



Driver Certification & Safety Manual



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DRIVER CERTIFICATION FOR VAN DRIVERS

Following are the criteria for new van driver certification as prescribed by the Transportation Committee.

Items to check:

1. Engine:
 - a. Radiator – Check reservoir to see if coolant is adequate.
 - b. Oil – Show oil measuring stick & how to check the level.
 - c. Transmission fluid – Measuring dip stick.....check with engine running.
 - d. Windshield Wiper Operation
 - e. Battery – Connections tight.....no corrosion.
2. Lights:
 - a. Includes HEAD, TAIL, BRAKE, SIGNAL; make sure tail/brake and signal lights are functioning properly.
3. Tires:
 - a. Tire pressure for van should be 65 psi. for rear tires and 55 psi for the front tires. Check tires for wear. Uneven wear indicates tires are out of alignment or tire pressure is not correct.
4. Mirrors:
 - a. Mirrors should be adjusted to where the driver has a full view of road or vehicles behind the van. Mirrors should be adjusted outward from the van enough to be able to see a vehicle in the “blind spot” for safety in switching lanes.

DRIVING TEST REQUIREMENTS

Neighborhood Driving:

Have individuals drive the van around the neighborhood on streets where cars are parked and narrow streets with tight turns. Driver needs to be aware of the length of the van which is taken into consideration in tight turns to prevent rear wheels from hitting the curb. Check rear wheel location in rear view mirror when making tight turns.

Beltline Driving:

Beltline driving is designed for driver to get a feel for the wind effects on a vehicle that is top heavy. Beltline driving would allow a driver to use side mirrors to switch

lanes. Observe the driver's use of the acceleration lane to build up enough speed to safely blend into the major traffic lane.

Braking:

Proper braking is critical for assuring a safe driving technique. For example, although equipped with good brakes, the distance required to stop a van is much further than it would be for a conventional automobile. This is particularly true if the van is loaded with people or equipment. Quick jerky maneuvers at high speeds may result in the van turning over.

Consider This:

- How does driving terrain affect how you use the brakes?
 - Level ground braking?
 - Hilly road braking?
 - Curvy mountain roads?
 - Steep mountain road braking?
- What would you do if you had a sudden blowout on one of the tires?

Responsibility of Driving

Driving a vehicle is a very serious responsibility because the fate of your passengers or other drivers depends very heavily on your driving skills and conduct behind the wheel. The tips shown below should help to fulfill your responsibility as a driver.

Tips for Managing Distractions:

- Recognize driving requires your full attention. If you feel you are wandering, remind yourself to stay focused on the road.
- Avoid talking on the phone when you are driving.
- If using a phone is unavoidable, use it at a safe time and place, keep the conversation short and postpone emotional or complex conversations until you are off the road.

- Avoid taking calls while you are driving. Let the voice mailbox function on your mobile phone capture calls while you're driving and return calls when stopped at a safe location.
- When you are behind the wheel, familiarize yourself with the features of your vehicle's equipment.
- Preset radio stations and climate control.
- Secure items that may move around when the car is in motion.
- Avoid smoking, eating, drinking and reading the map.
- Pull safely off the road and out of traffic to deal with children.
- Do your personal grooming at home – not in the van!
- Review maps and be familiar with the route of travel before embarking on a trip.
- Be courteous at all times (See page 16 for more on this subject).

Ten Most Common Driving Mistakes:

- Failure to pay attention - - "zoning out".
- Driving while drowsy.
- Becoming distracted inside the car (radio, cell phone, children, etc).
- Failure to adjust to adverse weather conditions.
- Driving aggressively (tail gating, running red lights and stop signs, etc).
- Speed
- Making assumptions about other driver's intentions.
- Changing lanes without checking blind spots and mirrors.
- Driving while being upset.
- Ignoring essential auto maintenance (brakes, lights, bald tires, etc)

Safety Fact:

The single biggest contributor to collisions is failing to see what is happening. To be a safe driver, you must remain aware of your surroundings at all times. You should look ahead on the road but also to the sides and behind your car, staying alert for unexpected events. Adjust to changes in the weather, traffic flow, action of other drivers, speed limit, road signs, traffic signals, and your car's performance and maintenance needs among other things. Safe drivers obey the rules of safety for everyone's sake.

