Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA

Driver's Handbook

Message to the Motorist

The information in this handbook is intended for all drivers. Road safety is a priority of the Province of Nova Scotia, and every driver, no matter how experienced, is encouraged to refresh their memory and skill from time to time.

Safe driving requires knowledge and skill. It must be learned through practice and a personal commitment to safety. Driving experience is extremely important, but experience itself is not enough. To become a safe driver you must continue to improve your skills, correct poor driving habits, and learn from your mistakes.

This handbook will familiarize you with the rules governing the operation of motor vehicles. Also included in this handbook is information about licensing, registration, inspection, and collision reporting.

The contents of this handbook explain the basic provisions of the law in Nova Scotia using language and terms that are easily understood by the general public. For the actual expression of the law, refer to the Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations.

Most driving decisions are based on judgement—yours and that of the other users of our roads and highways. Your attitude toward your own safety and that of others is an important factor.

Observing the rules and advice in this handbook will help you become a safer driver and avoid being involved in a collision. Drive defensively and remember—Caution is Critical.

Traffic laws are for your protection. Please observe them.

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There have been some changes to the Graduated Driver Licensing Program and rules of the road since the publication of this handbook.

These changes are outlined in the next four pages. Read this information and keep it in mind as you study for your test.

Be aware that the rules and laws for driving can change. Pay attention to changes even after you have your licence – learn about changes by visiting www.NovaScotia.ca or by reading the latest copy of the Nova Scotia Driver Handbook.

Important Graduated Driver Licence Changes

In chapter one, you will learn about the *Nova Scotia Graduated Driver Licensing* program. On April 1, 2015, a third stage of GDL was added to the program – it is called the *restricted individual* stage.

There are now three stages of GDL:

1 The learner's licence stage (see page 6)
2 The newly licensed stage (see page 16)
3 The restricted individual stage

Restricted Individuals (Class 5R or 6R with condition 47)

Once you leave the newly licensed stage, you enter the restricted individual stage. You will remain in this stage for 2 full years.

Restrictions

When you have a Class 5R or 6R with condition 47, you must comply with 2 important restrictions:

1 You must have zero alcohol or drugs in your body while driving
2 You cannot be a supervising driver (previously called and experienced driver). This means you cannot teach someone to drive or be a supervising driver for a newly licensed driver during the curfew hours between midnight and 5:00 am.

No upgrade while a learner or Newly Licensed Driver

An upgrade to a higher licence class (1–4) is not allowed while you are a learner or newly licensed driver. However, you can upgrade your licence while in the restricted individual stage.

Exiting the GDL program

You will not exit the GDL program until you have finished the restricted individual stage. To complete the graduated licence program and receive your full Class 5 or Class 6 licence you must do the following:

- Have your Class 5N or 6N for at least 2 years
- Complete an approved driver training program and provide a copy to the Registry of Motor Vehicle or Access Nova Scotia
- Complete the 2-year driving period after graduating to the restricted individual stage

If you do not complete the above, you will stay in the GDL program indefinitely and will continue to be subject to the program restrictions.

You are not required to obtain a replacement driver's licence when you graduate from the newly licensed or restricted individual stage, but may do so if you wish. There is no fee to exchange your licence if you use the same photo.

Learner's Licence Expiry

A learner's licence is valid for a maximum of 2 years (previously 1 year). You must successfully pass the road test to enter the next GDL stage before your learner's licence expires. If you do not, you must rewrite the learner's test before you may renew your learner's licence.

Emergency vehicles

On page 45, you will learn the rules for sharing the road with emergency vehicles.

These rules have not changed. However, there are new rules that require you to slow down and move over.

If you see an emergency vehicle pulled over with its lights flashing, slow down to 60 km/h or obey the speed limit if it's lower than 60 km/h.

If you're on a road with 2 or more lanes in your direction, you must also move into another lane farther away from the stopped vehicle if you can do so safely.

You don't need to slow down or move over if the vehicle is on the other side of the median on a divided highway.

Emergency Vehicles

Types of vehicles

Slow down and move over for:

- ambulances
- police vehicles
- fire department vehicles
- Department of Lands and Forestry fire vehicles
- fire chiefs' or deputy fire chiefs' vehicles
- conservation officers' vehicles
- motor vehicle and carrier inspector's vehicles
- public safety vehicles, like sheriffs and bridge patrol officers
- tow trucks that are stopped at the scene of a fire or collision or assisting a vehicle.

Yield to transit buses

There are new rules requiring you to yield the right of way to transit buses.

When a stopped transit bus is signalling its intent to re-enter the flow of traffic, yield the right of way if approaching the bus from the rear to allow it to move back into traffic.

Yield to transit bus

You must yield whenever the posted speed limit is 60 km/h or less and it is safe to do so.

This rule does not apply to school buses.

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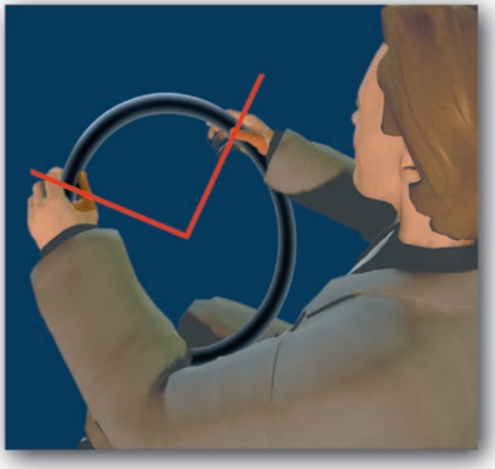


1 Your Driver's Licence

This chapter contains information on obtaining and holding a Nova Scotia driver's licence. The Registry of Motor Vehicles, under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Act, issues, renews, and suspends driver's licences. Possession of a driver's licence and the privilege of driving are major responsibilities.

The Nova Scotia Licensing System

To drive in Nova Scotia, you must have a valid driver's licence, and it must be the right type of licence for the kind of vehicle you want to drive (car, truck, motorcycle, etc.). Nova Scotia has different classes of licences to match different types of vehicles. Since most people drive only passenger vehicles, most of the information in this first section deals with that type of licence, which is called a Class 5 licence.

Nova Scotia also has what is called a Graduated Driver Licensing program (or "GDL" for short), which has 3 levels:

1. learner's licence (sometimes called the "beginner's licence")
2. newly licensed driver's licence
3. driver's licence

All new drivers have to graduate from the first level, and then from the second level, before they can get a regular driver's licence. This way, new drivers gradually gain experience over a period of several years. They move through a series of tests and restrictions on their driving privileges, which are gradually removed as they progress. Finally, when they are experienced enough, they become a fully licensed driver.

This program applies to all new drivers of passenger vehicles in Nova Scotia, whatever your age. A similar program is in place for all new motorcycle operators, including experienced licensed drivers of other classifications.

Visitors

If you are a visitor to Nova Scotia or a new resident you can drive in this province for up to 90 days without getting a Nova Scotia driver's licence, on two conditions: (1) you must have a valid driver's licence from another jurisdiction (province, state, country, etc.), and (2) you must be at least 16 years old. After 90 days, you have to get a Nova Scotia driver's licence.

Note: there is also the question of your vehicle permit and licence plates. If you are a visitor, you can drive a vehicle with out-of-province plates for 90 days; after that, it has to have Nova Scotia plates. If you have actually moved to Nova Scotia, you can drive with out-of-province plates for only 30 days.

Getting a Nova Scotia Driver's Licence

People who apply for a Nova Scotia driver's licence fall into one of three groups:

1. brand new drivers
2. drivers who used to have a Nova Scotia driver's licence, but don't now
3. visitors and new residents who have an out-of-province driver's licence

Brand new drivers

(someone who has never had any kind of driver's licence before)

In Nova Scotia, all new drivers regardless of their age have to work through the Graduated Driver Licensing program, and start by getting their learner's licence. How to do that is explained later on in this section.

People who used to have a valid Nova Scotia driver's licence, but don't now

If you are holding an expired Nova Scotia driver's licence that expired less than three years ago, you can get a new one without taking either a written test or a road test.

If your Nova Scotia driver's licence expired more than three years ago, the situation is different. Everything depends upon whether or not you ever had a valid licence for at least two full years. If you didn't, then you are considered a "brand new driver," and just like any other new driver, you will have to go through the full Graduated Driver Licensing program. If you had a valid licence for two full years or more, you will still have to take the written and road tests.

Road test: You have to make an appointment in advance to take a road test and you have to pay for it before you can get an appointment. For more information on the road test and how to apply for it, go to page 13 in this book, or use the Internet and visit the section on the road test, newly licensed driver's licence, in the Nova Scotia Permits Directory. The Directory address is <www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/paal/>.

New Residents

Canada: People from another province or territory of Canada can usually exchange their existing licence for a Nova Scotia driver's licence. You can do this without taking any written tests or a road test, if you meet all of these conditions:

- You are at least 16 years old.
- Your existing licence is valid, that is, not suspended or revoked.

- Your licence is for passenger vehicles only. (If your licence is for larger vehicles, then you will also need to supply a satisfactory medical report. Contact Service Nova Scotia for details.)
- If your licence has expired, it expired less than three years ago.
- If your licence includes a school bus endorsement, then you will have to pass a road test.

United States of America: If you are from an American state, the rules are the same as for Canada (above), with one difference:

- If your licence has any conditions attached that might interfere with the safe operation of a vehicle, then you must pass a road test.

Other Countries: If your driver's licence is not from Canada or the USA, you cannot usually exchange your licence for a Nova Scotia driver's licence. Instead, you will have to take a vision test, a written test on safety rules, a written test on Nova Scotia traffic signs, and a road test.

Getting a Learner's Licence (called Class 7)

The first stage in the Nova Scotia Graduated Driver Licensing program is called the learner's licence. This licence is valid for one year.

Who can apply?

Any resident of Nova Scotia who is at least 16 years old.

If you are 16 or 17 years old ...

If you are under 18, you must have written permission to get a learner's licence. This is done through a signed consent form, which you can get from any office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles or Access Nova Scotia centre.

- If you have a parent or a guardian who has custody over you, one of them has to sign.
- If both of your parents are deceased, and you do not have a legal guardian, your employer can sign.
- If you are married and your spouse is over 18, your spouse can sign.

Questions for young adults to consider if they are thinking of applying for a learner's licence:

- When I get angry, am I really good at keeping it under control?
- Am I consistently willing to follow basic rules laid out by authority figures?
- Can I keep my mind focused on what I am doing, or do I tend to get easily distracted?
- Am I prepared to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will make me a safe driver?

How to Apply for a Learner's Licence

1 Study this driver's handbook. When you come into our office to apply for your learner's licence, you will be given two written tests (oral tests are given in some cases), a road sign test and a rules test. Each test consists of 20 multiple-choice questions. To pass, you must answer 16 questions correctly. All the information you will need to pass these tests is in this handbook.

2 Arrange to be tested. Pay the knowledge test fee and obtain a receipt. Testing schedules are different for the various offices across the province. Phone ahead to find out when to come to the nearest testing site. Phone 424-5851 within the Halifax Regional Municipality or toll-free anywhere in Nova Scotia 1-800-898-7668. Generally, written learner testing is done on a first-come, first-served basis. We will make every effort to serve you as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

3 Come into our office. Bring the following documents with you:

- proof of your age
  We will accept your birth certificate, Nova Scotia I.D. card, passport, Canadian Citizenship card, Immigration papers (either Record of Landing or Permanent Resident card), Military identification documents, or Certificate of Indian Status card.
- two other pieces of identification that contain your name and signature
  We accept official documents such as credit cards, bank cards, or health cards.
- if your name has changed due to marriage or a formal name change and the name on your Birth Certificate is different than the two pieces of signed ID, you must bring in supporting documentation such as your Marriage Certificate or Change of Name Certificate from Vital Statistics.
- if you are 16 or 17 years old, a signed consent form
  You may bring a signed consent form with you or bring your parent, or other acceptable signee, with you to sign the consent at the time of testing.

4 Complete an application form. This is called an Application for Driver's Licence.

5 Pass a vision test. This is a screening test to ensure that you meet minimum vision standards. It includes a colour test, a field-of-vision test (minimum 120 degrees), a visual acuity test (minimum 6/12 [20/40] Snellen), and a distance-judgement test. If your vision is not acceptable for driving, then a licence will not be issued. You will be given a form to be completed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Once the form is completed, present it to a driver enhancement officer. The specialist's professional opinion and recommendations will be accepted. If you do require visual correction, a licence will not be issued until it has been obtained. If you can only pass the vision test using corrective lenses, your licence will be issued with

the following condition: Valid only while licence holder is wearing proper visual correction.

6 Pass a road sign test. This tests your ability to recognize and understand the meaning of highway road signs. You must answer 16 of 20 questions correctly.

7 Pass a rules test. This tests your knowledge of traffic laws and rules for safe driving. You must answer 16 of 20 multiple-choice questions correctly.

8 Pay the licence fee. Once you have passed all three tests (vision test, road test, rules test), go to the transaction counter and pay the licence fee. You will then be given your learner's licence. As a convenience, you may pay for the road test at the same time. Note: keep your road test receipt. If you lose the receipt or forget to bring it to the road test you will have to purchase another one.

Sample of Learner's Licence

9 Congratulations! You now have your learner's licence and have become part of the Graduated Driver Licensing program. Learn the conditions under which you may drive and then practise, practise, practise. Remember to always carry your learner's licence with you when you are operating a motor vehicle.

Expiry

Your learner's licence is good for one year. If you have not acquired your newly licensed driver's licence (called Class 5N) before the end of the twelfth month, you must then reapply for a learner's licence. However, you will not have to wait an additional three or six months before taking a road test.

Restrictions

While you hold a learner's licence, you must comply with two important restrictions on your driving:

1 You must drive with an experienced driver in the front seat of the vehicle and no other passengers. An experienced driver is someone who has held a valid driver's licence for two years and is no longer in the GDL program.

Don't Drink and Drive symbol

2 Your blood-alcohol level must remain at zero. That means absolutely no drinking when driving.

If you violate these restrictions, you will receive demerit points. As a learner, if you get four or more demerit points, then your driving privileges will be suspended for six months. The suspension will delay your taking the road test and moving to the newly licensed driver stage. (See pages 28 and 29 for information on demerit points.)

Becoming a Good Driver

It takes both a safe driving attitude and experience to be a good driver. A safe driving attitude comes from thinking about safety, being cautious, and avoiding unnecessary risks. Through experience, your skills and coordination will improve.

As a good driver, you will

- always wear a seat belt and ensure that your passengers do so
- never drive when you are impaired by alcohol, prescribed medications, or illegal drugs
- think twice about driving when you are tired or too emotional
- keep your vehicle and yourself in good condition (See Section 4 on safety.)

If you are going to become a driver, become a good driver.

Be prepared

- Identify situations that require concentration or reaction.
- Predict what other drivers and pedestrians will do or might do.
- Make safe decisions.

Identifying dangerous situations early improves the chances of making a safe decision. Avoid distractions. Perform safety scans continuously. A European study revealed that if drivers had just one more second to react, 80 per cent of crashes could be avoided.

Learn to control your vehicle

Professional racing drivers control their vehicles with great precision. For them, even a slight mistake could result in an collision causing injury or even death. You too must learn to control your vehicle with precision. It is very important to begin with good instruction. Often in life learning comes from making mistakes. However, there is no room for error when operating a vehicle.

Provincial statistics indicate that the Graduated Driver Licensing program has contributed to the downward trend of highway collisions for new drivers in the province of Nova Scotia. (Based on evaluation by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, 2003.)

Driver training programs

At some point along the way, before you can exit the GDL program and get your regular driver's licence, you will have to take a driver training program that is approved by Service Nova Scotia. You can take either the long course or the short course. The long course involves at least 25 hours of classroom time and at least 10 hours of actual driving time. The short course is 6 hours of classroom time.

Learners, take note: if you take the long course, you can take your road test after only three months (instead of six). There are also some other advantages:

- You may save money on insurance.
- You learn to drive from a professional instructor.
- You will automatically meet a requirement you need to exit the GDL program and get your regular driver's licence.

Tips for safe, fuel-efficient driving

- **Don't drive aggressively** — quick starts, hard stops, and extreme aggressive driving can increase fuel consumption by up to 39 per cent.

- **Drive at the posted speed limit** — increasing your cruising speed from 100 km/h to 120 km/h will increase fuel consumption by 20 per cent.

- **Don't idle** — when you let your vehicle idle longer than 10 seconds, you burn more fuel then you would restarting the engine.

- **Drive only when you need to** — leave your vehicle at home whenever possible by walking, biking, blading, carpooling, or taking the bus to nearby locations.

- **Plan ahead** — If you have to drive, plan the most fuel-efficient route in advance.

- **Use your vehicle's air conditioner sparingly** — using your air conditioner in stop-and-go traffic can increase fuel consumption by as much as 20 per cent. Try opening the windows or fresh air vents to cool your vehicle.

- **Measure the inflation level of your tires once a month.** A single tire under-inflated by just 56kPa (8psi) can increase your vehicle's fuel consumption by 4 per cent.

- **Use cruise control** — on dry, flat wide-open highways, use cruise control to help improve fuel efficiency by maintaining an even speed.

- **Maintain your vehicle properly** — a poorly maintained vehicle consumes more fuel, produces higher levels of emissions, requires more expensive repairs, and has a lower resale value.

Find out more information at <vehicles.gc.ca>.

Road Test

Normally, learners have to wait at least six months before they can take a road test. (However, if you pass a long-course driver training program, you have to wait only three months.)

Steps

1 Pay the road test fee and obtain a receipt.

2 Make an appointment for the road test by calling our Telephone Information Centre at 424-5851 or toll free outside Metro 1-800-898-7668. You need your road test receipt number when making the appointment. Note: Your road test will be cancelled if road or weather conditions are hazardous at the appointed time.

3 Bring the following items to your appointment:

- road test receipt—if you lose the receipt or forget to bring it to your road test, you will have to purchase another one
- a vehicle to take the test with. It should be one that you have driven before and that is comfortable and familiar to you. Your vehicle must be in good mechanical condition and must have a valid safety inspection sticker
- your current licence
- the motor vehicle permit for the vehicle you will be driving
- a valid insurance liability card in the name of the registered owner of the vehicle that you will be driving

4 Read the instruction sheet provided by the driver enhancement officer before the actual road test.

5 The driver enhancement officer will begin by asking for your learner's licence, vehicle permit, and insurance liability card. The driver enhancement officer will then ask you to demonstrate the use of signal lights, horn, brake light, headlights, windshield wipers, and hand signals.

6 Listen as the driver enhancement officer explains the test. Follow his or her instructions. During the driving test, do not talk unnecessarily to the driver enhancement officer, who will be busy giving instructions, observing your performance, and recording your score.

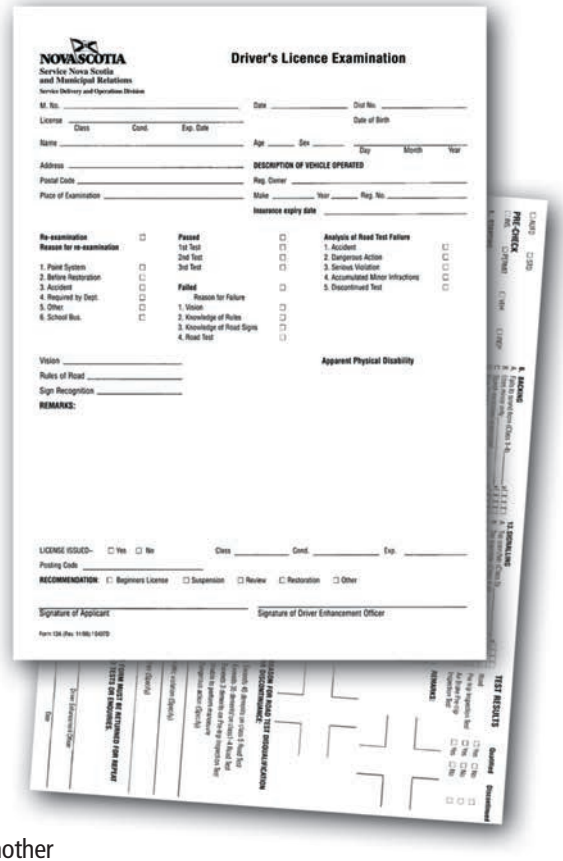
7 Take the test. During the test, the driver enhancement officer will be observing the following:

- how well you control the vehicle during starting, stopping, turning, and parking
- your observation skills, including shoulder checks, when and how often you use your mirrors, and where you look
- how well you respond to traffic, pavement markings,

signs, and possible hazards
- how well you manage the space around your vehicle
- your ability to make safe lane changes
- how closely you follow and stop behind other vehicles
- how you communicate with other road users, including your use of turn signals and brake lights and whether you make eye contact with other drivers and pedestrians
- your ability to make good driving decisions, such as knowing when to yield the right of way
- your speed

8 At the end of the test, the driver enhancement officer will give you a complete report of your skills and explain any mistakes you may have made. The driver enhancement officer will tell you if you have passed.

If you do not pass the road test, the driver enhancement officer will advise you on how to improve your driving skills. You should study some more and get more practice. You must wait at least one week before you may take the test again. You must pay another road test fee and book another appointment.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Driver's Licence Examination

Sample of Road Test Score Sheet

9 If you have passed the road test, the driver enhancement officer will tell you how to exchange your learner's licence for a newly licenced one. Note that there is a time limit to do this.

You must have your driver's licence upgraded within 6 months of passing the road test. Failure to do so will result in you having to complete the road test again.

You will find a sample road test score sheet in the back of this handbook, under Driver's Licence Examination.

Newly Licensed Drivers (called "Class 5N")

Once you pass the road test, you leave the learner's stage and advance to the newly licensed stage. You remain in this stage for at least two full years.

Restrictions

While you have a newly licensed driver's licence, you must comply with three important restrictions on your driving:

1 Your blood alcohol level must remain at zero.

2 Passengers: You may transport only one passenger in the front seat and only as many rear seat passengers as there are seat belts.

3 Curfew: You cannot drive between midnight and 5:00 am unless you meet one of the following conditions:

- You are accompanied by an experienced driver who has held a Class 5 licence for at least two years and is not still in the GDL system. The experienced driver must be in the front seat.
- You are exempted by Service Nova Scotia/Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Exemption from nighttime driving curfew

If you are required to drive to and from work between midnight and 5:00 am, you must apply for an exemption from the nighttime driving restriction. There is a fee for this exemption. An application form can be obtained from the Registry of Motor Vehicles or Access Nova Scotia centre.

No upgrade while in GDL

You cannot apply to upgrade to a higher class of licence (1-4) while in the newly licensed stage.

Demerit points and suspension

The demerit-point system remains in effect during this stage. If you accumulate six points, then your driving privileges will be suspended for six months. If you are suspended while at the newly licensed stage, then you will not be able to move to experienced driver status for two years from the date your licence is reinstated, nor can your licence be upgraded to a higher class of licence. For more information on demerit points and the point table refer to pages 28 and 29.

Exiting the GDL program

To complete the graduated driver licensing program and receive your Class 5 experienced driver's licence, you must do all of the following:

- have your newly licensed driver's licence for at least two years
- successfully complete an authorized driver training program
  Note: any recognized program completed after October 1, 1994, will be accepted.

Sample of Class 5 Licence

- provide a copy of your graduation certificate, in person or by mail*, to any Registry of Motor Vehicles or Access Nova Scotia centre for record purposes
- exchange your Class 5N licence for your regular-class licence (Class 5) (No fee is charged for this exchange.)

* *If you mail in your Class 5N licence you cannot drive until you receive your Class 5 licence back.*

Congratulations! Now all driving restrictions placed on you while driving under the GDL program are lifted.

If you do not follow the above procedure, you will remain in the GDL program indefinitely. This means that you will continue to be subject to the program restrictions.

Public awareness during the initial implementation of the GDL program resulted in a substantial reduction in driver injuries and fatalities for young drivers aged 16 to 21 years. (Based on the Health Information and Education section, Nova Scotia Department of Health, 1995.)

Answers to Some Commonly Asked Questions about the GDL Program

As a learner, do I have to go to a driving school to get my Class 5N licence?

No.

Who must participate in the GDL program?

Any person, regardless of age, who applies for a learner's licence to learn to drive. This includes anyone, including experienced drivers (two years), who applies for a motorcycle licence.

How long is a learner's licence valid?

A maximum of one year. You must either pass the road test by that time or rewrite the learner's test. If you must rewrite the learner's test, you are not required to wait an additional three or six months before taking a road test.

What are the stages of the GDL program for passenger vehicle drivers?

Each new driver begins as a learner (Class 7) and progresses to the next stage, newly licensed driver (Class 5N), before exiting as an experienced driver (Class 5).

Class	To enter stage	Length of time in stage
Learner (Class 7)	Pass a written and a vision test.	At least three months, or six months if no recognized driver course is taken. Must rewrite after twelve months has expired.
Newly Licensed (Class 5N)	Pass a road test.	At least two years. No maximum time.
Experienced (Class 5)	Complete all GDL exit requirements: spend 24 consecutive months in the program with no suspensions; complete a driver training program and register the certificate with the Registry of Motor Vehicles; and turn in your Class 5N licence.	

I have a learner's licence. Who is allowed to teach me to drive and are there any restrictions?

An experienced licensed driver who has had at least two years of driving experience and is not currently in the GDL program can teach you to drive. The licensed driver must be seated in the front passenger seat and no other passengers can be in the vehicle.

There are exemptions from these restrictions:

1. More than one Driver Enhancement Officer may be in a vehicle that is being driven by a person holding a learner's licence.
2. When a licensed learner is driving a motor vehicle that is equipped with dual control brake and is accompanied by an instructor approved by Service Nova Scotia, there may be up to three students in the back seat.

It is illegal for a licensed learner to drive a motorcycle or a farm tractor on a public road except when being examined by an examiner.

When can I take a road test to become a newly licensed driver and get a Class 5N licence?

After a six-month waiting period. You may shorten this period to three months by completing an approved driver-training program that has a minimum of 25 hours of classroom theory and 10 hours of driving time.

As a newly licensed driver under GDL, how many passengers may I have in my vehicle?

Only one passenger in the front seat and no more passengers in the rear seat than the number of seat belts. For trucks, only one passenger is allowed in the front seat.

As a newly licensed driver participating in GDL, can I drive on 100-series highways?

Yes. There is no restriction on which highways you may use.

How long must I remain in the newly licensed or Class 5N stage?

At least two years.

What must I do to exit the newly licensed stage after the two-year period?

You must do two things: provide proof (in person or by mail) to the Registry of Motor Vehicles or Access Nova Scotia Centre that you completed a recognized driver training program and exchange your Class 5N licence for a regular Class 5 licence. You may mail in your Class 5N licence with a letter of explanation. However, if you mail in your Class 5N licence, you must not drive until you receive your Class 5 licence back. If you drive without your licence in your possession, you will be violating the Motor Vehicle Act.

