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United States • RMV Learner's Permit Exam

Massachusetts

Study Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: Obtaining Your License

1.1 Junior Operator License (JOL) Passenger and Night Restrictions

Drivers in Massachusetts between the ages of 16 1/2 and 18 are considered Junior Operators and are subject to strict driving restrictions. For the first six months after receiving a JOL, a junior operator may not transport any passengers under the age of 18, unless the passenger is an immediate family member. The only other exception is if the junior operator is accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old, has at least one year of driving experience, and is seated in the passenger seat. Additionally, all JOL holders are prohibited from driving between 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

- ✓ For the first six months, a JOL holder cannot drive with any non-family passengers under 18 unless accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old and sitting in the front seat.
- ✓ A JOL holder is not allowed to operate a motor vehicle between 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless a parent or legal guardian is in the vehicle.

1.2 Penalties for Junior Operator License (JOL) Violations

Massachusetts law enforces severe penalties for Junior Operators who violate driving restrictions. A first offense for violating either the passenger restriction or the night driving curfew results in a 60-day license suspension. A second offense for these violations leads to a 180-day suspension and the mandatory completion of a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course. Speeding also carries harsh penalties for JOL holders, with a first offense resulting in a 90-day suspension and subsequent offenses leading to a one-year suspension.

- ✓ The penalty for a first offense of violating the JOL passenger or night restriction is a 60-day license suspension.
- ✓ The penalty for a first speeding offense for a JOL holder is a 90-day license suspension.
- ✓ A second offense for violating the passenger or night restriction results in a 180-day suspension and requires completion of a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.

1.3 Junior Operator License (JOL) — Obtaining Your MA License

To be eligible for a Junior Operator License (JOL) in Massachusetts, an applicant aged 16 1/2 to 18 must meet several key requirements. They must hold a valid learner's permit for at least six consecutive months with a clean driving record. They must also successfully complete an RMV-approved driver education program, which includes 30 hours of classroom instruction, 12 hours of behind-the-wheel training, and 6 hours of in-car observation. Finally, a parent or guardian must certify that the applicant has completed at least 40 additional hours of supervised driving.

- ✓ An applicant must have a valid learner's permit for at least six consecutive months before taking the road test for a JOL.
- ✓ Applicants must complete an RMV-approved driver education program and at least 40 hours of supervised behind-the-wheel driving.
- ✓ A parent or guardian of a JOL applicant must participate in two hours of instruction on the driver’ s education curriculum.

1.4 Minimum Age and Residency for Massachusetts Licenses

To legally operate a vehicle in Massachusetts, you must meet specific age and residency requirements. A person must be at least 16 years old to apply for a learner's permit for a passenger vehicle (Class D). The minimum age to obtain a JOL is 16 and a half. It is illegal for anyone under 16 to drive in Massachusetts, even if they hold a valid permit or license from another state. Furthermore, a Massachusetts driver's license can only be issued to a resident of the Commonwealth.

- ✓ The minimum age to apply for a Class D learner's permit is 16.
- ✓ No person under the age of 16 may legally drive in Massachusetts, regardless of their license status in another state.
- ✓ If you become a resident of Massachusetts, you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license immediately, as there is no grace period.

1.5 Vision Requirements for a Massachusetts Driver's License

All applicants for a Massachusetts driver's license must pass a vision screening at the RMV or submit a certificate from an optometrist. The standard for a full Class D or M license is a visual acuity of at least 20/40 in the better eye (with or without corrective lenses) and a horizontal peripheral vision of at least 120 degrees. If you need glasses or contact lenses to meet this standard, your license will be issued with a 'B' restriction, legally requiring you to wear them whenever you drive.

- ✓ To obtain a full license, your vision must be at least 20/40 in your better eye and you must have at least 120 degrees of horizontal peripheral vision.
- ✓ If you need corrective lenses to pass the vision test, your license will have a 'B' restriction, and you must wear your glasses or contacts while driving.

1.6 Parental Consent and License Format for Minors

In Massachusetts, any applicant for a learner's permit or driver's license who is under the age of 18 must obtain written consent from a parent or legal guardian. This is done by having the parent or guardian sign the application. All licenses and ID cards issued to individuals under the age of 21 are printed in a vertical format to make it easy for law enforcement and others to identify them as being under the legal drinking age.

- ✓ Applicants under age 18 must obtain written consent from a parent or legal guardian to get a permit or license.
- ✓ Driver's licenses issued to anyone under the age of 21 are vertically oriented.

1.7 License Classes and Out-of-State Driving Privileges

The most common driver's license in Massachusetts is the Class D, which allows you to operate passenger vehicles, vans, and small trucks. A Class M license is required for motorcycles. If you are a U.S. resident from another state and at least 16 years old, you may drive in Massachusetts using your valid out-of-state license. However, you cannot hold a driver's license in more than one state at a time.

- ✓ A Class D license is for operating standard passenger vehicles like cars and SUVs.
- ✓ A U.S. resident who is at least 16 years old may drive in Massachusetts using a valid driver's license from their home state.
- ✓ It is illegal to hold a valid driver's license in more than one state simultaneously.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: Safety First

2.1 Massachusetts Mandatory Safety Belt Law

Massachusetts law requires every person in a passenger motor vehicle to wear a safety belt or be secured in a proper child restraint. This is a primary safety law, and fines can be issued to the driver or adult passengers for non-compliance. The law applies to passenger cars, vans, and small trucks.

