

2ND EDITION

Amendments  
to the Highway  
Safety Code  
included

# DRIVER'S HANDBOOK



## **GANNABIS AND DRIVING**

*New Criminal Code Offences*

The federal government is adding **three new** offences related to cannabis and driving.

**For more information:**

[saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/cannabis](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/cannabis)

# DRIVER'S HANDBOOK

---

## LES PUBLICATIONS DU QUÉBEC

425, rue Jacques-Parizeau, 5<sup>e</sup> étage, Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1

### SALES AND DISTRIBUTION

Telephone 418 643-5150 // Toll Free 1 800 463-2100  
[publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca)

**Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec  
and Library and Archives Canada  
cataloguing in publication**

Main entry under title:

Driver's handbook

ISSN 1182-8722

ISBN 978-2-551-26246-5

1. Traffic safety – Québec (Province) – Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Automobile driving – Québec (Province) – Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Traffic regulations – Québec (Province) – Handbooks, manuals, etc. 4. Traffic signs and signals – Québec (Province) – Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec.

KEQ590.G8413

343.71409'46

C91-082284-0

# DRIVER'S HANDBOOK

**This edition was published by**  
Les Publications du Québec  
425, rue Jacques-Parizeau, 5<sup>e</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1

**Project leader, art direction,  
production, infographics**  
Les Publications du Québec

**Illustrations**  
Jean-Michel Girard

**Graphic design**  
Dièse

**This publication was prepared by**  
the Société de l'assurance  
automobile du Québec.

**Researched and written by**  
Direction des normes et partenariats  
d'affaires

**Collaboration**  
Vice-présidences de la Société

**Project coordination**  
Direction des communications  
et des relations publiques

**Translation**  
Direction des communications  
et des relations publiques

Legal deposit – 2018  
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

ISBN  
978-2-551-26246-5 (print)  
978-2-551-26256-4 (PDF)

© Gouvernement du Québec – 2018

All rights reserved for all countries.  
Reproduction by any means and translation  
of any part of this document are prohibited without  
the authorization of Les Publications du Québec.  
Original text in French.

# INTRODUCTION

Sharing the road means that all users have to exercise courtesy and mutual respect. Whether we are pedestrians, cyclists, passengers or drivers, we need to be informed about standards for using the road network and our duty to comply with those standards.

Generally speaking, all road users must be careful and considerate when travelling on a public highway, especially toward more vulnerable users. Vulnerable users, for their part, have a duty to adopt behaviours that enhance their own safety.

Although this publication does not cover everything, the *Driver's Handbook* summarizes all the main rules of the *Highway Safety Code* and its regulations. It is one of the main reference tools for all road users, in particular new drivers. The six chapters cover people's obligations and rules about vehicles, road signs and traffic signals, as well as penalties resulting from offences under the regulations.

This edition includes regulatory amendments applied over recent years, including graduated licensing for all new drivers who are required to take a driving course, 4-, 8- and 12-demerit point brackets for drivers under 25 and the consequences of impaired driving. We also deal with some other unauthorized practices, like street racing and car surfing, as well as the various behaviours to adopt near emergency vehicles or road construction workers.

The Web site of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec ([saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)) has a great deal of additional information on a number of subjects related to road safety and its requirements. For any legal references, please refer to the *Highway Safety Code* and attendant regulations.

We hope that this publication will help users of the road network be better informed of the importance of adopting safe, cooperative and responsible behaviours.



# TABLE OF CONTENT

## CHAPTER 1

### THE DRIVER

13

#### Licences to Drive.....15

- ▶ To obtain a first driver's licence ..... 15
- ▶ Licence classes ..... 22
- ▶ Health requirements ..... 35
- ▶ Driver's obligations ..... 38
- ▶ Obligations for persons from outside Québec ..... 41

#### A revoked or Suspended Licence .....44

- ▶ Suspension for an unpaid fine ..... 45
- ▶ Demerit points ..... 46
- ▶ *Criminal Code* offences ..... 51
- ▶ Driving while impaired ..... 53

#### Factors That Influence Driving .....58

- ▶ Vision ..... 59
- ▶ Physical problems ..... 61
- ▶ Fatigue and mental state ..... 62
- ▶ Electronic devices ..... 63
- ▶ Alcohol ..... 66
- ▶ Drugs and medication ..... 69
- ▶ Your mind-set ..... 70
- ▶ Observation ..... 71
- ▶ Staying alert and exercising your judgment ..... 72

**Vehicle Registration.....75**

- ▶ General provisions..... 75
- ▶ Vehicles exempt from registration ..... 76
- ▶ Obtaining registration and putting your vehicle into operation ..... 77
- ▶ Conditions relating to vehicle registration ..... 79
- ▶ Ownership transfer ..... 82

**Rules About Road Vehicles and Their Equipment .....84**

- ▶ Mandatory identification numbers ..... 84
- ▶ Compulsory equipment and accessories..... 84
- ▶ Lights and signals..... 85
- ▶ Brakes ..... 88
- ▶ Alteration of seat belts ..... 88
- ▶ Air bags ..... 89
- ▶ Screens..... 89
- ▶ Radar detectors ..... 89
- ▶ Horns ..... 90
- ▶ Exhaust system ..... 90
- ▶ Windshields and windows ..... 91
- ▶ Rearview mirrors ..... 91
- ▶ Speedometer and odometer..... 91
- ▶ Bumpers..... 92
- ▶ Tires ..... 92
- ▶ Fenders and mudguards..... 93
- ▶ Natural gas and propane vehicles ..... 93
- ▶ Modifying a vehicle..... 93

**Mechanical Inspection.....94**

- ▶ Mandatory inspection ..... 95
- ▶ Inspection outcome..... 96

## Doing Your Own Inspection .....97

- ▶ Brakes ..... 97
- ▶ Parking brake ..... 97
- ▶ Rearview mirrors ..... 97
- ▶ Steering ..... 98
- ▶ Windshield wipers ..... 98
- ▶ Tires ..... 98
- ▶ Exhaust system ..... 98
- ▶ Lights and headlights ..... 99
- ▶ Seat belts ..... 99
- ▶ Headrests ..... 99
- ▶ Drive belts ..... 99
- ▶ Shock absorbers ..... 100
- ▶ Body condition ..... 100

## CHAPTER 3

## ROAD SIGNS AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS 101

### Signal Lights ..... 103

- ▶ Traffic lights ..... 103
- ▶ Flashing lights ..... 105
- ▶ Pedestrian lights ..... 106
- ▶ Cyclist lights ..... 107
- ▶ Lane use lights ..... 107
- ▶ Railway crossing signals ..... 108
- ▶ Regulated parking lights ..... 108
- ▶ Work site lights ..... 109
- ▶ Bus priority lights ..... 110
- ▶ Inspection station lights ..... 112

### Pavement Markings ..... 112

- ▶ Purpose of pavement markings ..... 112
- ▶ Colour of pavement markings ..... 113
- ▶ Lines, arrows and symbols ..... 115

## Road Signs ..... 120

- ▶ Shapes and colours of the main types of signs ..... 121
- ▶ Pictograms ..... 125
- ▶ Identification and meaning of road signs and traffic signals ..... 126
- ▶ Signs for cyclists ..... 203

## Highway Safety Code Provisions Concerning Road Signs and Traffic Signals ..... 211

### CHAPTER 4

## TRAFFIC RULES

213

## Protection ..... 215

- ▶ Seat belts ..... 215
- ▶ Air bags ..... 216
- ▶ Headrests ..... 218

## Traffic Rules ..... 219

- ▶ Traffic lane divisions ..... 219
- ▶ Lane use ..... 220
- ▶ Speed limits and distance between vehicles ..... 223
- ▶ Passing ..... 224
- ▶ Turning ..... 228
- ▶ Traffic circles ..... 235
- ▶ Indicating your intentions and presence ..... 236
- ▶ Yielding the right of way ..... 237
- ▶ School buses ..... 244
- ▶ Level crossings ..... 245
- ▶ Backing up ..... 246
- ▶ Shared streets ..... 246
- ▶ Bicycle boulevards ..... 246
- ▶ Sharing the road with heavy vehicles ..... 247
- ▶ Heavy vehicle blind spots ..... 248

<b>When Nearing a Work Site .....</b>	<b>249</b>
---------------------------------------	------------

<b>Stopping and Parking .....</b>	<b>251</b>
-----------------------------------	------------

- ▶ Obligations ..... 251
- ▶ Restrictions ..... 252
- ▶ Spaces reserved for people with a disability and disabled parking permits ..... 253

<b>Unlawful Practices .....</b>	<b>255</b>
---------------------------------	------------

- ▶ Driving prohibited – where and when? ..... 255
- ▶ Unlawful practices involving the vehicle..... 256
- ▶ Restrictions on the use of public roadways..... 258

<b>Special Rules for Certain Road Users .....</b>	<b>259</b>
---	------------

- ▶ Pedestrians ..... 259
- ▶ Cyclists ..... 262
- ▶ Foot scooters ..... 267
- ▶ Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters ..... 267
- ▶ Emergency vehicle drivers..... 269
- ▶ School transport drivers..... 270
- ▶ Vehicles travelling on logging roads ..... 271
- ▶ Vehicles carrying loads..... 273
- ▶ Heavy vehicle drivers..... 274
- ▶ Drivers of off-road vehicles..... 280

## **CHAPTER 5**

## **ACCIDENTS**

**285**

<b>Automobile Insurance .....</b>	<b>287</b>
-----------------------------------	------------

- ▶ In Québec ..... 287
- ▶ Outside Québec..... 288
- ▶ Non-residents of Québec ..... 288
- ▶ Accidents that are not covered..... 289
- ▶ Special cases ..... 290
- ▶ Compensation ..... 291
- ▶ Right of appeal..... 292

**Property Damage ..... 292**

**Hit-And-Run and Insolvency ..... 293**

▶ Accidents involving property damage..... 293

**In the Event of an Accident..... 294**

▶ At the scene of an accident ..... 295

▶ First aid ..... 296

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **OFFENCES AND CONSEQUENCES 297**

**Offences and Fines..... 299**

▶ Driver's licence..... 300

▶ Vehicle registration ..... 301

▶ Vehicle and accessories ..... 301

▶ Traffic..... 302

▶ Buffer lanes (Move Over law) ..... 303

▶ Speeding..... 304

▶ Mechanical inspection..... 305

▶ Motorcycles, mopeds and scooters ..... 305

▶ Bicycles..... 306

▶ Foot scooters ..... 307

▶ Pedestrians ..... 307

**Offences and Demerit Points ..... 308**

▶ Penalties and costs of impaired driving ..... 312

### **NOTES 315**

# THE DRIVER

1

---

To drive a vehicle on a public road, you are required to hold a licence with a class appropriate to the vehicle driven. Depending on which provisions of the *Highway Safety Code* apply to your situation, the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) will issue you a learner's licence, a probationary licence, a regular driver's licence or a restricted licence.

