

Rules of the Road

More Questions and Answers

Plates and Registration

- 1) Q. What happens to your registration when you sell your car?
A. The registration ends. The new owner cannot drive the car without getting a new registration.
- 2) Q. What must you do when you sell your car?
A. Fill out the notice on your registration certificate. Write the date you sold the car. Write the names and address of the new owner. Return the registration to the Registry.
- 3) Q. Who is responsible for a car on the road that is not registered, does not have the correct number plates or that does not have the required safety equipment?
A. The owner, the driver, the person in charge, or all three are responsible.
- 4) Q. What is your duty as owner or a person in control of a car?
A. You must be careful about giving your car to someone else to drive. You must make sure that this person has a valid license, is competent and has legal authority to drive your car.

Learners' Permits

- 5) Q. How old do you have to be to get a Learner's Permit?
A.) In order to obtain a Learner's Permit, you must be 16 years of age or over.
- 6) Q. What must you do to your Learner's Permit or Driver's License to make it valid?
A.) You must write your name in the space provided on the Learner's Permit or Driver's License to make it valid.
- 7) Q. If a police officer or a Registry Examiner or Investigator asks you to sign your name in his presence, what must you do?
A. The law requires you to sign your name if asked to do so by any of these officers.
- 8) Q. What does the law say about driving with a Learner's Permit?
A. The law says that a person driving with a Learner's Permit must be accompanied by a licensed Massachusetts driver 18 years of age or over, who is sitting beside the driver and who has had at least one year of driving experience.
- 9) Q. Who is responsible for the acts of a driver who is driving with a Learner's Permit?
A. Both the driver and the licensed individual who accompanies the driver are responsible for the acts of the driver with a Learner's Permit.

License Information

- 10) Q. What is a Junior Operator's License?
A. A Junior Operator's License is a license issued to a person under 18 years of age who may not drive between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

- 11) Q. For how long is your Driver's License valid?
A. Your Driver's License is valid for your (4) years. However, your original license will expire on your third birthday following the date it was issued.
- 12) Q. What must you as a driver or motor vehicle owner do when you move to another address?
A. You must notify the Registry of Motor Vehicles in writing within 30 days of any change in address.

Accident Information

- 13) Q. What must you do if you are involved in an accident as the driver of a motor vehicle?
A. You must give your name, address and registration number, to any person injured and to the owner or person in charge of the property damaged and you must show your Driver's License if asked to do so.
- 14) Q. What accidents must you report?
A. You must report an accident in which someone is killed, hurt or there are damages in excess of \$500.00 to a car or other property. A written accident report must be sent to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and to the Police Department in the city or town where the accident happened within five days of the accident. Accident report forms are available at all police stations.
- 15) Q. What must you do if a dog or cat is killed or injured by your car?
A. You must report such an accident to the owner of the dog or cat, or to the police in the city or town where the animal was hit.
- 16) Q. What can you do to make yourself and other safer while in your car?
A. You can wear safety belts. The law requires that a child less than five years old must wear a safety belt or be in a special child safety seat.
- 17) Q. What does the law say about having objects in your car or near you that could prevent you from driving safely?
A. You must not place objects in the car or near you that would interfere with safe driving. You should not have objects like baby shoes, beads, statues, etc., hanging or places in such a way to obstruct your view of the road.
- 18) Q. Is it against the law to wear headphones while driving?
A. Yes, you may be fined if convicted and your license may be suspended.

Alcohol, Drugs and Penalties

- 19) Q. When you become a licensed Massachusetts driver what do you agree to do regarding your use of alcohol?
A. You agree to drive soberly and, if stopped by the police for driving under the influence, to take a chemical breath test.
- 20) Q. What is the penalty for refusing the breathalyzer test?
A. It is mandatory that you lose your license for ninety (90) days.