Is there a charge for this service?

No fee is charged when you exchange your Class 5N for a Class 5 licence, provided your driver's licence is valid at the time of exchange. If your licence has expired you must pay the renewal fee.

What happens if I choose not to advance through the program?

You would remain a Class 5N driver and all the restrictions related to that class would apply indefinitely.

What are the main operating conditions placed on newly licensed drivers in the GDL program?

- Maintain a zero blood alcohol level.
- Drive only between 5 am and midnight.
- Have no more than one passenger in the front seat
- Carry only the number of passengers in the rear seat for which seat belts are available.
- No upgrade to a higher class of licence.

Are there penalties for violating the GDL program under the Motor Vehicle Act?

Yes. Fines will be levied and demerit points added to your driving record.

If you are convicted of a speeding violation, you could, in addition to any other penalty imposed, lose your driving privileges for one week and accumulate four demerit points on your driving record. You will remain in the GDL program. However, you will receive a letter requiring you to book an interview with a driver enhancement officer. You must attend this interview. If you fail to book an appointment or to attend the interview, your driving privileges could be suspended indefinitely.

If you are convicted of having care and control of a motor vehicle and have a blood alcohol content exceeding 0 milligrams (.00), you will accumulate six demerit points and will lose your driving privileges for six months.

Any time you accumulate six demerit points on your driving record, you will lose your driving privileges for six months. If you lose your driving privileges, you must complete a minimum two-year period as a newly licensed driver from the date your licence is restored or reinstated. This means that if you have held your Class 5N licence for one year and 11 months and your driving privileges are suspended, then you must start the two-year period for newly licensed drivers all over.

Are there any conditions under which I can operate a vehicle during the midnight-to-5 am driving curfew?

Yes. You may drive during curfew hours if you are accompanied by an experienced driver sitting in the front seat of the vehicle or if you have obtained an exemption from the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Do people who hold Class 8 farm tractor licences before October 1994 fall under the GDL program?

Yes. Once a Class 8 licence holder turns 16, that licence is also valid as a learner's licence (Class 7). The holder then falls under the restrictions of the GDL program.

What happens if I lose my driver-training program certificate?

You must contact the driving school or agency for a replacement certificate. You may have to pay to have it replaced.

Renewing Your Licence

You must renew your driver's licence every five years. You are responsible for making sure that this is done. Service Nova Scotia will send you a renewal notice approximately two months before your birthday to the address recorded at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Be sure to keep your address up to date. Bring the renewal notice to any Access Nova Scotia centre or Registry of Motor Vehicles office to have your licence renewed. If you do not receive a renewal notice you must complete an application to renew your driver's licence at any Access Nova Scotia centre or Registry of Motor Vehicle office. Holders of classes 1, 2, 3, and 4 licences must have a completed satisfactory medical upon renewal.

When renewing your driver's licence you must notify the customer service representative of the following:

- any changes in your physical or mental health that might limit or alter your ability to operate a vehicle. Examples of these changes include heart conditions, mental conditions, eye diseases, diabetes, strokes, substance abuse, conditions resulting in the loss of consciousness, and reduction in the use of a limb.
- any revocation or suspension of your licence

If you do not provide this information, then your driving privileges may not be renewed. Read the renewal application carefully before signing it.

If you have not paid all or part of a fine you have incurred plus the costs, the Registrar will refuse to provide further services until the fine and costs have been paid in full. You must pay a $30 fee to the Registry of Motor Vehicles to reinstate services.

Losing Your Licence

The possession of a driver's licence is a privilege that may be withdrawn for just cause at any time.

Mandatory revocation

Your licence or privilege of obtaining a licence will be revoked automatically if you are convicted of any of the following offences:

- failing to stop at the scene of a collision under the Criminal Code of Canada
- causing death or bodily harm due to negligence in the operation of a motor vehicle
- manslaughter resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle
- criminal negligence where you have not caused death or injury
- theft of a motor vehicle or taking a motor vehicle without the consent of the owner
- driving while impaired by alcohol or any drug
- failing or refusing to provide a breath sample
- driving with more than 80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood

- dangerous driving under the Criminal Code of Canada
- flight from a peace officer under the Criminal Code of Canada
- driving while disqualified due to revocation or suspension of your licence
- making a false affidavit or declaration
- refusing to provide a blood sample
- impaired driving causing death or injury

If you are convicted of any of these offenses, the revocation of your driver's licence will take place, whether or not you receive a notice from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

If your driver's licence has been revoked as a result of a conviction, it will remain revoked until you file an application to have it restored. You may apply to have your licence restored 30 days before your eligibility date (except where the revocation was for an alcohol-related offence). The application must be accompanied by the applicable fees (if your licence or driving privilege was revoked for an alcohol-related offence, the applicable fees may be higher).

If your driver's licence has been suspended or revoked for an alcohol-related driving offence, you must attend an Alcohol Assessment Program before you can get your driving privileges back. The Alcohol Assessment Program is sponsored by Addiction Services of the District Health Authority.

If you are convicted under the Criminal Code of Canada, the court will impose a prohibition order against driving a motor vehicle anywhere in Canada. This may be for a different period than the revocation period imposed under the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act.

Suspension without conviction

Your licence or privilege of obtaining a licence may be suspended without conviction if the Registrar has reason to believe that you

- have committed an offence that would result in mandatory revocation
- have caused or contributed to a collision that resulted in death, injury, or serious property damage by reckless or unlawful driving
- are incompetent to drive or have mental or physical disabilities that could cause you to drive unsafely
- are an habitual reckless or negligent driver
- have committed a serious violation of the Motor Vehicle Act or of the provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada relating to motor vehicles
- have operated a vehicle while the vehicle was being used for unlawful purposes
- are an habitual violator of the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act

Your licence may also be suspended if you

- lend your licence
- use another person's licence
- fail to obey restrictions imposed on your licence
- take a driver's test to obtain a licence for another person

The Registrar may suspend or revoke your driver's licence if

- a court, judge, or justice recommends it
- you fail or refuse to submit to an examination when required to do so
- you fail to provide information as requested
- you fail to take a driver training program when required
- you fail to successfully complete a driver training program when required
- you fail to submit a medical report from a qualified medical practitioner

The Registrar may also suspend or cancel the registration of a vehicle and may suspend or revoke any permit

- when the Department determines that the vehicle is unsafe or unfit to be operated or is not equipped as required by law
- when the vehicle is used for any unlawful purpose
- when the owner allows the vehicle to be used by another person who is not entitled to drive it
- when the driver's licence of the owner has been suspended or revoked

Court-imposed suspension

Your licence may be suspended by the court or magistrate if you are convicted of a violation under the Motor Vehicle Act. The suspension will be in addition to any fine that may be imposed. The period of suspension will vary according to the type of violation, and it depends on whether this is a first, second, third, or subsequent offence. Check the Motor Vehicle Act or the Criminal Code of Canada for suspension periods.

By accumulating too many demerit points

Demerit points are assigned to your driver's record if you are convicted of certain offences under the Motor Vehicle Act. These points remain on your driver's record for two years from the date of conviction. Points will be assigned to your record even if you did not have a licence at the time of the offense, or if you had an out-of-province licence. A record will be created and notice of the conviction will be sent to the proper province. If you are convicted in another province and that province sends the Registrar the conviction, it will be entered on your Nova Scotia driving record and the demerit points will be assigned as if the same offence occurred in Nova Scotia.

Demerit Points

The following table shows the number of demerit points assigned for convictions under various sections of the Motor Vehicle Act.

Conviction	Section(s)	Violated Number of Points
Careless and imprudent driving	100	6
Speeding or dangerous driving	101	6
Failing to stop at an accident or to perform any duty imposed by Section 97	97	6
Racing	163	6
Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) exceeds .00 (Zero)	100A(1)	6
Failing to comply with demand	100A(4)	6
Passing school bus	103(3)	6
Failing to obey a crossing guard	125A	6
Improper passing	114, 115(1)(a)	4
Speeding in excess of speed limit	102	4

Conviction	Section(s)	Violated Number of Points
Speeding in excess of posted limit – school area	103(1)	4
Speeding in excess of posted limit between 1 & 15 km/hr inclusive	106A(a)	2
Speeding in excess of posted limit between 16 & 30 km/hr inclusive	106A(b)	3
Speeding in excess of posted limit by 31 km/hr or more	106A(c)	4
Failing to yield to a pedestrian	125(1), 125(2)	4
Failing to obey a traffic control person	107B	4
Failing to obey traffic signs or signals or yield right of way	83(2), 93(2), 122, 132, 133, 134	2
Driving to the left of centre line	110, 115(1)(b), 115(1)(c), 115(2)	2
Operating motor vehicle without adequate brakes	181	2

Conviction	Section(s)	Violated Number of Points
Offences involving the use of a motor vehicle in motion under the following sections	70, 70A, 70B, 75(5), 107, 111, 112, 117, 118, 119, 120, 123, 164, 165, 169(2), 175(2), 175(3), 175(4), 178, 185	2

This table shows how the assignment of points would affect you.

	Warning Letter	Interview+	6-month suspension
Learner's Stage		2 points	4 points
Newly Licensed Driver's Licence	2	4	6
All Others	4	6	10

+If you are required to come in for an interview with a driver enhancement officer, you will be fully tested again, including a road test.

Probationary licence

If your driver's licence has been suspended because you have accumulated too many demerit points, then you will be issued a probationary licence once the suspension is over. The probationary licence will last for one year from your date of application. If during the life of the probationary licence you receive three new demerit points, then your licence will be suspended for a further six months.

Removing demerit points from your driving record

If you are an experienced driver (Classes 1-5), you may have demerit points removed from your driving record by successfully completing a recognized defensive-driving course.You must have completed the course within the last year. The Registrar may deduct up to four points in a five-year period, depending on your situation. This applies to points entered and still existing on your driving record at the time the Registrar makes a decision. Points will not be deducted if your licence has been suspended, you hold a probationary licence, or you owe fines. Newly licensed drivers (Class 5N) and holders of Class 7 or 8 licences are not eligible for point deduction.

Applying for a conditional driver's licence

If your licence has been suspended because of point accumulation, you may apply to the Registrar for a conditional driver's licence. This does not apply if you are a learner or if you hold a probationary licence. The conditional driver's licence allows you to drive at certain times or in certain places. If you accumulate any points while on a conditional licence or if you violate the driving conditions, then your conditional licence will be cancelled. No further licence will be issued to you until the original period of suspension has expired.

To apply for a conditional driver's licence, you must submit non-refundable applicable fees in addition to the applicable restoration fees.

Applying to have your driver's licence restored

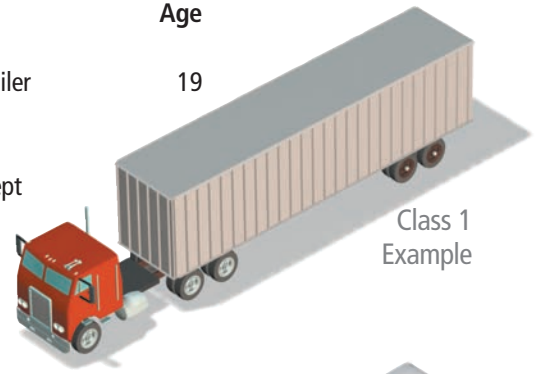
To have your licence restored after a suspension, you must submit a Notice of Application for Restoration and pay the required fees. You may apply 30 days before the expiry of your suspension date. You will be notified in writing of any further action required.

Driver Enhancement Re-examinations

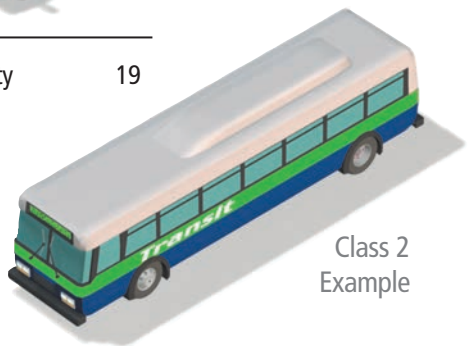
The Registrar may require that your physical condition or driving ability be re-examined at any time. This would normally come about because of a questionable driving record, due to such things as collisions and convictions. If a medical condition appears to be contributing to your driving problems, a medical report may be required. This medical report may be reviewed by the Medical Advisory Committee on Driver Licensing and its recommendation is given to the Registrar.

Classes of Driver's Licences

Licence Class	Permits the Licence Holder to Operate	Minimum Age
1	• semi-trailer and tractor trailer combinations • all types of vehicles in Classes 2,3,4,5 and 8 except school buses	19
2	• vehicles having a seating capacity of more than 24 passengers • all types of vehicles in Classes 3,4,5, and 8 except school buses	19
3	• any single vehicle over 14,000 kg (30,864 lbs) gross vehicle weight (G.V.W.) • any combination of vehicles (other than semi-trailer or tractor trailer combinations over 14,000 kg) G.V.W. where the towed vehicle in that combination does not exceed a G.V.W. of 4,500 kg (10,000 lbs) • all types of vehicles in Classes 4, 5, and 8 except school buses	18



Class 1 Example

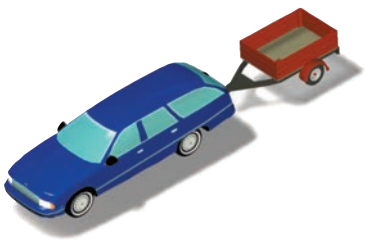


Class 2 Example

Class 3 Example

Licence Class	Permits the Licence Holder to Operate	Minimum Age
4	• buses under 24 passengers (except school buses), taxis, and ambulances • commercial vans as defined under the Motor Carrier Act and regulations • all types of vehicles in Classes 5 and 8 except school buses • must be at least 19 years of age to operate a public passenger vehicle	18
5 and 5N	• any single vehicle not exceeding 14,000 kg (30,864 lbs) G.V.W. which includes vans having a seating capacity of 10 or more and less than 24 • any combination of vehicles (other than semi-trailers or tractor trailer combinations) not exceeding in combination a G.V.W. of 14,000 kg (30,864 lbs), and the towed vehicles in that combination not exceeding a G.V.W. of 4,500kg (10,000 lbs) • vehicles in Class 8	16 with parental approval

Class 4 Examples



Class 5 and 5N Examples

Licence Class	Permits the Licence Holder to Operate	Minimum Age
6	• motorcycles and motor-driven cycles and vehicles in Class 8	16 with parental approval
7	• a learner's licence is valid only if the learner is accompanied by an experienced driver (2 years experience and not in the GDL program) who is a holder of a Class 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 valid driver's licence for the type of vehicle being operated	16 with parental approval
8	• farm tractors • from age 16 and also valid as a Class 7 learner's licence	14 with parental approval

Class 6 Example

Class 7 Example

Class 8 Example

All commercial drivers must file a medical report upon initial application, then upon renewal until the age of 64, and then annually thereafter.

Road tests must be taken in the correct vehicle type in order to get appropriate class endorsement.

Endorsements: Permission to drive additional vehicles

To show that you are qualified to drive various classes of vehicles, endorsements are added to your license. A letter will appear next to the class of license. This letter indicates which additional classes of vehicles you may operate. Letters A through E represent the respective vehicle types:

Endorsement (A)	valid for any motorcycle
Endorsement (B)	valid for school bus
Endorsement (C)	valid for motorcycle and school bus
Endorsement (D)	valid only for small motorcycle (engine size 100 cc or less)
Endorsement (E)	combination of B&D

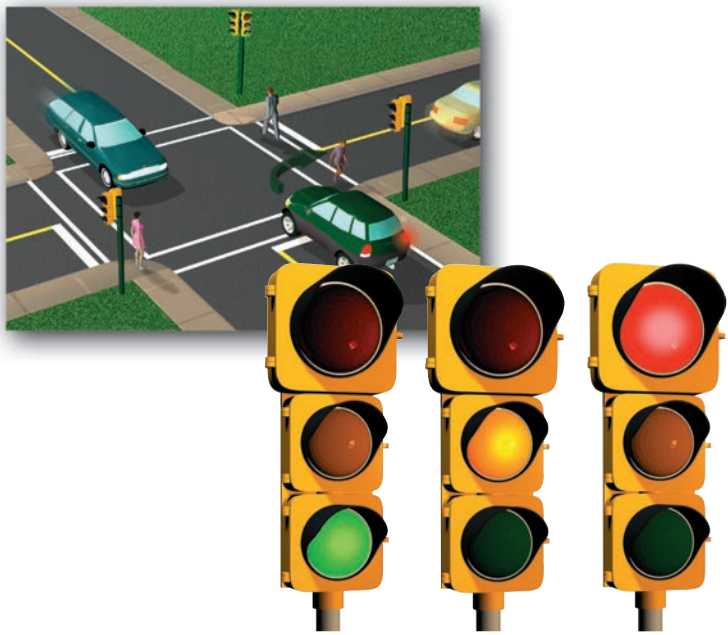
To obtain any one of these endorsements, make an appointment with the Registry of Motor Vehicles, bring a vehicle and any medical or optical reports (if required), and successfully complete a written test. You must also pass a road test in a vehicle for that class.

Conditions or restrictions on driver licences

Codes can be added to your licence to indicate that certain conditions or restrictions must be complied with. See some examples listed below.

(01) corrective lenses (glasses or corrective lenses must be worn when driving a vehicle)
(02) also valid as a learner's licence
(03) air brake endorsement (required in order to operate vehicles with air brakes)

Rules of the Road



2 Rules of the Road

This chapter explains the rules of the road including information about

- traffic control signals
- basic driving rules
- parking and stopping
- backing
- encountering other road users

Traffic Control

Vehicle and pedestrian traffic is controlled by a series of traffic signal lights, traffic signs, and pavement markings. The local traffic authority is responsible for traffic in cities or towns, while the provincial traffic authority is responsible for all other roadways in the province.

Traffic signal lights

Traffic signal lights control vehicle and pedestrian traffic at some intersections.

- A green signal light means that, when it is safe, you may go unless otherwise directed by a traffic sign or a peace officer. You must yield the right of way to pedestrians in the crosswalk, including persons in wheelchairs. You must also yield to other vehicles in the intersection or those approaching so closely as to be an immediate hazard. For vehicles turning left at a green signal light, you must yield the right of way to oncoming vehicles and any pedestrians that may be in your path.
- A yellow or amber signal light means that you must stop before entering the intersection, if you can stop safely.
- A red signal light means that all traffic facing this signal must stop at the place marked or at the nearest side of the crosswalk.

Green, Yellow, and Red Signal Lights

If the traffic signal lights are not working, treat the intersection as a multi-stop. Come to a full stop, then proceed when you have the right of way and it is safe to do so.
See page 44 for right-of-way rules at an intersection.

Green and Yellow Arrow Signal Lights

Tips:

- Stop for a yellow signal unless you are too close to the intersection to stop safely. In that case, drive cautiously through the intersection.
- Never speed up for a yellow signal to "beat" the red signal.
- Unless there is a sign showing "no turn on red," you may turn right on red after stopping and making sure that you can turn safely.
- It is illegal to make a left turn on a red light, except for left turns at a red light from a one-way street to another one-way street.

Arrow signals

Arrow signal lights control turning at some intersections. When facing a green signal light and a green arrow, turning traffic is controlled by the arrow signals and through traffic is controlled by the green signal lights.

- A green arrow means that you can turn in the direction of the arrow and proceed through the intersection.
- A yellow arrow means that you should stop, unless you are too close to the intersection to stop safely.
  In that case, drive cautiously through the intersection.

Flashing Red, Yellow, and Green Signal Lights

Flashing signals

- The flashing red signal has the same meaning as the stop sign: Stop and do not go until you can enter the intersection without interfering with approaching traffic.
- The flashing yellow or amber signal has the same meaning as a warning sign: Slow down and proceed with caution.

- The flashing green signal means that facing traffic may turn left, go straight ahead, or turn right.

Lane control signals

Some traffic lanes are controlled by special lane-control signal lights. These are used on some commuter routes when the direction of heaviest traffic changes throughout the day. The lights are mounted directly over the lane that they control. Never drive in a lane under a red X signal, regardless of any other signs or signals. You may drive in lanes underneath a green signal, but you must obey all other signs and signals.

Traffic signs

Traffic signs and pavement markings regulate the flow of traffic, warn you of conditions on the road ahead, and inform you about routes and distances. It is important to know the shapes of the signs and to understand their meanings. See Section 3 for information about signs.

Lane Control Signal Lights

Crosswalk guards

Crosswalk guards direct the movement of children along or across highways going to or from school. They signal drivers to stop by holding up a stop sign (paddle) facing the vehicle. Drivers must obey crossing guards appointed and employed for this purpose. Failure to do so could mean demerit points on your driving record.

Right of way

An intersection is any place where two or more roads meet or cross each other, marked and unmarked. Both vehicles and pedestrians must manage to pass through this common meeting place. With more than half of all traffic collisions occurring at intersections, it is important to know and understand the rules of the road. The rules of the road are set out in the Motor Vehicle Act and its associated regulations. These rules are designed to ensure driver and pedestrian safety. Drive defensively, and be prepared to yield the right of way.

Pedestrian at an Intersection With a Marked Crosswalk

Pedestrian at an Intersection With an Unmarked Crosswalk

Unmarked crosswalks

Every intersection has a crosswalk. Many are unmarked. Drivers must yield to pedestrians at all intersections, whether crosswalks are marked or unmarked.

Refer to the following situations:

- At intersections without traffic signals, pedestrians have the right of way if they are in marked crosswalks or in unmarked crosswalks formed by imaginary lines extending across the streets.
- At intersections controlled by traffic signals, pedestrians must obey the same signals as drivers travelling in the same direction. Pedestrians should not start to cross during a red or yellow signal.
- When crossing with a green signal, pedestrians have the right of way over all vehicles, including those turning across the paths of the pedestrians.
- If you are moving through an intersection with a green signal, make sure you look in all directions to make sure all pedestrians have finished their crossing.
- If a traffic signal changes to yellow or red while a pedestrian remains in the street, you must allow the pedestrian to complete the crossing safely.
- At some intersections, special signals instruct pedestrians either to "Walk" or "Don't Walk." When these signals are operating, pedestrians must obey them rather than regular traffic signals. Pedestrians crossing with the "Walk" signal have the right of way just as they do while crossing with a green light.

Intersection, Green Signal, Turning Right

Pedestrian Signal Lights

- The vehicle already in the intersection has the right of way ahead of any car that has not yet entered the intersection.

Intersection Right of Way - Vehicle already in intersection

- When two facing vehicles approach an intersection at the same time, both drivers can move straight ahead or turn right. If one driver is going straight while the other wants to turn left, the driver who wants to turn left must yield the right of way and wait until the turn can be made safely.
- When two or more vehicles reach an intersection at the same time, the car to the left must yield the right of way.
- Regardless of the "right of way" you feel you have, always be 100 per cent ready to yield to any oncoming vehicles when approaching an intersection if it will avoid a collision.
- Do not pass any vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk to allow a pedestrian to cross the street.

Tips:

- Make a proper lane change before entering the intersection. Never change lanes while you are moving through an intersection.
- When making a left turn, do not turn your wheels to the left until you are sure you can complete the turn. A collision could push your vehicle into oncoming traffic. Keep your wheels straight.

- Before starting, stopping, or turning, check to make sure that this can be done safely.
- When leaving a private driveway or parking lot, stop and yield the right of way to all other vehicles and pedestrians.

Emergency vehicles

Drivers of emergency vehicles and other vehicle drivers must share the responsibility of helping to deal with emergencies. Police cars, ambulances, and fire department vehicles with flashing lights and sirens have the right of way.

Intersection Right of Way - Vehicles reach at the same time

Follow these guidelines when approaching or being approached by an emergency vehicle:

- As the emergency vehicle approaches from ahead or behind, move to the right edge or curb of the road and stop completely.
- Remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has passed, or until you are directed to move by a peace officer.
- Never follow an emergency fire vehicle within 150 metres.
- Never drive or park within 150 metres of an emergency vehicle that has stopped to investigate a collision or to give assistance.
- Never drive a motor vehicle over a fire hose unless instructed to do so by a police officer or a firefighter.

Emergency Vehicles

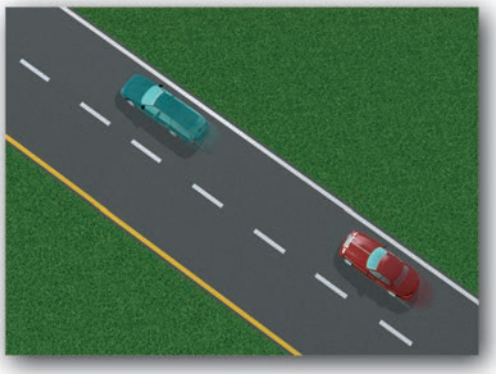
Basic Rules

Driving on the right

Drivers must drive on the right side of the road except when passing, turning left, or avoiding an obstruction. Slow-moving traffic must drive as closely as possible to the right edge or curb of the highway unless it is not practical to do so.

Do not hug the centre line as it poses a greater risk of head-on collision. Drive entirely or as nearly as is practical within a single lane. Don't move from that lane until it is safe to do so.

On a multi-lane highway slower vehicles should travel in the right lane. Driving at the speed limit doesn't entitle you to "camp" in the left lane which means to stay in the lane indefinitely. The left lane is a transition lane designed for passing. If you remain in the left lane, other drivers may try to pass you on the right. Passing on the right is not as safe as on the left because it is much more difficult to predict what everyone is going to do.

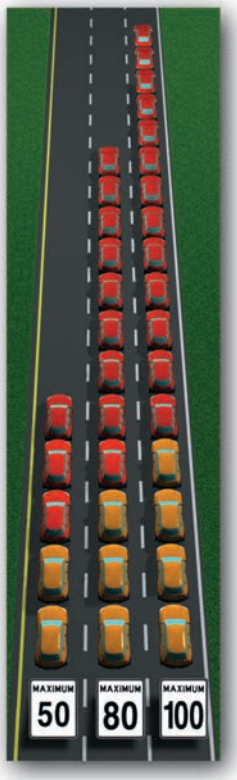


Driving on the Right

Stopping distances

The speed at which you drive determines the distance required to stop your vehicle. Stopping distance also depends on your reaction time. Stopping distances are longer at higher speeds because your vehicle travels farther during your reaction time, and it takes more braking distance to come to a full stop. Even in ideal conditions, if you are travelling at 80 km/h, your vehicle requires more than 140 metres (460 feet) to stop completely.

Driving at high speeds is more dangerous. With each additional kilometre travelled per hour, you reduce your ability to control the vehicle. Speed also increases the likelihood that a crash will cause serious injury or death.



Yellow indicates reaction distance. Red indicates braking distance.

