in the chart above may also require you to serve time in jail.

Additional suspension periods will apply to many of the offenses in the chart above when Junior Operators commit them and alcohol or drugs are involved. For more information, see the *Under 21 Alcohol Offenses* section later in this chapter.

Customers serving a mandatory suspension for certain drug trafficking offenses may seek a hardship license at any time during their suspension period.

### ***Driving Without a License***

It is illegal to drive in Massachusetts without a valid driver's license or permit.

### ***Driving With a Suspended License***

If your license or permit has been suspended or revoked for any reason, it is *not* valid. You are *not* allowed to drive in Massachusetts or anywhere else. **Driving with a suspended or revoked license is a criminal motor vehicle violation. You may face a large fine and/or jail sentence, as well as additional penalties.**

## License Reinstatement

To reinstate your driver's license or right to operate a motor vehicle, you may need a hearing. You have the right to a hearing with a Hearings Officer. Hearings are held on a walk-in basis, unless your notice lists a certain date, time, and place. Walk-in hearing hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During the Covid-19 state of emergency, you will start the process in the service center by completing your application and leaving any supporting documents. The Hearings Officer will then call you and conduct the hearing by phone.

**Full Time Hearings Locations** (Monday through Friday, excluding holidays): Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester.

**Part Time Hearings Locations** (selected days): Pittsfield (Wed).

**Note: Hearings days or locations are subject to change without notice. Please check [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/RMV)** to see if hearings are currently available at the RMV Service Center you wish to visit. If a hearing cannot be held there, the service center staff can tell you where to go for a hearing.

At your hearing, the Hearings Officer will review your case. This will include your driving record and all laws and regulations that apply. Most suspensions are mandatory, and the hearing is only about whether the law is being applied correctly.

Once you have been found guilty or responsible, the facts of the case are not important. The Hearings Officer will not be able to prevent a valid suspension. The Hearings Officer may take up to ten business days before making a decision.

**You must pay a fee to reinstate a suspended or revoked license.** Most fees are \$100. Fees for suspensions caused by serious offenses may be as high as \$1,200.

**For license suspensions of two years or more, you must also pass a learner's permit exam and road test to reinstate your license.** You must provide identification documents to take a learner's permit exam and road test (see *Identification Requirements* section of Chapter One).

All fees are subject to change at any time.

## Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving

The facts are simple. You cannot drive safely after drinking alcohol or taking other drugs. Alcohol is a drug. It is a depressant that affects your vision, reaction time, coordination, and judgment. Even small amounts of alcohol or other drugs can lower the mental and physical abilities you need to drive safely. This includes some over-the-counter medicines. You do not have to be drunk or completely intoxicated to be a dangerous driver.

Safety must always be your first responsibility. If you take any substance that affects your awareness and your reflexes, you are no longer safe to drive.

Each year in the United States, alcohol causes nearly 40% of all highway deaths. This does not include the thousands of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians who are seriously hurt or permanently disabled. It does not include the millions of dollars of damage. It does not include the tragedies that friends and families must face. All of this is caused by drivers operating under the influence (OUI) of alcohol or drugs.

### *Penalties for Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs*

Conviction	Fine	Prison Term	License Suspension
<b>First Offense</b>	\$500–\$5,000	Maximum 21/2 years	One Year
For your first offense, the court may allow you to complete an alcohol education course to reduce your license suspension period.			Over 21, 45–90 days, Under 21, 210 days
<b>Second Offense</b>	\$600–\$10,000	Minimum 30 days Maximum 21/2 years	Two years
<b>Third Offense (Felony)</b>	\$1,000–\$15,000	Minimum 150 days Maximum Five years	Eight years
<b>Fourth Offense (Felony)</b>	\$1,500–\$25,000	Minimum One year Maximum Five years	Ten years
<b>Fifth Offense (Felony)</b>	\$2,000–\$50,000	Minimum Two years Maximum Five years	Lifetime

Because driving under the influence is so dangerous, Massachusetts has very strong penalties for OUI violations. The chart above shows the penalties for each OUI conviction.

## Alcohol

Whether it's beer, wine, or hard liquor, alcohol is a depressant. **It slows your reflexes, increases the time you need to react, and distorts your vision and judgment.** Alcohol also often makes you *feel* more confident. This can cause you to take chances while driving that you normally wouldn't take. This is a dangerous combination that often leads to serious motor vehicle crashes and tragic deaths.

**In addition to the fines listed in this chart, you will have to pay any RMV reinstatement fees before you can get your license back.**

Even one alcoholic drink in an hour can affect your driving. It can be much worse if you are tired, emotionally upset, or haven't eaten. No one is immune to alcohol. After drinking, your ability to drive safely is impaired. It does not matter how much you try to be careful or concentrate. There is still a drug inside your body affecting you physically and mentally.

## Blood Alcohol Content

When you drink alcohol, your body works hard to remove it from your system. You *do not* digest alcohol as you do food. Alcohol is processed by your liver and kidneys. This takes time. There is no quick way to sober up or to get the alcohol out of your body. Drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, exercising, or eating might make you feel more alert after drinking alcohol. However, none of these actions affect how quickly alcohol leaves your body.

## License Suspension Periods for Failed Chemical Tests

All drivers will fail a chemical test if they have a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of 0.08 or greater. Drivers under 21 have the same standard for criminal purposes, but will face administrative sanctions for tests with a BAC as low as 0.02.

AGE	LICENSE SUSPENSION
<b>Drivers over age 21</b>	License is suspended for 30 days or until the conclusion of the court case, whichever is shorter. The suspension will end if the case is concluded either before or during the 30-day period. If the court finds you guilty, you will then face whatever sanctions ordered by the court.
<b>Drivers age 18 to 21</b>	License is suspended for 30 days, plus an additional 180 days, pursuant to MGL c.90, s. 24P. If this is your first operating under the influence case, the 180-day suspension can be waived upon entry into a Department of Public Health (DPH) approved alcohol education program.
<b>Drivers under age 18</b>	License is suspended for 30 days, plus an additional one year, pursuant to MGL c.90, s. 24P. If this is your first operating under the influence case, the one-year suspension can be reduced to 180 days upon entry into a Department of Public Health (DPH) approved alcohol education program.
<b>Note:</b> The additional 180-day or one-year suspension for drivers under age 21 is designed to get youths charged with operating under the influence, or with having a BAC of 0.02 or higher, to undergo alcohol education. <b>It does not matter what happens with your court case. Even if you win the case, it will not change the requirement for you to take the alcohol education course.</b>	

Ideally, if you have *any* alcoholic beverage, you should *not* drive. Knowing what is “too much” alcohol can be difficult. The amount of unprocessed alcohol in your body is measured as **blood alcohol content (BAC)**. This can be measured by a blood or a breath test. Your BAC depends on several factors:

- Your body weight
- How much alcohol you had to drink
- The amount of food you ate before drinking
- The length of time you have been drinking alcohol
- The speed your body processes alcohol (everyone processes alcohol differently)

The *kind* of beverage you drink does not matter. What is important is the amount of alcohol you drink over a period of time. **Each of the following drinks contain about the same amount of alcohol** (about 1/2 ounce) (source: National Institutes of Health):

- 12 ounce beer
- Five ounce glass of wine
- One and a half ounce serving of 80-proof liquor (even if mixed with a soft drink)

Any one of these drinks can raise an average person’s BAC by 0.02. If you have more than one drink in an hour, your BAC will rise. Only time will rid you of the effects of alcohol.

## Alcohol Tests

Massachusetts has an Implied Consent Law. Every licensed driver in the state must agree to consent to a breathalyzer or blood test in certain cases. If a police officer believes you are operating under the influence of alcohol, he/she has the right to ask you to...

- Perform a field sobriety test
- Submit to a breathalyzer or blood test to calculate your BAC, if you have been arrested

**You are operating above the legal limit if you have a BAC of 0.08 or higher. Massachusetts has a “zero-tolerance” law for drivers under 21. Any driver under 21 will face penalties for having a BAC of 0.02 or higher.**

If your BAC is above the legal limit OR if you refuse a breathalyzer or blood test, the police officer must take away your license. You will be given a notice of suspension, which is effective immediately. See the charts on pages 57 and 59 for the suspension periods.

## Under-21 Alcohol Offenses

Drivers under age 21 are twice as likely as other drivers to be involved in alcohol-related crashes. This is one reason why laws are stronger for under-21 drivers.

Massachusetts has a “zero-tolerance” law. If you are under 21 and are caught with a BAC as low as 0.02 while driving, you will lose your license.

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## Ignition Interlock Devices

If you had **two or more operating under the influence offenses** and are eligible for a hardship license or for license reinstatement, you must have an Ignition Interlock Device. It must be attached to your motor vehicle at your expense.

If you get a hardship license, you must use the device the **entire time you have the hardship license**. You must keep using the device **for two more years after your license has been reinstated**.

If your license is eligible for reinstatement, **the device is required for two years**. This two-year period is mandatory (even if you used the device with a hardship license). If you don't have the device installed, your license will not be reinstated. If you do not obey the Ignition Interlock Law, your license will be revoked and suspended for ten years to life.

**The RMV strongly recommends that you arrive prior to 4:00 p.m. for an Ignition Interlock Device hearing.**

The RMV provides a list of vendors who install the device. Once it is installed, you must pass a breath test before starting the vehicle. A blood alcohol reading greater than 0.02 will prevent the vehicle from starting. Every 30 days, you must return to the vendor for a service visit. The vendor will upload and transfer data from the device to the RMV. This law protects both the public and the driver. Most states now use this technology.

A \$30 RMV fee (in addition to the device distributor fees) must be paid at each service visit for the entire time a driver is required to have the Ignition Interlock Device. This fee is per driver, not per vehicle.

## License Suspension Periods for Refusing a Chemical Test

Note: For this table, a prior operating under the influence (OUI) offense refers to a court conviction for OUI or a court-ordered assignment to an alcohol education program. Chemical test refusals do not count as prior OUI offenses.

AGE	LICENSE SUSPENSION	
Drivers <u>over age 21</u>	No Prior OUI Offenses	180 days
	One Prior OUI Offense	Three years
	Two Prior OUI Offenses	Five years
	Three or More Prior OUI Offenses	Lifetime
Drivers <u>age 18 to 21</u>	No Prior OUI Offenses	Three years + 180 days
	One Prior OUI Offense	Three years + 180 days
	Two Prior OUI Offenses	Five years + 180 days
	Three or More Prior OUI Offenses	Lifetime

Note: The additional 180-day suspension for drivers under age 21 is designed to get youths charged with OUI who refuse a chemical test to undergo alcohol education. It does not matter what happens with your court case. **Even if you win the case, it will not change the requirement for you to take an alcohol education course.** If this is your first OUI case, the 180-day suspension can be waived upon entry into a Department of Public Health (DPH) approved alcohol education program.

Drivers <u>under age 18</u>	No Prior OUI Offenses	Three years + One year
	One Prior OUI Offense	Three years + One year
	Two Prior OUI Offenses	Five years + One year
	Three or More Prior OUI Offenses	Lifetime

Note: The additional one-year suspension for drivers under age 18 is designed to get youths charged with OUI who refuse a chemical test to undergo alcohol education. It does not matter what happens with your court case. **Even if you win the case, it will not change the requirement for you to take an alcohol education course.** If this is your first OUI case, the one-year suspension can be reduced to 180 days upon entry into a Department of Public Health (DPH) approved alcohol education program.

## Ignition Interlock Device Road Tests

Road tests can be scheduled by calling the RMV Automated Service Line at 866-MASSRMV (866-627-7768). If you are required to use an Ignition Interlock Device and it is installed in a vehicle without a center brake or seating for the sponsor, you must call and request a supervisor to schedule the road test.

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## Buying, Possessing, or Transporting Alcohol

If you are under 21, it is illegal to...

- Buy alcohol or have someone buy it for you
- Possess, carry, or transport alcohol unless accompanied by a parent or guardian

Your license will be suspended for 90 days to one year for breaking either of these laws. There are also fines and other penalties. **If you are under 21 and you buy, or try to buy, alcohol, your license will be suspended for 180 days.**

## Open Container Law

You may *not* drink alcohol while driving. You may *not* have an open alcoholic drink inside your vehicle, even if someone else is holding it. If you are convicted of this offense, you will be fined \$100 to \$500. If you are under 21, you will be arrested, fined, and your license will be suspended.

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## False or Altered Licenses/Identification Cards

It is illegal to use a false license or ID, to alter a license or ID, or to use another person's license or ID. It is also illegal to use false information to obtain a license or ID. In most cases, these are felonies with serious penalties. You can face penalties even if you do not attempt to purchase alcohol. *M.G.L.c.90, §22(e) allows the RMV to suspend your license or right to operate in Massachusetts for up to six months. A conviction is not required. If you are convicted, your license will be suspended for one year.*

Please be aware that purchasing false licenses or IDs through the Internet is dangerous and often results in identity theft.

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## Illegal Drugs, Medicine, and Other Controlled Substances

Laws for operating under the influence of alcohol also apply to drugs. Almost any drug can affect your driving skills. Illegal drugs, prescription medicines, and over-the-counter medicines can all make it dangerous to drive.

### Marijuana

Smoking or eating marijuana makes it more difficult to respond to sights and sounds. This makes you dangerous as a driver. It lowers your ability to handle a quick series of tasks. The most serious problem is facing an unexpected event, such as a car coming from a side street or a child running out from between parked cars. These problems get worse after dark, because marijuana also causes a bad loss of night vision.



Massachusetts law has decriminalized certain aspects of possession and/or use of marijuana. However, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of marijuana is still illegal!

It is very important for all drivers of any age to note that operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of marijuana remains a criminal offense.

The chart “Penalties for Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs” in this chapter **STILL APPLIES TO MARIJUANA** and should be reviewed carefully.

### ***Other Drugs***

Many other drugs and controlled substances can decrease your ability to drive:

- Illegal hard drugs, like lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), heroin, and opium, make you feel unaware of where you are. You also feel like you don’t care.
- Prescription sedatives and tranquilizers make you drowsy. This makes you a dangerous driver.
- Most medicines taken for colds, hay fever, or headaches can make you drowsy. Pain killers and medicines with codeine can be very dangerous.

**You can be considered OUI with prescription drugs. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle while impaired by any substance.**

- Stimulants like pep pills, speed, cocaine, and diet pills make you feel more awake and aware for a short time. However, this is always followed by fatigue, nervousness, dizziness, and a lack of concentration. They can also affect your vision.
- Inhaling substances like solvents or glue vapors is a serious health risk. It can leave you unable to operate a motor vehicle properly.

Make sure you read labels carefully and know the side effects of prescription or over-the-counter medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you’re not sure.

**Combining alcohol with other drugs dramatically increases the negative effects. Do not mix alcohol, drugs, and driving. It’s a fatal mistake.**

## **Reasons for License Nonrenewal**

The RMV will refuse to renew your license if you have...

- Unpaid fines for parking violations
- Citations for abandoned vehicles
- Unpaid excise tax due to your local community
- Outstanding court warrants
- Unpaid Massachusetts, Maine, or New Hampshire E-ZPass/Fast Lane toll violations
- Unpaid Tobin Bridge violations

Before renewing, you must present official **release forms**. They must show that all fines and taxes have been paid to local communities or that outstanding warrants have been satisfied.

For an outstanding court warrant, a recall notice from the court is required. No other documents will be accepted by the RMV.

Unpaid parking tickets and excise taxes must be paid to local cities and towns.

The RMV can only collect E-ZPass/Fast Lane violations that are 60 or more days delinquent. This means that at least 60 days have passed since the date the violation was issued.

For more information, call the E-ZPass Violation Processing Center at 1-877-627-7745.

Tobin Bridge violations issued by MassDOT can be paid by calling 617-561-6180 or at:

MassDOT Tobin Bridge Violations  
145 Havre Street  
East Boston, MA 02128

Tobin Bridge violations issued by MassPORT can be paid in-person at:

Terminal C  
Lower Level  
Logan International Airport  
East Boston, MA 02128

Tobin Bridge violations can be paid by mail to:

Parking Violations  
1 Harborside Drive  
Suite 200S  
East Boston, MA 02128

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## License Suspension

You cannot renew your license if it is suspended or revoked. See the *License Suspension or Revocation* section of this chapter for more information.

**The RMV cannot serve you until you have cleared all outstanding problems.**

# Safety First

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death of children and young adults in America. About one in three Americans will be injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash.

One in three.

Chances are good that you will be in a motor vehicle crash sometime in your life. It does not matter how good a driver you are. You can never predict when a crash might happen.

This chapter explains motor vehicle safety laws. It also gives tips on how to avoid serious trouble.

## CHAPTER 3

## Passenger Vehicle Safety

Passenger vehicles, including vans and pickup trucks, must have working safety equipment. Each passenger vehicle must have all of the following:

- A safety belt for the driver and all passengers
- A mirror
- A horn
- A lock for the engine's ignition
- Windshield wipers
- An exhaust muffler
- A foot brake and a parking brake

Each passenger vehicle must also have lights for driving in the dark. There must be two approved white headlights in the front, two approved red lights in the back, and directional signals. The vehicle must also have three red stop (brake) lights in the back and a small white light above the back license plate.

The Highway Assistance Patrol (HAP) provides help to stranded drivers. It is operated by the MassDOT-Highway Division and sponsored by MAPFRE | Commerce Insurance.

For more information, visit [MassDOT.State.MA.US/Highway/TrafficTravelResources/EmergencyRoadsideAssistance.aspx](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-state-ma-us-highway-traffic-travel-resources-emergency-roadside-assistance.aspx)

**If the directional signals or brake lights on your vehicle stop working, you must have them fixed right away. Until they are fixed, you must use hand signals when turning or slowing (see Chapter Four for hand-signal diagrams).**

**Every vehicle must pass an annual safety and emissions inspection. For details, see Chapter Six.**

A passenger vehicle may have a spot light that can only be used to read signs or as an emergency light if the headlights are not working. A spot light can only shine two feet above the roadway 30 feet away from your vehicle.

Emergency lights (flashing, rotating, oscillating, or strobe lights) are not allowed on a vehicle unless you get a permit from the RMV.

**Some equipment and changes to your vehicle are illegal. For more information, see Chapter Six.**

Glass tinting is allowed on passenger vehicles, but there are restrictions. You can darken your side and rear windows up to 35 percent. It is illegal to tint your windshield.

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## Safety/Seat Belt Law

In 2015, 9,874 people who were not wearing a safety belt were killed in crashes in the United States.

**Massachusetts law requires every person in a passenger motor vehicle (including vans and small trucks under 18,000 lbs.) to wear a safety belt or sit in a child passenger restraint.**

- Any driver who is not wearing a safety belt can be fined \$25. Any passenger 16 years old or older who is not wearing a safety belt can be fined \$25.

- A driver can also be fined \$25 for each passenger age 12, 13, 14, or 15 who is not wearing a safety belt.

You can only get a fine for the safety belt law when you are stopped for a traffic violation. The following people do not need to wear safety belts:

- Drivers and passengers of vehicles made before July 1966
- Drivers of taxis, liveries, tractors, buses, and trucks with gross weights of 18,000 pounds or more (However, drivers of some commercial motor vehicles do need to wear safety belts.)
- Passengers of emergency vehicles and drivers of police and fire vehicles
- An employee of the U.S. Postal Service who is driving a motor vehicle while working
- A person who physically cannot wear a safety belt because of a disability. A physician must certify that the person has this disability.



**An air bag works better if you are wearing your safety belt.**

A crash can happen any time. The best way to protect yourself is to always wear your safety belt. Safety belts save lives for both drivers and passengers.

### ***Child Passenger Restraints***

Infants and small children must sit in federally approved child passenger restraints until they...

1. Are at least eight years old **or**
2. At least fifty-seven inches tall

Children at least eight years old or at least fifty-seven inches tall must wear safety belts. The safety belts must be used correctly. You can be fined \$25 for breaking this law.

The child restraint must have a sticker that says it meets the necessary standards (U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 213 or the standards in 49 C.F.R. 571.213). The restraint must be permanently attached to a motor vehicle or attached by a safety belt or an attachment system.

Never put a back-facing child safety seat in the front passenger seat if your vehicle has an air bag for that seat.

**The safest place for a child to sit is in the back seat. The back middle seat is best. Infant seats must face the back of the vehicle.**

To find a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to help attach a child safety seat, call 1-877-392-5956 or go to [Mass.Gov/Highwaysafety](http://Mass.Gov/Highwaysafety).

**Use your child's height and weight to pick the right safety seat. Each seat is different. Check the manufacturer instructions for exact height and weight limits.**



<i>Guide to Child Safety Seats</i>	
Infant seat	up to 20 pounds
Toddler convertible seat	20–40 pounds
Booster seat	40–80 pounds

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## How Safety/Seat Belts Work

Safety belts stop you from being thrown around or out of your vehicle in a crash. It is best to wear both lap and shoulder belts. When worn correctly, safety belts lower the chance of death or serious injury in a crash by about 50 percent.

In a crash, a safety belt can help in many ways.

- **Stop you from hitting the windshield, dashboard, steering wheel, or other hard parts of the vehicle.**

Your vehicle will stop moving if it crashes head on. If you are not wearing a safety belt, your body will keep moving until it hits something hard, like the windshield. Your safety belt will stop you from hitting the windshield or other passengers.



The *right* way to wear a safety belt.



The *wrong* way to wear a safety belt.

- **Stop you from being thrown out of the vehicle.** Lap and shoulder belts keep you protected inside your vehicle. This makes your chance of surviving a crash five times better.
- **Help you stay seated and in control of the vehicle.** When you wear a safety belt, you can stay behind the wheel and avoid a worse crash. The safety belt will stop you from being pushed across the seat.

**Hitting the windshield at 30 mph is like falling from the third story of a building and hitting the pavement.**

A lap belt should fit low, tight, and flat over the hips. It should not be twisted. A shoulder belt should be worn across the shoulder and chest. A shoulder belt should never be worn under the arm or across the face or neck.

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## Myths About Safety/Seat Belts

Safety belts save lives and prevent injuries in a crash. Stories about the “dangers” or “hassles” of safety belts are simply not true.

**“I’ll be trapped inside the car if I’m wearing a safety belt in a crash.”**

Cars don’t catch fire or sink in water very often. If it does happen, wearing a safety belt helps you not hit your head and lose consciousness. If you stay conscious, you can undo your safety belt and get out. Even if you’re upside down, it takes less than a second to undo your belt.

**“My car has air bags, so I don’t need to wear a safety belt.”**

An air-bag is made to work with safety belts, not instead of them. You still need to wear a safety belt when you drive. Front air bags are only made for head-on crashes and do not protect you in crashes from the side or back.

**“I’m only driving a short distance. I don’t need to wear my safety belt.”**

Most motor vehicle crashes happen less than 25 miles from home. Eight out of ten crashes happen at speeds of 40 mph or less. Don’t take chances. Always wear your safety belts.

**“I’m only going to the store. It’s too much trouble to put kids in child safety seats.”**

Motor vehicle crashes are the easiest cause of child death to prevent. Most kids killed in car crashes would have lived if they were properly put in child safety seats. Take the extra minute to put your children into their seats before driving.

**Children and small pets are often killed or injured when they are crushed by adults not wearing safety belts during a crash.**

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## Air-Bag Safety

When used with lap and shoulder safety belts, air bags are very good at saving adult lives. You should follow these procedures with air bags.

- *Children in back.* Infants in back-facing child safety seats should never be in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag. Children are always safest when riding in the back seat.
- *Child safety seats.* Infants and young children should always sit in child safety seats that are right for their age and size. For more information, see the *Child Passenger Restraint Law* section earlier in this chapter.
- *Air bags do not replace safety belts.* You should always wear both lap and shoulder belts. For more information, see the *Safety Belt Law* and *How Safety Belts Work* sections of this chapter.
- *Move the front seat back.* You should move the driver’s seat and front passenger seat as far back from the dashboard as you can. This is safer and makes it easier to drive.

These tips will help you **and your children** survive a crash.

---

## Inside the Vehicle

In your vehicle, nothing should get in the way of your ability to see, react, or drive.

### ***Distracting Objects***

You cannot have anything inside your vehicle that can prevent you from driving safely. Nothing inside your vehicle, on your dashboard, on your windshield, or hanging from your rear view mirror can block your view of the road in front of you or through your mirrors. Make sure that nothing can roll under your feet and get in the way of your pedals (the accelerator, clutch, and brake).

### ***Cell Phones/Mobile Electronic Devices***

For information on the use of mobile (cell) phones and other mobile electronic devices, see the *Hands-Free Mobile (Cell) Phone Use* section on the next page.

### ***Headphones***

It is illegal to wear a radio headset, headphones, or any other wired or wireless device that restricts your attention to the environment while driving. If you are 18 or older, you can use one earplug for use with a cell phone.

### **Televisions**

Any television installed in a vehicle must be behind the front seat and not visible to the driver. A driver cannot be distracted by a television screen, even when looking sideways out of the vehicle.

### **Truck Beds**

Children under 12 years old are not allowed to ride in the beds of pickup trucks (there are very limited exceptions, and never at speeds more than five mph).

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## **Hands-Free Mobile (Cell) Phone Use**

The use of hand-held mobile electronic devices (including cell phones) while driving is prohibited in Massachusetts (Chapter 122 of the Acts of 2019).

### **Drivers 18 and Older**

Drivers 18 and older can **only** use mobile electronic devices in “hands-free” mode while driving. This means that devices cannot be held, cannot be touched except to activate “hands-free” mode, and must be installed or mounted to the windshield, dashboard, or center console and not interfere with driving.

Handheld device use is only allowed if the vehicle is stationary and is not located in a public travel lane. It is not allowed at red lights or stop signs.

Mobile electronic devices **cannot** be used to write, send, or read an electronic message (including text messages, emails, instant messages, or accessing the Internet) while driving. GPS devices (including cell phones) can be used if the device is affixed, either temporarily or permanently, in the motor vehicle for the purpose of providing navigation assistance.

### **Drivers Under 18**

Drivers under 18 cannot use any mobile electronic device for any reason while driving. The only exception is for reporting an emergency.

### **What is a Mobile Electronic Device?**

The law defines a “**mobile electronic device**” as any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between 2 or more persons, including, without limitation, a mobile telephone, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, electronic equipment that is capable of playing a video game or digital video disk, equipment on which digital photographs are taken or transmitted or any combination thereof, or equipment that is capable of visually receiving a television broadcast; provided, however, that mobile electronic device shall not include any audio equipment or any equipment installed, or affixed, either temporarily or permanently, in a motor vehicle for the purpose of providing navigation or emergency assistance to the operator of such motor vehicle or video entertainment to the passengers in the rear seats of such motor vehicle.