- 21) Q. What effect does alcohol have on a driver?
A. Alcohol slows down the driver's reaction time and affects the driver's judgment. It can also affect the driver's hearing and vision. The only sure way to avoid driving while intoxicated is not to drive after drinking alcoholic beverages.
- 22) Q. Will small amounts of beer, wine or whiskey?
A. Yes
- 23) Q. What is the active ingredient in beer, wine or whisky?
A. The active ingredient in beer, wine and whiskey is ethyl alcohol, which is a depressant (downer).
- 24) Q. How much alcohol is in 1.5 ounces of whiskey, 12 ounces of beer or 3 or 5 ounce of wine?
A. There is approximately ½ ounce of alcohol in each?
- 25) Q. Will the quantities of alcohol in beer, wine or whiskey affect the functions necessary to drive safely?
A. Your reaction time, judgment, vision and coordination will all be affected by the alcohol, even when taken in small quantities
- 26) Q. How can you sober up quickly?
A. You can't. There is no fast way to speed up the way your body eliminates alcohol once it enters the blood. Metabolizing alcohol takes about one hour and fifteen minutes for each ounce
- 27) Q. How does alcohol reach your bloodstream?
A. By the process of absorption. Alcohol doesn't require digestion. Your liver has to eliminate the alcohol and that is why only with time and waiting can you get sober. Black coffee, cold showers, exercise, food, drinking more alcohol or other liquids are all ineffective myths.
- 28) Q. What is a blood alcohol content (BAC)?
A. It is the amount of alcohol in your bloodstream and is directly related to your weight, food in your stomach, physical condition and how many drinks you have had. The higher your BAC the more severe your impairment and potential for being involved in an accident.
- 29) Q. Under current Massachusetts law, what is the penalty for the first driving under the influence offense?
A. A guilty finding for the first offense may result in the following penalties: imprisonment for up to two years, a fine of up to \$1000, and your driver's license revoked for a year.
- 30) Q. What is the penalty under current Massachusetts law for operating a vehicle while drinking an alcoholic beverage or being in possession of an open can or bottle or other container having an alcoholic beverage in it?
A. If you are convicted you may be fined \$100 to \$500 and your license may be suspended.
- 31) Q. What effect does marijuana have on a driver?
A. Marijuana affects the driver's night vision and slows down the driver's ability to react to dangerous driving situations.
- 32) Q. Is it against the law to drive while on marijuana?
A. Yes, the penalties are the same for driving under the influence of alcohol. See question 29.

Speed Limits

- 33) Q. What is the basic speed law?
A. The speed of a car must be safe for pedestrians, road conditions, and other traffic.
- 34) Q. When do you have to drive slower than the posted speed limit?
A. You must drive slower than the posted speed limit when there is any situation which is dangerous.
- 35) Q. What is a "thickly settled district"?
A. A thickly settled district is a place where houses are less than 200 feet apart for $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile or more, or a place built up with business buildings.
- 36) Q. What speed may be considered unreasonable in a thickly settled district?
A. Unless otherwise posted, a speed greater than 30 m.p.h. may be considered unreasonable in a thickly settled district.
- 37) Q. What speed may be considered unreasonable outside of a thickly settled district?
A. A speed greater than 50 m.p.h. on a divided highway and a speed greater than 40 m.p.h. on other roads may be considered unreasonable.
- 38) Q. What speed may be considered unreasonable in a school zone?
A. A speed greater than 20 m.p.h. may be considered unreasonable.

Brakes

- 39) Q. What does the law say about brakes on cars?
A. The law requires that cars have two braking systems in good working order, a foot brake and a parking brake to hold the car when parked.
- 40) Q. When going down a steep hill, should you use your brakes?
A. Only use brakes to keep control and to keep the car at a safe speed. It is better to put the car in a lower gear when going down a steep hill because the engine acts like a brake. If your car is standard shift, put it into first or second gear. If your car is automatic, put it into lower gear.
- 41) Q. What can you do if your brakes do not work because they are wet?
A. Drive slowly, holding the brake pedal down. This will make the brakes heat up and the heat will dry the brakes.
- 42) Q. What do you do when your car begins to skid (slip or move out of control)?
A. Steer your car into the skid. If the rear of the car is skidding to the right, steer to the right. If the rear of the car is skidding to the left, steer to the left. When you have control of the car, use your brakes lightly.
- 43) Q. What is hydroplaning?
A. Hydroplaning is when your tires ride on top of the water on the road. Skidding and loss of steering may result from hydroplaning. Good tires with deep grooves reduce hydroplaning. To prevent hydroplaning, slow down.

Lights and Other Equipment

- 44) Q. What lights do you need when driving at night?
A. Cars must have two (2) approved white lights on the front and two (2) red lights on the back, mounted one on each side. Also, the car must have two (2) red stop lights. There must be a white light to light up the rear number plate.
- 45) Q. When do drivers have to turn on their lights?
A. Drivers must use their lights from ½ hour after the sun goes down until ½ hour before the sun comes up.
- 46) Q. When should drivers lower their head lights to low beam?
A. Drivers should put their headlights on low beam when an oncoming car is within 500 feet, or when driving on well-lighted roads.
- 47) Q. When may a spotlight be used?
A. Drivers may only use a spotlight to read signs, or as an emergency light if the headlights are not working. Also, the spotlight may shine no more than 2 feet above the road at a distance of 30 feet from your car.
- 48) Q. Your car must have brakes and lights. What other equipment is required on your car?
A. Your car must have a horn, a muffler, a lock for the ignition, windshield wipers, and directional signals.
- 49) Q. If the Registrar decides that a car is unsafe to drive or is not properly equipped, what can the Registrar do?
A. The Registrar can refuse to register the car. If the owner already has a registration, the Registrar may suspend or revoke it.

