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Ontario

Study Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: Getting Your Driver’ s Licence

1.1 Basic Requirements for Driving in Ontario

To legally operate a motor vehicle in Ontario, all drivers must meet specific age and licensing criteria. Residents must be at least 16 years old and possess a valid Ontario driver's licence. If you have recently moved to Ontario, you are permitted to use your driver's licence from your previous jurisdiction for 60 days, after which you must obtain an Ontario licence. Visitors to Ontario must also be at least 16 and have a valid licence from their home country, province, or state.

- ✓ The minimum age to drive in Ontario is 16.
- ✓ New residents must obtain an Ontario driver's licence within 60 days.
- ✓ Visitors staying for more than 3 months must have an International Driver's Permit.
- ✓ You cannot simultaneously hold an Ontario Driver's Licence and an Ontario Photo Card.

1.2 Ontario's Graduated Licensing System Overview

New drivers seeking a car or motorcycle licence must go through Ontario's graduated licensing system, a two-level process designed to help them gain skills and experience gradually. The process starts at Level One (G1) after passing vision and knowledge tests. After a minimum time period and a successful road test, drivers advance to Level Two (G2). A final road test is required to obtain a full G licence. The entire process takes at least 20 months to complete.

- ✓ To begin the graduated licensing process, you must be 16, pass a vision test, and pass a knowledge test.
- ✓ The system consists of two levels, G1 and G2, before earning a full G licence.
- ✓ The minimum time to complete the graduated licensing process is 20 months.
- ✓ Taking an approved driver-education course can reduce the time spent in Level One (G1) from 12 months to 8 months.

1.3 Driving Restrictions for G1 Licence Holders

Level One (G1) drivers must adhere to several strict conditions to ensure safety while learning. A G1 driver must always be accompanied by a qualified driver, maintain a zero blood-alcohol level, and avoid driving during late-night hours or on major highways. These rules are strictly enforced.

- ✓ You must not drive if you have been drinking alcohol; your blood-alcohol level must be zero.
- ✓ You must be accompanied by a fully licensed driver with at least four years of driving experience, who must sit in the front passenger seat.
- ✓ You are not permitted to drive on 400-series highways or other designated high-speed expressways.
- ✓ You must not drive between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m.
- ✓ The accompanying driver's blood-alcohol level must be less than .05%.

1.4 Driving Restrictions for G2 Licence Holders

Level Two (G2) drivers have more privileges but are still subject to important restrictions, particularly concerning alcohol and, for young drivers, late-night passengers. All G2 drivers must maintain a zero blood-alcohol level. Drivers aged 19 and under have limits on the number of young passengers they can carry between midnight and 5 a.m.

- ✓ Your blood-alcohol level must be zero at all times when driving.
- ✓ For G2 drivers 19 and under, during the first six months, you can carry only one passenger aged 19 or under between midnight and 5 a.m.
- ✓ For G2 drivers 19 and under, after six months, you can carry up to three passengers aged 19 or under between midnight and 5 a.m.
- ✓ The late-night passenger restrictions for G2 drivers 19 and under do not apply if a fully licensed driver is in the front seat or if passengers are immediate family.

1.5 Zero Blood-Alcohol Rule for All Young Drivers

Ontario has a strict zero-tolerance policy for alcohol for all drivers aged 21 and under. This rule applies regardless of the driver's licence class, meaning even fully licensed G drivers in this age group must have a blood-alcohol level of zero when operating a vehicle.

- ✓ If you are a driver aged 21 or under, your blood-alcohol level must be zero.
- ✓ This law applies to all licence classes, including G1, G2, and full G.

1.6 Vehicle Privileges for a Class G Licence

A Class G licence is the standard licence for cars, vans, and small trucks. It also allows for the towing of trailers or other vehicles, subject to specific weight restrictions. Understanding these limits is crucial for operating your vehicle combination legally and safely.