Over 5,100,000 Quebecers hold a driver's licence. Obtaining a driver's licence is not an automatic right. Getting and keeping a licence depends on meeting requirements and specific conditions. Your licence can be taken away if your behaviour or health condition has become a threat to your own safety and that of other road users.

As a driver, you need to take your state of health into consideration and adopt cooperative, safe and responsible behaviour, and be aware of how this could influence your driving.

# LICENCES TO DRIVE

1

## To obtain a first driver's licence

A first driver's licence is generally issued for the operation of a passenger vehicle (Class 5 licence). You may qualify for a driver's licence after holding a learner's licence, and then a probationary licence.



## Basic requirements

To obtain the class of driver's licence for a passenger vehicle, you must be at least age 16. The written consent of a person with parental authority is required if you are under age 18.

You also have to present two pieces of identification. The first must be from the Directeur de l'état civil du Québec or a civil authority recognized elsewhere in Canada, a certificate of Canadian citizenship, a legal document indicating Canadian citizenship or a Permanent Resident Card or a Canadian passport. The second piece of identification can be a provincial health insurance card.

## Steps to obtain a Class 5 driver's licence

### Registering for the driving course

To drive a passenger vehicle, first you have to register for the mandatory driving course. The Road Safety Education Program provides new drivers with the skills required to adopt safe, cooperative and responsible behaviour. The course is divided into four different learning phases that alternate with theoretical modules and in-car driving sessions. The emphasis is on visual scanning, anticipation of risks, dangerous behaviour (speeding, drinking, using drugs, distraction) and sharing the road.

The mandatory driving course is offered by **driving schools recognized** by the Association québécoise des transports (AQTr). For information about the schools, contact the AQTr or visit its Web site:

#### Association québécoise des transports

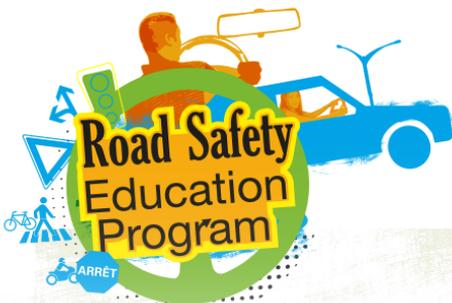
6666, rue Saint-Urbain

Bureau 450

Montreal (Québec) H2S 3H1

Telephone: 514 523-6444

aqtr.com



## Getting a learner's licence

At the end of Phase 1 of the Road Safety Education Program, you are required to take a knowledge test.

Once you have received an attestation from the driving school confirming that you have passed Phase 1, you can apply for your learner's licence in an SAAQ service centre, if you meet the following requirements:



- ▶ Prove your identity by submitting the identification previously indicated in the “Basic requirements” section;
- ▶ Fill out the SAAQ’s *Declaration of Illness or Impairment* form and meet the medical requirements;
- ▶ Pass the SAAQ’s vision test;
- ▶ Provide the duly completed attestation from the driving school.

You must hold a learner's licence for at least 12 months, during which time you are subject to specific rules, including the following:

- ▶ You must be **accompanied at all times** by an authorized person in the front passenger seat who is able to provide you with assistance and advice;
- ▶ Prohibition from driving:
  - ▷ Between midnight and 5 a.m.;
  - ▷ After consuming alcohol or drugs;
- ▶ If you accumulate four or more demerit points in your driving record, your licence will be revoked and you must wait three months before you are eligible to obtain a new one.



## Practising driving

If you hold a learner's licence, you are authorized to drive on the road network accompanied by a driving instructor during the driving course. Outside of class time, you have to be accompanied by a person who has held a valid driver's licence for a passenger vehicle for at least two years.

The accompanying rider must be seated next to you and be prepared to provide you with assistance and advice. Remember that a probationary licence holder cannot act as an accompanying rider for a learner.

## Passing the knowledge test

During the mandatory training course, you have to pass the knowledge test in an SAAQ service centre. To be eligible for the test, you have to have held a learner's licence for at least 10 months and have made an appointment.

The purpose of this test is to check if you can apply your knowledge about regulations, road signs and traffic signals, and behaviour to adopt in various situations.

If you fail the test, you have to wait at least 28 days before taking the knowledge test again. If you pass the test, you are still required to take all of the theoretical modules and do all of the in-car sessions of the driving course.

## Passing the road test

After passing all of the phases of the mandatory driving course, you have to pass the road test in an SAAQ service centre. To be eligible for the test, you need to make an appointment and:

- ▶ Have passed the knowledge test;
- ▶ Have held a learner's licence for at least 12 months;
- ▶ Have a driving course attestation, duly completed, confirming that you have passed all of the learning phases at a driving school recognized by the Association québécoise des transports.

During the road test, the SAAQ examiner checks whether you put into practice your knowledge of the *Highway Safety Code*, road signs and traffic signals, and behaviour to adopt on the road, as well as whether you have the skills to drive safely, cooperatively and responsibly.

If you fail the test, you have to wait at least 28 days before taking the test again.

## Getting a probationary licence

Once you pass the road test, you can obtain a probationary licence at an SAAQ service centre. You need to hold a **valid** probationary licence for **24 months** before you can obtain a regular driver's licence.



A probationary licence is subject to the following specific rules:

- ▶ Your 24 months of experience with this licence can be accumulated **only** while it is valid;
- ▶ Your licence will be revoked and suspended for at least three months if you accumulate **four or more demerit points** in your driving record;
- ▶ You are **prohibited from driving** after consuming any alcohol or drugs. It is zero tolerance! You must not have any traces of alcohol or drugs in your system;
- ▶ You cannot act as an **accompanying rider** for a learner driver of a road vehicle.

### Carrying passengers

Probationary licence holders aged 19 or under may only carry a limited number of passengers who are also aged 19 or under between midnight and 5 a.m.

- ▶ Drivers with 6 months or less of driving experience can carry only one passenger;
- ▶ Drivers with between 6 and 12 months of driving experience can carry up to 3 passengers.

The driver's immediate family members, however, are excluded from the passenger count, including:

- ▶ The driver's spouse (married, civil union or *de facto* spouse);
- ▶ The driver's or the spouse's children;
- ▶ The driver's brothers and sisters;
- ▶ Children of the driver's mother or father or of their spouses.

These restrictions do not apply if:

- ▶ The driver has over 12 months of driving experience;
- ▶ An accompanying passenger who has held a driver's licence for two or more years is seated in the front passenger seat and is able to provide the driver with assistance and advice.

## Driver's licence

After acquiring 24 months of driving experience with a probationary licence, you can go to an SAAQ service outlet to obtain your driver's licence.



Specific demerit point brackets now apply to driver's licence holders under 25 years of age, meaning that the limit of demerit points allowed on their record is lower. Thus, their licences are revoked sooner if they commit offences that result in demerit points being entered in their record. The period during which they cannot obtain a new licence after it has been revoked can also be longer.

### Demerit point bracket by type of licence

- ▶ Learner's licence and probationary licence ..... **4 points**
- ▶ Driver's licence holder - **under 23** ..... **8 points**
- ▶ Driver's licence holder - **23 or 24 years old** ..... **12 points**
- ▶ Driver's licence holder **25 or older** ..... **15 points**

## Licence classes

There are 13 licence classes in Québec. Each class authorizes you to drive a certain category of vehicle on Québec roads.

Once you have been issued a licence to drive a particular class of vehicle, other classes of vehicles are generally authorized, as shown in the following table under the heading “Classes included”.

### To obtain an additional class

You cannot go directly from one class to another. Before applying for a particular class, you have to meet certain conditions, which may require driving experience of one to three years or a satisfactory health care professional’s report on fitness to drive.

To get a licence, go to an SAAQ service centre to take the knowledge and road tests, after passing an initial vision test.

Some classes also require you to hold a learner’s licence or probationary licence for a certain period.

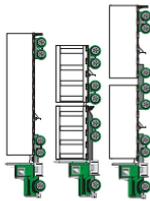
The main requirements are listed in the following table.



For further information on obtaining another licence class, you can find brochures specific to various classes either at SAAQ service centres, by contacting the SAAQ call centre (1 800 361-7620) or by visiting the Web site ([saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)).

## Classes

## 1



## Authorized vehicles

Road vehicle combinations consisting of:

- ▶ A double-axle road tractor with a net weight of 4,500 kg or more hauling 1 or more trailers or semitrailers;
- ▶ A road tractor with 3 or more axles hauling 1 or more trailers or semitrailers;
- ▶ A truck covered by Class 3 hauling a trailer or semitrailer whose net weight is 4,500 kg or more and which is only used to transport equipment, tools or furnishings as part of its permanent equipment;
- ▶ A truck covered by Class 3 hauling any trailer or semitrailer other than those described above, with a net weight of 2,000 kg or more.

## Requirements

36 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 driver's licence (passenger vehicle)

OR

24 months of experience if you have successfully completed 1 of the following programs:

- A.** a truck driving training program authorized by the ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur as a requirement for a vocational diploma;
  - B.** a program that consists of 300 hours of driving a Class 1 road vehicle on a public road.
- The program must include at least 40 hours of driving dispensed by a training school specialized in driving heavy vehicles AND practical on-the-job training that includes the number of hours necessary to accumulate the required 300 hours.
- You must have either of these programs recognized by the SAAQ, which may request certain documents, such as your daily logs as well as those of the accompanying rider in the case of the 300-hour program.

## Classes

## 1

Note: A road tractor is a motor vehicle that does not have cargo space and that is permanently equipped with a fifth wheel.

