

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Sharing the Road

A User's Manual for Public Ways

Most public ways, including urban streets, country lanes, main roads, secondary roads, and suburban or rural roads, are meant to be shared by all of us. "Us" includes pedestrians, persons riding on bicycles or motorcycles, persons riding in passenger vehicles or buses, and persons operating commercial motor vehicles or trailers, or combinations of those vehicles. Some ways, such as Interstate highways and expressways, are designed exclusively for use by motor vehicles and trailers traveling at high speeds. Other public ways are specifically designed for slower speeds or for travel by lighter vehicles and may restrict or prohibit certain vehicles. Public ways come in various lengths and widths with various features: one-way, two-way, multiple lanes, High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (HOV), center dividers, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and hard or soft shoulders. However the public way is laid out, it is meant to be used by people and the various types of vehicles that may propel them along if they are not on foot.

Although the bulk of this Manual provides information about the use of public ways for motor vehicles and trailers, the goal of the RMV in producing it is to make all users of public ways aware that our public streets and roads are meant to be shared except where the law provides for limited uses.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Obtaining Your License	1
License Descriptions and Classifications	2
Who Needs a Massachusetts License?	2
Who is Eligible for a Massachusetts License?	3
License Classes	5
Endorsements	6
Restrictions	6
Massachusetts IDs and Liquor IDs	8
Massachusetts ID	8
Massachusetts Liquor ID	8
Identification Requirements	9
Document Requirements Chart	10
Acceptable Forms of Identification	12
Social Security Numbers and License Numbers	15
Rejected Documents and Rejected Applications	16
Penalties for Presenting Fraudulent Documents	18
License/ID Fees	18
Junior Operator License Law	19
Requirements to Obtain a JOL	20
JOL License Restrictions	20
Applying for a License	21
Getting a Learner's Permit	22
Driving With Your Permit	23
Taking the Road Test	25
Receiving Your New License	31
Converting Your License	32
Out-of-State Conversions	32
Junior Operator License Conversion	33
Permit Conversion	34
Conversions from a U.S. Territory, Canada, or Mexico	34
Other Foreign Licenses	35
Renewing Your License	35
SSN Verification on Renewal	36
Driving Record Check on Renewal	36
Other Reasons for Non-Renewal	36
Renewals for Military Personnel	37
Replacing Your License	37
Duplicate License	37
Temporary Replacements	37
Replacements for Military Personnel	37
Surrendering Your License	38
Renewing Your Massachusetts Identification Card	38
Change of Address or Name	39
Voter Registration	39
Organ and Tissue Donor Program	40
Chapter 2 Keeping Your License	41
Motor Vehicle Violations and Penalties	42
Civil Motor Vehicle Infractions	42
Criminal Violations	43
Out-of-State Violations	44
At-Fault Accidents	44
Surchargeable Events	44

Driver Retraining Course	45
Driving Records	45
License Suspension or Revocation	46
Reasons for License Suspension	46
When Your License Is Suspended or Revoked	50
Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving	51
Alcohol	52
Ignition Interlock Devices	54
Buying, Possessing, or Transporting Alcohol	56
False or Altered Licenses/Identification Cards	56
Illegal Drugs, Medicine, and Other Controlled Substances	56
Reasons for License Nonrenewal	57
Chapter 3 Safety First	59
Passenger Vehicle Safety	60
Safety Belt Law	60
How Safety Belts Work	62
Myths About Safety Belts	62
Air-Bag Safety	63
Inside the Vehicle	64
Driving Defensively	64
Your Health and Physical Condition	65
Checking Your Vehicle's Condition	65
Safe Distances Around Your Car	66
Braking and Stopping	67
Using Your Horn, Headlights, and Emergency Signals	68
Night Driving	68
Driving in Rain or Fog	69
Winter Driving	70
Pedestrians	71
Bicycles and Mopeds	71
Motorcycles	72
Motorcycle Safety	73
Riding Gear	73
Carrying a Passenger	74
Rider Training	74
Moped Safety	74
Motorized Scooter Safety	75
Chapter 4 Rules of the Road	77
Speed Limits	78
Traffic Signals	79
Motor Vehicle Signals	79
Pedestrian Signals	80
Traffic Signs	81
Stop and Yield Signs	84
Regulatory Signs	84
Warning Signs	84
Guide Signs	84
Construction and Maintenance Road Work Warnings	84
Railroad Crossings	85
Pavement Markings	85
White Lane Lines	85
Yellow Lane Lines	86
Words and Symbols	87
Stop Lines and Crosswalks	87