- ✓ A Class G licence allows you to drive any car, van, or small truck.
- ✓ You may tow a vehicle or trailer up to 4,600 kilograms.
- ✓ The total combined weight of your vehicle and the towed vehicle cannot exceed 11,000 kilograms.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: Safe and Responsible Driving

2.1 Defensive Driving: Visibility, Space, and Communication

Defensive or strategic driving involves anticipating dangerous situations and responding effectively to prevent them. It is based on three key ideas: visibility (seeing and being seen), space (maintaining a cushion of space around your vehicle), and communication (using signals, eye contact, and your horn to inform others of your intentions).

- ✓ Scan the road ahead and to the side, and check your mirrors every five seconds or so.
- ✓ Maintain a safe cushion of space in front, behind, and to the sides of your vehicle.
- ✓ Signal whenever you intend to slow down, stop, turn, or change lanes to communicate with other road users.

2.2 Understanding and Checking Vehicle Blind Spots

Blind spots are areas around your vehicle that cannot be seen in your mirrors. It is critical to adjust your mirrors to minimize these spots and to always perform a shoulder check by turning your head to look over your shoulder before turning or changing lanes. This is the only way to ensure the space is clear.

- ✓ Adjust your side mirrors so you can just see the rear of your car to reduce blind spots.
- ✓ Turning your head to do a shoulder check is the only way to make sure there is nothing in your blind spots.
- ✓ Be aware that other vehicles, especially large ones, have large blind spots, and you should avoid driving in them.

2.3 Seatbelt Laws, Penalties, and Proper Use

In Ontario, it is mandatory for the driver and all passengers to wear a seatbelt. The driver is responsible for ensuring passengers under 16 are properly secured. Failure to comply results in fines and demerit points. Seatbelts must be worn correctly, with the lap belt low over the hips and the shoulder strap over the shoulder.

- ✓ A driver can be fined and receive two demerit points for not wearing a seatbelt.
- ✓ Drivers are responsible for ensuring all passengers under the age of 16 are properly buckled in a seatbelt, child car seat, or booster seat.
- ✓ Novice drivers must have a working seatbelt for every passenger, or they can lose their licence for at least 30 days.

2.4 Child Car Seat and Booster Seat Requirements

Ontario law requires children to be secured in an appropriate child car seat or booster seat until they meet specific age, weight, or height requirements. The driver is responsible for ensuring children under 16 are correctly secured. The stages progress from rear-facing seats for infants, to forward-facing seats for toddlers, to booster seats for young children.

- ✓ Infants who weigh less than 9 kg (20 lbs) must be buckled into a rear-facing child car seat.
- ✓ A child must use a booster seat until they turn eight years old, OR weigh 36 kg (80 lbs), OR are 145 cm (4 feet 9 inches) tall.
- ✓ Never place a rear-facing child car seat in a front seat that has an active airbag.

2.5 Rules for Using Vehicle Headlights

Headlights are required at night and during poor visibility conditions. There are specific rules for using high and low beams to ensure you can see properly without blinding other drivers. Daytime running lights are not a substitute for headlights in poor conditions as they may not activate your tail lights.

- ✓ You must use your headlights from one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour after sunrise, and any other time you cannot see clearly for 150 metres.
- ✓ You must switch from high-beam to low-beam headlights within 150 metres of an oncoming vehicle.
- ✓ You must use low-beam headlights when you are less than 60 metres behind another vehicle.

2.6 Principles of Safe and Responsible Driving

Safe driving is a combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude. It requires knowing and obeying traffic laws, as breaking them is a primary cause of collisions. Drivers must be predictable, courteous to others by giving space and signalling, and take responsibility for avoiding collisions, even when another road user makes a mistake.

- ✓ You are responsible for avoiding collisions, even if someone else does something wrong.
- ✓ You must be predictable on the road, doing what other road users expect you to do.
- ✓ Breaking traffic laws is the major cause of collisions and can result in fines, jail time, or licence suspension.

2.7 Driver Fitness and Readiness to Drive

Before driving, you must be physically and mentally alert. Your ability to drive can be negatively affected by factors such as illness, fatigue, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, stress, and strong emotions like anger. It is your responsibility to assess your fitness to drive and to refrain from driving when impaired.