### **Penalties for Violating the Law**

The penalties for using a hand-held mobile electronic device while driving are the following:



- 1st offense - \$100 fine
- 2nd offense - \$250 fine, plus mandatory completion of a distracted driving educational program
- 3rd and subsequent offenses - \$500 fine, plus insurance surcharge and mandatory completion of a distracted driving program

### ***Negligent Operation and Injury from Mobile (Cell) Phone Use***

It is a crime to injure a person or damage property because of negligent driving. If you crash because you were using a mobile electronic device, you will face criminal charges and lose your license.

**Note: Federal regulations restrict the use of hand held mobile (cell) phones while operating a commercial motor vehicle.**

## **Driving Defensively**

Even experienced drivers make mistakes. At some point, you will have to deal with equipment failures, bad weather, unskilled drivers, unpredictable pedestrians, and drivers who ignore traffic laws.

To prepare for unpredictable events, you should always **drive defensively**.

- Always keep good vision in front and around your vehicle.
- Stay alert and prepared for the unexpected.
- Keep your eyes on the road. Taking your eyes off the road even for a split second to look at a passenger or object inside your car can be very dangerous.
- Keep a safe distance around your vehicle.
- Drive at the right speed and know when to slow down and stop.
- Always wear your safety belt.
- Do not drive if you have been drinking, are on medication, or are very tired.
- Keep your vehicle in good working order.
- Obey the rules of the road and give the right-of-way when appropriate.

Always look ahead of and around you, and check your mirrors often. Be aware of road conditions and possible hazards in front, to the sides, and behind you.

- Look at everything in front of you. Look for vehicles stopping and watch for people getting in or out of parked vehicles. Pay close attention to pedestrians or bicyclists sharing the road with you.
- Expect mistakes from other drivers.
- Watch for back-up lights of vehicles ahead of you.
- Pay close attention to crosswalks. Don't rely on traffic signals. Other drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians may ignore traffic signals.
- Always pay close attention near playgrounds, schoolyards, and shopping centers. Children, pedestrians, and bicyclists may be hidden from sight.

- Be aware that pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers may not hear you. This is especially important in crosswalks and parking lots. One out of every five individuals of driving age is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
  - Remember that right-of-way is something you give. A big part of driving defensively is giving the right-of-way to prevent unsafe traffic situations.
- 

## **Your Health and Physical Condition**

Have your eyesight checked every year or two. Fix any vision problems immediately. As you get older, your vision may get worse, or it may become harder to see at night.

You must always stay alert and in control of your vehicle. You need good vision and, if your hearing has become diminished, you need to be even more visually alert to anticipate changing driving conditions. You should never drive in the following cases:

- When you have been drinking alcohol
- When you have taken any prescription drug or over-the-counter medication that can cause drowsiness
- If you are under the influence of any drug
- When you are very tired
- When you are upset. Emotions like anger and depression can cause you to drive carelessly

On bright, sunny days, you should always wear sunglasses.

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## **Checking Your Vehicle's Condition**

Your passenger vehicle or motorcycle must be inspected for safety and emissions every year (see *Chapter Six*). Always follow the maintenance procedures recommended by your vehicle manufacturer. Every time you enter your vehicle or mount your motorcycle, make a quick visual check for low tire pressure or damage.

### ***Brakes and Tires***

Pay close attention to changes in your vehicle when braking. If you think you have a problem, have your brakes inspected immediately. If you feel the vehicle pull to one side when you brake, your brakes may need adjustment or repair.

Check your tires for proper inflation and wear. Rotate your tires as often as recommended by the vehicle or tire manufacturer. It is dangerous and illegal to drive a vehicle with extremely worn or damaged tires. Tires must have at least 2/32 inches of tread depth in the proper grooves and no fabric breaks or exposed cords.

The distance between the edge of a penny and the top of Lincoln's head is about 2/32 of an inch. A quick way to check your tire tread is to slide a penny into a tread groove. If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, your tires are worn out.

### ***Steering***

Your steering wheel should not feel loose. There should not be a delay between when you turn the wheel and your tires respond. With power steering, you should check the fluid level regularly. If your vehicle makes a high-pitched noise when you turn, you should have your power steering inspected.

## ***Lights and Glass***

Check your headlights, brake lights, and turn signals regularly. Keep your lights clear of dirt, snow, and ice. Keep your windows and mirrors clean. Change your windshield wipers if they streak or fail to clear your windshield properly.

## ***License Plates***

You must keep your license plates clean and they cannot be blocked by anything. Your plate number must be visible from 60 feet at night. Registration stickers must only be placed in the upper right corner of the plate.

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## **Safe Distances Around Your Car**

Always keep enough space between your vehicle and others to give yourself room to stop safely or avoid hazards.

- Use the "three-second" rule to keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Pick an object in front of you, like a sign post or a tree. When the vehicle in front of you reaches that object, count out "one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand". If you reach the object before you count three, you are too close. Slow down until you've put enough distance between you and the other vehicle.

**The three-second rule is a minimum safe distance for good road conditions and moderate traffic. Count more for added safety and when traffic allows.**

- Keep more space behind a motorcycle than you would for another vehicle.
- Keep more space between your vehicle and heavy equipment (for example, dump trucks, tractors).
- Never cut in front of heavy equipment or tractor-trailers. These vehicles carry more weight and need much more space to stop safely.
- Never tailgate a vehicle in front of you. Tailgating is illegal and the main cause of rear-end crashes. The fine for tailgating can be as high as \$100.
- If a tailgater is behind you, move to another lane or pull to the side of the road to let the tailgater pass.

Allow extra space for bad drivers and the following situations:




- Rain, snow, ice, or other poor weather or road conditions
- Blind driveways or obstructed-view driveways or roads
- Drivers backing out of parking spaces or driveways
- Children playing in yards or near the road

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## **Braking and Stopping**

Look far ahead so you have enough time to brake and stop safely. The time it takes you to react, think, and hit the brakes is called reaction time.

It takes about three-quarters of a second to react to a situation and step on the brake pedal. This time is also measured in feet traveled, or reaction distance.

MPH	Stopping Distance		Total
 20	22 ft.	37 ft.	59 ft.
 40	44 ft.	112 ft.	156 ft.
 60	66 ft.	226 ft.	292 ft.
<b>Total Stopping Distance</b>			

Sample stopping distance statistics from *How to Drive, A Text for Beginning Drivers* by the American Automobile Association (Ninth Ed.) The white boxes are the reaction time distance and the black boxes are how far the vehicle travels after you hit the brakes.

At 50 mph, your vehicle will go another 55 feet in the three-quarters of a second it takes to react. Once you hit the brakes, you may go another 160 feet or more before you stop.

This is your average braking distance on dry, level, clear pavement.

Your total stopping distance is about 215 feet (55 feet + 160 feet). If road conditions are not clear and dry, your stopping distance will be more.

If your brakes and tires are working and the road is dry and level:

- At 60 mph, it takes about 292 feet (almost a whole football field) to react to a hazard, step on the brake, and safely stop.
- At just 30 mph, your total stopping distance will be about 104 feet.

These numbers are only for educational purposes, to show that motor vehicles need much more distance to stop safely than you may imagine. Actual stopping distances change with road, weather, and vehicle conditions.

Follow these useful braking tips:

- Warn pedestrians, bicyclists, or other drivers of possible trouble. Brake early and gently when preparing to stop or turn.
- Do not let your foot rest on the brake pedal while driving. (This is called riding your brakes.)
- If your vehicle has antilock brakes, never pump the brakes. (In 2010, 89% of new cars and 99% of new light trucks had antilock brakes.)
- Always slow down near a curve or an area where you cannot see clearly ahead.

## Using Your Horn, Headlights, and Emergency Signals

It is important to know how to use your vehicle's safety equipment.

**Use your horn to:**

- Warn pedestrians or other drivers of possible trouble
- Avoid crashes

### **Do not use your horn to:**

- Show anger or complain about other drivers' mistakes
- Try to get a slower driver to move faster
- Try to get other vehicles moving in a traffic jam

### **You must use your headlights and taillights: ( \* new law in 2015)**

- From one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise
- \*When you cannot clearly see people or vehicles 500 feet ahead due to insufficient light or weather conditions
- \*Whenever you use your windshield wipers (daytime running lights are not sufficient)
- In rain, snow, fog, or other weather that makes it hard to see
- Anytime you have trouble seeing other vehicles
- To alert another driver to turn on his/her headlights
- While driving through a tunnel

Use emergency lights and signals when your vehicle breaks down, so other drivers can see it. Move your vehicle as far to the side of the road as you can. For your own safety, stay off the road. Never change a flat tire in a traffic lane. Wait for help to arrive.

You can also use your emergency lights to warn drivers behind you about a traffic crash or hazard. Give other drivers as much warning as possible.

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## **Night Driving**

Night driving is more dangerous than daytime driving. Vehicles, pedestrians, and obstacles may be harder to see. Always be extra careful at night. You must use your headlights from one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise. You should do the following when driving at night:

- Do not drive when you are tired or drowsy.
- Drive more slowly at night, especially in an unfamiliar area. Keep a speed that will let you react and stop safely within the distance you can see ahead.
- Keep more space between your vehicle and other vehicles.
- Put your inside rearview mirror in the "night" position. This will reduce the glare from headlights behind you. Keep inside lights off.
- Do not look straight at headlights. Look to the lower right side of your lane.
- Keep your windows and headlights clean.
- If another driver flashes headlights at you, your headlights may be off or your high beams may be on.

### **High Beam Headlights**

High beam headlights normally let you see about 350 feet ahead. Low beam headlights normally let you see about 100 feet ahead.

- Only use high beams in dark areas where you cannot see the road surface ahead.

- You must lower your high beam headlights to low beam when you are within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle or within 200 feet of a vehicle traveling ahead of you.
- If a driver is coming toward you with high beams, you may flick your headlights to remind the driver to change to low beams. If the driver does not change to low beams, stay to the right and do not turn on your high beams.

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## Driving in Rain or Fog

Rain and wet roads make it harder to start, stop, and turn. Hard rain, fog, and mist can also make it more difficult to see. **The law now requires you to use your headlights and taillights whenever you use your windshield wipers. Daytime running lights are not sufficient.**

Slow down as soon as the rain starts. Many roads are most slippery when rain first mixes with road dirt and oil and forms a greasy film. If a road is slippery, your tires can lose traction and your car can hydroplane.

Hydroplaning is caused by road conditions, water, and speed. It happens when your tires are riding on water and have no contact with the road. If your vehicle starts to hydroplane, you're driving too fast. Slowly step off the gas pedal. Never hit the brakes or turn suddenly. You may lose control and skid.

Following are some tips for driving in rain or fog:

- Make more space between your vehicle and others. You need more space to stop your vehicle. Be prepared to stop quickly and within the distance you can see ahead.
- Be careful of wet leaves on the road. They can be as slippery as ice.
- Keep your windshield wipers and window defoggers in good condition.
- In fog, use your low beam headlights to reduce glare.
- Always use your turn signals.
- If you cannot see the pavement or sign posts, slow down and look for road edge markings to guide you.
- Do not drive through puddles. Wet brakes do not work right. If you drive through a large puddle, apply your brakes lightly as soon as you can to dry them until you feel them working normally again.

The Highway Division has a 511 phone service. You can use this to get up-to-date information about traffic and weather conditions and construction projects. You can also report problems on the road. Service is available 24/7.

Dial 511 from your cell phone or 617-986-5511 (Metro-Boston), 508-499-5511 (Central Mass), or 413-754-5511 (Western Mass) from a landline.

For more information, visit [MassDOT.State.MA.US/Highway/TrafficTravelResources/About511Massachusetts.aspx](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-511-service)

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## Winter Driving

Driving in winter is difficult and dangerous for new and experienced drivers. Motor vehicles run very differently on ice and snow than on warm, dry pavement. You should practice driving in winter weather.

- Lower your speed. Drive carefully and accelerate slowly.
- Never lock your brakes on icy roads. You will lose steering control. If you skid, remember to **turn into the direction of the skid** (see *Driving Emergencies* in *Chapter Five*).
- Make more space between your vehicle and others. You need more space to stop safely on slippery surfaces.
- Be alert for emergency vehicles and yield to plows. Do not crowd plows.
- Bridges and highway overpasses freeze before the rest of the road and can be very slippery. This is because the ground does not insulate them.
- If it is snowing, start slowly. Test your brakes by tapping them gently to see how much traction your tires have.
- Keep your windshield wipers and defroster in good condition.
- Remove ALL ice and snow from your vehicle before driving. Clear all windows, windshield wipers, headlights, and brake lights. It is very important that you clear the roof, hood, and trunk so ice and snow does not blow into vehicles behind you. If you do not, you can be charged with negligent operation.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent the gas line from freezing.
- Keep your windshield washer filled with cleaning fluid that won't freeze.
- Keep a blanket, flashlight, and small shovel in your trunk.

If you have a truck and plow for compensation, you must have commercial plates.

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## Pedestrians

One in five motor vehicle deaths involve a pedestrian. Take extra care to look for pedestrians, especially ones who may be distracted due to cell phones or headphones. Pay close attention in busy areas with a lot of pedestrians. Be extra careful of:

- **Children** – Children are unpredictable and hard to see. Be careful near school zones, parks, bus stops, and playgrounds.
- **Joggers and Skaters** – Joggers and skaters do not always obey traffic signal and crosswalk rules.
- **Pedestrians, when you're backing up** – Be careful when backing up. Do not just use vehicle mirrors or sensors. Blind spots may hide people or objects behind the vehicle. You should turn your head and look out the window before you start to back up. If children are nearby, get out of your vehicle and check behind it.
- **Visually impaired (blind) individuals** – Always stop for a blind pedestrian at a street crossing. Remain stopped until the person has safely crossed. Do not honk or wave the person on. Never pass another stopped vehicle. Blind pedestrians may use a white cane or a guide dog. The White Cane Law requires you to stop completely for a blind pedestrian crossing a street.
- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals** – It is impossible to visually identify someone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Do not assume that a pedestrian, bicyclist, or other driver can hear your car and will yield or move out of the way. It is always safer for you to yield, even if you have the right of way, than it is to create an unsafe condition.

If you would like information on assistive listening and adaptive devices used by Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, contact the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at [Mass.Gov/MCDHH](https://www.mass.gov/MCDHH) or call 617-740-1600.

- **Train and bus stops** – Pay close attention at and near mass transit stops, where pedestrian traffic may be heavier.
- **Senior centers** – Pay close attention in areas where there are more elderly pedestrians, such as around senior centers and senior residences. Seniors may have diminished eyesight and reduced hearing, mobility, and reaction times.

Remember that you must slow down and stop when necessary for a person walking in the street. Always look ahead for places where pedestrians may be hidden, such as around a curve, at the top of a hill, or between parked cars.

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## Bicycles and Mopeds

Bicyclists and moped riders have the same right to use public roadways as all other drivers (the only exceptions are limited-access or express state highways with posted signs saying bicycles and mopeds are not allowed).



They must obey the same traffic control and right-of-way laws. These riders can be hard to see in traffic and are not well protected against being hit by vehicles.

When passing a bicycle or moped:

- Lower your speed. The wind caused by your vehicle can throw a rider off balance.
- Leave a lot of room between your vehicle and riders.
- If you don't have enough room to pass safely, wait for oncoming traffic to pass or for the lane to get wider.

Dim your headlights at night if a bicyclist is coming toward you. Be aware that a bicyclist or moped rider might need to swerve suddenly, just like any other driver. Always respect the rights of a bicyclist or moped rider to use the roadway, as you would respect the rights of another driver.

**When parked on the side of a road, always check carefully for bicycles or mopeds before opening your vehicle door. See the *Danger of Open Doors to Bicyclists* section on page 112 for more information.**

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## Motorcycles

Check Twice, Save A Life • Motorcycles Are Everywhere

Motorcycles are motor vehicles, just like cars and trucks. The number of motorcycles registered in Massachusetts keeps getting higher. The riding season usually goes from March through October, but some motorcyclists ride all year. Be aware of motorcycles and share the road safely.

Motorcycles go as fast as cars and trucks. Riders face extra dangers caused by weather and road conditions. Motorcycles do not have the safety features of an automobile and the risk of injury in a crash is much higher.



- **Changing lanes** – On the highway, pay extra attention when you change lanes or merge. Motorcycles can be hidden in blind spots because of their size. Always check your mirrors and blind spots for motorcycles. Signal early, and check twice before changing lanes.
- **Following Behind** – Leave extra space between your vehicle and a motorcycle in front of you. Use a four-second following distance (compared to a three-second for other motor vehicles).
- **Sharing lanes** – Motorcycles have the same right to use the full width of a lane. Even though a motorcycle may use a smaller part of the lane, you must never share a lane. Motorcyclists need to move within a lane for traffic maneuvers and to avoid road debris, potholes, or surface oil. **Never move into the same lane space as a motorcycle, even if the lane is wide and the motorcyclist is riding to one side.** Crowding into a lane with a motorcycle is illegal and very dangerous.
- **Turning at Intersections** – Cars or trucks turning left in front of an oncoming motorcycle cause a lot of crashes. Pay extra attention to motorcycles at intersections. Motorcycles are smaller and can be hidden by other vehicles. It can be hard to judge their speed and position. Even if you have enough time to turn, an oncoming motorcyclist may not have time to safely change speed. Let the motorcycle safely pass through the intersection first.
- **Road and Weather Conditions** – Road conditions that are only small problems for cars and trucks can be big hazards for motorcycles. Gravel, potholes, and slippery surfaces can cause a motorcyclist to change speed and direction suddenly. Motorcycles need more distance to stop in bad weather. Always give a motorcycle extra space in case it needs to stop suddenly.



It is illegal for a motorcycle operator to weave between lanes at any time.

Follow these tips and share the road safely with motorcycles and other motor vehicles.

## Motorcycle Safety

The RMV has a Motorcycle Manual. You must read it before you apply for a motorcycle license. The Motorcycle Manual has detailed information on motorcycle equipment, operation, riding gear, carrying passengers, and rules of the road.

The Motorcycle Manual is available online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

Every motorcycle must pass an annual safety inspection. For details, see *Chapter Six*.

## Rider Training

The Registry of Motor Vehicles sponsors the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP). Beginner and experienced rider courses are available. If you pass either course, you do not need to take a motorcycle road test to get your motorcycle license.

For information on motorcycle rider courses, or to speak to the program coordinator call 857-368-2903. You can also visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

## Motorized Bicycle (Moped) Safety

A moped (also known as a motorized bicycle) is a pedal bicycle with a helper motor, or a non-pedal bicycle with a motor. Its maximum speed must be thirty (30) miles per hour (mph) or lower. Its cylinder capacity must be fifty (50) cubic centimeters or lower. It must have an automatic transmission.

You must have a valid driver's license (any class) or learner's permit to drive a moped. You must follow these rules when driving a moped:

- Do not drive faster than 25 mph.
- Do not ride on limited-access or express state highways with signs saying that bicycles are not allowed.
- Use the correct electronic and hand signals before stopping or turning.
- Do not ride on off-street recreational paths (you can use bicycle lanes along roads).
- Drivers and passengers must wear helmets that meet or exceed the US DOT standard.
- Obey all traffic laws and regulations.

You can be fined up to \$100 for a violation of any of these rules

## Motorized Scooter Safety

A motorized scooter is any two or three-wheeled vehicle with handlebars and an electric or gas motor that can move the vehicle with or without human propulsion. Motorized scooters can either be designed for the driver to sit or stand.

**The Registry of Motor Vehicles will not register motorized scooters.**

You must have a valid driver's license (any class) or learner's permit to operate a motorized scooter. You can be issued tickets for violating motor vehicle laws.

You must follow these rules when driving a motorized scooter:

- Do not drive faster than 20 mph.
- Do not drive on limited-access or express state highways.
- Wear a helmet that meets or exceeds the US DOT standard.
- Always stay to the right side of the road, even when passing another vehicle.
- Use the correct electronic and hand signals before stopping or turning.
- Do not drive after sunset or before sunrise.
- Do not carry any passengers.
- Obey all traffic laws and regulations.

You can be fined up to \$25 (1st Offense); \$25-\$50 (2nd Offense); \$50-\$100 (3rd + Offense).

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

## Limited Use Vehicle Safety

A limited use vehicle can have two or more wheels. It can go faster than 30 mph, but not more than 40 mph. A limited use vehicle can either be a motorcycle or a passenger vehicle; it depends on how many wheels it has.

You must have a valid driver's license or learner's permit to drive a limited use vehicle. If the limited use vehicle is a motorcycle, the license or permit must be Class M. If the limited use vehicle is a passenger vehicle, the license or permit must be Class D.

You cannot drive a limited use vehicle on a limited-access or express state highway or any road with a speed limit faster than 40 mph.

## Low Speed Vehicle Safety

A Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) has four wheels and can only go between 20 and 25 mph. It must have a gross weight rating lower than 3,000 lbs.

You must have a valid Class D driver's license or learner's permit to drive a low speed vehicle.

You cannot drive a low speed vehicle on a limited access or express state highway or any road with a speed limit faster than 30 mph. Low speed vehicles may also not be allowed in areas with heavy traffic. You must obey all traffic laws and regulations. You can be fined for violations.

## Bicycle Safety Laws

Bicycle safety laws have been updated in recent years to place more responsibility on bicyclists, motorists, and on renters of bicycles while giving police officers more training in bicycle safety and traffic enforcement. This should result in better awareness of safety concerns and enforcement of bicycle safety laws.

If a police officer sees a bicyclist commit a traffic violation, the officer can issue a citation the same way he/she would for a motorist. The bicyclist can be fined, but it will not affect his/her driving record. A bicyclist must give the officer his/her true name and address when asked and can be fined for not doing so. A bicyclist can also be arrested for refusing to give his/her name.

Companies that rent bicycles must offer helmets that meet all safety requirements for renters.

The law also allows motorists to be cited for a motor vehicle violation for certain behaviors around bicycles. This should encourage motorists to be more careful.

For a list of laws for bicyclists and laws for motorists in the presence of bicyclists, please see page 109.



# Rules of the Road

Travel on public roadways is controlled by signs, signals, pavement markings, and driving laws. No matter what vehicle you drive or what road you drive on, you *must* obey these “rules of the road.”

You must learn how to drive properly on:

- Streets, roads, alleys, and avenues
- Traffic circles (rotaries)
- Highways, expressways, and freeways

You must also learn how to drive safely at:

- Special crossings
- Intersections
- Traffic hazards



## Speed Limits

Driving too fast (speeding) is a main cause of motor vehicle crashes. To protect safety, speed laws in Massachusetts are strongly enforced. If you speed, there are severe penalties (see *Chapter Two*). When speeding, you need more distance to react and safely stop your vehicle.

1. You must never travel so fast that it is not safe. That is the fundamental speed law. Even if the speed limit is higher, your speed must be based on the following.
  - **Traffic conditions** – the number of vehicles on the road and their speed
  - **Road conditions** – is the road surface rough or smooth; how much water, ice, or snow is on the road surface; and how wide is the roadway
  - **Weather conditions and visibility** – situations that make it hard to see, including rain, snow, ice, dust, and wind
  - **Pedestrians or bicyclists** - people who are traveling along or across the road are unprotected and more vulnerable to death or severe injury in high speed crashes

You must lower your speed if there are poor driving conditions or hazards. It does not matter if the posted speed limit is higher.

2. Never drive faster than the **posted speed limit**. Sample speed limit signs appear below. All speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions. If conditions are hazardous, you must drive slower.

Most roadways in the state have posted speed limits. Speed limits change as you drive on different kinds of roads or enter and exit highways. Limited-access highways, like interstate routes, have speed limits from 50 to 65 mph. Smaller highways have speed limits of 55 mph or lower.

Some roadways may have minimum speeds. There is a minimum speed of 40 mph on the Massachusetts Turnpike. There is a minimum speed of 20 mph in the Boston Harbor tunnels (Callahan, Sumner, and Ted Williams). Even without a minimum speed, a police officer may order a driver to the side of a state highway if he/she is slowing traffic.

3. Unless posted otherwise, **your speed would *not* be reasonable and proper if you drive over...**
  - 20 mph in a school zone
  - 30 mph in a thickly settled or business district (unless there are signs showing a 25 mph limit)
  - 40 mph outside a thickly settled or business district
  - 50 mph on a highway outside a thickly settled or business district

If you drive 40 mph in a heavy rainstorm on a highway with a speed limit of 50 mph, you can get a ticket for driving too fast.

A "thickly settled district" is an area where buildings are fewer than 200 feet apart for a distance of 1/4 mile or more.



Some communities have a thickly settled speed limit of 25 mph unless posted otherwise (per M.G.L. c90, Section 17c). Signs are posted at all entrances to these cities and towns.



### **School Zones**

The speed limit on roads near schools is 20 mph. This can be posted in various ways. Speed limit signs may have flashing yellow lights or be posted for certain hours of the day. Look closely for signs saying you are approaching or entering a school zone.

Drive carefully when entering a school zone. Be aware of children crossing the street or riding bicycles. Look out for school safety patrols or crossing guards.

## **Traffic Signals**



Traffic signals are lights that control movement of vehicles and pedestrians, usually at intersections. You must know what each light means and obey its signals at all times.

## **Motor Vehicle Signals**

Traffic signals are usually three round lights: red, yellow, and green circles, from top to bottom. There are also other types of signals, such as single flashing lights, colored arrows, and signals with 4 or 5 sections.



### **Steady Red Circle**

A steady red circle means "stop." Do not go until the light turns green. You can make a right turn on a red light *only* after you come to a complete stop and yield to pedestrians or other vehicles in your path. You may *not* turn on red if a **NO TURN ON RED** sign is posted.

You can turn left on a red light when driving on a one-way street and turning left onto another one-way street. Stop and yield to pedestrians and other vehicles before turning.



### **Steady Red Arrow**

A steady red arrow means the same as a steady red, circular signal (see the preceding *Steady Red* section). However, it only applies to vehicles going in the direction of the arrow. The same rules for "turning on red" apply in Massachusetts. However, when driving out-of-state, this may not be true because different states have different laws.



### **Flashing Red Circle**

A flashing red circle means the same as a **STOP** sign. Come to a complete stop. Obey the right-of-way laws and proceed when it is safe. If there is a white stop line or crosswalk line, you must stop **before** the line. If there are no lines, you must stop as close to the intersection as needed to see traffic in both directions. Do not enter the intersection until after coming to a complete stop.