**Classes included**

2, 3, 4A, 4B, 4C, 5, 6D and 8

## Authorized vehicles

## Requirements

**Length of the learning period**

You have to have held a Class 1 learner's licence for 3 months

OR

1 month if you meet one of the following requirements:

- ▶ Be enrolled in a truck driving training program authorized by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport leading to a vocational diploma and have passed all the mandatory parts of the program prior to driving on the road without an accompanying rider;
- ▶ Be age 25 or over;
- ▶ Have 60 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 licence;
- ▶ Hold a Class 2 or 3 driver's licence.

## Classes

## 2



## Authorized vehicles

Bus with a seating capacity of more than 24 passengers.

## Classes included

3, 4A, 4B, 4C, 5, 6D and 8

## Requirements

You must have 24 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 driver's licence (passenger vehicle).

## Length of the learning period

You have to have held a Class 2 learner's licence for 3 months

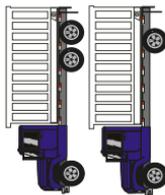
OR

for 1 month if you meet 1 of the following requirements:

- ▶ Be age 25 or over;
- ▶ Have 60 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 licence;
- ▶ Hold a Class 3 licence.

## Classes

## 3



## Authorized vehicles

A road tractor with 2 axles, whose net weight is 4,500 kg or over;  
Any truck with 3 or more axles;  
A road vehicle hauling a trailer or semitrailer:

- ▶ With a net weight of less than 2,000 kg;
- ▶ With a net weight of at least 2,000 kg but less than 4,500 kg which is only used to transport equipment, tools or furnishings as part of its permanent equipment;

All other types of vehicles, except for vehicles covered by Class 1, Class 2 and motorcycles.

## Classes included

4A, 4B, 4C, 5, 6D and 8

## Requirements

You must have 24 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 driver's licence (passenger vehicle).

## Length of the learning period

You must have held a Class 3 learner's licence for 3 months

OR

for 1 month if you meet 1 of the following requirements:

- ▶ Be age 25 or over;
- ▶ Have 60 months of experience as the holder of a Class 5 licence.

## Details about licence Classes 1, 2 or 3<sup>1</sup>

### To obtain a learner's licence, you must:

- ▶ Have less than four demerit points on your driving record;
- ▶ Not have had any revocation or suspension for demerit points or *Criminal Code* offences in the two previous years;
- ▶ Submit in advance a satisfactory medical examination report completed by a physician.

### Required tests

Pass a vision test, knowledge test, circle check inspection test and a road test for the vehicle in question.

### Endorsements associated with a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence

If you hold a Class 1, 2 or 3 driver's licence, you must have an endorsement on your licence certifying authorization to drive certain heavy vehicles. These endorsements appear on the licence itself, as follows:

- ▶ **F endorsement:** attests that you are allowed to drive a heavy vehicle equipped with air brakes;
- ▶ **M endorsement:** attests that you are allowed to drive a heavy vehicle equipped with a manual (standard) transmission;
- ▶ **T endorsement:** attests that you are allowed to drive an outsize double road train, requiring a special travel permit. This endorsement only applies to Class 1 and requires you to have held this class of licence for at least five years.

To obtain one of these endorsements, you need to pass the required exams or satisfy other conditions.

 To find out more,  
go to the SAAQ Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca).

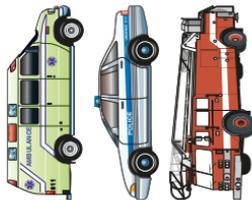
1. Further information on these licence classes can be found in the brochure *Prospective Heavy Vehicle Driver*, available on the SAAQ Web site ([saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)), in SAAQ service centres or by phoning its call centre (1 800 361-7620).

## Classes

## Authorized vehicles

## Requirements

## 4A



Emergency vehicles

(e.g. an ambulance, a police vehicle or a fire department road vehicle).

**Classes included**

4B, 4C, 5, 6D and 8

▶ Have 2 years of experience as the holder of a valid Class 5 licence or hold a Class 5 licence and have passed a course in driving an emergency vehicle offered by the École nationale de police du Québec or its equivalent.

- ▶ Submit in advance a satisfactory medical examination report completed by a physician.
- ▶ Pass a vision and knowledge test.

## 4B



Minibus: a double-axle motor vehicle with single wheels and equipped or a bus equipped to carry no more than 24 passengers.

**Classes included**

4C, 5, 6D and 8

▶ 1 year of experience as the holder of a Class 5 licence.

- ▶ Submit in advance a satisfactory medical examination report completed by a physician.
- ▶ Pass a vision and knowledge test.

## Classes

## 4C



Taxi

Classes included

5, 6D and 8

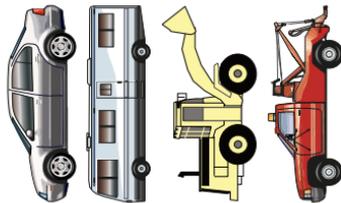
## Authorized vehicles

## Requirements

- ▶ 1 year of experience as the holder of a Class 5 licence.
- ▶ Submit in advance a satisfactory medical examination report completed by a physician.
- ▶ No prior conviction within the last 5 years for an offence related to operation of a taxi or for certain other criminal acts determined by the Act respecting transportation services by taxi (section 26).
- ▶ You must hold a taxi driver's permit, in accordance with the Act respecting transportation services by taxi and its attendant regulation. Ministère des Transports has prepared the Québec *Taxi Driver's Handbook*, which provides more information.
- ▶ Pass a vision and knowledge test.

## Classes

## 5



## Authorized vehicles

- ▶ Passenger vehicle (car or van) or truck with 2 axles with a net weight of less than 4,500 kg;
- ▶ Vehicle permanently outfitted as a dwelling;
- ▶ Tool vehicle: motor vehicle in which the work station is contained within the driver's compartment. The vehicle is manufactured to carry out a task and designed to travel at a maximum speed of 70 km/h;
- ▶ Service vehicle: vehicle equipped to supply, repair or tow motor vehicles. Also authorized is any vehicle covered by this class hauling a trailer or in the case of a motor home, another vehicle.

## Classes includes

6D and 8

## Requirements

- ▶ Be age 16 or over; or have the written consent of a person having parental authority if you are under age 18.
- ▶ Have held a learner's licence for 12 months and have passed a mandatory driving course given by a driving school recognized by the Association québécoise des transports (AQTr).
- ▶ Satisfy the medical requirements and pass the vision test and the SAAQ knowledge and road tests.
- ▶ Have held a probationary licence for 24 months.

## Classes

## 6A



All motorcycles

**Classes included**

6B, 6C, 6D, 6E and 8

## Authorized vehicles

## Requirements

For a licence to drive a motorcycle, you must go through the various steps and meet the requirements for each one.

**Obtaining a Class 6R learner's licence to drive a motorcycle only during a driving course or an SAAQ test:**

- ▶ Be age 16 or over and have the written consent of a person having parental authority if you are under age 18.
- ▶ Pass a vision test and knowledge test on the *Highway Safety Code*, road signs and traffic signals and techniques for operating a motorcycle (if you fail, you must wait a minimum of 28 days between tests).

**Obtaining a Class 6A learner's licence to drive a motorcycle, provided that the learner complies with the curfew prohibiting the operation of a motorcycle between midnight and 5 a.m.:**

- ▶ Have passed a driving course with a driving school recognized by the Association québécoise du transport.

## Classes

## Authorized vehicles

## Requirements

**6A**

- ▶ Have held a Class 6R learner's licence for 1 month.
  - ▶ Pass a test on a closed track (if you fail, you must wait a minimum of 14 days between tests).
- Obtaining a Class 6A, 6B OR 6C driver's licence:**
- ▶ Have held a class 6A learner's licence for at least 11 months.
  - ▶ Pass a road test using the type of motorcycle that corresponds to the licence sought (if you fail, you must wait a minimum of 56 days between tests).
  - ▶ If you do not have a Class 5 driver's licence, hold a probationary licence for 24 months (during this period, the zero tolerance (alcohol or drugs) and 4 demerit points rules apply).

Classes	Authorized vehicles	Requirements
<b>6B</b>	 <p>Motorcycles with a cylinder capacity of 400 cc or less  <b>Classes included</b>            6C, 6D, 6E and 8</p>	
<b>6c</b>	 <p>Motorcycles with cylinder capacity of 125 cc or less.  <b>Classes included</b>            6D, 6E and 8</p>	
<b>6D</b>	 <p>Moped or motorized scooter            A moped or motorized scooter is a 2- or 3-wheeled passenger vehicle that can travel at a maximum speed of 70 km/h, operates using an electric or maximum 50 cc motor and is equipped with an automatic transmission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Be age 14 or over and have the written consent of a person having parental authority if you are under age 18.</li> <li>▶ Pass the <i>Road Safety Education Program – Driving a Moped or Motorized Scooter</i></li> <li>▶ Pass a vision and knowledge test.</li> </ul>

Classes	Authorized vehicles	Requirements
<p><b>6E</b></p> 	<p>Three-wheeled motorcycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hold a valid Class 6A, 6B or 6C driver's licence or probationary licence.</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hold a valid Class 5 (passenger vehicle) driver's licence and pass the <i>Road Safety Education Program - Driving a Three-Wheeled Motorcycle</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8</b></p> 	<p>Farm tractor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Be age 16 or over and have the written consent of a person having parental authority if you are under age 18.</li> <li>▶ Pass a vision and knowledge test.</li> </ul>

## Health requirements

# 1

Driving safely not only demands road safety know-how and skills, but also a state of health that is consistent with the operation of a particular type of vehicle and its use.

Some illnesses, impairments or situations are incompatible with safely driving a road vehicle. The *Regulation respecting access to driving a road vehicle in connection with the health of drivers* describes these cases. These include sight disorders, cardiovascular disease, mental illnesses, alcoholism, drug dependency, epilepsy, diabetes, kidney or respiratory disease.

When applying for a licence or on renewal, you have an obligation to advise the SAAQ of any health condition that might affect your driving, and accordingly must fill out and sign the *Declaration of Illness or Impairment* form. The SAAQ must also be informed of any change in your state of health within 30 days.

