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United States • FLHSMV Class E Knowledge Exam

Florida

Study Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: DRIVER LICENSES & ID CARDS

1.1 Florida Driver License Requirements for New Residents

Florida law mandates who must obtain a state driver license. While all permanent residents must have one to drive, specific rules apply to non-residents who establish a significant connection to the state through work or by enrolling their children in public schools. These individuals are given a specific timeframe to comply with Florida's licensing laws.

- ✓ If you move to Florida and accept employment or engage in a trade, you must obtain a Florida driver license within 30 days.
- ✓ If you enroll your children in a Florida public school, you are required to get a Florida driver license within 30 days.
- ✓ A person is considered a resident if their principal place of domicile has been in Florida for more than six consecutive months.

1.2 Class E License Vehicle Operation Limits

The Class E license is the standard non-commercial driver license in Florida. It authorizes the holder to operate most personal cars, trucks, and vans. It is defined by the vehicle's weight, and specific endorsements are required for certain vehicles like motorcycles.

- ✓ A Class E license permits the operation of non-commercial vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of less than 26,001 pounds.
- ✓ To operate a motorcycle with an engine size greater than 50 cubic centimeters (cc), you must have a motorcycle endorsement on your driver license or a 'Motorcycle Only' license.

1.3 Exemptions from Needing a Florida Driver License

Certain individuals are permitted to drive in Florida using a valid license from another jurisdiction and are not required to obtain a Florida license. These exemptions typically apply to temporary residents such as students, military personnel, and some out-of-state commuters.

- ✓ Non-resident students attending college in Florida are exempt from needing a Florida driver license.
- ✓ Members of the Armed Forces stationed in Florida, as well as their spouses and dependents, are exempt if they hold a valid license from their home state.
- ✓ A non-resident who is at least 16 years old may drive in Florida with a valid non-commercial driver license from another U.S. state or territory.

1.4 When a Commercial Driver License (CDL) is Required

A Class E license does not permit the operation of large commercial vehicles. A Commercial Driver License (CDL) is required for vehicles based on their weight, passenger capacity, or if they are used to transport hazardous materials. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for legal vehicle operation.

- ✓ A CDL is required to operate any single vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more pounds.
- ✓ A CDL is required to operate a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver.
- ✓ A CDL is required for any size vehicle that must display hazardous material placards.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: YOUR DRIVING PRIVILEGE

2.1 Florida's No-Fault Insurance Requirements (PIP & PDL)

Florida's No-Fault Law requires all owners of motor vehicles registered in the state to carry proof of Personal Injury Protection (PIP) and Property Damage Liability (PDL) insurance. PIP covers your own injuries in a crash regardless of who is at fault, while PDL covers damage you cause to other people's property. This insurance must be purchased from an agency licensed in Florida and maintained continuously throughout the vehicle's registration period.

- ✓ You must have a minimum of $10,000 in Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage.
- ✓ You must have a minimum of $10,000 in Property Damage Liability (PDL) coverage.
- ✓ Failure to maintain required insurance can result in the suspension of your driver license and license plate for up to three years.
- ✓ You must provide proof of insurance to register a vehicle in Florida and must always carry proof of insurance when driving.

2.2 Consequences of Driving Without Insurance

If you are stopped by law enforcement and cannot provide proof of insurance, you may receive a citation. If convicted, your driver license and license plate will be suspended. To lift the suspension, you must get insurance and pay a reinstatement fee ranging from $150 to $500. If your license is suspended for this reason, you are not eligible for a temporary or hardship license for any reason, including work.

- ✓ To reinstate your license after a suspension for no insurance, you must get insurance and pay a reinstatement fee of $150 to $500.
- ✓ If your license is suspended for an insurance violation, you cannot obtain a temporary license for any reason.
- ✓ Driving with a license suspended for an insurance violation is a first-degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and a $1,000 fine.

2.3 Financial Responsibility Law and Higher Coverage

Beyond the basic PIP and PDL requirements, the Financial Responsibility Law may require you to carry higher insurance limits after certain convictions or incidents. For example, a DUI conviction requires you to obtain Bodily Injury Liability (BIL) insurance. This law ensures that drivers who have demonstrated higher risk are financially capable of covering damages they may cause in a future crash.

- ✓ A DUI conviction requires you to carry coverage of at least $100,000 BIL for one person, $300,000 BIL for two or more people, and $50,000 PDL for three years.
- ✓ If your license was suspended for excessive points or you caused a crash with injuries, you may be required to have BIL coverage of $10,000 for one person and $20,000 for two or more people.

2.4 Driving Under the Influence (DUI) and Implied Consent

You can be charged with DUI if you are driving or in physical control of a vehicle with a Blood Alcohol Level (BAL) of .08 or higher, or while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance. Florida's Implied Consent Law means that by signing your driver license, you agree to take a breath, blood, or urine test if a law enforcement officer suspects you are under the influence.

- ✓ Refusing to take a required blood, breath, or urine test for the first time will result in an automatic license suspension for one year.
- ✓ A second refusal to submit to testing results in an 18-month suspension and is a first-degree misdemeanor.
- ✓ At the time of arrest, your license will be administratively suspended if you have a BAL of .08 or above.

2.5 Zero Tolerance Law for Drivers Under 21

Florida has a strict Zero Tolerance policy for drivers under the age of 21. The legal BAL limit is significantly lower for these drivers, and the penalties for any amount of alcohol are immediate and administrative, separate from criminal DUI charges.

- ✓ Any driver under 21 who is stopped by law enforcement and has a BAL of .02 or higher will automatically have their driving privilege suspended for six months.
- ✓ A driver under 21 with a BAL of .05 or higher is required to attend a substance abuse course.

2.6 The Florida Driver License Point System

Florida uses a point system to track moving violations. Accumulating too many points within a specific timeframe will result in the suspension of your driving privilege. The length of the suspension increases with the number of points and the speed at which they are accumulated.

- ✓ Accumulating 12 points within a 12-month period results in a 30-day license suspension.
- ✓ Accumulating 18 points within an 18-month period results in a 3-month license suspension.
- ✓ Accumulating 24 points within a 36-month period results in a 1-year license suspension.

