



THE  
**Driving**  
PROFESSOR<sup>TX</sup>

## Unit 1: Traffic Laws

### Texas Learner License Important Terms

- A -

**Acceleration Lane:** is the lane that permits drivers entering a highway to accelerate to the speed of traffic

**Administrative License Revocation:** is the automatic driver license suspension of a driver who fails a breath or blood test with blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or more, refuses to submit to a breath or blood test, or is a minor with any detectable amount of alcohol in their system.

**Aggressive Driving:** describes the behavior of a driver who is being confrontational, forceful, or aggressive with other roadway users.

- B -

**Blind Spot:** is an area that cannot be seen by rearview mirrors.

**Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC):** is the amount of alcohol in a person's blood stream that is a percentage (%) of the alcohol to the volume of the total fluids in a person's bloodstream

**Blood Alcohol Test:** measures the amount of alcohol in a person's body.

**Broken White Lines:** are used to separate roadway lanes on one-way roads. You can cross broken white lines to change lanes.

- C -

**Cancellation of Driver License:** is the withdrawal of a driver license or privilege until the driver is qualified or eligible.

**Carbon monoxide:** is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas contained in the exhaust fumes of gasoline engines

**Central Vision:** is the field of vision around your focal vision in which you can see clearly while looking straight ahead that aids in determining vehicle position on the road.

**Channeling Devices:** are used in construction and maintenance work areas to direct drivers and pedestrians safely through work zones, and to make the area safer for workers. Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones, and tubes are the most commonly used channeling devices.

**Class A Driver License:** allows individual to drive every type of vehicle, except for a motorcycle or moped. A Class A license covers single vehicles with a gross weight of 26,001 lbs. or more with towed vehicles weighing more than 10,000 lbs. You must be 17 years or older to apply for a Class A license.

**Class B Driver License:** allows an individual to operate any single vehicle with a gross weight of 26,001 lbs. or more. You can also tow a vehicle under 10,000 lbs. or a farm trailer less than 20,000 lbs. This license also authorizes you to drive a bus carrying 24 passengers or more. The Class B driver license allows you to drive any vehicle in Class B or Class C, but does not permit you to drive a motorcycle, moped, or vehicles in Class A. You must be 17 years or older to apply for Class B driver license.

**Class C Driver License:** is for standard passenger vehicles, including cars, passenger vans, pick-up trucks, and light duty trucks. This is the most common Texas driver license type. The Online Driving Professor Teen Driver Education course was designed for students to obtain their Class C driver license. The Class C driver license authorizes an individual to drive any single vehicle with a GVWR of *less than* 26,001 pounds, and vehicles towing a trailer that does *not exceed* 10,000 pounds. A Class C driver license does not permit a person to drive a motorcycle, moped, or any Class A or B vehicles.

**Class M Driver License:** allows an individual to drive a motorcycle or moped. To drive a motorcycle, you must be at least 16 years old, and successfully complete a DPS-approved motorcycle operator training course. Drivers who are under 18 years old must also hold a valid learner license or provisional license, and show proof that they completed the classroom phase of driver education before enrolling in a motorcycle operator training course. To drive a moped, you must be at least 15 years old and completed the classroom phase of driver education, and a DPS-approved motorcycle operator training course.

**Commercial Driver License (CDL):** is a license for drivers who transport goods (both in and out of state) or paid passengers. Commercial truck drivers and school bus drivers need a Texas Commercial Driver License. You have to be at least 18 years old to drive a commercial vehicle in the United States. As with personal driver licenses, commercial driver licenses have different classes or types. Drivers are required to have a CDL if they operate a vehicle for commercial purposes.

**Controlled Access Highway:** is a highway which access to and from the highway is controlled or restricted. If you are driving on the frontage road of a controlled-access highway, you must yield the right-of-way to vehicles exiting the highway to travel on the frontage road, and vehicles exiting the frontage road to travel on the highway.