- ✓ Do not drive when you are tired, as fatigue slows down thinking and reaction time.
- ✓ Do not drive when you are upset or angry, as strong emotions can reduce your ability to think and react quickly.
- ✓ You must not operate a motor vehicle when taking any drug or medication that may reduce your ability to drive.

2.8 Proper Seating Position and Vehicle Adjustments

Properly adjusting your seat, mirrors, and headrest is crucial for safety and control. You should sit high enough to see the ground four metres in front of your vehicle, with elbows slightly bent and feet easily reaching the pedals. The headrest should be positioned so the middle of it is directly behind the back of your head.

- ✓ Adjust your seat so you can see over the steering wheel and hood, and your feet can easily reach the pedals.
- ✓ The back of your head should be directly in front of the middle of the headrest to protect you in a collision.
- ✓ Keep your windows clear of any obstructions or coatings that block your view in any direction.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 6: Ontario G1 testing trends

3.1 Vulnerable Road Users (Top Priority)

Ontario has significantly increased the focus on protecting non-motorists. These are now "must-know" topics for the G1 exam.

- ✓ The One-Metre Rule: Drivers must maintain a minimum distance of one metre when passing a cyclist. You should include questions about the fines and demerit points for failing to do so.
- ✓ Pedestrian Crossovers (PXO): Distinguish these from regular crosswalks. At a PXO (marked by overhead lights/signs), drivers must wait until pedestrians have completely crossed the entire width of the road before proceeding.
- ✓ Bike Lanes: Rules for crossing bike lanes to make right turns and checking blind spots for "right-hook" collisions.

3.2 Distracted Driving (Modernized Laws)

The laws have evolved beyond just "texting while driving."

- ✓ Red Light Stoppage: It is illegal to hold or use a phone even while stopped at a red light or stuck in traffic.
- ✓ Novice Driver Penalties: For G1/G2 drivers, a first conviction for distracted driving results in a 30-day license suspension, rather than just a fine. This is a high-conversion "fear factor" topic for your App.
- ✓ Infotainment Screens: Rules regarding adjusting GPS or vehicle screens while the vehicle is in motion.

3.3 Cannabis and "Zero Tolerance"

This is a major safety focus in Ontario.

- ✓ Tow Trucks and Service Vehicles: The law now includes tow trucks with flashing amber lights and public utility vehicles. If a driver sees these stopped on the side of a multi-lane highway, they must change lanes if it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Fines for Non-Compliance: Penalties for failing to move over for an emergency vehicle are very high ($400 to $2,000 for a first offense).

3.4 Specific Ontario Road Scenarios

- ✓ Roundabouts: As Ontario installs more roundabouts, questions regarding signaling (signal "right" when exiting) and right-of-way (yielding to traffic already in the circle) are becoming standard.
- ✓ High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes: Rules for who can use HOV lanes on 400-series highways (e.g., minimum 2 people, green plates) and the meaning of the diamond symbol.
- ✓ School Bus "Physical Median": A classic trap question. If there is a physical median (e.g., a raised concrete barrier), oncoming traffic does NOT have to stop for a school bus with flashing lights. If there is no barrier (even on a 5-lane road), everyone must stop.

3.5 Extreme Weather (Winter Driving)

- ✓ Black Ice: How to identify it (it looks like a wet road) and how to react if the vehicle starts to skid.
- ✓ Lights in Visibility: Legal requirement to turn on full headlights (not just DRLs) when visibility is reduced to 150m due to fog, rain, or snow.

3.6 Move Over Law (Emergency & Service Vehicles)

This is a major safety focus in Ontario.

- ✓ Tow Trucks and Service Vehicles: The law now includes tow trucks with flashing amber lights and public utility vehicles. If a driver sees these stopped on the side of a multi-lane highway, they must change lanes if it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Fines for Non-Compliance: Penalties for failing to move over for an emergency vehicle are very high ($400 to $2,000 for a first offense).

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 3: Traffic Signs and Lights

4.1 Identifying Key Traffic Signs by Shape and Colour

Certain traffic signs have unique shapes for quick identification. A stop sign is an octagon, a yield sign is an inverted triangle, a school zone sign is a pentagon, and a railway crossing sign is an 'X' shape. Recognizing these shapes from a distance allows you to prepare for the required action.