### **Steady Yellow Circle**

A steady yellow circle means the traffic signal is changing from green to red. You *must* stop if it is safe. If you are already stopped at an intersection or a stop line, you may *not* proceed.



### **Flashing Yellow Circle**

A flashing yellow circle is a warning. Proceed with caution, and stay alert. Look both ways when crossing an intersection.



### **Flashing Yellow Arrow**

A flashing yellow arrow allows you to turn left or right in the direction of the arrow when oncoming traffic has a green light but there is a break in traffic. You must carefully determine that there is an adequate gap in the oncoming traffic and ensure that there are no pedestrians in your path before making your turn.



### **Steady Green Circle**

A steady green circle means “go.” But first, you must yield to other vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians in the road. If you are crossing an intersection, make sure you have enough room to make it completely through. Never block an intersection. You may make a turn as long as you have enough space to complete the turn and not create a hazard. If you are turning left on a steady green light, you must yield to oncoming traffic. Look out for drivers who do not obey traffic signals or race through intersections.



### **Green Arrow**

A green arrow means you can make a “protected” turn in the direction of the arrow. When a green arrow displays for your turn, pedestrians and oncoming vehicles should be stopped for red lights. Look for signs saying the lane is only for turns in the direction of the arrow.



### **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon**

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are activated by pedestrians manually by a push button or by a pedestrian detection system. They are often located in intersections without traffic signals or at mid-block crosswalks. When activated, amber lights flash in an irregular pattern. You must stop for pedestrians when the beacon is flashing.



### **Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon**

A Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) allows pedestrians to safely cross a roadway. A PHB only operates when activated by a pedestrian. When all lights are dark, you can proceed with caution. When the bottom yellow light is



flashing, you must slow down. When the bottom yellow light is solid, you must prepare to stop. When the top two red lights are solid, you must stop for pedestrians. When the top two red lights are flashing, you must stop and proceed with caution if clear.



### ***Bicycle Signals***

Bicycle signals are lights specifically meant for bicyclists. They display as steady red, yellow, and green bicycle symbols. When the signal is green, bicyclists can go through busy intersections while motor vehicles are stopped, protecting them from turning vehicles.

### ***Traffic Signals Not Working***

If traffic signals are not working, they will simply flash either red or yellow lights. When this happens, follow the rules for flashing lights. If signals are blacked out and not functioning, be cautious and proceed as though there is a stop sign in all directions. Go when it is safe.

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## **Pedestrian Signals**

Special lighted signals are often used at crosswalks to tell pedestrians when to cross a roadway. Pedestrians must obey white and orange **DON'T WALK** and **WALK** signals. Some crosswalk signals include a numeric countdown timer. Pedestrians who are already in the crosswalk when the countdown reaches zero have the right-of-way.



### ***Laws for Drivers***

- You must yield to pedestrians entering or using a crosswalk in your travel path.
- Never let your vehicle block a crosswalk.
- You must yield to pedestrians if your traffic signal is red or if it is red and yellow.
- Never pass a vehicle that is stopped or slowing for a pedestrian.
- You must yield to pedestrians when turning into a driveway or parking lot.

### ***Laws for Pedestrians***

- Use a crosswalk if one is available.
- At crosswalks with pedestrian signals, push the button on the pole and wait for a **WALK** signal. Intersections without buttons automatically give **WALK** signals.
- When the **WALK** signal is shown, you can begin to cross. When **DON'T WALK** is shown, you should not begin to cross; if you are already in the crosswalk, you should finish crossing.
- Before you cross a roadway, stop at the curb and look left and right for traffic. *Be alert.* Look out especially for cars turning onto the road you are crossing.

## Regulatory



ALL WAY



Yield



No right turn



No left turn



No U-turn



No trucks



No pedestrians



No bicycles



No parking allowed between posted hours



Traffic moves only in direction of arrow



You may not overtake another vehicle



You may *not* turn right after stopping at a red light



All traffic must go left



Keep to the right of the upcoming median or lane divider

## Warning



AHEAD

School zone



School zone



Lane merging from right, watch for other traffic



Divided highway begins



Winding road, multiple curves ahead



Road turns right



School crossing



School crossing



Playground



Divided highway ends



Crossroad ahead



Road curves right



Pedestrian crossing



Traffic signal ahead



Stop ahead



Two-way traffic



Road entering from the right



Area off paved road is soft dirt - hazardous



200 FEET

Pedestrian crossing ahead



Circular intersection ahead



Traffic may flow on both sides of sign



Road slippery when wet



Road ends at junction



Maximum height



Deer crossing



Railroad crossing ahead



Added lane

## Guides and Directions



Interstate highway route marker



Information



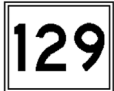
Gas



Telephone



Food



Massachusetts state highway route marker



Hospital



Lodging



Access for those with disabilities



BIKE ROUTE



Bike route signs



Destination directions



Picnic area



Bay State Greenway



Motorist services



Junction with a numbered route ahead



Notice of highway exits, in miles



Point of interest



Electronic tolling only



Destination distances, in miles



Highway mile markers



Parking facilities



Freeway interchange sign

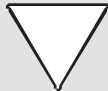


Highway rest area

Know signs by their appearances so you can recognize them at a distance.



Stop



Yield



Guide/Information



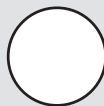
No Passing Zone



School Zone



Warning



Railroad Crossing



Regulation



Interstate Highway

## Traffic Signs

Traffic signs control traffic, warn you of hazards, help you get where you are going, and tell you about roadway services. The shapes and colors of traffic signs are important. Sign colors mean the following:

**RED**—stop or prohibition

**GREEN**—direction, shows where you can go

**YELLOW**—general warning

**BLACK/WHITE**—regulation

**BLUE**—motorist service (e.g., gas, food, hotels), evacuation route

**BROWN**—recreational, historic, or scenic site

**ORANGE**—construction or maintenance warning

**FLUORESCENT YELLOW-GREEN**—school zone, bicycle, pedestrian, and curve warning

**FLUORESCENT PINK**—incident management signs

**PURPLE**—electronic toll collection signs

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## Stop and Yield Signs

A STOP sign always means “come to a complete halt” and applies to each vehicle that comes to the sign. When approaching a stop sign, you must stop before any crosswalk or stop line painted on the pavement. Come to a complete stop, yield to pedestrians or other vehicles, and go carefully. Just slowing down is not enough. If a 4-WAY or ALL WAY sign is added to a STOP sign at an intersection, all traffic coming to the intersection must stop. The first vehicle in the intersection or four-way stop has the right of way.

When you see a YIELD sign, slow down and be prepared to stop. Let vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians go before you proceed. You must come to a complete stop if traffic conditions require it.

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## Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs have a red or white background and inform drivers of traffic laws or regulations. Some, such as SPEED LIMIT signs, may only include words. Others, such as NO U-TURN signs, use only images. Some are a combination of words and images. Signs that use a red circle with a diagonal slash mean that something is prohibited.

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## Warning Signs

Yellow and fluorescent yellow-green warning signs warn you of hazards or changes in conditions ahead. The road layout may be changing, you may be coming to a school zone, or there may be a special situation ahead. Slow down and obey the sign.

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## Guide Signs

In the “guide signs” category are route markers, distance and destination signs, and informational signs. Green signs give highway directions and guide you through highway interchanges. Blue signs list motorist services, like gas, food, and lodging. Brown signs direct you to public recreational areas, state and national parks, points of interest, and scenic sites.

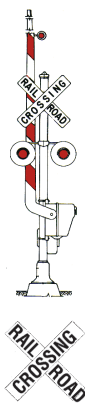
In Massachusetts, numbered state highway routes are posted on white, rectangular signs with black letters and borders. Interstate highway signs are blue, red, and white shields.

## Railroad Crossings

There is usually a round warning sign before a railroad crossing. When you see this sign, slow down and prepare to stop. If you see or hear a train coming, do *not* speed up and try to beat the train to the crossing.

The point at which train tracks cross a road is marked with a white crossbuck sign. If more than one track crosses a road, the number of tracks is posted below the crossbuck.

A railroad crossing may also have red flashing lights, a bell, and a red-and-white striped gate that lowers across the roadway when a train is passing. If the lights begin to flash, you must stop at least 15 feet before the light post or gate. You must then remain stopped until the gate raises and the lights stop flashing. Failure to stop is a violation that has a heavy fine. Even if you do not see a train coming, *never* drive around a lowered gate or ignore the flashing lights.



## Roadway Construction/ Maintenance (Work Zones)

Any roadway in Massachusetts may be under construction or require maintenance at any given time. These sections of roadway are designated and protected by warning signs and traffic control devices. They help guide you safely through a work zone and past any hazards. There are several rules or practices you should be aware of to protect yourself and roadway workers.

When approaching a work zone, reduce your speed. Be aware of the traffic around you and any obstructions or hazards that can be seen on or near the roadway. If a police officer or civil flagger is present, follow and obey their directions. DO NOT be distracted by what is happening within a work zone.

The start of a work zone is indicated with a warning sign or electronic message sign. This sign usually refers to roadwork/utility work beginning at a certain distance down the road.



Civil Flaggers are typically used on low-speed, low-volume roadways to control traffic movement around the work area and to support other road users navigate the area.



Flagger Ahead Sign (500 feet)



Work zone flag person

Upcoming warning signs inform you of where work is taking place and how you should maneuver through the work area. Read and follow the messages on these signs.



This sign shows which lane is closed



This sign means the right lane is closed and traffic should move to the left



This sign means the lanes are shifting to the right

Certain devices (such as drums, cones, and tubular markers) are used to direct traffic away from a work area where the shoulder or travel lane is closed. They are usually lined up in an angular fashion to shift traffic from the beginning of a travel lane to the left or right. You should carefully merge into the adjacent travel lane when you see these devices in the roadway. When a lane is closed to traffic, a barricade is often used to block off access to that area.



Drum



Cones



Tubular Marker



Barricade

In some cases, road work requires full closure of travel lanes in one direction, or an entire road closure. In these cases, detour signs are posted. They provide direction on bypassing the work zone and then getting back on the original road.



Detour sign used along the detour



Detour sign used at the start of the detour

On multiple lane roadways, portable arrow boards are used to provide notification that the shoulder or lane is closed and which lane is open for travel. These devices are located before the work area within the closed lane to give you notice to merge your vehicle when it is safe.



Right lane closure - merge left



Middle lane closure - merge right or left

There are many more types of traffic control devices you may encounter. Be aware, be cautious, be observant, and use common sense when driving through work zones. There are men and women working to improve roads for public use and these work zone signs and devices are there to guide motorists and protect these workers.

When approaching a work zone, the **FIRST** thing you must do is **SLOW DOWN** and look for guidance on how to safely travel through the area.

The Highway Division has a 511 phone service. You can use this to get up-to-date information about traffic and weather conditions and construction projects. You can also report problems on the road. Service is available 24/7.

Dial 511 from your cell phone or 617-986-5511 (Metro-Boston), 508-499-5511 (Central Mass), or 413-754-5511 (Western Mass) from a landline.

For more information, visit [Mass.Gov/Traffic-Information](https://www.mass.gov/traffic-information)

## Pavement Markings

Lines, symbols, and words are often painted on a roadway to help direct drivers and control traffic. You must know what the different lines and colors mean and obey them.

White and yellow lines are used on pavement edges and between lanes to keep vehicles in line. The lines may be solid or broken (long dashes), single or double. A solid white or solid yellow line that turns into a dotted line (short dashes) is a continuation of the line through an intersection or highway interchange.

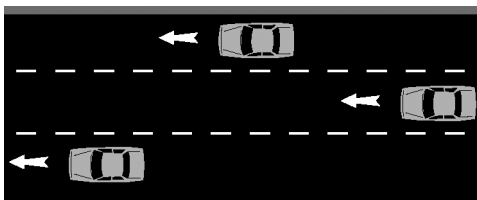
Unless you're turning, exiting a highway, or changing lanes, always stay between lane lines.

### White Lane Lines

White lane lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the **same** direction. Single white lines may also mark the right edge of the pavement.

#### **Broken White Line**

Broken white lines separate lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction. Once you have signaled, and it is safe to do so, you may cross this line when changing lanes.



#### **Solid White Line**

A solid white line marks the right edge of the roadway or separates lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction, including bicycle lanes. You can go in the same direction on both sides of this line (except the shoulder), but you should not cross it unless you need to avoid danger.

Broken white lines separate lanes in the same direction.

#### **Double Solid White Line**

A double solid white line separates two lanes of traffic going in the same direction. Crossing a double solid white line is not allowed.

### Yellow Lane Lines

Yellow lane lines separate lanes of traffic moving in **opposite** directions. Single yellow lines may also mark the left edge of the pavement on divided highways and one-way streets.

#### **Broken Yellow Line**

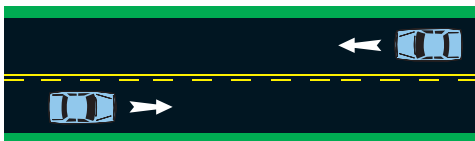
A broken yellow line separates lanes of traffic moving in opposite directions. Stay to the right of the line, unless you are passing a vehicle in front of you.



When passing, you may cross this line temporarily when it is safe to do so.

### **Double Yellow Lines: One Solid, One Broken**

One solid yellow line and one broken yellow line separate opposite lanes of traffic. If the *solid* yellow line is closer to you, you *cannot* cross the lines. If the *broken* line is closer to you, you can *only* cross the line to pass another vehicle when it is safe to do so.



### **Double Yellow Lines: Both Solid**

Two solid yellow lines prohibit vehicles from crossing them to pass another vehicle. You may not cross these lines unless turning left when it is safe to do so.

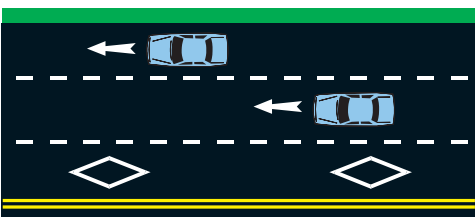


**Do not cross a double yellow line unless turning left.**

## **Words and Symbols**

Words or symbols may be painted on roadway surfaces to help guide, warn, or regulate drivers. Words or symbols are often used with traffic signs, signals, and other pavement markings. White arrows show lane directions or restrictions.

A white diamond symbol means there is a special lane restriction, like “high occupancy vehicle (HOV) only” or “bus only.”



**In the above three-lane diagram, the far left travel lane is reserved for high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs), like those used in carpools, or for buses.**

### **Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows)**

Shared Lane Markings (also known as Sharrows) help bicyclists position themselves in the right location and in the right direction in a lane that is shared with motor vehicles. By following these markings, bicyclists can avoid being hit by the open door of a parked vehicle or getting squeezed next to a motor vehicle in a narrow lane. When you see a Shared Lane Marking, you must look out for the presence of bicyclists and make sure that you leave them enough space when passing. Shared Lane Markings are not the same as the bicycle symbols that are used to mark bicycle lanes.



### **Bicycle Lanes**

Bicycle lanes are portions of the roadway that are intended for use by bicyclists and are typically marked by solid white lines, along with pavement markings and signs. They are five feet wide. Motor vehicles may only drive in these lanes when turning on or off the road. Before crossing a bicycle lane, you must look carefully for bicyclists, and you must cross with care.



### **Advisory Bicycle Lanes**

Advisory bicycle lanes are becoming common on streets that are too narrow for a full



bicycle lane, but still have a lot of bicycle traffic. They are dashed on one or both sides to indicate that motor vehicles may use the lane space when necessary, but they must always yield to bicyclists first.

### Green Pavement

Green pavement is used in areas where there could be road sharing conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles. You should pay close attention and look for bicyclists before crossing green pavement. At a red light, you should not stop on green pavement. See the *Laws for Bicyclists and Motorists in the Presence of Bicyclists* section later in this chapter for more information on green pavement.

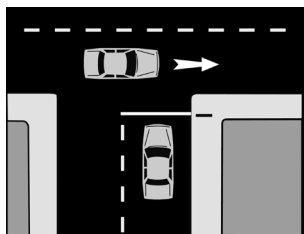
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## Stop Lines, Yield Lines, and Crosswalks

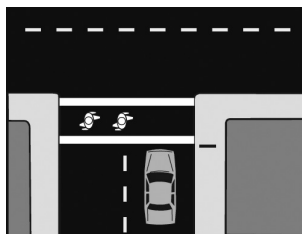
An intersection or pedestrian crossing with a stop sign or traffic signal may have a solid white **STOP** line painted across it. An intersection with a yield sign may have a **YIELD** line painted across it. A **YIELD** line looks like a series of triangles painted next to each other.

A crosswalk is a pair of white lines, or other distinguished pavement markings or materials, painted across a lane to guide pedestrians from one side of the road to the other. A painted crosswalk also warns drivers that pedestrians may be crossing the road. Crosswalks may have diagonal or vertical lines painted between the two main lines. Crosswalks are often located at intersections, but can also be found in other areas, such as bus stops, schools, trail crossings, commercial districts, and areas with a lot of pedestrians.

**You must stop *behind* the stop lines, yield lines, and crosswalk lines if required by a stop/yield sign, traffic signal, or pedestrian in the crosswalk.**



Stop line



Crosswalk



Yield line

---

## Channelizing Islands

A channelizing island is a traffic island or pavement marking that guides traffic along certain paths and prevents operation on areas of the roadway. You cannot drive over or park a motor vehicle upon any channelizing island, unless directed to do so by a police officer.

---

## Crossing Guards

In recent years, several crossing guards in Massachusetts have been killed or injured while on duty when struck by vehicles. As a driver, you should look for warning signs that crossing guards and children may be in the road and be prepared to stop. Crossing guards depend on drivers to be aware and obey their signals. Use caution when you see the following:

- Crosswalks/ Pedestrian Crossing Signs - These will be white crosswalks painted on the street, or pedestrian crossing signs placed in the middle or the side of the road.
- Reflective Vests - Crossing guards wear brightly colored and highly reflective clothing so they will be highly visible.
- Stop Paddles - These are hand-held stop signs that crossing guards hold up while walking out into the street to warn drivers of children crossing.

## Lanes, Intersections, and Turns

This section explains the rules of driving that apply to any roadway or intersection. In addition to standard travel lanes, there are...

- Special lanes for turning
- Restricted lanes for buses, car pools, and bicycles
- Breakdown lanes on the right-hand shoulder of highways and expressways

## Signaling

When you are driving on a roadway, you are expected to drive straight ahead, unless you show otherwise. This is why you must use signals whenever you stop or make *any* move in traffic. Your signals alert pedestrians and motorists of what you are doing and give them time to react.



Left turn



Right turn



Slow or stop

Regardless of the kind of vehicle you are driving, you *must* use signals. If the electronic signals on your vehicle are not working, you must use the three hand signals shown. Signals should be made through the driver's side window. You must know these signals to pass the road test.

You must signal in certain situations:

- Changing lanes
- Turning at an intersection or into a driveway
- Pulling away from a curb
- Pulling over to the side of the road
- Entering or exiting an expressway or a freeway

Once you have completed your move, you must turn your signal off. Any time you want to turn, merge, join traffic from a stopped position, or change lanes, you must...

1. Check your mirrors for traffic behind you and check your blind spot on the side you are moving or turning toward.
2. Signal your intent to move.
3. Make your move.

**Bicyclists may use either arm to signal.**

## Using Lanes

Always use traffic lanes as they are defined by pavement markings and road signs. Many intersections have special lanes marked for turns. Follow the rules of the road, using the proper lanes for turning and driving straight ahead.

On roadways with two or more lanes in your travel direction, use the right lane for driving unless...

- You are passing another vehicle.
- You are making a left turn.
- The right lane is blocked.

Here are a few more general rules for using lanes properly:

- Never change lanes in the middle of an intersection. It is illegal and dangerous.
- As a general rule, do *not* use a highway breakdown lane for travel or passing. On some highways, however, you may use the breakdown lane for travel during specific times.
- If you come to a curve in the road and cannot see ahead, keep to the right and slow down.

**The use of breakdown lanes as travel lanes is *very* restricted, and hours of use are posted clearly.**

Special rules for motorcycles:

- Do not ride along pavement lines, between lanes of traffic.
- Ride no more than two abreast (side-by-side).
- Unless your motorcycle can safely drive at minimum posted speeds, do not travel on highways or expressways.

### ***Restricted Lanes***

You must not drive in lanes posted as restricted, except when preparing for a turn. Look for signs like the ones to the right.



## **Highway Driving**

A divided highway has separate roadways for traffic in opposite directions. There are often multiple lanes on each side. Highway speed limits are usually between 45 to 65 mph.

Some highways cross other roads and are controlled by traffic signals. Others are “controlled access,” which means they have no signals or intersections. You enter and exit these highways using ramps. These highways are called “expressways” or “freeways,” and you enter or exit these highways at “interchanges.” In Massachusetts, interstate Routes 90 and 495 and State Highway 128 are examples of expressways.

Highway driving can make any new driver nervous. Following are some useful tips for driving on highways:

### ***Entering and Exiting the Highway***

- Make sure you are in the proper lane well in advance so you can safely enter or exit the highway.
- Yield the right-of-way to drivers already on the highway.
- When you enter a highway, increase your speed to match vehicles already on the road.
- **If you miss your exit, do *not* stop. *Never* back up on the highway.** Get off the highway at the **next** exit and look for signs showing you how to rejoin the road in the other direction.
- Be sure to signal your exit at least 500 feet before you reach the exit ramp.
- As you leave the highway and drive along the exit ramp, slow to the posted exit ramp speed limit.

## Driving on the Highway

- Make sure your vehicle operates well and can drive at highway speeds.
- Stay to the right and only use the left lane for passing. On an expressway with three or more lanes in your direction, use the far right lane for slower driving, the middle lane for faster driving, and the far left lane for passing.
- Drive in the middle of your lane, staying between the lines.
- Use your rearview mirror, check your blind spots, and use your directional signals when changing lanes. Remember these three steps: **(1) look, (2) signal, (3) move.**
- Do not drive in another driver's blind spot. If you are in another driver's blind spot, safely drive through the blind spot as quickly as you can.
- Look out for vehicles entering the highway and any vehicles or pedestrians in the breakdown lane.
- Do not weave in and out of traffic.
- Be aware of road construction signs, work crews, and signs that require you to reduce speed or change lanes.



The accompanying diagram shows the “blind spots” around your vehicle, in which you cannot see with your vehicle’s mirrors.

Take extra care when exiting a highway that uses breakdown lanes as travel lanes. Look to your right and check your right-hand blind spot before exiting.

- Avoid “highway hypnosis.” If you’ve been driving for a long time and feel tired, you should get off the highway at the next exit, rest stop, or service area.
- If you plan to drive far, stop and stretch every two hours or every 100 miles.

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Dial 511 from your cell phone or 617-986-5511 (Metro-Boston), 508-499-5511 (Central Mass), or 413-754-5511 (Western Mass) from a landline.

For more information, visit [Mass.Gov/Traffic-Information](http://Mass.Gov/Traffic-Information)

## Intersections

Intersections are where two or more roadways meet. Traffic flow at intersections is often controlled by signals, signs, and/or pavement markings. The next two sections in this chapter, *Turns* and *Right-of-Way Rules*, describe the rules and procedures you must follow at intersections.

Some roads have multiple turning lanes. While on these roads, you should follow the applicable road signs or markings.

Intersections are very important to the flow and safety of traffic. **It is illegal to block an intersection with your vehicle.** When driving through an intersection, you must obey all signs or traffic signals. **You may *only* enter an intersection or drive across a crosswalk if there is enough room for you to drive through safely. Blocking the paths of other vehicles or pedestrians in an intersection or a crosswalk is dangerous. This causes traffic jams and violates traffic law.**

When driving through an intersection, be especially alert for bicyclists. Give them plenty of space

and always double check for approaching bicyclists before proceeding through. If you're turning, you must yield to bicyclists going straight through an intersection. Never cut in front of a bicyclist.

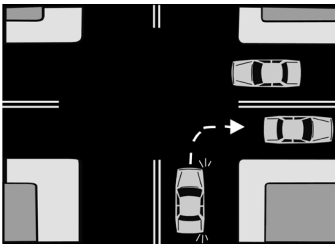
## Turns

Many motor vehicle crashes are caused by improper turns. Take the following steps to turn safely.

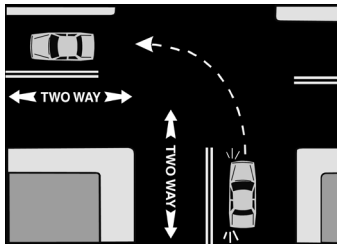
1. Plan for the turn. Do not turn suddenly.
2. Signal your turn at least 100 feet before making the turn. On a highway, signal at least 500 feet before a turn. It is best to signal before you apply your brakes, so you make your intentions known to other drivers.
3. Reduce your speed.
4. Check your mirrors for traffic behind you and check the blind spot on your turning side.
5. Give the right-of-way when appropriate (see the *Right-of-Way Rules* section).
6. Complete the turn carefully, making sure you turn into the proper lane.

The road diagrams below show proper turns. It is very important that you turn from and turn into the proper lane. Look for yellow or white pavement lines marking the road you are turning into. If you need to change lanes, do so *after* you turn. Here are a few rules:

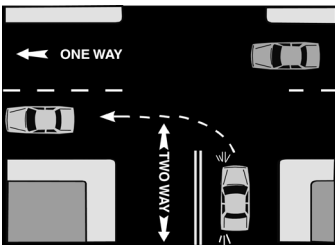
- Turn from the lane closest to the lane you want to enter. For a right turn, turn from the far right lane. For a left turn, turn from the lane closest to the center lane.
- Do not swing your vehicle out of your lane when making a turn or swing wide through the intersection. Keep your vehicle centered in the middle of the lanes you are leaving and entering.
- Once you have started a turn through an intersection, you must follow through. Do not stop in mid-turn and change direction. If you decide you do not want to make the turn, simply drive to the next intersection and work your way back.



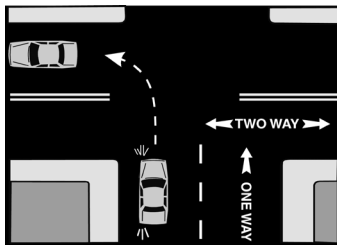
Right turn



Left turn from a two-way road to a two-way road



Left turn from a two-way road to a one-way road



Left turn from a one-way road to a two-way road

## Turns on Red

You must come to a complete stop at a red traffic light. You may then turn *right* unless a **NO TURN ON RED** sign is posted. You must first give the right-of-way to pedestrians and other vehicles. You may turn *left* on red *only* if you are turning from a one-way street onto another one-way street. The same rules that apply to right turns apply to left turns.