- D -

**Defensive Driver:** is a courteous, careful, responsible driver. A defensive driver has the following characteristics: is very aware of other drivers sharing the roadway, looks out for potential trouble and situations, stays alert at all times, keeps eyes moving to what is happening on the roadway all around their vehicle, maintains proper speed to allow for good traffic flow, obeys all right-of-way rules, avoids driving in another vehicle's blind spot, follows traffic at a safe distance, has a good attitude and roadway manners toward other drivers.

**Denial of Driver License:** is the withholding of a driver license or privilege because the person is ineligible for a license. A driver license may be issued when eligibility is met.

**Double Solid White Lines:** are pavement markings to indicate an area where crossing over the lines is prohibited

**Double Solid Yellow Lines:** are pavement markings to indicate passing is prohibited.

**Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of Alcohol:** is charged when a minor drives with *any* detectable amount of alcohol in their system, they have committed the offense of Driving under the Influence of Alcohol (DUI).

**Driving While Intoxicated:** is a criminal offense of driving while intoxicated (DWI), meaning driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) above 0.08%.

**DWI with Child Passenger:** is a criminal offense of driving while intoxicated (BAC 0.0 or greater) with a child passenger younger than 15 years old in their vehicle. The fine and punishments for DWI with a passenger under 15 years old is up to a \$10,000 fine, up to 2 years confinement in state jail, and driver license suspension up to 2 years.

- E -

**Endorsement:** is an approval for a driver with a commercial driver license to drive for different transportation activities. For example, a school bus driver is responsible for the safety of many children, so their driving skills have to be approved or endorsed by the DPS before they can start driving a school bus.

- F -

**Field of Vision:** is the entire area a driver can see while looking ahead. As the speed at which a driver is traveling increases, a driver's field of vision decreases.

**Traffic flow:** is the movement and interaction between vehicles, drivers, law enforcement, roadways, signs, and traffic control devices. The goal is a road network with efficient and safe movement of traffic and minimal traffic congestion and collisions.

- G -

**Good Samaritan Law:** offers legal protection to people who voluntarily provide care during an emergency situation. While these laws vary from state to state, they are typically referred to as Good Samaritan Laws.

**Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program:** gives teens a structured way to improve their driving skills over time in a low risk environment. Texas started this program to reduce the number of accidents involving teen drivers.

**Guide Sign:** is a roadway sign that informs drivers what road they are traveling, and how to get to a destination. Guide Signs are very helpful when you are traveling away from your home area. The signs give information that make a road trip more pleasant such as signs for rest stops, attractions, and nearby restaurants.

- H -

**Hardship license:** is a driver license issued to a minor who establishes the necessity to drive and may have restrictions based on the qualifying hardship.

**Highway:** is a divided arterial roadway with full control of access and no crossings at grade.

**Highway Hypnosis:** is a condition of drowsiness or unawareness that can occur when driving on open highways for an extended period of time. In this condition, the driver operates the vehicle in a dulled, drowsy, trance-like state

**Highway Transportation System:** is a sub-system of the National Transportation System (HTS), composed of interstate and state highways interacting in a coordinated fashion.

- I -

**Identification Card (ID):** is issued by the Texas DPS as a form of identification for an applicant. ID cards in Texas have a distinguishing number similar to a Texas driver license and are maintained in the Texas driver record files. ID cards are helpful to adolescents, minors, and senior citizens who cannot apply for a driver license, but still need an ID for travel or other purposes. You can also use your ID card in Texas to set up a bank account, apply for a job, or verify your identity when making a purchase. As with a driver license, Texas ID cards expire, and have to be renewed.

**Implied Consent:** All Texas drivers are subject to Implied Consent. By driving on Texas roads, all drivers have consented to a breath or blood test requested by law enforcement to determine if they have alcohol in their system.

**Intoxication:** is not having the normal use of your mental and physical functions because of drinking alcohol, a controlled substance, drug, or combination of two or more of these substances.