2.7 Child Safety Restraint Requirements

Florida law mandates specific safety restraints for children based on their age to ensure their safety while in a motor vehicle. The driver is legally responsible for ensuring that all passengers under the age of 18 are properly restrained. Children under 13 should be secured in the rear seat whenever possible.

- ✓ Children under age 4 must be secured in a proper child safety seat.
- ✓ Children ages 4 and 5 must be secured in either a child safety seat or a booster seat.
- ✓ A driver will be charged with a violation if any passenger under the age of 18 is not properly restrained.

2.8 Driving Curfews for Minor Drivers

To ensure the safety of new drivers, Florida law imposes specific driving curfews for licensed drivers under the age of 18. These restrictions vary by age and are lifted if the minor is driving to or from work or is accompanied by a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older.

- ✓ A 16-year-old licensed driver may not drive between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. unless for work or with a licensed driver 21 or older.
- ✓ A 17-year-old licensed driver may not drive between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless for work or with a licensed driver 21 or older.
- ✓ A minor with a Learner's License must only drive during daylight hours for the first three months, after which they may drive until 10 p.m.

2.9 Penalties for Passing a Stopped School Bus

Illegally passing a stopped school bus that is displaying its stop signal is a serious offense with significant penalties, including a mandatory court appearance, fines, and points on your license. The fines are substantially increased if the violation occurs on the side of the bus where children enter and exit.

- ✓ Passing a stopped school bus results in a minimum of four points on your driver license.
- ✓ The minimum fine is $265, which increases to a minimum of $465 if you pass on the side where children enter and exit.
- ✓ If you pass a stopped school bus, you must complete a basic driver improvement course.

2.10 Point System Restrictions for Minor Drivers

Drivers under the age of 18 face stricter consequences under the point system. Accumulating a relatively small number of points results in an immediate driving restriction rather than a suspension.

- ✓ Any driver under the age of 18 who accumulates 6 or more points within a 12-month period is automatically restricted for one year to driving for 'Business Purposes Only'.
- ✓ If additional points are accumulated during the restriction period, the restriction is extended for 90 days for every additional point received.

2.11 Florida's Safety Belt Law

Safety belts are required for drivers and certain passengers in Florida. The law holds the driver responsible for passengers under 18, while adult passengers are responsible for themselves. Airbags are supplemental safety devices and are not a substitute for safety belts.

- ✓ All drivers, front seat passengers, and all passengers under the age of 18 must wear a safety belt.
- ✓ A passenger who is 18 years old or older can be ticketed for not wearing a safety belt when required.
- ✓ In a crash, safety belts keep you from being ejected from the vehicle and help you maintain control of the vehicle.

2.12 Penalties for Excessive Speeding

While all speeding is illegal, Florida imposes significantly higher fines for excessive speeds and for speeding in designated safety zones like school and construction zones. These violations can also lead to mandatory driver improvement courses.

- ✓ Fines are doubled for speeding infractions that occur within a school zone or a construction zone.
- ✓ The fine for exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 MPH is $1,000 for a first offense and $2,500 for a second offense.

2.13 The "Three Crashes in Three Years" Law

This law targets drivers who are repeatedly involved in collisions. If you are convicted of a third traffic offense that caused a crash within a 36-month period, you must complete extensive retraining and retesting to retain your driving privilege.

- ✓ You must complete a 12-hour Advanced Driver Improvement (ADI) course.
- ✓ You must receive 4 hours of behind-the-wheel training from a licensed commercial driving school.
- ✓ Failure to complete these requirements within 90 days of the conviction will result in the cancellation of your license.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: BEFORE YOU DRIVE

3.1 Florida Laws on Distracted Driving

Distracted driving involves any activity that diverts attention from driving. There are three types of distraction: Visual (eyes off the road), Manual (hands off the wheel), and Cognitive (mind off driving). Texting is particularly dangerous because it involves all three. Florida law specifically prohibits texting while driving and also bans the use of handheld wireless devices in school and work zones.

- ✓ It is illegal in Florida to operate a motor vehicle while texting.
- ✓ Florida law prohibits a person from operating a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device in a handheld manner in a designated school crossing, school zone, or work zone.

3.2 Consequences and Effects of Drinking and Driving

Alcohol consumption severely impairs the skills necessary for safe driving. A person's judgment is the first ability affected by alcohol. Even one drink can slow reflexes and reaction time, and reduce the ability to see clearly. The penalties for driving under the influence (DUI) in Florida are severe and long-lasting.

- ✓ A person’ s judgment is the first thing affected after drinking an alcoholic beverage.
- ✓ In Florida, a DUI conviction must remain on your driving record for 75 years.

3.3 Impairment from Drugged Driving

Driving while impaired by any drug, including legal prescription or over-the-counter medications, is illegal and carries the same penalties as a DUI from alcohol. It is crucial to check medication labels for warnings about their effects. Mixing drugs with alcohol can multiply the impairing effects of both.

- ✓ Driving while impaired by drugs is illegal and subject to the same penalties as driving while impaired by alcohol.
- ✓ Mixing alcohol and drugs often multiplies the effects of both, making it extremely dangerous to drive.

3.4 Required Vehicle Safety Equipment Standards

All vehicles in Florida must be equipped with specific safety equipment that meets legal standards. This includes lights, brakes, mirrors, and other components that must be in good working order and visible from specified distances to ensure safety.

- ✓ Low beam headlights must show objects 150 feet ahead, while high beam headlights must show objects 450 feet ahead.
- ✓ Your vehicle must have two red brake lights that are visible from 300 feet in the daytime.

3.5 Proper Use of ABS and Conventional Brakes

Knowing what type of braking system your vehicle has is critical for stopping safely in an emergency. Anti-lock Brake Systems (ABS) and conventional brakes require different techniques to avoid skidding and maintain control.

- ✓ If your vehicle has an Anti-lock Brake System (ABS), you must press down hard on the brake pedal, hold it, and steer out of danger in an emergency.
- ✓ If your vehicle has conventional brakes, you must pump the brakes to stop in an emergency situation where traction is lost.

