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United States • DOL Knowledge Test

Washington

Study Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: Licenses

1.1 Restrictions for Intermediate Driver License Holders

Drivers aged 16 and 17 are issued an Intermediate Driver License with specific restrictions to promote safe driving. For the first 6 months, they cannot carry passengers under 20 unless they are immediate family. For the entire first year, they are prohibited from driving between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a qualified adult. The use of any personal electronic device, even hands-free, is also prohibited except for emergencies.

- ✓ For the first 6 months, an Intermediate Driver License holder cannot have any passengers under age 20, except for immediate family members.
- ✓ For the first year, an Intermediate Driver License holder cannot drive between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or licensed driver who is at least 25 years old.
- ✓ Intermediate Driver License holders are not allowed to use a cell phone or any wireless device while driving, even with hands-free technology, unless reporting an emergency.

1.2 Washington State DUI Laws for Alcohol and Cannabis

Washington has strict laws against driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or drugs. For drivers 21 and over, the legal limit is a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or a Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) level of 5.00 nanograms per milliliter. For drivers under 21, the limits are much lower: a BAC of 0.02% or any THC level above 0.00 nanograms. Under the Implied Consent Law, all drivers agree to be tested if suspected of DUI.

- ✓ For drivers age 21 and over, it is illegal to drive with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more, or a THC concentration of 5.00 ng/mL or more.
- ✓ For drivers under age 21, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of 0.02% or more, or a THC concentration above 0.00 ng/mL.
- ✓ Under the Implied Consent Law, you agree to take a breath or blood test if a police officer suspects you are driving under the influence.

1.3 Washington's Open Container Law

It is a traffic infraction in Washington to have an open container of alcohol or any cannabis product with a broken seal in the passenger compartment of a vehicle. This applies to both the driver and any passengers. To legally transport these items, they must be placed in the trunk of the car or, if the vehicle has no trunk, in an area not normally occupied or directly accessible by the driver or passengers.

- ✓ It is illegal for any person in a moving vehicle to drink alcohol or consume cannabis.
- ✓ Open containers of alcohol or cannabis products must be transported in the vehicle's trunk or a similar area not accessible to the driver or passengers.

1.4 Licensing Requirements for New Washington Residents

New residents moving to Washington must obtain a state driver license within a specific timeframe. Adults 18 and older have 30 days to transfer their license. If their out-of-state license is expired, they will be required to pass both the knowledge and skills exams. Teens aged 16-17 must apply for a Washington Intermediate Driver License and meet state-specific driver education requirements.

- ✓ New residents who are 18 or older must get a Washington driver license within 30 days of moving to the state.
- ✓ If a new resident's out-of-state license is expired, they must pass both the Driving Knowledge Exam and the Driving Skills Exam.

1.5 Obtaining an Instruction Permit and First License

To get a first driver license at age 16 or 17 in Washington, a teen must follow a specific process. This includes holding an Instruction Permit for at least 6 months, completing a driver training course, and logging a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving practice, including 10 hours at night. They must also have a clean driving record for the 6 months prior to applying for their license.

- ✓ A teen driver must hold an Instruction Permit for at least 6 months before applying for their first license.
- ✓ Applicants aged 16-17 must complete at least 50 hours of supervised driving, with 10 of those hours occurring at night.
- ✓ An applicant for a first license must not have any traffic violations or convictions for the 6 months immediately before applying.

1.6 Penalties for Violating Intermediate License Rules

Washington has a strict penalty system for Intermediate Driver License holders who violate traffic laws or the specific restrictions of their license. A second violation results in a 6-month license suspension (or until age 18), and a third violation results in a suspension until the driver turns 18. These penalties are designed to correct risky driving behavior early.

- ✓ A second traffic violation or at-fault collision by an Intermediate Driver License holder results in a license suspension for 6 months or until age 18, whichever comes first.
- ✓ A third traffic violation or at-fault collision results in the license being suspended until the driver turns 18.

1.7 Washington Driver License Exam Procedures

To obtain a Washington driver license, all new drivers must pass two exams: the Driving Knowledge Exam and the Driving Skills Exam. The knowledge exam must be passed first, and the score is valid for two years. For the skills exam, the applicant must provide a legally licensed and registered vehicle that is in safe operating condition and has valid proof of liability insurance.

- ✓ You must pass the Driving Knowledge Exam before you are eligible to take the Driving Skills Exam.
- ✓ A passing score on the knowledge exam is valid for two years.
- ✓ The vehicle used for the Driving Skills Exam must have proof of current liability insurance and be in safe operating condition.

1.8 Maintaining Your Washington Driver License

It is the driver's responsibility to keep their license information current and valid. If you move, you must notify the Department of Licensing (DOL) of your new address within 10 days. If your license has been expired for 8 or more years, you will be required to retake and pass both the knowledge and skills exams to be re-licensed.

- ✓ You must update your address with the DOL within 10 days of moving.
- ✓ If your driver license has been expired for 8 or more years, you must pass both the knowledge and skills exams again.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: Vehicles

2.1 Reporting the Sale of a Vehicle

When an individual sells, trades, or gifts a vehicle in Washington, they are legally required to file a Vehicle Report of Sale with the Department of Licensing within 5 days. This report helps protect the seller from liability for any infractions committed by the new owner. The purchaser then has 15 days to bring the signed title to a licensing office to officially transfer ownership and avoid penalty fees.

- ✓ The seller must file a Vehicle Report of Sale within 5 days of disposing of the vehicle.
- ✓ The purchaser must transfer ownership by bringing the signed title to a licensing office within 15 days to avoid penalties.
- ✓ A report of sale does not transfer ownership; the title must be signed and given to the purchaser.

2.2 Mandatory Vehicle Liability Insurance

Washington state law requires all drivers to carry proof of liability insurance in their vehicle. This insurance must meet specific minimum coverage amounts to be legally valid. The purpose is to ensure that a driver can cover the costs of bodily injury or property damage they may cause in a collision.

- ✓ You must carry proof of liability insurance in your vehicle.
- ✓ Minimum coverage is $25,000 for injury/death of one person.
- ✓ Minimum coverage is $50,000 for injury/death of two or more persons.
- ✓ Minimum coverage is $10,000 for property damage.

2.3 Headlight and High Beam Usage Rules

Proper use of headlights is critical for safety, both for seeing the road and for being seen by others. Washington law specifies when headlights must be used. High beams can be used on unlit open roads but must be dimmed in the presence of other vehicles to avoid blinding other drivers.