## U-Turns

A U-turn is a tight left turn that puts you in the opposite direction.

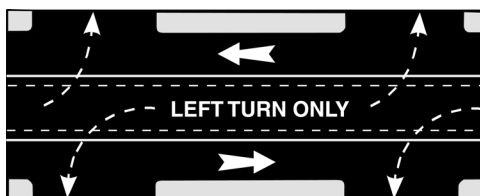
You can make a U-turn if your path is clear and it is safe to do so. You cannot make a U-turn if a NO U-TURN sign is posted.



- You may only make a U-turn from the lane closest to the center line.
- Make sure you have enough room to complete the turn. Do not create a hazard for oncoming vehicles.
- Do not make a U-turn at the crest of a hill, near a curve, or anyplace where you or other drivers cannot see 500 feet away.

## Left Turns from Center Lanes

On some two-way roads, a center lane may be marked as a common left-turn lane to be used by vehicles in both directions. You may *not* travel in a center turning lane.



## Three-Point Turns

When there is not enough room for a U-turn, you may consider a three-point turn. This will put you in the opposite direction. This turn should only be used when all of the following conditions are met:

- The street is narrow
- There is good visibility
- There are no public driveways to turn into
- The traffic is light
- The turn is legal
- There is no other option

Following are the steps of a three-point turn.

1. Position yourself as close as possible to the right edge of the curb. Signal a left turn. Check for traffic and pedestrians in both directions (including your blind spot). Wait until you have a 20-30 second gap to complete the turn.
2. Move slowly and turn the steering wheel quickly to the left. This will bring the vehicle perpendicular to the street about two feet from the curb. Come to a stop.
3. Turn your steering wheel fully to the right. Check for traffic in both directions (including your blind spot). Shift into reverse and start backing up, while looking over your right shoulder.

4. Back up to the opposite curb, stopping just before the curb.
5. Check again for traffic in both directions (including your blind spot). Signal a left. Shift into drive (or for manual cars, first gear) and accelerate to the proper speed.

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## Right-of-Way Rules

“Right-of-way rules” help drivers handle traffic situations not controlled by signs or signals. These rules are based on safety and courtesy. They do not give you any “rights.” Remember, the right-of-way is something you give, not take. If another driver does not follow these rules, you should always give the right-of-way.

This section describes many right-of-way rules. Other rules, like giving the right-of-way to emergency vehicles, are covered later in this chapter.

### ***Pedestrians***

You must always yield to pedestrians who are in a roadway. Also note these rules concerning pedestrians:



- If you are stopped at a traffic light that turns green, you must yield to pedestrians already in the crosswalk.
- When turning, look for pedestrians. Pedestrians have the right-of-way if using a sidewalk or crossing a driveway or an alley.
- Always yield to visually impaired (blind) people crossing a street. You must remain stopped until the person has safely crossed. Do not honk or wave the person on. Never pass another vehicle which is stopped. Blind pedestrians may use a white cane or a guide dog. The White Cane Law states that a driver must come to a complete stop when a blind pedestrian is crossing a street.
- On a multiple lane roadway, never pass another vehicle stopped at a crosswalk without checking for pedestrians first.

### ***Intersections Not Controlled by Signs or Signals***

Slow down at an uncontrolled intersection. Look left and right for oncoming traffic and proceed if the way is clear. However:

- You *must* yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that has entered the intersection from your *right* or is coming from your right.
- Look for traffic coming from the left. Even though you may have the legal right-of-way, make sure that the other driver is yielding before you proceed.

### ***Four-Way Stop***

At an intersection with stop signs in all directions, you must yield the right-of-way to...

- Another vehicle that has **already** come to a full stop
- A vehicle directly to your *right* that has stopped at the **same time** as you



Four-way stop intersections can cause confusion. Try to make eye contact with the drivers of other vehicles to judge their intentions and avoid crashes.

**At a four-way stop, vehicles must go in the order they stopped. The first to stop is the next to go. If in doubt, give the right-of-way to the driver on your right.**

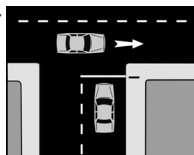
## **Turning Left**

When making *any* left turn, you must first yield the right-of-way to any...

- Oncoming vehicle
- Vehicle already in the intersection
- Pedestrians or bicyclists crossing your intended path of travel

## **Private Roads, Driveways, and Unpaved Roads**

When entering a paved thoroughfare from a private road, a driveway, or an unpaved road, you must stop. You must then give the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles on the road you are entering.



**You must give the right-of-way at throughways.**

## **Throughways**

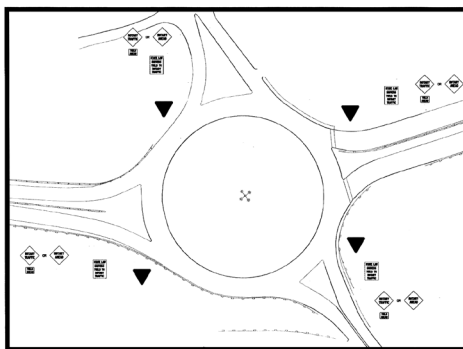
On a designated throughway, you must yield the right-of-way to traffic on the throughway before you turn.

## **Intersection of Single or Two-Lane Road and Multiple-Lane Road**

If you are on a single or two-lane road and come to an intersection with a divided highway or a roadway with three or more lanes, you must yield the right-of-way.

## **Rotaries**

Rotaries are much more common in Massachusetts than in other parts of the country. A rotary is an intersection of roads coming together from several directions. It allows you to continue through without stopping at a STOP sign or a traffic signal. There are yield signs at the entrance to a rotary. There is a physical barrier (the Central Island) in the center that forces traffic to travel around it. Big rotaries are designed to handle traffic traveling at up to 40 miles per hour.



**Traffic in a rotary travels counter- clockwise.**

## **Rotary Traffic Rules**

Traffic travels counter-clockwise in a rotary. Always yield the right-of-way to vehicles already in the rotary (unless told differently by signs or police officers) and to pedestrians. Use your turn signals in the same way as any other intersection. Travel through the rotary and, when you are ready to exit, use your right turn signal.

## **Choosing a Lane**

If the rotary has a single lane, you must enter from the right lane of the road you are coming from. You must exit onto the right lane of the road you intend to travel on.

If the rotary has multiple lanes, look for signs to help you choose the proper lane. If there are no signs, you should do the following:

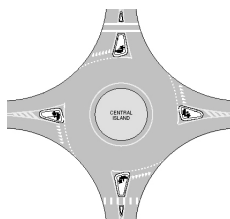


- For a quarter-turn, or to continue straight ahead, enter the rotary from the right lane. Stay in that lane, and exit onto the right lane.
- For a three-quarter-turn, or a U-turn, enter the rotary from the left lane. Travel through the middle or inner lane. Exit onto the right lane. If coming from a road with a single lane, you should stay in the right lane for the entire turn.

In a multiple-lane rotary, there may be traffic on both sides of your vehicle. Do not attempt to move out of your lane until it is safe to do so. If you miss your exit, don't get upset. Check the traffic around you. If it is safe to do so, go around again and position your vehicle to properly and safely exit the rotary. **Do not stop in the rotary.**

## Roundabouts

Roundabouts are similar to rotaries. They are generally much smaller than rotaries and have a smaller central barrier. Most roundabouts have yield lines on the pavement and crosswalks for pedestrians. Roundabouts are used on busy streets and their small size requires vehicles to reduce speed to 25 miles per hour or less. Roundabouts reduce the need to change lanes. Look for signs as you get near a roundabout to determine which lane you should be in. When entering a roundabout and choosing a lane, you should follow the same rules as for a rotary. Slow speeds in roundabouts make them safe for bicyclists.



## Rules for Passing

In general, the law requires you to drive on the right side of the road. When passing is allowed, you should pass on the left. Passing on the right is allowed only in certain situations.

You should pass a pedestrian, bicyclist, or motor vehicle *only* when it is necessary and safe to do so. **You may *not* exceed the speed limit when passing.** If you have any doubt, do not pass.

*Never* use a breakdown lane, the shoulder of a road, or a sidewalk for passing another vehicle.

## Passing on the Left

On a multiple-lane roadway with several lanes in one direction, you must use the middle and left lanes for passing. A broken yellow line on a two-way road allows you to cross over into the oncoming lane temporarily to pass a vehicle, **if it is safe to do so.**

The following steps go with the diagram to the right:

1. Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle you want to pass. Check the passing lane to make sure it is clear. If you are crossing a broken yellow line to pass, you must be able to see clearly **at least 400 feet** in front of you. Check your mirror and your blind spot.
2. Signal left and gradually move into the passing lane.
3. Maintain your speed until safely past the other vehicle, then signal right.



**If you are operating a motorcycle, you may only pass single file.**

4. Make sure there is enough distance between you and the other vehicle before moving back into the right lane. Wait at least until you can see the vehicle's headlights in your mirror.
5. You must return to the right lane before any oncoming vehicle comes within 200 feet of you. Turn off your signal once you have returned to the right lane.

### ***Passing on the Right***

Passing on the right is only allowed in certain circumstances. It can only be done when the road is clear and is wide enough for two or more lines of motor vehicles. You can pass on the right in the following circumstances:

- The vehicle you are passing is making, or is about to make, a left turn.
- You are driving on a one-way street.
- You are driving on a road where traffic moves in one direction (such as a multiple lane highway).

### ***Being Passed***

If you are being passed by another vehicle, you must slow down and stay to the right. Allow the other driver to pass safely. Do *not* speed up.

The “move-over law” (Chapter 418 of the Acts of 2008) requires that if you are approaching a stationary emergency vehicle and it is displaying its flashing lights, you must proceed with caution and reduce your speed to that of a reasonable and safe speed for the road conditions. If you are on a highway with at least four lanes (at least two of which allow travel in the same direction you are heading), yield the right-of way by safely “moving over” to a lane that is not next to the lane the emergency, highway, or recovery vehicle is occupying. In other words, leave an open lane between your vehicle and the stopped emergency vehicle. If “moving-over” is impracticable, you must still proceed with caution and reduce your speed to that of a reasonable and safe speed for the road conditions.

## **Road Respect/Sharing the Road**

Roadways are intended for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Courtesy is expected by all who use the road. Motorists must be especially careful because more vulnerable users can be seriously injured or killed. We ask that you show respect to people you share the roadway with. Do not let your anger get the best of you.

### *How Can You Identify Aggressive Drivers?*

Aggressive Drivers often do the following:

- Cut people off
- Exceed the speed limit
- Switch lanes without signaling
- Tailgate
- Run red lights
- Prevent other motorists from passing them

### *What Can You Do When confronted by an Aggressive Driver?*

- Attempt to get out of his/her way.
- Do not challenge that person.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Ignore rude gestures.
- Wear your safety belt. It will keep you in control of your vehicle and protect you in a crash.

### *Do not become an Aggressive Driver!*

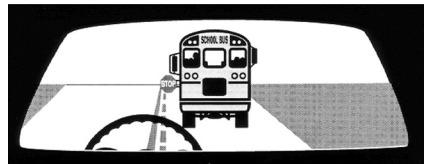
Control your anger and do not let the situation get worse. Do not question how aggressive the other driver may be. If you have a cell phone, call the State Police at 911 to report an emergency situation.

State Police patrol highways in unmarked vehicles. They look for aggressive drivers who put everyone in danger. If you are arrested for aggressive driving, the RMV may review your case. The RMV can suspend your license and registration before a court date if you are a threat to public safety.

Be a safe driver, be courteous, and always treat other drivers as you would like to be treated. As the driver of a passenger car, van, small truck, or motorcycle, you must constantly share the roadway with other people and other vehicles.

### **School Buses**

Yellow school buses have flashing red lights and stop signs that fold out from the driver's side. School pupil transport vehicles, like vans, station wagons, or family sedans, have flashing red lights and SCHOOL BUS signs on top. Drivers use these warning signals when letting pupils on and off.



**Obey school bus signals from either side of the road.**

**If a school bus or a school pupil transport vehicle has its lights flashing and a stop sign extended, you must stop. It is the law. It does not matter which side of the road you are traveling on. Remain stopped until the lights stop flashing or the stop sign folds back.**

A first violation of this law can cause a license suspension and a \$250 fine.

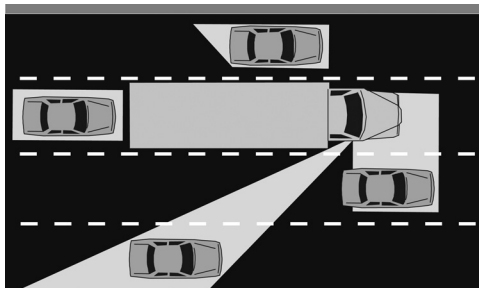
Even after the warning signals have stopped, you should proceed slowly and continue to look for children.

The only exception to this law is if a school bus has stopped on the other side of a divided highway with a barrier between travel directions. In this case, you do not have to stop.

### **Trucks and Other Large Vehicles**

One of the worst "sharing-the-road" problems is between large vehicles, like trucks and buses, and smaller ones, like cars and motorcycles. Following are some rules for driving safely among trucks, tractor-trailers, and buses:

- **Blind Spots** — It is easy for a car or a motorcycle to be hidden in a large vehicle's blind spots. Therefore, do **not** follow closely behind a truck or a bus. When driving near a large vehicle, be aware of the driver's blind spots on the right, left, front, and behind.



This diagram shows the various blind spots for a tractor-trailer

- **Tailgating** — If you cannot see a truck's rearview mirrors, you are tailgating. Tailgating is dangerous. By following too closely, you are losing the safety cushion you need if the vehicle in front of you stops short.
- **Cutting in Front** — Drivers of large vehicles try to keep a safety cushion of space around them. A large truck may need twice as much distance to stop as an automobile or a motorcycle, especially when roads are wet or icy. Do not drive into the space immediately surrounding a large vehicle. Do *not* pull in front of a large vehicle and slow down or stop suddenly. The driver will have too little room to stop and will crash into you or may risk "jackknifing" by trying to stop suddenly at highway speeds.

Studies by the National Safety Council and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that a fully loaded tractor trailer may take twice as far to stop as a passenger vehicle.

- **Driving Too Slowly** — On a multiple-lane highway, trucks and buses can only drive in the two right-hand lanes. They use the far right lane for normal travel and the second lane for passing. If you travel in the second lane, stay with the flow of traffic and do not drive below the minimum speed limit.

Driving too slowly in this lane can create a bottleneck of large vehicles. This can increase highway traffic hazards. If the driver of a truck or bus wants to pass you, move over when it is safe to do so and let the vehicle pass.

- **Passing on the Left** — It takes longer to pass a tractor-trailer or a bus than another car or a motorcycle. Be aware that large vehicles travel slower uphill and faster downhill.
- **Passing on the Right** — Do not pass a truck or bus on the right unless it is absolutely necessary. Large vehicles make wide turns, and sometimes they must move to the *left* before making a wide turn to the *right*. If you are next to a truck or bus, you are probably in a blind spot. Watch for possible right-hand turns, and stay safely behind until you know what the driver is doing.

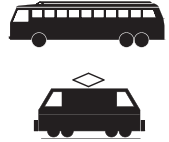


If you are thinking about passing, remember that a tractor may be pulling more than one trailer.

- **Truck or Bus Approaching** — If a large vehicle is coming toward you on an undivided road, stay to the right. You will avoid being sideswiped or shaken by air turbulence. At intersections, take extra care in judging the speed of the oncoming vehicle. Trucks and buses cannot slow down easily if you cut in front of them to turn.

## **Buses and Trolleys**

Be very careful near public transport buses and trolleys. Buses stop often. Be courteous and allow signaling buses to pull away from bus stops. Be cautious of pedestrians entering or exiting buses or trolleys.



State law is very specific about driving near trolleys and their tracks:

- You must *not* drive closer than eight feet of a trolley passenger step when the trolley is letting passengers on or off.
- Look for oncoming trolleys before crossing any tracks. Do *not* turn in front of a trolley if one is approaching.
- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and a trolley if the trolley is sharing the roadway.

Remember, a trolley's path is limited to the tracks. A trolley driver cannot swerve to avoid **you**.

## **Slow-Moving Vehicles**

Most farm vehicles, construction rigs, and other slow-moving vehicles have orange warning signs attached to the back. If you approach one, reduce your speed and use caution. Treat them similar to bicyclists and pedestrians. Leave plenty of space around the vehicle if you plan to pass.

## **Funeral Processions**

A funeral procession is two or more vehicles, including a lead or escort vehicle, traveling during daylight hours with the body or cremated remains of a deceased person. The rules for operating in and around a funeral procession are set by M.G.L. Ch. 85, Section 14A.

Funeral processions have the right-of-way at intersections, with the EXCEPTION that they must yield to emergency vehicles with flashing lights or sirens or when directed by law enforcement. If the lead vehicle in a funeral procession (which may be a hearse or a police vehicle) legally drives through an intersection, all vehicles in the procession may also drive through the intersection, even if a traffic light changes or there is a stop sign.

### **If driving as part of a funeral procession, you must:**

- Drive carefully at all times. You may follow the vehicle ahead as closely as is safe.
- Watch out for pedestrians or other vehicles when entering an intersection. As long as it is safe to do so, you may follow the lead vehicle through an intersection, regardless of a traffic light or stop sign.
- Not drive faster than 55 MPH on a highway with a speed limit of 55 MPH or higher. You must also not go more than 5 MPH slower than the speed limit on any other public way.
- Have your headlights and taillights turned on.
- Have your hazard lights on, if you are the first or last vehicle in the procession.

### **If your vehicle is not part of the funeral procession:**

- You may not drive between procession vehicles unless directed by law enforcement or you are operating an emergency vehicle with siren and flashing lights turned on.
- You may not join the procession.
- You may not pass a procession on a multiple lane highway on the procession's right, unless the procession is in the far left lane.

- You may not cross an intersection, even if you have a green light while a funeral procession is passing through a red light, unless you can do so without crossing the path of the procession.

**A vehicle owned by a funeral home or a funeral home director may display a flashing purple light (but no other color) when operated by the owner or an employee or contractor of the funeral home during a funeral procession.**

## **Road Workers and Repair Crews**

Nationally in 2017, 799 people were killed in crashes that happened in work zones.

**ROAD WORK  
NEXT 5 MILES**

Although road construction and maintenance sites are often well posted with warning signs, you must take extra care to ensure the safety of anyone working on a roadway. Orange warning signs and work equipment usually mean that people are on foot nearby. Follow road work signs carefully, and stay alert. Look for sudden changes in road direction or condition. Be prepared to stop. **If you are cited for speeding in a “work area”, the fine will be doubled.**

## **Animals and Horse-Drawn Vehicles**

Always give the right-of-way to an animal that someone is leading, riding, or driving. Animals are easily scared by motor vehicles. When you get near an animal or horse-drawn vehicle, be careful and do the following.



- Slow down.
- Stop if the animal or vehicle is coming toward you or is crossing your path. Allow the animal to pass.
- If the animal or vehicle is traveling in the same direction as you, allow plenty of room for passing safely. Drive at a reasonable speed.
- Do not honk your horn or make a loud noise.
- If the animal you are passing looks scared, you must pull your vehicle to the side and stop.
- Proceed only when it is safe.
- You must stop if a rider or driver signals you to do so.

**The law applies to horses, cows, and any other draft animals.**

In rural areas, take extra care when passing hay rides. These are usually animal drawn and full of passengers.

## **Parking**

Stopping and parking your motor vehicle is regulated. It is important to ensure safety and a smooth traffic flow. You should practice parking maneuvers and know the parking laws.

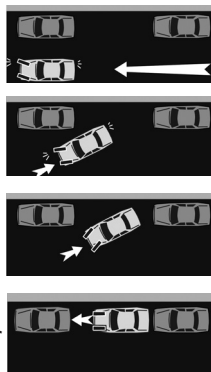
Here are some general rules about stopping and parking:

- You must not create a traffic hazard while parking or while your vehicle is stopped.
- You must always make sure that you leave at least a 12-foot wide, clear roadway for traffic to pass.
- When you leave your vehicle by itself, state law requires you to stop the motor, set the brake, make sure the ignition is locked, remove your key, and lock the door.

- When you pull away from the curb, you must wait for vehicles in the travel lane to pass. You must then signal that you are pulling out and move slowly into traffic.

## Parallel Parking

1. Choose a space that is long enough for your vehicle. Make sure parking is legal.
2. Pull up alongside the vehicle in front of the space. Leave about two or three feet between your vehicle and the parked one. Position your vehicle so that your rear bumper or front seats line up with the rear bumper or front seats of the other vehicle.
3. Look behind you *both* ways to check for pedestrians and other traffic.
4. Slowly back up and turn the steering wheel all the way toward the curb. Rest your foot lightly on the brake. Look directly out your rear window. Do *not* use your mirrors.
5. When your front passes the parked vehicle's rear bumper, turn your steering wheel the opposite way and continue backing up. Do not hit the vehicle behind you.
6. When you are back far enough, straighten your wheels and pull forward. Make sure you keep enough space in front of and behind you so that other vehicles can get out.

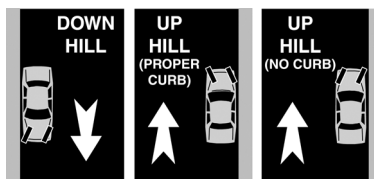


The steps in parallel parking

## Parking on Hills

Always set your parking brake and leave your vehicle in gear when parking on a hill if you have a manual transmission. If you have an automatic transmission, set your parking brake and shift into park. You must turn your front wheels in the proper direction to stop it from rolling downhill if the brake fails.

- **No Curb** — Turn your wheels *inward*, toward the edge of the road.
- **Uphill Against a Curb** — Turn your wheels *outward*, toward the travel lane.
- **Downhill Against a Curb** — Turn your wheels *inward*, toward the curb.



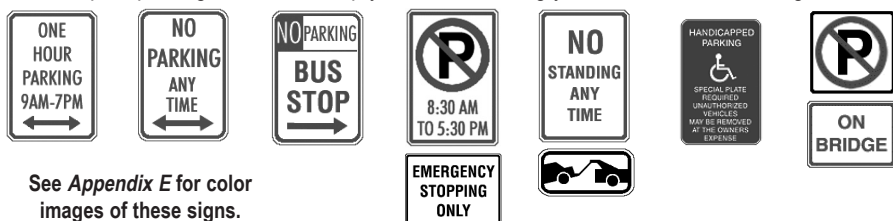
## Parking Regulations

Parking regulations are generally determined by state law and enforced by local cities and towns. When these regulations are adopted by municipalities, they are often, but not always, similar to the state regulations. If you park in a business or residential district, your vehicle must be no more than 12 inches from the curb. The only exception is if angled parking is allowed. Parking spaces are often marked by white road lines. You must park your vehicle between these lines. You may not take part of two spaces. In Massachusetts, you may *not* park your vehicle in certain places.

- In a zone posted with a NO PARKING, NO STANDING, or NO STOPPING sign
- In a bicycle lane

- In a bus stop (the penalty for parking in a posted bus stop is \$100)
- In a taxi stand
- In a zone and at a time posted for street cleaning
- In a posted loading zone
- Within 20 feet of an intersection
- In a crosswalk, in front of a driveway, or in front of a handicap-access ramp
- In a zone posted for HP-DV parking only (unless you have disabled person plates or placards, or disabled veteran plates). The fine for a first offense is \$300. The fine for wrongful use of a disabled person or veteran plate or placard is a minimum of \$500.
- In a striped crosshatch area next to an HP-DV space, even if you have disability plates or a placard
- Within ten feet of a fire hydrant or fire lane
- On a sidewalk, curb, center traffic island, or median
- During a weather or roadway emergency
- Facing the wrong way against traffic
- On a state or an interstate highway, unless authorized
- On the Massachusetts Turnpike (fines range from \$15 - \$100)
- On a roadway in a rural area or outside a thickly settled district
- In a traffic lane next to a row of parked vehicles ("double parked")
- To make nonemergency repairs to your vehicle

You may get a citation with a fine for violating a parking regulation. The fines for most of the violations listed above are set by city or town ordinance and will vary depending on the city or town. Unpaid parking tickets can stop you from renewing your license or vehicle registration.



## Parking Meters

Many public parking spaces are operated by coin-fed meters. Rules and time limits usually apply during posted days and hours.

If you park longer than allowed or fail to pay the meter fee, you may be issued a parking citation.

## Parking Permits

Many cities and towns give special parking permits to residents. Certain streets have **RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING ONLY** signs. If you do not have a permit or a special visitor's placard, you may not park there. Contact your local city or town to find out how to get a permit.



## Miscellaneous Rules of the Road

Listed below are laws that have not yet been covered. **It is illegal to...**

- Drive on a bet or wager
- Drag race
- Throw anything out of your window while driving
- Throw garbage or glass onto a roadway or onto public or private land
- Throw lighted cigarettes or anything that can cause a fire near a forest or open field
- Bypass or cut out a motor vehicle's muffler system

You must return used motor oil, transmission fluid, and other hazardous materials to the place you bought them. The garage or store that sold it to you is responsible for disposing of it.

## Rules for Pedestrians

Pedestrians must remember the following rules:

- State law requires you to use a crosswalk when one is available. If an intersection has a traffic signal, press the button and wait for the **WALK** signal. Intersections with no push buttons automatically give **WALK** signals. Be patient!
- Do not cross if the signal says **DON'T WALK**.
- Before you cross a roadway, stop at the curb, look left, look right, and look left again for traffic. Do this even on a one-way street. Be alert while crossing. Be especially alert at intersections that allow motor vehicles to turn right on red.
- If you must enter the street from between parked cars, stop and look before crossing.
- You must use a sidewalk when one is available. When no sidewalk is available, you should walk on the shoulder **facing** traffic.
- Never walk along or across expressways, interstate highways, or turnpikes.
- Wear clothing with bright colors or reflective strips, especially at night.



See *Appendix E* for color images of these signs.

## Laws for Bicyclists and Motorists in the Presence of Bicyclists (as amended by Chapter 525 of the Acts of 2008)

Bicyclists have the right to use all public ways in this state except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted. When riding on public ways, bicyclists must obey the same basic traffic laws and regulations that apply to motor vehicle operators. The rules for bicycles (including amendments) are listed here.