50 km per hour
Reaction
Distance 35 m
Braking
Distance 28 m
Total Stopping
Distance 63 m

80 km per hour
Reaction
Distance 56 m
Braking
Distance 84 m
Total Stopping
Distance 140 m

100 km per hour
Reaction
Distance 69 m
Braking
Distance 136 m
Total Stopping
Distance 205 m

110 km per hour
Reaction
Distance 76 m
Braking
Distance 170 m
Total Stopping
Distance 246 m

Driving too slowly

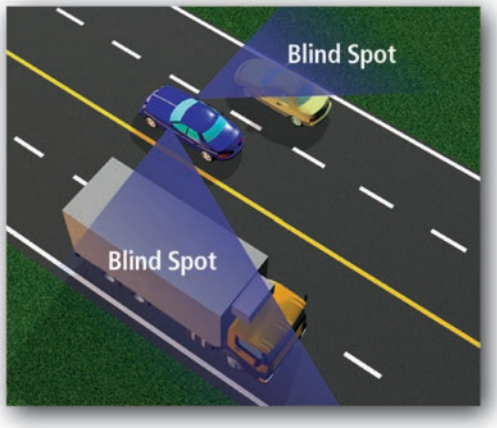
Driving below the posted speed limit in ideal conditions can also be dangerous. Studies show that a vehicle moving at a speed considerably below the posted limit is much more likely to cause or be involved in a crash than a vehicle moving at a normal speed.

Driving slowly is especially dangerous just beyond the crest of a hill or around a curve. The slowly moving vehicle is often hidden by the hill or curve. Faster-moving vehicles may crash into the slower-moving vehicles before they can slow down.

You should not drive your vehicle at such a slow speed as to block the normal and reasonable flow of traffic. A slow driver must stop where it is safe to do so and allow blocked traffic to pass. Once the blocked traffic has passed, the slow driver may resume driving until the following traffic begins to build up.

Using the safety scan

A safety scan is your best defence for avoiding hazards and other dangers. This means frequently moving your head and your eyes to check what is happening all around your vehicle. Frequently check the rearview and sideview mirrors, and be sure to do a shoulder check for your blind spots, especially before turning or changing lanes.



Blind Spots

Blind spots

Rear and side view mirrors assist you in seeing what is behind your vehicle. However, there is an area on each side that you cannot see with your mirrors. These are called blind spots. They are usually to the back left and back right of your vehicle. You may not see people, vehicles, or other objects when they are in these spots. Make it a practice to turn your head to look over your shoulder checking your blind spots. It is particularly important to check your blind spots before changing lanes or turning.

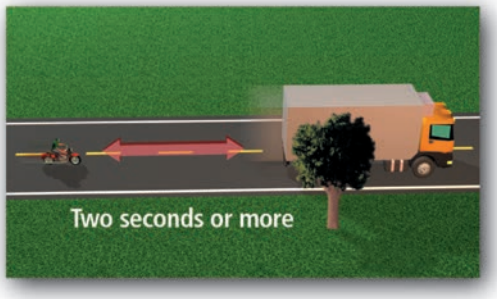
Two-second rule

Whenever you are following other vehicles in traffic you should allow enough space to stop safely if the vehicle in front stops suddenly. One way to judge a safe following distance is to use the "two-second rule."

1. Pick a landmark on the side of the highway ahead, such as a road sign or power pole.
2. When the vehicle you are following passes the landmark, count "one thousand and one, one thousand and two."
3. When your vehicle reaches the landmark stop counting. If you reach the landmark before you count "one thousand and two," you are following too close to the vehicle in front of you.

Although the two-second rule is sufficient for most driving situations, it is important to allow more distance on slippery roads or when your visibility is reduced by fog, rain, snow, or the glare of the sun, or when following large commercial vehicles that block your view of the road ahead.

You should also increase the distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you if you are carrying a heavy load. Carrying a heavy load will increase your stopping distance. You should also increase the distance between your vehicle and a smaller vehicle such as a motorcycle which can stop more quickly than you.



Two-Second Rule

Choosing a safe speed

Despite posted speed limits, you must drive at a speed and in a manner that will not endanger the life, limb, or property of others. You must consider all circumstances including general visibility, the weather, heavy traffic, and whether the road is wet or slippery.

- Never drive faster than the posted speed limit or at a speed that is not reasonable for the prevailing conditions.
- Allow a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Follow the two-second rule.
- The faster you are moving, the farther ahead you must be able to see to allow enough distance for stopping.

Conditions often change as you drive. You will drive through different areas such as open country, residential communities, and school zones. Watch for changing conditions and adjust your speed accordingly. Be extremely careful when driving through highway construction zones. Reduce your speed when workers are present.

Unless otherwise posted, the maximum speed permitted on any highway in Nova Scotia is 80 km/h. In business and residential districts the speed limit is 50 km/h. Regardless of posted speed limits, your speed must be reasonable and prudent and must take into account the traffic, the surface and width of the highway, and all driving conditions existing at the time.

The following is a list of situations where the maximum speed limit is set at 50 km/h:

- when passing a school building or grounds during school recess, while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours, or any other time that children are present where the speed limit prior to entering the School Zone is greater than 50 km/h
- when passing a church while the congregation is entering or leaving the church
- within 15 metres of an intersection where your view is reduced to less than 60 metres in either direction along any intersecting highway. The exception to this would be when travelling upon a through street or highway or at traffic-controlled intersections
- in public parks within cities or towns, unless another rate of speed is posted
- when approaching within 30 metres of a railway crossing
- in a residential district
- in a business district
- in a danger zone

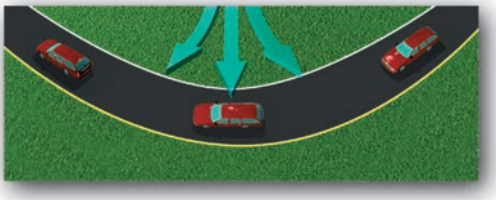
School zone

When children are present in a school zone, it is an offence to drive in excess of 30 km/h in areas where the approaching speed limit is 50km/h, or 50km/h where the approaching speed limit is higher than 50km/h whatever the time of day.

Curves or sharp turns

Your moving vehicle develops a force called momentum. The higher the speed, the greater the force. When you enter a curve, the momentum converts to centrifugal force. This means that the force pushes your vehicle away from the centre of the curve. Excessive speed, poor traction, or poor conditions while steering through a curve could cause you to skid and to lose control.

The proper driving speed at which you should enter a curve depends on the sharpness of the curve, the road's surface, the current driving conditions, and the condition of your vehicle and tires. Warning signs mark many curves on the highway where you should reduce your speed. While most curves without warning signs may be safe to enter at the posted speed limit, some may not. As you approach an unfamiliar curve assess the situation. Make note of the sharpness of the curve and whether you can see all the way through.



Rounding a Curve:
1 Slow down/ downshift as you enter the curve
2 Maintain slower speed
3 Gently increase your speed

As you approach a curve

- reduce your speed so that you enter the curve at a speed that will allow you to avoid additional braking
- at the midpoint of the curve, gradually accelerate to create a positive force, pulling you smoothly through the curve
- stay on your side of the road and drive as far to the right as you can for curves to the right, and in the middle of your lane for curves to the left

Collisions can occur when you enter the curve too fast and are forced to brake in the curve. If the road is slippery, a slight force could be enough to cause a skid and push your car off the road. Never stop, park, or make a U-turn in a curve. Since curves (and hills) obstruct the view of the road, do not pass or back up within a curve.

Using your signal lights and horn

Your vehicle must be equipped with signal lights that are working properly and a horn that is in good working order. Before starting, stopping, or turning, check to see that you can do so safely. Use your signal lights to show your driving intentions to other vehicles. When a pedestrian or another vehicle may be affected, you must sound your horn. The sound must be clearly audible to pedestrians and other drivers.

You may use hand-and-arm signals, but do so cautiously. Hand-and-arm signals may not be seen as readily as vehicle signals.

If the construction of your vehicle or the load it is carrying limits the visibility of hand-and-arm signals, then you must use signal lights. Specifically, the Motor Vehicle Act says that you must use signal lights if any portion of the vehicle, or the load on the vehicle, extends more than 60 cm to the left of the centre of the vehicle's steering wheel.

Signalling does not give you the right of way. You must make sure the way is clear and safe.

Left Turn

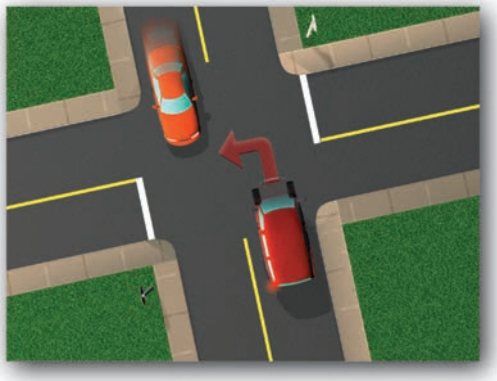
Right Turn

Slowing Down/Stopping

Hand Signals and Signal Lights

Turning

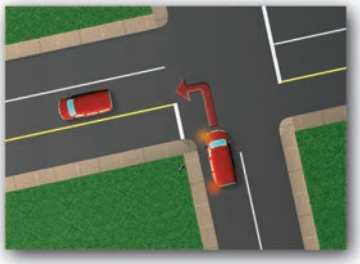
Reduce speed before making turns, do a shoulder check, yield the right of way, and then accelerate slightly. For right turns, you must wait for pedestrians to cross if they are in your path. Stay close to the right-hand edge of the road so that another vehicle cannot move between your vehicle and the curb.



Wheel position while turning left

If you intend to turn left, you must first yield to approaching vehicles and then, when the way is clear, complete the turn. You must wait for pedestrians to cross if they are in your path.

If you are stopped in position to make a left turn and are waiting for opposing traffic, do not turn the steering wheel to the left until you are sure you can complete the turn. If you are struck from the rear while stopped with the wheels turned to the left, your vehicle may be pushed into opposing traffic and cause another collision.



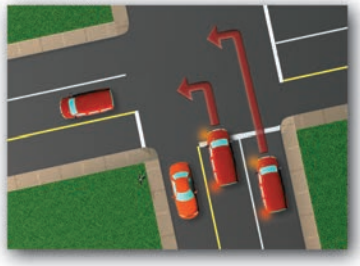
One-way road to a two-way road. Turn from the left curb lane to the lane just right of the centre line. Then, when you can, move into the right curb lane.

Do not turn from a direct course unless the turn is allowed and it can be made safely.

Motorcycles and bicycles are especially hard to see during a turn. Always give a proper signal. Do a safety scan. Make the turn only when it is safe to do so.

Here are some tips to make turns legally and safely:

- Prepare for the turn before you get there. Decide in advance where you want to turn. If you are not sure, drive slowly until you can read the street signs or markers or decide the direction you wish to turn. Don't make last-minute turns. They are dangerous.
- Signal your intention to change lanes and turn.
- Move into the correct lane as traffic permits, especially in fast-moving or heavy traffic.
- Look behind and on both sides to see where other traffic may be so that you can change lanes and make the turn safely.
- To make the turn safely, slow down before you reach the crosswalk and maintain a safe speed as you complete the turn. Do not use the brake or clutch pedal while turning. Do not shift gears after entering the intersection.
- Make the turn correctly. This will be easy if you are in the proper lane and are travelling slowly enough when you start the turn.
- Finish your turn at intersections in the proper lane. If there are two turning lanes, stay in the lane that you are in from the beginning to the end of the turn. For instance, if you begin turning in the right turning lane, you will enter the next roadway in the right receiving lane (refer to illustrations).
- Exceptions apply to large commercial vehicles that require sufficient room to make the turn safely. Be aware that large commercial vehicles sometimes require wide right turns.

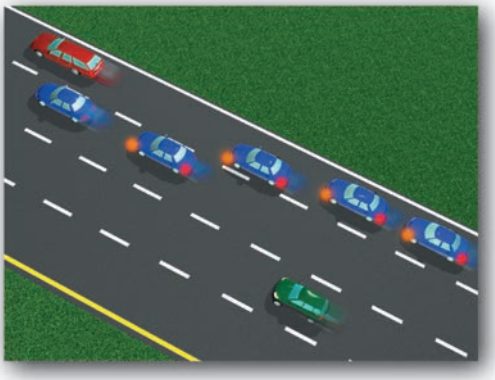


Two-way road to a two-way road. Turn from the lane closest to the centre line into the lane right of the centre line. Then, when you can, move into the right curb lane.

Two-way road to a one-way road. Turn from the lane closest to the centre line into the left curb lane.

Following

Following too closely is a leading cause of traffic collisions. Maintain plenty of space between your vehicle and the one ahead. If the vehicle ahead stops suddenly, you will need time to react. On the open road, keep enough distance between you and the vehicle ahead so that a passing vehicle can safely move into and occupy the space. Remember to use the two-second rule.



Changing lanes

On a highway with multiple lanes of traffic, do a safety scan to check your blind spots. Check the lane you are changing to and the next lane beyond that, to be certain that another vehicle is not planning to move into the same space.

Here are the steps for making a lane change:

1 Check your mirrors for a safe spot in the traffic where you can enter.

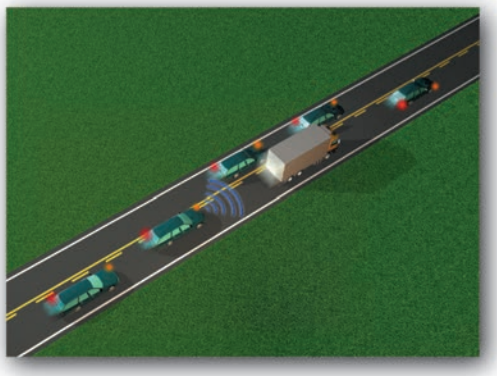
2 Check your blind spot by looking over your shoulder in the direction of the lane change. Use your signal light to indicate which direction you will be moving.

3 Check again to be certain that no vehicle is approaching too fast from behind.

4 Steer gradually into the new lane. Do not slow down, but maintain the same speed or gently increase it.

Overtaking and passing

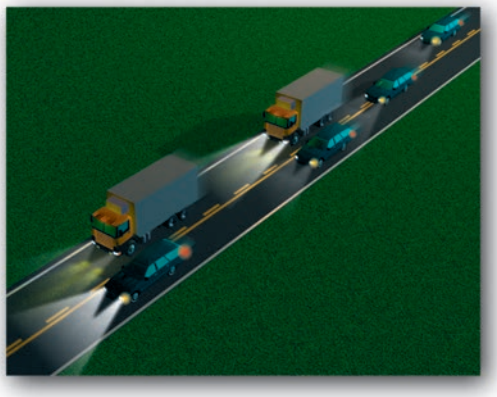
You must signal your intention to pass and sound your horn before overtaking and passing another vehicle. The horn signal places the driver of the vehicle you are passing under a legal obligation to help you to pass. The driver of the vehicle being overtaken must give way to the passing vehicle. The vehicle being passed must not increase speed until completely passed by the overtaking vehicle.



Passing, Signal Intention, Sound Horn

On roadways with two-way traffic, you must take precautions in order to pass safely. Take the time to determine if there is sufficient distance ahead to pass without disrupting the safe operation of approaching vehicles. The left side of the highway must be clearly visible and free of oncoming traffic. You must pass to the left of the vehicle you are overtaking and return to the right when the lane is clear and it is safe to do so. Whenever there are only two lanes, never follow another vehicle that has already begun to pass a slower-moving vehicle. Wait for the first vehicle to pass safely and then proceed.

When passing at night, use low-beam headlights until you have completed your pass.



Passing at Night

Many serious collisions are caused by improper passing. Take every precaution and make sure you are in a passing zone and that it is safe to pass. Here are some tips to consider:

- Is passing necessary? Often very little is to be gained by passing another vehicle. Experienced drivers will tell you that over a 100-km stretch of highway, aggressive driving will decrease driving time by less than two minutes while substantially increasing the risk of a collision.
- Stay back. Moving up closely behind another vehicle reduces your stopping distance and can obscure your vision, making it unsafe to pass.
- Drive defensively, checking for other vehicles that may be passing.
- Do a safety scan, looking ahead and behind to determine when it is safe to pass.
- If it is safe to pass, signal your intention to pass to alert the drivers ahead and behind you to enable them to plan their moves accordingly.
- Check your blind spot by looking over your left shoulder (chin to shoulder).
- Move left gradually.
- Accelerate, but do not exceed the posted speed limit.
- As required by law, sound your horn when you reach the rear of the vehicle you are overtaking.
- Turn your right signal on after you have passed. Look over your right shoulder (chin to shoulder).
- Move right when the headlights of the vehicle you have passed are visible in your rearview mirror.
- Resume normal speed. Turn off your signal light.

You have not passed safely if the vehicle you have passed must slow down to allow you back into your correct lane.

Places where passing is always unsafe and usually illegal:

- at intersections in cities and towns or at railway crossings
- at marked intersections in rural areas
- on any curve or hill where you cannot see at least 150 metres ahead
- wherever there is a solid yellow line in the driver's lane combined with a broken line in the approaching lane
- wherever there is a double solid yellow line
- at intersections or crosswalks where a car has stopped to yield to pedestrians
- wherever you cannot see far enough ahead to pass safely

Passing on the right

On a multi-lane highway, operating a vehicle at the speed limit doesn't entitle you to remain in the left lane indefinitely. You should generally travel in the right lane. On highways with two or more substantially continuous lanes, you may pass another vehicle from the right or left. In this instance you may pass another vehicle on the right if that vehicle is making a left turn. Passing on the right places your vehicle on the blind side of the car you are passing. The car you are passing could unexpectedly make a right turn or pull over to the right side of the road.

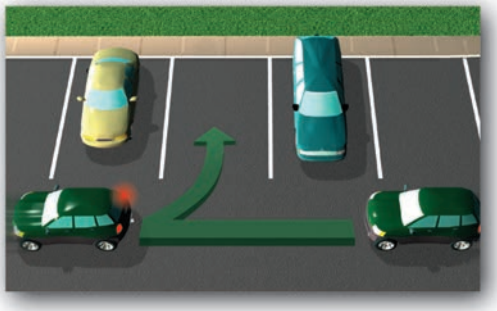
When your vehicle is being passed

When you are being passed, you must help the other driver to pass. If the driver of the passing car blows the horn, move to the right edge of the pavement. Never increase your speed.

Backing

Never back up unless you can do so safely. Watch for children or objects which may be hidden from view once you're sitting behind the wheel.

Safety Scan



Backing Up

Shift the car into reverse with your foot on the brake. Hold the steering wheel firmly with one hand in the 12 o'clock position. This way you can do a safety scan over both shoulders. Whether you are backing straight or to the right or left, turn your body and head to the right and look back over your right shoulder. Your left hand will be in the 12 o'clock position on the steering wheel. Begin backing slowly. Within the first few feet, check to see that the front end of your vehicle does not hit anything. Make steering adjustments as necessary. Continue to scan in all directions.

You may remove your seat belt to turn your body to see properly when backing. Don't forget to fasten your seat belt again before moving forward.

Parking and stopping

There are many rules relating to parking. Obey signs that restrict stopping, standing, or parking, but be aware that not all parking by-laws are posted on signs.

If it is necessary to stop, make sure that your vehicle is clear of the travelled portion of the highway. You may not park a vehicle on a street or highway for a period longer than 24 hours. Whenever your vehicle is left standing unattended, apply the parking brake and turn off the engine. Curbside wheels must be within 15 centimetres of the curb or edge of the road.

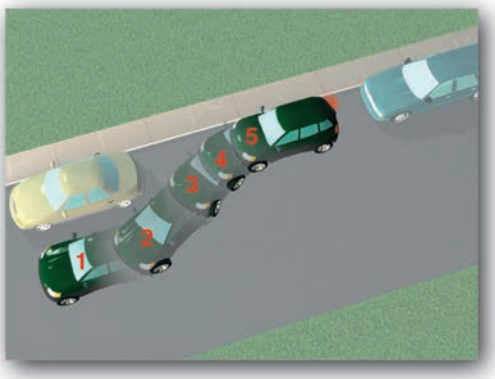
Your vehicle is considered stopped or parked if it is occupied or unoccupied and not moving. You may not stop or park a vehicle in any of the following places:

- on the crest of a hill or on a curve where the view of an approaching driver is obstructed
- where you will block a vehicle already parked, or where you will block a sidewalk, pedestrian crossing, road entrance, or private driveway
- within 5 metres of a crosswalk
- within 5 metres of a fire hydrant or driveway entrance to a fire station
- within 7.5 metres of an intersection
- within 10 metres of the approach to any official flashing beacon, stop sign, yield sign, or traffic control signal located at the side of the roadway
- within 15 metres of the nearest rail of a railway crossing
- alongside or opposite any street or highway excavation or obstruction when the stopping, standing, or parking would obstruct traffic
- on the roadway side of any vehicle stopped. This is called double parking
- in a space designated for "Persons with Mobility Disability" unless you have a permit or special plate

Parallel parking

If you are parking, turn on your appropriate signal and slow down. You may have to come to a complete stop early to force the vehicles behind you to stop back far enough so that you can park safely.

1. Then slowly proceed parallel to and approximately one metre from the side of the parked vehicle until the rear bumpers are even.
2. Do a safety scan. When it is safe, back slowly, turning the steering wheel sharply to the right until your vehicle is at a 40° angle, or until the centre of the rear window is in line with the point between the curb and the car behind.
3. Straighten your wheels and back slowly until your front bumper is clear of the parked vehicle.
4. Turn the steering wheel sharply in the opposite direction and slowly edge the car parallel to the curb.
5. Straighten your wheels and move forward or backward until your vehicle is centred in the parking space. Curbside wheels must be within 15 centimetres of the curb or edge of the road.



Parallel Parking

When you are properly parked, set the parking brake and move the gear selector into park and turn off your engine. For a manual transmission, shift into reverse if parked facing downhill or first if parked facing uphill. Remember to remove the key from the ignition. Check for traffic before opening your door. Lock your vehicle.

If you are driving and notice that a car ahead of you is pulling out from a parallel parking space, slow down and be prepared to stop.

Angle parking

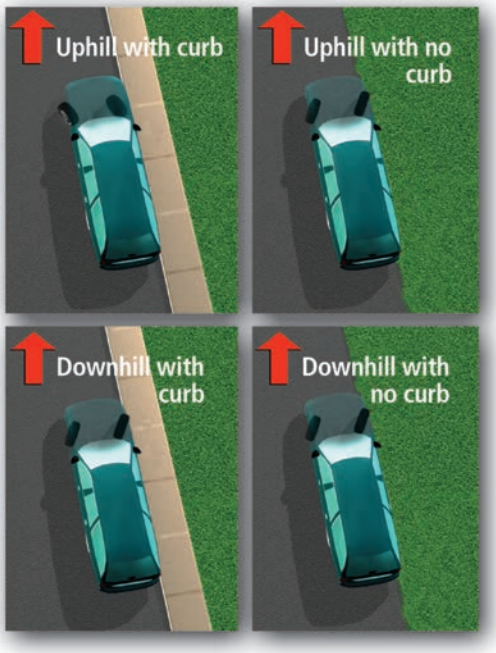
Angle parking is commonly used in parking lots, at shopping centres, and on very wide streets. Steps to complete angle parking:

1. Signal your intention to park and slow down.
2. Remain parallel to the curb at least 1.5 metres out from the other parked cars.
3. When your front end is even with the rear of the parking space, move slowly while turning the steering wheel to the right.
4. Straighten your wheels, trying to position the vehicle in the centre of the parking space.
5. Continue forward until the front of your car lines up with other parked cars or until the front wheels barely touch the curb.

When leaving an angled parking space, do a safety scan and remember to do a number of shoulder checks while backing. Watch your front end to avoid hitting anything. Back out straight all the way until the front end of your vehicle is clear of adjacent parked vehicles.

Parking on a hill

When parking on a hill or grade, turn the front wheels so that if your vehicle rolls away, it will roll into the curb and stop. Apply parking brake and then place shift lever in park position. When parking without a curb, turn your wheels so that the vehicle will roll off the highway rather than into traffic.



Parking on a Hill

For facing downhill with or without a curb, turn your wheels to the right. For facing uphill with a curb, turn your wheels to the left and for uphill without a curb, turn your wheels to the right. The curbside wheels must be within 15 cm of the curb or edge of the roadway.

Travelling through roundabouts and rotaries

Roundabouts and rotaries are specially designed intersections with traffic circulating around a central island. Vehicles entering the roundabout or rotary must yield to traffic in the circle. Drivers in the circle have right of way over entering traffic. Motorists must always yield to pedestrians who are legally crossing the road and be courteous towards cyclists who are sharing the road.

Slow down as you approach the intersection; roundabouts are designed for speeds of 30–50 km/h. Follow directions on signs or pavement markings about which lane to use. Enter the roundabout or rotary when there is a gap in traffic. Watch for vehicles already on the roundabout or rotary; be aware that they may not be signaling correctly or at all.

All vehicles in the roundabout or rotary must travel to the right around the central island. Drive around the circle in a counterclockwise direction until you come to the road or street where you want to exit. To leave the roundabout or rotary, activate your turn signal and exit to the right.

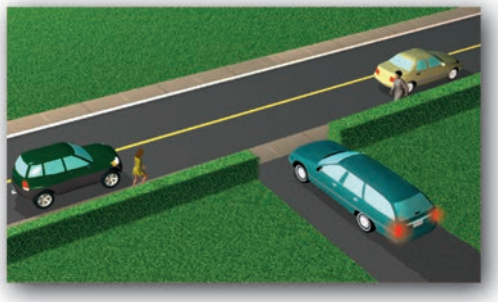
If there is more than one lane in the circle, safely move into the correct lane before you come to the place where you intend to exit the circle. Look, signal, and use caution as you change lanes and leave the circle. Never exit a roundabout or rotary from an inside lane.

These rules apply unless the roundabout or rotary is controlled by other signs or traffic signals.

Entering and leaving driveways

When entering or leaving driveways, you must yield the right of way to pedestrians crossing in front of you and to all vehicles approaching on the street.

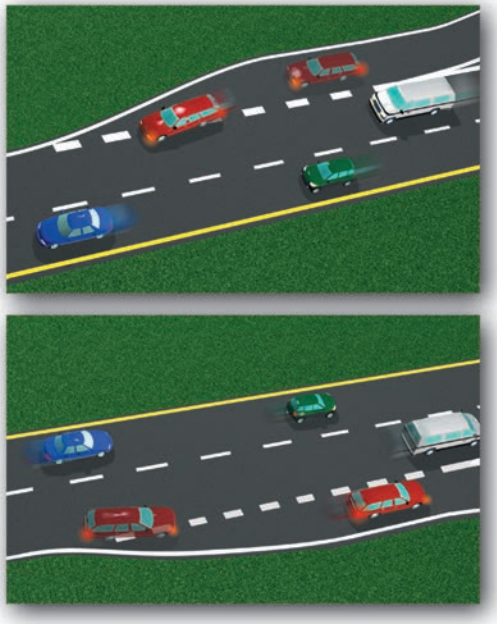
Before emerging from an alley, driveway, or building in a business or residential district, you must stop your vehicle immediately before driving on the sidewalk or on the sidewalk area extending across any alleyway.