- ✓ A driver can be fined $25 for not wearing a safety belt.
- ✓ A driver can also be fined $25 for each passenger aged 12, 13, 14, or 15 who is not properly belted.
- ✓ Any passenger 16 years of age or older can be fined $25 directly for not wearing a safety belt.

2.2 Child Passenger Restraint Law

Massachusetts has a specific law to protect its youngest passengers. Infants and small children must ride in a federally approved child passenger restraint until they meet specific age or height requirements. The safest place for a child is always in the back seat.

- ✓ Children must be in a child passenger restraint until they are at least 8 years old OR at least 57 inches tall.
- ✓ The fine for violating the child restraint law is $25.
- ✓ An infant seat must be placed in the back seat and face the rear of the vehicle.

2.3 Hands-Free Law for Adult Drivers (18 and Older)

In Massachusetts, it is illegal for drivers 18 and older to use a hand-held mobile electronic device while driving. Devices may only be used in a hands-free mode and must be properly mounted. Using a device by hand at a red light or stop sign is also illegal.

- ✓ Drivers 18 and older can only use mobile electronic devices in 'hands-free' mode.
- ✓ Handheld use is prohibited while the vehicle is in a public travel lane, even when stopped at a traffic light.
- ✓ The fine for a first offense is $100.

2.4 Zero Tolerance Mobile Device Law for Junior Operators

Massachusetts has a strict 'zero tolerance' policy for drivers under the age of 18 regarding mobile electronic devices. Any use, whether hand-held or hands-free, is prohibited while driving. This is a key rule of the Junior Operator License (JOL).

- ✓ Drivers under 18 are prohibited from using any mobile electronic device while driving, for any reason.
- ✓ The only exception for a junior operator to use a mobile device is to report an emergency.

2.5 Maintaining a Safe Following Distance

A key principle of defensive driving is keeping a safe space cushion around your vehicle. The 'three-second rule' is the standard method for maintaining a safe following distance from the vehicle in front of you under good driving conditions. Tailgating is illegal and dangerous.

- ✓ To follow the 'three-second rule', you should pass a fixed object at least three seconds after the vehicle in front of you passes it.
- ✓ You should allow more space, at least four seconds, when following a motorcycle.
- ✓ Tailgating is illegal and can result in a fine of up to $100.

2.6 Required Safety Equipment on Passenger Vehicles

To be legally operated in Massachusetts, all passenger vehicles must be equipped with specific, functioning safety equipment. This includes items essential for visibility, braking, and occupant protection. These items are checked during the annual vehicle inspection.

- ✓ Every passenger vehicle must have a working safety belt for the driver and all passengers.
- ✓ Vehicles must have a foot brake and a separate parking brake.
- ✓ Required lights include two white headlights, two red taillights, directional signals, three red stop (brake) lights, and a white light for the rear license plate.

2.7 Air Bags as a Supplemental Safety System

Air bags are designed to work with safety belts, not replace them. They provide additional protection, primarily in head-on collisions. To ensure safety, drivers and passengers should maintain a safe distance from the dashboard, and children should always be secured in the back seat.

- ✓ An air bag is made to work with safety belts, not as a substitute for them.
- ✓ Infants in rear-facing child safety seats should never be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag.
- ✓ Drivers should move their seat as far back from the steering wheel as is practical for safe driving.

2.8 Prohibited In-Vehicle Distractions and Obstructions

To ensure a driver's full attention is on the road, Massachusetts law prohibits certain items and behaviors inside a vehicle. This includes anything that blocks the driver's view or prevents them from hearing important sounds like emergency sirens.

- ✓ It is illegal to wear a headset, headphones, or any device covering both ears while driving.
- ✓ Drivers 18 or older are permitted to use a single earplug for communication with a mobile phone.
- ✓ Nothing can be placed or hung on the windshield, dashboard, or from the rear-view mirror if it obstructs the driver's clear view of the road.

2.9 Graduated Penalties for Mobile Device Violations

The penalties for violating the mobile device law in Massachusetts become more severe with each subsequent offense. Repeat offenders face higher fines and are required to complete a distracted driving educational program.

- ✓ The penalty for a 1st offense is a $100 fine.
- ✓ The penalty for a 2nd offense is a $250 fine plus mandatory completion of a distracted driving educational program.
- ✓ The penalty for a 3rd or subsequent offense is a $500 fine, an insurance surcharge, and the educational program.

2.10 Legal Requirement for Tire Tread Depth

For safety, tires on a passenger vehicle must have adequate tread depth to grip the road, especially in poor weather. Driving with worn-out tires is illegal. A simple way to check this is with the 'penny test'.

- ✓ Tires must have a minimum of 2/32 inches of tread depth in the proper grooves.
- ✓ If you place a penny into a tread groove and can see the top of Lincoln's head, your tires are illegally worn and must be replaced.

2.11 Understanding Total Stopping Distance

The total distance it takes to stop your vehicle is much longer than most people think. It is a combination of your reaction distance (how far you travel before hitting the brakes) and your braking distance. This distance increases dramatically with speed and is longer for heavier vehicles.