## As a bicyclist: (from Chap. 85, Section 11B)

- You can use the **full lane** anywhere, anytime, and on any street (except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted), even if there is a bike lane.
- You must bike in the same direction as traffic unless otherwise indicated by signs or markings.
- You must stop at red lights and stop signs.
- You can keep to the right when passing a motor vehicle moving in the travel lane.
- You must signal your intent by either hand to stop or turn. However, the signal does not have to be continuous or be made at all if both hands are needed for the bicycle's safe operation.
- You can ride on sidewalks outside of business districts for safety unless banned locally.
- If on a sidewalk or shared use path, you must yield to pedestrians and give an audible signal before overtaking or passing (no sirens or whistles).
- No more than two bicycles can be operated side-by-side. On a roadway with more than one lane in the direction of travel, bicyclists riding side-by-side must stay in one lane and not unnecessarily restrict a passing vehicle's ability to overtake you.
- You must maintain a safe distance from other bicyclists, especially when approaching intersections.
- You must slow down when approaching crosswalks, especially during heavy traffic.
- You must ride on or astride a permanent seat affixed to the bicycle. A passenger must also ride on a permanent seat attached to the bicycle or to a trailer towed by the bicycle.
- You cannot transport a person who is between one and four years old or who weighs 40 lbs. or less except in a "baby seat" attached to the bicycle. The person must be in a harness, be seated in an upright position, and their hands and feet must be protected from hitting the wheel spokes. A person can ride on or astride a seat on a tandem bicycle if the person can reach the pedals and handlebars. You cannot transport a child under the age of one year on a bicycle.
- A bicycle helmet approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission must be worn by a bicycle operator or passenger under 16 years old. It must be secured to the person's head when the bicycle is operated on a public way or bicycle path, unless the passenger is secured in an enclosed trailer which protects his/her head.
- You must give an audible warning (other than a siren or whistle) when necessary to ensure safe operation.
- You can park your bicycle on a way or a sidewalk, but only if it does not obstruct vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- You cannot let the bicycle be pulled by another vehicle and can only tow a bicycle trailer.
- You cannot carry any objects that would interfere with the safe operation of the bicycle and must keep one hand on the handlebars at all times.
- You must have a proper working brake system to stop from 15 MPH within 30 feet.

- From a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, you must have a white lamp in front visible from up to 500 feet and a rear facing red light or reflector visible up to 600 feet.
- From a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, you must have a reflector on each pedal or your ankles, or reflective material on yourself or on the bicycle. The reflectors must be visible up to 600 feet from all sides.
- Your handlebars cannot be set at a height above your shoulders while gripping them and you cannot extend the fork from its original manufacturer's design.
- You must report any crash involving personal injury and any crash involving property damage in excess of \$100 to the police in the municipality where it occurred.

In addition to the laws listed above, bicyclists should also do the following:

- Ride in a straight line so drivers and pedestrians know where to expect you.
- Ride at appropriate speeds on shared paths and streets. If riding on a sidewalk where it is legal, you must ride at a walking speed and yield to pedestrians.
- Put your phone away when biking. Do not text and bike.
- Yield to pedestrians. Be alert and prepared to stop for them.
- Slow down as you approach crosswalks.
- Ride outside of the "door zone" (at least three feet from parked cars) and watch for opening car doors.
- Give other bicyclists room. Pass other bicyclists on the left, not the right. Don't cut in front of other bicyclists who are stopped at an intersection.
- At intersections, assume drivers cannot see you. Slow down and try to make eye contact with the driver. Anticipate when drivers may turn. Don't try to race by a driver at an intersection. Maintain a safe speed.
- Give buses, trucks, and other large vehicles room and avoid riding next to them or passing them. They make wide turns, take time to come to a full stop, and have large blind spots. Be especially careful in the rear blind spot and don't assume the driver can see you. Never pass a moving tractor trailer on the right.
- Don't pass buses on the right. You might hit someone exiting the bus or get squeezed into the curb. If passing a bus on the left, pay attention and expect it to re-enter the lane.
- Do not wear headphones or earbuds in both ears while biking.

**Wearing a proper bicycle helmet significantly reduces the risk of bicycle-related deaths and disabling injuries.**

### **As a motorist in the presence of bicycles:**

- **Do Not Cut-Off After Passing:** When passing a bicycle traveling in the same direction that is on your right, you must not return to the right until you have safely passed the overtaken bicycle. (Chap. 89, Sec. 2)
- **Do Not Make an Abrupt Turn After Passing:** When passing a bicycle near an intersection or driveway where you want to turn right, you cannot turn unless you are at a safe distance from the bicyclist and you can make the turn at a reasonable and proper speed. (Chap. 90, Sec 14)

- **Do Not Squeeze Bicycles in a Narrow Lane:** If a lane is too narrow to pass a bicycle at a safe distance, be **PATIENT** until you can safely use an adjacent lane or **WAIT** until it is safe to pass in the lane you share. (Chap. 89, Sec. 2) You should stay at least three feet away when passing.
- **Do Not Fail to Yield When Turning Left:** When turning left at an intersection or into an alley, private road, or driveway, you must yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction, including a bicycle, if it is in the intersection or close enough to be an immediate hazard. (Chap. 90, Sec 14)
- **Watch for Bicycles on Your Right:** Bicycles can legally ride to the right of motor vehicle traffic. The law says it is not a defense for a motorist causing a crash with a bicycle that the bicycle was to the right of other traffic. (Chap. 85, Sec 11B)
- **Do Not Open a Door Without First Looking:** Drivers and passengers can be fined up to \$100 for opening a vehicle door into an oncoming bicycle. (Chap. 90, Sec 14) Before opening your door, you should always check behind you to make sure that no bicyclists are approaching.
- **Be aware that bicyclists can ride two bicycles side-by-side.** However, on a road with more than one lane in the direction of travel, they must stay in one lane. (Chap. 85, Sec. 11B)
- **Be aware that bicyclists Do Not Always Have to Signal Turns!** Bicyclists must signal their intent by either hand to stop or turn. However, the signal does not have to be continuous or be made at all if both hands are needed for the bicycle's safe operation. (Chap. 85, Sec. 11B)



See *Appendix E* for color images of these signs.

## The Danger of Open Doors to Bicyclists

Open vehicle doors pose a very serious threat to bicyclists. When opening a vehicle door, drivers and passengers should do the following:

1. Check your rear-view mirror.
2. Check your side-view mirror.
3. Open the door with your far hand (the hand farther from the door).

This is called the "Dutch Reach" method because it originated in the Netherlands. It forces your body to turn, which will better allow you to see approaching bicyclists. It also prevents the vehicle door from being opened too fast. This not only protects bicyclists, but can also prevent your door from being damaged or torn off by an approaching motor vehicle.

Bicyclists should ride at least three feet from parked cars to avoid doors, both on streets with and without bike lanes. This will keep bicyclists outside of the "door zone" and protect them from getting hit by opening vehicle doors.



The "Dutch Reach" method for opening vehicle doors.

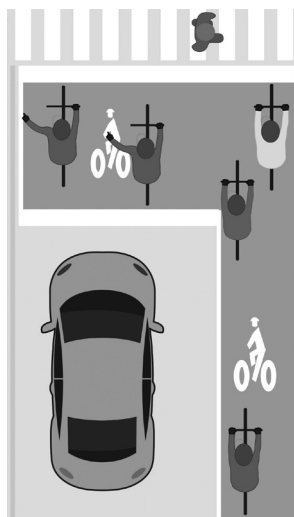
## Bicycle Boxes

Bicycle boxes are pavement markings that are installed at intersections to allow bicyclists a safe way to turn when approaching a red light. Bicycle boxes are green and have an image of a bicyclist. At intersections, they are painted on the pavement before the crosswalk and they cover the entire travel lane.

Drivers must stop behind the bicycle box (even when it's empty) and wait for a green light.

Bicyclists who are turning left should stop in the bicycle box, move to the left side of the box, signal the turn, and wait for the green light. Bicyclists traveling straight or turning right should stay to the right in the bicycle box, in a staggered formation, and wait for the green light.

Bicycle boxes can also be used by bicyclists to make a two-stage left turn. A two-stage left turn allows bicyclists to make a left turn in two separate steps, rather than crossing multiple lanes of traffic:



Example of a bicycle box

**Step 1:** Cross straight through the intersection on the green light and stop in the bicycle box for the road you are turning onto.

**Step 2:** Wait for the green light and go straight through the intersection.

## Separated Bicycle Lanes

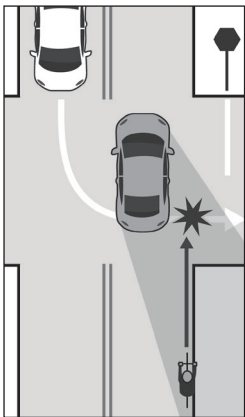
Separated bicycle lanes, also known as cycle tracks and protected bike lanes, physically separate bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic. Where bicycle lanes cross an intersection, they are often indicated by green pavement with an image of a bicyclist. Bicycle lanes are not intended for pedestrians, who must stay on the sidewalk.

At intersections, drivers must stop at the stop line to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross safely. When turning right, drivers must yield to pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing.

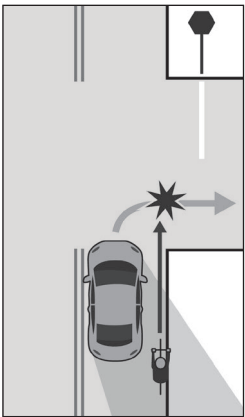
Bicyclists must ride in the proper direction on bicycle lanes. At intersections, bicyclists should ride in the lane through the intersection, while watching for turning vehicles. Bicyclists must yield to crossing pedestrians.

## Common Bicycle Crash Scenarios

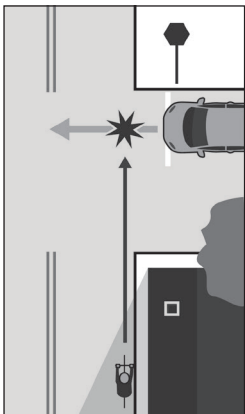
The images below show common crash scenarios between motor vehicles and bicyclists. The motor vehicle is at fault in all of these crashes and drivers must always be alert for bicycles that may be hidden by other vehicles or buildings. Drivers must also be careful to not underestimate a bicyclist's speed or the amount of space needed to pass. In all of these scenarios, bicyclists can increase their visibility and reduce the risk of a crash by riding farther left in the lane.



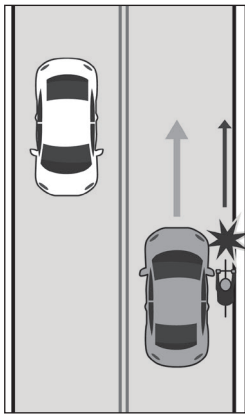
Left Cross



Right Hook



Drive Out



Sideswipe

# Special Driving Situations

Only practice and experience can make you a good driver. About 40 percent of highway crashes involve drivers under 25 years old (RMV Crash Data Department). Most of these crashes are caused by driver inexperience. To be a good driver, you must follow these rules.

- Give driving your full attention. Don't be distracted while driving. Talking to passengers, adjusting a car stereo, or eating can all be dangerous.
- Drive defensively, and keep your eyes on the road ahead. By staying alert, you will see hazards and have time to avoid them.
- Learn to drive in different situations. Practice highway driving, night driving, and handling a motor vehicle in different weather conditions.
- Know how to handle emergency situations, such as skidding or tire blowout.
- Know, understand, and obey the rules of the road.

This chapter explains defensive driving and how to handle special driving situations. It also tells you what to do if there is a crash, even if you are only a witness.

## CHAPTER 5

## Moving Emergency Vehicle

- Always yield the right-of-way to fire engines, ambulances, police cars, and other emergency vehicles that are using a siren and/or emergency flashing lights.
- If an emergency vehicle is coming from any direction, you must pull as close as possible to the right side of the road. Stop until the vehicle has passed. Slowly rolling is not acceptable.
- Check your mirrors and find a safe place to pull over to the right. You should not pull your vehicle to the left or slam on your brakes. Do not stop suddenly. Use your right turn signal.
- NEVER stop in the middle of an intersection. Drive through the intersection and pull over as soon as it is safe.
- After the emergency vehicle has passed, use your left turn signal and make sure the lane is clear. Be sure there are no other emergency vehicles approaching. Then you can merge back into traffic.
- It is illegal to follow closer than 300 feet behind an emergency vehicle responding to an alarm.

## Stationary Emergency and Maintenance Vehicles

In 2015, there were 422 crashes involving stopped emergency and maintenance vehicles in Massachusetts.

- You must slow down and stay alert when you see an “emergency response vehicle” stopped ahead of you with its emergency lights flashing. This includes fire trucks, police cars, ambulances, and “disaster vehicles” (usually in support of other emergency vehicles and services). This also includes highway maintenance vehicles or recovery vehicles (tow truck, ramp truck, etc.) with flashing emergency lights. You must be careful for the safety of yourself and others.
- The “**move-over law**” (Chapter 418 of the Acts of 2008) requires you to be cautious and reduce your speed to a speed that is reasonable and safe for the road conditions when you approach a stationary emergency vehicle with flashing lights. On a highway with at least four lanes (at least two in the same direction you are heading), yield the right-of way by safely “moving over” to a lane that is not next to the lane the emergency vehicle is in. In other words, leave an open lane between your vehicle and the stopped emergency vehicle. If “moving-over” is not possible, you must still be cautious and reduce your speed to a reasonable and safe speed.
- Always be ready to stop if necessary when passing an emergency vehicle.
- At night, be sure to dim your high beams.
- If you need help, pull in front of the police cruiser and ask for help. Never stop behind a police cruiser. (*Do not approach a police officer who is dealing with a stopped motorist.* Stand next to your vehicle on the shoulder until the police officer is finished.)
- It is illegal to drive by or park within 800 feet of a fire. Do not drive over an unprotected fire hose unless directed to by a firefighter or public safety official.

## General Guidelines if You Are Stopped by a Police Officer

State law requires you to pull over to the side of the road and stop when signaled by a police officer. You must pull over whether the officer is in a police car or on foot. Being pulled over may cause anxiety for both you and the police officer. You may be anxious about getting a



ticket or not know why you are being stopped. Police officers rarely know what to expect from a driver or passengers. Because of this, they may be anxious about their own personal safety.

Your actions during a traffic stop may determine the police officer's reaction. Arguing, disregarding the officer's instructions or requests, suggesting that the officer could be more productive by stopping other drivers, or suddenly reaching under the seat or into unseen areas of the passenger compartment are not appropriate. These actions may increase the officer's own anxiety.

Traffic law enforcement is one of a police officer's most important duties. They help to ensure the orderly flow of traffic and to prevent deaths and injuries on our public roads. There is an obvious need for constant enforcement. More persons are killed and injured in motor vehicle crashes across the U.S. each year than in all other forms of violence combined. In 2017 (the last year for which figures are available), 37,133 persons (drivers, passengers, pedestrians and bicyclists) were killed and over 2,746,000 were injured in the U.S. in crashes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration-NHTSA). In 2017, Massachusetts had 334 deaths and 32,413 injuries from crashes (RMV Crash Data Department).

Police officers have reason to be worried about their safety during traffic enforcement. Each year in the United States, a number of police officers are killed and thousands more are assaulted. During 2018 alone, 2 police officers were killed and 5,108 others were assaulted during traffic pursuits and stops (Federal Bureau of Investigation-Uniform Crime Reports).

To help reduce the levels of anxiety, you should do the following during a traffic stop.

- Don't ignore the officer's signal or pretend you didn't see it.
- Turn on the appropriate turn signal and check your mirrors. Carefully and slowly move your vehicle completely to the side of the road. If the officer drives by and doesn't stop, return to the travel lane when it is safe.
- Do not stop your vehicle in an intersection, in front of a driveway, or in a travel lane. If the officer directs you to pull over in a certain place, pull over where directed.
- Put the car in park (if an automatic transmission) or in neutral with the parking brake on (if a standard transmission). Turn off the engine and radio.
- Stay in the vehicle (both you and your passengers). Only get out if instructed by the officer. If asked to get out of the vehicle, stay safely away from traffic and keep hands in plain view.
- If it is dark, leave your headlights on and put the interior overhead light on.
- Roll down your window as the officer walks toward you.
- The officer will usually explain why you were stopped. If not in uniform, the officer will show you their credentials or you may ask to see them.
- Wait until the officer asks for your license and registration before you (or a passenger) reach into the glove compartment. Do not suddenly reach into clothing while the officer approaches or is present. While you know you are only reaching for the appropriate documents, your movements may be reasonably seen by the officer as an attempt to reach for a weapon or to hide something. The officer may feel threatened and may react in a manner that you do not expect. Hand the documents to the officer when requested and do not present the documents in a wallet or holder. Chapter 90, Section 11 of the General Laws requires you to have your license and registration handy when operating a vehicle. There is a \$35 fine for a first offense for the failure to produce either document. If you do not have your license and registration, the officer can ask for your name and

address and, if you do not own the vehicle, the name and address of the owner. If you fail to comply, or provide a false name or address, you can be fined \$100 (Chapter 90, Section 25). You can also be arrested and face criminal charges if you refuse.

- Outside of Massachusetts, an officer may also request "proof of insurance" (based on that jurisdiction's laws). Your registration identifies your insurance carrier and explains that an insurance card is not issued under Massachusetts law.
- **Keep your hands in plain sight and tell your passengers to do the same.**
- Give your full attention to the officer and do not use a cell phone during the stop.
- Do not make any sudden movements or gestures that could seem threatening. Examples of this could be reaching under the seats or into unlit areas of the vehicle. Make sure your passengers do not do this either.
- Stay in your vehicle when the officer goes back to the police car. If you have a question, wait until the officer returns. If you find something the officer requested, hold it out the window and wait for the officer to return.
- Answer appropriately if the officer asks if there are any weapons in the vehicle.
- Be polite when the officer returns your license and registration. If the officer gives you a ticket, do not argue. Once a citation is issued, the officer is required to file it and cannot take it back. You have the right to challenge the citation in court. If you have questions about the citation, you can ask the officer to clarify. Massachusetts **does not** require you to sign a citation, but some other jurisdictions do. Read a citation before signing. Your signature should only confirm receipt of the citation, not proof of a violation.
- When the officer tells you that you can go, put on your turn signal, check your mirrors, and return to the travel lane. If you are on a highway, accelerate to a safe speed in the breakdown lane before merging into traffic.

Remember that a police officer never knows what to expect when stopping a driver. Don't let your emotions or sudden unexplained movements (or those of your passengers) cause more anxiety. The officer may be more likely to listen to you and less likely to feel threatened if you follow these guidelines.

**IMPORTANT:** If you believe that you were stopped by a police officer because of your race or your gender, or if you believe the officer's conduct during the stop was otherwise inappropriate, you may report this by contacting the police department or law enforcement agency of the officer who stopped you.

## Driving Emergencies

In any emergency situation, it is very important to think clearly and don't panic. You often have only a short time to react. Read this section to learn what to do when an emergency occurs. It could save a life.

### ***Skidding***

You should handle a skid the same for front- and rear-wheel drive vehicles:

- Slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal and shift into neutral.
- Don't hit the brakes. You will make the skid worse.
- Turn your steering wheel **in the direction of the skid**. If your rear tires are skidding to the

left, turn your steering wheel left. If they are sliding right, steer right.

- You may need to steer left and right a few times until you get your car completely under control.

### ***Running Off the Pavement***

If you drive off the pavement and onto the shoulder of the road:

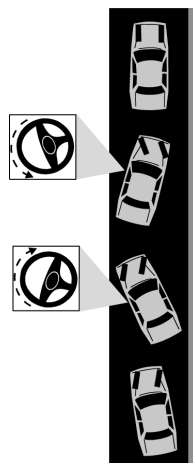
- Hold the steering wheel tightly and slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal.
- Gently apply the brake to reduce your speed.
- Check for traffic behind you, then steer gently back onto the road.

### ***Flat Tire, Blowout, or Wheel Loss***

If you get a flat tire, your tire blows out, or you lose a wheel:

- Grip the steering wheel tightly and slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal.
- Gently apply the brakes.
- If you begin to skid, turn the steering wheel **in the direction of the skid**.
- Gently straighten the car. Don't use the brake until you have the vehicle under control.
- Pull your car off the road as soon as it is safe.

If your vehicle skids, always turn your steering wheel in the direction of the skid.



### ***Brake Failure***

If your vehicle has antilock brakes and the brakes fail to respond when you are fully pressing the brake pedal, you should do the following:

- Downshift to a lower gear, and work your way down to the lowest gear, if necessary.
- Apply the parking brake gently. Hold the brake release in case your vehicle starts to skid.
- If you cannot slow your vehicle, sound your horn and flash your lights to warn drivers or pedestrians around you.

If your vehicle does not have antilock brakes, you should pump the brake pedal several times rapidly to build up brake fluid pressure. **Do not pump antilock brakes.** If this does not work, you should then follow the steps listed above.

You can determine what type of brakes you have by checking the indicator on your dashboard or checking your vehicle's user manual.

### ***Stuck Gas Pedal***

If your gas pedal sticks:

- Put your car in neutral and press the brake pedal to slow down.
- Try to free the gas pedal with your foot.
- If the gas pedal doesn't release, reapply the brakes.
- Keep your eyes on the road.
- When safe, pull your vehicle to the side of the road and bring it to a stop.

### ***Vehicle Approaching Head On***

If a vehicle is driving toward you head on in your lane:

- Slow down and pull to the right.
- Sound your horn to alert the other driver.

### **Headlight Failure**

If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Turn on your parking lights, emergency flashers, or turn signal.
- Try the headlight switch a few times.
- Pull off the road as quickly as possible and leave your emergency flashers on.

### **Stalling on Railroad Tracks**

If your vehicle stalls on railroad tracks and a train is coming:

- Get everyone out of the vehicle IMMEDIATELY and move as far from the tracks as you can.
- To avoid being hit by wreckage, run in a 45 degree angle away from the tracks in the direction that the train is coming, then immediately call 911.

If your vehicle stalls on railroad tracks and a train is NOT coming:

- Roll down your window or open your door and listen for a train.
- Try to start your engine.
- If your vehicle won't start, shift to neutral and try to push the vehicle off the tracks.
- If you cannot move your vehicle from the tracks, call the toll free Emergency Notification System (ENS) number that is located in the middle of the crossbuck or on the metal box near the grade crossing. Give the railroad dispatcher the DOT grade crossing locator number that is also on the sign. Be sure to specify that a vehicle is on the tracks and follow the dispatcher's instructions.

**You should also call the ENS number if you see anything suspicious (such as tampering with rail switches) along a railroad.**

### **Breakdowns**

- Move your vehicle to the side of the road. Never park on a hill or a curve where others cannot see you. If you cannot get your vehicle off the pavement, get all passengers out of the vehicle and off the road.

On a highway with a breakdown lane or shoulder, move your vehicle as far from the travel lane as you can. Do not stand near the travel lane or in the breakdown lane.

- Turn on your emergency warning lights (flashers). At night, also turn on your vehicle's interior lights.
- Tie a white cloth to your antenna or door handle (use a red cloth when it's snowing). Raise your vehicle's hood.
- If you have flares or reflective signs, place them 200 feet in front of and behind your vehicle to warn other drivers.

**The Highway Assistance Patrol (HAP) provides help to stranded drivers. It is operated by the MassDOT-Highway Division and sponsored by MAPFRE | Commerce Insurance.**

**For more information, visit [MassDOT.State.MA.US/Highway/TrafficTravelResources/EmergencyRoadsideAssistance.aspx](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-state-ma-us-highway-traffic-travel-resources/emergency-roadside-assistance.aspx)**

### ***Car Catches Fire***

If you see smoke coming from under your vehicle's hood:

- Pull off the road, turn off the ignition, and move away from the vehicle.
- Call the fire department or emergency services.
- Do not try to fight the fire unless you have an extinguisher.

### ***Vehicle Drives into Water***

If your car drives into water:

- Unfasten your safety belt and escape through a window.
- If you have power windows, open them quickly before the water causes them to stop working.
- Do not open a door. This would cause water to rush in and your vehicle could flip over.

If your vehicle sinks before you can get out, climb into the rear seat. An air pocket may form there. When the vehicle settles, take a deep breath and escape through a window.

### ***Driving Through Tunnels***

Public Safety is a priority at MassDOT. Please follow these important safety tips when traveling through our tunnels.

#### If You are in a Crash or a Disabled Vehicle in a Tunnel:

Most major tunnels within Massachusetts are monitored by the Highway Operations Center. State Police and MassDOT personnel are located throughout the tunnel system to respond to incidents as soon as possible.

- Pull to the side of the road, if you can.
- Activate your hazard flashing lights.
- Call 911 and follow instructions.
- Stay in your vehicle if it is safe to do so.
- Wait for emergency personnel for help.

#### When Entering A Tunnel:

- Stay alert!
- Turn on your headlights.
- Obey all signs and signals.
- Listen to the radio for traffic updates.
- Do not enter if you notice smoke near the entrance or if your car is smoking or burning.
- Maintain a safe driving distance.
- Hazardous Materials are prohibited, including propane.

#### In Heavy Traffic:

- Listen to the radio for updates.
- Keep a safe distance from other vehicles, even if traffic is moving slowly.
- Note the location of emergency exits.
- Follow the instructions of MassDOT officials, State Police, and message signs.

### If There's A Fire:

- Stop, turn off the engine, and exit your vehicle.
- To help emergency personnel, leave your keys in the vehicle.
- For your safety, leave your stuff in the vehicle.
- Call 911.
- Follow the instructions of Fire Department, State Police, MassDOT officials, and message signs.
- Exit at the nearest tunnel entrance, unless directed otherwise.
- Help others, if you can.

Please remember: Fire and smoke can kill. Save your life, not your car.

## Traffic Crashes

Each year, there are more than 130,000 motor vehicle crashes in Massachusetts. You can lower your chances of a crash by obeying the rules of the road, following the instructions in this manual, and learning to drive defensively. If you are involved in or witness any crash, state law requires you to do as follows.

### **If You Are Involved in a Crash**

When you're involved in a crash, even a small one, you must stop your vehicle. **Never leave the scene of a crash.** It's against the law. You could be charged with a "hit and run" violation.