Entering and Leaving Driveways

Using controlled-access highways

The provincial 100-series highways are designed for more convenient and safer driving. These highways are being upgraded as divided multi-lane roadways with restricted or limited access. Controlled access is permitted at specially designed intersections called interchanges.



Entrance and Exit Ramp to Highway

These areas require the driver's full attention because one group of drivers is slowing down to exit the controlled-access highway while, at the same time, another group is speeding up to enter the same highway. Use extreme caution in these zones to ensure a safe and proper manoeuvre for all involved vehicles. Signs will be posted to inform you whether to merge, yield, or stop. In all these situations, you will be required to yield to through traffic until a safe gap can be identified before you enter the highway.

As you approach an interchange, give careful attention to the directions on the roadway signs leading up to the interchange.

Tips

When driving on controlled-access highways, follow these rules:

- Plan your trip in advance.
- Be sure to check the vehicle's water, oil, tires, and gas before leaving on your trip.
- Decide in advance where you must enter and exit the highway.

- When entering the highway,use the acceleration lane until your vehicle's speed matches that of the other traffic, and then merge safely.
- Keep to the right, and use the left lanes for passing only.
- Maintain a minimum two-second following distance, and do not tailgate. One of the most frequent types of crashes on major highways is the rear-end crash.
- Remember that faster speeds require greater stopping distances and times.
- Stop at indicated rest areas frequently, preferably at least once every 150–200 km.
- Never stop in the traffic lane.
- If a vehicle breakdown forces you to stop, move far off the road. Tie a white cloth on the radio aerial or left door handle. If the breakdown occurs at night, engage the vehicle's emergency flashers or parking lights. (If you are a driver who spots a vehicle in distress, contact the police.)
- When leaving the highway, signal your turn well in advance, and, without slowing down, enter the deceleration lane. Slow down and proceed at the posted ramp speed limit. Most exit ramps are to the right. Changes in direction are then made where the exit ramp intersects another roadway.
- Be aware of cars in the lanes next to you.

Drivers and large commercial vehicles

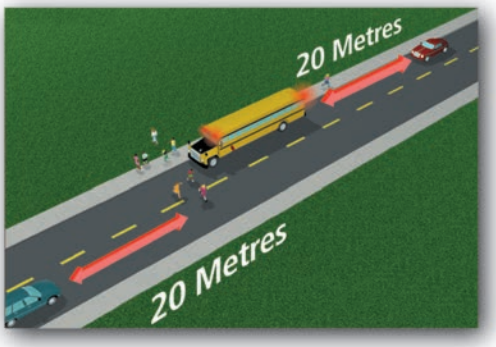
There is nothing more imposing on the highway than a commercial vehicle transporting tonnes of cargo. Show respect and use extra caution when driving near such vehicles. Allow extra room when passing. Maintain an appropriate speed when climbing a hill and even more so when descending. A fully loaded commercial vehicle descending a hill is like a heavy pendulum. It requires a professional driver using his or her knowledge and skill to keep the vehicle under control. It is very important to keep your speed up. Remember, this vehicle uses the downhill force to gain momentum to climb the next hill

(within the speed limit). Keep your distance and maintain an appropriate speed. It is illegal for the driver of a commercial motor vehicle to follow within 60 metres of another vehicle. This rule applies when travelling on a highway outside a business or residential district, but does not apply when overtaking and passing another vehicle. Whether you are in the passenger vehicle or in the commercial vehicle, all drivers share the responsibility to drive defensively.

Drivers and school buses

During the hours that school buses are operating (generally 7–9 am and 2–4 pm), drivers should be especially careful. Children waiting for the bus or getting off the bus might dart into the street unexpectedly. Observe the flashing lights on the school bus:

- Amber flashing lights alert you that the bus is about to stop. Passing is allowed, but use extra caution and be alert for the red flashing lights.
- Red flashing lights are used when the school bus is stopped to pick up or discharge students. The bus must also display a mechanical STOP sign with alternately flashing red lights. All drivers must halt from behind or in front of a school bus when red lights are flashing. You must stop. Do not pass a school bus with alternating flashing red lights at any time or place or from either direction, including a divided boulevard.



School Bus with flashing red lights – correct stopping distance

It is illegal for you to exceed 50 km/h in a school zone when children are present, whatever the time or day. Children may be playing on the school playground after school hours or on the weekend. At school crossings, both drivers and pedestrians must obey the instructions of the crossing guard.

Watch for children around school buses and school bus stops. Drive accordingly.

Drivers and motorcycles

The driver of a motorcycle is entitled to a full highway lane. This is both a right and a safety precaution. Allow extra space between your vehicle and the motorcycle so that you both can react to quick stops and other potential hazards with more manoeuvring room. Most fatal motorcycle crashes involve collisions with automobiles. Usually, the vehicle driver did not see the motorcyclist. More than half of these collisions occur under good driving conditions.
Safety considerations:

- Be aware of all motorists around you and their right to space.
- Be aware of your own limitations and drive within them.
- Motorcyclists should make themselves more visible by wearing appropriate clothing with reflective material for night driving, but they may not. So be careful. Always drive defensively.

Drivers and bicycles

Riders of bicycles must obey the same traffic rules and regulations that apply to all road users. Unfortunately, not all bicycle riders know or understand this, especially young children. So you have an extra responsibility to use caution around bicyclists, especially children. You must also respect the bicyclist's right to share the road.

Sharing the Road with Bicycles

The Motorist: According to the Nova Scotia *Motor Vehicle Act*, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. Respect for the rights of all road users goes a long way towards avoiding collisions.

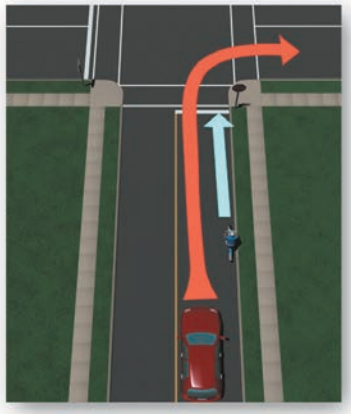
The Cyclist: According to the *Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act* cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. When cyclists and motorists follow the same set of rules, the chance of a collision is greatly reduced.

Preventing crashes

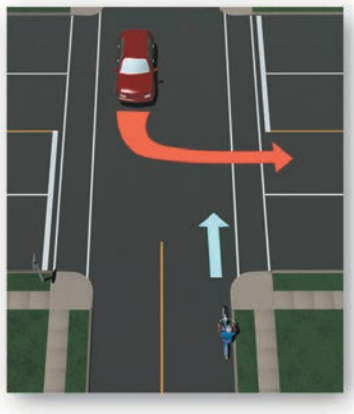
Watch For Bicyclists: Most collisions involving bicyclists and motorists occur at intersections. This often happens when a motorist pulls out from a stop sign or driveway without yielding, or turns across a bicyclist's path.

Common car-bike collisions

"Right Hook": Many motorists misjudge the speed of bicycles; they can travel faster than you think! (Experienced cyclists can travel at 25-35 km/h on a flat surface and up to 50km/h going downhill.) This misjudgment causes the motorist to pass and turn directly in front of the bicyclist. Scan the side of the road for bicyclists, and if it is not safe to pass before turning, slow down and move behind the cyclist before making the turn. DO NOT pass and cut!



"Left Cross": Motorists making turns which cross oncoming traffic must watch for cyclists as well as motor vehicles. Too often, motorists misjudge the speed of an oncoming bicyclist and turn in front of them. Motorists should always stop and wait for oncoming traffic, including bicycles, to pass before turning.



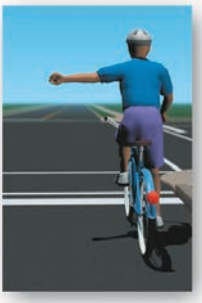
Getting Doored: When exiting your car, look behind you for approaching bicyclists. Don't open your door unless it's safe to do so.

Please keep in mind that bicycles are much more vulnerable in a collision. Motorists must realize that they are operating a large vehicle and with that comes the responsibility to ensure that it is safely operated.

Cycling strategies: Be visible, be predictable

Where To Ride on the Road: Ride on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic. Use as much of the lane as required to be safe from roadside hazards.

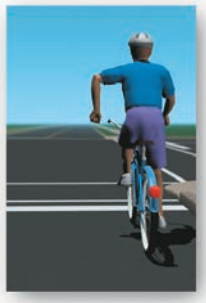
Signals: Use these hand signals to indicate a turn or a stop. An alternative right hand signal is widely recognized.



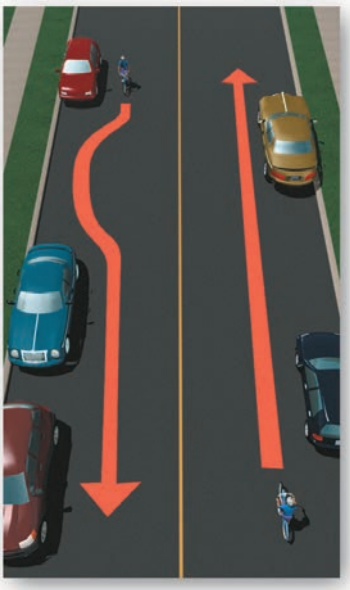
Left turn signal

Right turn signal

Alternative right turn signal



Slowing/stopping signal



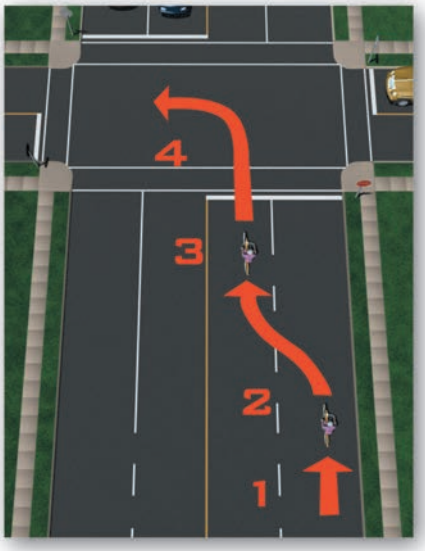
Ride a Straight Course: Don't weave between parked cars. Otherwise, a motorist may lose sight of you and there could be a collision if you suddenly pop out in traffic again. Stay at least one metre from parked cars to avoid opening doors.

Look Behind You: Learn to quickly scan the traffic behind you without swerving. A rear view mirror helps to view traffic; however a lane change requires a look behind, which also signals your intention to motorists.

Be Careful at Intersections: Intersections can be dangerous for cyclists. At a four-way stop, it is important for cyclists to remain in line with the flow of traffic and to wait their turn. Right-turn lanes are for traffic that is making a turn; don't go into a turn lane if you are going to travel straight ahead.

Vehicular Left Turn: Signal and look behind you. When there's an opening, move into the left lane and turn from near the centre line.

Pedestrian Left Turn: The safest way to turn left on a busy street includes a little walking too. Get off your bicycle and walk it across the intersection using the crosswalk. Wait for the light to change and walk your bicycle across to the next corner, using the crosswalk.



Vehicular Left Turn

Pedestrian Left Turn

Safety equipment

Lights: When riding at night, you must use a white front light and red rear reflector (a rear-facing flashing red light, like an LED, is okay too). Reflectors and reflective tape on your helmet, clothes or bicycle also make you more visible.

Horn: Attach a horn or bell to your handle bars and use it to warn pedestrians and other vehicles that you are near them.

Helmet Safety: By law, you must use a bicycle helmet when operating a bicycle. A properly fitted helmet greatly reduces the risk of brain injuries, the leading type of fatal or disabling injury to bicyclists.

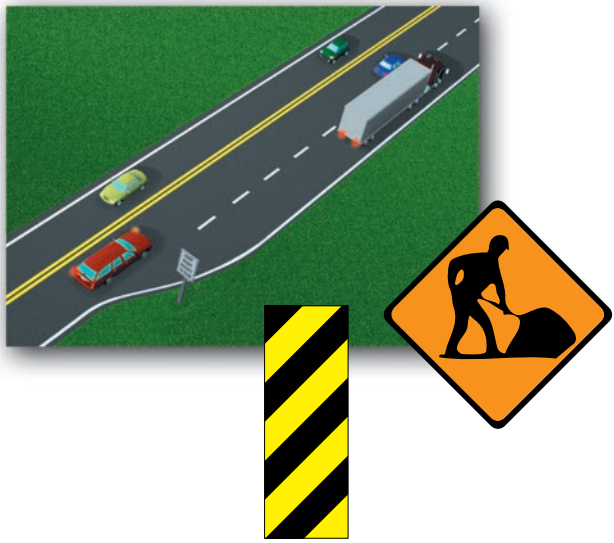
How to Properly Wear a Helmet: Read the manufacturer's instructions and consult with sales staff when you buy a helmet; staff will make sure that you get a helmet that fits you correctly. Generally speaking, wear the helmet low on your forehead—about a two-finger width above your eyebrows.

With the helmet on your head, try to move it gently from side to side and back and forth. It should be snug enough to move the skin. If not, use the thicker foam padding provided with the helmet. Tighten the chinstraps with enough room to slide one finger between the strap and the chin.

Rules of the Road

Safe bicycling requires knowledge, skill, and maturity on the part of the cyclist, and skill and attention on the part of the motorist.

Signs, Pavement Markings, and Work Zones



3 Signs, Pavement Markings, and Work Zones

This chapter includes information on highway signs that are intended to guide and inform you while you are driving. It includes information on the following:

- regulatory signs
- warning signs
- guidance signs
- work zone signs
- pavement markings

Traffic signs and pavement markings are pictures with specific meanings. Like flash cards, they must be read and understood in an instant. Signs and pavement markings help regulate the flow of traffic and warn you of conditions on the road ahead. They also inform you about routes, distances, and available services. Take the time to learn and remember the numerous traffic signs and pavement markings.

Be aware that signs and pavement markings change over time. The Department of Transportation and Public Works continually reviews existing highway conditions. The department also reviews new practices and technologies, creates new signs, modifies existing signs, and introduces new devices whenever appropriate. Always be alert and prepared for these changes.

Traffic signs have distinctive shapes and use different symbols and colours so that you can recognize them from a distance. Early recognition will allow you to regulate your driving in accordance with these signs. Traffic signs are classified according to their function: regulatory (rules of the road), warning, and guidance (information and direction). Become familiar with the various signs so that you can understand them.

Signs with a green circle give permission, as indicated

Signs with a red circle with a slash deny permission, as indicated

Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs indicate the laws and regulations affecting the use of the highway. You must observe the instructions on regulatory signs unless directed otherwise by a Peace Officer.

Stop sign

The stop sign is eight-sided with a red background and the word "STOP" printed in white. The octagonal shape is used only for stop signs. A stop sign means that you must bring your vehicle to a complete stop and be sure the way is clear before proceeding. The stop must be completed at the clearly marked stop line, or at the nearest crosswalk line. If there is no painted crosswalk or stop line, you must stop far enough back to allow sufficient room to allow a pedestrian to cross safely. This is called an unmarked crosswalk.

Stop Sign

Yield sign

The yield sign is triangular and is red and white. The yield sign means that you must reduce speed as your vehicle approaches the intersection. You must give the right of way, stopping if necessary, to any other traffic in, or closely approaching, the intersection.

Yield Sign

School zone

The school zone sign is five-sided with a fluorescent yellow-green background and two school children pedestrian symbols in black. This is the standard design across Nova Scotia since June 1, 2001. When children are present in a school zone, the maximum speed limit is 30 km/h where the approaching speed limit is 50km/h, or 50km/h where the approaching speed limit is higher than 50km/h whatever the time of day. You must slow down, watch for children, and exercise extreme caution, as with all driving situations. Your speed must be reasonable and prudent for existing conditions.

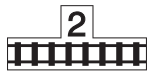
School Zone Sign

Railway crossings

Railway crossings are marked with a crossbuck sign which has a white background with a red reflective border. This has replaced the older sign which had "Railway Crossing" in black lettering printed on the crossbuck.

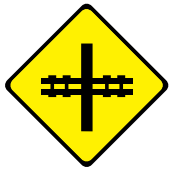
A yellow and black warning sign indicates that you are approaching a railway crossing. The direction or angle of the tracks across the road is reflected on the sign (in this case perpendicular).

Crossbuck Sign



Indicates number of tracks to cross

As you approach the tracks, look both ways and listen, because you may have to stop. Trains can approach a crossing at any time. If there is a stop sign, you must come to a full stop before crossing. A railway crossbuck sign is used at the crossing itself. A smaller sign below the crossbuck indicates if there is more than one set of tracks.



This warning sign is usually posted in advance of the Railway Crossbuck sign

Many crossings have flashing red lights or flashing red lights with gates. If the warning signal activates, you must stop before the gates lower across your side of the road. Do not move through a railway crossing when the gates are lowered.

Remember these railway crossing rules:

- When flashing red lights are used with crossbuck signs at the railway crossing, you must stop, just as you would stop for any flashing red traffic signal, and only proceed when it is safe to do so.
- If you are waiting for a train to pass, be patient.
- Do not move immediately after the train has passed. First check to make sure that there isn't another train approaching.
- Be prepared to stop for vehicles that must stop at crossings, such as school buses, motor vehicles carrying passengers for hire, or vehicles transporting explosives or hazardous materials (these vehicles are marked with placard signs).

- If you happen to be crossing the tracks and the warning lights begin flashing or gates start to come down, do not stop. Keep moving! The warning signals will allow enough time for you to finish driving through the crossing before the train arrives. The gate on the far side of the tracks will not block you in. If you stop and try to back up, your vehicle may stall.
- Crossing gates will not trap you, but stopped traffic might. Be sure the traffic ahead of you will not stop you on the tracks before you move forward.
- As you approach a railway crossing, slow down, keep alert, and watch for the railway crossing signal.

What to do if your vehicle is blocked in, or stalls on the railway tracks:

- Immediately move everyone out of the vehicle and well away from the tracks and the vehicle.
- Post a lookout in each direction of the tracks to see if a train is approaching.
- If there is no train in sight, try to push the vehicle clear of the tracks or, if stalled, try to restart it.

Some trains require more than a kilometre for stopping distance. Remember, trains cannot stop quickly, but your vehicle can.

Other regulatory signs

The most common regulatory signs are rectangular or square with a white background and either black or red lettering.

Many of these signs use a combination of graphics and symbols. For example, two cars in a green circle means that passing is permitted, whereas two cars in a red circle with a line through it means do not pass.

The accessible parking sign means that the space is reserved for persons with mobility disability who have a special licence plate or permit. The permit must be hung from the rearview mirror.

Warning Signs

Most warning signs are diamond-shaped with black lettering or symbols on a yellow background.

Warning signs caution you of changing road conditions ahead. The merge sign, for example, indicates an upcoming intersection where two separate traffic lanes are about to join and merge into one. Drivers approaching from both lanes are equally responsible for seeing that traffic merges smoothly and safely. You should be ready to yield the right of way when necessary.

Guidance Signs

Guidance signs are rectangular, usually with a green background and white letters. They provide information and directions, including route numbers and distances. Other signs with different colours guide you to facilities, services, and attractions.

Example of Warning Signs

Slippery When Wet

Traffic Signal Lights Ahead

Stop Sign Ahead

Truck Entering

Pavement Markings

Pavement markings work with road signs and traffic signal lights to give you important information about the direction of traffic and where you may and may not travel. Pavement markings divide traffic lanes, show turning lanes, mark pedestrian crossings, indicate obstacles, and tell you when it is not safe to pass.

Rules about solid and broken lines

Yellow lines separate travel lanes moving in opposite directions. White lines separate travel lanes moving in the same direction. A yellow dotted or broken line is used as the centre line on a two-lane, two-way road where passing with care is permitted in both directions. When the centre line consists of continuous double solid yellow lines, you cannot cross them to pass in either direction. On a two-lane road, passing with care is permitted if the broken yellow line is on your side of the centreline markings.

Broken Centre Line

Double Solid Lines

Single solid white lines are used as right-edge lines along the roadway and for guiding traffic travelling in the same direction. Single solid yellow lines are used as left-edge lines on divided highways. If you see the reverse, you are travelling in the wrong direction.

A single solid yellow line marking the centre of a highway permits passing in either direction when traffic, sight distance, and other conditions are ideal.

The rules respecting solid and broken lines do not apply when

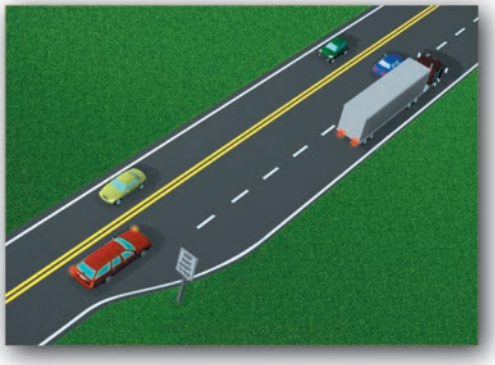
- a vehicle is entering or leaving the highway at a place other than an intersection
- a vehicle is completing a passing manoeuvre begun in accordance with rules noted above
- the lines are not clearly visible
- it is reasonable or prudent to drive to the left of the lines due to weather or other conditions

Broken Centre Line with Solid Line

Left Edge Solid Yellow Line on a Divided Highway

Two-laned highway with climbing lane

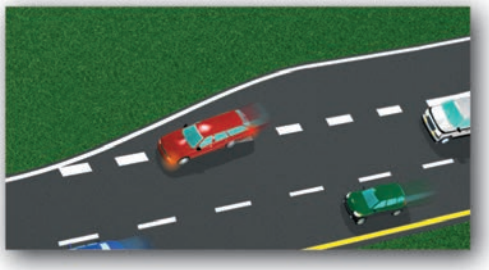
Climbing lanes are designed to allow faster-moving traffic to pass slower-moving traffic. All traffic must keep to the right unless passing. Vehicles travelling at less than 70 km/h must use four-way flashers when indicated by a posted sign on the right hand side of the road. Traffic wishing to pass must pass using the left lane, returning to the right lane when the pass is completed. Do not attempt to pass when you reach the solid line at the end of the climbing lane. The vehicle on the right has the right of way.



Climbing Lanes

Continuity lines

Continuity lines are painted on the highway at entry and exit ramps. They indicate the separation between the through-lane and the entry or exit ramps. They are wider than the regular lane-separation lines.



Continuity Lines

Two-way-left-turn lanes

On certain multi-lane highways, the centre lane is reserved exclusively as a two-way-left-turn lane. This means that traffic travelling in both directions share the lane when making left turns. Never use this lane to pass or overtake another vehicle.

When a highway is divided into three or more lanes and a sign is posted or the pavement is marked designating the centre or middle lane as a two-way-left-turn lane, all drivers must drive to the right of the double lines except to prepare for a left turn.

Be careful when using this lane. Remember, other vehicles may also be using the lane from the opposite direction.

Complete a left turn in a two-way-left-turn lane in the following way:

- Turn on your left-turn signal, check traffic to the front and rear, and do a shoulder check to the left.
- When it is safe, slow down and gradually move into the two-way-left-turn lane as close to your exit point as possible. Do not drive in the two-way-left-turn lane for an extended distance.
- Reduce your speed and stop as near as possible to the point at which the left turn will be made.
- Yield to approaching vehicles. When the way is clear, complete the turn. Vehicles approaching in the turning lane from the opposite direction are also required to yield. Each driver must yield sufficiently to the other so that traffic moves smoothly without causing an immediate hazard to other drivers or pedestrians.

Examples of Signs and Their Meanings

Crosswalk signs

Pedestrian Crosswalk. Indicates the location of a pedestrian crosswalk

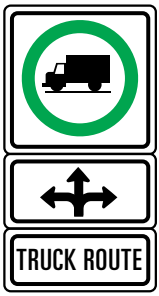
School Crosswalk. Indicates the location of a school crosswalk

Playground. You are approaching a playground: Reduce speed, watch for children

Regulatory signs

No Turns

No Parking in either direction of this sign



Truck Route. Truck traffic may proceed only in the direction indicated by the arrow(s)

No right turn on red signal. Wait for green light before making a right turn

No left turn permitted

Do Not Litter

No U-turn permitted. Do not turn to go in the opposite direction

No Stopping

Passing Permitted

One-Way Sign. Indicates to drivers that traffic is allowed to travel only in the direction of the arrow

Do Not Pass

Do Not Enter

Through or right turn only

Change in maximum speed limit ahead. Be prepared to adjust your speed accordingly

Maximum speed limit. Speed signs indicate the maximum speed allowable under ideal conditions: Reduce your speed when poor conditions exist or visibility is restricted

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Keep to the right of the traffic island or obstruction

Hazard warning. If the black lines are sloped to the right, drive to the right of the sign

Hazard warning. If the black lines are sloped to the left, drive to the left of the sign

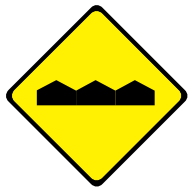
Warning signs

Road narrows ahead. Quite often, when the road narrows, hazard warning signs will be posted to alert drivers to keep to the left or right, or between the signs if both are posted. Example: at an approach to a bridge

Fire truck entrance ahead. Indicates to drivers that they are approaching a location at which fire trucks are entering or leaving

Hidden intersection ahead. Drivers on the side of road at the intersection ahead don't have a clear view of approaching traffic: Use caution and be prepared to slow down

Steep decline ahead. You may need to use a lower gear



Bump or rough road ahead. Slow down

Divided highway ends. Two-way traffic beyond this section of the highway; often followed by two-way traffic sign to reinforce the message

Divided highway ahead. Transition from an undivided to a divided highway

Bridge opening. Indicates to drivers that they are approaching a bridge that can be opened to permit the passage of boats

Right curve ahead. Posted speed sign indicates safe speed for this turn

Narrow structure ahead. Indicates a structure such as a road, bridge, culvert, underpass, overpass, or similar structure having a clear road width less than the width of the approach road

Right lane ends

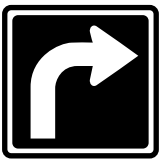
Sharp turn or bend in the roadway ahead. Checkerboard design is a warning to slow down; the arrow indicates the direction of the roadway

Chevron (arrow) signs are posted in groups to guide drivers around sharp curves in the road

Low Clearance. Underpass ahead; overhead clearance as shown

Merge. Prepare to merge with other vehicles

Lane arrows

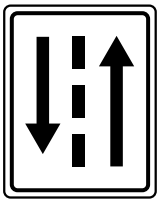


Right turn only lane. Indicates to drivers approaching an intersection in the designated lane that they must only turn right from the designated lane at the intersection—if this arrow was reversed the above would apply for left turns only

Straight through or left turn only lane. Indicates to drivers approaching an intersection in the designated lane that they must only proceed straight through or turn left

Two-way left turn lane. Indicates to drivers that the designated lane is reserved for left-turning vehicles only

Guide signs



Two-way traffic. Indicates to drivers that the section of road which they are travelling on is a two-way road, and that the normal rules of the road for two-way operation apply

Highway 102. Provincial highway with controlled access; also referred to as 100-series highway

Construction or Work Zones

In a work zone, construction or maintenance activities take place on or near the roadway. Work zones may interfere with the normal traffic flow. They also tend to distract driver attention. Stay alert and be prepared to react safely to unexpected conditions.