- ✓ At 60 mph, the total stopping distance can be nearly the length of a football field (approximately 292 feet).
- ✓ Large trucks can require twice the stopping distance of a passenger vehicle.
- ✓ Your total stopping distance will be longer on wet or slippery roads.

2.12 Massachusetts RMV License and Test Fees

The Massachusetts RMV charges specific fees for services like the learner's permit exam and the road test. These fees are non-refundable and must be paid for each attempt. For example, if you fail your learner's permit exam or your road test, you must pay the fee again to retake it.

- ✓ The learner’ s permit exam fee is $30.00.
- ✓ The road test fee is $35.00.
- ✓ If you fail the road test, do not appear for it, or cancel with less than 72 hours notice, you will be charged the $35 fee again.

2.13 License Plate Visibility Requirements

Your vehicle's license plate must always be clean, legible, and properly displayed. It cannot be obstructed by any object, and the registration sticker must be in the correct location.

- ✓ Your license plate number must be visible from a distance of 60 feet at night.
- ✓ Registration stickers must be placed only in the upper right-hand corner of the plate.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: Keeping Your License

3.1 Surchargeable Events and License Suspension

In Massachusetts, your driving record tracks both moving violations and at-fault crashes, which are collectively known as 'surchargeable events.' Accumulating too many of these events within a specific timeframe will lead to mandatory license suspension and other penalties. The RMV automatically tracks these events to identify high-risk drivers.

- ✓ Accumulating three surchargeable events within a two-year period requires you to complete a Driver Retraining course within 90 days, or your license will be suspended.
- ✓ Accumulating seven surchargeable events within a three-year period results in an automatic 60-day license suspension.
- ✓ An 'at-fault' crash is considered a surchargeable event if your insurance company finds you more than 50% at fault and pays out over $1000 for damages or injury.
- ✓ A Habitual Traffic Offender, defined as a driver with three major moving violations or twelve total violations in a five-year period, faces a four-year license suspension.

3.2 Junior Operator (JOL) Speeding Penalties

The Massachusetts RMV enforces extremely strict penalties for Junior Operators (drivers under 18) convicted of speeding. These penalties are far more severe than those for adult drivers and are designed to curb dangerous driving habits in new drivers. A single speeding conviction has significant consequences for a JOL holder.

- ✓ A first conviction for speeding results in a mandatory 90-day license suspension for a Junior Operator.
- ✓ A second or any subsequent speeding conviction results in a mandatory one-year license suspension for a Junior Operator.
- ✓ In addition to the suspension, a JOL holder convicted of speeding must also complete a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course and may be required to take the State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) course.
- ✓ After a speeding conviction, a JOL holder must also retake the learner's permit exam and a new road test to regain their license.

3.3 Junior Operator (JOL) Passenger and Night Restriction Penalties

Junior Operators must abide by specific passenger and nighttime driving restrictions. Violating these rules is a serious offense with escalating penalties for each conviction. The first offense results in a license suspension, and subsequent offenses lead to longer suspensions and mandatory retraining.

- ✓ A first conviction for violating the JOL passenger or night restriction results in a 60-day license suspension.
- ✓ A second conviction for violating these restrictions results in a 180-day license suspension and requires completion of a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.
- ✓ A third or subsequent conviction results in a one-year license suspension and requires the driver to re-apply for a learner's permit and pass a new road test.

3.4 Criminal Driving Offenses and Penalties

Certain motor vehicle violations are considered criminal offenses, not civil infractions. These include Operating Under the Influence (OUI), leaving the scene of a crash, and motor vehicle homicide. Convictions carry severe penalties, including lengthy license suspensions, fines, and potential jail time. The suspension for OUI increases significantly with each subsequent offense.

- ✓ A first conviction for OUI (alcohol or drugs) results in a one-year license suspension.
- ✓ A fifth conviction for OUI results in a lifetime license revocation.
- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash where a person is injured results in a license suspension of one to two years.
- ✓ Motor vehicle homicide carries a penalty of a 15-year to lifetime license revocation.

3.5 Junior Operator (JOL) Mobile Device Penalties

Massachusetts law strictly prohibits Junior Operators from using any mobile electronic device while driving, for any reason. The penalties for a first offense are severe and include fines, license suspension, and mandatory retraining courses and re-testing.

- ✓ A first offense for a JOL using a mobile device results in a $100 fine, a 60-day license suspension, and the requirement to complete a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.
- ✓ A second offense results in a $250 fine and a 180-day license suspension.
- ✓ A third or subsequent offense results in a $500 fine and a one-year license suspension.
- ✓ After a first offense, a JOL must also retake the learner's permit exam and pass a new road test to have their license reinstated.

3.6 Speeding Fines and Work Zone Penalties

Massachusetts has a specific formula for calculating speeding fines. The penalty starts with a base amount and increases for every mile per hour over a certain threshold. Fines are significantly increased for speeding in a designated and posted work zone to protect highway workers.

- ✓ The minimum fine for a speeding violation is $105.
- ✓ If you are driving more than 10 mph over the speed limit, the fine increases by an additional $10 for each mph over that initial 10 mph.
- ✓ Any fine for speeding in a posted work zone is doubled.
- ✓ For drivers 18 and over, being found responsible for three speeding violations in a 12-month period results in a 30-day license suspension.