- ✓ Headlights must be on from a half hour after sunset until a half hour before sunrise, and anytime visibility is poor (e.g., rain, fog, snow).
- ✓ You must dim your high beams when you are within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle.
- ✓ You must dim your high beams when you are within 300 feet of a vehicle you are following.

2.4 Child Passenger Restraint Laws

Washington has specific, strict laws regarding child safety seats to ensure children are protected while in a moving vehicle. The type of restraint required is based on the child's age and size. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure all child passengers are properly secured according to these regulations.

- ✓ Children up to age 2 must ride in a rear-facing car seat.
- ✓ Children ages 2 to 4 must ride in a car seat with a harness (rear- or forward-facing).
- ✓ Children over age 4 must use a booster seat until they are 4'9" tall.
- ✓ Children under the age of 13 should never ride in the front seat due to airbag risks.

2.5 Using Turn Signals and Hand Signals

Signaling your intentions is a key part of safe and predictable driving. In Washington, you must signal before changing direction, such as turning or changing lanes. If your vehicle's electric turn signals are not working, you must use proper hand signals.

- ✓ You must signal for a turn or lane change at least 100 feet before you make the move.
- ✓ For a right turn, the hand signal is left arm out the window, bent up at the elbow with fingers pointing to the sky.
- ✓ For a left turn, the hand signal is left arm extended straight out the window.
- ✓ To stop or slow down, the hand signal is left arm out the window, bent down at the elbow with fingers pointing to the ground.

2.6 Sharing the Road with Large Vehicles

Large vehicles like trucks and buses have significant blind zones, often called 'no zones,' around them. It is crucial for drivers of smaller vehicles to be aware of these areas and avoid lingering in them. A simple rule of thumb is a critical safety practice when driving near any large vehicle.

- ✓ Large vehicles have large blind zones on all four sides, known as 'no zones'.
- ✓ If you cannot see the driver of a large vehicle in their side mirrors, they cannot see you.
- ✓ Avoid following large vehicles too closely or driving alongside them for extended periods.

2.7 Vehicle Certificate of Ownership (Title) and Registration

In Washington, the Department of Licensing (DOL) issues a Certificate of Ownership, also known as the title, which proves legal ownership of a vehicle. It is a critical document that should be stored securely, but never inside the vehicle itself. All vehicles must also be registered with the DOL. New residents have 30 days to register their vehicles. The registration document must be signed and kept inside the vehicle at all times.

- ✓ The Certificate of Ownership (title) must be kept in a safe place, but not in the vehicle.
- ✓ New residents have 30 days to register their vehicle in Washington.
- ✓ The vehicle registration document must be signed and kept in the vehicle.

2.8 Vehicle Safety Technology (VST/ADAS) Limitations

Modern vehicles are often equipped with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) like blind spot detection and lane keeping assistance. While these systems enhance safety, they are not a substitute for an alert and engaged driver. You are still fully responsible for the operation of your vehicle and must be aware of the technology's limitations.

- ✓ Vehicle Safety Technology (VST) and ADAS are meant to assist, not replace, a driver's healthy driving habits.
- ✓ The driver is always fully responsible for the operation of the vehicle, even when using assistance systems.
- ✓ These systems may not detect pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles in adjacent lanes, requiring the driver to perform visual checks.

2.9 Seat Belt and Occupant Protection Requirements

Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective way to protect yourself in a crash. Washington law mandates that every person in a moving vehicle must be properly restrained. Proper fit is essential for the seat belt to work correctly.

- ✓ Every person in a moving vehicle must wear a seat belt or be in an approved child restraint.
- ✓ The lap belt should be worn low and snug across the hips/upper thighs, not the stomach.
- ✓ The shoulder belt should cross the middle of your chest and shoulder, not your neck or face.

2.10 Basic Vehicle Maintenance for Safety

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure their vehicle is in safe operating condition. Key components like tires, lights, and windows must be properly maintained to ensure visibility and control while driving.

- ✓ Tire tread depth must not be less than 2/32 of an inch.
- ✓ License plates must be displayed on the front and rear of the vehicle and must be clean and readable.
- ✓ Windshields and windows must be clean and free of obstructions, including decals or items hanging from the mirror that block your view.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: Drivers

3.1 Impairment Effects of Alcohol on Driving Abilities

Alcohol is a common factor in impaired driving crashes. It acts as a depressant, negatively affecting a driver's judgment, vision, reaction time, and coordination. Even a small amount can lead to overconfidence and risky behavior, making it unsafe to drive after consuming any alcohol.

- ✓ Alcohol can cause blurry vision, drowsiness, and reduced reaction times.
- ✓ Alcohol impairs a driver's ability to judge speed and distance, and to perform multiple tasks like staying in a lane.
- ✓ A driver's overconfidence can increase after drinking alcohol, leading to more risk-taking.

3.2 Cannabis (Marijuana) Impairment and Driving Illegality

While recreational cannabis is legal for adults 21 and over in Washington, it is illegal for a person of any age to drive under its influence. Cannabis significantly impairs the skills necessary for safe driving, and there is no safe amount to consume before operating a vehicle.

- ✓ Driving after consuming any amount of cannabis is illegal for all ages.
- ✓ Cannabis can impair driving by reducing attention, slowing reaction time, and decreasing motor coordination.
- ✓ Cannabis use can negatively affect a driver's ability to judge distances and handle the vehicle properly.

3.3 Washington's Strict Law on Electronic Device Use (E-DUI)

Washington has a strict "Driving Under the Influence of Electronics" (E-DUI) law to combat distracted driving. This law prohibits drivers from holding any personal electronic device, such as a cell phone or tablet, while they are driving. This includes when stopped in traffic or at a stop light.

- ✓ It is illegal to hold any personal electronic device while driving, even when temporarily stopped in traffic or at a red light.
- ✓ Fines for violating the distracted driving law can be doubled after the first offense.
- ✓ Drivers with an Instruction Permit or Intermediate License are prohibited from using any electronic device, even in hands-free mode.

3.4 Vision Requirements and Safe Night Driving Practices

Good vision is legally required for driving in Washington, and you must pass a vision test to get a license. If you need corrective lenses, you must wear them at all times when driving. Night driving presents unique challenges like glare from headlights. Drivers should adopt specific techniques to remain safe when visibility is reduced.