Work zones are usually marked with orange warning signs. The orange signs with messages in black letters identify work zones and direct drivers as they travel through the work zone. When you see these signs, go on high alert and follow their directions.

Traffic-control devices such as barricades, cones, and drums guide and direct drivers safely through the work zone. Traffic control persons may also be present, using "stop/slow" paddles to direct traffic safely through the work zone.

Respect road workers and follow their directions. You are travelling through their workplace. They have families waiting for their safe return.

You are at greater risk of having an accident when travelling through a work zone. The biggest hazard is speed variations between vehicles. Drive at the correct speed for the conditions present. Be aware of the speed of vehicles ahead of you and behind you as you adjust your speed.

Travelling safely through a work zone

- Go on high alert. You are entering an area where an accident is more likely—Hands on wheel. Eyes on road. Mind on task. Cell phone off.
- Follow instructions on work zone signs and from traffic control persons.
- Travel no more than the speed limit. Travelling at a speed different from other vehicles causes the most accidents in work zones.
- Slow down safely when directed to do so. Take note of the speed of vehicles ahead of you and behind you, and adjust your speed to avoid collisions.
- Act promptly when signs direct your movement. For example, if you are directed to shift your vehicle to another lane, make the move as soon as it is safe to do so without impeding traffic.
- Leave extra space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. If you are hit from behind by a faster moving vehicle, this space could prevent your hitting the vehicle in front of you.

Lane closures

Take extra care on multi-lane roads when a lane is closed. The risk of accidents is high at merge points. Take the following precautions to avoid collisions:

- Adjust your speed when you see a merge sign or lane closure sign.
- Obey the "Do Not Pass" sign. It prepares traffic for an orderly merge.
- Merge as soon as safely possible. A common mistake is to approach the merge point at too high a speed in the lane to be closed, then to push into the other lane at the last moment. This causes collisions.
- Be courteous to road workers and other drivers.

Biggest cause of collisions at work zones

1 **Vehicles travelling at different speeds**
As you enter a work zone, pay attention and adjust your speed gradually so that all vehicles move at the same reduced speed through a work zone. Be aware that the vehicles ahead of you may have slowed down more than you. You may collide with them if you approach too quickly. As you slow your speed, be aware of the vehicles behind you. If you slow too quickly, you may be hit from behind.

2 **Driver inattention**
Driving through work zones demands all of your attention. Follow instructions on work zone signs, especially the "Do Not Pass" sign. Drivers who ignore signs place themselves and others at risk.

Work zone signs

Some work zone signs give a general warning. They indicate that unusual conditions will occur, without telling you exactly what the condition is.

Human activity signs are those with a symbol of a person. They are only used when the workplace is active—people are working and at risk of being struck.

Some signs give specific information about conditions. They warn you that a hazard exists or a driving manoeuvre will be needed. When you see these signs, act promptly. Don't wait until the last moment.

If you see someone driving irresponsibly through a work zone, report it to the police.

General Signs

- warn of unusual conditions
- remain in place until the road is returned to normal

Watch for slow moving equipment and road surface hazards

Prepare for unusual road conditions or construction traffic that may be moving at a difference in speed.

The road has returned to normal. Expect no more impact from road work. When the end point of a project is obvious, this sign is not often used.

Signs with Arrows

- called advance temporary condition signs
- used when drivers need time to prepare for conditions ahead

Construction activities will begin 1.5 km ahead. Choose a different route or be prepared for delays.

Tar has been sprayed on the road ahead. The tar may make the road surface slippery. Spray from tires may stick tar to your vehicle's paint. Choose a different route or drive to avoid the hazards.

Right lane will be ending ahead. It gives advance notice so that traffic can form a single lane in plenty of time. This sign is often used with the Do Not Pass sign.

If you are in the right lane, merge left as soon as you can do it safely. It is best to form the single lane as soon as practical, to avoid vehicle conflict at the last possible moment.

There is an equivalent sign for use when the left lane will end.

This combination sign gives advance notice that traffic may be stopped by traffic control persons. Adjust your speed gradually to avoid rear-end collisions.

Specific Signs

Specific Signs

- prepare for the hazard shown on the sign
- act before you reach the hazard, to reduce the need for urgent and rapid manoeuvres at the last minute

Specific signs remain in place as long as the condition exists.

Road surface conditions may be rutted, grooved, or pose another danger. Bicycles or motorcycles may become unstable.

Difference in elevation between the lanes.

A tire catching the edge could cause a vehicle to lose control.

Road will narrow, but the number of lanes will not change. You may need to slow down, because there will be less lane width available.

Construction traffic could be entering or leaving the road on the right and may be moving slower than through traffic. Be careful whenever there are differences in speeds.

A similar sign shows the entranceway on the left of the road.

Blasting activities are taking place on or near the road. The sign is usually used with the Shut Off Your Radio Transmitter sign and the End Blasting Zone sign.

Traffic may be required to stop. A loud noise could startle a driver. Debris may be thrown from the blast.

Do Not Pass is used to create an orderly flow of traffic before a merge point or to prevent passing at other locations where it is unsafe.

Obeying this sign at merge points makes work zones safer. Disobeying this regulatory sign is an offence that warrants a ticket.

Drive to the right of the sign. It is sometimes used to move traffic around an obstruction on the road.

This is a regulatory sign. You must obey its message.

Human Activity Signs

- used only when workers are present on the site
- take extra care

Workers are active at the site.

Driving mistakes have the potential to cause fatal injuries to road workers.

Red/orange flags are used on human activity signs when they are displayed close to the ground.

Traffic Control Persons are actively managing traffic past the workplace using Stop/Slow paddles.

Driving mistakes have the potential to cause fatal injuries to road workers.

Red/orange flags are used on human activity signs when they are displayed close to the ground.

Survey work is being done on or near the road.

Driving mistakes have the potential to cause fatal injuries to road workers.

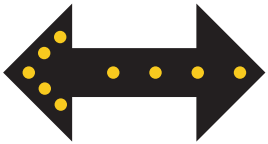
Red/orange flags are used on human activity signs when they are displayed close to the ground.

Work is going on overhead with electrical or data cables.

Driving mistakes have the potential to cause fatal injuries to road workers.

Red/orange flags are used on human activity signs when they are displayed close to the ground.

A Flashing Light Unit displaying two arrow heads means that the lane ahead is closed and you will have to move over, or there is an obstruction which you will have to drive around. When two arrow heads are displayed at the same time it is safe to pass on either side of the Flashing Light Unit.



A Flashing Light Unit displaying a left or right arrow means that the lane ahead is closed and you will have to move over, or there is an obstruction which you will have to drive around. When a single arrow head is displayed, it is safe to pass the Flashing Light Unit, but only on the side indicated by the arrow.

Lamps in a straight line or bar is called "caution" mode.

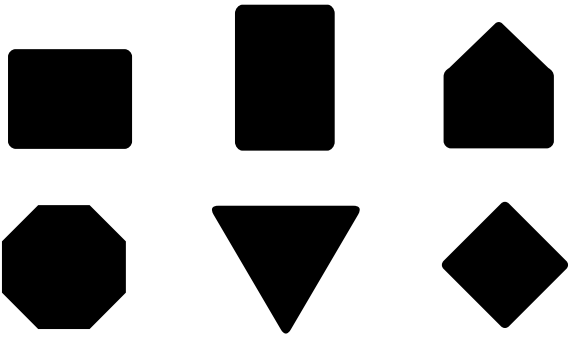
The Flashing Light unit in caution mode is used to alert drivers to a hazard, such as a vehicle occupying a lane or workers laying out signs.

The Flashing Light Unit in caution mode does not indicate that it is safe to pass. Drivers must evaluate the situation and make a decision to pass based on conditions present in the work zone.

Remember: it is an offence to deface, destroy, or remove traffic signs or signals.

The Shape of a Sign Says What It Means

What do the shapes below mean to you? The correct answer for each of the six sign shapes shown here is in the list. Match the sign shape with the correct answer.



Correct answers are in this list:

- Guide Sign
- Stop
- Yield
- School Zone
- Warning Sign
- Regulatory Sign

Safety

4 Safety

This chapter provides information to keep you informed and safe. It includes information on the following:

- vehicle safety
- passenger safety
- safe driving tips

Vehicle Safety

Maintaining your vehicle

All motor vehicles registered in Nova Scotia must be inspected every year to make sure they meet safety standards. The same is true for all trailers towed on provincial roads. The standards are outlined in the Motor Vehicle Inspection Regulations. Inspections must be performed at an official inspection station by an authorized inspection mechanic.

The following parts of a motor vehicle must be inspected by the official testing station:

- windshield and glass in windows
- horn
- brakes
- windshield wipers
- steering system
- suspension system
- exhaust system
- fuel system
- lights
- tires and wheels
- mirrors
- body components
- coupling devices and towing
- connections (if so equipped)

Any police officer, or inspector appointed by the Minister, can inspect your vehicle at any time. If your vehicle is found to be unsafe, it can be ordered off the road until the problem is fixed. In more serious situations, you may be charged for failing to meet the requirements outlined in the Motor Vehicle Act.

For your safety and the safety of your passengers, you should perform regular checks throughout the year so that problems can be identified and corrected early. The annual inspection is not a guarantee that the vehicle will operate satisfactorily for another year. Remember, it is illegal to operate a vehicle in an unfit or dangerous condition.

Regular maintenance checklist

The manual that comes with your vehicle tells you what needs to be done for proper maintenance and how to do it. The recommended maintenance schedule will vary depending on the type of driving you do. Your manual contains information about regular service, such as when to replace or check various parts of your vehicle. If you are unable to perform these checks yourself, have them done by a qualified person.

Tires

Check the tire pressure of each tire, including the spare (preferably when the tires are cold or have remained still for more than four hours). Properly inflated tires last longer and provide better gas mileage, better traction, and safer driving. Rotate tires according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
Tip: Have your brakes examined when each tire is removed and rotated. Also check tires for damage or wear, as unusual wear could indicate a more serious problem. For example, when wheels are out of alignment, tires show unusual wear. Poor alignment could be caused by a serious mechanical problem.

Have a qualified person at a garage or tire shop check your tires for

- tread depth of at least 1.5 millimetres
- bumps, bulges, knots, exposed cords, or deep cuts in the tread or sidewall
- metal fragments projecting through the rubber, if they are steel-belted tires

Replace badly damaged or worn tires as soon as possible. Buy or replace tires according to owner's manual or the tire manufacturer's guide.

To get good traction in winter, install snow or all-season tires on all four wheels. Remember, winter tires will suffer excessive wear if used during the summer. Studded tires are legal in Nova Scotia between October 15 and April 30 only.

Windshield Check the windshield for cracks or marks that could affect visibility. Make sure windshield wipers work properly. If your wipers leave streaks on the windshield, replace them.

Fluids Check under the hood, when the engine is cool and turned off, to see that the fluid levels are sufficient. This includes oil, radiator coolant, brake fluid, and windshield washer. Also, check all hoses for cracks or leaks and fan belts for wear and tension.

Lights Check that all lights and signals are working properly.

Shocks Check shock absorbers by pushing down hard on each corner of your vehicle and let up. If the corner bounces more than once before resuming its original position, the shock likely needs to be replaced.

Mirrors Check mirrors to ensure they are solidly attached. Look for cracks or chips that might impair visibility. Re-adjust mirrors to your personal driving position to provide the best visibility. Consider potential blind spots and your ability to safely scan when making adjustments.

Interior Check the interior of your vehicle. Your vehicle should be kept clean inside and out. Secure loose objects so that they do not accidentally become lodged under the brake or gas pedals, restricting their operation. Keep seat belts clean to prevent moisture from damaging the mechanism. Check seat belts for any cuts or breaks in the fibres or wear at the anchor points.

Brakes

Check brakes regularly by observing how the vehicle responds when the brakes are applied. If any of the following happen when you apply your brakes, then have your mechanic check them immediately:

- the brake pedal goes down too far
- you hear metal surfaces rubbing together
- the vehicle pulls to the left or right
- stopping occurs slowly

Also test the parking brake to make sure that the vehicle doesn't move when it is stopped or parked on a grade. Make sure the brake releases fully.

Steering

Check the steering for unreasonable play when turning the steering wheel. Most new vehicles use a direct drive system. This means that you only need to turn the steering wheel a little and the vehicle will begin to change direction.

Exhaust

Check the exhaust system by listening for changes in the noises you hear as you drive. A hole in the exhaust system can be very noisy or cause a change in the sound of your vehicle's motor. More importantly, holes cause poisonous gases to leak from the exhaust system. Inspect the floor and trunk area for holes where toxic exhaust fumes may seep into the passenger compartment. This is very important during the winter when windows and vents are generally closed.

Body

Check the body of your vehicle for sharp edges and loose parts. Also check doors and windows to ensure they are working properly.

Lighting equipment

Lighting equipment standards have been established for each class of vehicle. Headlights must be used during the period beginning half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise. Lights are also required any time when visibility is limited by fog, rain, snow, or other atmospheric conditions and when there is not enough light on the highway to see a person 300 metres ahead. During times when lights are required, it is illegal to use parking lights or daytime running lights instead of headlights.

Headlights must be adjusted to be parallel to the road. None of the main bright portion of the beam may rise higher than one metre at a distance of 20 metres from the vehicle. Headlights should be periodically checked for aim by a mechanic.

Daytime running lights allow a vehicle to be seen more easily and at greater distances by other motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Vehicles made before 1990 can be modified to add daytime running lights. If your vehicle is not equipped with daytime running lights, you can improve your vehicle's visibility by using your headlights at all times.

Red brake lights are required on all registered motor vehicles. The brake lights must be plainly visible in normal sunlight from a distance of 100 metres. The rear signal and parking lights can be separate lights or form part of the brake light.

A **white plate light** that illuminates the number plate is also necessary. The number plate must be readable from a distance of 15 metres. This white light is not required on a motor-driven cycle (moped).

Signal lights or turn indicators are required to signal an intention to start from a parked position, to turn at an intersection (whether you are in a marked lane or not), to stop from a moving position, or to change lanes. These lights must give a flashing white or amber (yellow) signal to the front, and a flashing amber or red signal to the rear. On vehicles 2.05 metres or more in overall width, each signal must be plainly visible in normal sunlight from a distance of 150 metres. On vehicles less than 2.05 metres, the signal must be visible for 100 metres. A signal must not project a glaring or dazzling light.

Parking lights or **reflectors** are required on all vehicles. A white or amber light or reflector must be displayed on the front roadway side of all parked vehicles. Parked vehicles must also display a red light or reflector to the rear during the times when lights are required.

Emergency flashers are used during emergency situations, such as when a vehicle is stalled in a roadway, or when a vehicle travelling uphill cannot maintain the minimum posted speed as directed by signs such as "Use 4-way flashers below 70 km/h."

Special lights

Only specialty and emergency vehicles may use revolving or flashing lights.

Flashing red: A flashing red light visible from the front may be used only on the following vehicles:

- an ambulance
- a police or fire department vehicle
- a school bus while taking on or unloading passengers
- a vehicle used by the chief or deputy chief of a volunteer fire department

Flashing amber: Flashing amber lights are required on a school bus. They may also be used on a vehicle transporting explosives, on a motor vehicle towing a wide trailer, or on a service vehicle. A service vehicle includes a vehicle engaged in the construction or maintenance of highways, communications, or power systems.

Flashing blue: A flashing blue light can be used only on a police vehicle or a vehicle being used by a conservation officer.

Other vehicle equipment

Ornaments: A motor vehicle must not have any ornaments or decorations, either inside or outside, that obstruct the vision or distract the attention of the driver.

Horn: Every motor vehicle must be equipped with a horn in good working order that can be heard at a distance of 60 metres. Horns should be sounded whenever it is necessary, such as advising another driver of your intention to pass. You must not use your horn unnecessarily.

Adjustable front seat: The front seat in most vehicles can be moved back and forth to adjust to the leg length of each driver. Adjust your seat so that you can reach all the controls and pedals easily and still sit comfortably.

Winter maintenance

Begin with the items on the Check List (pg 103). Although a well-maintained vehicle will usually start in all weather conditions, it is best to shelter your vehicle from direct contact with rain or snow whenever possible. Cold weather can put extra strain on your vehicle, especially on its electrical systems when lights, radio, heaters, and defroster are all working at once. Have your battery checked and the terminals cleaned at least twice during the winter.

Be prepared for a winter emergency. You should carry the following items in your vehicle:

- a shovel
- a bag of sand or kitty litter
- booster cables
- candles and matches
- emergency flares or warning lights
- blankets
- chain for towing
- extra winter windshield washer fluid (refill the container regularly)
- tire chains
- cell phone or change for a pay phone in case of an emergency

Passenger Safety

Automobile collisions can be traumatic events. Responsible drivers greatly reduce the risk of a collision by obeying traffic regulations. They realize it is their responsibility to drive carefully so as not to cause any harm to themselves or other persons, or damage to property.

Why to use a seat belt or child restraint

Collisions do happen, however, even to the most careful driver. The force of a collision is so great that unrestrained persons may strike each other or the interior of the vehicle, or may be ejected from the vehicle. Severe injuries or death often result. Using a seat belt or child restraint system correctly helps hold all persons in place in the vehicle. This provides them with a far better chance of avoiding serious injury.

Seat belts and child restraints also help prevent injuries during "regular" driving. A driver may have to swerve and stop, or stop suddenly to avoid a collision. Unrestrained persons may strike each other or the vehicle interior.

Fewer than 1 per cent of all injury-producing collisions involve fire or submersion. In these situations, wearing a seat belt greatly increases the chance of remaining conscious in order to escape from the vehicle.

Seat belts, child restraints, and the law

Everyone 16 years of age and older, whether a driver or passenger, riding in a motor vehicle in Nova Scotia is required by law to wear a seat belt if a seating position with a seat belt is available to them.

A driver is responsible for ensuring that all passengers under 16 are wearing a seat belt if a seating position with a seat belt is available to them. Young children must be placed in an approved child restraint system that is appropriate for them:

- Children from birth to 10 kg (22 lb) must ride in a rear-facing infant seat that meets the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.1. It is secured to the vehicle by the vehicle seat belt.
- Children from 10 kg (22 lb) to 18 kg (40 lb) must ride in a forward-facing child seat that meets the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213. It is secured to the vehicle by the seat belt and by a tether strap. The tether strap is connected from the child car seat to an anchor bolt installed in the metal framework of the vehicle.
- Children who weigh more than 18 kg (40 lb) but are under 145 cm (4'9") tall must ride in a booster seat that meets the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.2, if they are younger than 9 years of age unless they have reached 145 cm (57") in height. A booster seat is strongly recommended to help position the seat belt correctly across the child's body.

Child Restraint

The wearing of seat belts does not apply to

- a person who is unable to wear a seat belt or use a child restraint because of their size, build, or other physical characteristic
- a person who, in the opinion of a legally qualified medical practitioner, is unable to wear a seat belt or child restraint system for medical reasons
- an on-duty peace officer
- a fireman while in or on a vehicle of a firefighting organization
- a driver operating a taxicab for hire
- a driver operating a public transit bus
- a medical attendant in an ambulance transporting a patient
- a person while engaged in work that entails leaving and entering the vehicle at frequent intervals
- the driver and passengers of a motor vehicle transporting prisoners

Correct use of seat belts and child restraints

- Vehicle seat belts must be maintained in good working order and not altered in any way that reduces their effectiveness.
- The lap portion of a seat belt should be worn as low on the hips as possible, while the shoulder portion should not lie across the face or neck.
- Seat belts must also be worn during pregnancy. The lap portion should be worn under the abdomen and as low over the hips as possible.
- Parents should read and understand the instructions for their child restraint before attempting to install it in the vehicle. Further information may be obtained from the child restraint manufacturer, local safety organizations, or provincial and federal transportation departments.

Seatbelt

Airbags

- Airbags do not replace seat belts. They provide additional protection in severe frontal collisions. (Side and rear airbags are available on some vehicles.)
- A rear-facing child restraint must never be used in a seating position where there is an airbag. There is too much force exerted on the child restraint by the deploying airbag. Children under 12 years of age should not be located in a seating position where there is an airbag.

Carrying passengers

You must take on or let off passengers or goods only at the curb or side of the road. Never allow a person to leave or enter your vehicle while it is moving.

You may carry passengers in trucks in the space intended for cargo only if there are seats securely affixed to the floor or frame of the vehicle. Never carry passengers in a travel trailer or mobile home while it is being towed on a public road. Carry passengers in a truck camper being operated on the highway only if they are in regular passenger seats or seats permanently mounted on the lower part of the body of the truck camper.

Walking on the highway

If you are walking along a highway, walk facing traffic if there is no sidewalk. Use retro-reflective material on your clothing to make yourself visible. After dark, carry a light and wear light-coloured or reflective clothing. In snow conditions, wear some dark clothing.

Thumbing rides—hitchhiking

It is illegal to hitchhike!

Driving position

You can be a better driver and have more confidence on the road by sitting properly. This will give you maximum control of the steering wheel as well as the brake and gas pedals.

1 Sit up straight, with the small of your back firmly against the seat back and cushion.

2 Adjust your seat, moving it forward or backward until you can place your right foot on the floor between the brake and gas pedal, with a slight bend in your leg. For a manual transmission, make the seat adjustment using the clutch with your left foot. When the clutch is completely depressed, your leg should be slightly bent. You should not have to use excessive force to depress any pedal to the floor. This should be an easy exercise if you are seated properly.

Sit Up Straight

3 Your line of vision should be half-way between the top of the steering wheel and the top of the windshield. Adjust the angle of the seat to support your thighs. If you can't adjust the seat, a seat cushion can bring you up a few centimetres. For comfort's sake, leave at least a fist's space between top of your head and the roof of the vehicle.

4 If the seat back is adjustable, move it so that your arms are slightly bent when you grasp the steering wheel. Position your hands so that your left hand is at the ten o'clock position and your right hand is at the two o'clock position (or nine and three position). If you find that you are too far back in the seat, use a good quality seat-back cushion. You could also ask your mechanic to install a thicker rubber pad over the brake or gas pedals.

5 Head restraints are designed to support the back of your head and to minimize whiplash. Many head restraints are set too low to be effective. Adjust your head restraints so that the top edge extends seven centimetres (two to three inches) above your eye level.

Steering

Where you grasp the steering wheel will vary, depending on its size and the width of your shoulders. Your hands should be spaced apart and on the upper part of the steering wheel for best control. Grasping the wheel too tightly will cause tension in your arms, shoulders, and neck. This can lead to fatigue, so use a relaxed grasp. Once your hands are in this position, do not shuffle them around on the wheel. Keep your grip in the same place and simply turn the steering wheel to steer the vehicle. Grip steering wheel firmly at the "ten-and-two" hand position (note that the "nine-and-three" hand position is also acceptable).

Hand Position

The key to steering is to know at which steering wheel position your front wheels are straight. When you start out, straighten your front wheels and place your hands in the "ten-and-two" or "nine-and-three" position. If you do not shift your grip, every time your hands are straight and level, you know your front wheels are straight.

Use the hand-over-hand method to steer through sharp turns or in emergencies. Start the turn steering to the left or right, then take the bottom hand off the wheel. While continuing to pull down with the top hand, put the free hand at the top of the steering wheel, hand over hand.

Continue turning and moving the bottom hand to the top until you have completed the turn.

When unwinding the wheel after a turn, use the hand-over-hand method to return the front wheels to a straight position. Don't let the wheel slide through your hands, as you have very little control of the speed at which it comes back or the point at which it stops. This is especially noticeable in front-wheel-drive vehicles, where the wheel does not automatically return all the way.

Safe Driving Tips

- Scan the road ahead constantly. Don't look at any one object for more than a few seconds at a time, and never stare into the distance.
- Use the rearview and sideview mirrors frequently to reduce the chance of your vehicle being hit from the rear.
- Do not block your view through the windshield or windows. Only the official inspection sticker is allowed at the lower driver's corner of the windshield.
- Load your vehicle so that your view of the road will not be blocked.
- Do not divert your attention away from the task of driving. Eating, drinking, smoking, or using a cell phone are examples of activities that cause inattention.
- Keep the rearview mirror free of any hanging objects that may obstruct your vision.

Play it safe:

- Reduce your speed any time you see a situation that might be dangerous.
- Never place your arm, head, or foot outside a moving vehicle, except to make a hand signal. Never allow a passenger to do so.

Starting your car

Check the vehicle owner's manual for starting instructions. Put the parking brake on. If the vehicle has a manual transmission, put it in neutral. In some vehicles with a manual transmission, the clutch must be depressed before the engine will start. For vehicles with an automatic transmission, shift to the "park" position. Start your vehicle.

Accelerating

To drive smoothly, you must learn to vary your foot pressure on the accelerator by small amounts. It is best to accelerate a little and wait for the vehicle to build up speed. Pressing down on the accelerator too much can cause the drive wheels to spin and the vehicle to skid, particularly on slippery surfaces.

In cars with a manual transmission, you must release the clutch until the friction point is reached. You then gradually increase the pressure on the accelerator while releasing the clutch completely.

Stopping and braking

The best procedure for braking is to begin early, apply light pressure, and ease up on the brake as the vehicle comes to a stop. Gradually increase pressure on the brake pedal to slow more quickly. Threshold braking is a technique applying firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal. Avoid locking up the wheels. If the wheels do lock, ease off the brakes slightly, then reapply pressure to the brake pedal.

Many newer vehicles have an antilock braking system (ABS). This system prevents the brakes from locking. If your vehicle has ABS, press the brake steadily and firmly. Do not pump your brake. Do not release the brake until you have control of the vehicle or it has stopped. A slight vibration and pulsing noise is normal. Your vehicle owner's manual will provide more information about using your ABS properly.

Whenever you have a choice of braking or steering to avoid a collision, generally it is best to use evasive steering rather than braking. Alternatively, combine threshold braking with steering. Steering is preferred to braking at speeds over 40 km/h because you require less distance to steer around an object than to come to a complete stop.

Preventing collisions

Most highway crashes are caused by driver error. The following is a list of the most common causes of highway crashes in Nova Scotia, in order of frequency, and what you can do to help prevent being in an collision.

Collision Causes	**Solutions**
Driver inattention	Pay close attention to the task of driving your vehicle. Collisions occur in a matter of seconds. Be ready to react immediately.
Failure to yield right of way	Share the road. Practise consideration for others.
Driver distraction	Resist the temptation to become a spectator.
Driver inexperience or confusion.	Follow the rules of the road. Signal your intention to change positions. Sound your horn. Check your blind spots. Make the move gradually and only when it is safe to do so.
Alcohol involved, driver had been drinking.	Don't drink and drive. Pay attention and watch for unusual driving behaviour.
Operating too fast for conditions.	Slow down! Adjust your speed to the driving conditions.