Vehicle Inspection Stickers

- 50) Q. Inspection stickers are valid for how long?
A. All inspection stickers are valid for one year unless the vehicle is sold or transferred, and vehicles must be reinspected prior to the date of expiration indicated on the sticker.
- 51) Q. If you buy a car do you have to have it inspected?
A. Yes. You must have a newly purchased car inspected within 7 days of the date you register it. This is required even if the car has an inspection sticker on the windshield that was issued to the prior owner.

Traffic Lights and Signs

- 52) Q. What does a green light mean?
A. A green light means that you may go if it is safe to go.
- 53) Q. What does a flashing green light mean?
A. A flashing green light means that you may go if it is safe to go.
- 54) Q. What does it mean when a green light changes to a yellow light?
A. If you are proceeding on the green light and the light changes to yellow, you must stop if it is safe to do so.

- 55) Q. What does a flashing yellow light mean?
A. The flashing yellow light means "Warning: Proceed with Caution."
- 56) Q. What does it mean when a red light shows alone?
A. A red light means stop.
- 57) Q. What does a flashing red light or a stop sign tell you?
A. You *must* stop. Then move when it is safe.
- 58) Q. Cars are stopped at a red light. A person is crossing the street. The light changes but the person has not finished crossing. What must the driver do?
A. The driver must wait until the person finishes walking across the street before proceeding.
- 59) Q. What do red and yellow lights showing together mean?
A. Red and yellow lights showing together mean that cars must stop. People may cross the street.
- 60) Q. What does a red traffic light with a green arrow mean?
A. If there is a green arrow, you may drive in the direction of the arrow. An up and down arrow tells you to drive straight ahead. If the arrow points to the right, you may turn right. If the arrow points to the left, you may turn left.
- 61) Q. When may you turn right on a red light?
A. You may turn right on a red light only after coming to a full stop unless a posted sign states "No turn on red."
- 62) Q. What do the red-yellow-red bands painted on a traffic light pole mean?
A. The red-yellow-red bands mean that there is a special walk light for people who cross the street. People can push a button to activate the walk light.
- 63) Q. You see a sign "YIELD". What do you do?
A. A "YIELD" sign means that you must stop unless you can enter the intersection safely without interfering with other traffic.

Other Rules and Responsibilities

- 64) Q. Does a driver have to signal when stopping or turning?
A. Yes, a driver must give a signal when stopping or turning. The signal may be a mechanically or electrically operated signal or a hand/arm signal given by the driver. Signals should be given at least 100 feet ahead of the turning point.
- 65) Q. What is an intersecting way?
A. An intersecting way is any road that meets another road whether or not it crosses.
- 66) Q. What does a solid line painted next to a broken line on a two lane roadway mean?
A. A solid line painted next to a broken line means the driver may not pass other vehicles if the solid line is painted on the driver's side of the road.
- 67) Q. What does a solid double yellow line painted on a roadway mean?
A. A solid double yellow line means that a driver may not cross the double line except when entering or leaving a driveway.

- 68) Q. Who has the right of way at a rotary?
A. Cars going around the rotary have the right of way and may go before cars entering the rotary.
- 69) Q. Who has the legal right to go first at an intersection?
A. The car that gets to the intersection first may go first. If two cars arrive at the intersection, at the same time, from different directions, then the car on the right goes first.
- 70) Q. If you miss your exit on a highway, what should you do?
A. You should keep going until the next exit. Never back up on a highway.
- 71) Q. What should you do if you have an emergency and must stop on a highway?
A. You should drive off the highway onto the breakdown lane before stopping.
- 72) Q. Do you have to keep your vehicle in the right lane when traveling on a highway?
A. Yes, when it is available you must stay in the right lane on a highway except when passing other vehicles.
- 73) Q. What do you do before driving away from a curb or parking space?
A. Watch for cars that are coming. Signal. Move when it is safe.
- 74) Q. How do you make a right turn at an intersection?
A. Keep as close as you can to the right curb as you make your turn.
- 75) Q. How do you make a left turn at an intersection?
A. Keep next to and to the right of the center line of the road. Then keep next to and to the right of the center line of the road you are turning into. Let oncoming traffic go first, and be sure it is safe before you turn.
- 76) Q. How do you make a left turn when you are on a one way street?
A. Move into the left lane. Stay close to the left curb while making the turn.
- 77) Q. If you come to a curve in the road and cannot see ahead, what must you do?
A. Keep to the right and slow down.
- 78) Q. Another car is traveling in the same direction and you want to pass it. What must you do?
A. You must keep to the left of the other car. Give yourself enough room to pass safely.
- 79) Q. Is passing on the right permitted?
A. Passing on the right is permitted only on a multi-lane barrier-divided highway or on a one way street. You may also pass on the right when the vehicle in the left lane is turning left or is preparing to turn left.
- 80) Q. If you want to pass another car, how far ahead do you need to see before passing?
A. You must be able to see 400 feet or more ahead if you are preparing to pass another car.
- 81) Q. What must you do when another car is passing or attempting to pass your car?
A. You must move to the right to permit the vehicle to pass on the left unless you are traveling on a way which permits vehicles to pass on the right. You should not increase your speed until the other car has safely passed.