#### ***Property Damage Only***

1. Move your vehicle off the road, if possible.
2. Exchange name, address, driver's license number, vehicle registration, and insurance information with all drivers or property owners who are involved. You must show your driver's license and registration, if asked to.
3. If you damaged a parked vehicle or other property, **you must try to locate the owner to report the crash or notify the local police.**
4. Within five days of the crash, you must file a crash report with both the RMV and the local police department. You must report *any* crash with \$1,000 or more of property damage.
5. If you've injured a cat, dog, or any other animal, **notify the local police and, if possible, the animal's owner.**

If you have a cellular phone, you can contact the state police to report any emergency by calling 911.

#### ***Crashes Involving Injuries***

1. Check to see if anyone is injured.
2. Call the police and request an ambulance or EMTs, if necessary.
3. If possible, move your vehicle off the road.
4. Exchange name, address, driver's license number, vehicle registration, and insurance information with anyone who is injured and with any other drivers involved. You must show your driver's license and registration, if asked to.

5. Within five days of the crash, you must file a crash report with both the RMV and the local police department. You must report *any* crash that caused injury or death or that caused \$1,000 or more of property damage.
6. Notify your insurance company.

### ***Emergency First Aid Tips***

- Don't move an injured person unless absolutely necessary. If you must move someone because of a life-threatening situation, fully support the person's head and spine.
- Check to see if the person is breathing. If the person is not breathing and you are certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), begin performing CPR immediately.
- If the person is bleeding, put pressure directly on the wound. Maintain pressure until help arrives.
- Cover the injured person with a blanket or coat to provide warmth and prevent shock.

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## **Hit and Run Crashes (Leaving the Scene of a Crash Without Identifying Yourself)**

From 2015 through 2017, Massachusetts averaged 8,175 "hit & run" crashes each year in which drivers leave the scene without stopping and identifying themselves.

Leaving the scene of a crash can result in serious consequences, both for the driver (once caught), and for any victims left behind at the scene.

When you're involved in a crash, even a small one, you must stop your vehicle. **Never leave the scene of a crash involving a death, personal injuries, and/or property damage without stopping and identifying yourself. You must stay on the scene, properly identify yourself, give aid if possible, and call for emergency assistance if needed.**

If you leave the scene after a crash without properly identifying yourself, you could be criminally charged with a "leaving the scene" violation and face the following maximum penalties.

- Up to \$200 or up to two years imprisonment, or both, for leaving the scene after a crash causing damage to another vehicle or other property (M.G.L. c.90, Section 24 (2) (a))
- Up to \$1000 and imprisonment of up to two years for leaving the scene after a crash causing personal injury to any person (not resulting in death) (Section 2 (a) ½ (1))
- Up to \$5000 and imprisonment of up to 2 ½ years in jail or up to 10 years in state prison for leaving the scene after a crash causing personal injury to any person that resulted in death (Section 2 (a) ½ (2))

If you hit and injure or kill a cat or dog and do not notify the animal's owner or the local police, you can be fined under M.G.L. Chapter 272, Section 80H.

Any criminal conviction may result in probation costs and you may be subject to up to six-years of insurance surcharges. Your driver's license may also be suspended. See the license suspension periods and reinstatement fees in the "*Criminal Offenses and Suspensions Chart*" in Chapter 2 of this Manual.

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## If You Witness a Crash

If you drive by a crash and there are police and emergency vehicles there, use good judgment. Reduce your speed and drive carefully. Look out for people and equipment in the road. Do not stop or slow down to “sightsee.” This is dangerous and will cause a traffic problem.

If you see a crash and there are no police or emergency vehicles:

1. Park your car off the road. Turn on your emergency flashers to warn other drivers.
2. Check to see if anyone is injured.
3. If you have a cellular phone, call the police. If you don't have a cellular phone, tell the next person who stops with a phone to call the police, or try to flag down a passing vehicle and ask the driver to get help.
4. If anyone has flares, emergency triangles, or reflectors, put them 200 feet or more in front of and behind the crash to warn other drivers.
5. Follow the emergency first aid tips listed on the previous page.
6. If possible, move all vehicles involved in the crash to the side of the road.
7. Turn off the ignition of all vehicles involved in the crash.

Do not go near any electrical wires that have fallen because of a crash. If electrical wires have landed on a vehicle, tell the people inside to remain inside until emergency personnel arrive. Do not touch the vehicle.

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## Reporting a Crash

You must report any motor vehicle crash you are in that causes someone to be killed or hurt, or that causes \$1,000 or more in property damage. You must file a written report with the RMV within five days of the crash. If you are required to file a crash report, but you do not, you can be fined and your license can be suspended or revoked.

**Just reporting a crash to your insurance company is not enough. You must follow all the instructions in this section.**

You can get a Motor Vehicle Crash Operator Report at your local police station, an RMV Service Center, or by calling the RMV's Contact Center. You can also download the report from our website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

### ***Where to send completed reports:***

1. Mail or deliver one copy to the local police department in the city or town where the crash happened.
2. Mail one copy to your Insurance Company.
3. Mail one copy to the RMV at the address below.

**Crash Records, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889**

You should keep a copy of the report for your own files.

You can request a copy of a crash report completed by law enforcement online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) for \$20.



# Owning a Vehicle

If you own or lease a motor vehicle in Massachusetts, you must meet certain obligations to keep your vehicle legally registered and safe for the road, with some exceptions:

- A vehicle owned or leased by a resident of Massachusetts must be registered, have at least the minimum required liability insurance coverage, and display a valid inspection sticker to be operated on public ways in Massachusetts.
- Each vehicle must have a Certificate of Title.
- You must pay 6.25 percent sales tax on any vehicle you buy.

This chapter presents information on meeting each of these obligations for private passenger vehicles and motorcycles. Unless exempted by law, each person operating a motor vehicle should have a Certificate of Registration on his or her person or in his or her vehicle at all times.

**Checklists for common registration and title transactions are available on [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/rmv). They list the requirements and documentation you will need to successfully complete your transaction at a service center.**

## CHAPTER 6

## Vehicle Registration

Although there are a few exceptions, if you are a Massachusetts resident, to drive a vehicle legally on the roads of Massachusetts, you must register your vehicle with the RMV and your vehicle must bear the assigned license plates. All vehicle registrations are subject to periodic renewal with fees.

**When you are issued two plates, you must display both plates.**

When you register a passenger vehicle or motorcycle, you will be issued license plates that you must mount on your vehicle. Newly registered passenger vehicles are issued two plates for front and back mounting; motorcycles require single plates. For each renewal period that your registration is valid, you will receive a plate decal that must be placed in the upper right corner of the rear plate. Failure to place the decal as instructed can result in a fine. For motorcycles, you must also affix an inspection sticker each year (see the *Vehicle Inspections* section later in this chapter).

### ID Requirements for Registration

Chapter 90, Section 2 establishes identity requirements for the registration of a motor vehicle in the Commonwealth. A resident of Massachusetts, or another state or country, who does not have an unexpired driver's license, an unexpired Massachusetts ID, or a Social Security Number, will be required to prove lawful presence in the U.S. to obtain a registration.

This requirement applies to the following registration transactions:

- New Registrations
- Registration Transfers
- Plate Swaps
- Renewals
- Amendments
- Reinstatements

When you apply for a registration for a motor vehicle or trailer, you must provide at least ONE (1) of the following forms of identification for a registration:

- **Your unexpired Massachusetts Driver's License or Massachusetts ID Card Number.** The number must be provided on the *Registration and Title Application* and it will be verified by the RMV.
- **Your unexpired Out-of-State or Out-of-Country Driver's License.** The number must be provided on the *Registration and Title Application* and the physical license must be presented. If the owner of the vehicle is not physically present, a photocopy of the license must be presented. The photocopy must show both the front and back of the license, be in full color, and all data elements must be legible. When renewing your registration, you will need to show this proof again if the license originally presented has expired.
- **Your Social Security (SSN) Card.** The number must be provided on the *Registration and Title Application* and the physical SSN Card must be presented.

- **Proof of lawful presence.** Intention to prove lawful presence must be indicated on the *Registration and Title Application*. To prove lawful presence, you must present one of the documents listed in the *Documents to Prove Lawful Presence/Date of Birth* section on page 13.

**Note 1:** If a vehicle has two owners, both owners must meet this requirement.

**Note 2:** When registering a vehicle in the name of a sole proprietor with a Federal Identification Number (FID) or Employer Identification Number (EIN), the sole proprietor is required to also provide his/her SSN on the registration application and present the physical SSN Card.

### **Exceptions**

ID requirements for registration do not apply to the following entities:

- Business owners (companies, corporations, limited liability companies, incorporations, or general partnerships) – must have an FEID/FID to register a vehicle
- Lessees – the leasing company is the owner of the vehicle
- Trusts with FEIN – must provide proof of trust to register a vehicle
- Moped owners – mopeds are not classified as motor vehicles

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## **New Registrations**

To register a newly acquired new or used vehicle, you must follow these steps:

1. Go to an authorized Massachusetts insurance agent and have the agent fill out, stamp, and sign a *Registration and Title Application*.
2. After verifying the information, sign the application.
3. Make a reservation to visit an RMV Full Service Center and bring the completed application, along with the Certificate of Origin for a new vehicle, the previous owner's certificate of title for a used vehicle, or a bill of sale and copy of last registration for a non-titled vehicle. You may also need to provide proof of lawful presence (see the *ID Requirements for Registration* section for more information).
4. **Payment of Sales or Use Tax:** For a new vehicle, you will pay a 6.25 percent sales tax or use tax based on the price you paid the Massachusetts dealer or an out-of-state dealer. If the vehicle is used and was purchased from a private party or an out-of-state dealer who is *not* registered with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), the vehicle sales tax is calculated as 6.25 percent of the actual purchase price **or** 6.25 percent of the NADA trade-in (book) value, **whichever is higher**. Acceptable evidence of the purchase price you paid includes the following documents:
  - a. **If the vehicle was purchased from a licensed Massachusetts dealer or an out-of-state dealer registered with the Massachusetts DOR**, you will need a completed *Registration and Title Application* that clearly shows the price you paid for the vehicle in the area labeled Sales or Use Tax Schedule.
  - b. If the vehicle was purchased from an out-of-state dealer not registered with Massachusetts DOR, you will need either a completed *Registration and Title Application* or a completed purchase contract that clearly shows the price paid.

- c. If the vehicle was purchased from a private party, if the vehicle does not have a title, if the Certificate of Title does not have a space provided for sale price information, or the price information was not included, you need a bill of sale that clearly shows the price you paid.
- d. By law, you **MUST** apply for a Certificate of Title for a motor vehicle or trailer within ten days of purchase. Failure to apply within ten days is a criminal offense under Chapter 90D, Section 32, and you may be fined at least \$500. You **MUST** also pay the required sales or use tax at the time you apply for the Certificate of Title, even if you do not register the vehicle at that time. Late payment of the sales or use tax subjects you to penalties and interest from the Department of Revenue.

**Sales tax may be paid in cash or by credit/debit card, certified check, personal check, or money order, made payable to MassDOT.**

**In addition to sales tax, your local city or town levies an annual excise tax.**

**To apply for a tax abatement (rebate), you must submit a form to the DOR. To obtain a form, visit an RMV Service Center or call the DOR at 1-800-392-6089.**

5. Pay the registration fee and title fee (the registration fee will vary based on the plate type - please see our fee chart for more information); special registration plates require an additional fee for each renewal period. The title fee is \$75.
6. **State law requires you to have your vehicle undergo a Massachusetts motor vehicle inspection within seven days of registration** (see the *Vehicle Inspections* section later in this chapter).

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

### ***Rules for Military Personnel***

If you are serving on extended active military duty, the following two cases generally apply:

- If your vehicle was purchased, titled, and registered in your home state, you may retain your home state registration indefinitely, regardless of where you are stationed in the country. The only requirement is that you carry insurance at least equal to Massachusetts minimum levels.
- If your vehicle was purchased, titled, and registered in a state *other* than your home state, you will need to register the vehicle in each state you are assigned to. If you are not a Massachusetts resident and your vehicle falls into this category, you may drive the vehicle with the existing out-of-state registration for 30 days only. You must register and title the vehicle in Massachusetts before the 30-day period has expired.

If you are returning from service abroad and your vehicle bears plates issued by the Armed Forces, you may drive the vehicle for up to 30 days for the purpose of traveling to military duty or to your place of residence.

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## **Registration Renewal**

You are obligated to renew your vehicle registration, when necessary. About six to eight weeks before your registration expires, you should receive an *Application for Renewal* in the mail. The application will indicate if you need to provide proof of the lawful presence

requirement (see the *ID Requirements for Registration* section). If you do need to provide proof, you can only renew in an RMV Service Center after making a reservation.

**Note:** If you did not receive your *Application for Renewal*, it could be because . . .

- You have outstanding parking tickets, excise tax bills, abandoned vehicle citations, or unpaid E-ZPass/Fast Lane violations. If you do, the city or town must release your obligation from the RMV database or provide a certified release form.
- You have outstanding court warrants. If you do, you must obtain a recall notice from the court that issued the warrants.
- You have outstanding child support obligations. If you do, you must contact the DOR at 1-800-332-2733.

If you do *not* receive an *Application for Renewal*, please call the RMV Contact Center to make sure your correct address is listed with the RMV.

To check the current status of your registration and find out if you are eligible to renew, visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) and select **Registration Inquiry**.

### ***Renewal by Mail***

When you receive your *Application for Renewal*, you are asked to do the following:

1. Verify that all information on the application is correct.
2. Indicate any changes or corrections on the application by marking an **X** in the box.
3. If your application shows **Ins Stamp Required**, have your insurance agent stamp and sign the application.
4. Make sure the application has been signed by **all** owners listed on the front and that all owners have included their driver's license numbers and dates of birth in the space provided.
5. Mail the completed insurance-certified application and payment (check or money order only made payable to MassDOT) to this address:

Mail-In Registration/Data Scan  
Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55891  
Boston, MA 02205-5891

Please allow at least ten days for processing.

### ***Renewal by Phone or Internet***

Eligible customers can renew registrations by calling the RMV Contact Center or by using the Internet (may be restricted by plate type).

To renew over the phone, call 866-MASSRMV (866-627-7768). To renew using the Internet, go to [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). If you have outstanding parking tickets, unpaid excise taxes or a suspended or revoked registration, you will *not* be able to renew your registration.

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## **Duplicate Registration**

If you lose your registration certificate, you may apply for a duplicate by taking one of the following steps.

### ***By Internet or Phone***

Visit the RMV's website (Mass.Gov/RMV) or call the RMV Contact Center. You must pay the \$25 fee with a MasterCard, VISA, Discover, or American Express card.

### ***In Person***

Visit one of the RMV's Registration Drop Off Service Centers (see Appendix C for full list) to drop off your request for a duplicate registration.

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

## **Canceling a Registration**

You can cancel your vehicle registration and plates online or in one of the RMV's Registration Drop Off Service Centers (see Appendix C for full list), even if you do not have the plates to turn in.

To cancel your registration and plates online, visit Mass.Gov/RMV. Once the cancellation is complete, you can download a *Registration Cancellation Receipt*. You must then bend and recycle or destroy the plates, if you have them.

To cancel your registration and plates at a Registration Drop Off Service Center, you will need to provide your driver's license or other proof of identity. If there are two vehicle owners you must also complete and sign an *Affidavit for Cancellation of Registration*. You must then bend and recycle or destroy your plates, if you have them. You will receive a *Registration Cancellation Receipt*.

Please keep the *Registration Cancellation Receipt* for your records and provide a photocopy to your insurance company. You may be able to use it to seek an abatement of your excise tax from your local city or town.

Failure to properly cancel a registration may result in additional excise tax being due and your registration being revoked due to insurance cancellation.

**You may be able to cancel your registration through your insurance agent. Contact your agent to see if they can process this transaction for you.**

If you need to cancel somebody else's registration and plates, you must visit a Registration Drop Off Service Center and complete and sign an *Affidavit for Cancellation of Registration*, as proof that you have that person's authorization.

## **Transferring a Registration to a Newly Acquired Vehicle**

### ***The Seven-Day Registration Transfer Law***

The seven-day registration transfer law allows you enough time to transfer the registration from your current vehicle to a vehicle you just bought.

Under this law, if you transfer ownership or lose possession of your vehicle or trailer, you have seven calendar days to transfer your registration to another vehicle or trailer. During these seven days, you may operate your new vehicle with the registration plates from your old vehicle.

However, you must transfer your registration to your new vehicle by 5:00 p.m. of the seventh day after transferring ownership of your former vehicle. The day of transfer counts as the first day.

**You cannot use the Seven-Day period to transfer your registration if you have retained the currently registered vehicle.**

The following conditions of the law apply:

- The seller has properly assigned the Certificate of Origin (if a new vehicle) or the Certificate of Title (if a used vehicle) and delivered it to the buyer when the newly acquired vehicle is delivered (MGL c. 90D, §15).
- The term *vehicle* means a motor vehicle or trailer.
- The term *owner* means a person, a corporation, or another entity that is legally qualified to hold title to property.
- The owner, if a person, must be at least 18 years old.
- The previously owned vehicle and the newly acquired vehicle must be the same type and have the same number of wheels.
- When operating the newly acquired vehicle, the owner must carry an original copy of the bill of sale, or, if the vehicle was purchased from a dealer, the owner must carry the purchase and sales agreement indicating the registration number to be transferred and the registration card of the transferred vehicle.
- The registration plates must be attached to the newly acquired vehicle.
- The phrase *lose possession* means an involuntary circumstance, like theft or repossession.
- The newly acquired vehicle may be a **new** or **used** motor vehicle or trailer.

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## Temporary Plates

Beginning November 12, 2019, temporary plates will be issued for certain plate types no longer stocked in RMV Service Centers. These plate types include charitable special design plates, low volume plates, and vanity plates. Temporary plates are printed on paper and a plastic sleeve is provided. They must be affixed to the rear of the vehicle with the plate number visible. Temporary plates are valid for 20 days and include detailed vehicle information. You will also receive a temporary registration to be carried in the vehicle. Your permanent plates and registration will be mailed within 20 days to your mailing address on file with the RMV. If you choose to have your permanent plates mailed to a service center, you will receive a letter within 20 days to notify you that they can be picked up.

- Vehicles can be inspected with temporary plates
- If you do not receive your permanent plate within 17 days of the issuance of the temporary plate, you can apply for an extension. To apply for an extension visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](https://www.mass.gov/RMV)
- The temporary plate is authorized for use of the vehicle listed on it until you receive the permanent plate
- Reproduction of the temporary plate is prohibited

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## Registration Policies for New Residents

### ***Converting an Out-of-State Registration***

You must register your vehicle in Massachusetts as soon as you become a Massachusetts resident. The law does not provide a grace period.

To convert your out-of-state vehicle registration, follow the instructions in the *New Registrations* section earlier in this chapter. See the *ID Requirements for Registration* section for information on providing proof of lawful presence.

If you want to convert your out-of-state registration and your current certificate of title is being held by your lienholder, you must submit your out-of-state registration and list your lienholder information on the *Registration and Title Application*. A letter will be sent to the lienholder requesting the out-of-state title be mailed to the Title Division. Once it is received, the lienholder will receive a clear Massachusetts title.

If your vehicle has been registered in another state, you may have to pay some sales tax. To determine your Massachusetts sales tax, call the DOR at 617-887-6367.

Follow the instructions earlier in this chapter for applying for a title and registration. The registration and plates are valid for two years. The RMV will process and mail your new title to you.

### ***Nonresidents Registering in Massachusetts***

Even a nonresident (anyone whose legal residence is outside the Commonwealth) may be required to register and/or insure a motor vehicle or trailer in Massachusetts in certain situations. Following are some examples:

- Nonresidents whose primary residences are in other states may not operate motor vehicles or trailers in Massachusetts for more than 30 total days in one year unless they have liability insurance (see the *Insurance and Merit Rating* section later in this chapter).
- Nonresidents must register in Massachusetts the motor vehicles or trailers they use for their Massachusetts businesses. If nonresidents use their vehicles in Massachusetts and one or more other states, they must register the average number of vehicles they use in Massachusetts. Other rules apply to vehicles owned by nonresidents who have “apportioned” license plates from other states.
- Nonresidents who own motor vehicles or trailers that are registered in other states or countries must register those vehicles and trailers in Massachusetts if Massachusetts residents have or control those vehicles or trailers for more than 30 total days in one calendar year.
- Nonresidents who must register their motor vehicles or trailers in Massachusetts may still be required to register those vehicles or trailers in their states of residence. This is called “dual registration.”

**If you know of an illegally registered out-of-state vehicle, contact the RMV's anonymous tip line at 1-800-I PAY TAX (1-800-472-9829).**

**Please report the vehicle type, the plate number, the location, and how long the vehicle has been in the area. Include local address of the person you believe owns the vehicle, if you know it.**

**Exemption for Enrolled Students:** While nonresidents who are enrolled as full-time students in Massachusetts schools, colleges, and universities do not have to register their



out-of-state vehicles in Massachusetts, they must complete and file **Nonresident Student Vehicle Information Forms** with the police departments **in the cities and towns where their schools, colleges, and universities are located**. These forms, which should be available at schools, colleges, universities, and on Mass.Gov/RMV, provide registration, residence, and insurance information. In addition to submitting these completed forms, full-time nonresident students must carry full liability insurance policies.

**This exemption does not apply to graduate students who are compensated beyond the cost of tuition or to fully registered medical practitioners (per the definition of “student” defined in MGL c. 90, §1).**

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## **Motorcycles, Motorized Bicycles (Mopeds), Motorized Scooters, and Segways**

### ***Motorcycle Registration***

By law, a motorcycle is any motor vehicle having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground, including any bicycle with a motor or driving wheel attached. A three-wheeled motor vehicle on which the operator and passenger ride within an enclosed cab may be registered as a motorcycle if the manufacturer indicates it meets the safety standards for a motorcycle on the Certificate of Origin and it is designed to be operated on public ways.

A motorcycle is registered in the same fashion as any other motor vehicle, using the *Registration and Title Application*.

A tractor or a motor vehicle designed for the carrying of golf clubs and not more than four persons, an industrial three-wheel truck, or a motorized bicycle are **not** considered motorcycles.

### ***Motorized Bicycle (Moped) Registration***

By law, a moped (also known as a motorized bicycle) is a pedal bicycle which has a helper motor, or a non-pedal bicycle which has a motor, with a cylinder capacity not exceeding fifty (50) cubic centimeters, an automatic transmission, and which is capable of a maximum speed of no more than thirty (30) miles per hour (mph).

To register a moped, you must complete a Motorized Bicycle (Moped) Registration Application. This application is available at Mass.Gov/RMV. The registration fee is \$40.00 for two years. You will receive a single moped plate, decal, and a moped registration certificate. Moped plates are valid for two years and expire in March. The plate with decal affixed must be placed on the rear of the moped (instructions are provided on the registration certificate). You must carry the moped registration certificate whenever you operate the moped.

### ***Motorized Scooters***

**The Registry of Motor Vehicles will not register motorized scooters.** By law, a motorized scooter is any two-wheeled tandem or three-wheeled device that has handlebars, is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator, and is powered by an electric or gas powered motor that is capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion. The definition of a “motorized scooter” shall not include a motorcycle, motorized bicycle, or three-wheeled motorized wheelchair.

## **Segways**

The RMV has determined that a “Segway” cannot be registered in this state as a “motor vehicle” or as a “motorized bicycle” (moped). The Segway, a battery-powered vehicle with two (2) wheels (not in tandem), uses gyroscopes to help maintain balance, carries the operator in a standing position, and has a top speed of approximately 12 1/2 mph. Segways do not have the same legal rights to use public ways as bicycles. Municipalities may regulate their use on local ways and public property with ordinances, laws, or regulations.

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## **Special Categories of Vehicles**

### ***Limited Use Vehicles***

A limited use vehicle can have two or more wheels and is capable of a speed greater than 30 mph, but is not capable of exceeding 40 mph. It must be certified by the manufacturer to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for its vehicle type. Depending on the vehicle type, these vehicles can be registered as limited use motorcycles, passenger vehicles, or commercial vehicles. The registration fee will depend on the vehicle type. Limited Use Plates are available for passenger vehicles, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, livery vehicles, and taxis.

### ***Low Speed Vehicles***

A Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) is a “motor vehicle” that has four wheels, a minimum speed of 20 mph, a maximum speed of 25 mph, and a gross weight rating of less than 3,000 lbs. New and used LSVs must be certified by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as meeting federal safety standards, be equipped as required by federal and state law, be insured, be inspected annually, and be operated by properly licensed drivers or permit holders accompanied by qualified drivers. LSVs can only be registered and used as “passenger vehicles.”

### ***Custom Vehicles***

A custom vehicle is a motor vehicle that was manufactured after 1948, has a model year at least 25 years old, and has been altered from the manufacturer’s original design or has a body constructed, in whole or in part, from non-original materials.

To register and title a custom vehicle, it must have a vehicle identification number assigned from the Massachusetts State Police Salvage Unit or from another jurisdiction. You must present the vehicle’s previous Certificate of Title.

### ***Replica Vehicles***

A replica motor vehicle is a motor vehicle that was constructed or assembled by a non-manufacturer from new or used parts that, when assembled, replicates an earlier year, make, and model vehicle.

To register and title a replica vehicle, it must have a vehicle identification number assigned from the Massachusetts State Police Salvage Unit or from another jurisdiction. You must also present the Certificate of Origin from the manufacturer of the replica kit, the Bill of Sale or invoice for the replica kit, and the Certificate of Title from the donor vehicle of the chassis (unless the kit included a frame that was listed on the Certificate of Origin).

## ***Specialty-Constructed Vehicles***

A specialty-constructed motor vehicle is a motor vehicle that was reconstructed or assembled by a non-manufacturer from new or used parts, and that does not replicate or resemble any other manufactured vehicle.

To register and title a specialty-constructed vehicle, it must have a vehicle identification number assigned from the Massachusetts State Police Salvage Unit or from another jurisdiction. You must present the vehicle's previous Certificate of Title.

## ***Street Rods***

A street rod is a motor vehicle that was manufactured before 1949 and has been altered from the manufacturer's original design or has a body constructed from non-original materials.

To register and title a street rod, it must have a vehicle identification number assigned from the Massachusetts State Police Salvage Unit or from another jurisdiction. You must present the vehicle's previous Certificate of Title.

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## **Special Design Plates**

The RMV offers the special design plates listed in this section. In addition to the initial registration fee, special plates require a special plate fee each renewal. A portion of the initial special plate fee for these plates, and the full renewal special plate fee, are tax deductible.