Driving defensively

Defensive driving means being in control. Skilled drivers identify situations that require attention, anticipate what other drivers might do, decide how to deal with the situation, and safely execute a suitable course of action.

Examples: When you see children playing near the street, anticipate that someone might come running out in front of you. When you see the flash of a brake light coming from a parked vehicle, anticipate that the vehicle may move to enter traffic. Observe the speed of a vehicle approaching an intersection and anticipate whether or not the driver will stop.

The essence of defensive driving is to reduce your own driving mistakes and to anticipate the mistakes of others, both drivers and pedestrians, and guard against them.

Avoiding highway hypnosis

Inattention tends to increase when you have been driving for a period of time. Unintentionally you begin to scan less and your eyes become more fixed. The motion of the pavement, the lines, and other vehicles may begin to "hypnotize" you. You may experience momentary lapses of memory. Before highway hypnosis leads to a collision you need to pull over and stop.

Here are a few tips to help prevent highway hypnosis:

- Eat modestly before a long drive. Eating a big meal will reduce your energy level.
- Wear comfortable clothing. Tight or bulky clothing will cause tension in your muscles over time. Tension causes fatigue and reduces your ability to respond quickly.
- Talk with your passengers, but not to the point of distraction.
- Safety scan continually. Looking in every direction for potential problems is your best defence for avoiding dangers and hazards. Be well aware of your blind spots and check them before turning or changing lanes.
- Keep your mind active about driving by taking an interest in all road signs and traffic around you.
- Take a one-to-two-minute walking break every hour to refresh yourself.
- Don't try to drive too far in one day.
- Avoid driving during your normal sleeping hours.
- Keep the temperature in your vehicle cool. If it becomes too warm, you may get drowsy.

Sharing the road

Throughout this manual you will find references to situations where traffic and pedestrians need to share the road. Everyone's safety depends on courtesy and consideration. Good communication means that everyone involved understands how each person or driver is going to react. Safe driving comes from developing good driving skills and learning how to share the road with others.

Alerting Other Drivers to Your Activities

Slow-moving vehicles

You must display a slow-moving-vehicle sign at the rear of a farm tractor, or the load hauled by the tractor, and any other vehicle that cannot maintain a speed over 40 km/h under normal conditions. When you see this sign, reduce your speed.

Slow-moving Vehicle Sign

Open tailgates

It is illegal to drive a commercial motor vehicle (truck) on a highway with an tailgate open or in a horizontal position, unless it is being used to support all or part of the load being carried in the vehicle.

Carrying loads

During daylight hours, display a red flag at the rear of a load whenever the load extends more than one metre beyond the rear of the bed or body of a vehicle. The red flag must be at least 300 millimetres in length and width and be clearly visible at all times.

After dark, which is half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise, display an amber or red light that is plainly visible for 60 metres from the rear of the load.

Towing trailers

All trailers must be licensed and inspected for use on the highway. Towing a trailer requires knowledge usually acquired through experience. Go cautiously, keeping safety in mind at all times. It is a good idea to practise parking and backing before heading out onto the highway. Make certain that the two vehicles are connected properly.

- Only commercial vehicles can tow more than one trailer at a time.
- The draw bar or towing connection should not exceed five metres in length or eight metres if transporting poles.
- If the connection consists of a chain, rope, or cable, you must display upon the connection a red flag or other signal cloth (minimum size 300 sq. mm).
- Never carry people in any type of trailer, including travel trailers, while it is being towed on the highway.
- The driver must make sure no one riding a bicycle, coaster, roller skates, skis, toboggan, sled, or toy vehicle holds onto the vehicle while it is being operated.

Moving disabled vehicles

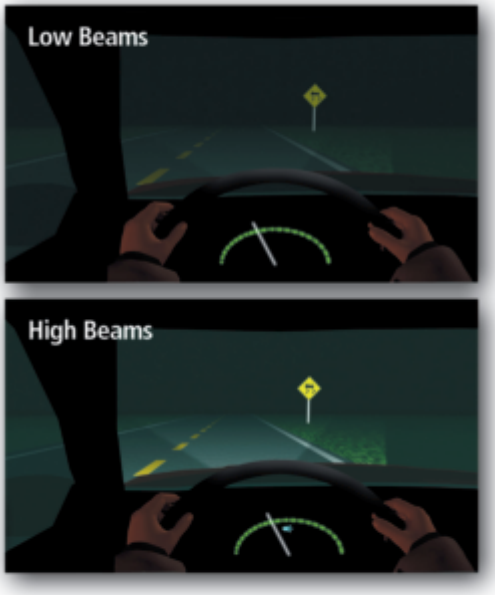
We strongly recommended that you seek professional towing services when moving a disabled vehicle. If you must tow using another vehicle, display warning signals or emergency flashers and make sure the vehicle is attached securely. Someone must sit in the disabled vehicle and use the brakes to keep the tow cable tight. Don't tow vehicles that have power braking and steering if the engine cannot run. If the engine is disabled, braking and steering are difficult, and towing may lead to a collision. Trying to start a disabled vehicle by towing it is dangerous and could damage both vehicles.

Oversized vehicles

You must have a permit to operate an oversized vehicle. An oversized vehicle is a vehicle or combination of vehicles, including any load, that exceeds any of the following measurements:

- 12.5 metres in length for a single vehicle or 25 metres for a combination of vehicles
- 14.65 metres in overall length for a trailer
- 2.6 metres total outside width
- 4.15 metres in height
- a rearview mirror extending more than 20 centimetres on each side beyond the maximum permissible outside vehicle width
- a load-securing device extending more than 10 centimetres on each side beyond the maximum permissible outside vehicle width

Adverse Driving Conditions



5 Adverse Driving Conditions

This chapter contains information regarding driving in poor conditions. It provides you with information on the following:

- nighttime driving
- driving in the rain, snow, or fog
- road surfaces
- emergencies

Coastal Nova Scotia is known for harsh and variable weather. In this ocean-side province, the secret to arriving safely is to adapt your driving to adverse driving conditions. Some road and weather conditions warrant slow and cautious driving. Slippery roads caused by rain, snow, or sleet, and gravel or dirt roads, make it much more difficult to control your vehicle. Fog, rain, snow, and floods reduce visibility and can cause moisture to form on your brakes. This will increase your stopping distance. These road and weather conditions are especially dangerous because your vehicle may not respond as expected, even though you may respond quickly and diligently.

To prevent the weather conditions from controlling your vehicle, you must

- anticipate potential problems. This may mean driving cautiously or not driving at all when dangerous weather conditions exist. Ask yourself: Have I listened to the weather forecast? Should I be on the road?

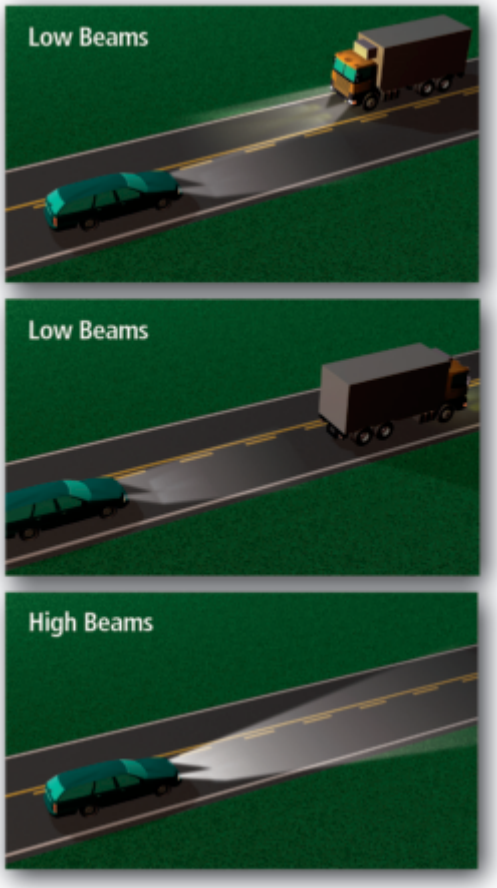
- be ready to respond to weather conditions and their effects on you and your vehicle. If you learn about potential weather hazards and learn what to do when you begin to lose control of your vehicle, you will be better prepared to deal with adverse driving conditions. The provinces and industry conduct ongoing research to improve driving standards. Keep up to date by reading articles and reports about driving techniques and vehicle improvements such as ABS brakes.

Reduced Visibility

Nighttime driving

Nighttime driving is much more dangerous than daytime driving because

- you cannot see as well in the dark
- there are more impaired drivers on the road at night
- you are more likely to be tired and therefore less alert at night—driver inattention is a leading cause of collisions
- headlights of oncoming vehicles can blind you



High and Low Beams Outside

Tips for nighttime driving:

- Use your headlights for all nighttime driving, starting half an hour after sunset and continuing until half an hour before sunrise.
- Also use your headlights any time that you can't see at least 300 metres ahead.
- When you drive at night in a city, use lowbeam headlights. On the open road, use highbeam headlights unless you are approaching or following another vehicle.
- By law headlights must be dimmed within 150 metres of an approaching vehicle and 60 metres when following a vehicle on any highway.
- Drive at a controlled rate of speed.

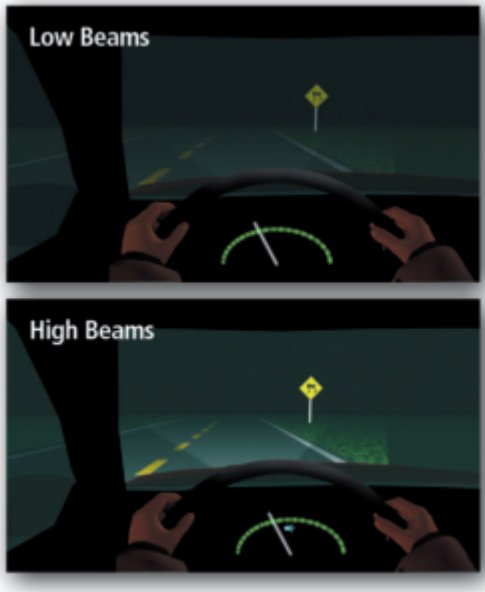
Remember:

- Even if the oncoming driver does not dim his or her lights, keep your lights on lowbeam.
- Stay on the right side of the road and use the edge of the road as a guide
- Reduce your speed and watch the road as far ahead as possible. Look slightly to the right so you will not be looking directly into the headlights of oncoming traffic.
- Practice doing safety scans so that you can be aware of everything around you.

Sunlight glare

Sunlight, either direct or reflected, poses a dangerous driving situation. To reduce this problem, adjust your sun visor and wear sunglasses. If these do not help, stop on the roadside, well away from moving traffic, until you can drive safely.

When you enter a tunnel or underground parking garage on a bright day, remember to slow down, remove your sunglasses, and turn on your headlights.



High and Low Beams Inside

Rain, snow, and fog

Rain, snow, and fog reduce visibility and limit your ability to see clearly. You should slow down gradually, avoid sudden stops, increase your following distance, and stay alert. Use lowbeams only. The light from your highbeams will reflect off the precipitation, making it more difficult to see ahead. Do not use parking lights when driving your vehicle on the highway, especially when adverse conditions reduce visibility.

If you have extreme trouble seeing, you need to

- pull as far off the roadway as possible
- stop, secure the vehicle, and turn on its emergency flashers
- leave the car from the passenger side and stay away from the road

A trucker's blind spots

Many motorists believe that truck drivers can see farther ahead and can react more promptly to events as they develop because they sit higher than most other drivers. Being higher does have some advantages. However, truckers have serious blind spots immediately in front of the cab, on either side of the cab, and up to 200 feet in the rear. A trucker cannot see over or through another truck in front of him or her any better than you can and may have a limited view of the road directly in front of the cab. Some truckers can't see the first 20 feet of road in front of their bumper. This provides plenty of room for a car to slip unnoticed into a position of danger. Even on more streamlined tractors with sloped hoods or with no front hood, there can be a blind spot of up to ten feet.

The blind spots on the sides and to the rear restrict a trucker's ability to take evasive action to avoid crashes. To make yourself more visible, turn on your headlights, use your signal lights for changing lanes, sound your horn when overtaking and passing, and put more space between yourself and the vehicle in front of you. Remember, if you can't see the truck driver in the truck's side mirror, the trucker can't see you.

Changes to the Road's Surface

Rain

Rain both reduces visibility and makes roadway surfaces dangerous. When it rains, you should drive more slowly than usual and use your lowbeam headlights and windshield wipers. Increase normal following distance to four or more seconds. Stopping distances on slippery pavement are from two to ten times farther than on dry pavement.

Roads are most dangerous for the first 10 to 15 minutes after the rain has begun to fall, especially if it has not rained for a while. This is because oil from the asphalt and residues left on the road by vehicles mixes with dirt, dust, rubber, and rain water to create a slick surface.

Wet pavement, when combined with other factors such as vehicle speed and improper tire pressure, can cause you to lose vehicle control due to hydroplaning. In a standard passenger car, partial hydroplaning starts at about 55 km/h and increases with speed. At about 85 km/h, the tires may be riding totally on top of the water. When this happens, there is no friction available to brake, accelerate, or corner. A gust of wind or even a slight turn could create an unpredictable and uncontrollable skid. When roads are wet, reduce your speed to avoid hydroplaning.

Your brakes are also a concern in the rain. Wet brakes are less effective. When driving in the rain, test your brakes regularly. If the brakes don't respond normally, apply some pressure to the brake pedal with your left foot while you apply light pressure to the gas pedal with your right. Continue until the brakes work normally.

Snow, frost, and ice

Snow and ice make roads very slippery, especially when the temperature is at or below freezing. Slush makes it difficult to steer, hard packed snow increases the danger of skidding, and black ice makes driving extremely dangerous. Black ice is a thin layer of ice that forms on the road's surface. Stopping distances for a vehicle travelling at 30 km/h are approximately 6 metres on dry pavement, 22 metres on packed snow, and 52 metres on black ice.

Remember that condensation on shaded sections of the highway and on bridges and overpasses will freeze before the rest of the road. Shaded sections, bridges, and overpasses will also take longer than other parts of the highway to thaw.

If you must drive during a snowstorm, reduce your speed, use your windshield wipers and defroster, and turn on your lowbeam headlights. Reduce your speed by more than half for packed snow and slow to a crawl on ice. Using chains or studded tires may improve your traction on snow and ice.

Gravel or dirt roads

You should use care when driving on any unpaved roads. Even under ideal conditions and when driving slowly, controlling your vehicle may be difficult. The loose dirt or gravel on these surfaces increases stopping distances significantly. Drive cautiously.

About four-wheel drive

The amount of traction or friction between your tires and the surface of the road determines the amount of control you have over your vehicle. Each element listed on the previous page reduces traction, making road surfaces slippery. Even if you have four-wheel traction, you cannot stop any quicker on a slippery road surface. Vehicles in four-wheel drive handle differently than when they are in two-wheel mode. Having four-wheel drive may create a false sense of security. Drive cautiously.

Tips for dealing with slippery surfaces:

- Make only slight and gentle movements with your brake, accelerator, and steering wheel. Sudden braking or accelerating could cause a skid.
- Allow more time to complete your journey.
- Roads are the most slippery during the first 10 minutes of a storm, so adjust your speed to the conditions and drive with caution.
- Test the road surface to determine if slippery by applying brakes slightly. If one of the tires locks, release brakes immediately. This is called threshold braking.
- Early-morning frost can be a serious problem during the fall and spring months. Check the forecast and listen for updates. Road surfaces are far more slippery near 0°C than at colder temperatures of -10° or -20°C.
- Watch out for other drivers.

Stopping on ice

If you apply your brakes suddenly on an icy road, your car will go into a skid. If you have to stop on a slippery surface, it is advisable to keep the clutch engaged and apply slight gradual pressure to the brakes, gradually slowing the vehicle without locking the wheels. Using studded tires will decrease your stopping distance on ice.

Rules for winter driving

Follow these simple rules for winter driving:

- Drive defensively and be prepared for any situation.
- Adjust your speed to the road and weather conditions.
- Allow yourself time and space to stop safely.
- Keep the windshield and windows clear.
- Be sure headlights, wiper blades, and defrosters are in top working condition.
- Get the feel of the road by trying your brakes occasionally whenever it is safe to do so.
- Use snow tires, tire chains, or studded tires on snow and ice.

Emergencies

General highway trouble

Emergencies occur anytime, anywhere, and usually when you least expect them. Knowing what to do in a given situation can help you deal with the emergency and may even reduce its effect.

You can avoid many potential vehicle emergencies by having your vehicle serviced regularly. Check your vehicle owner's manual for the recommended maintenance schedule. Here are some suggestions for dealing with potential problems:

- At the first sign of trouble, signal and take defensive action. Check your mirrors, put on your four-way flashers, slow down, and pull over as far off the road as possible. Never stop in the driving lanes.
- If you have a cellular phone, call for help. If not, put a "Call Police" sign in your side or back window, or tie a white cloth around the antenna. Do not raise the hood. Stay in your vehicle with the doors locked. If someone stops, ask him or her to call the police or an automobile club for you.
- Whenever you have a choice of braking or steering to avoid a collision, generally it is best to use evasive steering rather than braking. Alternatively, combine threshold braking with steering. Steering is better than braking at speeds over 40 km/h, because you need less distance to steer around an object than to come to a complete stop.
- You threshold brake by applying firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal just short of the point where the wheels lock up or stop turning. Ease off the brakes slightly if the wheels do lock, then repeat. Many newer vehicles have an antilock braking system (ABS). This system prevents the brakes from locking, allowing you to press on the brake pedal as hard as you can. Because the brakes will not lock, you can still steer. Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use your ABS.

Brake failure

If your brakes fail, try pumping the brake pedal several times to build up enough hydraulic pressure to allow you to stop. If that doesn't work, apply the parking brake gently but firmly while holding the release button. Holding the release button will allow you to manually increase or decrease braking pressure. Once you manage to get stopped, do not attempt to drive away. Get help.

Tire blowouts

A tire blowout can cause tremendous steering and wheel vibration. You may notice this vibration either when the air pressure in a tire is very low or after the tire blows. If this happens, do not use the brake. Hold the steering wheel firmly. Ease your foot off the accelerator slowly. Try to steer the vehicle to a safe stop off the highway.

Power failure

Power failure will cause loss of power steering and power brakes. This means it will be difficult, but not impossible, to turn and to stop. It will take more effort to turn the steering wheel and you must apply more pressure to the brake pedal. Move off the highway and stop when you safely can. Get help.

Headlight failure

If your headlights suddenly go out, check the light switch a couple of times. Try switching between highbeams and lowbeams. If that does not work, turn on the four-way emergency flashers and any other light that may still work, such as turn signals or fog lights. Get off the highway as quickly and as safely as possible. Remember, it is both dangerous and illegal to drive at night without lights.

Sticking gas pedal

If your gas pedal sticks, try tapping the pedal or lifting it by sliding your foot under it. Keep your eyes on the road. Don't bend down to lift the pedal with your hand. Turn on your four-way emergency flashers, shift to neutral, apply firm pressure to the brakes without locking them, and pull off the road when it is safe to do so. Turn off the engine. Call for help.

Vehicle fires

Rarely does a vehicle catch fire. If your car does catch fire, or if you see or smell smoke, move the vehicle off the highway and turn off the ignition immediately. Get passengers out of and away from your vehicle. Move at least 30 metres away. Fighting a fire safely and efficiently requires quick thinking and fast action. Use extreme caution if you try to put the fire out yourself.

- Shut off all remaining switches, such as ignition, lights, and radio.
- Use a fire extinguisher, not water. Water spreads gasoline and oil fires. You may also try smothering the flames with earth, sand, or large articles of clothing. You should carry a small fire extinguisher in your vehicle.
- When using a chemical extinguisher, keep some chemical in reserve for flare-ups.
- Whenever possible, fight fires with the wind at your back.
- If you need to open the hood, do so slowly to avoid a flare-up. Opening the hood may introduce fresh air and oxygen to the fire. This will make it worse.
- Don't risk your life. Gasoline fires can spread rapidly and may explode.

Skids

Stopping on ice requires skill, patience, and more distance than usual. Your vehicle may go into a skid if you shift gears, apply the brakes, or suddenly move the steering wheel. Take your foot off the gas pedal and allow the vehicle to slow down. Use evasive steering to avoid collisions. When the vehicle has slowed enough, try threshold braking.

When rain, snow, ice, or loose gravel comes between your tires and the highway, there is the possibility of a skid. Remember, too, that rain or snow on bridges and overpasses freezes before the rest of the roadway.

Wheels leaving the pavement

When your tires drop off the pavement onto the shoulder of the road, be careful. Returning to the highway from the shoulder can be extremely dangerous. Resist the urge to whip the vehicle immediately back onto the pavement. You may lose of control of the vehicle. When it is safe and your steering is under control move the steering wheel smoothly back onto the pavement, keeping your eyes forward looking at the centre of your lane. This allows the leading edge of the front tire to climb up over the edge of the pavement smoothly.

Animals on the road

Always be alert for animals on the road. Animal crossing signs warn you where there is a known danger of large animals such as moose, deer, or cattle stepping out onto the road. Animals, however, may appear from anywhere. Look well ahead. At night, use your highbeams when possible.

Vehicle plunging into water

Your vehicle will float for three to ten minutes if the windows are closed. Your seatbelt can prevent you from being knocked unconscious during the vital moments required to escape. Doors will be difficult to open at first due to water pressure as the vehicle begins to sink or because of vehicle damage. As the vehicle fills with water, pressure inside and outside equalizes.

The best escape route is through the windows. If you have power windows, roll them down immediately, because water will cause a short circuit in the electrical system. If you can't open the windows, try not to panic.

Most vehicles will sink nose first, so the air trapped inside will be pushed to the rear near the roof. You may need to breathe this air while waiting for the pressure inside and outside to become equal. Then it will be easier to open a door and get out.

Electrical wires on the roadway

Stay in the vehicle if at all possible. Do not touch the ground or anything outside the vehicle. Staying in the vehicle is always the first choice, but if you must exit because of other circumstances, such as fire, you need to jump clear with both feet together, not touching any other part of the vehicle. Then shuffle with both feet together, away from the scene, until you are at least 20 metres, or 65 feet, away. Onlookers, too, should know the importance of staying clear of any accident involving live wires.

Encountering snow plows

During winter storms, watch for snow plows clearing the roads. The flashing lights warn you of wide, slow-moving vehicles. Some snow plows have a wing that extends up to three metres to the right of the vehicle. On highways, several snow plows may be staggered across the road, clearing all lanes at the same time by passing a ridge of snow from plow to plow. Do not try to pass between them. This is extremely dangerous. There is not enough room to pass safely, and the ridge of wet snow can throw your vehicle out of control.

Collisions

Procedures and responsibilities

The driver of a vehicle involved in a collision must stop immediately. It is an offence to leave the scene of a collision. You must file a report within 24 hours with the local police, the RCMP, or the Registry of Motor Vehicles if the collision involves personal injury, death, or property damage of $2000 or more.

If you are involved in a collision, you must provide your name, address, and vehicle permit for the vehicle you are driving to the person struck, to the driver or occupant of the other vehicle, or to a witness. You must also give all reasonable assistance to any injured person.

If you are physically incapable of making a report and another occupant is in the vehicle, then the occupant must make the report.

If you are in charge of a garage or repair shop and you receive a vehicle for servicing that shows evidence of having been involved in a serious collision, then you must notify the police within 24 hours. Your report must include the vehicle make, the serial and registration numbers, the name and address of the operator or owner, and the name of the person who brought it to or left it in your repair shop.

If you are involved in a collision that damages an unattended vehicle or property, you and every driver involved must take reasonable steps to locate and notify the owner. If you are unable to locate and notify the owner, then you must notify the police within 24 hours.

Suspension of a licence after a collision

If the Registry of Motor Vehicles receives a report of a collision causing property damage in an apparent amount of $50 or more or in bodily injury or death, and there is no proof of financial responsibility, your licence and all registrations in your name will be suspended.

Driving and Impairment

6 Driving and Impairment

This chapter contains information on various factors that affect your ability to safely drive a motor vehicle.

To operate a motor vehicle, you must be mentally alert and unimpaired. As a driver, you must be able to identify what is happening around you, predict potential outcomes, make key decisions, and respond quickly and safely.

Alcohol and Drugs

The degree to which alcohol and drugs affect you depends on many factors: your age; gender; physical condition, such as your height, weight, or general fitness; emotional condition, such as depression, anger, happiness, or fatigue; amount of food consumed; interactions with other substances; and other factors.

Drinking and driving

Drinking and driving is a high-risk behaviour that can have serious consequences for you, your passengers, and other motorists or pedestrians. Alcohol is absorbed directly into the blood stream. This means that alcohol-induced impairment begins with the first drink. Legal impairment is defined as having a blood-alcohol content (BAC) of .08 per cent or more. However you can be charged and convicted below this level if you show other symptoms of impairment.

Don't Drink and Drive Symbol

The only way to remove alcohol from your system is through time. Your liver breaks down alcohol at the rate of .015 mg/hr. It takes more than one hour to eliminate each standard drink from your system. A standard drink is a 340 ml (12 oz.) bottle of beer, 43 ml (1.5 oz.) of spirits, or a 142 ml (5 oz.) glass of unfortified wine. They all contain the same amount of alcohol. Black coffee, cold showers, or a jog around the block won't remove the alcohol from your system.

As the effects of alcohol start to wear off, you begin to feel better or more in control. However, you are probably not sober and may still be impaired. The solution? Don't Drink and Drive!

Getting caught

If a police officer or other peace officer reasonably suspects that you are impaired by alcohol, you will be ordered to supply a breath sample. There are two steps to this process. The first is a roadside screening using the SL2 unit; the second step, the breathalyzer test. The roadside test, which is normally administered in the police vehicle, indicates "pass," "warn," or "fail." If the device reads "pass," you will be permitted to leave if there are no other violations. If the device reads "warn," meaning it registers a reading between 50 mg/100 ml of blood (.05) and 80 mg/100 ml (.08), the police may issue 7-day, 15-day, or 30-day suspension of your licence based on whether or not you had any other similar incidents in the past ten years. If the device reads "fail," you will be arrested. You must accompany the police officer to the police station or a sub-station where you will be asked to take a breathalyzer test. It is an offence to refuse the breathalyzer or the SL2. If you refuse, you will be charged with "failing to comply" or "refusing the breathalyzer."

A survey[1] of Canadian drivers injured in 1994 indicated that 44 per cent had been drinking. Eighteen per cent had a BAC of .01-.08 per cent. A staggering 82 per cent were legally impaired, with 20 per cent having a BAC between .081-.149 per cent and 62 per cent having a BAC above .150 per cent. Anyone driving at nighttime should be aware that roughly 10 per cent of those sharing the road with you have been drinking and 3 per cent are legally impaired.

Drug impairment

Impairment can also be caused by prescription and non-prescription medications, herbal remedies, illegal drugs, or other substances. Drinking in combination with drugs can be a lethal cocktail causing serious impairment.