3.6 Effects of Physical and Mental Condition on Driving

A driver's physical and mental state is critical for safe vehicle operation. Illnesses, medications, and strong emotions can significantly impair driving ability. It is the driver's responsibility to be aware of their condition before getting behind the wheel. For prescribed medications, always consult a doctor or pharmacist about potential effects on driving. Strong emotions like anger or worry can be as distracting as using a cell phone.

- ✓ If you are prescribed medication, you must ask your doctor or pharmacist how it can affect your driving.
- ✓ Strong emotions can distract you from driving and alter how you react to situations on the road.

3.7 Dangers and Prevention of Drowsy Driving

Driving while tired or fatigued can be as dangerous as driving drunk. Drowsiness slows thought processes and reaction time, affects judgment and vision, and can lead to micro-sleeping or falling asleep at the wheel. To avoid drowsy driving, get adequate sleep and take regular breaks on long trips.

- ✓ Fatigue can be as dangerous as drunk driving because it slows your reaction time and impairs your senses.
- ✓ On long trips, you should take a break every 100 miles or every 2 hours to prevent drowsy driving.

3.8 Identifying and Responding to Road Rage

Road rage is violent or angry behavior by a driver. If you encounter an aggressive driver, you should not engage with them. Remain calm, avoid eye contact and obscene gestures, and create as much distance as possible between your vehicle and theirs. If you need assistance, contact law enforcement.

- ✓ If another driver is threatening you or driving dangerously around you, slow down and let them pass to create distance.
- ✓ If you need help with an aggressive driver, you should call *FHP (*347) or 911.

3.9 Florida Vehicle Registration and Renewal Requirements

Vehicles owned in Florida must have a Florida registration and license plate. New residents who are employed or have children in public school must register their vehicle within a specific timeframe. Vehicle registrations must be renewed regularly, and the expiration date is tied to the owner's birthday for most private vehicles.

- ✓ Non-residents who accept employment or enroll children in a Florida public school must obtain a Florida registration and license plate within 10 days.
- ✓ For most vehicles, registrations expire at midnight on the birthday of the first owner listed on the registration form.

3.10 Prohibited Vehicle Equipment in Florida

Certain types of equipment are not permitted on private vehicles in Florida because they can be distracting, dangerous, or interfere with emergency vehicle identification. This includes specific colored lights, sirens, and excessively loud mufflers.

- ✓ Red or blue lights visible from the front of the vehicle are prohibited, as they are reserved for emergency and law enforcement vehicles.
- ✓ A siren, bell, or whistle is not permitted on a private vehicle.

3.11 Towing Connection and Load Security Rules

When towing a trailer or another vehicle, the connection must be secure and meet specific length requirements. Any load being hauled must be secured so that it cannot drop, shift, leak, or otherwise escape from the vehicle.

- ✓ A drawbar or towing connection must not be more than 15 feet long, unless towing objects that cannot be easily disassembled.
- ✓ If the towing connection is a chain, rope, or cable, a white flag at least 12 inches square must be attached to it.

3.12 Marking Requirements for Projecting Loads

Loads that extend a significant distance from the rear or sides of a vehicle must be clearly marked to be visible to other drivers. The marking requirements differ for daytime and nighttime.

- ✓ A load that extends four feet or more beyond the rear of a vehicle must be marked with red flags, each at least 18 inches square, during the day.
- ✓ At night, a load extending more than four feet from the rear must be marked with two red lamps visible from at least 500 feet.

3.13 Florida Bumper Height Requirements

Florida law specifies maximum bumper heights for cars and trucks, which are determined by the vehicle's net shipping weight. These regulations are in place to ensure compatibility between vehicles in the event of a collision.

- ✓ Bumper height limitations are governed by the net shipping weight of the vehicle, not its modified or altered weight.
- ✓ For a car weighing less than 2,500 lbs, the maximum allowable height for both the front and rear bumper is 22 inches.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: TRAFFIC CONTROLS

4.1 Understanding White Pavement Lane Lines

White lane lines are used to separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. The style of the line—broken, solid, or double solid—dictates whether lane changes are permitted, discouraged, or strictly prohibited. These markings are fundamental for maintaining safe lane discipline.

- ✓ A single broken white line indicates that you may cross the line to change lanes when it is safe to do so.
- ✓ A double solid white line indicates that crossing the line to change lanes is not allowed.

4.2 Understanding Yellow Pavement Lane Lines

Yellow lane lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions. The combination of solid and broken yellow lines determines when it is permissible to pass another vehicle. You must always stay to the right of yellow lane lines unless you are legally passing or turning.

- ✓ Double solid yellow lines mean vehicles moving in either direction must not pass or cross the lines, though you may make a left turn when it is safe.
- ✓ If the yellow line on your side of the road is broken, you are permitted to pass when it is safe. If the line on your side is solid, passing is not allowed.

4.3 Using Center Left-Turn Lanes

Some two-way roadways feature a center lane marked for left turns by traffic moving in either direction. This lane is intended exclusively for initiating left turns and must not be used for any other purpose, such as passing.

- ✓ The center turn lane is shared and can be used by drivers from either direction to make a left turn.
- ✓ You must not use the center turn lane for passing other vehicles or as a through lane.

4.4 Stopping at Stop Lines and Crosswalks

Solid white stop lines and marked crosswalks are critical traffic controls at intersections. They indicate the precise point where a vehicle must come to a complete stop for a stop sign or red light and designate areas where pedestrians have the right-of-way.

- ✓ When required to stop, you must bring your vehicle to a halt before any part of it crosses the solid white stop line.
- ✓ Motorists must always yield the right-of-way to pedestrians who are in a marked crosswalk.

4.5 Interpreting Traffic Sign Colors

The color of a traffic sign provides an immediate clue to its meaning. Each color is standardized to represent a specific type of message, such as a regulation, a warning, or directional guidance. Knowing these color codes is essential for passing the Road Signs portion of the exam.

- ✓ Red is used for signs that require immediate action, such as Stop, Yield, Do Not Enter, and Wrong Way.
- ✓ Yellow is the standard color for general warning signs, while orange is used exclusively for warning signs in construction and maintenance zones.