Your particular health condition may affect your eligibility to drive or lead to the refusal for or withdrawal of classes of licences and restrict your driving privileges. However, the most common situation is one in which the SAAQ issues a licence with conditions, in particular the following:

- ▶ Requiring the driver to wear eye glasses, contact lenses or a hearing aid;
- ▶ Requiring the installation of equipment in the vehicle to assist driving;
- ▶ Limiting the time of day, period and area for driving;
- ▶ Limiting the types of vehicles that can be driven;
- ▶ Allowing the person to drive only a vehicle that is equipped with an alcohol ignition interlock device.

One or more of the following conditions may appear on a driver's licence:

A	Must wear glasses or contact lenses when driving
B	Must drive only during the daytime
C	Must wear a hearing aid when driving (Classes 2, 4A, 4B and 4C)
D*	Must undergo a medical examination every five years
E*	Must undergo a medical examination every six months
F*	Must undergo a medical examination every year
G*	Must undergo a medical examination every two years
H	Must drive only a vehicle with a net weight of less than 2,500 kg
I	Must drive a vehicle fitted with an alcohol ignition interlock device following a medical diagnosis
J	Must drive a vehicle with an automatic transmission
K	Must drive a vehicle with power steering
L	Must drive a vehicle equipped with power brakes
N	Must wear a safety harness when driving
P	Must drive only a vehicle equipped with hand-operated controls
Q	Must drive a vehicle with a manual control to adjust the brightness of the headlights
R	Must drive only a vehicle equipped with an accelerator on the left
S	Subject to medical restrictions as indicated on the licence
V	Must drive a vehicle with controls adapted to the holder's handicap
W	Must not drive a vehicle requiring Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4B in the U.S.
X	Must drive a vehicle fitted with an alcohol ignition interlock device following a criminal conviction
Y	Must comply with the zero alcohol rule

\* This condition does not appear on the licence, but is entered in the licence holder's record.

The SAAQ can require you to take a proficiency examination or undergo a health assessment in any of the following cases:

- ▶ You are 70 years of age or older;
- ▶ The licence authorizes you to drive a tractor semitrailer, tractor-trailer, straight-body truck, road train, bus or minibus, emergency vehicle or taxi cab;
- ▶ You have not undergone an examination within the last 10 years;
- ▶ The SAAQ has reasonable grounds to verify your health or driving behaviour on public roads;
- ▶ You have not been authorized to drive a road vehicle for three years or longer.

Proficiency examinations, whether a knowledge or road test, can be required if you want to change a licence class. A health assessment can also be required before changing one of the conditions that appear on your licence.

The SAAQ can also require you to provide a medical or optometric assessment at various intervals when an illness or impairment requires periodic follow-up.

The SAAQ can suspend a licence or driver's licence class if you:

- ▶ Make a false health declaration or fail to declare a health condition;
- ▶ Refuse to undergo a medical examination or assessment or fail to submit the report of such an examination;
- ▶ Refuse to take or fail a proficiency test;
- ▶ Are afflicted with an illness or disability that could jeopardize road safety.

## Driver's obligations

To drive on a public roadway, you are required to hold and carry a valid licence, duly signed. You have to comply with the conditions that appear on the licence. A law enforcement officer may seize your vehicle if you do not hold the proper licence class for the vehicle driven and may impound the vehicle for 30 days.

You are also required to have with you all documents related to the vehicle, that is:

- ▶ A valid and duly signed registration certificate for the vehicle;
- ▶ Valid proof of insurance coverage or certificate of financial responsibility;
- ▶ A lease contract (original or copy) for a vehicle leased for less than a one-year period;
- ▶ Written proof of the period of the loan of a vehicle by a car dealer.

If you drive or own a vehicle without third-party liability insurance, and become involved in an accident causing more than \$500 in property damage, you are subject to licence suspension (driver's licence, probationary licence or learner's licence). The operation of any vehicle registered in your name is also prohibited, until the SAAQ is provided with a payment guarantee or proof of settlement covering the damage.

The obligation to carry certain documents is not only for travelling on public roads. Some of them are also required on private roads open to public traffic, logging roads and shopping centre parking lots.

For some drivers of heavy vehicles or vehicle combinations, other documentation may be required, such as the driving and duty time log, circle check inspection report or certain certificates, depending on the type of load or services provided.

These documents must be shown to a peace officer on demand.

## One document only

It is an offence to hold more than one valid driver's licence, probationary licence or learner's licence issued by the SAAQ or another authority in Canada or the U.S. It is also prohibited to lend a licence to another person or provide false or misleading information to obtain one.

## The right address

The address that appears on your licence must be your principal place of residence. Under the *Highway Safety Code*, you must notify the SAAQ of any change of address within 30 days, or be subject to penalties set out in the Code.

You can do so on the SAAQ Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca), by mail, in person at a service centre or by telephone at 1 800 361-7620. The SAAQ will then send you a confirmation, which must be kept with your licence.

## Replacing a licence

When a licence is illegible, damaged, lost, destroyed, stolen or if information becomes invalid, you are required to apply to the SAAQ to have it replaced. The SAAQ will issue a replacement on payment of the required fee and presentation of two valid pieces of identification.

## Renewing a licence

Although a plastic licence with a photo is intended to last four years, the associated driving privilege is only valid for one year. You are required to pay a licence fee each year, even if you do not receive a notice to do so. The portion of fees for the insurance contribution is set based on the number of demerit points in your driving record. If you do not make the payment, you cannot drive a road vehicle. Failure to comply with this obligation is an offence that may result in a minimum fine of \$300, among other penalties.

If your licence has been invalid for three years or more, you will need to pass a knowledge test and a road test before obtaining a licence again.

## Health declaration

You are required to declare any illnesses or disabilities when the SAAQ asks you to provide information on your state of health, and fill out the form for that purpose, in particular when obtaining or renewing a licence. You must also notify the SAAQ of any change in your health.

## Obligations for persons from outside Québec

1

### New residents

If you are a newly arrived resident of Québec, you may drive a passenger vehicle for six months without holding a Québec licence, provided you hold a valid driver's licence.

After six months, you must obtain a Québec licence, and you may have to take a proficiency examination:

- ▶ If you hold a driver's licence for a passenger vehicle (equivalent to Class 5) issued by a Canadian province or territory, the U.S., or a country with which Québec has signed a licence exchange agreement, you may, upon settling in Québec, exchange this licence for a Class 5 licence issued by the SAAQ, without taking a proficiency examination. Go the SAAQ Web site to find out which countries have signed such an agreement.



If you take up residence in Québec and do not come from one of the jurisdictions listed on the previous page, the conditions vary according to the number of years you have held a valid driver's licence corresponding to a Class 5:

- ▶ If you have held a licence for at least one year at the time you take up residence in Québec, you must pass a knowledge exam and road test before the SAAQ can issue you a licence;
- ▶ If you have held a licence for less than one year, the licence is not recognized by the SAAQ; you are therefore subject to the same requirements as applicants for their first driver's licence.

Everyone who comes from outside Québec must obtain a valid Québec driver's licence for any vehicle other than a passenger vehicle.



For more information about conditions for exchanging a driver's licence, contact the SAAQ call centre (514 954-7771 or 1 888 356-6616) or go to the Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca).

## Non-residents

1



If you are from outside Québec, you can drive in Québec for a period of not more than six consecutive months without holding a licence issued by the SAAQ. However, you must hold a valid licence issued by a jurisdiction that grants the same right to Québec residents, drive only a vehicle covered by the licence and comply with the conditions that appear on it.

If you are a student, cooperant or trainee enrolled in a Québec educational institution, you are not required to obtain a Québec licence to drive a passenger vehicle for the duration of your studies or internship, on the condition, however, that your licence has been issued by a jurisdictional authority that grants the same right to Québec residents.

If you hold an international driver's permit issued by your country of origin, you may drive road vehicles authorized by your driver's licence during the validity period of that permit.

An international driver's permit must always be accompanied by the original, valid driver's licence.

# A REVOKED OR SUSPENDED LICENCE

This section is a summary of the consequences of suspensions and revocations in connection with offences committed on the road.

 To find out more, visit the SAAQ Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca).

Revoking a licence means that the licence becomes invalid. If your licence is revoked, you lose your right to drive a road vehicle for a determined period. To get a new licence, you must abide by the conditions provided under the *Highway Safety Code*.

Suspending a licence means that the licence becomes temporarily invalid.

Lastly, suspending your right to obtain a licence means that the SAAQ cannot issue any licence for a determined period. This penalty can also be imposed on people who have never had a licence.

Revocation or suspension of a licence or of the right to obtain one may result from:

- ▶ An unpaid fine for an offence under the *Highway Safety Code* or a municipal traffic or parking regulation;
- ▶ Accumulated demerit points resulting from offences under the *Highway Safety Code*;
- ▶ A conviction for an offence under the *Criminal Code* related to driving a road vehicle;
- ▶ An arrest for an offence related to alcohol- or drug-impaired driving;
- ▶ An interception by a peace officer, in particular following an offence for excessive speeding, street racing or car surfing.

You should note that the SAAQ is informed of certain offences committed in other Canadian provinces or territories or an American state that has made a reciprocity agreement with Québec. Demerit points are entered on a driving record for these offences, in the same way as if they were committed in Québec.

## Suspension for an unpaid fine

If you do not pay fines imposed following an offence under the *Highway Safety Code* or a municipal traffic or parking regulation, the SAAQ will suspend any learner's licence, probationary licence or driver's licence that you hold, or the right to obtain one if you do not hold a licence. A written notice will be sent to you before the suspension comes into effect. The suspension is applied in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Penal Procedure and remains in effect until the SAAQ has been notified that the fine has been paid.

## Consequences of a suspension

- ▶ You are prohibited from driving a vehicle for the duration of any suspension.
- ▶ If you contravene the prohibition to drive a vehicle, a peace officer can seize, at the owner's expense, the vehicle you are driving for a period of 30 days and give the owner a fine of between \$300 and \$600, in addition to judicial costs.

The seizure and impoundment can be for 90 days if you have had, during the 10 previous years, a prohibition from acquiring, registering, renting or leasing, or putting into operation a road vehicle because of an offence for alcohol- or drug-impaired driving.

- ▶ It is prohibited for any such offenders to purchase or lease a road vehicle.
- ▶ It is prohibited for any such offenders to sell or transfer a vehicle that they own.
- ▶ It is prohibited for any such offenders to operate a vehicle registered under their name or allow the vehicle to be operated.