- ✓ If you are required to wear corrective lenses, you must always wear them when driving.
- ✓ To avoid the glare of oncoming headlights at night, look toward the right edge of the road and use it as a steering guide.
- ✓ At night, you should reduce your speed and increase your following distance to be able to stop within the area lit by your headlights.

3.5 Restrictions on Headphones and Audio Devices While Driving

Hearing is an important sense for detecting warnings like sirens or horns. Washington law restricts the use of personal audio devices to ensure drivers can hear their surroundings. There are specific, stricter rules for new drivers with an instruction permit or intermediate license.

- ✓ It is illegal to drive a vehicle while wearing earbuds, earphones, or headphones that broadcast sound in or over both ears.
- ✓ Drivers with an Instruction Permit or Intermediate Driver License cannot use a cell phone or any mobile electronic device while driving, even if it is hands-free.
- ✓ A hands-free device may be used in one ear if it complies with state regulations.

3.6 Driving Impairment from Legal Medications

Impaired driving is not limited to alcohol or illegal drugs. Many common prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause drowsiness, dizziness, and other side effects that make driving unsafe. A driver can be arrested for DUI if impaired by any drug, regardless of whether it is legal or prescribed.

- ✓ Just because a drug is legal or prescribed does not mean it is safe to use while driving.
- ✓ Warning labels that advise against 'operating heavy machinery' apply to driving a vehicle.
- ✓ You should not drive after starting a new medication until you know how it affects your judgment, coordination, and reaction time.

3.7 Increased Dangers of Mixing Drugs (Polydrug Use)

Polydrug use is taking more than one type of drug, which can include mixing alcohol with cannabis, prescription medications, or other substances. This combination can multiply the impairing effects, making it extremely dangerous to drive. It is the most common type of impairment found in fatal crashes.

- ✓ Mixing alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs can produce effects greater than any single drug on its own.
- ✓ Polydrug use is the most common form of impairment involved in fatal crashes.
- ✓ Polydrug use can involve any combination of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter medicines.

3.8 Recognizing and Preventing Drowsy Driving

Driving while fatigued is as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It impairs vision, judgment, and reaction time. Drivers should recognize the signs of drowsiness and take action to avoid falling asleep at the wheel.

- ✓ Signs of fatigue include difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, drifting from your lane, and missing traffic signs.
- ✓ On long trips, you should plan to stop for a break about every 100 miles or every 2 hours.
- ✓ If you feel tired while driving, the safest course of action is to pull over to a safe place and take a short nap.

3.9 Proper Visual Scanning Techniques for Safe Driving

To be a safe driver, you must constantly gather information about your surroundings. This involves actively searching and scanning the road ahead, to the sides, and behind your vehicle to identify potential hazards early and give yourself time to react.

- ✓ Scan far ahead of your vehicle to anticipate potential hazards and avoid last-minute braking or swerving.
- ✓ Before changing lanes, slowing down, or backing up, you must check traffic behind you using your mirrors and over-shoulder checks.
- ✓ When approaching an intersection, you should look to the left and right for approaching vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists before proceeding.

3.10 Distinguishing Aggressive Driving from Road Rage

It's important to understand the difference between aggressive driving and road rage. Aggressive driving is a traffic offense involving dangerous actions like speeding or tailgating. Road rage is a criminal offense where a driver uses their vehicle or a weapon in a violent manner.

- ✓ Aggressive driving is a traffic offense, while road rage is a criminal offense.
- ✓ Behaviors like speeding, following too closely, and making unsafe lane changes are considered aggressive driving.
- ✓ If you are being targeted by an aggressive driver, do not engage; move out of the way, avoid eye contact, and drive to a populated area if you feel threatened.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: Roads

4.1 Yielding Right-of-Way to Pedestrians

In Washington, pedestrians have the absolute right-of-way at all crosswalks and intersections, regardless of whether they are marked or unmarked. Drivers must be vigilant and prepared to stop. Special care must be taken for pedestrians with disabilities, such as those using a service animal or cane; you must wait for them to cross the entire street before proceeding.

- ✓ You must yield to pedestrians at all crosswalks and intersections, whether they are marked or not.
- ✓ After a pedestrian has crossed your lane, you must wait for them to clear one additional lane before you can proceed.
- ✓ For pedestrians with a service animal, cane, or wheelchair, you must wait until they have completely crossed the street before moving.
- ✓ It is unlawful to honk at or interfere with a service animal, as it can confuse or frighten them and the pedestrian.

4.2 Stopping for a School Bus

Washington has strict laws for stopping for school buses to protect children. When a school bus displays flashing red lights and its stop sign is extended, you must stop. The rules for stopping depend on the type of road you are on. Fines are doubled for illegally passing a stopped school bus.

- ✓ You must stop for a school bus with flashing red lights if you are traveling in the same direction, regardless of the number of lanes.
- ✓ On a two-lane road, traffic in both directions must stop for a school bus with flashing red lights.
- ✓ On a road with three or more lanes, or one separated by a median or barrier, traffic traveling in the opposite direction is not required to stop.
- ✓ You may not use a center turn lane to pass a stopped school bus.

4.3 Sharing the Road with Large Vehicles

Large vehicles like trucks and buses have significant limitations, including large blind zones (or 'no-zones'), long stopping distances, and a wide turning radius. To drive safely around them, you must provide extra space and be aware of these limitations.

- ✓ If you cannot see the driver's mirrors on a large vehicle, the driver cannot see you.
- ✓ When merging in front of a large truck, wait until you can see both of its headlights in your rearview mirror before pulling in front.
- ✓ Never pass a large vehicle that is turning, as it may need to use more than one lane to complete the turn.
- ✓ Avoid driving alongside large vehicles for extended periods to stay out of their blind zones.

4.4 Driving Safely Around Motorcycles

Motorcyclists have the same rights as other drivers but are much more vulnerable and harder to see. Drivers must actively scan for motorcycles, provide extra following distance, and respect their right to use the full width of a lane for safety and visibility.

- ✓ A motorcyclist is entitled to the full width of a lane; never attempt to share a lane by driving alongside them.
- ✓ You should allow for a greater following distance behind a motorcycle, as they can stop more quickly and are more affected by road hazards.
- ✓ Before turning or changing lanes, look twice and make an over-the-shoulder check to ensure you haven't missed a motorcycle in your blind spot.

4.5 Rules for Sharing the Road with Bicyclists

Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as vehicle drivers in Washington. Because they are vulnerable road users, drivers must provide adequate space when passing and yield to them at intersections and crosswalks.