4.6 Obeying Stop and Yield Signs

Stop and Yield signs are regulatory signs that control the right-of-way. A Stop sign requires a complete halt. An All-Way Stop has specific rules for determining who proceeds first. A Yield sign requires you to slow down and give the right-of-way to crossing traffic.

- ✓ At an All-Way Stop, the first vehicle to reach the intersection should move forward first. If two vehicles arrive at the same time, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on their right.
- ✓ A Yield sign means you must slow down and give the right-of-way to vehicles crossing your path. You only need to stop if the way is not clear.

4.7 Understanding Speed Control Signs

Regulatory signs for speed control set the maximum legal speed for a stretch of road. Florida also uses signs to indicate when speeding fines are doubled and to advise a safe speed for conditions like an exit ramp.

- ✓ The 'Speed Limit' sign indicates the maximum legal speed you may travel under ideal conditions.
- ✓ The 'Speeding Fines Doubled' sign is posted in active school and work zones, and getting a speeding ticket in these areas will result in a doubled fine.

4.8 Recognizing Prohibitive Action Signs

Regulatory signs with a red circle and a slash over a symbol, as well as signs like 'Do Not Enter' and 'Wrong Way,' indicate actions that are strictly forbidden. These signs are critical for preventing accidents and maintaining traffic flow.

- ✓ A sign showing a red circle with a red slash through an action, such as a U-turn or a right turn, means that action is prohibited.
- ✓ A 'Wrong Way' sign indicates you are traveling against the legal flow of traffic and must turn around immediately and safely.

4.9 Responding to Warning Signs

Warning signs, which are typically yellow and diamond-shaped, are designed to alert you to potential hazards or changes in road conditions ahead. Seeing a warning sign means you should slow down and proceed with caution.

- ✓ A diamond-shaped sign is a warning sign that alerts you to conditions such as a sharp curve, merging traffic, or a stop sign ahead.
- ✓ An 'Advisory Speed Sign' may accompany a warning sign (like a curve sign) to recommend the maximum safe speed for that specific hazard.

4.10 Sharing the Road in Bicycle Lanes

Florida roadways often include designated lanes for bicyclists. Exclusive bike lanes are separated by solid white lines, while shared-use lanes are marked with 'sharrows' to indicate that bicyclists may use the full lane. Motorists must respect these markings and yield to bicyclists.

- ✓ Motor vehicles are prohibited from driving in an exclusive bike lane; they may only cross it to make a turn at an intersection when no bicyclists are present.
- ✓ Shared-lane markings, known as 'sharrows,' alert motorists that bicyclists may legally use the entire travel lane.

4.11 Following Lane Usage and Directional Signs

Regulatory signs provide mandatory instructions about lane usage, such as requiring a turn from a specific lane or keeping slower traffic to the right. These signs are typically white and black and are legally enforceable.

- ✓ The 'Slower Traffic Keep Right' sign mandates that slower-moving vehicles must stay in the right-hand lane, especially when being overtaken by a faster vehicle.
- ✓ A sign with an arrow and the text 'Left Lane Must Turn Left' means you cannot go straight from that lane and must make a left turn.

4.12 Using Guide Signs for Navigation

Guide signs provide information about your location, destination, and nearby services. They are color-coded: green for directions and distances, blue for motorist services, and brown for recreational or cultural sites.

- ✓ In Florida, green guide signs on interstates use an exit numbering system that corresponds to the mile markers.
- ✓ Blue and white service signs direct you to essential services like gas, food, motels, and hospitals.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5: DRIVING SAFETY

5.1 Rules for a Steady Red Light

A steady red light requires a driver to come to a complete stop before the stop line or crosswalk. After stopping, turns on red are permitted under specific circumstances, provided there is no sign prohibiting it and the way is clear of traffic and pedestrians.

- ✓ You must come to a complete stop at the stop line when facing a steady red light.
- ✓ After stopping, you may turn right on red if there is not a 'NO TURN ON RED' sign and the way is clear.
- ✓ You may turn left from a one-way street onto a one-way street on a red light after stopping, provided the way is clear.
- ✓ Before turning on red, you must yield the right-of-way to all pedestrians and oncoming traffic.

5.2 Responding to Steady Yellow and Green Lights

A steady yellow light is a warning that the signal is about to turn red, requiring a driver to stop if it can be done safely. A steady green light indicates you may proceed, but only after yielding to any vehicles or pedestrians remaining in the intersection.

- ✓ A steady yellow light means the signal is changing to red; you must stop if you can do so safely.
- ✓ A steady green light means you may go, but only if the intersection is clear.
- ✓ When turning left on a steady green light, you must yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

5.3 Understanding Traffic Arrow Signals

Traffic arrow signals control turning movements. A green arrow provides a 'protected' turn, meaning oncoming traffic is stopped. A yellow arrow warns that the protected turn is ending. A red arrow prohibits the turn.

- ✓ A green arrow allows you to make a turn in the direction of the arrow after yielding to anyone already in the intersection.
- ✓ A red arrow means you must stop and may not make the movement shown by the arrow.
- ✓ A yellow arrow indicates the green arrow is ending and you should prepare to stop or clear the intersection.
- ✓ A flashing yellow arrow means turns are permitted, but you must first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

5.4 Rules for Flashing Signal Lights

Flashing signals are used at dangerous intersections or to provide a warning. A flashing red light is treated the same as a stop sign, requiring a complete stop. A flashing yellow light is a warning to slow down and proceed with caution.

- ✓ A flashing red light has the same meaning as a stop sign: you must stop completely and proceed only when it is safe.
- ✓ A flashing yellow light is a warning signal; you must slow down and proceed with caution through the intersection or hazard area.

5.5 Safety Rules at Railroad Crossings

When approaching a railroad crossing, you must slow down and be prepared to stop. It is illegal and extremely dangerous to stop on the tracks or to drive around a lowered gate.

- ✓ You must stop no closer than 15 feet from the nearest rail if warning devices are flashing, a gate is lowered, or a train is visible.
- ✓ It is against the law to drive around or under a crossing gate, whether it is down or in the process of being opened or closed.
- ✓ The crossbuck sign at a railroad crossing is a yield sign; you must yield the right-of-way to trains.
- ✓ Before crossing, ensure there is enough space for your vehicle on the other side of the tracks without stopping on them.