## Demerit points

The SAAQ enters demerit points on the records of drivers who commit certain offences under the *Highway Safety Code*, or any other law or regulation dealing with road safety.

To learn more about such offences and related fines and number of demerit points, please refer to the list of *Highway Safety Code* offences in Chapter 6 of this publication, entitled “Offences and Consequences”.

## Accumulating demerit points

If you hold a learner’s licence or probationary licence and have accumulated four or more demerit points on your record, the SAAQ will revoke your licence.

The SAAQ also revokes licences of drivers who have reached the maximum number of demerit points in the point bracket to which they are subject, based on their age:

- ▶ Drivers **under age 23** ..... **8 points or more;**
- ▶ Drivers **age 23 or 24** ..... **12 points or more;**
- ▶ Drivers **age 25 or older** ..... **15 points or more.**

Points are entered on the driving record **once the SAAQ receives** a notice of judgment that confirms a conviction and not on the date of the offence or judgment. If the maximum number of points has been reached in your driving record, you will receive a notice to inform you of the impending licence revocation.

Driving a vehicle during a penalty period is an offence under the *Highway Safety Code*, subject to a fine of \$600 to \$2,000, as well as the seizure and impoundment of the vehicle driven for 30 days.

If you are a heavy vehicle driver covered by the *Act respecting owners, operators and drivers of heavy vehicles*, a taxi driver or an emergency vehicle driver, you are required to inform the person responsible for the heavy vehicle, or the owner of the taxi or emergency vehicle if your driver's licence (or a licence class) has been changed, suspended or revoked.

## Before obtaining a licence again

If your licence has been revoked or if your right to obtain a licence has been suspended because of demerit points, you can only obtain a new licence after the time period prescribed by the *Highway Safety Code*.

## After four demerit points on record

Under the provisions of the *Highway Safety Code*, four or more demerit points entered on a **new driver's** record result in a licence revocation for a minimum three-month period, during which you cannot obtain a new licence. This measure particularly concerns:

- ▶ Holders of a Class 5 or 6A learner's licence who are not already a driver's licence holder;
- ▶ Holders of a probationary licence;
- ▶ Holders of a Class 6D licence (authorizing them to drive a motorized scooter or moped) or a Class 8 licence (authorizing them to drive a farm tractor) who have had their licence for less than five years.

Given that holders of a learner's licence or probationary licence must have 12 and 24 months of driving experience respectively with a valid licence, the duration of their licence will be prolonged to take into account the period during which the licence was not valid.

At the end of the penalty period, if you held a probationary licence, you must pass a reinstatement test before obtaining a new licence. If you were a learner's licence holder, you are required to go to an SAAQ service centre to obtain a new licence and the right to drive that you previously had.

## After 8, 12 or 15 points on record

Under the provisions of the *Highway Safety Code*, a licence revocation or the suspension of the right to obtain one is required for a 3-, 6- or 12-month period. These periods are determined based on whether it is the first, second or third time that you have accumulated 8, 12 or 15 demerit points (and depending on your age) over the two previous years.

To obtain a new driver's licence, you have to pass a knowledge test. Make an appointment in advance, the date of which will be calculated taking into account that the penalty period must have ended at the time of the test. You will also have to pay the test fees and the required amount for the licence. It is important to note that the cost of the licence will be increased since the insurance contribution payable is set based on the number of demerit points entered on your driving record.

## Demerit points and driving record

Demerit points stay on record for two years following the date of conviction or the date that the fine is paid (paying a fine is equivalent to a conviction).

Each time the SAAQ revokes a driver's licence because of an accumulation of demerit points, it subtracts 8, 12 or 15 points from the record for a driver's licence or 4 points for a learner's licence or a probationary licence, depending on the situation. However, any additional points remain on record for two years following the date of the most recent conviction or payment of a fine.

For example, if you have 14 demerit points on record and you commit an offence that brings the number of points to 16, because at least 15 points are on your record, your licence is revoked, and 15 points are erased from your record. Therefore, one point remains on your record, which will be erased two years after the date of conviction for the most recent offence.

No demerit points are erased when renewing a learner's, probationary or driver's licence, nor when issuing a first licence or obtaining a new licence after a revocation.

## Restricted licence and demerit points

If your licence has been suspended or revoked because of an initial accumulation of demerit points during the two previous years (4 points if it is a probationary licence or 8, 12 or 15 points for a driver's licence, depending on your age), you might be able to obtain a restricted licence. However, your main livelihood must require you to drive a road vehicle. To obtain a restricted licence, file a motion with the Court of Québec and inform the SAAQ. When the motion is heard, you will have to prove to the judge that you need to drive for work.

The order of the judge must be provided to the SAAQ, who will then issue the restricted licence.



## Criminal Code offences

# 1

The *Criminal Code* is a federal law that codifies all criminal offences subject to prosecution in Canada and specifies their corresponding sentences. The *Criminal Code* applies to any individual who commits a criminal offence in a Canadian province or territory.

People found guilty of certain offences described in the section of the *Criminal Code* concerning offences relating to conveyances will have their licence revoked or their right to obtain one suspended. Such offences include:

- ▶ Dangerous driving;
- ▶ Failure to stop (failure to stop when being pursued by police or when involved in an accident);
- ▶ Driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and blood drug concentration (BDC) that is equal to or exceeds the BAC and the BDC for the drug that are prescribed by regulation for instances where alcohol and that drug are combined;
- ▶ Driving with a BDC equal to or exceeding the BDC prescribed by regulation;
- ▶ Driving or having the care or control of a vehicle when the ability to drive is impaired by alcohol or drugs;
- ▶ Driving or having the care or control of a vehicle with a BAC over 0.08 (80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood);
- ▶ Refusal to obey the orders of a peace officer (for example, to provide a breath sample or to submit to a physical coordination test).

## Minimum period during which it is impossible to obtain a licence

After a revocation, it is impossible for an offender to obtain a licence for a minimum period which is determined based on the type of *Criminal Code* offence and the number of convictions. The length of this prohibition corresponds to the period ordered by the judge at the time of conviction and the period prescribed by the *Highway Safety Code*, whichever is longer, based on the following:

- ▶ **First conviction**  
one year, or four years for a failure to stop;
- ▶ **Second conviction**  
(within a 10-year reference period)  
three years, or five years for a failure to stop;
- ▶ **Third conviction**  
five years.

Note that the period during which the driver is not authorized to obtain a new licence could be longer than what is prescribed in the *Highway Safety Code* if the judge issues an order to this effect.

In addition, offenders may have to fulfill certain conditions in order to obtain a new driver's licence (for example, passing a knowledge test). In the case of an impaired driving offence, other conditions also apply (see further on).

When any of the previously listed offences is committed in another province or territory, or when such an offence is committed in an American state with which Québec has signed a reciprocity agreement, the offence is entered on the driver's record, and the driver is subject to the same penalties as if it had occurred in Québec. There are many consequences of *Criminal Code* offences, and they depend on various factors.

Chapter 6 of this publication, entitled "Offences and Consequences" indicates the main offences and provides information on penalties and measures provided under the *Criminal Code* and the *Highway Safety Code* following a conviction for a criminal offence.

## Driving while impaired

1



Driving while impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication is a dangerous behaviour that is severely punished under the *Criminal Code* and the *Highway Safety Code*.

### The Criminal Code

The *Criminal Code* sets out the rules and penalties that apply in the event of driving offences involving alcohol, drugs and medication: prison time, fines, driving prohibition periods, etc.

### You could be arrested and convicted if:

#### **Your blood alcohol concentration is over 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood (0.08)**

At any time you are driving a vehicle, a police officer can order you to blow into an approved screening device or, if he or she suspects you have consumed alcohol, submit you to roadside physical coordination tests. Based on the results, the police officer may arrest you and take you to the police station in order to measure your blood alcohol concentration using a breathalyzer. If your blood alcohol concentration is equal to or over 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood (0.08), you could face *Criminal Code* charges.

## **You have drugs or certain medications in your system**

If a police officer suspects that you have consumed drugs or certain medications, you may be required to submit to physical coordination tests or take a saliva test. These tests are enough for the police officer to place you under arrest and require that you provide a blood sample.

For example, if your blood sample contains a concentration of cannabis (THC) that is above the concentration prescribed by federal regulation, you could face *Criminal Code* charges. The prescribed blood drug concentrations for cannabis are as follows:

- ▶ 2 nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood
- ▶ 5 nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood
- ▶ 2.5 nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood, combined with a blood alcohol concentration equal to or over 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood

For all other federally controlled drugs, any detectable trace at all is enough to face charges, with the exception of GHB.

## **Your ability to drive is impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication**

If a police officer has reasonable grounds to believe that you are impaired by alcohol or drugs (including medication) or a combination of alcohol and a drug, he or she can place you under arrest without having you take any tests.

If a police officer suspects that you have consumed alcohol, drugs or medication, you may be required to submit to physical coordination tests, to blow into an alcohol screening device or to take a saliva test. At any time you are driving a vehicle, a police officer can order you to blow into an approved screening device.

These tests are enough for the police officer to place you under arrest and bring you to the police station in order to have you undergo another series of tests by an evaluating officer. The evaluating officer may measure your blood alcohol concentration using a breathalyzer, if you are suspected of having consumed alcohol. If the evaluating officer concludes that your ability to drive was impaired, you could face *Criminal Code* charges.

### **You refuse to obey the orders of a peace officer**

Refusing to submit to the tests ordered by a police officer is a criminal offence that automatically results in the stiffest penalties.

#### **CARE OR CONTROL OF A VEHICLE**

The law not only prohibits impaired driving, but also having the care or control of a vehicle while impaired. Here are some situations that can have the same consequences as impaired driving:

- ▶ sitting in the driver's seat, even if the vehicle is stopped or broken down
- ▶ being in the vehicle (even asleep on the back seat) and having the possibility of starting the engine
- ▶ being near the vehicle, for example to brush snow off the car or put things in the trunk

The police officer will assess whether it was possible for the person to drive the vehicle and whether he or she intended to drive.

## The Highway Safety Code

The *Highway Safety Code* is a provincial law that applies only in Québec. It sets out administrative measures and penalties that can be imposed for impaired driving.