Driving in the Rain

Skidding and Hydroplaning In Rainy Conditions

Losing control of your car on wet pavement is a frightening experience. You can prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves. Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow, do not brake hard or lock the wheels and risk a skid. Maintain mild pressure on the brake pedal.

If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the car to go. For cars without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as "steering into the skid", will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. If your car has ABS, brake firmly as you steer into the skid.

While skids on wet pavement may be frightening, hydroplaning is completely nerve-wrecking. Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of your tires builds up faster than the car's weight can push it out of the way. The water pressure causes your car to rise up and slide on a thin layer of water between your tires and the road. At this point, your car can be completely out of contact with the road, and you are in danger of skidding or drifting out of your lane, or even off the road.

To avoid hydroplaning, keep your tires properly inflated, maintain good tread on your tires and replace them when necessary, slow down when roads are wet, and stay away from puddles. Try to drive in the tire tracks left by the cars in front of you.

If you find yourself hydroplaning, do not brake or turn suddenly. This could throw your car into a skid. Ease your foot off the gas until the car slows and you can feel the road again. If you need to brake, do it gently with light pumping actions. If your car has anti-lock brakes, then brake normally: the car's computer will mimic the pumping action, when necessary.

A defensive driver adjusts his or her speed to the wet road conditions in time to avoid having to use any of these measures.

Safety Fact:

The deadliest months for drivers are July and August. Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the deadliest days on the road

DRIVING IN FOG

Fog can be thought of as a cloud at ground level. It forms when the temperature drops to the dew point (the temperature at which the air is saturated), and invisible water vapor in the air condenses to form suspended water droplets. Fog can reduce visibility $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less, creating hazardous driving conditions. If you don't postpone your trip until dense fog lifts - - usually by late morning or the afternoon - - follow these tips:

- Drive with lights on low beam. High beam will only be reflected back off the fog and actually impair visibility even more.
- Reduce speed - - and watch you speedometer. Fog creates a visual illusion of slow motion when you may actually be speeding.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see. Open your window a little, to hear better.
- Use wipers and defrosters as necessary for maximum visibility.
- Use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide.
- Be patient. Do not pass lines of traffic.
- Do not stop on a freeway or heavily traveled road. If your car stalls or becomes disabled, turn your vehicle's lights off, and take your foot off the brake pedal. People tend to follow tail lights when driving in fog. Move away from the vehicle to avoid injury.

Source: National Weather Service. Wisconsin Department of Transportation.



Safety Fact: Motor vehicle deaths are the no.1 cause of death of children, and child motor vehicle deaths are highest during the summer months.

DRIVING IN SNOW AND ICE

The best advice for driving in bad weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination.

If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared to make the trip (enough gas, good battery, good tires, windshield wipers operating properly, etc), and you know how to handle the car. It's helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot, so you're familiar with how your car handles. Consult your owner's manual for tips specific to your vehicle.

Driving on icy roads;

- Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the other car in front of you.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock, ease off on the brakes.
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- Keep your lights and windshield clean.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
- Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and frequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
- Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.
- Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

If your rear wheels skid:

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
- If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
- If your vehicle has standard brakes, pump them gently.
- If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse - - this is normal.

If your front wheels skid:

- Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
- As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

If you get stuck.

- Do not spin your wheels.
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push the snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
- Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels to help get traction.
- Try rocking the vehicle. Shift from forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.

THE CELLULAR PHONE EXPLOSION

We have all seen drivers talking on a cellular phone while driving. In fact, the number of cellular phones sold in the United States in 1995 was higher than the national birth rate for the same period!

There are numerous benefits to cellular phone use. Two-thirds of new cellular phone owners listed their main reason for purchasing a cellular phone as a security measure. Nearly half of all cellular phone owners have used their car phones to report car trouble, medical emergencies, crimes and drunk or reckless drivers.