- 82) Q. What must you do when you are driving out of a private road, driveway or garage?
A. Stop before you drive across the sidewalk. Let pedestrians and other cars go first.
- 83) Q. If a person is walking in the street on which you are driving, what must you do?
A. Slow down or stop if necessary. People walking have the right to go first.
- 84) Q. What does the law say a driver must do at crosswalks?
A. The driver shall not pass any other car which has stopped at a marked crosswalk to allow a pedestrian to cross. No driver shall stop his vehicle on a marked crosswalk.
- 85) Q. What must you do when you come to a trolley where people are getting on and off?
A. The people have the right to go first. Do not drive closer than 8 feet to the step of the trolley.
- 86) Q. A vehicle with a school bus sign and alternately flashing red signals lights stops. What must you do?
A. When the red lights on the vehicle with the school bus sign are flashing alternately you must stop not less than fifteen (15) feet before reaching such vehicle, even if you are going in the opposite direction. You must allow the children to get on and off the bus. When the lights stop flashing you may go. If a school bus stops on the other side of a divided highway (with a barrier in the middle) you do not have to stop.
- 87) Q. What must the driver do when a blind person is trying to cross the street with a white cane or is guided by a dog?
A. The driver must stop and make sure that the blind person has safely crossed the street before the driver may continue.
- 88) Q. What must you do if a fire truck is going to a fire or answering an alarm and the fire truck comes near you?
A. Drive to the right and stop. (Do not follow closer than 300 feet behind a fire truck that is answering an alarm.)
- 89) Q. What does the law say about driving near a fire?
A. The law says that you must not drive over the fire hose unless a fireman says it is all right. Do not park closer than 800 feet to the fire.
- 90) Q. What must you do when a funeral procession comes near your car?
A. The law forbids you to cut through or disrupt cars in a funeral procession. You may be fined if you violate this law.
- 91) Q. What must you do when you come to a cow, horse, or other animal that someone is leading, riding or driving?
A. If you are driving in one direction and the animal is moving in the other, stop and wait until the animal passes. If your car and the animal are moving in the same direction, be careful when passing the animal. You must stop and turn off your motor if the animal seems afraid.
- 92) Q. What must you do when you approach train tracks?
A. Slow down. Then proceed carefully.
- 93) Q. When you leave your car unattended in the street, what should you do?
A. Stop the motor, set the brake, make sure the ignition is locked and remove the key. Lock your car.

- 94) Q. Who can park in spaces marked 'Handicapped Only?'
A. Only disabled people with special "HP" number plates issued to the handicapped, or "V" number plates issued to veterans may park in spaces marked "Handicapped Only."
- 95) Q. What are the rights of a person riding a bicycle in the street?
A. Persons riding bicycles have the same rights as cars to use the road. Bicycle riders may move in traffic and make turns the same way cars do and obey the traffic laws.
- 96) Q. Is it against the law to throw glass or garbage on the road or any public or private land?
A. Yes, it is a violation to litter. You may be fined if you do so.
- 97) Q. Is it against the law to throw lighted cigarettes or anything else that can cause a fire near a forest or open field?
A. Yes. You may be fined and your license may be suspended.
- 98) Q. Are children under the age of five required to wear seat belts or be carried in a properly fastened safety seat?
A. Yes, the law requires this or you, the driver, may be fined.
- 99) Q. What is one safety advantage to wearing seat belts?
A. It may keep you from being thrown out of your car onto the highway.
- 100) Q. Will the shoulder restraint of a safety belt keep you from hitting your windshield or steering column?
A. Absolutely "Yes".
- 101) Q. What is the shape of a "Railroad Crossing" sign?
A. The shape of a "Railroad Crossing" sign is round.
- 102) Q. What is the shape of a "No Passing" sign?
A. The shape of a "NO Passing" sign is pennant.
- 103) Q. What is the shape of a "Yield" sign?
A. The shape of a "Yield" sign is an upside down triangle.
- 104) Q. What is the shape of a "stop" sign?
A. A "Stop" sign has eight equal sides.