Lanes, Intersections, and Turns	87
Signaling	87
Using Lanes	88
Highway Driving	89
Intersections	90
Turns	91
Right-of-Way Rules	93
Rules for Passing	95
Road Respect/Sharing the Road	96
Parking	100
Parking Regulations	101
Miscellaneous Rules of the Road	102
Rules for Pedestrians	102
Rules for Bicyclists	103
Chapter 5 Special Driving Situations	105
Your Health and Physical Condition	106
Checking Your Vehicle's Condition	106
Moving Emergency Vehicle	107
Stationary Emergency Vehicle	107
If You are Stopped by a Police Officer	108
Driving Emergencies	110
Traffic Accidents	112
If You Are Involved in an Accident	112
If You Witness an Accident	113
Reporting an Accident	114
Chapter 6 Owning a Vehicle	115
Vehicle Registration	116
New Registrations	116
Registration Renewal	117
Duplicate Registration	118
Canceling a Registration	119
Transferring a Registration to a Newly Acquired Vehicle	119
Registration Policies for New Residents	120
Mopeds and Motorized Scooters	122
Special Design Plates	122
Disability Plates and Placards	124
Eligibility Standards	125
Applying for Plates and Placards	125
Vehicle Inspections	126
Lemon Aid Law	127
Titles	127
Basic Title Transactions	128
When You Sell a Vehicle	134
Insurance and Merit Rating	134
Private Passenger Automobile Insurance and Your Driving Record	134
Merit Rating Plans	134
Safe Driver Insurance Plan	135
The Merit Rating Board	135
Contact Information	136
Appendices	137
A. Parties to the 1949 Road Traffic Convention and the 1943 Inter-American Automotive Traffic Convention	139
B. Sample Permit Knowledge Tests	142
C. RMV Customer Services	144

D. RMV Full Service/Limited Service Branches145
E. RMV License and Identification Cards147
F. Street Signs148
G. RMV Special Registration Plates149

This document is published by the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. While it contains a great deal of information about RMV policies and state laws, it is important to note that this is not a legal document. Every effort is made to present the most accurate, error free, and up-to-date information. However, RMV policies and fees change from time to time, as do laws governing motor vehicles.

The RMV will make every effort to post information about changes to the fees, policies, procedures or laws referenced in this Driver's Manual that may affect your ability to obtain a Learner's Permit, Driver's License or Identification Card. Relevant changes will be posted on the RMV's website at www.mass.gov/rmv. If you do not have access to a computer, you may call the RMV's Phone Center at 617-351-4500 (from the 339/617/781/857 area codes) or 800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes).

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has changed a great deal since its inception in 1903. There are now nearly five million licensed drivers in our state. And today, more than ever, the Agency is committed to increasing efficiency and improving customer satisfaction through technology and innovative initiatives.

Enhanced computer technology continues to strongly impact customer service. Through the RMV's website (www.mass.gov/rmv), you can conduct such transactions as renewing a registration, renewing a license or Massachusetts Identification Card, ordering a special plate, paying a traffic citation, ordering a duplicate license/ID, changing your address, or verifying the issuance of a driver's education certificate. You can also download forms, view this *Driver's Manual*, and learn the latest "rules of the road." Over the Internet, the RMV also invites you to ask questions and offer suggestions for improving RMV services.

To encourage you to avoid unnecessary trips to one of the RMV's branches, the Agency wants you to process some transactions over the phone: you can replace a lost license, pay a citation, order a driving record, schedule a road test, and renew a registration. By mail, you can conduct some title and registration transactions. Through the Electronic Vehicle Registration program, participating automobile dealers and insurance agents can issue new plates and perform registration transactions and renewals.

The RMV will continue to explore other ways to improve its relationship with you.

How to Use This Manual

For *new drivers*, this booklet is a useful tool for understanding the licensing process and for studying the rules of the road. For *experienced drivers*, this booklet offers more than the procedure for obtaining a learner's permit. It provides valuable information on RMV policies, changes to driving laws, and safe driving tips. Keep this manual in your vehicle and refer to it whenever you have a question.