5.6 School Zone Signs and Speed Limits

School zones are marked with specific signs to alert drivers to the presence of a school and children. Drivers must adhere to the reduced speed limit when indicated by time of day or flashing lights.

- ✓ You must obey the posted school zone speed limit during the times indicated on the sign or when the warning light is flashing.
- ✓ You must always watch for children near a school, not just during school hours.
- ✓ You must obey any signals from a school crossing guard.

5.7 Understanding and Managing Blind Spots

Blind spots are areas around your vehicle that cannot be seen in your mirrors. It is critical to check these areas by turning your head before changing lanes, passing, or turning to avoid collisions.

- ✓ Blind spots are areas near the left and right rear corners of your vehicle that are not visible in your mirrors.
- ✓ You must turn your head to check your blind spots before you change lanes, pass another vehicle, or make certain turns.
- ✓ Avoid driving in another driver's blind spot; either speed up or drop back so they can see you.

5.8 Total Stopping Distance and the Effect of Speed

Total stopping distance is the combination of how far your vehicle travels during perception, reaction, and braking. This distance increases exponentially with speed. At 50 MPH, the minimum total stopping distance is nearly the length of a football field (268 feet).

- ✓ Doubling your speed from 20 to 40 MPH increases the braking distance and impact by 4 times.
- ✓ Tripling your speed increases the braking distance and impact by 9 times.
- ✓ Total stopping distance is the sum of perception distance, reaction distance, and braking distance.

5.9 Maintaining a Safe Following Distance

To prevent rear-end collisions, drivers must maintain a safe following distance. The minimum recommended distance in good conditions is four seconds. This distance should be increased in adverse weather, when following large vehicles, or in other specific situations.

- ✓ Keep a minimum following distance of four seconds during favorable weather and traffic conditions.
- ✓ Increase your following distance in rain, low visibility, or when following a motorcycle.
- ✓ By law, you must not follow a fire truck responding to an emergency closer than 500 feet.
- ✓ A truck or vehicle towing another vehicle must not follow within 300 feet of another truck or vehicle in tow, except when passing or in cities.

5.10 Right-of-Way at Intersections

Right-of-way rules determine who should go first at an intersection to prevent collisions. At a four-way stop, the first vehicle to arrive goes first. If two vehicles arrive simultaneously, the driver on the left yields to the driver on the right.

- ✓ At a four-way stop, the first vehicle to reach the intersection should move forward first.
- ✓ If two vehicles arrive at a four-way stop at the same time, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on their right.
- ✓ At an open intersection (without signs or signals), you must yield to a vehicle already in the intersection.
- ✓ Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley, or unpaved road must yield to vehicles already on the main road.

5.11 Entering and Exiting Limited Access Highways

Entering a highway requires using an acceleration lane to match the speed of traffic before merging. When exiting, use the deceleration lane to slow down after leaving the main flow of traffic. You must yield to traffic on the highway when entering.

- ✓ When entering a highway, you must yield the right-of-way to traffic already on the highway.
- ✓ Use the full length of the acceleration lane to match the speed of traffic before merging.
- ✓ When exiting, slow down in the deceleration lane, not on the main highway.
- ✓ If you miss your exit, you must proceed to the next one; never stop or back up on a highway or ramp.

5.12 Florida's Move Over Law

The Move Over Law requires drivers to protect stopped emergency, law enforcement, sanitation, utility, and maintenance vehicles, as well as disabled vehicles displaying warning lights. You must either move over a lane or slow down significantly.

- ✓ On a multi-lane roadway, you must vacate the lane closest to the stopped vehicle. If you cannot safely move over, you must slow down to 20 MPH below the posted speed limit.
- ✓ On a two-lane roadway, you must slow down to a speed of 20 MPH below the posted speed limit.
- ✓ If the speed limit on a two-lane road is 20 MPH or less, you must slow down to 5 MPH.

5.13 Understanding Overhead Lane Use Signals

Overhead lane signals are used to manage traffic flow, often in reversible lanes or at toll plazas. A red 'X' indicates the lane is closed, while a green arrow indicates the lane is open for use.

- ✓ A steady red 'X' over a lane means you are not allowed to drive in that lane.
- ✓ A steady yellow 'X' over a lane means the lane is about to be closed and you should move out of it safely.
- ✓ A green arrow over a lane means you are permitted to use that lane.

5.14 Driving Safely in Work Zones

Work zones use orange, diamond-shaped signs, channeling devices, and flaggers to guide traffic. Drivers must reduce speed and be prepared for unusual conditions. Disobeying a flagger or work zone sign is illegal and dangerous.

- ✓ You must obey all directions from signs, channeling devices, and flaggers in a work zone.
- ✓ Stripes on barricades and panel devices slope downward in the direction traffic must travel.
- ✓ Flashing arrow panels provide advance warning that you need to move to another lane.

5.15 Pre-Drive Vehicle Safety Checks

Before driving, it's essential to perform a quick inspection of your vehicle's key safety components, including brakes, lights, and tires. Inside the vehicle, adjust your seat and mirrors, and ensure all passengers are buckled up.

- ✓ If your vehicle's rear window is non-transparent, it must be equipped with side mirrors on both sides that provide a rearview of at least 200 feet.
- ✓ Before starting the engine, adjust your seat and mirrors, lock all doors, and fasten your safety belt.
- ✓ When backing up, place your right arm on the back of the passenger seat and look directly through the rear window; do not rely only on mirrors or cameras.

5.16 Rules for Navigating Roundabouts

A roundabout is a circular intersection where traffic flows counter-clockwise. Drivers entering the roundabout must yield to traffic already inside. Lane choice is important in multi-lane roundabouts.

- ✓ Drivers entering a roundabout must yield to traffic already circulating within it.
- ✓ Traffic in a roundabout always travels in a counter-clockwise direction.
- ✓ Do not change lanes or stop while inside a roundabout.
- ✓ In a multi-lane roundabout, use the right lane to turn right or go straight, and use the left lane to go straight, turn left, or make a U-turn.