### **If your blood alcohol concentration is equal to or over 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood (0.08)**

- ▶ Immediate licence suspension for 90 days
- ▶ Immediate seizure and impoundment of the vehicle for 90 days, in the case of a repeat offence

### **If your blood alcohol concentration is equal to or over 160 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood (0.16)**

- ▶ Immediate licence suspension for 90 days
- ▶ Immediate seizure and impoundment of the vehicle for 30 days (90 days, in the case of a repeat offence)
- ▶ Program to assess and reduce the risk of impaired driving
- ▶ Alcohol ignition interlock device (depending on the situation)

### **Refusing to obey the orders of a peace officer**

- ▶ Immediate licence suspension for 90 days
- ▶ Immediate seizure and impoundment of the vehicle for 30 days (90 days, in the case of a repeat offence)
- ▶ Program to assess and reduce the risk of impaired driving
- ▶ Alcohol ignition interlock device (depending on the situation)

### **Zero alcohol for drivers under age 22, learner drivers and holders of a probationary licence**

- ▶ Immediate licence suspension for 90 days
- ▶ 4 demerit points
- ▶ Fine of \$300 to \$600

## **Zero alcohol for bus, minibus and taxi drivers**

- ▶ Prohibition from driving these kinds of vehicles for 24 hours

## **Limit of 0.05 for heavy vehicle drivers**

- ▶ Prohibition from driving these kinds of vehicles for 24 hours

## **Failing the tests carried out by an evaluating officer at the police station (impaired driving due to drugs or medication, or by a combination of alcohol and drugs)**

- ▶ Immediate licence suspension for 90 days
- ▶ Immediate seizure and impoundment of the vehicle for 90 days, in the case of a repeat offence

## **Alternative solutions**

There are a number of alternative solutions to avoid driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs:

- ▶ Take a taxi or public transit
- ▶ Have a designated driver for the evening
- ▶ Sleep over, if you're at a friend's house
- ▶ Call a drive-home service, such as Operation Red Nose or Tolérance Zéro.

# FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DRIVING

At first glance, driving may appear fairly simple. However, just knowing how to start, steer and stop a vehicle is not enough to know how to drive. You also need to know how to make decisions that take into account other road users, and traffic and road conditions.

In addition to offences, the annual number of road accident victims is still high enough to show that driving is difficult.

Driving a vehicle calls on you to act on what you already know, as well as on information you gather while travelling. You need to be aware of what is going on around you, plan what to do and anticipate the reactions of other road users in order to make decisions. Your decisions reflect your assessment of a given situation. For example, when approaching an intersection, it is not enough simply to recognize a stop sign. To decide how fast to slow down and where to stop, you also have to assess the distance before the stop sign, take into account the speed of the vehicle, the condition of the roadway and whether there are other road users.

Whether you are a novice or an experienced driver, you will notice that most of the time your driving is subject to influences like your health, personality and environment. Your decisions are influenced by your dominant character traits, feelings and your general state.

Because driving is complex, it is important to remember that your physical and mental condition are important and are directly connected to your skill in using the road network.

## Vision

Vision plays a fundamental role in safely driving an automobile. Studies have shown that 90% of the information necessary for driving is gathered through sight. Any significant impairment to your visual functions decreases your performance on the road, especially when it comes to making decisions, which increases your risk of accident and the unfortunate consequences that can result.

Vision has several functions that help you form an accurate representation or picture of your environment. If one of these functions is lacking or seriously weakened, especially if you are not aware of it, you may be unfit to drive.

## Visual acuity

Visual acuity is the ability to clearly distinguish the details of objects at a certain distance. The level of precision can vary greatly from one person to the next. Some people whose visual acuity is lower than average do not realize that they are not seeing many details they think they see as well as anyone else. This phenomenon is particularly associated with aging and a person's state of health. Only regular examinations can detect a progressive deterioration of visual acuity.

## Field of vision

Your field of vision is the expanse of space in which objects are perceived while your eyes focus on one particular point. Your field of vision must be large enough for you to see, in a single glance, all of the obstacles that could appear suddenly in front of or on either side of your vehicle. A clear field of vision is just as important as good eyesight. If it is obscured, your risk of accident increases.

As a vehicle accelerates, your visual field shrinks, in the same way that it does when your eye focuses on one object. Drugs, alcohol and fatigue often produce the same effect. Eye problems or neurological problems can also cause a significant loss of visual field.

Glasses with temples that are too wide can also have an impact on your visual field.

## Stereoscopic vision

Stereoscopic vision, or depth vision, makes it possible for you to accurately situate objects in three-dimensional space. You can also assess the distance separating the vehicle from other objects around it, even if those objects are in motion.

## Corrective lenses

It is dangerous to drive without wearing any corrective lenses that you may require (glasses or contact lenses). If you have this requirement, it appears on your driver's licence as Condition A. Failure to comply with the condition is an offence, and makes you liable to a fine.

## Night vision

No matter what kind of vision you have, driving at night is riskier than driving during the day. Drivers have to adapt their driving because of the limited range of their headlights.

Road signs are designed to reflect light, so that they can be seen from far away when a vehicle's headlights hit them, which is not the case for non-reflective objects. You can only see those close up. For this reason, it is important to base your estimate on the visibility of reflective objects so that you do not misjudge the range of your headlights.

The two following factors are important in night vision:

- ▶ Ability to see in low-light conditions;
- ▶ Resistance to glare.

As you get older, your ability to recover after encountering glare decreases. When driving at night becomes particularly demanding, you should be even more cautious.

Lastly, you should not wear dark glasses when driving at night, because they reduce your visual acuity.

## Physical problems

Some physical illnesses can be direct causes of road accidents. Health care professionals can notify the SAAQ of the names and addresses of people 14 years of age or older who are considered to be unfit, whether medically or due to a visual problem, to drive a road vehicle. No action in damages can be brought against a health care professional who makes such a report.

The SAAQ can suspend your licence, change its conditions or even refuse to issue a licence because of your state of health. The SAAQ can also require you to undergo a new examination or assessment by a health care professional. All responsible drivers should comply with recommendations of their doctor.

Some discomfort is temporary, but physical problems like a migraine, fever, etc. make driving difficult and demanding. In such circumstances, you should avoid driving. If you experience physical discomfort or illness while driving, you should stop your vehicle in a safe area.

## Fatigue and mental state

Fatigue at the wheel should not be taken lightly, since it can decrease your performance even if you are a careful driver, and can sometimes have disastrous consequences.

Fatigue can cause drowsiness, which can also be caused by other things, such as a heavy meal. However, the most common causes of drowsiness are lack of sleep, a monotonous road, lack of familiarity with night driving or when the temperature of your car is too warm.

Drowsiness affects your attention. You should regard warning signs of fatigue as a clear warning that you are risking an accident.

Because fatigue slows down movements in general, when you feel tired, yawn, have itchy eyes, or brief hallucinations, you should know that it is time to stop. Stretching exercises can be a good way of lessening fatigue on long trips. Sometimes, all you need is a few minutes of rest to bring back your alertness, but sleep is really the only way to recoup your strength when drowsiness sets in.

Your physical condition is important for driving, but so is your mental or psychological condition. If you are experiencing psychological stress or strong emotions like sadness or anger, you should not drive.

## Electronic devices

Drivers are prohibited from using an electronic device while operating a vehicle. From the moment a driver holds an electronic device in his or her hands or in any other way, he or she is presumed to be using the device. The law applies to all devices, whether or not they are activated, such as:

- ▶ Cell phones;
- ▶ MP3 players or portable multimedia players;
- ▶ Portable satellite radios;
- ▶ Electronic tablets;
- ▶ Screens that display information that is not of use when driving;
- ▶ Devices that display emails and make it possible to browse the Internet.



While the hands-free operation of an electronic device is permitted, it is not a safer option and not advisable, as the simple act of talking on a telephone is a distraction.

## Meaning of the expression “while driving”

If you bring your vehicle to a stop for road signs, traffic signals or traffic obstructions, you are still considered to be driving. You are considered to be controlling a vehicle so as to comply with road signs and traffic signals or to avoid traffic obstructions. Therefore, if you are waiting at a red light or are in a traffic jam, you are considered to be driving a vehicle and therefore cannot use an electronic device.

However, if you bring your vehicle to a safe and legal stop at the side of the road to use an electronic device, you are no longer considered to be driving, even if the vehicle's engine is running.

## CBs are authorized

Use of devices that have been installed in the vehicle dashboard or are mounted on the dashboard and only the microphone or receiver is held in the hand, are not prohibited.

This applies to high frequency radio communication equipment, such as central battery telephone systems or portable transmitters-receivers, more commonly known as CBs and walkie-talkies.

## Safety tips

As a motorist, you are responsible for driving safely. You should therefore keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ Turn off your electronic device before leaving and let your voice mail take all messages.
- ▶ If you absolutely have to use your electronic device, pull off the road to a place where parking is allowed and it is safe for you and other road users. For example:
  - ▷ The side of a road where the speed limit is 70 km/h or less;
  - ▷ A parking lot;
  - ▷ A service area.
- ▶ Remember that, except in an emergency, no one is allowed to bring a vehicle to a stop on the shoulder of a highway or on highway access and exit ramps.
- ▶ You could also ask a passenger to handle the device or make a call for you.

## Legal consequences

### First offence

- ▶ Five demerit points added to the offender's driving record;
- ▶ \$300 to \$600 fine.

### Repeat offence

For a repeat offence, in addition to another five demerit points, the minimum fine doubles to \$600 and the offender's driver's licence is immediately suspended as follows:

- ▶ First repeat offence\*: 3 days
- ▶ Second repeat offence\*: 7 days
- ▶ Third or additional repeat offence\*: 30 days

\* 2-year reference period.

## Alcohol

Drinking and driving is a major social concern, with good reason! In Québec, alcohol is a factor in collisions associated with approximately 32% of deaths, 16% of serious injuries and 5% of minor injuries. On average, from 2006 to 2010, these percentages translated into 185 deaths and more than 2,500 injuries annually.

Drinking alcohol can make drivers take risks. Today we recognize that alcohol decreases driving ability. The more you drink, the less capable you are of making good decisions in terms of road safety.

Lastly, if you drive while you are impaired by alcohol, you have a very high risk of causing a serious accident, which could result both in penalties that have become even harsher and in dire consequences.