3.7 Junior Operator (JOL) Drag Racing Penalties

Drag racing is considered an extremely dangerous and serious offense, especially for Junior Operators. The penalties are severe, involving long-term license suspensions, substantial fines, and mandatory educational courses to address reckless driving behavior.

- ✓ A first conviction for drag racing results in a one-year license suspension and a $500 reinstatement fee for a Junior Operator.
- ✓ A second or subsequent conviction for drag racing results in a three-year license suspension and a $1000 reinstatement fee for a Junior Operator.
- ✓ All drag racing convictions for a JOL holder require retaking the learner's permit exam, a new road test, and completing a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course.

3.8 Civil Motor Vehicle Infractions (CMVI)

A Civil Motor Vehicle Infraction (CMVI) is a non-criminal violation, such as failing to obey a traffic signal. When you receive a citation for a CMVI, you have a limited time to respond by either paying the fine or requesting a court hearing to dispute it. Failure to respond has serious consequences.

- ✓ You must pay the fine or request a hearing for a CMVI within 20 days of receiving the citation.
- ✓ If you fail to respond within 20 days, you are automatically found responsible, charged a large late fee, and your license will be suspended.
- ✓ To request a hearing to dispute a citation, you must pay a $25 court filing fee.
- ✓ Paying a fine for a CMVI is an admission of responsibility, and the violation will be added to your driving record as a surchargeable event.

3.9 Penalties for Using a Fake ID

Using a false or altered license or ID is a serious offense in Massachusetts, even if it is not related to driving. The RMV can suspend your driving privileges for manufacturing, selling, or using a fake ID, or for using someone else's ID as your own.

- ✓ The RMV can suspend your license for six months for a fake ID offense, even without a court conviction.
- ✓ If you are convicted in court for a fake ID offense, the RMV can suspend your license for one year.
- ✓ Offenses include altering a license, making or using a fake ID, or using someone else's license.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: Rules of the Road -1

4.1 The Fundamental Speed Law in Massachusetts

The most important speed rule in Massachusetts is the fundamental speed law, which states you must never drive faster than is reasonable and proper for the current conditions. This law overrides any posted speed limit. Your speed must always be adjusted for traffic, road conditions (like ice or water), weather, and the presence of pedestrians or bicyclists.

- ✓ You must never travel so fast that it is not safe, regardless of the posted speed limit.
- ✓ Your speed must be reduced for poor conditions such as heavy traffic, bad weather, or a rough road surface.
- ✓ You can be ticketed for driving too fast for conditions even if you are below the posted speed limit.

4.2 Statutory Speed Limits in Massachusetts

When no speed limit is posted, you must follow the statutory speed limits. These are default limits for specific types of areas. A 'thickly settled district' is an area where buildings are fewer than 200 feet apart for a distance of 1/4 mile or more. Knowing these default speeds is critical for the exam.

- ✓ The speed limit in a school zone is 20 mph.
- ✓ The speed limit in a thickly settled or business district is 30 mph, unless posted otherwise.
- ✓ The speed limit on a highway outside a thickly settled district is 50 mph.
- ✓ The speed limit is 40 mph on a road outside a thickly settled or business district.

4.3 Understanding Red and Yellow Traffic Signals

Red and yellow traffic signals control stopping and preparing to stop. A steady red light means come to a complete stop. A flashing red light is treated exactly like a STOP sign. A steady yellow light is a warning that the light is about to turn red, and you must stop if it is safe to do so.

- ✓ A steady red circle means 'stop.' You may turn right on red after a complete stop and yielding, unless a 'NO TURN ON RED' sign is posted.
- ✓ A flashing red circle means the same as a STOP sign: come to a complete stop and proceed only when it is safe.
- ✓ A steady yellow circle means the signal is changing to red; you must stop if it is safe.
- ✓ You may turn left on a red light only when driving on a one-way street and turning onto another one-way street, after a complete stop.

4.4 Identifying Traffic Signs by Color

The color of a traffic sign provides an immediate clue to its meaning. Red is used for stop or prohibition signs. Yellow is for general warnings. Black and white signs are regulatory and state the law. Orange is exclusively for construction and maintenance warnings.

- ✓ Red signs are used for stopping or prohibition (e.g., STOP, DO NOT ENTER).
- ✓ Yellow or fluorescent yellow-green signs are used for general warnings, including school and pedestrian zones.
- ✓ Orange signs indicate a construction or maintenance work zone.
- ✓ Blue signs indicate motorist services like gas, food, or lodging.

4.5 Rules for STOP and YIELD Signs

STOP and YIELD signs are critical regulatory signs that manage right-of-way. A STOP sign requires a complete halt before the stop line or crosswalk. A YIELD sign means you must slow down and give the right-of-way to other traffic, stopping only if necessary. At a 4-way stop, the first vehicle to arrive has priority.

- ✓ At a STOP sign, you must come to a complete halt; just slowing down is not enough.
- ✓ At a YIELD sign, you must slow down, be prepared to stop, and let other vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians proceed before you.
- ✓ If a 4-WAY or ALL WAY sign is added to a STOP sign, all traffic coming to the intersection must stop, and the first vehicle to arrive has the right-of-way.