5.17 Rules for Legal Parking

When parking on a public road, you must park on the right side, in the direction of traffic flow. Your vehicle must be close to and parallel with the curb.

- ✓ You must park on the right side of the road, except on a one-way street.
- ✓ Your right-hand wheels must be parallel to and within 12 inches of the curb or side of the roadway.
- ✓ After parking, you must set the parking brake and shift to Park (automatic) or Reverse (manual).

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6: SPECIAL DRIVING SITUATIONS

6.1 Driving in Low Visibility Conditions

In conditions with low visibility, such as fog, smoke, or heavy rain, Florida law mandates specific actions to ensure safety. You must turn on your headlights. Crucially, you should use your low beam headlights, as high beams will reflect off the fog or rain, further impairing your vision. A key Florida-specific law to remember is that you must turn on your headlights any time you turn on your windshield wipers. Use the right edge line of the road as a visual guide and eliminate all distractions.

- ✓ You must turn on your headlights when driving in low visibility conditions.
- ✓ Use low beam headlights in fog, smoke, or heavy rain; high beams will worsen visibility.
- ✓ Florida law requires you to turn on your headlights whenever your windshield wipers are in use.

6.2 Managing Rain, Hydroplaning, and Flooded Roads

Rain makes roads slick, increasing braking distance. You must increase your following distance. Hydroplaning, where your vehicle slides on a layer of water, is a major risk. It can be prevented by slowing down and ensuring your tires have good tread and are properly inflated. If your brakes get wet, you should slow down and gently apply the brake pedal until they work correctly. Never attempt to drive through a flooded roadway; the water's depth and current are unknown, and your vehicle could be swept away.

- ✓ Increase your following distance on wet roads because braking distance increases.
- ✓ Hydroplaning occurs when your tires lose contact with the road; reduce speed to prevent it.
- ✓ If you encounter a flooded roadway, you must turn around and find another route; do not drive through it.

6.3 Florida Headlight Laws for Night Driving

Florida law has very specific rules for using headlights at night, which are frequently tested. Headlights must be used between sunset and sunrise. You must switch from high beams to low beams when you are within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle. You must also use low beams when you are following a vehicle within 300 feet. It is illegal to drive using only your parking lights. High beams are most effective at speeds over 25 MPH and can reveal objects up to 450 feet away.

- ✓ You must use headlights from sunset to sunrise.
- ✓ You must use low beam headlights when you are within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle.
- ✓ You must use low beam headlights when you are within 300 feet of the vehicle ahead of you.
- ✓ It is illegal to drive using only parking lights in place of headlights.

6.4 Responding to Animals on the Roadway

When encountering an animal on the road, your primary goal is to maintain control of your vehicle and avoid a more serious crash. Do not swerve into oncoming traffic or off the road. It is safer to collide with the animal than to cause a head-on collision or lose control. Slow down, tap your brakes, and sound your horn if you have time. If a collision is inevitable, brake firmly but stay on the roadway. Crashes involving large animals, like deer or bears, must be reported to law enforcement.

- ✓ Do not swerve into oncoming traffic or off the roadway to avoid hitting an animal.
- ✓ If a collision is unavoidable, keep your vehicle under control and on the roadway.
- ✓ You must report a crash to law enforcement if it involves a large animal such as a bear, deer, or farm animal.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7: HANDLING EMERGENCIES

7.1 Proper Procedure During a Law Enforcement Traffic Stop

When being pulled over by law enforcement, it is crucial to remain calm and follow a specific procedure to ensure safety for both the driver and the officer. This includes pulling over safely, turning off the engine, keeping hands visible, and waiting for instructions before retrieving any documents. Refusing to sign a traffic ticket can lead to arrest.

- ✓ Upon seeing emergency lights, signal and pull over to the side of the road as soon as it is safe.
- ✓ Keep your hands on the steering wheel or in another visible location until the officer instructs you otherwise.
- ✓ Wait for the officer's instructions before reaching for your license, registration, or proof of insurance.
- ✓ Refusal to sign a traffic ticket is not an admission of guilt, but it may result in your arrest.

7.2 Driver Responsibilities and Duties After a Crash

Florida law requires any driver involved in a crash resulting in death, injury, or property damage to stop, render aid, and provide information. If a crash is minor and the vehicle is blocking traffic, it must be moved. For crashes with only property damage not requiring a police report, the driver must file a report with FLHSMV.

- ✓ You must stop at the scene of any crash you are involved in that results in injury, death, or property damage.
- ✓ If a crash is minor and your vehicle is blocking the flow of traffic, you are required by law to move it.
- ✓ If a crash results in property damage and does not require a law enforcement report, you must make a written report to FLHSMV within 10 days.
- ✓ If you hit an unattended vehicle or property, you must attempt to locate the owner or leave a note with your name, contact information, and license plate number.

7.3 Severe Penalties for Leaving a Crash Scene (Hit and Run)

Leaving the scene of a crash in Florida carries severe penalties that escalate based on the severity of the crash. These penalties range from a misdemeanor for property damage to a first-degree felony for a fatality, including mandatory prison time and a minimum three-year license revocation for any crash involving injury or death.

- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash that results in death is a 1st degree felony with a minimum 4-year prison term.
- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash involving injury, serious bodily injury, or death will result in your driver license being revoked for a minimum of 3 years.
- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash involving damage to a vehicle or property attended by another person is a 2nd degree misdemeanor.

7.4 Emergency Braking with ABS and Conventional Brakes

The correct technique for emergency braking depends on whether your vehicle has an Anti-lock Braking System (ABS). For conventional brakes, you should pump them. For ABS, you must press the brake pedal down hard, hold it, and steer. Pumping the brakes on an ABS-equipped vehicle will disengage the system.

- ✓ In an emergency with conventional brakes, you should pump the brakes to maintain control.
- ✓ In an emergency with Anti-lock Brakes (ABS), you must press down hard on the brake pedal, hold it firmly, and steer out of danger.
- ✓ Never pump the brakes on a vehicle equipped with ABS, as this will turn the system off.

7.5 Correcting a Skid or Hydroplaning Vehicle

If your vehicle begins to skid or hydroplane, you must regain traction and control. Immediately take your foot off the accelerator and do not use the brakes. To correct the skid, turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go (steer into the skid).