Drinking a single glass of alcohol can sometimes cause the effects previously mentioned, even if your blood alcohol level is less than 0.08 (80 mg per 100 ml of blood), since already 0.05 (50 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood) in an average adult can cause significant impairment. In addition, it is important to emphasize that young drivers are more affected by alcohol, even in small amounts. For example, with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.03 (30 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood), the risk of being involved in a fatal accident is three times higher for a driver between 16 and 19 years of age.

These effects can also happen quickly if you have not eaten or are tired. The more you drink, the more you risk becoming impaired. If you have been drinking, you simply should not drive.

There are many opportunities to drink. It is important to remember to limit the effects of alcohol and to get in the habit of moderation. If you are having family or friends over, you should encourage them to be cautious.

Below are a series of things you can do, but you should still be careful:

- ▶ Drink slowly and in small quantities;
- ▶ Eat;
- ▶ Suggest non-alcoholic beverages (and why not water?);
- ▶ Pace yourself;
- ▶ Stop serving alcoholic beverages at least one hour before the end of the evening;
- ▶ Make arrangements not to drive when you have been drinking, for example, have someone else drive you, take a taxi or the bus, or use a drive-home service;
- ▶ If one of your guests has had too much to drink, ask him or her to stay over;
- ▶ Plan ahead.

Some people wrongly believe that drinking alcohol regularly is a guarantee against becoming impaired. Although, it is recognized that the body of a person who drinks regularly adapts, only an illusion of sobriety is apparent and the person can overestimate his or her driving ability.

Certain suggested ways of decreasing the effects of alcohol are rarely effective. For example, some people believe that eating while drinking makes the body eliminate alcohol more quickly. Alcohol takes effect in the blood more slowly because of food, but it does not prevent you from reaching an elevated blood alcohol level.

Remember that when you drink alcohol, 90% of it is eliminated by your liver. The liver of a person in good health works at a regular rhythm, and it can only eliminate a certain number of milligrams per hour.

Taking a walk or shower does not work either. There is no miraculous way of eliminating alcohol and its effects. Only time can do that.

---

## Main effects of drinking alcohol on driving

---

### On observation

---

- ▶ Rather than scanning the road ahead, to the sides and occasionally behind, if you are under the influence of alcohol, you tend to focus on one spot or object ahead: you pay less attention to vehicles, persons and objects on or near the road.
  - ▶ You are less able to estimate distances between objects.
  - ▶ You are less able to adapt to darkness.
  - ▶ At night, you have difficulty focusing after encountering the glare of an oncoming vehicle and the time it takes to adjust after the vehicle has passed is longer than normal.
  - ▶ You have a decreased sense of danger, and you therefore take more risks.
- 

### On decision making

---

- ▶ Brain activity is slowed.
  - ▶ You are less able to recognize a problem situation.
  - ▶ Making a quick decision is difficult.
- 

### On execution

---

- ▶ The effects of alcohol result in overconfidence in your abilities.
  - ▶ Slower brain activity results in a loss of muscular coordination. Since you are slow to realize that you have to act, limb movements are often abrupt and imprecise. You find it difficult to stay in your lane, go through an intersection, change lanes, make a turn, control the vehicle and even come to a stop. Alcohol can also affect your balance if you are riding a motorcycle.
-

## Drugs and medication

1

All drugs (cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines, etc.) and certain medications (anxiolytics, antidepressants, sedatives, etc.) have effects that impair your ability to drive. In combination with alcohol, the risk of accident increases significantly.

### Effects of cannabis on driving

While cannabis use may be legal, driving under the influence of cannabis is dangerous and prohibited. Cannabis causes a decrease in vigilance and concentration, slower reflexes, poor coordination, longer reaction times and impaired judgment.

Other possible effects

- ▶ A strong tendency not to notice road signs and traffic signals
- ▶ Veering off the road
- ▶ Difficulty maintaining a constant trajectory
- ▶ Unsafe passing manoeuvres
- ▶ Longer braking time
- ▶ Difficulty reacting in emergency situations

### Medications: Some safety precautions

Drivers taking medication must make a reasonable assessment of whether it is compatible with safely operating a vehicle.

Taken alone, some medications have effects similar to alcohol. This is particularly true for minor tranquilizers or sleeping pills.

Antihistamines (in the form of syrup or pills) to relieve allergy or cold symptoms can also cause drowsiness. If you are using this type of medication, you should read the label carefully and ask a physician or pharmacist about side effects and the likely impact on your ability to drive.

If you are taking medication, you should not drink alcohol. Combining substances is dangerous because the effects of medication and alcohol can be amplified, multiplying the effects of both, and causing you significant impairment, making you unable to drive.

## Your mind-set

Although, as a driver, your physical health is important, so is your mental health. Your personality traits often make themselves known through your behaviour at the controls of a motor vehicle, which provides an individual with a feeling of independence and serves as an outlet for emotions.

Some drivers show self-respect and consideration. In a difficult driving situation, their decisions are based on tolerance, patience and foresight. They are fully aware of the inherent danger involved in operating a motor vehicle, and their skills and driving habits improve with experience.

However, some situations are more likely to lead to conflicts between drivers, for example, city rush hours or getting on and off highways. People react in a wide variety of ways to traffic jams. To avoid making a bad situation worse, you need to moderate your behaviour and anticipate possible danger.

Moreover, in order to avoid dangerous situations, the *Highway Safety Code* specifies that all road users must be careful and considerate when travelling on a public highway, especially toward more vulnerable users. Accordingly, cyclists must protect pedestrians by adopting safe practices when riding. Drivers must protect more vulnerable users (motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians, etc.) by exhibiting extra care in their presence. Vulnerable users, for their part, have a duty to adopt behaviours that enhance their own safety.

Regardless of the cause of a traffic problem, it is sometimes best just to slow down and, if necessary, pull off to the side of the road. This does not mean being passive; it means being alert.

There are also other ways to avoid conflict situations. To be a good driver, you should plan ahead, choosing travel times and routes that make it possible to avoid traffic congestion and the likelihood of an accident. These are preferable alternatives to using the shoulder of the road or stop-and-go tactics to move forward faster than the person ahead.

## Observation

Observing the immediate surroundings and checking on all sides of the vehicle are key to determining if you can safely pass a vehicle, change lanes, proceed through an intersection or merge with traffic. By looking ahead of you, on both sides and behind, you gather the information you need to decide when you should steer your vehicle in a given direction. Then, if necessary, you will be able to yield the right of way to other road users and adapt your speed to traffic conditions. Otherwise, you will be in conflict with other users and have a greater risk of being involved in an accident or other unpleasant situation.

You need to think about what could happen if you go through an intersection without stopping or checking, or if you pass someone without checking to see if there is another vehicle in the oncoming lane. These types of behaviours can often result in serious accidents and victims who had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Negligence increases the risk of accidents.

## Staying alert and exercising your judgment

A greater number of accidents occur at night and on weekends, so you should be especially vigilant during these times. Any situation could become distracting when you are driving. The possibility of human error is all around, in the vehicle ahead or behind, in the oncoming vehicle or the one passing you. You have to stay alert.

You also need to use your judgment at all times. You should constantly exercise caution, since possibilities for error and accidents are numerous.

Unexpected situations may call for reduced speed. Road building or repair work, a mishap, fog, etc., may test your patience and leave little time for proper response.

All drivers will encounter situations that are beyond their control, for example a traffic light may be defective, the driver in front may appear lost or is driving too slowly or any other unexpected situation may cause you to lengthen or change your route.

This is when you need to exercise judgment. Obviously, no one takes pleasure in yielding to or being intimidated by other drivers or appearing unable to take a risk. However, a hasty action can lead to a dramatic situation. Inconvenience or delay is the small price a smart driver is willing to pay for safer roads.

# THE VEHICLE

2

---

In Québec, all road vehicles, regardless of their use, must be registered in with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), unless they are exempt under the *Highway Safety Code*.

In addition, vehicle owners must pay the required annual amount if they want to operate their vehicle.

The *Highway Safety Code* and its regulations also require vehicle owners to maintain their vehicles properly and to ensure that they have the features and accessories required by law.

# VEHICLE REGISTRATION



## General provisions

If you are a vehicle owner, you are required to apply for your registration as soon as you take possession of your vehicle or before the temporary registration obtained from a vehicle dealer expires. If you are newly settled in Québec, you have to apply to register your vehicle within six months of your arrival.

The registration remains valid for as long as the vehicle and the owner remain the same.

When the vehicle is registered, the SAAQ issues a licence plate and registration certificate that corresponds to the vehicle owner and category type, its use and place of operation.

## Vehicles exempt from registration

Registration is not required for road vehicles that are not used on public roads, including the following most common ones:

- ▶ Snowblowers with a net weight of 900 kg or less;
- ▶ Farm tractors that are not used on public roads;
- ▶ Snowmobiles with a net weight of 55 kg or less and a maximum speed under 15 km/h;
- ▶ Snowmobiles, with a net weight of 450 kg or less that are owned by a person who does not reside in Québec provided that the snowmobile is registered in compliance with the laws of the owner's place of residence or head office;
- ▶ Motorized toy vehicles that can carry one person;
- ▶ Golf carts;
- ▶ Garden tractors, not including farm tractors, and riding mowers that carry one person;
- ▶ Road vehicles used exclusively inside a building.

Exceptionally, a farmer's agricultural machinery, although it is exempt from registration, can be operated on a public roadway.

## Obtaining registration and putting your vehicle into operation

### Requirements

To register a vehicle and obtain the right to operate it on the road, you must:

- ▶ Meet the terms and conditions set out by regulation;
- ▶ Pay all the fees set by regulation;
- ▶ Following the purchase of a used vehicle, submit the odometer reading at the time of registration.

In addition, you could be prohibited from registering a vehicle or having the right to register a vehicle if you have an unpaid fine, or if you are a repeat impaired driving offender.

Owners of heavy vehicles (heavy vehicles or combinations of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 4,500 kg or more, buses, minibuses, tow trucks or road vehicles used to transport hazardous material) must enter their vehicles in the register of owners and operators of heavy vehicles kept by the Commission des Transports du Québec.