- ✓ You must allow at least 3 feet of space between the widest part of your vehicle and a bicyclist when passing.
- ✓ Bicyclists in a crosswalk are considered pedestrians, and you must yield the right-of-way.
- ✓ You may not share a lane with a bicyclist; they are legally entitled to use the full lane.
- ✓ You may only enter a bike lane when making a turn or parking.

4.6 Railroad Crossing Safety Rules

Trains always have the right-of-way and cannot stop quickly. At a railroad crossing, you must obey all warning signals, including flashing red lights, bells, and gates. Never try to beat a train or drive around a lowered gate.

- ✓ You must stop between 15 and 50 feet from the nearest rail when a crossing's warning lights are flashing.
- ✓ Trains always have the right-of-way over all other road users.
- ✓ Never stop your vehicle on the railroad tracks.
- ✓ If your vehicle stalls on the tracks, get everyone out immediately, move away from the tracks, and call the number on the blue and white Emergency Notification System sign or 911.

4.7 Yielding to Emergency Vehicles

When an emergency vehicle (police, fire, or ambulance) approaches with its lights and/or sirens activated, you must yield the right-of-way immediately. This allows them to respond to emergencies without delay.

- ✓ You must immediately pull over to the right side of the road and come to a complete stop for an approaching emergency vehicle with active lights or sirens.
- ✓ You must remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has completely passed.
- ✓ After the emergency vehicle passes, you should signal and re-enter traffic when it is safe to do so.

4.8 Yielding to Public Transit Buses

Drivers must be courteous and yield to public transit vehicles. When a transit bus has signaled and is attempting to pull back into the roadway from a stop, drivers traveling in the same direction are required to yield the right-of-way.

- ✓ You must yield to any transit vehicle that has signaled and is pulling back onto the roadway.
- ✓ This rule applies to transit vehicles traveling in the same direction as you.

4.9 Identifying and Passing Slow-Moving Vehicles

Agricultural and farm vehicles often travel at speeds of 25 mph or less. These vehicles are identified by a reflective orange and red triangle emblem on the back. When you encounter one, slow down and only pass when it is safe, providing ample space.

- ✓ A slow-moving vehicle is marked with a triangular sign on the back.
- ✓ When passing an agricultural vehicle, you must provide at least 3 feet of space between it and your vehicle.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5: Rules of the road 1

5.1 Responding to Inoperative Traffic Signals

When a traffic signal is not working due to a power outage or malfunction, drivers must treat the intersection as if it were a four-way stop. This is a critical safety rule to maintain order and prevent collisions when signals are out of service.

- ✓ If a traffic signal is not working, you must treat the intersection as a four-way stop.
- ✓ At a broken signal, come to a complete stop, yield to traffic on your right, and proceed cautiously only when it is safe.

5.2 Understanding Red Traffic Light Signals

Red lights and arrows are prohibitive signals requiring a complete stop. A solid red light means stop before the stop line or crosswalk. A flashing red light functions as a stop sign. A red arrow specifically prohibits movement in the direction of the arrow, even if the main traffic light is green.

- ✓ A flashing red traffic light has the same meaning as a stop sign: come to a full stop and proceed when it is your turn.
- ✓ A red arrow means you cannot go in the direction of the arrow until it turns green.
- ✓ After a complete stop at a solid red light, you may turn right if not prohibited by a sign and the way is clear.
- ✓ You may turn left on a solid red light only from a one-way street onto another one-way street, after a full stop and if not prohibited.

5.3 Navigating Yellow Traffic Light Signals

Yellow lights and arrows indicate that the signal is about to change to red. A solid yellow light means you should slow down and prepare to stop. A flashing yellow light means you should slow down and proceed with caution, yielding the right-of-way as you would at a yield sign.

- ✓ A solid yellow light is a warning that the light is changing to red; you must prepare to stop.
- ✓ If you are already in the intersection when a light turns yellow, you should continue through it at a safe speed.
- ✓ A flashing yellow light has the same meaning as a yield sign; slow down and proceed cautiously.
- ✓ A yellow arrow indicates the protected turning period is ending and you should prepare to stop.

5.4 Proceeding on Green Traffic Light Signals

A green light or arrow indicates you may proceed, but only when the way is clear. On a solid green light, you must yield to any vehicles or pedestrians already in the intersection. When turning left on a solid green light, you must yield to all oncoming traffic. A green arrow gives you a 'protected' turn, meaning you have the right-of-way.

- ✓ A solid green light means you may go, but you must first yield to any traffic and pedestrians in the intersection.
- ✓ When turning left on a solid green light, you must yield the right-of-way to all oncoming traffic.
- ✓ A green arrow gives you the right-of-way to proceed in the direction of the arrow.

5.5 Identifying Traffic Signs by Color

Washington uses standardized sign colors to convey specific types of information. Recognizing these colors helps drivers quickly understand the nature of a sign. Red is for prohibition, orange for construction warnings, yellow for general warnings, white for regulations, and green for guidance.

- ✓ Red signs indicate a prohibition or restriction, such as a Stop sign or 'Do Not Enter' sign.
- ✓ Orange signs are used for construction and maintenance warnings.
- ✓ White signs are regulatory and state the law, such as Speed Limit signs.
- ✓ Yellow signs provide general warnings about unexpected road conditions, like a 'Slippery When Wet' sign.

5.6 Right-of-Way Rules at Four-Way Stops

At an intersection with stop signs in all directions, specific rules determine who proceeds first. The first vehicle to arrive and come to a complete stop has the right-of-way. If two vehicles arrive at the same time, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on the right.

- ✓ At a four-way stop, the first vehicle to arrive and stop is the first to go.
- ✓ If two vehicles arrive at a four-way stop simultaneously, the driver on the left must yield to the driver on the right.
- ✓ Any vehicle turning left at a four-way stop must yield to vehicles going straight or turning right.

5.7 General Intersection Right-of-Way

Understanding right-of-way is essential for navigating all intersections safely. At a two-way stop, vehicles on the minor road must yield to vehicles on the through road. Critically, every intersection in Washington is legally considered a crosswalk, whether it is marked or not, requiring drivers to be prepared to yield to pedestrians.

- ✓ At a T-intersection or two-way stop, vehicles turning onto the through road must yield to vehicles already on it.
- ✓ Every intersection is legally a crosswalk, regardless of whether it is marked with painted lines.
- ✓ Before entering an intersection, you must be able to see crossing traffic and have enough space to clear the intersection without blocking it.