- ✓ To correct a skid, take your foot off the gas pedal and do not apply the brakes.
- ✓ Turn the vehicle's front tires in the direction you want to go, which means steering in the direction of the skid.

7.6 Emergency Procedure When Stalled on Railroad Tracks

If your vehicle stalls on railroad tracks, the situation is extremely dangerous. Immediately get everyone out of the vehicle and move far away from the tracks. If a train is approaching, run at a 45-degree angle away from the tracks but towards the train to avoid being hit by your vehicle or debris from the collision.

- ✓ If your car stalls on railroad tracks, exit the vehicle immediately and get everyone away from the car.
- ✓ If a train is coming, run in a 45-degree angle away from the tracks but in the direction of the train.

7.7 Escaping from a Submerged Vehicle

If your vehicle crashes into water, you have a very short time—only 30 to 60 seconds—before it sinks. Your immediate priority is to escape. Do not call 911 until you are safely out. Unbuckle your seatbelt and get out through a side window by rolling it down or breaking it.

- ✓ A vehicle will only float for 30 to 60 seconds after entering water; you must get out immediately.
- ✓ The primary escape route is through a side window; unbuckle your seatbelt, then roll down or break the window.
- ✓ Do not try to open the door and do not call 911 until after you have escaped the vehicle.

7.8 How to Handle a Tire Blowout While Driving

A tire blowout can cause a sudden loss of control. The correct response is to grip the steering wheel firmly, take your foot off the gas pedal, and do not use the brakes. Concentrate on steering to keep the vehicle straight. Only after the car has slowed down and is under control should you brake gently and pull completely off the road.

- ✓ If you have a tire blowout, do not use the brakes; instead, take your foot off the gas pedal.
- ✓ Hold the steering wheel tightly and concentrate on keeping the vehicle moving in a straight line.
- ✓ Slow down gradually and only pull off the road once the car is fully under control.

7.9 Navigating Intersections During a Power Outage

When traffic signals at an intersection are not working due to a power outage, the intersection legally functions as a four-way stop. Drivers must come to a complete stop and yield the right-of-way according to four-way stop rules: the first vehicle to arrive proceeds first, and if two arrive simultaneously, the driver on the left yields to the driver on the right.

- ✓ An intersection with an inactive traffic signal must be treated as a four-way stop.
- ✓ At a four-way stop, vehicles proceed in the order they arrived.
- ✓ If multiple vehicles arrive at the same time, the driver on the left must yield the right-of-way to the driver on the right.

7.10 Defensive Driving and Crash Avoidance Hierarchy

Defensive driving involves using safe strategies to prevent crashes by anticipating potential dangers and the actions of others. If a crash becomes unavoidable, there is a clear hierarchy of choices to minimize damage and injury. The goal is to choose the option with the least severe outcome.

- ✓ It is better to swerve off the road than to swerve into oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Hitting a vehicle moving in the same direction is preferable to a head-on collision.
- ✓ It is better to hit a soft object, like a hedge, than a solid object like a tree or post.

7.11 Basic First Aid and Safety at a Crash Scene

When assisting at a crash scene, the first priority is to call for help and ensure your own safety. When providing first aid, there are critical actions to avoid. You should never move a person with a suspected neck or spinal injury, nor should you remove the helmet from an injured motorcycle or bicycle rider.

- ✓ Do not move an injured person who may have a neck or spinal injury.
- ✓ Do not attempt to remove the helmet of an injured motorcycle or bicycle rider.
- ✓ To treat for shock, have the person lie flat, elevate their legs, and cover them with a blanket to maintain body heat.

7.12 Preventing and Avoiding Rear-End Collisions

To prevent rear-end collisions, drivers must manage the space in front of and behind their vehicle. This involves maintaining a safe following distance of at least four seconds, signaling intentions early, and avoiding sudden stops. Driving too slowly can be as dangerous as speeding.

- ✓ To avoid hitting the vehicle in front of you, maintain a minimum following distance of four seconds.
- ✓ Signal well in advance for all turns, stops, and lane changes to give drivers behind you ample warning.
- ✓ Avoid sudden stops by slowing down gradually and drive with the general flow of traffic, within the speed limit.

7.13 Procedure for Handling a Vehicle Breakdown

If your vehicle breaks down, your first priority is to get it completely out of the traffic lanes. Make the vehicle visible by turning on hazard lights and parking where it can be seen from 200 feet in each direction. For safety, all passengers should exit on the side away from traffic.

- ✓ You must move a disabled vehicle so all four wheels are out of traffic lanes as soon as possible.
- ✓ If possible, park where the disabled vehicle can be seen for 200 feet in each direction and turn on your hazard lights.
- ✓ Have all passengers get out of the vehicle on the side away from traffic.

7.14 Handling a Jammed Gas Pedal

If your gas pedal becomes stuck, you must act quickly to slow the vehicle. The primary action is to shift the transmission into neutral, which disconnects the engine from the wheels. Then, you can apply the brakes and steer to a safe location. Do not turn off the engine unless shifting to neutral fails, as this will disable your power steering.

- ✓ If your gas pedal gets stuck, the first step is to shift the car into neutral.
- ✓ After shifting to neutral, apply the brakes and steer to a safe place to stop.
- ✓ Do not shut off the engine immediately, as you will lose power steering, making the vehicle difficult to control.

7.15 Recovering When Your Wheels Leave the Pavement

If your right wheels drive off the edge of the pavement, it is critical to avoid overcorrection. Stay calm, hold the steering wheel firmly, and take your foot off the accelerator. Brake lightly and only when the vehicle has slowed, check for traffic and steer gently back onto the pavement at a slow speed.

- ✓ If your wheels go off the pavement, take your foot off the gas pedal and do not slam on the brakes.
- ✓ Hold the steering wheel firmly and steer in a straight line until you have slowed down.
- ✓ When it is clear, turn back onto the pavement at a slow speed to avoid losing control.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter 8: SHARING THE ROAD

8.1 Bicyclist Rights and Motorist Responsibilities

In Florida, bicycles are legally considered vehicles and have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles on public roads. Motorists must exercise specific caution around them, particularly by providing adequate clearance when passing. Bicyclists have rules they must follow, such as using bike lanes when available and proper lighting at night.