Pay close attention to the precautions noted on all medications that you may take before and during a planned road trip. When in doubt, ask your pharmacist.

Some prescription and non-prescription drugs that may affect your driving skills are

- pain killers such as codeine or other narcotics
- antidepressants such as tricyclic antidepressants
- antiemetic agents for nausea such as Gravol
- antihistamines—sinus and allergy medications
- antipsychotic drugs—major tranquillizers and similar medications, like phenothiazines (i.e., chlorpromazine), haloperidol
- ophthalmic preparations including eye ointments and drops
- sedatives and anxiolytics including barbiturates, benzodiazepines
- muscle relaxants including skeletal relaxants

[1] Study of the Profile of High-Risk Drivers, Transport Canada Publication #TP-13108 E, Authors: D.J.Bierness & H.M. Simpson, Performing Organization: Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada

- antihypertensive or blood pressure medications (usually during the first week as your body adjusts to the new medication)
- antineoplastic agents
- chemotherapeutic agents
- immunosuppressants
- steroids

(Source: *Physician's Guide to Driver Examination*)

Penalties for impaired driving

Certain driving behaviours are considered sufficiently dangerous to be dealt with under the Criminal Code of Canada. It is an offence to operate or have care or control of a motor vehicle while impaired by alcohol or drugs. The penalties for a conviction are severe, including a fine of up to $2000 and a prison term of up to life for impaired driving causing death. If you are convicted under the Criminal Code of Canada, you will also be prohibited from operating a motor vehicle anywhere in Canada for one year to life.

Effective October 2010, any driver with a blood-alcohol content level between 50 mg/100 ml (.05) and 80 mg/100 ml (.08) may be removed from the road and suspended from driving for a minimum period of 7 days.

Administrative Licence Suspension Program

The Administrative Licence Suspension Program was introduced June 1, 1995, as a further deterrent to drinking and driving. The program provides for an immediate three-month suspension of driving privileges for failing the breathalyzer or refusing to give a breath sample.

The specific objectives of the program are to

1. decrease the number of drinking drivers by providing a strong deterrent
2. reduce the potential for additional incidents by immediate suspension of driving privileges

If you are charged, the police will order a three-month suspension of your driving privileges and will issue a seven-day temporary licence, only if you have a valid licence.

Penalties in Nova Scotia for driving while impaired are outlined below. However, judges will make decisions based upon the specific facts of each case. Fines will vary between the minimum and the maximum limits. There could also be a difference in the fine and prison term for convictions if death or bodily harm or dangerous driving is involved.

1st offence:

- applicable fines
- revocation (loss) of driving privileges for one year from the date of conviction
- applicable reinstatement fees to get your licence back
- completion of an Alcohol Assessment Program with Addiction Services of the District Health Authority and the submission of the applicable fees
- you **may** be required to be re-examined, including written, road, and vision tests

2nd offence:

- applicable fines
- possible prison term of at least 14 days*
- revocation (loss) of driving privileges for three years from the date of conviction
- completion of an Alcohol Assessment Program with Addiction Services of the District Health Authority and the submission of the applicable fees
- applicable reinstatement fees
- you **will** be required to be re-examined, including written, road, and vision tests

If your licence is suspended or revoked while you are in the Graduated Driver Licensing Program, you will have to begin the two-year GDL Program over again after serving the suspension.

* Persons prosecuted by indictment for offences under Sections 253, 254 of the Criminal Code (Canada) are liable to receive a prison term of up to five years. Persons prosecuted by way of summary conviction under these sections are liable to receive a prison term of up to six months.

3rd offence:

- applicable fines
- prison term of at least 90 days*
- revocation (loss) of driving privileges is indefinite (minimum of ten years) from the date of conviction
- completion of an Alcohol Assessment Program with Addiction Services of the District Health Authority and the submission of the applicable fees
- applicable reinstatement fees
- you will be required to be re-examined, including written, road, and vision tests

4th offence:

- permanent revocation (loss), in addition to all of the penalties provided under the *Criminal Code of Canada*

Being a responsible host or hostess

When hosting a party that involves alcohol, you must consider the safety of your guests as they return home. Here are some suggestions for being a responsible host or hostess.

Friends do not let friends drink and drive.

1. Offer non-alcoholic alternatives and do not add alcohol to the punch bowl. Never press alcoholic beverages on any guest. Respect the wishes of any guest who says, "No, thanks."
2. Serve snack foods early in the evening, as food tends to slow down the absorption of alcohol.
3. As part of your party routine, close the bar an hour or so before guests are expected to leave and serve non-alcoholic beverages.
4. Support the Designated Driver Program by encouraging individuals to remain alcohol- and drug-free during the social event. Make sure that group members are driven home by a designated driver, or arrange other safe transportation.

Being in Shape to Drive: Physically and Mentally

Guidelines for issuing a licence

Service Nova Scotia manages the driver-licensing program that ensures road safety. We consider both the needs and safety of the general public and the needs and rights of individual drivers to get around and to travel. Through the use of our licence classification system, conditional and restricted licences, and the approval of modified (specially equipped) vehicles, Nova Scotians are able to get and keep their driving privileges as long as it is safe to do so.

The department is responsible for establishing the qualifications of competency and fitness for drivers when issuing and renewing driver's licences. Every person wishing to obtain a driver's licence in Nova Scotia must be able to demonstrate reasonable and ordinary control while operating a vehicle. This includes an understanding of traffic signs and signals and the rules of the road. We may refuse to issue or renew a driver's licence to any person if there are identified concerns with their ability to operate a motor vehicle.

Health guidelines

If you have any medical condition that may interfere with the safe operation of a motor vehicle, you may need to see a physician for a Driver's Medical Examination Report. This report provides detailed information on the following:

- visual acuity/field of vision
- substance abuse
- drug usage
- cerebrovascular diseases
- diseases of the nervous system
- metabolic diseases (including diabetes)
- musculoskeletal disabilities
- cardiovascular diseases
- respiratory diseases
- peripheral vascular diseases
- psychiatric disorders
- hearing

The costs associated with this report are your responsibility. We will review the report in confidence, and may refer it to the Medical Advisory Committee on Driver Licensing. Reference will be made to the Canadian Medical Association, A Guide for Physicians Determining Fitness to Drive and the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrator's Medical Standards for Drivers.

All commercial drivers must file a medical report upon initial application, and every five years thereafter upon renewal, until the age of 64, then annually thereafter.

Emotional and physical stress

Strong emotions and driving do not mix well. Mistakes can and do happen, but they can be prevented. Here are a few tips to help you manage the effects of emotions and stress on your driving:

- If you are under emotional or physical stress, avoid driving and choose another competent driver.
- If you are angry or excited, take a deep breath and, if necessary, take a short walk. Stay off the road until you can give driving your full attention.
- If you are worried, feeling down, or are upset about something, put these emotions aside and concentrate on your driving.
- If a quarrel develops among passengers while driving, safely move the vehicle off the roadway so that you can calmly deal with the situation.
- If you tend to be impatient, develop a set of relaxing routines, and give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Driving aggressively at faster speeds will not get you to your destination sooner.
- Remember, driving a motor vehicle is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. Full attention and concentration are necessary to perform the complex maneuvers necessary to operate a motor vehicle safely.

For your own safety and the safety of other drivers, drive as if your life depends on it —because it does!

Vision

A new driver must pass a vision test before participating in a road test. Your vision must be acceptable by Canadian standards before you are allowed on the road. If you think you need visual correction, see an eye specialist. Bring your visual correction with you when you come to complete the driver's test. We accept the professional opinions of ophthalmologists and optometrists. Higher classes of licence require higher vision standards.

For Class 1, 2, and 4 licences
Applicants for Class 1, 2, or 4 licences must have vision in both eyes and an acuity of not less than 20/50 (6/15) in the poorest eye and 20/30 (6/9) in the better eye, with or without visual correction. You must be able to see from side to side not less than 120 degrees, in each eye examined separately (field of vision), and double vision must not be detected.

For Class 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 licences
Applicants for Class 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 licences must have a visual acuity of not less than 20/40 (6/12) in at least one eye and a field of vision of not less than 120 degrees with both eyes open and examined together.

Hearing

When operating a commercial vehicle carrying passengers or dangerous goods, you must be capable of hearing a forced whisper at 5 feet in the better ear.

Driver fatigue

It is unwise and unsafe to drive when you are overtired. You could easily experience highway hypnosis, which causes you to feel disoriented and drowsy, and you could even fall asleep at the wheel. Never use cruise control when you are overtired. You must be mentally alert and prepared to react in an instant in an emergency situation.

You are the best judge of how you are feeling. Don't overdo it. Know when to pull over and stop driving.

Remember

Good health is an important ingredient to a safe driver. Should you feel the need to assess health issues and driving please consult your family physician.

Vehicle Registration and Insurance

7 Vehicle Registration and Insurance

This chapter contains information on vehicle ownership and registrations.

Before you operate a vehicle on a highway in Nova Scotia, your vehicle must meet a number of conditions.

1. It must be registered. Your vehicle certificate of registration/ownership certificate is valid for as long as you own the vehicle.
2. It must have a motor-vehicle permit, number plate, and validation sticker. For passenger vehicles and light trucks, you must renew your vehicle permit every two years. You will be given a validation sticker to place on your licence plate to show that your permit has been renewed.
3. It must have a valid safety inspection sticker. Your vehicle must be inspected each year. The inspection station will place a new sticker on your windshield each year.
4. It must be insured for third-party liability. You must carry proof of insurance or other proof of financial responsibility in the vehicle.

Note: Every permit, licence, certificate, and number plate remains the property of the Crown. When a permit or licence is suspended or revoked, the permit or licence must be returned to us. You must not drive when your licence is cancelled, revoked, or suspended.

Vehicle Registration

Owning a vehicle

Whenever you buy a vehicle, you must register the vehicle with the Registry of Motor Vehicles. You will be given a Certificate of Registration, also called a certificate of ownership or title document. The certificate shows your name, the serial number or vehicle identification number (VIN), the date of issue, and a description of your vehicle. Your Certificate of Registration is valid for as long as you own the vehicle.

Certificate of Registration

To obtain a Certificate of Registration for a new vehicle, you must apply to the Registry of Motor Vehicles. You must bring the New Vehicle Information Statement or Certificate of Origin supplied to you by the dealer. You must pay all applicable tax, transfer, permit, or plate fees at the time of application.

At that time you will be issued a Certificate of Registration, Vehicle Permit, Validation Sticker and licence plate.

Visitors and new residents

If you are a visitor to Nova Scotia, you may drive a passenger vehicle that you own using out-of-province registration for 90 days. The 90 days starts when the vehicle first enters the province. This exemption is allowed only once a year and only for personal, non-business purposes. The vehicle must display a valid plate.

If you are a new resident of Nova Scotia, you must register your vehicle within 30 days of taking up residence.

Transferring a vehicle from another jurisdiction

To transfer registration from another province, you must surrender the out-of-province registration to the Nova Scotia Registry of Motor Vehicles. If the registration certificate is not in your name, then it must be signed by the previous owner, assigning ownership to you. You must also present the original Bill of Sale.

To transfer an outside-of-Canada registration, you must surrender the following documents to the Registrar:

- previous registration documents, such as a vehicle title or Certificate of Registration
- a Vehicle Import Entry form from Canada Border Services Agency
- a Casual Goods Accounting form from Canada Border Services Agency

If a lien exists on the title to the vehicle, you must provide a letter from the lienholder authorizing you to register the vehicle in Nova Scotia.

Selling a vehicle

When you sell your vehicle, you must transfer ownership to the buyer. You must fill in the Notice of Sale form on the bottom of your Certificate of Registration and return it to us. You must also fill in the Transfer of Title form on the back of your Certificate of Registration and give it to the buyer. The buyer must submit this form to the Registry of Motor Vehicles to obtain a new certificate. Before you sell your vehicle, it must have a valid safety inspection while it is still in your possession.

Notice of Sale Form

Permits, Licence Plates, and Validation Stickers

Operating a vehicle

You must have a valid permit and licence plate before operating your vehicle on any public road in Nova Scotia. The original permit must be carried in the vehicle or in the immediate possession of the driver at all times when the vehicle is being operated on the highway. The licence plate must be attached to the rear of the vehicle (passenger and light trucks) and must display a current validation sticker. The validation sticker must be attached to the vehicle on the plate in the block provided at the corners of the licence plate. It must be affixed free from foreign materials, maintained in good condition, and be clearly legible. Expiry dates are shown on the vehicle permit and validation sticker.

You must remove your licence plate(s) from your vehicle when you sell, transfer, or dispose of it. The plate(s) may be reassigned to another vehicle that you own or acquire later. If you have valid plates in your name, you may use them on a new vehicle for 30 days, while waiting to receive your new

vehicle permit. You would use them instead of buying a temporary permit.

Renewing your vehicle permit and licence plate

You must renew your vehicle permit and licence plate every two years for passenger vehicles and light trucks. We will send you a renewal notice in the mail, so be sure to tell us of any change of address.

Note: Any time a vehicle registration (plate) is issued or renewed for a motorized vehicle (excludes off-highway vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers and miscellaneous towed vehicles), insurance information is required.

Vehicle Permit

You can renew your permit and licence plate in three ways:

1. by internet if you have a Visa or Master Card. This process takes a few minutes, and documents are mailed to you within two business days. Simply go to our website (www.AccessNS.ca), 24 hours a day, and follow the instructions. Have your existing permit or renewal notice and insurance information for the vehicle. You may also use this website to change your address on your licence or purchase a road test receipt.
2. by mailing in your renewal notice and payment
3. in person at any Registry of Motor Vehicles Office or Access Nova Scotia centre. We also have convenient drop-off boxes at most offices

If for some reason you do not receive a renewal notice in the mail, you can use the form attached to the bottom of your vehicle permit.

In-transit permits

In-transit permits are useful as a temporary measure when you wish to move a safe, unregistered vehicle from one location to another. They allow you to operate an unregistered vehicle between two definite points on a specific date, upon payment of the prescribed fee. The vehicle does not require a valid safety inspection, but it must be equipped as specified by the Motor Vehicle Act.

Temporary Permit

Temporary permits

Temporary permits are available pending the issuance of number plates and a vehicle permit. Temporary permits are valid for 30 days from the date of issue, for a nominal fee. Vehicles must carry valid liability insurance and valid safety inspection.

Accessible parking plates and permits

If you have a mobility disability and you regularly own and operate a motor vehicle, you may be registered with a special number plate. This special plate is issued to you and assigned to your vehicle. Alternatively, you may be issued an identification permit. The permit may be used in any vehicle, as long as the carrier of the accessible parking identification permit is in the vehicle. You must display the permit on the rearview mirror of the vehicle whenever it is parked in a designated zone. It should be removed when the vehicle is being driven. You must have an accessible parking plate or identification permit before you park in a designated zone, otherwise you could be fined or towed.

The Annual Safety Inspection

All registered vehicles and trailers must undergo an annual motor vehicle safety inspection at an official inspection station. The inspection must be carried out by an authorized inspection mechanic. You will receive a motor vehicle inspection report form and an approved safety inspection sticker. Approval stickers expire at the end of the month as shown by the date on the sticker.

If your vehicle fails the inspection, a rejection sticker is placed on it. You have 10 days from the date of rejection to have the defects corrected and the vehicle reinspected without paying a second fee for inspection.

If your inspection sticker becomes defaced, you must replace it. You can buy a new sticker at an inspection station for a small fee. You must produce your motor vehicle inspection report for this purpose.

Accessible Parking Permit

Vehicle Insurance and Financial Responsibility

Collisions can and do happen

Collisions happen to the best of drivers. The Nova Scotia government requires that everyone be prepared to deal with the expenses of a collision should one occur. A collision may or may not be your fault, but securing financial responsibility eases the unforeseen difficulties of managing the repairs, fines, towing, injuries, and mishaps associated with motor vehicle collisions.

You are required by law to secure financial responsibility. As a driver, you must have either an active motor vehicle liability insurance policy or other proof of financial responsibility. The minimum amount of coverage required by law is $500,000 in third-party liability, also known as public liability and property damage. This is meant to protect you against the claims of others if you should injure someone or someone else's property with your vehicle. Most insurers will recommend that you buy more than the provincial minimum. If you wish to protect your own property, you will need additional types of coverage.

There are two other ways of securing driver financial responsibility that are acceptable in Nova Scotia. You may obtain either

- a bond from an approved guarantee or surety company, such as an insurance company, for $500,000
- a certificate from the Treasurer, the Minister of Finance, proving that you have deposited $500,000 with the treasurer for each motor vehicle registered

If you are involved in a collision

After a collision, you must present a motor vehicle liability insurance card or other financial responsibility card to all parties involved in the collision, all witnesses, and the police. While the vehicle is being operated on the highway always carry a current liability insurance card in your vehicle with your vehicle permit. The Registry of Motor Vehicles may suspend your licence and the permit of every vehicle registered in your name, if you do not present an active financial responsibility card or a motor vehicle liability insurance card for the motor vehicle involved in the collision.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles receives written notice of collision particulars in Nova Scotia. This information will appear on your file. The collision report collects information about

- property damage of $2,000 or more
- bodily injury to, or death of, any person resulting from a motor vehicle collision

Consequences of not obtaining coverage

The consequences of failing to produce a liability insurance card or other proof of financial responsibility, on demand, can be serious. If you are found guilty of not having the required coverage, the Registry of Motor Vehicles will suspend your driving privileges. Simply not carrying proof of financial responsibility in your vehicle is an offence under Nova Scotia law.

To restore your driving privileges once they have been suspended, you must provide the Registry of Motor Vehicles proof of financial responsibility, pay the applicable reinstatement fee, and settle all fines. The Registry of Motor Vehicles may require that you be re-examined before restoring your driver's licence.

The total fine for a first offence is $1,250, at the time of publishing this manual. This fine is subject to change. The current fine is composed of

- penalty of $1,000
- court cost of $100
- victim-fine surcharge of $150

Note: Penalties for repeat offences can (currently) go as high as $5,850.

Protecting you from the uninsured driver

Since July 1, 1996, your insurance company must pay costs related to a collision if the other motorist is not insured. Any necessary legal action will also be the responsibility of the insurer. Before this legislation, you would have had to make an collision claim through the province's Judgement Recovery Program. That program was indirectly funded by you through premiums built into your annual insurance bill.

This has been replaced by an uninsured automobile coverage premium added to each auto insurance policy. Every authorized insurer of automobiles is a member of the Facility Association. This Facility Association pays claims for damages made by persons who are not insured. The rates are filed with the Utility and Review Board. For more information, call your insurance agent.

Documents to keep in your vehicle's glove compartment

- Valid Motor Vehicle Permit
- Valid Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance Card
- Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Report

Do not forget to carry your driver's licence with you when you operate a motor vehicle.

Motorcycles

8 Motorcycles

This chapter contains information on how to obtain a motorcycle driver's licence. It also provides safety information for the operation of a motorcycle.

Anyone who lives in Nova Scotia and wants to operate a motorcycle on our public roads and highways needs either a separate motorcycle driver's licence or an add-on to their regular driver's licence called an endorsement. This endorsement lets them drive a motorcycle as well as a regular passenger vehicle. One is for people who already have a driver's licence, and the other is primarily for those who do not. Both are explained in this section.

There are two ways to obtain this licence in Nova Scotia. The first is through a driver enhancement officer at a Registry of Motor Vehicle site or Access Nova Scotia centre. The second is through an approved motorcycle training course.

Visitors or newcomers who already have a valid motorcycle driver's licence, or a valid driver's licence with a motorcycle endorsement from another part of Canada or from another country, can drive in Nova Scotia for up to 90 days without getting a Nova Scotia motorcycle driver's licence. After that, you need a Nova Scotia licence.

People Who Do Not Have a Regular Driver's Licence

In Nova Scotia, anyone who wants to get a regular motorcycle driver's licence has to proceed through the Graduated Driver's Licence (GDL) program regardless of their age or driving experience. Learner motorcycle licenses can be obtained through a driver enhancement officer at a Registry of Motor Vehicle testing site, Access Nova Scotia centre, or an approved motorcycle training program.

Level 1: Learner motorcycle licence (called Class LM)

For motorcycle drivers, this is the first level in the graduated licensing program. To get this licensing level, you have to do three things:

1. qualify for a Class 7 (learner's) licence
   This is where every new driver has to start, because it covers the basic tests everyone must pass: vision, road signs, traffic and safety rules.
2. pass a written test on motorcycle safety rules
3. pass a "practical skills" test (sometimes called a balance test), which is a form of road test. It includes such things as a pre-trip check, basic motorcycle balance, and stopping/braking techniques
   There is a road test fee for the practical skills test. You must make an appointment to take this test. However, if you take an approved motorcycle training course, the test is included.

All drivers, regardless of age, must pass through the provincial Graduated Driver's Licensing Program (GDL).

Remember that until you actually have your learner's motorcycle licence, you are not permitted to ride a motorcycle on any highway or public road in Nova Scotia.

Restrictions in this stage: There are three special driving restrictions when you drive with a learner's motorcycle licence:

1. Zero blood alcohol level
2. No passengers
3. Daylight driving only: you can drive ONLY during the period from ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset.

Level 2: Newly licensed motorcycle driver's licence (called Class 6N)

For motorcycle drivers, this is the second level in the graduated licensing program. To get this licence, you have to do two things:

1. qualify for a learner motorcycle licence, by means of a balance test
2. complete a 6-month probationary period before taking an advanced road test with the department driver enhancement officer. (If you pass an approved motorcycle training course, this period is reduced to 3 months.)

Restrictions in this stage: There are two restrictions when you drive with a newly licensed motorcycle driver's licence:

1. Zero blood alcohol level
2. Driving Curfew: A newly licensed motorcycle driver is not allowed to drive between midnight and 5 am, unless you have a written exemption from the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
   You must pay a fee to apply for this exemption.

A Class "6" or "6N" Motorcycle Licence is also valid as a Learner's Licence for passenger vehicles.

Level 3: Regular motorcycle driver's licence (called Class 6)

For motorcycle riders who do not want to get a Class 5N Licence, this is the third level in the Graduated Driver Licensing system. To get this licence you have to do two things:

1. Hold a current Class 6N motorcycle driver licence for a two-year period.
2. Complete an approved motorcycle driver improvement program. You must also provide the Department with proof of successful completion of a motorcycle driver improvement program.

People Who Already Have a Regular Driver's Licence

If you already have a valid Nova Scotia driver's licence (Classes 1,2,3,4, or 5), it can be upgraded to include driving a motorcycle by having an endorsement added. This means you still have the driving privileges given by your regular licence and you will have motorcycle driving privileges.

To obtain a motorcycle learner's licence in addition to your regular driver's licence, you must pass the following tests:

1. a written test on motorcycle safety rules
2. a "practical skills" test/balance test, which is a form of road test; you have to be on your cycle to take it. The test includes such things as a pre-trip check, basic motorcycle balance, and stopping/sbraking techniques.

After you pass those two tests, you will be issued a learner motorcycle licence. This indicates that you are now also qualified as a motorcycle learner.

Note: Whenever you are driving a motorcycle, you must always carry this learner motorcycle licence with you in addition to your regular driver's licence.

Restrictions: There are three conditions when you drive with a learner motorcycle licence:

1. Zero blood alcohol level
2. No passengers
3. Drive in daylight hours only

Motorcycle endorsements

There are two types of motorcycle endorsements:

A Valid for the operation of any motorcycle

D Valid for motorcycles with an engine size of 100 cc's or less

To get a motorcycle endorsement, you have to do three things:

1 qualify for a learner motorcycle licence (paper) by passing a motorcycle rules test and balance test

2 complete a practice period of three months (see previous page)

3 pass an "advanced skills" test which is another road test

If you completed an approved motorcycle training course, the practice period is reduced to one month, and the chief instructor will stamp your licence (LM). You will not be required to be examined by a driver enhancement officer, as both practical tests are included in the training program.

Once you have completed those three requirements, a motorcycle endorsement is placed on your regular driver's licence. This is in the form of the letter A or D added to your licence class at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. There is no further waiting period, and all driving restrictions are lifted.

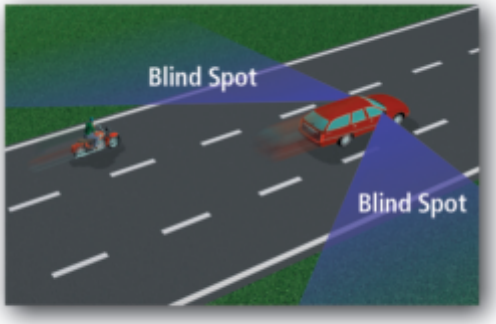
Motorcycle Safety Information

Safety First!

There are two essential elements of motorcycle safety: awareness and smoothness. Due to the consequences of a collision, it is important for a motorcyclist to identify potential highway and traffic hazards and to evaluate the level of risk posed by any given hazard. The best way to avoid trouble is to see it coming. Look ahead, anticipate, and take corrective action. It is also important to be smooth with the operation of the motorcycle's controls. If you are aware, you will protect yourself from the environment.

Think for a moment how you would handle these situations:

- Children are playing near the street and one runs out in front of you.
- Vehicles are approaching from either side of an intersection and one is not yielding.
- A train whistle sounds as you approach a railroad crossing.
- The road ahead of you changes from pavement to loose gravel.



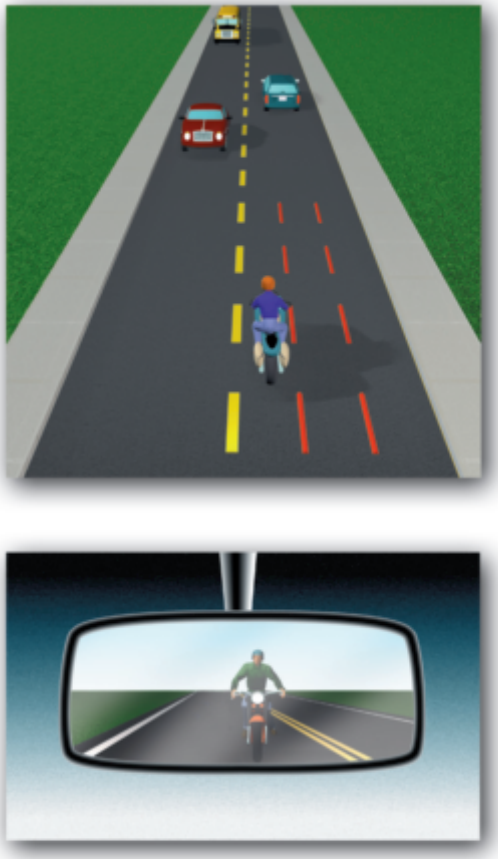
Blind Spot

It is equally important to learn to handle the motorcycle well. Remember, it takes time and practice to develop road and handling skills. You may want to practice your manoeuvring skills in a lot or private parking area. You must get permission from the property owner.