- ✓ A red, eight-sided stop sign means you must come to a complete stop before the stop line, crosswalk, or intersection edge.
- ✓ A five-sided, fluorescent yellow/green school zone sign warns you to slow down and watch for children.
- ✓ A triangular yield sign with a white background and red border requires you to slow down or stop if necessary, letting traffic in or near the intersection go first.
- ✓ An X-shaped railway crossing sign warns that tracks cross the road ahead; you must slow down, look both ways for trains, and be prepared to stop.

4.2 Understanding and Obeying Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs give a direction that must be obeyed by law. They are typically rectangular or square with a white or black background. A green circle on a sign indicates a permitted or mandatory action, while a red circle with a line through it prohibits an action.

- ✓ A sign with a green circle indicates an activity you may or must do.
- ✓ A sign with a red circle and a slash through a symbol means the activity shown is not allowed.
- ✓ Regulatory signs, such as speed limit signs or 'Do Not Enter' signs, are legally enforceable commands.

4.3 Following Rules for School Zones and Buses

Special rules apply in school zones and when encountering a school bus to protect children. Signs indicate reduced speed limits during school hours, and drivers must stop for school buses with flashing lights.

- ✓ When a school zone sign indicates a lower speed limit and has flashing yellow lights, you must obey that limit when the lights are active.
- ✓ You must stop for a school bus with its upper red lights flashing, regardless of which direction you are travelling, unless you are on a highway with a median divider.
- ✓ A 'School Bus Loading Zone' sign marks an area where buses may load or unload without using their flashing lights and stop arm; exercise caution.

4.4 Recognizing and Reacting to Warning Signs

Warning signs alert you to dangerous or unusual conditions ahead, such as curves, slippery roads, or merging traffic. They are typically diamond-shaped with a yellow background and black symbols. Seeing a warning sign means you should slow down and drive with extra caution.

- ✓ Warning signs are almost always diamond-shaped and have a yellow background.
- ✓ A sign showing a car with squiggly lines behind it warns that the pavement is slippery when wet.
- ✓ A sign showing two roads joining into one warns that traffic is merging and drivers on both roads are responsible for merging safely.

4.5 Navigating Lane and Highway Transitions

Warning signs provide critical information about changes in the road ahead, such as a lane ending or a divided highway beginning or ending. These signs help you position your vehicle correctly and anticipate the actions of other drivers.

- ✓ A 'Right lane ends ahead' sign means you must merge safely with traffic in the lane to the left.
- ✓ A 'Divided highway begins' sign indicates the road ahead is separated by a physical median, and you must keep to the right-hand road.
- ✓ A 'Divided highway ends' sign warns that the median is ending and you will soon be on a road with oncoming traffic.

4.6 Driving Safely Through Temporary Work Zones

Temporary condition signs warn of road work, detours, or traffic control people ahead. These signs are typically diamond-shaped with an orange background. In these zones, you must slow down, be prepared for sudden stops, and follow all instructions.

- ✓ Temporary condition signs for construction or road work are usually orange and diamond-shaped.
- ✓ You must obey the directions given by a traffic control person in a work zone.
- ✓ A sign stating that fines are doubled means speeding fines are increased in that construction zone when workers are present.

4.7 Understanding Solid Red, Yellow, and Green Lights

Traffic lights control the flow of traffic at intersections. A green light means you may proceed if the way is clear, a yellow light is a warning that the light is about to turn red, and a red light means you must stop.

- ✓ At a solid red light, you must come to a complete stop at the stop line, crosswalk, or edge of the intersection.
- ✓ A solid yellow light means you must stop before entering the intersection if you can do so safely.
- ✓ A solid green light means you may proceed straight or turn, but you must yield to vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection.

4.8 Executing Turns at a Red Light

In Ontario, drivers may make certain turns at a red light after coming to a complete stop and yielding to all traffic and pedestrians, unless a sign prohibits it.