4.6 Driver Responsibilities to Pedestrians

Drivers must take special care to protect pedestrians. The law requires you to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk. You should never block a crosswalk or pass a vehicle that has stopped for a pedestrian. Special flashing beacons are used to alert drivers to pedestrians crossing.

- ✓ You must yield to pedestrians entering or using a crosswalk in your path of travel.
- ✓ You must never pass a vehicle that is stopped or slowing for a pedestrian.
- ✓ When a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon is activated (flashing amber lights), you must stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- ✓ If traffic signals are not working (blacked out), the intersection should be treated as a four-way stop.

4.7 Understanding Green and Flashing Yellow Signals

Green and flashing yellow signals permit movement, but with conditions. A steady green light means 'go,' but only after yielding to any traffic or pedestrians already in the intersection. A green arrow provides a 'protected' turn. A flashing yellow arrow indicates a 'permissive' turn where you must yield to oncoming traffic.

- ✓ A steady green circle means 'go,' but you must first yield to other vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians in the road.
- ✓ When turning left on a steady green light, you must yield to oncoming traffic.
- ✓ A green arrow means you can make a 'protected' turn in the direction of the arrow, as oncoming traffic should be stopped.
- ✓ A flashing yellow arrow allows you to turn after yielding to oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

4.8 Safety at Railroad Crossings

Railroad crossings require specific actions for safety. A round yellow sign warns of a crossing ahead. At the crossing, if lights begin to flash or the gate lowers, you must stop a safe distance away and wait for the train to pass completely.

- ✓ If lights at a railroad crossing begin to flash, you must stop at least 15 feet before the light post or gate.
- ✓ You must remain stopped until the gate is fully raised and the lights stop flashing.
- ✓ Never drive around a lowered gate or ignore flashing lights at a railroad crossing.

4.9 Navigating Roadway Work Zones

Work zones, indicated by orange signs, are hazardous areas that require reduced speed and heightened awareness. The directions of a police officer or a civil flagger take precedence over all other signs, signals, or pavement markings.

- ✓ When approaching a work zone, you must reduce your speed and be prepared for changes in the road.
- ✓ You must always obey the directions of a traffic officer or civil flagger in a work zone.
- ✓ The start of a work zone is indicated with an orange warning sign or electronic message sign.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5: Rules of the Road -2

5.1 The Principle of Right-of-Way

Right-of-way rules are guidelines that determine who should proceed first in traffic situations not controlled by signs or signals. These rules are based on courtesy and safety. It is crucial to understand that right-of-way is something a driver gives to another to prevent a crash, not a right that can be taken.

- ✓ The right-of-way is something you give, not take.
- ✓ If another driver fails to follow right-of-way rules, you should always yield to them to avoid a collision.

5.2 Pedestrian Right-of-Way and the White Cane Law

Drivers must always prioritize pedestrian safety. This includes yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks, even if your light turns green. Massachusetts has a specific and strict law, the White Cane Law, that provides extra protection for visually impaired pedestrians.

- ✓ You must always yield to pedestrians who are in a roadway.
- ✓ The White Cane Law states that a driver must come to a complete stop when a blind pedestrian (using a white cane or guide dog) is crossing a street and remain stopped until the person has safely crossed.

5.3 Navigating Uncontrolled Intersections

An uncontrolled intersection is one without any traffic signs or signals. When approaching such an intersection, you must slow down and be prepared to stop. The general rule is to yield to traffic on your right.

- ✓ At an uncontrolled intersection, you must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that has entered the intersection from your right.
- ✓ Even if you have the legal right-of-way over a vehicle to your left, you should make sure that driver is yielding before you proceed.

5.4 Rules for Four-Way Stop Intersections

Four-way stops are common and can be confusing. The rules are based on a first-come, first-served basis. If two vehicles arrive simultaneously, the vehicle on the right has the right-of-way. Making eye contact with other drivers is a good practice to confirm intentions.

- ✓ At a four-way stop, the first vehicle to come to a full stop is the next to go.
- ✓ If two vehicles stop at the same time at a four-way stop, the vehicle on the right has the right-of-way.

5.5 Navigating Massachusetts Rotaries

Rotaries are common in Massachusetts and have specific rules. Traffic flows in a counter-clockwise direction. The most important rule is to yield to traffic that is already circulating within the rotary before you enter.

- ✓ Traffic in a rotary travels in a counter-clockwise direction.
- ✓ You must always yield the right-of-way to vehicles already in the rotary, unless directed otherwise by signs or a police officer.

5.6 Being Passed and the Massachusetts Move Over Law

When another vehicle is passing you, your legal responsibility is to be courteous and safe by slowing down and staying to the right. Additionally, Massachusetts has a 'Move Over Law' that requires specific actions when approaching stationary emergency or recovery vehicles with flashing lights.

- ✓ If you are being passed by another vehicle, you must slow down and stay to the right; you must not speed up.
- ✓ The 'Move Over Law' requires you to yield the right-of-way by safely moving over to a lane not adjacent to a stationary emergency vehicle if you are on a highway with at least two lanes in your direction.

5.7 Rules and Restrictions for U-Turns

A U-turn is a 180-degree turn that reverses your direction of travel. In Massachusetts, U-turns are illegal in certain situations to ensure safety. The most critical factor is visibility; you must be able to see far enough in both directions to avoid creating a hazard for other drivers.