Please remember that 911 is for emergencies only.

Dialing 911 is a free call for cellular subscribers. Police and EMS officials say that in many cases response times have been cut, criminals have been apprehended and lives have been saved due to calls from cellular phone users. But is it possible to drive safely while talking on the phone?

DRIVER STUDIES

While the following studies are beginning to help shed some light on the issue of cellular phone use in motor vehicles, it must be remembered that this is still a new area of concern. The fact that these studies focus on different populations of drivers and use differing research methodologies may lead to conflicting conclusions and may limit the comparability of the findings.

National Public Services Research Institute for AAA

A study done by the National Public Services Research Institute for AAA in 1991, "**The Effect of Cellular Phone Use Upon Driver Attention**", used a driving simulator to test reaction responses while tuning a car radio, having a simple conversation on a cellular phone, dialing a cellular phone and having a complex conversation on a cellular phone. **The conclusions were:**

1. All forms of cellular phone usage lead to significant increases in response times or non-response to highway traffic situations.
2. Intense or complex conversation leads to the greatest increases in overlooking significant highway traffic conditions and the time to respond to them. The distracting effect is similar to that of tuning a radio. The effect of placing calls or engaging in casual conversation was less of a problem, although it did slow response times.
3. The distracting effect of cellular phone use among **drivers over age 50 is two to three times as great** as that of younger drivers and encompasses all three aspects of cellular phone use - placing calls and carrying on simple and complex conversation. The effect is to increase non-response by 33 - 38%.
4. Prior experience with cellular phones appears to bear no relationship to the distracting effect of cellular phone use.

Association Between Cellular-Telephone Calls and Motor Vehicle Collisions

The results of a recent study conducted by researchers from the University of Toronto, "Association Between Cellular-Telephone Calls and Motor Vehicle Collisions", were published in the New England Journal of Medicine in February of 1997. Studies were made of 699 drivers who had cellular phones and were involved in traffic crashes resulting in substantial property damage but no personal injury. Each motorists cellular phone bills were analyzed for the day of the crash and the week prior to the crash.

The results of the study showed that **the risk of collision when using a cellular phone was four times higher than the risk when the cellular phone was not being used**. Calls close to the time of the collision (i.e., within 5 minutes) presented a greater risk than calls placed 15 minutes or more prior to the crash. The risk was similar for drivers who differed in personal characteristics, such as age and driving experience. The study also found that **cellular units allowing hands-free operation offered no safety advantage over hand-held units**.

The researchers cautioned that "data do not indicate the drivers were at fault in the collisions; it may be that cellular telephones merely decrease a driver's ability to avoid a collision caused by someone else."

Thirty-nine percent of the drivers called emergency services after the collision, which suggests that having a cellular telephone may have had advantages in the aftermath of an event.

The authors noted that motor vehicles are a leading cause of death in North America and the most frequent cause of death for children and young adults. They also point out that **driver error contributes to over 90% of collisions**.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, using 1993 data, reports that of the 53,343 drivers involved in fatal crashes, 28 drivers, or two one-hundredths of one percent were involved in a fatal crash due to cellular phone use. However, these numbers were taken from police accident reports listing factors that **may** have played a role in a crash, and it is important to note that these numbers reflect only **fatal crashes** and not the much larger number of nonfatal crashes.

SOME TIPS FOR SAFE CELLULAR PHONE USE

- Make safe driving your first priority:
 - Buckle up
 - Keep your hands on the wheel
 - Keep your eyes on the road
- Position your phone where it is easy to see and reach
- Familiarize yourself with the phones' operation while the car is parked
- Use a hands-free microphone while driving
- Use the speed dial feature for frequently called numbers
- Pull over and dial manually
- Never take notes while driving. Pull off the road if you must read or write.
- Use voice mail to pick up your calls if it is inconvenient or unsafe to answer the car phone.