- ✓ You may turn right on a red light after coming to a complete stop and ensuring the way is clear, unless a sign specifically forbids it.
- ✓ You may turn left on a red light only when moving from a one-way road onto another one-way road, after a complete stop and yielding.
- ✓ A sign showing a right-turn arrow within a red circle with a slash means 'Do not turn right when facing a red light'.

4.9 Navigating Turns with Advanced Green Lights and Arrows

Some intersections use special signals to allow turning traffic to proceed before oncoming traffic. These are called advanced green lights and are indicated by a flashing green light or a green arrow.

- ✓ A flashing green light or a left-pointing green arrow means you have the right-of-way to turn left while oncoming traffic faces a red light.
- ✓ After a green arrow, a yellow arrow will appear, indicating the advanced green period is ending and you should not start your turn.
- ✓ Even with a solid green light, you can still turn left, but only after yielding to all oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

4.10 Responding to Flashing Lights and Power Outages

Flashing lights or non-functioning traffic signals require specific actions. A flashing red light is treated as a stop sign, a flashing yellow light as a yield or caution sign, and a blank signal as an all-way stop.

- ✓ A flashing red light has the same meaning as a stop sign: you must come to a complete stop and proceed only when it is safe.
- ✓ A flashing yellow light means you should slow down and proceed through the intersection with caution.
- ✓ If traffic lights at an intersection are not working, you must treat it as an all-way stop, yielding to vehicles on your right.

4.11 Differentiating No Stopping, Standing, and Parking

Regulatory signs control where you can temporarily leave your vehicle. 'No Stopping' is the most restrictive, followed by 'No Standing', and then 'No Parking'. Understanding the difference is crucial to avoid fines and ensure traffic flow.

- ✓ A 'Do not stop' sign prohibits stopping your vehicle for any reason, even for a moment.
- ✓ A 'Do not stand' sign allows you to stop only while actively loading or unloading passengers.
- ✓ A 'Do not park' sign allows you to stop to load or unload passengers or merchandise.

4.12 Identifying Slow-Moving and Long Commercial Vehicles

Certain signs are displayed on vehicles themselves to alert other drivers. The slow-moving vehicle sign is an orange triangle with a red border, and the Long Commercial Vehicle (LCV) placard indicates an extra-long double-trailer truck.

- ✓ An orange triangle with a red border on the back of a vehicle indicates a 'slow-moving vehicle' travelling at 40 km/h or less.
- ✓ When you see a slow-moving vehicle sign, you must slow down and prepare to pass only when it is safe.
- ✓ An LCV placard indicates a double trailer that can be up to 40 metres long, requiring extra time and distance to pass safely.

4.13 Yielding to Pedestrians at Signalized Crossings

Pedestrian signals indicate when it is safe for people to cross the street. Drivers must be aware of these signals and always yield the right-of-way to pedestrians who are crossing legally.

- ✓ A white 'walking person' symbol means pedestrians are permitted to start crossing the street.
- ✓ A flashing or steady orange 'hand' symbol means pedestrians must not begin to cross.
- ✓ When facing a green light, drivers who are turning must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrians crossing the intersection.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 4: Keeping Your Driver’ s Licence

5.1 Ontario Driver's Licence Requirements and Renewal

All drivers must carry their one-piece driver's licence card whenever they drive. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure their licence is valid. Renewal notices are mailed, but failure to receive one is not an excuse. An expired car or motorcycle licence can be renewed within one year without tests. If a licence has been expired for more than three years, the driver must re-apply and complete the entire graduated licensing process again, including all tests.

- ✓ You must carry your driver's licence with you at all times when driving.
- ✓ If your licence has been expired for more than three years, you must re-apply for a licence and meet all graduated licensing requirements.
- ✓ You are responsible for renewing your licence on time, even if you do not receive a renewal notice in the mail.

5.2 Demerit Point System for Fully Licensed Drivers

The demerit point system encourages safe driving. For fully licensed drivers, accumulating 15 demerit points results in a 30-day licence suspension. After the suspension, the point total is reduced to seven. Demerit points remain on your record for two years from the date of the offence. Warning letters are sent at 6 and 9 points.