5.8 General Lane Rules and Driving Conduct

In Washington, drivers must adhere to fundamental rules for road positioning and movement. The standard is to drive on the right side of the road. On roads with multiple lanes going in the same direction, the right lane should be used for general travel, reserving the left lane for passing slower traffic. It is illegal and dangerous to use the road's shoulder to pass.

- ✓ Always drive on the right side of the road, except when legally and safely passing.
- ✓ On multi-lane roads, keep right except to pass, and do not exceed the speed limit when passing.
- ✓ It is illegal to drive on the shoulder of the road to pass another vehicle.
- ✓ It is illegal to back up on a shoulder or freeway.

5.9 Work Zone Rules and Penalties

Work zones, indicated by orange signs, are areas that require increased driver awareness. Motorists must yield to all highway construction personnel and their vehicles. To enhance worker safety, fines for traffic offenses are doubled when committed in a work zone where workers are present.

- ✓ You must yield the right-of-way to any highway construction personnel or vehicles inside a work zone.
- ✓ Fines for traffic violations are doubled in construction areas when workers are present.

5.10 Proper Procedures for Making Turns

State law requires specific actions when turning. Drivers must signal their intent to turn at least 100 feet before the intersection. When completing the turn, you must enter the lane closest to the one you came from. For example, a right turn should be made into the right-most lane of the new road.

- ✓ You must use your turn signal at least 100 feet before you turn.
- ✓ When turning, you must enter the lane that is closest to the lane you are coming from.
- ✓ Before making a turn, you must check for and yield to any bicyclists and pedestrians in your path.

5.11 Using a Shared Center Left-Turn Lane

A shared center lane, marked with solid and dashed yellow lines, is designed exclusively for vehicles making left turns from either direction of traffic. It is illegal to use this lane for passing other vehicles or for through travel.

- ✓ The shared center lane is reserved only for making left turns.
- ✓ You may not use the shared center left-turn lane to pass other vehicles or as a regular travel lane.

5.12 Obeying Directions from Authorized Personnel

In certain situations, directions from authorized individuals override posted signs and signals. Drivers must always obey the orders and directions given by law enforcement officers, highway construction workers (flaggers), and school crossing guards.

- ✓ You must follow the directions of law enforcement, construction personnel, and school crossing guards.
- ✓ The directions given by an authorized person overrule any traffic signals or signs at the location.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6: Rules of the road 2

6.1 How to Navigate a Roundabout Intersection

A roundabout is a circular intersection where traffic flows counterclockwise around a central island. Drivers must slow down upon approach, yield to all traffic already circulating within the roundabout, and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists at crosswalks when entering and exiting. Lane choice should be made before entering, and you must stay in your lane until you exit.

- ✓ When approaching a roundabout, you must yield to all traffic and bicyclists already inside the circle.
- ✓ Always travel in a counterclockwise direction within a roundabout.
- ✓ Slow down to the advisory speed, typically between 15 and 25 mph, when approaching and driving through a roundabout.
- ✓ You must stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks when you enter and exit the roundabout.

6.2 Right-of-Way at Uncontrolled Intersections

An uncontrolled intersection has no signs or traffic signals. Standard right-of-way rules apply. You must yield to any vehicle already in the intersection. You must also yield if you are entering a paved road from an unpaved one, entering a state highway from a secondary road, or if you are turning left and a vehicle is approaching from the opposite direction.

- ✓ At an uncontrolled intersection, you must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that is already in the intersection.
- ✓ You must yield when entering a paved road from an unpaved road.
- ✓ When planning a left turn at an uncontrolled intersection, you must yield to any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction.

6.3 Meaning of Pavement Line Colors and Types

Pavement markings guide traffic and indicate rules. Yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions. White lines separate traffic moving in the same direction. Dashed lines may be crossed if it is safe, while solid lines indicate you should stay in your lane. Double solid lines, white or yellow, are barriers that cannot be crossed.

- ✓ Yellow lines separate traffic flowing in opposite directions.
- ✓ White lines separate traffic lanes moving in the same direction.
- ✓ A dashed line means you may cross it to change lanes or pass when it is safe, while a solid line means you should stay in your lane.
- ✓ It is illegal to cross double solid white lines.

6.4 Rules for Passing Using Centerlines

The centerline markings on a two-way road dictate when it is legal to pass. You may not pass when there is a solid yellow line on your side. You may pass only when the dashed yellow line is on your side and the way is clear. Passing is prohibited from either direction when there are double solid yellow lines.

- ✓ You may not pass another vehicle if the solid yellow line is on your side of the road.
- ✓ If the centerline is a combination of a solid and a dashed yellow line, you may only pass if the dashed line is on your side and it is safe.
- ✓ You are not allowed to pass in either direction on roads marked with double solid yellow lines.

6.5 Pedestrian Right-of-Way at Crosswalks

Drivers must always yield to pedestrians who are in or about to enter a crosswalk. In Washington, every intersection is legally considered a crosswalk, even if there are no painted lines on the road. Be especially alert for pedestrians when turning at intersections.

- ✓ You must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian in or about to enter a crosswalk.
- ✓ Every intersection is legally defined as a crosswalk, regardless of whether it is marked with painted lines.
- ✓ You must yield to pedestrians when the in-pavement crosswalk lights are flashing.

6.6 Sharing the Road with Bicycles

Washington has several markings to facilitate sharing the road with bicyclists. Sharrows indicate a shared lane where cyclists are expected to ride. A bicycle box is a painted area at an intersection that allows cyclists to position themselves ahead of cars. Drivers must not enter the bike box and cannot turn right on red at these intersections.

- ✓ When you see sharrow pavement markings, be prepared to share the lane with bicyclists and allow at least 3 feet of space when passing.
- ✓ A bicycle box at an intersection is for cyclists to wait in front of vehicles; drivers must stop behind the white stop line.
- ✓ You are not permitted to make a right turn on a red light at an intersection that has a bicycle box.

6.7 School Zone Speed and Safety Rules

A school zone is the area around a school, marked by signs and sometimes flashing lights. The speed limit in a school zone is 20 mph. This speed limit can be in effect at various times, not just during school hours, due to after-school activities. Drivers must slow down and be vigilant for children.

- ✓ The speed limit in a school zone in Washington is 20 mph unless signs indicate otherwise.
- ✓ You must obey the school zone speed limit when it is in effect, regardless of whether you see children present.