**Intoxication Assault:** is a third degree felony in Texas, when a driver is drunk and causes serious bodily injury to another person. The person injured can be a passenger, the occupant of another car, or a pedestrian. The punishment for Intoxication Assault is up to \$10,000 fine, 2 to 10 years confinement in Texas prison system, and driver license suspension up to 1 year.

**Intoxication Manslaughter:** is killing another person while driving intoxicated. The person killed can be a passenger, the occupant of another car, or a pedestrian. The punishment for Intoxication Manslaughter, a Second Degree felony, is up to 20 years confinement in Texas prison system, fine up to \$10,000, driver license suspension up to 2 years.

- L -

**Learner License:** is the first step in the Texas Graduated Driver License (GDL) process. It is also called an instructional permit. A Texas learner license allows teens to practice driving for a minimum of six (6) months, before applying for a Provisional Driver License. The Texas Learner License has several restrictions: (1) a licensed adult, 21 years or older, must drive with you, and occupy the front passenger seat at all times, (2) you must be at least 15 years old, but less than 18 years old, to apply for a learner license, (3) you must have successfully completed the first 6 hours of driver education to apply for the license.

**911 Life Line Law:** was enacted so that persons under 21 cannot be charged by the police for possessing or consuming alcohol if the person calls 911 because someone may have alcohol poisoning.

- M -

**Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act:** ensures that all drivers are financially responsible for the death, injury, or property damage they may cause while driving. The most common way to provide evidence of financial responsibility is to purchase liability insurance coverage or be self-insured. All owners and drivers in Texas must have at least the minimum amount of liability insurance.

- N -

**Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV):** are battery-operated electric vehicles that are built to have a maximum speed of 35 miles per hour and maximum loaded weight of 3,000 lbs. These vehicles include golf carts. They are regulated by state, local, and federal laws. NEVs can be legally driven at a maximum speed of 35 mph, and only on public roads with a posted speed limit of 45 mph or less.

**Novice Driver:** is a driver with limited or no driving experience. The State of Texas considers a novice driver to be a person with one year or less driving experience.

**Non-traditional Intersections:** is an intersection where roadway users meet at a non-traditional place, like a turnabout or railroad crossing.

- O -

**Occupational Driver License:** is also called an essential need license, is a special type of restricted license issued to individuals whose driver license has been suspended, revoked or denied for certain offenses other than medical or delinquent child support. An Occupational Driver License allows you drive a vehicle to work, school, or to perform essential household duties. You must prove in court that there is an *essential need* to drive. The court will determine if you are eligible to apply for an occupational license, and you must carry a copy of the court order when driving.

- P -

**Parent-taught Driver Education (PTDE):** allows a parent or legal guardian to become an instructor for their teen's driver education. PTDE requires both online classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel driver training.

**Pavement Markings:** are road markings used to warn and direct drivers, and to regulate traffic. Different types of pavement markings are: broken and solid yellow lines, double yellow lines, broken and solid white lines, double white lines, crosswalk lines, and white stop lines.

**Provisional Driver License:** driver license, that is marked provisional, issued to teens less than 18 years old that is regulated under the phase two GDL driving restrictions.

**Public Intoxication:** Under Texas law, you commit the crime of Public Intoxication if you appear in a public place while intoxicated. Public intoxication is a Class C Misdemeanor, and the penalty is a fine up to \$500. If a minor commits the offense, it is punishable as a Minor in Possession (MIP) or Minor in Consumption (MIC) offense and subject to a fine of up to \$500.

- Q -

**Qualifying Hardship:** an adverse situation such as family illness, disability, death of a family member, or court order, or enrollment in a vocational program that requires a driver license for participation. The situation qualifies as a hardship for the issuance of a provisional license at age 15.

- R -

**Regulatory Signs:** roadway signs that tell drivers what to do. Drivers are required to obey all regulatory signs in the same manner as traffic laws.

**Restriction Code:** a code placed on your driver license to indicate a driving restriction. Common driving restrictions are: driving with corrective lenses only, or drive in daytime only.