- ✓ A fully licensed driver will have their licence suspended for 30 days upon accumulating 15 demerit points.
- ✓ Demerit points stay on a driving record for two years from the date of the offence.
- ✓ After a 30-day suspension for accumulating 15 points, the driver's record is reduced to 7 points.

5.3 Demerit Point System for Novice Drivers (G1/G2)

Novice drivers (G1, G2) face stricter penalties under the demerit point system. Accumulating 9 or more points results in a 60-day licence suspension. After the suspension, the point total is reduced to four. Warning letters are sent at 2 and 6 points. Novice drivers also face a 30-day suspension for violating any of their licence conditions.

- ✓ A novice driver (G1/G2) will have their licence suspended for 60 days upon accumulating 9 demerit points.
- ✓ For novice drivers, a warning letter is sent upon reaching 2 demerit points.
- ✓ Violating any condition of a novice licence results in a 30-day licence suspension.

5.4 Offences with High Demerit Point Values

Certain serious traffic offences carry a high number of demerit points. These are considered major infractions and can lead to a licence suspension very quickly. Understanding which offences carry the most points is critical for all drivers.

- ✓ Failing to remain at the scene of a collision results in 7 demerit points.
- ✓ Failing to stop for a school bus results in 6 demerit points.
- ✓ Careless driving and racing each carry 6 demerit points.
- ✓ Exceeding the speed limit by 50 km/h or more results in 6 demerit points.

5.5 Demerit Points for Common Driving Offences

Many common driving infractions result in the addition of 2 to 4 demerit points to a driver's record. These can accumulate quickly and lead to warnings or suspensions.

- ✓ Following too closely (tailgating) results in 4 demerit points.
- ✓ Failing to obey a stop sign, traffic light, or failing to yield the right-of-way results in 3 demerit points.
- ✓ Driving while using a hand-held wireless communication device results in 3 demerit points.
- ✓ A driver failing to wear a seatbelt results in 2 demerit points.

5.6 Zero BAC for Young and Novice Drivers

Ontario has a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol for certain drivers. All drivers aged 21 and under, regardless of their licence class, must have a Blood-Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of zero. All novice drivers (G1, G2, M1, M2), regardless of age, must also have a BAC of zero.

- ✓ All drivers 21 years of age and under must have a Blood-Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of zero.
- ✓ All novice drivers (G1, G2) must have a BAC of zero, regardless of their age.
- ✓ Consequences for violating the zero BAC rule include an immediate 24-hour roadside suspension and, upon conviction, a fine and a further suspension of at least 30 days.

5.7 Immediate Roadside Licence Suspensions for Alcohol

Police can issue an immediate licence suspension at the roadside based on a driver's Blood-Alcohol Concentration (BAC). A BAC in the 'warn range' of .05 to .08 results in an immediate suspension. A BAC over .08, or refusing to provide a sample, results in a longer Administrative Driver's Licence Suspension (ADLS).

- ✓ Driving with a BAC in the 'warn range' (.05 to .08) results in an immediate 3-day suspension for a first offence.
- ✓ Driving with a BAC over .08 results in an immediate 90-day Administrative Driver's Licence Suspension (ADLS).
- ✓ Refusing to provide a breath, blood, or other fluid sample to police results in an immediate 90-day ADLS and criminal charges.

5.8 Criminal Code Penalties for Impaired Driving

Driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a criminal offence in Canada. A conviction results in severe penalties, including a mandatory licence suspension, fines, and potential jail time. A first-time conviction under the Criminal Code for an impaired driving offence leads to a one-year licence suspension.

- ✓ A first-time conviction for an impaired driving offence under the Criminal Code results in a one-year licence suspension.
- ✓ You can be charged with impaired driving even if your vehicle is not moving, as long as you are behind the wheel and have care or control of the vehicle.
- ✓ Refusing a police officer's demand for a breath or fluid sample is a criminal offence with penalties similar to impaired driving.