6.8 Understanding Diverging Diamond Interchanges

A diverging diamond interchange (DDI) is a specific intersection design that allows for more efficient left turns, typically onto a freeway. In a DDI, traffic is temporarily guided to the left side of the road, which eliminates the need to turn against oncoming traffic. Drivers should follow all signs, signals, and pavement markings carefully through the interchange.

- ✓ In a diverging diamond interchange, traffic temporarily crosses over to the left side of the roadway.
- ✓ The design of a DDI allows drivers to make left turns onto a freeway without stopping or yielding to oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Drivers must pay close attention to signs and pavement markings to navigate the lane shifts correctly.

6.9 Using a Shared Center Turn Lane

A shared center lane, marked with solid and dashed yellow lines and left-turn arrows, is reserved for vehicles making left turns from or into the roadway. It is not for passing. You should not travel more than 300 feet in this lane before making your turn.

- ✓ A shared center lane is reserved exclusively for making left turns from or into the roadway.
- ✓ You must not use a shared center turn lane for passing other vehicles.
- ✓ You should not travel farther than 300 feet within a shared center turn lane.

6.10 Rules for Special Use and Reversible Lanes

HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes are marked with a diamond symbol and reserved for carpools, buses, and motorcycles. Reversible lanes change direction to manage traffic flow and are controlled by overhead signals. A green arrow means the lane is open, a red X means it is closed, and a yellow X means you must exit the lane safely.

- ✓ HOV lanes are identified by a diamond symbol on signs and pavement.
- ✓ On a reversible lane, a green arrow indicates you can use the lane, while a red X means you cannot.
- ✓ A steady yellow X on an overhead signal for a reversible lane means the lane is about to change direction and you must move out of it.

6.11 Driving Safely in Work and Emergency Zones

A work zone is an area with road construction, while an emergency zone is a temporary area for a crash or other incident. In these zones, you must slow down, increase your following distance, eliminate distractions, and be prepared to stop. Move over when possible to give space to workers and vehicles.

- ✓ When approaching a work zone, you must reduce your speed and increase your following distance, even if workers are not visible.
- ✓ You must follow the instructions on work zone signs until you see a sign indicating that you have left the work zone.
- ✓ When possible, you should move over a lane to provide more space for roadside workers, construction vehicles, or emergency vehicles.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7: Rules of the road 3

7.1 Responding to Emergency Zones on Washington Roads

When you see a roadside response vehicle (like a police car, tow truck, or ambulance) with its lights flashing, you are entering an emergency zone. You must take specific actions to ensure the safety of the workers. This involves either moving over a lane or significantly reducing your speed.

- ✓ If you see a roadside response vehicle with flashing lights, you must move over into a farther lane if possible.
- ✓ If you cannot move over, you must slow down to at least 10 mph below the posted speed limit.
- ✓ You must never drive faster than 50 mph in an emergency zone, regardless of the posted speed limit.

7.2 Prohibited Parking Locations and Required Distances

In Washington, it is illegal to park in many specific locations to ensure safety and traffic flow. You must know the minimum legal distances you must maintain from objects like fire hydrants, stop signs, and driveways.

- ✓ Do not park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- ✓ Do not park within 30 feet of a traffic signal, stop sign, or yield sign.
- ✓ Your vehicle must be parked no more than 12 inches from the curb.
- ✓ Do not park within 5 feet of a driveway, alley, or private road.

7.3 Correctly Parking on a Hill in Washington

When parking on a hill, you must turn your wheels in a specific direction as a safety measure in case your parking brake fails. The direction depends on whether you are facing uphill or downhill, and whether there is a curb.

- ✓ When parking uphill against a curb, turn your front wheels away from the curb.
- ✓ When parking downhill against a curb, turn your front wheels toward the curb.
- ✓ If there is no curb, turn your front wheels toward the edge of the road, regardless of whether you are facing uphill or downhill.

7.4 Laws on Unattended Children and Animals in Vehicles

Washington has strict laws against leaving children or animals unattended in a parked vehicle, as it can be extremely dangerous. The rules vary based on the child's age and whether the vehicle's motor is running.

- ✓ It is a crime to leave a child under the age of 16 unattended in a parked vehicle with the motor running.
- ✓ It is illegal to leave an animal unattended in a vehicle if it could be harmed by excessive heat, cold, or lack of ventilation.
- ✓ It is a crime to leave a child under the age of 12 unattended in a parked vehicle, even if the engine is off.

7.5 Safe Parking Practices and Curb Markings

Beyond just placing your car, safe parking involves being aware of your surroundings. Washington's manual highlights the 'Dutch Reach' method for opening your door to prevent collisions with bicyclists. Curb colors also indicate specific parking restrictions.

- ✓ Use the 'Dutch Reach'—opening the door with your hand farthest from it—to force your body to turn and see approaching bicyclists or vehicles.
- ✓ A white painted curb indicates that only short stops are permitted.
- ✓ A yellow or red painted curb indicates a loading zone or some other restriction.

7.6 Specialized Parking Rules for Disabled and EV Spaces

Certain parking stalls are reserved for specific uses. It is illegal to park in a disabled parking spot without a proper placard or plate, or to block the adjacent access aisle. Similarly, electric vehicle charging stations have specific use requirements.

- ✓ You may not park in or block the striped access aisle next to a reserved disabled parking space.
- ✓ It is illegal to park in an electric vehicle charging station unless your vehicle is connected to the charging equipment.
- ✓ You must not hang a disabled parking placard from your rearview mirror while driving.

7.7 Requirement to Secure All Vehicle Loads

Driving with an unsecured load is illegal and dangerous in Washington. Any items in or on your vehicle or trailer must be properly secured to prevent them from falling onto the road and causing a hazard or a crash.

- ✓ All loads must be tied down with rope, netting, or straps to prevent items from falling or shifting.
- ✓ Large objects should be tied directly to the vehicle or trailer.
- ✓ Driving with an unsecured load is against the law.

7.8 Laws for Safely Transporting Animals in Vehicles

Washington has specific laws to ensure the safety of animals during transport and to prevent them from becoming a distraction to the driver or a hazard to the public.

- ✓ It is illegal to transport an animal in the open bed of a truck unless it is secured with a protective harness or enclosure.
- ✓ An animal that is loose in a vehicle or riding on the driver's lap is a potential distraction that can take your focus off safely driving.