An important aspect of operating a motorcycle is to make yourself visible. Too many motorcycle crashes occur because motor vehicle drivers fail to see a motorcyclist. Be aware of the blind spots of other drivers. Don't ride in another vehicle's blind spot.

Warning! Even vehicles with side mirrors on both sides have blind spots.

Every motorcycle is entitled to the full use of a traffic lane and a full parking space. A motorcycle rider has a choice of where to drive in the lane. The best position is the blocking position, which is slightly to the left of the centre of the lane.



Blocking Position

This discourages other drivers from trying to squeeze past you in the same lane. When riding on a freeway with three or more lanes, avoid the centre lanes because you don't have a blocking position.

Always wear a helmet

A helmet is your only protection against a serious or fatal head injury. Both you and your passengers must wear helmets that are approved helmets that are properly adjusted and securely fastened. All helmets must meet one of the following standards: Canadian Standards Association Standard; Snell Memorial Foundation; United States of America Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard - 218; (DOT) American National Standard Specifications for Protective Head-gear for Vehicular User 290.1; or the British Standards Institute. All helmets must bear the appropriate monogram or symbol.

Wear a Helmet

Choose a helmet with a bright colour. Ideally, it should have reflective material on the back and sides. Make sure that the helmet is properly fitted to your head. When you put it on, it should be snug. Securely fasten the strap. Full-faced helmets usually offer the best protection.

Always wear eye protection

Windshields or fairings are no substitute for proper eye protection. Momentary blindness from rain, wind, dust, insects, or debris can cause you to lose control. Goggles or clear face shields designed for your helmet provide the best protection. Eyeglasses or sunglasses provide some protection. Tinted shields should not be worn in low light situations or at night, and "bubble" shields may distort your vision.

Helmet

Always wear protective clothing

Cover up from head to toe. Leather is the best protection against natural hazards like insects or debris and provides the best protection from injury in case of a fall. Heavy nylon and denim are acceptable alternatives to leather. Your clothing should fit snugly, with no hanging flaps or laces, and should allow sufficient movement to operate the controls. Clothing should be warm and ventilated. Bright colours and reflective items make you more visible. Boots or shoes should be sturdy and high enough to protect your ankles, and leather gloves should be worn.

Clothing

Before You Start Your Motorcycle...

Licence, registration, and insurance

Always carry your licence, registration, inspection, and insurance liability card.

For safe operation, you must maintain your motorcycle in sound mechanical condition. You should routinely check the motorcycle and get it repaired at the first sign of a problem. Here are some things to look for:

Safe Operation

Tires and wheels

Check tread depth, sidewall condition, air pressure, rim condition, spoke tension, axle nuts, and cotter pins.

Brakes

Check both the front and rear brakes for wear and adjustment. Check brake fluid levels and check for possible leaks.

Clutch, throttle, and choke

Make sure the controls work smoothly and that the throttle snaps closed when released.

Lights

Check lighting system regularly for defects; keep all lights clean. Check all four turn signals to make sure they flash properly. To be seen during the day, ride with your headlight on even if your motorcycle is not equipped with a daytime running light. Test your high and low beams at night. Test your brake controls and make sure the brake light is working properly.

Mirrors

Adjust your mirrors before driving. Replace broken or damaged mirrors immediately.

Electrical system

Check the condition of your battery. Make sure battery connections are tight and terminals are clean. Make sure battery fluid levels are correct.

Test your horn

Chain or belt

Check the chain or belt for proper tension. Review your owner's manual for adjustment and maintenance.

Lubrication system

Check and maintain oil levels. Look for leaks.

Suspension

Check that the suspension operates smoothly and that there are no fluid leaks.

Major nuts and bolts

Check for fasteners that have vibrated loose. Ensure that everything is fastened securely, such as turn signals and foot rests.

Safety Tips

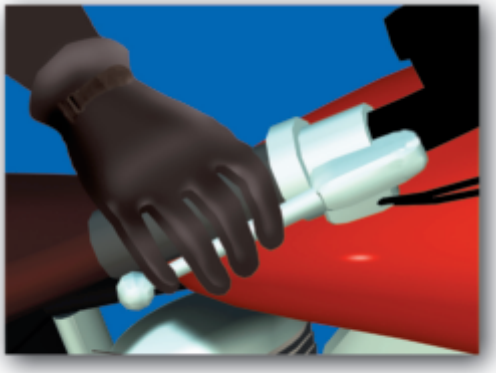
Starting Your Motorcycle

Develop a routine for starting the engine to ensure that nothing important is missed. Think of FINE-C:

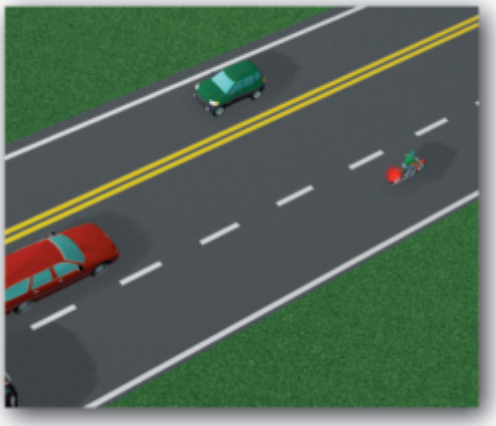
F	Fuel	Does the tank have enough fuel for the trip? Is the fuel valve turned on?
I	Ignition	Is the ignition key turned on?
N	Neutral	Is the transmission in neutral? Roll the motorcycle backward or forward while sitting on it, to ensure that it is in neutral.
E	Engine Cut-Off	Be sure the "shut off" switch is turned to the "Run" position or the motorcycle will not start.
C	Choke/Clutch	If the engine is cold, you may have to apply the choke. It is always a good habit to disengage the clutch when starting the engine.

Effective Braking

Your motorcycle is equipped with front and rear brakes. The front brake provides 70 per cent of your stopping power. You need both brakes to stop effectively, so get into the habit of using both brakes every time you slow down or stop. This practice will help you develop proper skills and instincts for when you must react to an emergency situation.



Use all Fingers



Never Ride the Brake

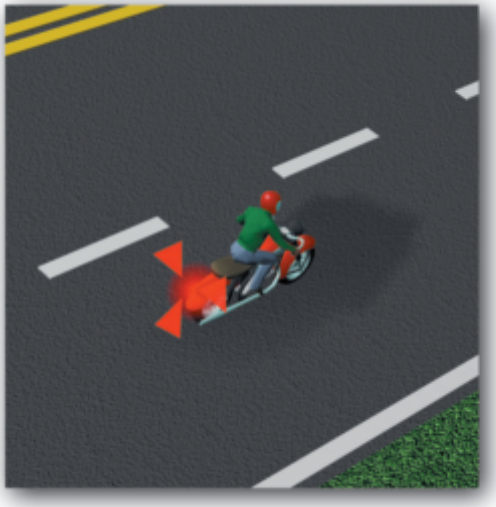
Here are some tips to effective braking:

- Always be ready to stop.
- Learn to downshift properly. Downshifting uses engine compression to reduce speed.
- Use all your fingers to apply the front brake.
- Apply both brakes at the same time.
- Do all your braking before you get into a turn until you learn the cornering limits of your motorcycle. Use caution on wet surfaces, gravel roads, and dirt layers on paved surfaces.
- Never ride the brake. This turns the brake lights on and confuses other drivers. It also causes unnecessary wear on your brakes.

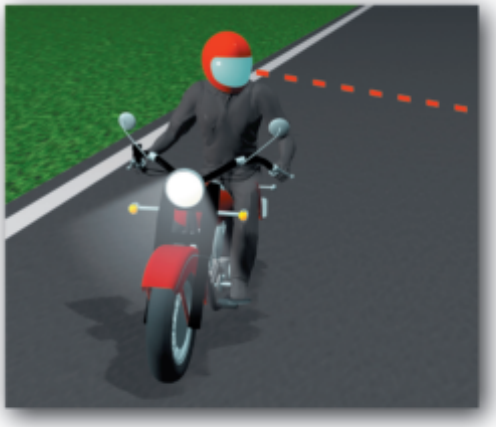
- Because you can stop more quickly than most other vehicles, constantly check your mirrors for someone following too closely. Flash your brake light to alert drivers behind you. Always leave plenty of distance between you and the vehicle ahead in case you need space to avoid a crash.

Shoulder checks

When you plan to start, stop, or change direction in traffic, it is important to check your blind spots. Turn your head and glance over your shoulder at the traffic behind you in the next lane. On a roadway with more than two lanes, check the far lanes as well as the lane next to you. Another driver may be moving toward the same space you are.



Flash Brake Light

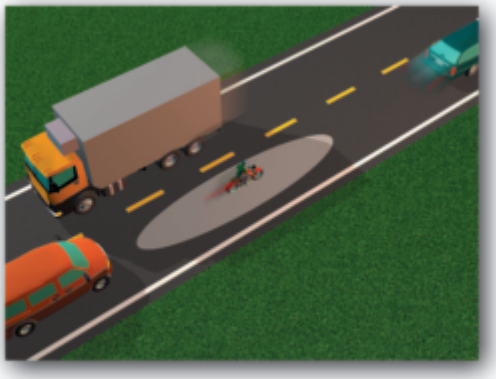


Turn Your Head

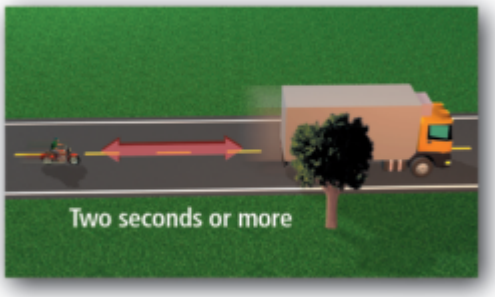
Safety zone

Always leave plenty of space between you and the vehicles around you so that you have time to react and some place to go. Space will allow you to see traffic and road conditions ahead more easily, provide room to stop safely, and give you a buffer zone in order to keep a vehicle from hitting you from behind.

A two-second following distance rule is the minimum distance you should maintain while following another vehicle under ideal conditions. The rule works this way: as the vehicle ahead of you passes an object, such as a road sign, power pole, or guard rail, begin counting to yourself "one thousand and one, one thousand and two." If you pass that same spot before you finish the two-second count, you are following too closely. In unfavourable conditions or as you increase speed, always allow more time and space between yourself and other vehicles, or in other words, increase the two-second following distance rule.



Leave Plenty of Space



Two-second Rule

At 50 km per hour, you have gone 15 to 20 metres before your brakes start to take hold, and 30 metres or more before you are stopped! (That's the length of a basketball court.)

At 100 km, you have gone 30 to 40 metres before the brakes take hold, and about 90 metres before you are stopped—that's almost the length of a football field.

Sudden stops

When you have to stop quickly, don't panic. Look and steer in the direction you want to go. Try to keep the bike upright and in a straight line. Apply each brake as hard and as smoothly as you can without locking either wheel. If a wheel locks up, release the brake slightly and then reapply pressure. If you are forced to brake when the front wheel is turned, do it gradually. Give more emphasis to the back brake.

You need practice to know how much braking pressure you can apply without locking the wheels and skidding. In an emergency, draw in the clutch, gear down, apply the front brake, and push down on the back brake all at the same time. This will help you keep your balance and stop you in the shortest distance. Remember, if you take your feet off the footrests for balance, only your front brake remains on.

Slippery surfaces

Any number of things can combine to make the road surface slippery, such as

- painted surfaces (lines and arrows), particularly when newly painted
- grease, oil, and rubber buildup or deposits on the roadway
- metal surfaces, such as railway tracks and bridge decks
- fallen leaves
- sand and gravel, which tend to collect where the road meets the shoulder
- wet wooden surfaces

Reduced Visibility

Note: The highway is likely to be slippery for the first few minutes after it starts to rain, or following light drizzle!

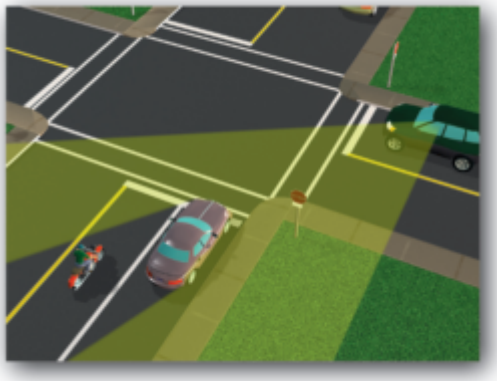
Best practices when encountering slippery surfaces:

- Avoid driving. Pull off the road.
- Reduce your speed and use both brakes.
- Avoid sudden manoeuvres.
- Be smooth.

Some Other Safety Factors

Intersections

Most collisions between vehicles and motorcycles happen at intersections! Other drivers often have a hard time seeing a motorcycle, especially when the motorcyclist is making a left turn.



Sight Lines

Good motorcyclists are careful to maintain the proper blocking position to increase visibility. Proper positioning at intersections helps to prevent vehicles from moving up beside you and crowding you. Crowding not only restricts your visibility but can prevent you from being seen by other drivers.

At an intersection where a lane is designated for right turns, maintaining your blocking position is more difficult. Here your blocking position is closer to the centre of the lane. As you approach the intersection, do a shoulder check, move to the centre of the lane, and stop if required. Make your right turn, and then, after making a shoulder check, move into the proper blocking position.

Carrying passengers

If you have a learner motorcycle licence, you cannot carry passengers at any time! Once you graduate from that stage and you start to carry passengers, remember that the extra weight changes the way a motorcycle handles: its balance and the way it turns, speeds up, and slows down. You are responsible for your passenger's safety.

Here are some tips for carrying passengers:

- Your motorcycle must be equipped with a rear seat and footrests to carry a passenger.
- Don't assume the passenger knows what to do. Tell the passenger to sit as far forward as possible without crowding you, and to hold on tightly to your waist or hips.
- Make sure your passenger understands that he or she must keep both feet on the footrests at all times, even when the motorcycle is stopped.

Lean into Curves

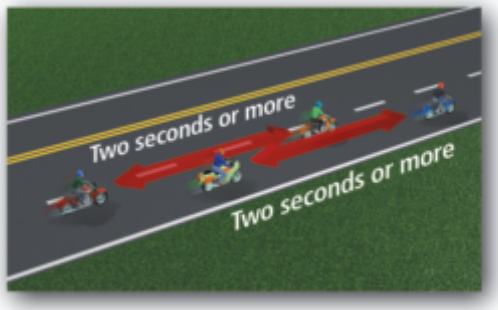
As you are driving, be sure to alert your passenger of your intentions so that there are no surprises. Allow first-time passengers to get used to riding by first taking them out at slow speeds in light traffic.

Explain to your passengers about leaning their body into curves and corners with you. If they lean the other way or try to keep their body upright they will make the bike unstable. Have your passenger look over the shoulder in the direction of the turn. Operate at a slower speed than usual, particularly on corners, curves, or bumps. Begin to slow down earlier than usual when you approach a stop. Allow more room between the motorcycle and the vehicle in front of you.

Group riding

Group riding is acceptable, but you have no special rights on the road. Follow these guidelines for making group riding a safe experience:

- Select an experienced leader, and put inexperienced riders behind the leader.
- Limit the size of your group to four or five bikes. If you have more than that, break into two or more smaller groups.
- Never ride side-by-side. Riding side-by-side in the same lane is very unsafe and could limit your ability to manoeuvre in an emergency situation.
- Use the two-second rule. Keep a safe distance between bikes.

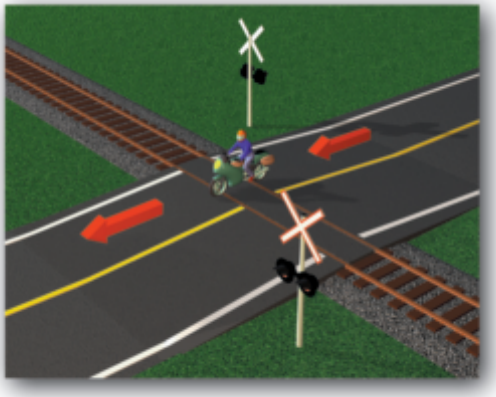


Group Riding

Plan ahead. Make sure everyone knows the route. Let the last bike set the pace. No one should have to race to keep up. Use your mirrors to keep an eye on the bike behind you.

Railroad tracks

It is not necessary to change your path when crossing railroad tracks that are at an angle of 90 degrees or less to the highway you are travelling on. If the tracks are closer to parallel to your path, then make an angled approach. Don't try to edge your way across the tracks. Avoid heavy braking or swerving.

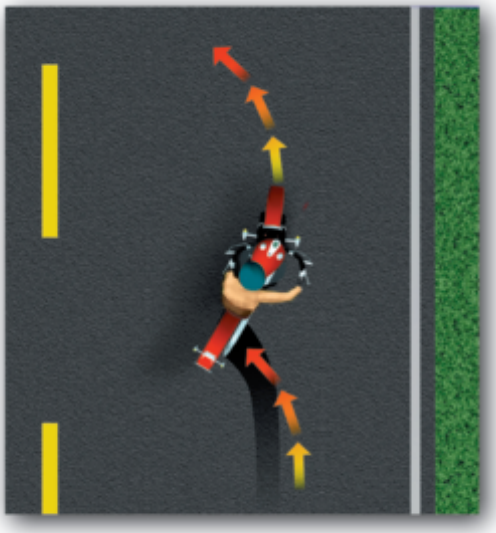


Crossing Tracks

Skids

Most motorcycle skids are caused by braking too hard. This braking usually affects the rear wheel, creating a skid.

To correct a skid:



Correct Skids

Rear wheel aid: Steer slightly in the direction of the skid, letting up on the brake so the wheel can turn. It is best to have the motorcycle as vertical as possible when the brake is released.

Front wheel aid: Release the front brake immediately and smoothly.

If the rear wheel skid is caused by over-acceleration, correct it by gradually closing the throttle. Sudden closing of the throttle may make the problem worse.

Wobble and weave

Wobble and weave are unstable reactions of the motorcycle, usually caused by an aerodynamic imbalance, a mechanical problem, or incorrect loading of the motorcycle. A wobble is a rapid shaking of the front wheel from side to side. A weave is a slower movement of the rear end from side to side, usually with a bit of lean at the same time, often occurring at higher speeds.

Don't apply the brakes, as this could make the wobble worse. Never accelerate. Do not try to fight the wobble. Grip the handlebars firmly, without locking your arms. Ease off the throttle. This will help to reduce the instability. Pull off the road when possible and stop.

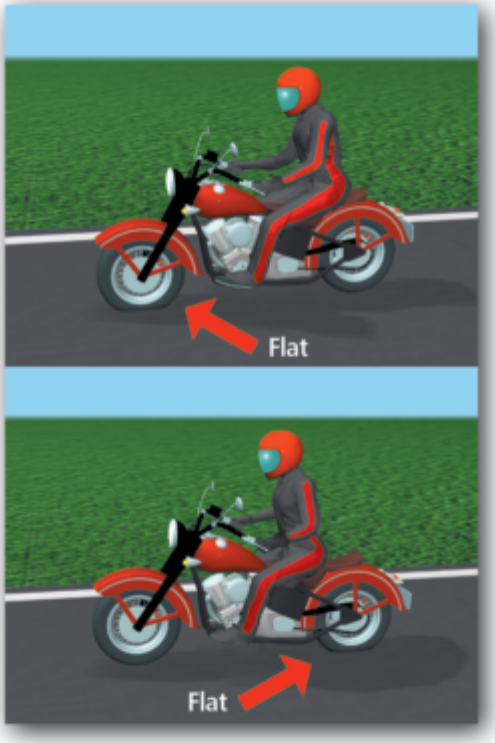
Check for unequal tire pressure or design, bent or misaligned wheels, loose spokes, an improperly mounted windshield or fairing, or an unbalanced load. Have the motorcycle thoroughly checked by a mechanic.

Blowouts

If you have a blowout, you will need to react quickly to keep your balance. A front wheel blowout is dangerous since it affects your steering. You cannot always hear a tire blow. You should be able to detect a flat from the way the motorcycle reacts. If the front tire goes flat, the steering will feel heavy. If the rear tire goes flat, the back of the motorcycle will tend to slide from side to side.

What to do if you have a blowout:

- Hold on tightly and try to steer straight ahead.
- Don't use the brake. Gradually ease off the throttle, letting the motorcycle coast.
- With a front-tire blowout, shift your weight as far back as you can. If the rear tire blows out, stay where you are.
- Wait until the motorcycle is going very slowly, then edge toward the side of the road and coast to a stop.
- If you must use a brake, select the brake controlling the good tire.



Handling Blowouts

Stuck throttle

If your throttle sticks, take the following steps:

- Immediately squeeze the clutch lever.
- Rotate the throttle back and forth several times.
- If you can't close the throttle, it is best to turn off the engine with the emergency shut-off switch or the ignition key.
- Steer off the road and stop.

Avoiding obstacles

Trying to stop quickly may not be enough to keep you from hitting something in your path. If a piece of debris or a pothole appears suddenly in front of you, the only way to avoid a collision might be to take quick evasive action. The trick to making a quick turn is to get the motorcycle to lean quickly in the direction you wish to turn. To get the motorcycle to lean quickly, counter steer. If you wish to turn right, push on the right handgrip. This will cause the front wheel to move slightly left. The result forces the bike to lean to the right. As the motorcycle begins to lean, turn the handlebars in the direction in which the bike is leaning to keep from falling over. Remember to be smooth.

Riding over objects

Sometimes you may see an object in your path too late to steer around it. If this happens, follow these basic rules:

- Hold onto the handlebars tightly.
- Keep a straight course.
- Stand slightly on the footrests.
- Shift your weight back.
- Accelerate slightly as the front wheel reaches the object.
- Decelerate and move your weight forward as you go over the object.
- Resume your normal seating position and normal speed.

Tips

General tips for riding and controlling a motorcycle:

- Use high-speed highways only if you can keep up with the flow of traffic.
- Never lend your motorcycle to an inexperienced driver or to someone who does not have a valid motorcycle licence.
- For motorcycle models without daytime running lights, always turn on your headlights.
- When you come for your road test, make certain your bike is the right size. If your bike is too large, you may have difficulty controlling your bike and passing your test.

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Organ and Tissue Donation

Effective May 1, 1999, donor information is no longer recorded on Nova Scotia Driver's Licence and Identification Cards.

Now every Nova Scotian can record their wishes on their Health Card.

If your Health Card does not include donor designation and you are interested in becoming a donor, please contact MSI (902) 496-7008 or toll free 1-800-563-8880 or by writing to:

MSI
P.O. Box 500
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2S1

For additional information on organ and tissue donation contact:

Multi-Organ Transplant Program
Victoria General Hospital Site
Queen Elizabeth II Health Services Centre
5788 University Avenue
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 1V8
(902) 473-5500

Driver's Licence Examination

The following is a reproduction of the scoring form used by the Driver Enhancement Officer to evaluate your driving. If you are learning to drive, it may help you to have your teacher grade you, using this form.

Pre-Check

❑ Ins. ❑ Per. ❑ Veh. ❑ Insp.

❑ Checked box is a fair or poor rating

Starting

A Lacks knowledge of equipment ❑
B Parking Brake set/stalls ❑
C Incorrect hand signals ❑
D Unnecessary starts—fast/slow ❑
E Fails to cover brake ❑
F Rolls back one metre or more ❑
G Inadequate check/blind spot ❑
H Dangerous action ❑

Steering

A Hands in unstable position ❑
B Uncertain—forward/backward ❑
C Steering with one hand ❑
D Control/recovery ❑
E Dangerous action ❑

Shifting Gears

A Wrong gear ❑
B While turning ❑
C Rides clutch/looks down ❑
D Coasts with clutch ❑
E Too soon/not soon enough ❑
F Cannot shift ❑
G Other than intended ❑
H Coasts in neutral ❑
I Dangerous action ❑

Right Turns

A Too far left ❑
B Observation—before turn ❑
C Excessive speed/too slow ❑
E Cuts corner/swings wide ❑
F Dangerous action ❑

Left Turns

A Too far right ❑
B Observation—before turn ❑
C Excessive speed/too slow ❑
E Cuts corner/swings wide ❑
F Dangerous action ❑

Backing

A Improper use of mirrors ❑
B Speed—excessive/ inconsistent ❑
C Poor control ❑
D Poor observation before/ while backing ❑
E Dangerous action ❑

Passing

A Uncertain ❑
B Fails to sounds horn/ crowds ❑
C Poor observation ❑
D Violation/Dangerous action ❑

Stopping

A Stop abrupt ❑
B Stops too close/far back ❑
C Improper brake use ❑
D Reacts slowly ❑
E Dangerous action ❑

Following

A Too far back ❑
B Too close ❑
C Dangerous action

Stop Signs

A Fails to notice in advance ❑
B Approaches too fast ❑
C Hesitant in leaving ❑
D Stops too far ahead/back of stop line ❑
E Incomplete stop ❑
F Violation/Dangerous action ❑

Traffic Lights

A Fails to anticipate/slow ❑
B Speeds up to make green/amber ❑
C Fails to enter intersection on green ❑
D No caution—flashing amber/green/red ❑
E Stop on green light/arrow ❑
F Fails to observe right on red ❑
G Hesitant in entering, has to wait for next light ❑
H Violation/Dangerous action ❑

Right of Way

A Uncertain to take/yield right of way ❑
B Assumes right of way ❑
C Stops unnecessarily ❑
D Fails to yield to vehicle/pedestrian ❑
E Depends on others for safety ❑
F Violation/Dangerous action ❑

Signalling

A Too soon/late (Class 5) ❑
B Too soon/late (Class 1-4) ❑
C Not cancelled ❑
D No signal given ❑
E Wrong signal ❑
F Dangerous action ❑

Intersections

A Blocks crosswalk/ intersection ❑
B Brakes after entering ❑
C Speed too fast/slow ❑
D Fails to observe/scan/ incautious ❑
E Dangerous action ❑

Lane Usage

A Late choosing lane/crowds centre/shoulder ❑
B Improper lane change/ merge ❑
C Driving left of centre ❑
D Wrong lane ❑
E Straddles lane ❑
F Fails to observe conditions/inadequate/ blind spot ❑
G Dangerous action ❑

Parking

A Over 15 cm but under 30 cm ❑
B Improper position— vehicle/wheels ❑
C Fails to set brake/wrong gear ❑
D Hits curbs/object ❑
E More than three attempts ❑
F Climbs curb ❑
G Poor observation— before/while ❑
H Over 30 cm from curb ❑
I Dangerous action ❑

Attention

A Fails to follow instructions ❑
B Overconfident/improper attitude ❑
C Fails to observe conditions or signs which might affect operation ❑
D Fails to clear windows ❑
E Poor observation ❑
F Takes eyes off road ❑
G Fails to observe conditions, necessitates fast action to avoid ❑
H Dangerous action ❑

Speed

A Inconsistent speed ❑
B Slow, but not so as to obstruct traffic ❑
C Too fast ❑
D Too slow ❑
E Violation/Dangerous action ❑