- ✓ You may not make a U-turn near the crest of a hill or a curve.
- ✓ A U-turn is illegal at any location where other drivers cannot see you from 500 feet away.

5.8 Yielding When Making a Left Turn

Making a left turn is a high-risk maneuver because it involves crossing the path of oncoming traffic. Therefore, vehicles turning left must always yield to oncoming traffic, as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

- ✓ When making any left turn, you must first yield the right-of-way to any oncoming vehicle.
- ✓ You must also yield to any pedestrians or bicyclists who are crossing your intended path of travel.

5.9 Entering a Road from a Driveway or Private Road

When you are entering a main public road from a private road, driveway, or unpaved road, you do not have the right-of-way. You must stop and wait for a safe gap in traffic before proceeding.

- ✓ You must come to a complete stop before entering a paved thoroughfare from a private road, driveway, or unpaved road.
- ✓ After stopping, you must give the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles already on the road you are entering.

5.10 Lane Choice in Multi-Lane Rotaries

In a multi-lane rotary, your choice of entry lane depends on your intended exit. Using the correct lane helps traffic flow smoothly and prevents crashes inside the rotary. If you miss your exit, you should go around again rather than making an unsafe last-minute maneuver.

- ✓ For a quarter-turn or to go straight, enter the rotary from the right lane and stay in the right lane.
- ✓ For a three-quarter-turn or a U-turn, enter from the left lane, travel through the inner lane, and then move to the exit lane.

5.11 Rules for Passing on the Left

Passing on the left is the standard way to pass another vehicle. On a two-way road, this requires you to enter the oncoming lane, so you must have a clear line of sight and sufficient distance to complete the pass safely without interfering with oncoming traffic.

- ✓ When crossing a broken yellow line to pass, you must be able to see clearly for at least 400 feet in front of you.
- ✓ You must return to the right lane before any oncoming vehicle comes within 200 feet of you.

5.12 When Passing on the Right is Permitted

While passing on the left is standard, passing on the right is allowed in specific situations. This is generally only when the road is wide enough for multiple lanes of traffic moving in the same direction or when a vehicle ahead is turning left.

- ✓ You are allowed to pass on the right if the vehicle you are passing is making, or is about to make, a left turn.
- ✓ You can pass on the right on a one-way street or on a highway with two or more lanes of traffic moving in your direction.

5.13 Executing a Three-Point Turn

A three-point turn is a maneuver used to turn a vehicle around on a narrow street when a U-turn is not possible. It should only be performed when traffic is very light and visibility is good, as it involves blocking the entire road temporarily. You must ensure you have a large enough gap in traffic before beginning.

- ✓ A three-point turn should only be used on a narrow street with good visibility, light traffic, and no other option like a driveway.
- ✓ Before starting a three-point turn, you must wait until you have a 20-30 second gap in traffic to complete the maneuver safely.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6: Rules of the Road -3

6.1 Stopping for School Buses in Massachusetts

Massachusetts law requires all drivers to stop for a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle that has its red lights flashing and a stop sign extended. This rule applies to traffic moving in both directions. The only exception is when the school bus is on the other side of a divided highway with a physical barrier in between. You must remain stopped until the lights stop flashing and the sign is retracted. A first offense for failing to stop carries significant penalties.

- ✓ You must stop for a school bus with flashing red lights and an extended stop sign, regardless of your direction of travel.
- ✓ The penalty for a first violation of the school bus stop law is a license suspension and a $250 fine.
- ✓ You do not have to stop for a school bus if it is on the opposite side of a divided highway with a barrier between travel directions.

6.2 Penalties for Speeding in Work Zones

Road construction and maintenance areas, often marked by orange warning signs, require extra caution due to the presence of workers and changing road conditions. To ensure worker safety, Massachusetts law enforces stricter penalties for speeding in these areas. If you are cited for speeding in a designated 'work area', the fine is doubled.

- ✓ The fine for speeding in a posted 'work area' is doubled.
- ✓ Orange warning signs typically indicate a road work zone where you must slow down and be alert for workers on foot.
- ✓ In a work zone, you must follow posted signs carefully and be prepared for sudden stops or changes in road direction.

6.3 General Parking Rules and Distances

When parking your vehicle, you must follow specific state laws to ensure safety and traffic flow. Your vehicle cannot obstruct traffic, which means you must leave a minimum amount of clear roadway for other vehicles to pass. You must also park close to the curb.

- ✓ When parked, your vehicle must be no more than 12 inches from the curb.
- ✓ You must always leave at least a 12-foot wide, clear roadway for traffic to pass your parked vehicle.
- ✓ When leaving a parked vehicle, state law requires you to stop the motor, set the parking brake, lock the ignition, and remove the key.

6.4 Correctly Parking a Vehicle on a Hill

To prevent your vehicle from rolling into traffic if the brakes fail, you must turn your front wheels in the correct direction when parking on a hill. The direction depends on whether there is a curb and if you are facing uphill or downhill.

- ✓ When parking uphill against a curb, turn your front wheels outward, toward the travel lane.
- ✓ When parking downhill against a curb, turn your front wheels inward, toward the curb.
- ✓ When parking on a hill with no curb (either direction), turn your front wheels inward, toward the edge of the road.