5.9 Updating Your Name or Address on Your Licence

It is legally required to inform the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) of any change to your name or address. This must be done within six days of the change. An address change can be completed online, by mail, or in person. A name change requires an in-person visit to a ServiceOntario Centre with supporting documents. There is no fee for these updates.

- ✓ You must notify the Ministry of Transportation of a change of name or address within 6 days.
- ✓ A change of name requires an in-person visit to a ServiceOntario Centre, while an address change can be done online or by mail.

5.10 Vehicle Impoundment Program

In certain situations, the vehicle you are driving can be impounded at the roadside, regardless of who owns it. The owner is responsible for all towing and storage fees. This program targets high-risk driving behaviours like impaired and suspended driving.

- ✓ The vehicle you are driving will be impounded for 7 days if you are caught driving with a BAC over .08 or if you refuse a police demand for a breath/fluid sample.
- ✓ The vehicle will be impounded for a minimum of 45 days if you are caught driving while your licence is suspended for a Criminal Code offence.
- ✓ The vehicle owner is responsible for all towing and storage costs, even if they were not the one driving.

5.11 Consequences of Driving with a Suspended Licence

It is illegal to drive under any circumstances when your licence is suspended. The penalties for being caught are severe and can include heavy fines, jail time, and a further extension of your suspension period.

- ✓ If you are convicted of driving while your licence is suspended for a Highway Traffic Act offence, you will receive an additional six-month suspension.
- ✓ Penalties for driving under suspension can include fines in the thousands of dollars and up to six months in jail.
- ✓ If caught driving while suspended, the vehicle you are driving can be impounded for 7 days (HTA suspension) or a minimum of 45 days (Criminal Code suspension).

5.12 Penalties for Stunt Driving and Racing

Ontario has strict laws against aggressive driving behaviours, including street racing and stunt driving. These are defined by actions such as driving 50 km/h or more over the speed limit (or 40 km/h over on roads with a limit under 80 km/h), intentionally cutting off another vehicle, or performing stunts.

- ✓ Driving 50 km/h or more above the posted speed limit is considered stunt driving and carries severe penalties.
- ✓ Street racing and intentionally cutting off another vehicle are considered forms of aggressive driving that can lead to immediate sanctions.
- ✓ A conviction for careless driving results in 6 demerit points, fines, and a possible licence suspension.

5.13 Licence Renewal Requirements for Senior Drivers

To ensure road safety, drivers aged 80 and older must follow a specific renewal process every two years. This process includes a review of their driving record, a vision test, and a group education session. A road test may also be required based on the assessment.

- ✓ Drivers aged 80 and over are required to renew their driver's licence every two years.
- ✓ The renewal process for senior drivers includes a vision test, a driving record review, and a 45-minute group education session.
- ✓ A road test may be required to renew a licence for a driver aged 80 or over.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 5: Your Vehicle

6.1 Vehicle Maintenance and Safety Inspections

As a driver, you are responsible for ensuring your vehicle is in safe operating condition. It is illegal to drive an unsafe vehicle. Regular checks before and during driving can identify potential issues. A police officer or Ministry of Transportation inspector can inspect your vehicle at any time and may remove it from the road if it's deemed unsafe.

- ✓ It is illegal to drive a vehicle that is in a dangerous condition.
- ✓ Before driving, you must check for unobstructed visibility and clear any snow, ice, or dirt from windows, lights, and licence plates.
- ✓ While driving, you must be alert for unusual noises, such as squeaking brakes or engine sounds, and dashboard warning lights.

6.2 Tire Safety Standards and Replacement Rules

Tires are critical for traction and safety. They must meet legal standards for tread depth and condition. Tires degrade with age and should be replaced if they are over 10 years old, regardless of tread wear. Using the correct type of tires, especially in winter, improves vehicle control.

- ✓ Tires must be replaced when the tread depth is less than 1.5 millimetres.
- ✓ For vehicles over 4,500 kg, front tires must be replaced when tread depth is less than 3 millimetres.
- ✓ Tires older than 10 years should be replaced due to deterioration.
- ✓ You must replace any tire that has bumps, bulges, knots, or exposed cords.