(These tips for safe cellular phone use were provided by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association)

USE COMMON SENSE

Any task a driver performs while driving is a potential distraction. It is best to use your cellular phone when you are stopped, but if you must use your phone while driving it is important to check traffic conditions before placing a phone call or performing any task, and if necessary, wait until conditions improve to make your call. Learn how your cellular phone operates while parked. If possible, dial while the car is not in motion. Program frequently used numbers into your phone. If a number is not programmed into memory, dial in short segments, check the traffic, and dial another segment. Never allow your conversation to distract you from driving. Keep calls brief. Keep your eyes on the road, and frequently check the side and rear view mirrors.

Safety Fact: The most fatal crashes happen on two lane, undivided highways and occur between 3PM and 6PM. Accidents involving alcohol occur between midnight and 3AM.



Safety Fact: Drivers under the age of 25 have the highest accident rate of all drivers in the US, followed second by drivers that are 75 or older.



WHAT IS AGGRESSIVE DRIVING?

Aggressive driving can refer to any display of aggression by a driver. It is often used to describe more extreme acts of physical assault that result from disagreements between drivers. "Road Rage" is a term believed to be coined by the American media, originally to describe the most violent events.

Although the media currently seem to refer to all aggressive driving as road rage, the New York State Police have pointed out that there is an important difference. "**Road Rage**", such as using the vehicle as a weapon or physically assaulting a driver or their vehicle, is NOT aggressive driving. Such acts are **criminal** offenses, and there are laws to deal with these violent crimes.

The New York State Police define an **Aggressive Driver** as one who:

Operates a motor vehicle in a selfish, bold or pushy manner, without regard for the rights or safety of the other users of the streets and highways.

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING SEEMS TO BE INCREASING

Part of the problem may be the roads themselves. The roads are more crowded. The number of vehicle miles driven each year is up 35% in the past ten years, and there are more vehicles on the roads. Yet the number of miles of roadway has increased by only 1%. Also, people are busier. Time is at a premium, and road congestion causes frustration.

According to the media, there are numerous events of aggressive driving or "road rage" on the public highways. There is growing concern among motorists about this problem. The American Automobile Association (AAA), Potomac Club commissioned a survey in early 1996 to determine what issues drivers were concerned about in the Washington, D.C. area. The largest group of drivers, 40%, felt the major traffic safety threat was the aggressive driver.

AGGRESSION DISPLAYED TOWARD OTHER DRIVERS

Respondents were then asked about the aggressive behavior they had displayed towards other drivers. Forty percent (40%) indicated that they had never behaved aggressively towards another driver. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents admitted to one or more of the following behaviors (listed in order of frequency):

- Flashed lights at another motorist because they were annoyed with them
- Gave aggressive or rude gestures
- Gave verbal abuse
- Aggressively tailgated another motorist

- Deliberately obstructed or prevented another from moving their vehicle
 - Physically assaulted another motorist (one positive response)
- (These behaviors may be under-reported here since people may not be willing to admit to some of their more serious actions.)

■ **Noise** -- While not provoking aggression, noise has been shown to influence the intensity of a pre-existing case of aggression.

■ **Temperature** -- In a study conducted in 1986, it was found to that there was a direct relationship between temperature and driver aggression. The hotter it was the more aggressive the subjects became. Most past studies of temperature and its effect on aggression have been inconclusive because if the subject was too hot, they could ask that the temperature be adjusted. This perception of control would lessen frustration and aggression. In the 1986 study there was no control of temperature on the part of the subject.

■ **Overcrowding** -- This is a subjective environmental factor. In experiments where all the subjects agreed to the fact that conditions were overcrowded, and especially in the case of traffic congestion, aggression may reach detrimental levels. Noise and heat may exert the most influence on motorists in a traffic congestion situation.

■ **Territoriality** -- Furthermore, individuals often view their vehicles as an extension of their home. At home, one sets standards for oneself that may be fine in the privacy of one's home but would not be acceptable in public. The car seems to straddle the boundary between private space and public domain.