6.5 Prohibited Parking Zones and Fines

Parking is illegal in many designated areas to ensure public safety and access. These include areas near intersections, fire hydrants, crosswalks, and bus stops. Violations in these zones, especially those reserved for public transport or persons with disabilities, carry significant fines.

- ✓ You may not park within 20 feet of an intersection.
- ✓ You may not park within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- ✓ Parking in a posted bus stop results in a $100 fine, while illegally parking in a disabled person (HP-DV) space is a $300 fine for a first offense.

6.6 Responding to Aggressive Drivers on the Road

Aggressive driving includes actions like speeding, tailgating, and cutting others off. When confronted by an aggressive driver, your priority is safety. You should not engage or challenge the driver. Instead, try to move out of their way, avoid eye contact, and ignore them. If the situation feels like an emergency, report it to the State Police by calling 911. The RMV has the authority to suspend the license of an aggressive driver even before a court hearing if they are deemed a threat to public safety.

- ✓ If you are confronted by an aggressive driver, you should attempt to get out of their way and avoid eye contact.
- ✓ You can report an emergency situation involving an aggressive driver to the State Police by calling 911.
- ✓ The RMV can suspend your license for aggressive driving before a court date if you are considered a threat to public safety.

6.7 Safely Sharing the Road with Large Trucks

Driving safely around large vehicles like trucks and buses requires understanding their limitations. They have large blind spots on all four sides; if you can't see the truck's mirrors, the driver can't see you. A fully loaded tractor-trailer can take twice as far to stop as a passenger car, so never cut in front of one and then slow down. On multi-lane highways, trucks are restricted to the two right-hand lanes.

- ✓ A fully loaded tractor-trailer may take twice as far to stop as a passenger vehicle.
- ✓ If you are driving behind a large truck and cannot see its rearview mirrors, you are tailgating in its rear blind spot.
- ✓ On a multiple-lane highway, trucks and buses are generally restricted to using the two right-hand lanes.

6.8 Rules for Driving Near Trolleys

State law has very specific rules for operating a vehicle near trolleys. Because trolleys run on tracks and cannot swerve, drivers must be extra cautious. You are legally required to maintain a specific minimum distance when a trolley is stopped for passengers. You must also yield and never turn in front of an approaching trolley.

- ✓ You must not drive closer than eight feet to the passenger steps of a trolley that is stopped to let passengers on or off.
- ✓ You must not turn in front of an approaching trolley, as its path is limited to its tracks and it cannot swerve to avoid a collision.
- ✓ Always keep a safe distance between your vehicle and a trolley that is sharing the roadway.

6.9 Funeral Procession Right-of-Way Rules

Funeral processions have the right-of-way at intersections. If the lead vehicle legally enters an intersection, the rest of the procession may follow, even if the traffic signal changes to red. Other drivers must yield to the procession and are prohibited from interfering with it. You may not drive between vehicles in a procession, join it, or cross its path at an intersection, even if you have a green light.

- ✓ A funeral procession has the right-of-way at intersections and may follow its lead vehicle through a red light or stop sign.
- ✓ You may not drive between the vehicles of a funeral procession unless directed by law enforcement.
- ✓ You may not cross the path of a funeral procession at an intersection, even if your traffic light is green.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7: Rules of the Road -4

7.1 Massachusetts Prohibited Parking Locations and Fines

Details the specific locations where parking is illegal in Massachusetts. Violations can result in fines and prevent the renewal of your license or registration. It is crucial to know specific distances, such as from fire hydrants and intersections, and the penalties for violations like parking in a bus stop or a space for persons with disabilities.

- ✓ You may not park within 20 feet of an intersection.
- ✓ You may not park within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- ✓ Parking in a posted bus stop carries a $100 penalty.
- ✓ The fine for illegally parking in a space reserved for persons with disabilities (HP-DV) is $300 for a first offense.
- ✓ You are not allowed to 'double park' (park in a traffic lane next to a row of parked vehicles).

7.2 Motorist Duties When Sharing the Road with Bicyclists

Explains the specific legal duties a motor vehicle operator has when driving near bicyclists to prevent common types of crashes. This includes rules for safe passing distance, yielding the right-of-way, and preventing 'dooring' incidents. The 'Dutch Reach' is a key technique emphasized for safety.

- ✓ When passing a bicyclist, a motorist must maintain a safe distance of at least four feet.
- ✓ Drivers and passengers can be fined up to $100 for opening a vehicle door into an oncoming bicycle.
- ✓ When turning left, a driver must yield the right-of-way to an oncoming bicycle, just as they would for another motor vehicle.
- ✓ Use the 'Dutch Reach' method (opening the door with your far hand) to ensure you see approaching bicyclists before opening your door.

7.3 Properly Parking a Vehicle on a Hill

Explains the correct procedure for securing a vehicle when parking on a hill, with or without a curb, to prevent it from rolling into traffic. This involves setting the parking brake, putting the vehicle in the correct gear (Park for automatic, in gear for manual), and turning the front wheels in the proper direction based on the curb and direction of the hill.

- ✓ When parking uphill against a curb, you must turn your front wheels outward, toward the travel lane.
- ✓ When parking downhill against a curb, you must turn your front wheels inward, toward the curb.
- ✓ When parking on a hill with no curb (either uphill or downhill), you must turn your wheels inward, toward the edge of the road.