6.3 Ontario Vehicle Registration and Licence Plates

All motor vehicles in Ontario must be registered, which includes having valid licence plates and a vehicle permit. Ontario uses a 'plate-to-owner' system, meaning the licence plates belong to the owner, not the vehicle. New residents have a limited time to register their vehicles in the province.

- ✓ When you sell a vehicle, you must remove your licence plates; they do not stay with the vehicle.
- ✓ New residents to Ontario have 30 days to register their vehicles.
- ✓ You must carry the vehicle permit (or a true copy) with you when driving the vehicle.

6.4 Mandatory Automobile Insurance in Ontario

It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle in Ontario without valid automobile insurance. Proof of insurance is required to register a vehicle or renew your registration. You must be able to present proof of insurance to a police officer when requested.

- ✓ Every vehicle registered and operated in Ontario must be covered by compulsory automobile insurance.
- ✓ You must show proof of insurance when registering a vehicle or renewing your registration.

6.5 Winter Vehicle Preparation and Safety

Preparing your vehicle for winter is crucial for safety. This includes having a well-maintained vehicle that starts in cold weather and carrying an emergency kit. A faulty exhaust system is particularly dangerous in winter as drivers keep windows closed, which can lead to a buildup of deadly carbon monoxide gas inside the vehicle.

- ✓ A winter emergency kit should include items like a shovel, booster cables, a blanket, and warning lights or flares.
- ✓ Always carry extra windshield washer fluid during winter months to maintain visibility.
- ✓ You must have your exhaust system checked if it sounds noisy or rattles, as it poses a significant carbon monoxide risk in winter.

6.6 Trailer Towing Licence and Registration

To tow a trailer in Ontario, you need a valid driver's licence (G, G2, or G1). Trailers are considered separate vehicles and must be registered with ServiceOntario, which includes getting a licence plate and permit for the trailer itself. It is illegal to tow more than one trailer with a non-commercial vehicle.

- ✓ A Class G, G2, or G1 licence allows you to tow a trailer with a gross vehicle weight of up to 4,600 kilograms.
- ✓ A trailer is considered a separate vehicle and must be registered and have its own licence plate and permit.
- ✓ It is against the law for non-commercial vehicles to tow more than one trailer at a time.

6.7 Trailer Equipment Safety Requirements

Trailers must be equipped with specific safety features to be legal on Ontario roads. This includes brakes for heavier trailers, proper lighting, and a secure attachment system. If the trailer blocks the driver's rear view, additional mirrors are required on the towing vehicle.

- ✓ A trailer with a gross weight of 1,360 kilograms or more must have its own brakes.
- ✓ A trailer must have two separate means of attachment to the towing vehicle, such as a hitch and crossed safety chains.
- ✓ It is illegal to carry any person in a trailer that is being towed.
- ✓ If a trailer is wider than 2.05 metres, it requires clearance lights on the front (yellow) and rear (red).

6.8 Safe Trailer Loading and Weight Distribution

How a trailer is loaded significantly affects its stability and the safety of the towing vehicle. The load must be secured, and the weight must be distributed correctly to prevent swaying or loss of control. Generally, more weight should be placed in front of the trailer's axle.

- ✓ The load in a trailer must be securely strapped down to prevent it from becoming dislodged or falling off.
- ✓ Distribute the load so that more weight is in front of the trailer's axle, with about 5-10% of the total weight resting on the hitch.
- ✓ An improperly balanced load, especially with too much weight in the rear, can cause the trailer to sway or 'fishtail'.

6.9 Driving Techniques When Towing a Trailer

Towing a trailer changes a vehicle's handling, acceleration, and braking characteristics. Drivers must adjust their techniques by increasing following distance, allowing more room for turns and lane changes, and being aware of environmental factors like wind from large trucks.

- ✓ When towing, you must increase your following distance to allow for longer stopping times.
- ✓ When turning, you must swing wider to prevent the trailer's wheels from hitting the curb or crossing into another lane.
- ✓ When backing up a trailer, steer the vehicle's wheel in the opposite direction you want the rear of the trailer to go.