If you encounter an aggressive driver:

The New York State Police recommend these basic tips for dealing with an aggressive driver:

- Remain calm
- Keep your distance
- Do not pass unless you have to
- Change lanes once it is safe (don't jump lanes without looking)
- If you cannot change lanes and an aggressive driver is behind you, stay where you are, maintain the proper speed and do not respond with hostile gestures.
- Call one of the **State Police hotlines**:
 - You may call **911** (or from a cellular phone ***911**)
 - If you believe a driver may be impaired, you may call **1-800-CURB-DWI (1-800-287-2394)** or from a cellular phone ***DWI (*394)**

(Of special note: If you witness an act of aggressive driving, the police cannot issue a ticket simply because you've gotten a plate number. A police officer

must witness the infraction and positively identify the driver of the vehicle in order to issue a ticket. However, if you travel a route on a regular basis and witness aggressive behavior at certain times, or all of the time, the State Police would be interested in knowing about the locations.)

SOME SAFE DRIVING TIPS:

If you encounter an aggressive driver, consider the [recommendations of the State Police](#).

However, there are some basic things that you can do to reduce your chances of ever becoming involved in an aggressive driving or "road rage" incident:

- First of all, [observe common courtesy](#) and consciously try to [avoid actions which can provoke other drivers](#).
- Secondly, take measures to [reduce your own stress](#) so that you are less likely to feel aggressive yourself.
- You can also try to [adjust your attitude](#) about why other drivers are behaving the way they are.
- Finally, [keep your emotions in check and think](#) about the consequences of your behavior before you react.

The following tips, which expand on the above points, were compiled from several different sources. Although the list is quite extensive, these suggestions are worth heeding:

BE AWARE OF ACTIONS WHICH CAN PROVOKE AGGRESSION

Motorists are advised to be patient and courteous to other drivers. You should correct any unsafe driving habits that may endanger, annoy or provoke other drivers. Be aware of the actions that have resulted in violence in the past. Many of these actions are simply eliminated by practicing common courtesy. Others are behaviors which are, or may be considered, offensive.

Avoid Behaviors which are likely to provoke aggression:

- Gestures -- Obscene or offensive gestures irritate other drivers. Be aware that any gesture may be misinterpreted by another driver.
- [Car phones](#) -- Don't let your phone become a distraction. Car phone users are perceived as being poor drivers and presenting a traffic hazard. Data shows that aggressive drivers are particularly irritated by fender-benders with motorists who were talking on the phone.

- Displays -- Refrain from displaying a bumper sticker, slogan or vanity license plate that may be considered offensive.
- Eye contact -- If a motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. Get out of the way without acknowledging the other motorist. If the driver follows you, do not go home. Go to a police station or location where you can get help and there will be witnesses.
- Aggressive tailgating -- Riding the bumper of the vehicle in front of you is both annoying and unsafe.
- Aggressive horn use -- Leaning on the horn to express anger is aggravating.
- Aggressive headlight use -- Flashing headlights to denote irritation is rude and unsafe.

Use common Courtesy:

- Lane blocking -- Don't block the passing lane on multiple lane highways. Allow vehicles to pass you.
- Tailgating -- Maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.
- Signal use -- Don't change lanes without using your signal, and make sure you can change lanes without cutting another driver off. After changing lanes or turning, turn your signal off.
- Horn use -- Use your horn sparingly. Noise is shown to be a contributor to stress.
- Failure to turn -- In many areas, including New York State, right turns are allowed after a complete stop for a red light unless an intersection is marked otherwise. Avoid the right lane if you are not turning right.
- Parking:
 - Don't take up more than one parking space
 - Don't park in a space reserved for people with disabilities unless you are disabled
 - Don't open your door into the car next to you
 - When parallel parking, do not tap the vehicles in front or in back of yours
 - Always look carefully before backing out of a parking space
- Headlight use -- Keep headlights on low beam, except where lighting conditions are poor. Dim your high beams for oncoming traffic, when approaching a vehicle from the rear or when another vehicle is passing you.
- Merging -- When traffic permits, move out of the right hand acceleration lane of a freeway to allow vehicles easier access from on-ramps.
- Blocking traffic -- If you are driving a cumbersome or slow moving vehicle, pull over when possible to allow traffic to pass you. Do not block the road to stop and have a conversation with another driver or a pedestrian.
- Alarms -- Be sure you know how to turn off the anti-theft alarm on any vehicle you are driving. If you are purchasing an alarm, buy one that turns off automatically after a short time.