See *Appendix F* for images of all available special plates.

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

**ALS One** plates benefit ALS One Inc, which treats and looks for a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Atlantic White Shark Conservancy** plates benefit the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Basketball Hall of Fame** plates benefit the Basketball Hall of Fame. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Blackstone Valley** plates benefit the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, which provides grants to educate and preserve the Massachusetts environment. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Boston Bruins** plates benefit the non-profit organization Massachusetts Hockey Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Boston Celtics** plates benefit the Boston Celtics Shamrock Foundation, which benefits the Boston Children's Hospital. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Cape Anne** plates fund the Cape Ann Community Foundation Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Cape Cod and Islands** plates promote economic development and tourism on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. The special plate fee is \$50 every two years.

**Choose Life** plates benefit Choose Life Inc., which benefits not-for-profit agencies within Massachusetts. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Conquer Cancer** plates benefit the Conquer Cancer Coalition of Massachusetts. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Cure Breast Cancer** plates benefit the Tufts New England Medical Center Hospital Inc/Diane Zaniboni Breast Cancer Research Fund for Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Project. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Fallen Heroes** plates benefit the Massachusetts Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Hero Memorial Fund Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Freemasonry** plates fund the Masonic Education and Charity Trust. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Firefighters Memorial** plates benefit the Massachusetts Fallen Firefighters Memorial Fund Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Fish and Wildlife** plates benefit the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, which provides grants to educate and preserve the Massachusetts environment. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Fresh and Local** plates benefit Third Sector New England Inc, which will distribute the money to farmers' markets and to Tufts University project on farms. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Habitat and Heritage** plates fund the Sportsmen's National Land Trust, Massachusetts Chapter, Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Invest in Children** plates benefit the Child Care Quality Fund, which is a division of the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Martha's Vineyard** plates benefit Martha's Vineyard Community Services Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Massachusetts Animal Coalition** plates benefit non-profit humane organizations and municipal animal control agencies to prevent pet overpopulation by funding programs that provide services, such as spaying and neutering cats and dogs for free or at minimal cost. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Nantucket Island** plates benefit the Nantucket Lighthouse School and other island non-profits that benefit children. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**New England Patriots** plates benefit the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation, which assists a variety of charitable organizations and programs that foster cultural diversity, education, family, and health. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Olympic Spirit** plates help Massachusetts residents on US Olympic teams. The special plate fee is \$50 every two years.

**Pan-Mass Challenge** plates benefit the Pan-Mass Challenge. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Plymouth 400** plates benefit Plymouth 400 Inc. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Red Sox/Jimmy Fund/Red Sox Foundation** plates benefit cancer care and research at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**Right Whale** plates benefit the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, which provides grants to educate and preserve the Massachusetts environment. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**State Police Association of Massachusetts** plates benefit the State Police Association of Massachusetts Benevolent Fund. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**UMASS** plates benefit the UMASS Alumni Association. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

**United We Stand** plates benefit the Massachusetts 9/11 Fund and the Commonwealth Security Fund. The special plate fee is \$40 every two years.

A **“Year of Manufacture Plate”** is a registration plate (in the possession of the applicant) originally issued by the Commonwealth in the exact year of manufacture of the antique motor car (vehicles from 1978 or older only) to which it is proposed to be attached. For more information, contact the RMV Contact Center or visit the RMV’s website.

Annually renewed **vanity plates** are also available for an extra fee of \$50. You can obtain the necessary form from the RMV’s website.

If you have questions about registrations or special plates, please call the RMV Contact Center or visit the RMV’s website.

**RMV Contact Center:** 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)  
800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email [AskRMV@state.ma.us](mailto:AskRMV@state.ma.us)  
The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).  
**Contact Center Hours:** Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. **Internet Address:** [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)

## Drive Smart and Save - “Green Driving” Tips

There are a lot of ways you can save money on gas and reduce your carbon footprint, and you can do it with any vehicle! These simple tips (from [commute.com/commuter-options/drive-smart-and-save](http://commute.com/commuter-options/drive-smart-and-save)) will save you money.



- **Drive Less** - Try taking public transportation, walking or biking, or carpooling. Short trips in particular are great for walking or biking – you’ll get exercise, save fuel, reduce wear and tear on your engine, and you can enjoy the scenery. And, if you have a lot of errands to make, try “chaining” your trips together to save time and gas – when you do make multiple stops, go to your farthest destination first to warm up your engine more quickly for better fuel economy.
- **Set it at 60** - Fuel consumption increases about five percent for every five miles per hour driven above 60 mph. It’s like paying an additional 30 cents per gallon! Set the cruise control at 60 and start adding up the savings.
- **Go Easy on the Pedals** - Rapid starts and hard stops can increase fuel use by 40 percent, but reduce travel time by only four percent. Accelerate gradually. Maintain a constant speed. Coast when you can. And don’t forget to pick up your E-ZPass transponder to avoid traffic at the tolls- this can save lots of time, as well as fuel.
- **Turn it Off** - Idling gets you zero miles per gallon. So when you’re stopped, switch off the engine. It saves you fuel, and it’s the law – Massachusetts state law prohibits idling for more than five minutes. If you really need to idle, shift to neutral, so the engine is not working against your brake and consuming more fuel.
- **Click the Cap** - Loose, damaged, or missing fuel tank caps cause 147 million gallons of fuel to evaporate each year. Make sure the cap is tight and you can save about \$120 per year.
- **Check the Pressure** - Billions of gallons of fuel are wasted by driving on underinflated tires. Proper tire pressure is safer, extends tire life, and can provide up to 3% benefit per tankful of fuel.

## Disability Plates and Placards

Through Medical Affairs, the RMV issues special license plates and placards to people with disabilities who meet certain medical qualifications. Designated disability (HP or DV) plates and placards allow people with disabilities to park vehicles in spaces posted with HP-DV parking only signs and at meters without paying fees or penalties. The Massachusetts Port Authority does not exempt meter fees for Disabled Parking.

Note: These parking privileges are also available to any vehicle displaying a valid HP plate or HP placard issued by another U.S. state or Canadian province. All U.S. states and Canadian provinces also recognize the Massachusetts disabled placard as an authorized document for HP parking. However, New York City does not recognize disabled placards issued by any authority other than the City of New York.

For toll-free, deaf and hard of hearing assistance, call 1-877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).

**These special privileges are extended *only* to people with disabilities who have been granted special disability plates or placards. These privileges are *not* available to any other person using a vehicle displaying such a plate or placard. Abuse of an HP plate or placard may result in fines, license suspension, and/or plate or placard revocation. A person who abuses this special parking privilege may face additional penalties, such as a fine or license suspension.**

To report abuse of disability plates or placards, visit:  
[Mass.Gov/how-to/report-disability-parking-abuse](https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-disability-parking-abuse)

Medical Affairs, Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889

## Disability Plate

If you own a vehicle, you may apply for a disability registration number plate. The vehicle must be registered in the disabled person's name. If you have a vehicle registered in your name, you may choose to apply for a plate. Holders of disability plates may apply for a placard on a temporary basis.

**Note:** Temporary placards are available to holders of HP plates by written request. The applicant must provide information showing good cause for the temporary placard.

## Disability Placard

Any disabled individual who meets the eligibility criteria described on the next page, may apply for a placard, regardless of whether or not they have a valid license or own a vehicle. Placards are issued on a temporary or permanent basis and hang from the rear-view mirror when in use. Temporary placards are valid anywhere from two months to 24 months, based on your particular need. Permanent placards must be renewed every five years. Before the RMV can issue you a disability placard, you must be photo-imaged (see the *Facial Image Policy* section of Chapter One). For security reasons, only one valid placard may be issued to a person at a time. The RMV includes a solid plastic sleeve with your placard that slides over your picture and name to protect the privacy of placard holders. The use of this sleeve is not required. Placard holders may use it at their discretion.

Disability placards must be removed from the rear-view mirror while you drive.

**Note: If you currently have an old dashboard style placard, contact Medical Affairs at 857-368-8020 to convert it to the new hanging style placard.**

## Qualification for Disabled Veteran (DV) Plate and Fee Exemptions

The disabled veteran (DV) plate has the same purpose as an HP plate or Placard (see the *Disability Plates and Placards* section). It shows that the vehicle's owner is a disabled veteran. To be eligible, you must meet the same requirements for a disability plate. You will also need a statement of disability from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs which lists your service connected impairment(s). At least 60% of your listed impairments must qualify for disability parking. Medical Affairs will review your application and the statement from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. It will then determine if you are "permanently disabled" and qualify for the DV plate.

Disabled veterans **approved for a DV plate by Medical Affairs** are exempt from paying the following fees:

**Registration Fee** (per M.G.L. Chapter 90, Section 33(29))

Disabled veterans do not need to pay a registration fee for one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck. It must be owned by the veteran and used for non-commercial purposes. The veteran can choose either one set of DV plates or one set of passenger plates. If the veteran chooses passenger plates with an additional special plate fee (special, vanity, or reserved plates), the special plate fee must be paid. If the veteran owns additional vehicles, registration fees must be paid for those vehicles.

**Driver License Fee** (per M.G.L. Chapter 90, Section 33(29))

Disabled veterans do not need to pay fees for driver's license transactions. It does not matter if the veteran has obtained DV plates, but he/she must be approved for them.

**Excise Tax** (per M.G.L. Chapter 60A, Section 1)

Disabled veterans do not need to pay excise tax for one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck. It must be owned by the veteran and used for non-commercial purposes. It does not matter if the veteran has obtained DV plates, but he/she must be approved for them. Application for the excise tax exemption must be made to the board of assessors of the city or town where the vehicle is registered. If the veteran owns additional vehicles, excise tax must be paid for those vehicles.

**Sales Tax** (per M.G.L. Chapter 64H, Section 6)

Disabled veterans do not need to pay sales tax for one passenger vehicle or pick-up truck. It must be owned by the veteran and used for non-commercial purposes. To be eligible, the veteran **MUST** obtain DV plates for the vehicle. If the veteran purchases additional vehicles, sales tax must be paid for those vehicles.

## Eligibility Standards

To obtain a disability plate, disability placard, or DV plate, you must be a Massachusetts resident. In addition, a licensed physician, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner must certify that you meet one of the following conditions:

- Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest, or cannot walk without the assistance of another person, prosthetic aid, or other assistive device, as a result of a described clinical diagnosis



- Have a cardiovascular disease to the extent that your functional limitations are classified in severity as Class III or Class IV according to the guidelines set by the American Heart Association (*if you are a Class IV heart patient you must surrender your license*)
- Have a pulmonary disease to the extent that forced expiratory volume (FEV-1) in one second when measured by spirometry is less than one liter, or requires continuous oxygen therapy, or has an O2 saturation rate of 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion even with supplemental oxygen (*if your O2 saturation rate is 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion even with supplemental oxygen, you must surrender your license*)
- Are legally blind: your central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye of the corrective lenses, or you have a visual acuity that is greater than 20/200 in the better eye but with a limitation in the field of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle not greater than 20 degrees. Please attach a copy of certification that you are legally blind with your application (if you are in this classification, you must surrender your license)
- Have lost, or permanently lost the use of, one or more limbs

**Contact Medical Affairs directly at 857-368-8020.**

## Applying for Plates and Placards

To get an application form, you can call the RMV Contact Center and have an application mailed to you or download one from the RMV website. The application must be completed by both you and your attending Massachusetts registered physician, physician's assistant, chiropractor, or nurse practitioner. There is no fee for a disability plate or placard, but customers must pay the registration fee.

**RMV Contact Center: 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)  
800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email [AskRMV@state.ma.us](mailto:AskRMV@state.ma.us)  
The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).  
Contact Center Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Internet Address: [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)**

Send all written correspondence involving medical affairs to the following address:

Medical Affairs  
Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55889  
Boston, MA 02205-5889

Please allow ample time for processing any plate or placard transaction.

## Transferring a Plate to a Placard

To transfer from disability plates to a placard, please submit a written request stating the disability plate number and enclose a copy of the vehicle registration. As soon as the RMV processes your letter of request, you will receive instructions by mail for completing the transaction.



## Applying for Replacement Placards

To apply for a replacement placard, you must submit a letter stating the reason you need a replacement. In your request, please include your name, address, social security number (SSN), date of birth, and the placard number or the date the placard was first issued.

## Vehicle Inspections

The Enhanced Emissions and Safety Test ensures that vehicles comply with federal requirements to help clean the air. Under this program, registered motor vehicles are required to be inspected every year for safety. New vehicles are exempt from emissions testing for one year, but must undergo the safety inspection. After the one year period for new vehicles has passed, an emissions inspection is required every year for all light-duty (most cars, SUVs, and pick-up trucks) gasoline powered vehicles with a model year of 1996 or newer, and for light-duty diesel vehicles with a model year of 1997 or newer. Light-duty vehicles with a model year of 15 years or older will be exempt from on-board diagnostics (OBD) emissions testing.

**Note:** Heavy-duty (10,001 lbs. or more) diesel vehicles with a model year of 1983 or older are exempt from emissions testing. Most older heavy-duty gasoline powered vehicles will also be exempt from emissions testing.

These inspections are conducted at licensed stations across the state. You can find them by calling the toll free number or using the website listed. The fee is \$35.00.

Motorcycles require an annual safety inspection which is performed at licensed Class M motorcycle inspection stations. The fee is \$15.00.



**For questions, or to find an inspection station in your area, call the toll free Hotline at 844-358-0135 or visit the Enhanced Emissions and Safety Test website at [MAvehiclecheck.com](http://MAvehiclecheck.com)**

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

When you buy a motor vehicle or motorcycle, **state law requires you to have it inspected within seven days of registration**, regardless of the vehicle's model year. You must have a new inspection, even if the vehicle bears a valid sticker from the previous owner.

**Driving any motor vehicle without a valid inspection sticker is a traffic violation and can result in a fine and affect your insurance rate.**

If your motor vehicle passes the annual inspection, a sticker will be affixed to the lower right inside windshield of your vehicle. This sticker is valid for one year from your initial inspection date and will expire on the final day of the month indicated on the sticker. If your motorcycle passes the inspection, a sticker will be affixed to your license plate. This sticker is valid until May 31. For motorcycles inspected in January through April, stickers will be valid until May 31 of the following year.

If your motor vehicle fails the inspection, you will receive a "reject" sticker. If your motorcycle fails the inspection, you will not receive a new sticker.

- If the problem is safety-related, you must have the problem fixed immediately. You are not allowed to drive the vehicle until the safety issue is resolved.

- If the problem involves vehicle emissions, you have 60 days to correct the problem and resubmit your vehicle for inspection. For more details, call toll free 844-358-0135 or visit the website at [MAvehiclecheck.com](http://MAvehiclecheck.com).

For emissions information, call the Department of Environmental Protection,  
Division of Inspection Maintenance, at 617-292-5604.

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## Commercial Vehicles

Generally, commercial vehicles that have a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or combined GVWR of 10,001 lbs or more are required to have the Massachusetts Commercial Vehicle Inspection. This inspection is equivalent to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration inspection (commonly known as the annual "DOT Inspection") and satisfies this requirement, which means that only one inspection is required. The fee is \$35, plus a market rate for labor.

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## Trailers

Trailers that have a gross vehicle weight of 3,001 lbs. or more and are used in commerce need to be inspected. The fee is \$35, plus a market rate for labor.

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## The Lemon Aid Law

You may have protection under the Massachusetts Lemon Aid Law and be able to void or cancel a motor vehicle contract or sale if you meet the following two conditions:

1. Your vehicle fails to pass inspection within seven days from the date of sale AND
2. The estimated costs of making the repairs of emissions or safety related defects exceed 10% of the purchase price

If your situation does not meet these standards, you may have other laws to protect you. To find out how to receive your refund or if you have any questions, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation: 617-973-8787 or (888) 283-3757 (in MA only).

Consumer Affairs,  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 5170, Boston, MA 02116

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## Titles

A Certificate of Title is a legal document showing proof of ownership. When you buy a vehicle, your seller must give you his or her original title after printing and signing his or her name on it and entering the sale price and the required odometer information at time of transfer. Buyers are also required to sign and print their name(s). Signing your name at the time of transfer indicates that you are aware of the odometer disclosure statement made by the seller(s). You must then present the title to the RMV with your application for a new title. You must also obtain a registration if you are going to operate the vehicle on public ways. If you are borrowing money to pay for the vehicle, the Certificate of Title will be sent to the lending institution, also known as the **lienholder**, which is listed on the title.

## Basic Title Transactions

Transaction Type	Forms and Documents	Fee	RMV Office or Mail Department	Processing Time	Notes
<b>Original Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application</li> <li>Certificate of Origin or</li> <li>Certificate of Title or</li> <li>Bill of Sale (If Nontitled Vehicle)</li> </ul>	\$75	RMV Full Service Center (reservation required)	Four to Six weeks	If you borrow money to buy the vehicle, the title will be mailed to the lienholder. You must pay 6.25 percent sales tax on any vehicle you buy.
<b>Duplicate Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duplicate Title Application</li> <li>Lien Release Letter (On Original Letterhead) if Lien Has Been Paid Off</li> </ul>	\$25	Mail to: Duplicate Titles Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	If lien has been paid off, remember to include an original lien release letter from the lending institution.
<b>Adding a Lienholder to Certificate of Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title Amendment Form</li> <li>Original Certificate of Title</li> </ul>	\$25	Mail to: Adding Lien Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	Don't forget to send the original title with your application. The RMV will send the new title to the lienholder.
<b>Corrected Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title Amendment Form</li> <li>Original Certificate of Title</li> <li>Notarized Affidavit (For Mileage Only)</li> </ul>	\$25	Mail to: Title Correction Department Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	If you are correcting an odometer problem, you must get a notarized affidavit stating the true mileage. This affidavit must be signed and witnessed by a notary public.
<b>Salvage Repairable Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application</li> <li>Current Title</li> </ul>	\$50	Mail to: Salvage Title Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	You must list the salvage repairable brand as collision, salt, flood, theft, or vandalism.
<b>Owner-Retained Total Loss Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application Listing Current Odometer Reading</li> <li>Current Title (Original Only)</li> <li>Copy of Appraisal from Insurance Company</li> </ul>	\$75	Mail to: Salvage Title Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	To secure an owner-retained title, the vehicle must be driveable, able to pass a Massachusetts safety inspection, and have an active registration.
<b>Reconstructed Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application Listing Current Odometer Reading</li> <li>Previous Salvage Title</li> <li>Salvage Inspection Form</li> </ul>	\$75	Mail to: Salvage Title Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	You must list the brand as reconstructed (collision, salt, flood, vandalism, other).
<b>Recovered Theft Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application Listing Current Odometer Reading</li> <li>Previous Salvage Title</li> <li>Salvage Inspection Form</li> </ul>	\$75	Mail to: Salvage Title Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	You must list the brand as recovered theft (collision, salt, flood, vandalism, other).
<b>Parts-Only Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and Title Application Listing Current Odometer Reading</li> <li>Previous Salvage Title</li> <li>Appraisal Report from insurance company</li> </ul>	\$50	Mail to: Salvage Title Title Division P.O. Box 55885 Boston, MA 02205	Seven to ten business days after receipt of application	You must list the salvage parts-only brand.

**Massachusetts title law requires all motor vehicles and trailers to be titled within ten days of purchase.** This applies to both new and used vehicles purchased from either a dealer or private party. There are some exceptions:

- Trailer with gross weight of 3,000 pounds or less
- Vehicle owned by a manufacturer or dealer and held for sale, even though it may be driven on the highway or used for testing or demonstration purposes
- Vehicle used by a manufacturer solely for testing
- Vehicle owned by a nonresident of the Commonwealth that has a current, valid Certificate of Title issued by the state of residence
- Vehicle regularly used for transporting people or property between states that has a current, valid Certificate of Title issued by another state or country
- Vehicle moved solely by animal power
- Implement of husbandry (farming or agriculture)
- Special mobile equipment
- Self-propelled wheelchair or invalid tricycle
- Manufactured (mobile) home as defined in MGL c. 140, §32Q
- Vehicle owned by the U.S. Government, unless it is registered according to the provisions of MGL c. 90
- A vehicle on loan from the U.S. Government or from a vehicle manufacturer or distributor to the Commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof.

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## Basic Title Transactions

There are several basic title transactions:

- Obtaining an original title
- Obtaining a duplicate title
- Obtaining a salvage-related title, which may be a:
  - Salvage repairable title
  - Owner-retained total-loss title
  - Reconstructed title
  - Recovered-theft title
  - Parts-only title
- Adding a lienholder to your title
- Correcting information on your title

The procedures for each of these transactions are summarized on the following pages.

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

To apply for an original Certificate of Title and for all other basic title transactions, you can either make a reservation to visit an RMV Service Center or conduct your business by mail.

For any mail-in title transaction, be sure to include all required forms and documents and a check or money order for the appropriate fee, made payable to *MassDOT*. Send the

required documentation to the RMV department listed in the chart on page 143 to the following address.

ATTN: Title Division  
(Specific Department)  
Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55885  
Boston, MA 02205-5885

Title transaction forms are available from most insurance agents, and through the RMV's website. Be aware that for most of these transactions, **all vehicle owners must sign the application forms.**

If you have any questions about title application procedures or would like title forms mailed to you, please call the RMV Contact Center or visit the RMV's website.

The chart on page 143 provides all the information you need for basic transactions. However, following are a few useful notes.

### ***Obtaining an Original Title***

If you are registering your vehicle when you apply for a title (see the *Vehicle Registration* section earlier in this chapter), an authorized Massachusetts insurance agent must stamp and sign the application to certify your insurance coverage.

If you bought your vehicle from a dealer, you must pay 6.25 percent state sales tax on your purchase price. For a private sale, your sales tax will be 6.25 percent of the actual purchase price or of the NADA trade-in (book) value, whichever is higher. If the vehicle is nontitled, you must bring the bill of sale when applying for a title.

**Reminder:** If you borrowed money to purchase the vehicle, the RMV will issue a "paper title" and mail it directly to the lienholder. Upon satisfaction of the lien (full payment by you), the lienholder is responsible for releasing its lien and mailing the title directly to you. If the lienholder uses the more modern "Electronic Lien and Title" (ELT) process, the RMV will send the lienholder an electronic message indicating that their lien has been perfected. When the lien is satisfied, the lienholder will notify the RMV electronically. The RMV will then issue and mail the "paper title" to you.

RMV Contact Center: 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)  
800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email [AskRMV@state.ma.us](mailto:AskRMV@state.ma.us)  
The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).  
Contact Center Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Internet Address: [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)

### ***Obtaining a Duplicate Title***

Eligible customers, with no lien on the vehicle, can apply for a duplicate title online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

You can also apply for a duplicate title by mail. Complete all the required information on an *Application for Duplicate Certificate of Title*, which can be downloaded from [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). All owners must sign the application. Mail it to the address at the top of the application.

If there was a lien on the vehicle and the loan has been satisfied, a Lien Release, on original letterhead from the lienholder, must be submitted. Faxes and photocopies are not acceptable. This must be done by mail.

### ***Obtaining a Salvage-Related Title***

A vehicle is deemed “salvage” when an insurance company has declared it to be a total loss due to fire, vandalism, collision, theft, flood, or any other cause. Once a vehicle has been given salvage classification, the classification is permanent and remains part of the vehicle’s history.

If your insurance company takes possession of the salvage vehicle, the company is responsible for applying for a salvage title. If you choose to keep the vehicle, you can apply for a salvage title, or, if the vehicle has an active registration and is capable of being safely operated on a public way, you can apply for an owner-retained title. Passenger vehicles ten or more model years old at the date of the event which caused the vehicle to be declared a total loss are exempt from the salvage title process.

**A vehicle with a salvage title cannot be registered.** If you plan to sell a salvaged vehicle, you should take it through the salvage inspection process and apply for a reconstructed or a recovered-theft title, whichever applies. Alternatively, you can advise the buyer that the inspection and title process is required before the vehicle can be registered.

You cannot transfer a salvage title from private party to private party without the current owner first getting a salvage title in his or her name or completing the salvage process and securing the reconstructed title.

**If you have questions about the salvage inspection process, call the RMV  
Contact Center at 857-368-8000.**

**Salvage Repairable or Parts Only Title:** If your vehicle becomes **inoperable** due to fire, vandalism, collision, theft, flood, or another event to such an extent that you or, if insured, your insurer considers it uneconomical to repair the vehicle, the vehicle will be declared a total loss.

**If the vehicle is insured and the insurer retains the vehicle,** you will have to assign your title to the insurer. If the title is being held by the lienholder, the insurer will send you an *Authorization for Payoff of a Salvage Vehicle* for you to complete. The insurer will then need to obtain a salvage title.

**If the vehicle is uninsured or if you decide to keep possession of the vehicle,** you must apply to the RMV for a salvage title with the appropriate brands (repairable or parts only). State law prohibits you from operating the vehicle until it has passed a salvage inspection (see the *Salvage Inspection* section later in this chapter) and you have obtained a new title.

Salvage titles can be processed by mail to the RMV’s Title Division. To apply, you must send your current Certificate of Title, a completed *Registration and Title Application*, and a \$50 check or money order made payable to MassDOT. Within seven to ten days, the RMV will review your application and mail you a new salvage title.

**Owner-Retained Total Loss Title:** If your insurer declares your vehicle a total loss due to fire, vandalism, collision, theft, flood, or another event; **the vehicle is capable of being safely operated on a public way** and has an active registration; **and** you choose to keep the vehicle, you may continue to drive the vehicle after you have obtained an owner-retained total loss title.

Within ten days of receiving the settlement from your insurance company, you can apply for an owner-retained total loss title by presenting your current Certificate of Title, your current Certificate of Registration, an appraisal report from your insurance company, a completed *Registration and Title Application*, and a \$75 check or money order payable to MassDOT. This can be done by mail to the RMV's Title Division. Within seven-ten days, the RMV will review your application and mail you a new owner-retained total loss title.

**Reconstructed Title:** A reconstructed title is issued to a vehicle that was previously titled as salvage repairable (*see the preceding section*) and has been repaired, inspected, and retitled as reconstructed. If you have such a vehicle, you may drive it legally when a new registration is issued. To get a reconstructed title, send by mail to the RMV's Title Division your present salvage title, your current Certificate of Registration (if applicable), the letter or e-mail you received when the vehicle passed the salvage inspection, and a \$75 check or money order made payable to MassDOT.

**All fees are subject to change at any time.**

**Recovered Theft Title:** A recovered theft title is issued to a vehicle that was previously titled as salvage repairable theft with damage sustained from a theft and that has been repaired, inspected, and retitled as recovered theft. The vehicle may be legally driven when a new registration is issued.