**Revocation of Driver License:** the termination of a driver license or privilege for an indefinite period of time. May be restored when all requirements for the revocation have been satisfied.

**Right-of-way:** IS the privilege of having immediate use of a certain part of a road. There are times when you will need to yield the right-of-way to another vehicle or person. To yield right-of-way means to let another vehicle or person go first. As a driver, it is your responsibility to know who has the right-of-way, or whose turn it is to go first in driving situations.

**Road Rage:** also called aggressive driving, is when a driver becomes so angry or irritated that the driver will intentionally aggravate or annoy other drivers. Road Rage can result in injuries, property damage, or deaths.

- S -

**Safety Responsibility Act:** mandates that your vehicle registration, license, and driving privilege will be suspended if : (1) you are convicted of a traffic violation and did not present evidence of insurance, (2) you have not satisfied the judgment resulting from a crash within 60 days of the court decision, (3) you are in default of an installment agreement from a car crash settlement, (4) you are the driver and involved in a car crash in which someone is killed, injured, or you incurred at least \$1,000 in property damage and you are uninsured and there is reasonable probability of a judgment against you, (4) you fail to maintain evidence of financial responsibility for two years from your most recent conviction date.

**Solid white lines:** are roadway markings used for pavement edge lines, shoulder markings, channelizing, transitions, and lane use control. Crossing a solid white line should be avoided.

**Suspension of Driver License:** temporary withdrawal of a driver license or privilege for a definite period of time.

- T -

**Texas Move Over Act:** passed into law to reduce the number of injuries to police officers, paramedics, ambulance workers, fire fighters, and Texas Department of Transportation (TX DOT) workers. The law requires motorists approaching emergency vehicles to move out of the traffic lane closest to the emergency vehicle. If you can't move out of the lane next to an emergency vehicle or TX DOT workers, you must reduce your speed to 20 mph under the posted speed limit.

**Texas Open Container Law:** states it is illegal to have an open container of alcohol in the passenger area of your vehicle if you are driving or parked on a public roadway. The penalty for an open container violation is a Class C Misdemeanor, and a fine up to \$500.

**Traditional Intersections:** are where two or more roadway users meet, and the intersection can be controlled by traffic signs and signals or uncontrolled.

**Traffic flow:** the movement and interaction between vehicles, drivers, law enforcement, roadways, signs, and traffic control devices. The goal is a road network with efficient and safe movement of traffic and minimal traffic congestion and collisions.

- W -

**Warning signs:** alert drivers to conditions that are immediately ahead and tell them what to look for. There may be road hazards, changes in direction, or another important situation.

- V -

**Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR):** is received when a vehicle passes inspection. The inspection station will print the vehicle inspection report and enter the information into a state electronic database. When you register your car, the vehicle inspection report is verified electronically. The VIR is only valid for registration with the state for 90 days from the date of the inspection.

**Verification of Enrollment Form (VOE):** is issued by your high school that states you are a student enrolled in a public, private, or home school and attended school at least 80 days in the fall or spring semester proceeding the date of application for Texas Learner License.

**Vulnerable Roadway User:** is a pedestrian, highway construction worker, utility worker, person on horseback, bicyclist, horse-driven vehicle, and unprotected farm equipment.

**Warning Signs:** alert drivers to road hazards, upcoming changes in direction, or other situations that may affect safety. When you see a warning road sign it's important to pay attention, follow the instructions, and reduce your speed to the posted speed limit. Warning signs can save lives and prevent accidents.

**Yield:** means to allow another vehicle or roadway user to go first

- Z -

**Zero Tolerance Law:** states that it is illegal for drivers younger than 21 years old to have *any amount* of alcohol or drugs in their system. Minors are prohibited from purchasing alcohol, attempting to purchase alcohol, consuming alcohol, and possessing alcohol. The State of Texas has strong fines, penalties, and punishments for minors that commit alcohol-related offenses.