REDUCE YOUR STRESS

Learn to spot the warning signs of stress, and try to avoid situations which are likely to cause stress, distraction and fatigue.

In General:

- Keep your vehicle in good working order to avoid the stress of a breakdown.
- If your destination is in an unfamiliar area, plan your route and have a map available.
- Have windshield cleaning materials and sunglasses available.

If you are making a long trip:

- Plan your route and have a map in your vehicle.
- Take breaks to stretch and walk around.
- Eat light snacks as opposed to heavy meals.
- Avoid eating in noisy, crowded places since they can promote stress.

Road Congestion is a major contributing factor to traffic disputes:

- Consider altering your schedule.

Allow plenty of time to get where you are going. Can you change your schedule or route to avoid the worst congestion? And does it really matter if you are a little late?

- Improve the comfort of your vehicle.

Listen to music that reduces your anxiety, or try listening to books on tape, but avoid anger-inducing talk radio. Use your air conditioner. Make your seat more comfortable by adjusting your seating position or using a pillow.

- Concentrate on being relaxed.

Take a deep breath. Don't clench your teeth or grip the steering wheel too tightly. Try doing limited stretching exercises.

- Don't drive when you are upset, angry or overtired.

Take a break to calm down, "cool off" or rest before you get behind the wheel.

ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

- Give the other driver the benefit of the doubt.
- We all make mistakes. Do not assume that all unsafe driving actions are intentional or personal.
- Be polite and courteous, even if the other driver isn't.

KEEP YOUR COOL... THINK BEFORE YOU REACT

■ Self-control is crucial in managing stress and aggression.

It is important for individuals to have a set of responses to cope with frustration. The most important advice is to remain patient in traffic congestion. You can gain a sense of control by realizing that people behave differently in different situations and that environmental factors may effect others to a greater or lesser degree than they effect you. Information about why a driver may be acting in a certain way will make their behavior more predictable to you, and you will be able to take action to avoid a confrontation, if necessary.

■ Drivers must pay more attention to their own levels of emotion.

Evidence suggests that drivers who allow their emotions to spiral out of control while driving are a much greater risk to themselves than to those around them. It is important not to try to alleviate aggressive emotion with an outburst. Research shows that this does not help to overcome the situation, and the risk of retaliation increases.

Several psychologists suggest a "cooling off" period such as going for a walk or using relaxation techniques. Although many people, particularly men, go for a drive to "cool off", it is not recommended. Any activity that is an attempt to "cool off" must be distracting enough to interfere with the train of anger-inducing thought.

■ Avoid all conflict if possible.

Safety Fact: On the average, 269 more people die in traffic fatalities each month during the summer than other months of the year. Source: NHTSA

SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE

Researchers have found the following symptoms to be associated with drowsy driving:

- Your eyes close or go out of focus by themselves.
- You have trouble keeping your head up.
- You can't stop yawning.
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts.
- You don't remember driving the last few miles.
- You drift between lanes, tailgate, or miss traffic signs.
- You keep jerking the car back into the lane.
- You have drifted off the road and narrowly missed crashing.

If you have **even one** of these symptoms, you may be in danger of falling asleep. Pull off the road and take a nap!

If you find that you are regularly tired during the day or experience any of these symptoms on a regular basis, you may have a sleep disorder and should seek medical help.

Safety Tips:

If you are planning a long trip, follow tips for avoiding fatigue:

Prepare for your trip by getting good nights sleep the night before. Plan to drive during the time that you are normally awake, and stay overnight rather than traveling straight through.

Avoid driving during the body's "down time". This is generally in the mid-afternoon and between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

If you have a passenger, talk to them. They will also be able to tell if you are showing signs of getting sleepy.

Schedule a break every two hours or every hundred miles. Take a nap, stretch, take a walk and get some exercise before resuming your trip.