**Parts-Only Title:** A parts-only title is issued to a vehicle that the insurance company has declared a total loss due to fire, vandalism, collision, theft, flood, or other occurrence and that the insurance company has declared to be "parts only." This type of vehicle can never be rebuilt or registered in the Commonwealth and may never be legally driven.

**Salvage Brands:** Each salvage title requires a brand. A brand simply describes the type of damage that caused an insurance company to declare a vehicle a total loss. A brand tells you that you are buying a salvage vehicle, and it also tells you the specific reasons your vehicle is considered salvage.

Brands fall into two main categories: primary and secondary. A primary salvage title brand, which indicates how a vehicle will be used, is one of two types: repairable or parts only. A repairable brand (REPR) means the vehicle can be repaired and returned to its operating condition. A parts-only brand (PART) means the vehicle can never be registered in the Commonwealth. The insurance company that declared the vehicle a total loss determines whether a vehicle is branded "parts only."

The secondary salvage brand describes the event that occurred for the insurance company to declare your vehicle a total loss. Following are the seven secondary salvage brands:

- Collision
- Fire
- Fresh Water Flood
- Salt Water Flood
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Other

**Note:** Other is to be used only when the listed brands cannot describe the event which caused the vehicle to be salvaged.

## **Salvage Inspections**

Once you have repaired your vehicle, and before you can register it, you must have your vehicle inspected. Salvage inspections protect you because they combat fraud and prevent the sale of stolen parts.

At the salvage inspection, the inspector checks the vehicle's identification number (VIN) and records, by number or receipt, all major component parts that were replaced. **The salvage inspection is not a safety inspection.**

If the safety inspection sticker was removed from your vehicle's windshield at the damage appraisal and replaced with a rejection sticker, you may submit the vehicle to any official inspection station for a valid safety inspection sticker any time after your vehicle's defects have been corrected. Note that the rejection sticker is valid for 20 calendar days from the date of inspection.

Before scheduling a salvage inspection, you must obtain a salvage title, complete an *Application for Inspection of a Salvaged Motor Vehicle*, and pay a \$50 salvage inspection fee. You can complete the application and pay the fee online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

You can schedule the salvage inspection online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV). You will need the VIN and title number, as well as VINs used for major component replacement parts. You can also call the Massachusetts State Police Salvage Unit at 857-368-8445 to schedule a salvage inspection.

You will need to bring the following to your salvage inspection:

1. Completed and signed *Application for Inspection of a Salvaged Motor Vehicle*
2. Current salvage title
3. Insurance Appraisal Report, issued by the insurance company that declared the vehicle to be a total loss salvage vehicle
4. Bills of sale (receipt or invoice) proving the purchase of all major component parts used to restore the vehicle
  - a. For new part(s), you'll need descriptions of all new parts
  - b. For used part(s), you'll need part number(s); description(s); and, VIN, make, model, and year of the vehicle from which any part was removed
5. Receipt confirming payment of the \$50 salvage inspection fee



After the salvage inspection, your inspector will let you know if the vehicle passed or failed the inspection. You will also receive a “pass/fail” report either via email or by mail with the results of your inspection.

If your vehicle passed inspection, you may apply for a vehicle registration.

If your vehicle failed inspection, you must:

- Correct the reasons it failed
- Complete a new Application for Inspection of a Salvaged Motor Vehicle, pay a \$50 fee, and schedule a new salvage inspection

Title Division, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55885, Boston, MA 02205-5885

In general, all salvage-titled vehicles must be inspected in Massachusetts to be registered in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts RMV does not honor out-of-state salvage inspections unless the RMV and the motor vehicle administrators of those states have previously agreed to accept each others' inspections.

Vehicles from states that do not issue salvage titles (such as New York, which issues only a Salvage Certificate [Form 907A]) cannot be transferred or reinspected in Massachusetts until their owners have applied for Massachusetts salvage titles.

If you have any questions about salvage title procedures or would like forms mailed to you, please call the RMV Contact Center at 857-368-8000 or visit the RMV's website, [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

### ***Obtaining a Corrected Title***

If you are correcting any information on your Certificate of Title, please refer to **Basic Title Transactions**. If you are correcting an odometer reading, you must submit a notarized affidavit of this fact. In this case, the notarized document is a written statement, made by the seller who provided the incorrect information, stating the true and accurate odometer reading at time of transfer, signed and witnessed in the presence of a notary public. Faxes and photocopies are not accepted.

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## **When You Sell a Vehicle . . .**

Whenever you sell a motor vehicle, you must sign the Certificate of Title over to the new owner and either ...

- Cancel the registration and recycle or destroy the plates  
or
- Transfer the plates to another vehicle you own according to the seven-day registration transfer law (see the *Seven-Day Registration Transfer Law* section earlier in this chapter)

Take extra care when completing the transfer form on the back of the Title Certificate. Be sure to list the purchase price and odometer reading.

**To check the current status of your title, visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) and select Title/Lien Inquiry.**

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## Anti-Theft and NMVTIS

The federal Anti-Car Theft Act of 1992 was enacted to deter trafficking in stolen vehicles by strengthening law enforcement against auto theft, combating automobile title fraud, preventing “chop shop” related thefts, and inspecting exports for stolen vehicles. The Act required the US Department of Transportation to implement a National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS). Since its creation, NMVTIS has been administered by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA).

NMVTIS is designed to protect consumers from title fraud and unsafe vehicle purchases and to prevent stolen vehicles from being resold. It is an online system used to verify and exchange vehicle history data among DMVs, law enforcement, prospective purchasers, and insurance carriers. The RMV uses NMVTIS to verify the title being submitted, check if a vehicle has been reported stolen, or if it has been identified as a “junk” or “salvage” vehicle.

Massachusetts fully participates in NMVTIS. You can visit [vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov](https://vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov) to find vehicle history information and how to order a vehicle history report.

## Insurance and Merit Rating

As part of the registration process, Massachusetts requires every vehicle on the road to be covered at least by minimum levels of motor vehicle insurance.

Compulsory insurance coverage:

- **Bodily injury to others**—Minimum \$20,000 per person, \$40,000 per crash (Part One)
- **Personal injury protection**—Pays up to \$8,000 to you, passengers, pedestrians or anyone you allow to drive your vehicle (Part Two)
- **Bodily injury caused by an uninsured auto**—Minimum \$20,000 per person, \$40,000 per crash (Part Three)
- **Damage to someone else’s property**—Minimum \$5,000 for property damage (Part Four)

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## Private Passenger Automobile Insurance and Your Driving Record

Your driving record will always be an important factor in determining how much you will pay for auto insurance.

In Massachusetts, auto insurers may offer different rates for different insurance packages. Insurers may use the point-based system of the Safe Driver Insurance Plan (SDIP) or develop their own merit rating plan to determine discounts for safe drivers and surcharges for drivers with at-fault crashes and traffic violations. While rates may vary by insurance company, all rates must be approved by the Commissioner of Insurance.

For more information, the Massachusetts Division of Insurance has consumer guides to help you in making decisions about your automobile insurance coverage. Please visit their website at [Mass.Gov/DOI](https://Mass.Gov/DOI) or call the Division of Insurance Consumer Hotline at 617-521-7777.

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## Merit Rating Plans

Your insurance company can choose to develop its own method, or merit rating plan, for adjusting your auto insurance premium based on your driving record. This means that the insurer can determine if and how it will impose surcharges on your premium for traffic violations and at-fault crashes and apply discounts for good driving. Massachusetts law states that an insurance company's merit rating plan cannot:

- Use any at-fault crash or traffic violation that is greater than six years old from the policy effective date, or
- Increase premiums for at-fault crashes or traffic violations for more than five years

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## Safe Driver Insurance Plan

Insurance companies are not required to develop a merit rating plan. They can choose instead to adopt the existing Safe Driver Insurance Plan as their merit rating plan. The Safe Driver Insurance Plan lowers premiums for drivers with clean driving records, and increases premiums for drivers with traffic violations and at-fault crashes. To learn more about the surcharges and credits that apply in the Safe Driver Insurance Plan, visit the Merit Rating Board website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) or call 857-368-8100 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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## The Merit Rating Board

Whether they customize a merit rating plan or use the Safe Driver Insurance Plan, all Massachusetts auto insurance companies are required to report at-fault crashes to the Merit Rating Board (MRB). Massachusetts auto insurance companies may also report out-of-state driving record information to the MRB. The MRB maintains and updates driving history records for individual operators and reports this information to insurers.

The MRB driving record consists of surchargeable incidents. A surchargeable incident is any event in which you are:

- Convicted of, or pay a fine for, a motor vehicle violation
- Assigned to an alcohol education program or controlled substance treatment or rehabilitation program
- Found to be more than 50 percent at fault for a crash, and your insurance company makes a claim payment of more than \$1000

In addition to potentially affecting your private passenger automobile insurance, each surchargeable incident counts toward possible license suspension (see *Chapter Two* for more information on suspensions).

You are considered to be more than 50 percent at fault in a crash if your insurance company:

1. Finds you at fault according to one of the 19 Standards of Fault (see a complete list on the next page), and

2. Has paid a claim of more than \$1000 for Collision, Limited Collision, Damage to Someone Else's Property, or Bodily Injury to Others.

Driving safely and maintaining a clean driving record will almost certainly reduce your automobile insurance premium. The Safe Driver Insurance Plan and most insurance company merit rating plans provide good driver discounts to people with clean driving records.

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## Contact Information

For more information regarding automobile insurance, call the Massachusetts Division of Insurance Consumer Hotline at 617-521-7777, or visit their website at [Mass.Gov/DOI](http://Mass.Gov/DOI). You can also contact an automobile insurance company or insurance agent directly. For more information regarding your driving record, call the Merit Rating Board's Customer Service Section at 857-368-8100 or visit their website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

### ***Standards of Fault***

- Collision with a lawfully or an unlawfully parked vehicle
- Rear-end collision
- Out-of-lane collision
- Failure to signal
- Failure to proceed with due caution from a traffic control signal or sign
- Collision on wrong side of road
- Operating in the wrong direction
- Collision at an uncontrolled intersection
- Collision while in the process of backing up
- Collision while making a left turn or a U-turn across the travel path of a vehicle traveling in the same or opposite direction
- Leaving or exiting from a parked position, a parking lot, an alley, or a driveway
- Opened or opening vehicle door(s)
- Single-vehicle collision
- Failure to obey the rules and regulations for driving
- Unattended vehicle collision
- Collision while merging onto a highway or into a rotary
- Noncontact operator causing collision
- Failure to yield the right-of-way to emergency vehicles when required by law
- Collision at a "T" intersection (you entered from a side road)

## A. Foreign Licensed Drivers

Effective July 2018, Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 90, Section 10) was changed to allow validly licensed drivers from **any** country to operate validly registered motor vehicles in Massachusetts.

**All** foreign-licensed drivers are subject to the following requirements when operating a motor vehicle in Massachusetts. Violation of these requirements is a criminal offense.

1. A foreign-licensed driver must have a valid driver's license when operating a motor vehicle in Massachusetts. It cannot be suspended or revoked.
2. If the foreign driver's license is not written in English or does not contain an English translation, the license holder must obtain and carry either a valid International Driving Permit **or** an acceptable alternative translation document.
  - **International Driving Permit (IDP):** An IDP is a translation of a driver's license into 10 major languages. It does not convey any driving privileges but must accompany any foreign license that is not in English. A foreign-license holder should contact the agency that issued the foreign driver's license before coming to the United States. IDP's cannot be issued in the United States to foreign-licensed drivers.

For information on obtaining an IDP, visit <https://internationaldrivingpermit.org/>

- **Alternative Translation Document:** If an IDP cannot be obtained in the country that issued the driver's license, the license holder must obtain an alternative translation document that properly identifies the license holder and translates the relevant license information into English. An alternative translation document must contain a passport-size photo of the license holder and a translation into English of the license, including the following:
  - Country where the license is issued
  - Full name of licensee
  - Date of birth
  - Permanent place of residence
  - Gender
  - Type of vehicle for which the license is valid
  - Driver's license number
  - Name and address of the driver licensing agency (including the website address if available)

The RMV form "*Translation into English of a Foreign Driver License*" can be used as an acceptable translation document and can be found on the RMV website at: [Mass.Gov/service-details/driving-in-massachusetts-on-a-foreign-drivers-license](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/driving-in-massachusetts-on-a-foreign-drivers-license). It must be completed by one of the following:

- A bilingual teacher at an accredited Massachusetts college, university, or private language school

- A bilingual Notary Public whose commission has been issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- The local Consulate for the licensee's country of origin in the United States
- The American Translator's Association (the national association of professional translators and interpreters)

**Note:** An alternative translation document is acceptable as long as it contains a photo and English translation that closely matches the information from an IDP.

3. The country of issuance must have and enforce standards for operation of motor vehicles equivalent to those in Massachusetts (as determined by the RMV).
4. The foreign license must be issued by the driver licensing authority in the country in which the driver is a resident. (A provisional or learner's license does not qualify as a "driver's license".)
5. A foreign-licensed driver must be at least 16 years of age to operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts.
6. A non-resident who holds a valid driver license from the country in which he/she resides may operate any motor vehicle in Massachusetts of the same type which he/she is licensed to operate. The vehicle must be properly registered in this state or in any other state or country. If registered in a foreign country, the vehicle may be required to display the *International Distinguishing Sign* outside, on the rear of the vehicle. The driver must have the vehicle's current registration document in his/her possession or in the vehicle.
7. A foreign-licensed driver who is visiting Massachusetts cannot convert the foreign license to a Massachusetts driver's license while still a visitor to this state. Only a "resident" of this state (with acceptable required documentation, including documents to prove "lawful presence" in the United States) can obtain a Massachusetts license or ID Card. A short-term visitor cannot qualify as a "resident."
8. A member of the United States Armed Forces returning from active duty outside of the United States who possesses a driver's license issued by the United States Armed Forces in a foreign country may operate motor vehicles for up to 45 days from the date of return to the United States.
9. Massachusetts accepts the driving permit, license, or military permit issued by a NATO country to its own military personnel or to the personnel of a civilian component of the military force. These NATO personnel are required to carry and present to law enforcement both of the following on demand:
  - An identity card issued by the NATO country showing name, date of birth, rank and number (if any), service, and photograph
  - An individual or collective movement order, in the language of the country and in the English and French languages, issued by an agency of the country or NATO and certifying to the status of the individual or group as a member or members of a force and to the movement ordered.

**2017 List of all 29 NATO Member Countries:** Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

### **Avoid International License Scams**

The RMV and law enforcement agencies are aware that individuals or organizations use the Internet to sell documents as “International Driver Licenses” and “International Driving Permits” that imply driving privileges. The RMV does not recognize a document labeled as an “International Driver License,” “International Driving Permit,” or any other document that allegedly confers driving privileges unless it was issued by the driver license issuance agency in the licensed driver’s country of residence.

## B. RMV Customer Services

In addition to the full service and limited service RMV Service Centers listed in this appendix, the RMV provides two excellent information resources to help serve you better: its Contact Center and website.

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### **Customer Contact Center**

Recorded RMV information is available 24 hours a day. Information is available on licensing, registrations, titles, suspensions, medical affairs, and RMV locations. Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, you can speak to an RMV Representative to:

- Make general inquiries
- Request forms to be mailed to you
- Book a driver's license road test
- Provide change-of-address information or change-of-vehicle-garage location
- Conduct business transactions using a MasterCard, Visa, Discover, or American Express card including:
  - Renewing a vehicle registration
  - Paying a moving violation fine, such as a speeding ticket
  - Ordering a driving record
  - Ordering a duplicate license, Mass ID, or Liquor ID
  - Paying license suspension reinstatement fees
  - Ordering a duplicate vehicle registration

**RMV Contact Center: 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA) 800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email AskRMV@state.ma.us**  
**The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).**  
**Contact Center Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Internet Address: Mass.Gov/RMV**

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### **RMV Website**

The RMV maintains its own website, Mass.Gov/RMV, for customers who have online access. You can start certain permit/license/ID card transactions, schedule a road test, pay your road test/license fees, renew your Class D or Class M license, renew your Massachusetts ID Card, renew vehicle registrations, pay moving violation fines, order duplicate vehicle registrations, order specialty plates, check to see if a vanity plate is available, change your address, order a duplicate driver's license or Mass ID, order a duplicate title, download forms, verify the issuance of a driver's education certificate, check the status of a registration or title, check wait times for any RMV Service Center, change your organ donor status, and cancel plates. Online transactions can be paid for using a MasterCard, Visa, Discover, or American Express card. General information is also available on most Registry topics.

Checklists for common registration and title transactions are also available on the website. They list the requirements and documentation you will need to successfully complete your transaction at a service center.



Customers wishing to renew their registration, book a Class D road test, or check RMV Service Center wait times can do so by calling our automated number: 1-866-MASSRMV.

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### ***Warning of Unofficial Websites Mimicking the Massachusetts RMV Website***

Massachusetts residents looking for the RMV (Registry of Motor Vehicles) website or trying to do RMV transactions online should make sure they are using the “official” RMV website at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

Several similar-looking, third-party websites, not connected with the RMV, have fooled RMV customers by seeming to offer RMV services and/or RMV information. These “mimic” sites are often reached by customers using online search engines. **DO NOT BE FOOLED!** RMV customers should be extra careful and avoid any “mimic” websites that charge fees to perform RMV services online or to provide basic RMV information or forms. Some of these websites may even contain printed disclaimers of a connection to the RMV on their site.

It is also smart to avoid any site that uses the phrase “Department of Motor Vehicles” or the letters “DMV”. That phrase and the abbreviation “DMV” are NOT used in relation to the Registry of Motor Vehicles in Massachusetts. Remember: [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV).

If you rely on any driver license or motor vehicle-related information these websites provide, access any services they claim to offer, or pay a fee to them for an alleged “service” (whether online or by mail), **you are doing so at your own peril.** The information they provide may not be correct and your personal and financial information may not be safe in the hands of the operators of these “mimic” websites.

The RMV is proud of the fact that its customers can perform at least 28 different transactions safely and securely on the “official” RMV website and can also obtain much invaluable “free” information. For example, all of the information from the current RMV “Driver’s Manual” is available for free (a \$5 value) just by clicking on and opening the online version from “Forms and Manuals” rather than buying a copy.

And, the RMV’s “site policies” (located at the bottom of RMV web pages) explain how the RMV uses and protects your personal and financial information when you provide it to the RMV. Please note that the **RMV cannot be responsible** for the content or actions taken by third-party “mimic” websites.

## C. Full Service and Limited Service RMV Service Centers

Unless otherwise noted, all service centers are full-service facilities that allow you to transact most RMV business and receive information.

Note: Class D and M learner's permit exams are offered until one hour before the service center's closing time. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) learner's permit exams are offered until two hours before the service center's closing time.

Master Card, VISA, Discover, American Express, and debit cards are accepted for all RMV transactions at all locations.

**Reservations are required for all service center visits. You can make a reservation on our website or by calling the Contact Center.**

**During the Covid-19 State of Emergency, some of our service centers may be closed, only process certain transactions, or only accept registration/title drop off transactions. Visit our website for the most updated information.**

### **Boston**

Haymarket Center  
136 Blackstone Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Braintree**

10 Plain Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Brockton**

490 Forest Avenue  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Chicopee**

1011 Chicopee Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
No Learner's Permit Exams at this Site

### **Danvers**

Danvers Crossing Plaza  
8 Newbury Street  
(Route 1 South)  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Easthampton**

116 Pleasant Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Fall River**

1794 North Main Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Greenfield**

18 Miner Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### **Haverhill**

229c Lincoln Avenue  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Lawrence**

73 Winthrop Avenue  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Leominster**

500 Research Drive  
Southgate Business Park  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Lowell**

77 Middlesex Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Martha's Vineyard**

11 A Street, Airport Business Park, Edgartown  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

### **Milford**

14 Beach Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Nantucket**

16 Broad Street  
Mon-Fri - 8 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

### **New Bedford**

212 Theodore H. Rice Boulevard  
New Bedford Industrial Park  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **North Adams**

33 Main Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

### **Pittsfield**

333 East Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Plymouth**

40 Industrial Park Road  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Revere**

9c Everett Street (Bell Circle)  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Roslindale (Boston)**

4210 Washington Street

### **Limited Service**

Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
No Learner's Permit Exams at this Site

### **Southbridge**

4 Larochelle Way  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **South Yarmouth**

1082-1084 Main Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Springfield**

1250 St. James Avenue  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Taunton**

One Washington Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Watertown**

550 Arsenal Street  
(Watertown Mall)  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Wilmington**

355 Middlesex Avenue  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Worcester**

611 Main Street  
Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

## RMV Limited Service Centers

### Attleboro License and Registration Renewal Express

75 Park Street, Attleboro

Mon-Fri - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

This location processes license, ID card, and registration renewals, amendments, and duplicates. Class D and M learner's permit exams are offered from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and CDL learner's permit exams are offered from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

It **does not accept cash**. It only accept checks, money orders, MasterCard, VISA, Discover, American Express, and debit cards.

### Natick License and Registration Renewal Express

Massachusetts Turnpike

Natick East Bound Service Plaza

Mon-Fri - 8 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

This location processes license, ID card, and registration renewals, amendments, and duplicates.

## Registration Drop Off Centers

Registration Drop Off Centers are available at these locations: Boston, Braintree, Chicopee, Greenfield, Haverhill, Milford, North Adams, Pittsfield, Taunton, and Wilmington. At these locations, you can drop off your transactions, pay online, and then pick them up when done. Average turnaround time is 4 business days. See our website for available days and hours.

**AAA offers certain RMV services to AAA members. For a full list of locations and the RMV services they offer, visit [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)**

## E-ZPass Transponders

MassPike E-ZPass Transponders are available in all RMV Service Centers.

### RMV Contact Center

857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)

800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes)

Email: [AskRMV@state.ma.us](mailto:AskRMV@state.ma.us)

Monday—Friday 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (877-768-8833)

### RMV Mailing Address

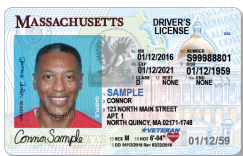
Registry of Motor Vehicles

P.O. Box 55889 Boston, MA 02205-5889

For directions, visit the RMV's website: [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV)

#### D. RMV License and Identification cards

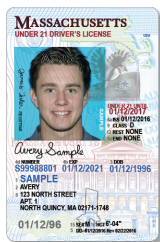
Below are images of all the licenses and identification cards that the RMV issues.



Mass License Issued  
2016 - Present



Mass License Issued  
2010 - 2016



**Under 21 License Issued**  
**2016 - Present**



**Under 18 License Issued  
2016 - Present**



**Under 21 License Issued**  
2010 - 2016



Under 18 License  
Issued 2010 - 2016



MA ID Issued  
2016 - Present



Under 21 ID Issued  
2016 - Present

MA ID Issued  
2010 - 2016

Under 21 ID Issued  
2010 - 2016



Liquor ID Issued  
2016 - Present



Liquor ID Issued  
2010 - 2016



### Back of License Issued 2016 - Present



Back of License Issued 2010 - 2016

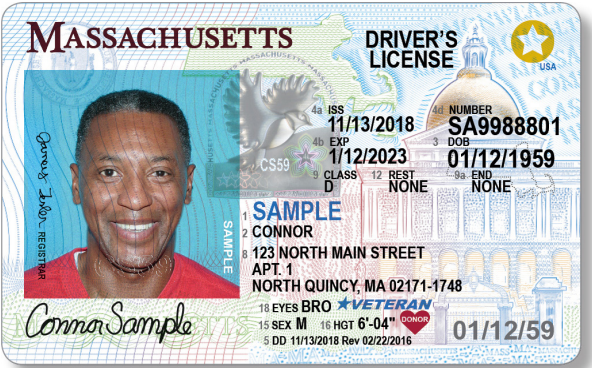
The barcodes on the license or ID card include a machine readable version of the text on the front of the card, the card issuer (MA), the Julian date of manufacture request, the license/ID card number, the document type identifier (license or ID card), and the factory remake count.

# REAL ID Cards and Standard Massachusetts Cards

Below are images that show the differences between REAL ID Cards and Standard Massachusetts Cards.

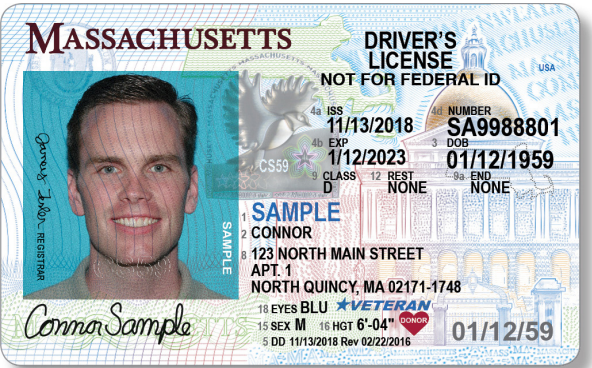
REAL ID Cards (both driver's licenses and Massachusetts ID Cards, but not Liquor ID Cards) have a star indicator on the top right corner.

Beginning October 1, 2021, you will need a REAL ID, or other acceptable ID such as a valid passport, to fly within the United States. See page 2 for more information.



REAL ID Driver's License Card

Standard Massachusetts Cards (both driver's licenses and ID Cards) have text indicating "NOT FOR FEDERAL ID".



Standard Massachusetts  
Driver's License Card

## E. Street Signs

Below are images of typical parking signs used in Massachusetts.



Below are images of typical pedestrian signs and signals used in Massachusetts.



Below are images of typical bicycle signs used in Massachusetts.





## F. RMV Special Registration Plates

Below are images of all the special plates that the RMV offers.



ALS One



Atlantic White Shark  
Conservancy



Basketball Hall of  
Fame



Blackstone Valley



Boston Bruins



Boston Celtics



Cape Anne



Cape Cod and  
Islands



Choose Life



Conquer Cancer



Cure Breast Cancer



Fallen Heroes



Firefighters Memorial



Fish and Wildlife



Freemasonry



Fresh and Local



Habitat and Heritage



Invest in Children



Martha's Vineyard



Massachusetts  
Animal Coalition



Nantucket Island



New England  
Patriots



Olympic Spirit



Pan-Mass Challenge



Plymouth 400



Red Sox / Jimmy Fund  
/ Red Sox Foundation



Right Whale



State Police Association  
of Massachusetts



UMASS



United We Stand



Year of Manufacture  
Plate