7.4 Pedestrian Rules and Safety Responsibilities

Outlines the rules pedestrians must follow for their own safety in Massachusetts. This includes using crosswalks and sidewalks when available and walking on the correct side of the road when no sidewalk is present. Drivers must be aware of these rules to anticipate pedestrian behavior.

- ✓ State law requires pedestrians to use a crosswalk when one is available.
- ✓ When no sidewalk is available, pedestrians should walk on the shoulder facing oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Pedestrians must not walk along or across expressways, interstate highways, or turnpikes.

7.5 Bicyclist Traffic Laws and Equipment Requirements

Details the traffic laws that apply to bicyclists, who generally have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicle operators. This includes rules for lane use, signaling, and required safety equipment, such as lights for night riding and helmets for young riders.

- ✓ Bicyclists under 16 years old must wear an approved helmet.
- ✓ From a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, a bicycle must have a white front lamp visible from 500 feet and a red rear light or reflector visible from 600 feet.
- ✓ Bicyclists must signal their intent to stop or turn, but the signal does not have to be continuous if both hands are needed for safe operation.
- ✓ No more than two bicycles can be operated side-by-side, and they must stay within a single lane if on a multi-lane road.

7.6 Understanding Bicycle Boxes and Separated Bike Lanes

Describes modern road infrastructure designed for cyclist safety, such as bicycle boxes and separated bike lanes. Drivers must know how to properly approach and stop at intersections with these markings to avoid conflicts with cyclists and follow traffic laws.

- ✓ At an intersection with a bicycle box, a motor vehicle must stop behind the white stop line, before the green bicycle box, even if the box is empty.
- ✓ When turning right across a separated bike lane, drivers must yield to pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing.

7.7 Miscellaneous Illegal Driving and Roadway Actions

Covers a range of illegal activities while operating a vehicle or on a roadway in Massachusetts. These rules address safety, environmental protection, and public nuisance, including prohibitions against racing, littering, and modifying a vehicle's exhaust system.

- ✓ It is illegal to drag race or drive on a bet or wager.
- ✓ Throwing garbage, glass, or lighted cigarettes from your vehicle is prohibited.
- ✓ It is illegal to bypass or cut out a motor vehicle’s muffler system.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter 8: Special Driving Situations

8.1 Responding to Moving Emergency Vehicles

When an emergency vehicle (fire engine, ambulance, police car) approaches from any direction with its siren or flashing lights active, you must yield the right-of-way. This requires you to pull over to the far right side of the road and come to a complete stop until the vehicle has passed. It is also illegal to follow a responding emergency vehicle too closely.

- ✓ You must pull over to the right side of the road and come to a complete stop for an approaching emergency vehicle with its lights and/or siren active.
- ✓ It is illegal to follow closer than 300 feet behind an emergency vehicle that is responding to an alarm.
- ✓ If you are in an intersection when an emergency vehicle approaches, drive through the intersection first and then pull over and stop.

8.2 Massachusetts Move Over Law

The 'Move Over Law' in Massachusetts mandates specific actions when approaching a stationary emergency, highway maintenance, or recovery vehicle with its flashing lights activated. Drivers must slow down to a reasonable and safe speed. On highways with multiple lanes in the same direction, drivers are required to move over to a lane that is not directly next to the stopped vehicle, if it is safe to do so.

- ✓ When approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with flashing lights, you must reduce your speed to one that is reasonable and safe for the conditions.
- ✓ On a highway with at least two lanes in your direction, you must yield the right-of-way by moving to a lane not adjacent to the emergency vehicle, if possible.
- ✓ If moving over is not possible or safe, you must still slow down significantly and proceed with caution.

8.3 Penalties for Not Producing Documents During a Stop

During a traffic stop in Massachusetts, you are legally required to provide your driver's license and vehicle registration to the officer upon request. Failure to do so, or providing false information, carries specific monetary fines and can lead to more serious charges.

- ✓ The fine for a first offense for failing to produce your license or registration upon an officer's request is $35.
- ✓ If you provide a false name or address to a police officer, you can be fined $100 and may be arrested.

8.4 Driving and Parking Restrictions Near a Fire

For the safety of emergency personnel and the public, Massachusetts law places strict distance restrictions on drivers near a fire scene. You are prohibited from driving or parking within a specified distance of a fire and must never drive over an unprotected fire hose unless directed by an official.

- ✓ It is illegal to drive by or park your vehicle within 800 feet of a fire.
- ✓ You may not drive over an unprotected fire hose unless a firefighter or public safety official directs you to do so.

8.5 Proper Procedure During a Police Traffic Stop

If signaled to stop by a police officer, you must pull your vehicle over to the right side of the road safely and completely. To ensure safety, you should stay in your vehicle, turn on the interior light at night, keep your hands in plain sight, and wait for the officer to request your documents before reaching for them.

- ✓ When pulled over by a police officer, you must remain in your vehicle unless instructed to get out.
- ✓ If the traffic stop occurs at night, you should turn on the interior overhead light of your vehicle.
- ✓ Wait until the officer asks for your license and registration before reaching into your glove compartment or other areas.