7.9 Special Driving Rules for Washington's Ocean Beaches

In certain Washington counties (Grays Harbor and Pacific), ocean beaches are designated as state highways, and all traffic laws apply. This includes a specific speed limit and rules about right-of-way for pedestrians.

- ✓ The speed limit on an ocean beach where driving is permitted is 25 mph.
- ✓ Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right-of-way at all times on the beach.
- ✓ You may only enter the beach with your vehicle through marked beach approaches.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter 8: Risks 1

8.1 The Dangers and Consequences of Speeding

Driving over the posted speed limit significantly increases risk. Excessive speed reduces your ability to scan for and react to hazards, lengthens your vehicle's stopping distance, and can make it harder to maintain control, especially in poor weather. In the event of a crash, higher speeds dramatically increase the severity of injuries and can reduce the effectiveness of safety equipment like seat belts.

- ✓ Speeding increases the force of impact in a crash, leading to more severe injuries or fatalities.
- ✓ Driving at excessive speeds reduces the effectiveness of seat belts and lengthens the distance required to stop your vehicle.

8.2 Adjusting Speed for Current Road Conditions

The posted speed limit is the maximum legal speed under ideal conditions. Washington law requires you to drive at a speed that is safe for the current conditions, which often means driving slower than the posted limit. You are responsible for reducing your speed in situations like sharp curves, slippery roads, areas with pedestrians or cyclists, and heavy traffic.

- ✓ You must drive at a speed that is safe for current road, weather, and traffic conditions, which may be lower than the posted speed limit.
- ✓ It is illegal to drive faster than the posted speed limit, but you can be cited for driving too fast for conditions even if you are below the limit.

8.3 Right-of-Way Rules for Merging onto Highways

When merging onto an interstate or highway, you must yield to traffic that is already on the main road. It is the merging driver's responsibility to adjust their speed, use the entire on-ramp, signal their intention, and find a safe gap in traffic. Attempting to merge into a space that is too small is dangerous and can cause other drivers to brake suddenly or swerve.

- ✓ Drivers already on the interstate have the right-of-way over drivers entering from an on-ramp.
- ✓ When merging, you must adjust your speed to match the flow of traffic and wait for a safe space before entering the lane.

8.4 Yielding Right-of-Way When Turning

When you intend to turn across the path of other vehicles, you must yield the right-of-way. Oncoming traffic that is proceeding straight has the right-of-way over a driver who is turning. It is the turning driver's responsibility to accurately judge the speed and distance of approaching vehicles to ensure they have enough time to complete the turn safely without forcing others to slow down or stop.

- ✓ Approaching traffic always has the right-of-way over a driver who is preparing to turn across their lane.
- ✓ You must not begin your turn until it is safe to do so and you can clear the intersection without impeding oncoming traffic.

8.5 Identifying and Responding to Road Hazards

Hazard perception is a critical driving skill involving the ability to scan the road, identify potential risks, and react appropriately before they become dangerous. A hazard is defined as anything that requires you to change your speed or direction. This can range from a child running into the street to a stationary object like a trash can. Drivers must constantly scan their surroundings—front, sides, and rear—to maintain situational awareness and manage multiple hazards by prioritizing the most urgent one.

- ✓ A hazard is any road condition or user that requires you to change your speed or direction.
- ✓ When approaching a hazard, you should slow down to give yourself more time and space to make a safe decision.
- ✓ You must continually scan your surroundings, including using your mirrors to know what is happening behind you, to be aware of potential hazards.

8.6 Common Factors in Washington Fatal Crashes

Understanding the primary causes of fatal crashes is essential for defensive driving. In Washington, the most common contributing factors are speed, impairment, distractions, and occupants not wearing seat belts. Drivers aged 16 to 25 are particularly at risk, as vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for this age group in the state. Recognizing these risks helps drivers make safer choices.

- ✓ The most common factors in fatal crashes are speed, impairment, distractions, and unrestrained occupants.
- ✓ In Washington, vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for people between the ages of 16 and 25.

8.7 Using the Zipper Merge Technique

In slow or stopped traffic caused by a lane closure, Washington drivers should use the zipper merge technique. This involves using both lanes up to the designated merge point and then taking turns to merge into the open lane, like the teeth of a zipper. This method is proven to improve traffic flow and reduce collisions caused by sudden lane changes.

- ✓ When a lane is closed ahead, continue to use both lanes of traffic until you reach the merge area.
- ✓ At the merge point, drivers in each lane should take turns merging one-by-one into the open lane.

CHAPTER 9

Chapter 9: Risks 2

9.1 Rules and Techniques for Safe Night Driving

Driving at night is more hazardous due to significantly reduced visibility. Drivers must adjust their speed to be able to stop within the distance illuminated by their headlights. It is crucial to use headlights correctly to see and be seen, and to know how to react to the headlights of other vehicles to avoid being blinded.

- ✓ Use your high beams whenever there are no oncoming vehicles, but switch to low beams when approaching another vehicle or when following one.
- ✓ If an oncoming vehicle has its high beams on, look away towards the right side of the road to avoid being temporarily blinded.
- ✓ You must drive at a speed that allows you to stop within the distance you can see ahead in your headlights.
- ✓ Increase your following distance when driving at night or on unfamiliar roads.

9.2 Adjusting Driving for Slippery Road Conditions

Washington weather often creates slippery roads from rain, snow, and ice, which reduces tire friction and increases stopping distances. Drivers must reduce speed and increase following distance. Be especially cautious on bridges, overpasses, and in shady spots, which can be icy even when other roads are not. Black ice is a particularly dangerous, nearly invisible hazard.

- ✓ On a hot day, pavement is most slippery for the first few minutes of rain because heat brings oil to the surface.
- ✓ Bridges, overpasses, and shady spots can have ice on them even when the rest of the road is clear.
- ✓ When driving on snow or ice, you must reduce your speed dramatically and increase your following distance.
- ✓ Black ice is a thin coating of ice that is very difficult to see, requiring extreme caution in near-freezing temperatures.

9.3 Maintaining Focus and Avoiding Driving Distractions

Safe driving in Washington requires a driver's full mental and visual attention. The driver's manual emphasizes that the brain can only focus on one thing at a time. Distractions, even for a few seconds, can lead to devastating consequences. Drivers should be mentally present, anticipate hazards by scanning, and proactively adjust to conditions. This involves eliminating both internal and external distractions before starting to drive.

- ✓ Commit to being fully engaged and focused on driving by turning off distractions like your phone and in-car entertainment systems.
- ✓ Your full attention is the most valuable asset on the road; you must align your mental attention with your visual focus.
- ✓ Anticipate hazards by constantly scanning the road ahead and maintaining awareness of your surroundings.