Stop sooner if you show any danger signs of sleepiness.

Safety Fact: In the past 5 years, 135 million drivers were involved in a car crash attributing it to drowsiness. Source: NHTSA



NC Child Passenger Safety Law - G.S. 20-137.1

Summary of law

updated 01-04-05

NOTE: Senate Bill 1218, which implemented enhancements to the NC CPS Law, was ratified by the NC Legislature on July 15, 2004 and signed into law by Governor Easley on August 17. The changes went into effect January 1, 2005.

Ages/Positions Covered:

- » Children less than age 16 in front or back seats are covered under the NC Child Passenger Safety law.
- » Drivers and passengers 16 years old and older are covered by the NC Seat Belt Law.

Vehicles Covered:

- » All vehicles required by federal standards to have seat belts are covered. In general, these are cars made after 1967, light trucks and vans made after 1971, and large buses including school and municipal buses.

Restraint Required:

- » A properly used child restraint device (CRD) is required if the child is less than 8 years old AND weighs less than 80 pounds. Most parents and other care givers will be able to comply by using belt-positioning booster seats for children between 40 and 80 pounds. The child must be within the weight range for the child restraint/booster seat and it must meet Federal standards in effect at time of manufacture.
- » Children may be secured in a properly fitted seat belt at age 8 (regardless of weight) OR at 80 pounds (regardless of age) - whichever comes first. Placing the shoulder belt under a child's (or adult's) arm or behind the back is both dangerous and illegal.
- » If no seating position equipped with a lap and shoulder belt to properly secure a belt positioning booster seat is available, a child who weighs at least 40 pounds may be restrained by a properly fitted lap belt only. **WARNING: Belt-positioning booster seats can only be used with lap and shoulder combination safety belts. Belt-positioning booster seats must NEVER be used with just a lap belt.**

Refer to "[What are Options for Children over 40 pounds?](#)" in the "Choosing and Using" section for additional information on booster seats and safer alternatives for lap-belt-only seating positions.

Position in Vehicle:

- » The CRD must be installed in the rear seat if the child is less than age 5 and 40

lbs. and if the vehicle has a passenger side air bag and a rear seat.

» Front seat installation is allowed if the CRD is designed for use with air bags.

Exemptions:

» Vehicles not required to have belts (such as cars made before 1968 and pickup trucks, SUVs, and vans made before 1972, and large buses)

» Ambulances and other emergency vehicles

» If child's "personal needs" are being tended to

» If all seating positions with belts are occupied

Responsibility/Penalties:

» Driver responsible for all children less than sixteen

» Penalty not to exceed \$25

» Full court costs apply (\$100)

» Two (2) driver license points

» No insurance points

» No conviction if the child is less than 8 years old and proof is presented at trial that an appropriate CRD/Booster seat has been acquired for a vehicle in which the child is normally transported since the violation.

SAFETY TIPS LOCATED ON THE WEB

- The 8 Must-Know Tips for avoiding accidents and saving lives on the road
http://www.safedrivingtest.com/nsc_tips.html.
- More Safety Tips; Drive For Life
<http://www.safedrivingtest.com/safetytips.html>
- What Causes Crashes? Know Before You Go.
<http://www.safedrivingtest.com/contributing.html>
- The 101 Deadliest Days on the Road and how to survive them.
<http://www.safedrivingtest.com/101days.html>
- Aggressive Driving
http://www.defensive-driving.org/agressive_driving.htm
- Safe Driving Video. Safe Driving Training (Aust.) PTY LTD.
<http://www.sdt.com.au/SAFEDRIVINGVIDEO.htm>
- The Cellular Phone Explosion
http://www.defensive-driving.org/Cell_phone.htm

- Symptoms of Fatigue; Safe Drive Training (Aust) PTY LTD.
<http://www.defensive-driving.org/fatuge.htm>
- Safety CD-ROM (Driver-ZED) Developed by AAA Foundation. More than 80 live-action scenarios. Developed for teenage drivers.
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/home/index.cfm>