

Daytime Running Lights

Overview

In Nova Scotia, the Province has enacted legislation requiring the use of Daytime Running Lights, or lighted headlamps, at all times while a vehicle is being operated on a highway.

The following information has been excerpted from the *Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations* and is provided as guidance for enforcement agencies and the general public to determine if the operation of a vehicle complies with current legislation. This information is intended to be of a general nature, and should not be interpreted as being the legal definition of daytime running lights (DRLs).

DRLs are a lighting device installed on the front of motor vehicles. In Canada every passenger car, multi-purpose passenger vehicle, truck, bus and three-wheeled vehicle operating on the highway must be equipped with two DRLs at the time of manufacture. DRL's have been required, by law, on all vehicles manufactured after 1990. Therefore, all vehicles manufactured after this date must have operating DRLs installed as standard equipment. For complete definition of daytime running lights, and the standards for these lighting devices, please refer to the *Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations* at:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/acts-regulations/regulations-crc-c1038-sch-iv-108.htm>

Vehicles manufactured outside of Canada may not have DRLs installed by the manufacturer. There are many jurisdictions that do not require the use of DRLs. For example, vehicles manufactured in the United States are not required to have DRLs installed at the time of manufacture and are not required to be operated displaying DRLs in their home state.

The Nova Scotia *Motor Vehicle Act* indicates:

Lighted headlamps or daytime running lights

174A (1) Notwithstanding Section 174, every motor vehicle equipped with one or more headlamps must be equipped with lighted daytime running lights or lighted headlamps at all times while being operated upon a highway within the Province.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a motor vehicle registered as an antique vehicle. 2008, c. 62, s. 2.

This section of the Act requires all vehicles to have either functioning DRLs or lighted headlamps. The only exception to this rule is in the case of a vehicle registered as an antique, which vehicles are not required to use DRLs or lighted headlamps. Some antique vehicles do not have lighting systems robust enough to be operated for lengthy periods of time.

The goal of the provincial legislation was to ensure all vehicles are displaying lights to the front of the vehicle while operating on roads. DRLs have a proven safety benefit, and have been shown to decrease the frequency of collisions.

Types of DRLs

DRLs make take various forms. The *Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations* recognizes that DRLs may include the following:

- Lighted headlamps alone;
- DRLs combined with headlamps (DRLs must turn off when the headlight switch is activated);
- DRLs combined with fog lamps;
- DRLs combined with turn signals (DRLs that are combined with turn signals may turn off when the turn signal is activated).

Colour

The colour of the lamps used for DRLs is permitted to range from white, yellow, or white to yellow (any range of colour between white and yellow would be acceptable).

Summary

Some vehicle owners choose to disconnect their manufacturer installed DRLs. There may be many reasons for this, but the important consideration is that DRLs are a proven safety device. Vehicles operated on the Province's highways without DRLs present a public safety hazard, while not complying with provincial legislation. Due to the safety benefits, the Province has entrenched the requirement for DRLs within the *Motor Vehicle Act* and require all vehicles (except registered antiques) to display DRLs while operating on the highway. If a vehicle does not have DRLs, or its DRL's have been disconnected, it is required to have its headlamps illuminated during the daytime. (again, registered antiques exempted).