9.4 Proper Technique for Driving Through Curves

Safely navigating a curve requires managing speed and vehicle position to counteract physical forces like inertia. The correct procedure involves slowing down before the curve, maintaining a steady speed through it, and accelerating gently as you exit. This technique helps maintain traction and control.

- ✓ You must reduce your speed *before* entering a curve, not while you are in it.
- ✓ Position your vehicle slightly to the outside of the lane as you approach the curve to improve your visibility and create more room to maneuver.
- ✓ Avoid sudden braking or accelerating while in the middle of a curve, as this can disrupt the vehicle's balance and lead to a loss of control.

9.5 How to Correctly Respond to a Skidding Vehicle

A skid occurs when your tires lose their grip on the road. To regain control, you must react calmly and correctly. The primary actions are to take your foot off the accelerator and steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go. Your use of the brakes depends on whether you have an antilock braking system (ABS).

- ✓ If your vehicle begins to skid, take your foot off the accelerator immediately.
- ✓ Steer in the same direction your vehicle is moving to regain traction.
- ✓ If you have antilock brakes (ABS), press the brake pedal firmly; if you do not have ABS, you may need to pump the brakes gently to avoid locking the wheels.

9.6 Understanding and Reacting to Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs on wet roads when a layer of water builds up between the tires and the road surface, causing a loss of traction and control. The vehicle can feel like it's floating. The best way to prevent hydroplaning is to slow down on wet roads. If it happens, you must ease off the accelerator and steer straight until traction is regained.

- ✓ The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down when the road is wet.
- ✓ If you start to hydroplane, take your foot off the accelerator and avoid making sudden turns or braking hard.
- ✓ Keep the steering wheel steady and look in the direction you want to go until your tires regain contact with the road surface.

9.7 The Effect of Speed on Your Field of Vision

Drivers use three types of vision: central (for detail directly ahead), fringe (for the edges of your central view), and peripheral (what you see to the sides). As your speed increases, the quality of all three types of vision is reduced, effectively narrowing your field of view and making it much harder to spot hazards from the side.

- ✓ Higher speeds reduce the quality and scope of your central, fringe, and peripheral vision.
- ✓ To see potential hazards clearly, especially those at the sides of the road, you may need to reduce your speed.

CHAPTER 10

Chapter 10: Risks 3

10.1 Immediate Actions Required at a Collision Scene

Washington law requires any driver involved in a collision to stop at the scene. Leaving is a serious offense. Your duties include checking for injuries, moving vehicles out of traffic lanes if possible, and warning oncoming traffic. If you hit an unattended parked vehicle, you have a legal obligation to find the owner or leave a note with your contact and collision details.

- ✓ You must not drive away from a collision scene; doing so is illegal.
- ✓ If you are involved in a collision, you should move your vehicle to the side of the road if possible to avoid blocking traffic.
- ✓ If you hit a parked vehicle and cannot find the owner, you must leave a note with your contact information, and the date and time of the collision.

10.2 Collision Reporting Requirements in Washington State

After a collision, drivers must exchange information, including name, contact details, driver license number, and insurance policy information. State law also mandates that a collision report form be filed with the Department of Licensing (DOL) within four days if a law enforcement officer does not file one at the scene. This is a legal requirement.

- ✓ You are required to file a collision report form with the DOL within 4 days of a crash if a law enforcement officer does not do it for you.
- ✓ Following a collision, you must exchange your name, contact information, driver license number, and insurance company/policy number with others involved.
- ✓ Do not move injured people after a crash unless they are in a burning vehicle or other immediate danger.

10.3 Safety Procedures for Collisions Involving Power Lines

Collisions involving power lines present a unique and severe electrocution risk. If power lines fall on your vehicle, the safest action is to stay inside, call 911, and wait for emergency responders. The ground around the vehicle may be energized. If you must evacuate due to a fire, you must jump completely clear of the vehicle, landing with both feet together, and then shuffle away to safety.

- ✓ If power lines fall on your vehicle, you must stay inside the vehicle and call 911 for help.
- ✓ Warn people to stay at least 35 feet away from a vehicle that is in contact with a power line, as the ground may be energized.
- ✓ If you must exit a vehicle touching a power line because of a fire, jump clear with both feet landing together and shuffle at least 35 feet away.

10.4 Responding to Common Vehicle Failures on the Road

If your vehicle experiences a mechanical failure while driving, your first priority is to get it safely off the road and away from traffic. It is crucial to make your vehicle visible to others by using emergency flashers and, if available, placing flares 200-300 feet behind your vehicle. Specific failures require distinct responses: for a tire blowout, you must avoid hard braking; for a stuck accelerator, shift to neutral immediately.

- ✓ If a tire blows out, grip the steering wheel firmly, take your foot off the accelerator to slow down gradually, and do not brake hard.
- ✓ If your accelerator pedal sticks, you should quickly shift the vehicle into neutral and then pull off the road when safe.
- ✓ To signal an emergency breakdown, turn on your emergency flashers, lift the hood, or tie a white cloth to the antenna or door handle.

10.5 Proper Procedure During a Law Enforcement Traffic Stop

When being pulled over by law enforcement, you must signal and pull over to the right side of the road as soon as it is safe. For the safety of both you and the officer, turn off your engine, turn on your interior light at night, and keep your hands on the steering wheel. Do not reach for your documents until the officer instructs you to do so.

- ✓ When an officer pulls you over, you should keep your hands on the steering wheel until the officer gives you other instructions.
- ✓ Wait for the officer to ask for your documents before reaching for your driver license, proof of insurance, or vehicle registration.
- ✓ If you are pulled over at night, you should turn on your vehicle's interior lights.

10.6 Legal Responsibilities When Receiving a Traffic Ticket

In Washington, if you are issued a traffic ticket, you are required to sign it. This signature is not an admission of guilt but an acknowledgment that you received the ticket and promise to respond. Refusing to sign can result in your arrest. You must follow the instructions on the ticket within 15 days to prevent the suspension of your driving privileges.

- ✓ You are required to sign a traffic ticket when it is issued to you; refusing to sign may lead to your arrest.
- ✓ You must respond to the instructions on a traffic ticket within 15 days to avoid having your driving privileges suspended.
- ✓ Signing a traffic ticket is an acknowledgment of receipt, not an admission of guilt.