- ✓ Florida law requires motorists to give bicyclists a minimum of three feet of clearance when passing.
- ✓ A bicyclist may use the full lane if the lane is too narrow for a car and bicycle to share safely.
- ✓ Between sunset and sunrise, bicyclists must have a white front light visible from 500 feet and a red rear light and reflector visible from 600 feet.
- ✓ All bicyclists and passengers under age 16 are required to wear helmets.

8.2 Yielding Right-of-Way to Emergency Vehicles

When an emergency vehicle approaches using sirens or flashing lights, all road users must yield the right-of-way. This involves moving your vehicle out of the path of the emergency vehicle safely and promptly.

- ✓ You must yield the right-of-way to law enforcement vehicles, fire engines, and other emergency vehicles using sirens or flashing lights.
- ✓ Immediately pull over to the closest edge of the roadway and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed.
- ✓ Do not block intersections when yielding to an emergency vehicle.

8.3 Operating Motorcycles and Mopeds Safely

Motorcyclists have the right to a full traffic lane. Due to their smaller size, it can be difficult for other drivers to judge their speed and distance. Therefore, motorists must provide extra space and be vigilant when changing lanes or turning. There are also specific licensing and helmet laws for riders.

- ✓ A motorcyclist is entitled to the entire lane; do not attempt to share a lane with a motorcycle.
- ✓ Maintain more than a four-second buffer zone when following a motorcycle.
- ✓ Motorcycle operators must wear a helmet unless they are 21 or older AND carry a medical insurance policy with at least $10,000 in medical benefits.
- ✓ Operators of motorcycles must complete a safety course and obtain a motorcycle endorsement on their driver license.

8.4 Motorist Responsibilities Toward Pedestrians

Motorists must do everything possible to avoid colliding with pedestrians. This includes stopping for pedestrians in marked and unmarked crosswalks and exercising extreme caution around visually impaired or mobility-impaired individuals.

- ✓ You must stop and remain stopped for pedestrians crossing at any marked crosswalk or intersection.
- ✓ You may not overtake or pass a vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk for a pedestrian.
- ✓ You must come to a complete stop and yield to a visually impaired pedestrian using a white cane with a red tip or a service animal.

8.5 Stopping for School Buses in Florida

Florida law is very strict about stopping for school buses that are picking up or dropping off children. The rules vary depending on the type of roadway.

- ✓ On a two-way street, all drivers moving in either direction must stop for a school bus displaying a stop signal.
- ✓ On a highway divided by a raised barrier or an unpaved median at least five feet wide, you do not have to stop if you are moving in the opposite direction of the bus.
- ✓ Painted lines or pavement markings are not considered barriers; in this case, traffic in both directions must stop.

8.6 Rules for School Crossings and Guards

Drivers must be extra vigilant in school zones and at school crossings. When a school crossing guard is present, you must obey their signals and stop for any pedestrians in the crosswalk.

- ✓ When children or school crossing guards are present in a crosswalk, you must yield and stop at the stop line, not in the crosswalk.
- ✓ Drivers must obey all signals and directions from a school crossing guard.

8.7 Sharing the Road with Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMVs)

Due to their size, commercial motor vehicles like semi-trucks have significant blind spots, known as 'No Zones,' in the front, rear, and on both sides. Drivers should avoid lingering in these areas. Safe following distances are crucial, and extra care must be taken when a CMV is turning or backing up.

- ✓ Stay out of the 'No Zone,' which are the large blind spots in front, behind, and on both sides of a CMV.
- ✓ When passing a CMV, ensure you can see the truck's cab in your rearview mirror before merging back into the lane.
- ✓ CMVs often need to swing wide to the left to make a right turn; do not drive between the CMV and the curb.

✓

Never cross behind a CMV that is backing up, as the driver's view is completely obstructed.

8.8 Rules for Encountering Funeral Processions

Funeral processions have the right-of-way in Florida. Motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians must yield. Once the lead vehicle lawfully enters an intersection, the rest of the procession may follow without regard to traffic control devices.

- ✓ All road users must yield the right-of-way to funeral processions.
- ✓ Once the lead vehicle enters an intersection, the remaining vehicles in the procession may follow through, even if the traffic signal changes.
- ✓ Vehicles in a funeral procession are identified by headlights and may also use flashing hazard lights.

8.9 Yielding to Public Transit Buses

In Florida, drivers must yield the right-of-way to public transit buses that are signaling to re-enter the traffic flow from a designated pullout bay.

- ✓ You must yield the right-of-way to a public transit bus traveling in the same direction that has signaled to re-enter traffic.
- ✓ This rule applies when the bus is leaving a specifically designated pullout bay.

8.10 Identifying and Reacting to Slow-Moving Vehicles

Certain vehicles, like farm equipment, are designed for speeds under 25 MPH. They are required to display a specific orange and red triangular emblem on the rear when on public highways.

- ✓ A vehicle displaying a triangular sign with a red border and orange center on its rear is a slow-moving vehicle (less than 25 MPH).
- ✓ These vehicles must only be operated during daylight hours unless they are equipped with proper lights for night driving.

8.11 Florida Laws for Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs)

Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs) are four-wheeled vehicles with top speeds of 21-25 MPH. To be operated on public roads, they must be registered, insured, and driven by a licensed driver only on specific streets.

- ✓ LSVs may only be operated on streets with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or less.
- ✓ A valid driver license is required to operate an LSV.
- ✓ LSVs must be registered and insured with Personal Injury Protection (PIP) and Property Damage Liability (PDL) coverage.

8.12 Rules for Operating Golf Carts

Golf carts can only be driven on designated roadways or golf courses. Operation on public roads is restricted by age, time of day, and the type of road.

- ✓ A person under 18 may not drive a golf cart on a public road unless they possess a valid learner's license or driver license.
- ✓ Golf carts may only be operated between sunrise and sunset unless specifically authorized by local government and equipped for night driving.
- ✓ Golf carts may cross state roads with a speed limit of 45 MPH or less, but only at an intersection with a traffic control device.