## Cost of registration

The cost of registration varies based on the type of vehicle, and its use and place of operation. It includes:

- ▶ The registration fee;
- ▶ The contribution to the Québec automobile insurance plan and related taxes;
- ▶ Administrative charges;
- ▶ A public transit contribution, if applicable;
- ▶ Any additional fees set by regulation to register specific road vehicles.

## Mandatory liability insurance

The *Automobile Insurance Act* requires every vehicle owner to have third-party liability insurance coverage in the amount of at least \$50,000. This is a legal obligation if you plan to drive on public roads in Québec.

## Special requirement for minors

If you are under 18, and you want to register a vehicle, you have to provide the SAAQ with written consent from your parent or legal guardian.

## Cases in which vehicle registration may be denied

The SAAQ will not register a vehicle if you cannot prove that you are the sole or joint owner, or prove that the vehicle is owned by a business in which you have an interest, or if you are subject to a measure prohibiting you from registering a vehicle.

## Conditions relating to vehicle registration

### Signature

You must sign your registration certificate as soon as you receive it.

### Change of address

If your name is on a vehicle registration certificate, you are required to inform the SAAQ of any change of address within 30 days. You can carry out the change of address by Internet (saaq.gouv.qc.ca).

### Motor vehicle liability insurance card

If you drive, or have care or control of a motor vehicle, you must carry the vehicle's registration certificate and vehicle liability insurance card, and be able to show them upon request by a peace officer.

### Licence plate installation

Securely attach your licence plate to the rear of your vehicle or elsewhere, as determined by regulation.

However, owners of combination vehicles designed to pull a trailer (road tractor with a fifth wheel) must attach the licence plate to the front of the vehicle.



## Legible and clean licence plates

The SAAQ determines what may appear on a licence plate.

Keep your licence plate free of any matter that might prevent it from being clearly legible.

The plate also needs to be properly lit at the rear to make it visible at night.

A law enforcement officer may require you to clean the licence plate if it is so dirty that it is hard to read.

## No other plates allowed

No plate that might be confused with one issued by the SAAQ or an equivalent authority in another jurisdiction may be affixed to a vehicle, unless another Québec statute so requires.

## Certificate and plate replacement

If your registration certificate is damaged, illegible or lost, apply to the SAAQ for a replacement. A fee will be charged for the new certificate.

Anyone who operates a vehicle with a licence plate that is so damaged that it is illegible is subject to a fine.

## Annual registration fees

To retain the right to drive your vehicle, you have to pay registration fees every year no later than the due date set by regulation.

**No grace period is allowed for late payment.** Pay the total amount on the payment notice unless you are storing your vehicle before the beginning of the new registration period. Additional charges are applied when registration fees are not paid before or by the deadline.

You are not permitted to drive your vehicle if you owe the SAAQ any amounts.

## Discarding a vehicle

You are required to inform the SAAQ if you discard a vehicle because it can no longer be used and declare that you will not drive the vehicle anymore. You can do so by phone or on the SAAQ Web site.

Before a discarded vehicle can be authorized for use once more on a public roadway, the vehicle needs to undergo a mechanical inspection at your expense, and you have to ensure that all repairs required to allow the vehicle to meet regulatory standards are made.

## Storing a vehicle

If you want to store your vehicle for an indefinite amount of time, you have to inform the SAAQ. You cannot drive your vehicle during the storage period, but the licence plate must remain on it. The SAAQ will issue you a receipt to confirm that the vehicle is in storage. If you make the storage application by telephone or on the SAAQ Web site, you will be sent a letter confirming the vehicle's change of status.

## Reimbursement

When a vehicle you own is discarded, placed in storage, sold, damaged, stolen or exported, you are entitled to be reimbursed for part of the amount paid to cover registration fees and the Québec automobile insurance plan contribution.

Note that a compliant certificate of mechanical inspection, issued by an SAAQ agent, is required for a vehicle stored for more than 12 months if you want to put it back into operation.

## Ownership transfer

When the ownership of a vehicle is transferred, supporting documents are required, for example a piece of identification, power of attorney where another person is being represented, or a document giving parental consent in the case of a minor. You cannot transfer ownership of a road vehicle registered in your name if your registration or your right to register a vehicle has been suspended for an unpaid fine, or for a repeat offence in certain cases of impaired driving.

## Vehicle purchased from an individual

When buying a vehicle from an individual, both the buyer and the person selling the vehicle have to go an SAAQ service outlet. To cancel the vehicle registration, the seller has to hand in the registration certificate. Then a new registration certificate confirming the buyer as the new owner is issued. Before purchasing a vehicle, check with the SAAQ to make sure that the owner is entitled to sell it.

Société de l'assurance automobile <b>Québec</b>		N° DE PLAQUE ABC000-5	N° DE DOSSIER L600703033309	N° DE CTO
<b>CERTIFICAT D'IMMATRICULATION</b>		N° DE DOSSIER L600703033309	DELIVRANCE AN MOIS JOUR 2005 03 02	EXPIRATION AN MOIS JOUR 2005 09 30
NOM ET PRÉNOM DU PROPRIÉTAIRE ENREGISTRÉ LARUE PRUDENCE		N° DE CERTIFICAT SF0627BBK		
NOM ET PRÉNOM DU PROPRIÉTAIRE OU DU LOCATAIRE À LONG TERME LARUE PRUDENCE				
MARQUE FORD	MODÈLE 1978	CYLINDRÉE 3,2 L	MASSÉ NETTE 1000	# ESSEUX
N° D'IDENTIFICATION DU VÉHICULE 22345678912345678		N° D'UNITÉ		
		CATEGORIE D'USAGE AU-SQ-SP-PROME		SP-A1
		SIGNATURE DU PROPRIÉTAIRE OU DU LOCATAIRE À LONG TERME		
		<b>SPECIMEN</b>		La Société

## Exchanging vehicles

When two people exchange road vehicles, each vehicle owner must apply for new registration and pay applicable fees.

## Transaction through a dealer

If you sell a road vehicle to a dealer, you must give the dealer the registration certificate, after having endorsed it.

If you do not purchase a new vehicle, you have to turn in the licence plate to the SAAQ.

If you do purchase a new vehicle, you must apply to the SAAQ for its registration. If you wish, you can use the same licence plate.

# RULES ABOUT ROAD VEHICLES AND THEIR EQUIPMENT<sup>1</sup>

## Mandatory identification numbers

Road vehicles must bear manufacturers' serial numbers. The numbers manufacturers assign are recorded by the SAAQ. The SAAQ may also assign and affix an identification number.

Vehicle owners who find that their vehicle does not bear a serial number must apply to the SAAQ to obtain one.

Changing, making illegible, defacing, removing or replacing a vehicle's serial number is prohibited without prior consent from the SAAQ.

## Compulsory equipment and accessories

All road vehicles must include the features and accessories that the manufacturer is required to include under statutes and regulations in effect in Québec.

Buses and minibuses used to carry school children must be equipped with signs at the front and rear that read "ÉCOLIERS" (school children).

1. Farm-use vehicles are subject to specific traffic rules and safety standards.

If school children are carried in a passenger vehicle, the owner must install one of these signs on the vehicle roof, facing the front and back of the vehicle. The signs must be removed or covered when the vehicle is not being used to provide school transportation.

## Lights and signals

Make sure that the lights and signals required for your type of vehicle are in good working order and that they have not been soiled or obstructed in such a way as to make them less effective.

# 2

### Road vehicles

All vehicles other than a motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter travelling on public roads must be equipped at the front with at least two single or twin white headlights, two white or amber parking lights, and two white or amber turn-signal lights.

At the rear, all vehicles other than motorcycles, mopeds or motorized scooters, including trailers and semitrailers, must have two red tail lights, two red reflectors (which may be part of the lens), two red brake lights, two red or amber turn-signal lights, a white backup light, and a white licence plate light. They must also have a red parking light and side marker light at the rear and an amber parking light and side marker light at the front on either side.

In addition, all vehicles that are 9.1 metres long or more must be equipped with an amber parking light and side marker light on either side, halfway between the front and rear side marker lights.

Road vehicles and vehicle combinations that are more than two metres wide must also be equipped with lights, reflectors or flares.

## Special rules for vehicles over 2.03 metres wide

In addition to the lights required above, road vehicles and combinations of road vehicles that are over 2.03 metres wide must have an amber clearance light on either side and three amber identification lights in front, and at the rear, a red clearance light on either side and three red identification lights.

## Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters

Motorcycles, mopeds and scooters must be equipped with at least one white headlight, one red tail light, two white or yellow turn-signal lights at the front, two red or yellow turn-signal lights at the rear and one red brake light at the rear. In addition, motorcycles must have two yellow reflectors at the front and two red reflectors at the rear (one on each side).

## School buses

Buses and minibuses used to carry school children must be equipped with two flashing red lights at the front and rear, two flashing amber lights at the front and rear as well as a mandatory stop signal consisting of a retractable stop sign or retractable arm with a stop sign (ARRÊT) with flashing red lights that works in tandem with the red flashing lights on the vehicle. This stop signal must be installed on the outside near the driver's seat. These signals and lights must be used while children are boarding or leaving the bus.

## Flashing and rotating lights

Rotating and flashing lights are reserved for certain types of vehicles:

- ▶ **Red** flashing or rotating lights are reserved for emergency vehicles;
- ▶ **Blue** lights are reserved for police vehicles;
- ▶ **Amber** lights are reserved for service, equipment, escort, snow removal and road maintenance vehicles as well as vehicles covered by a special permit (oversize vehicles);
- ▶ **Green** lights are reserved for emergency vehicles at disaster sites or for indicating a command post.

If these lights are installed on unauthorized vehicles, they can be confiscated at the owner's expense.

## Fog lights

Optional fog lights must meet prescribed standards and be placed at the front of the vehicle at the same level—never higher—than headlights.

## Brakes

Road vehicles and combinations of road vehicles must be equipped with at least one service brake system that is in good working order and capable of applying sufficient braking power to each load-bearing wheel to stop the vehicle quickly in case of emergency, as well as parking brakes that keep it at a full stop. Trailers with a gross vehicle weight of 1,300 kg or less than half of the net weight of the vehicle towing it are exempt from this requirement.

It is an offence to drive a vehicle on which the brake system has been modified or altered in such a way as to reduce its effectiveness.

A law enforcement officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that the brake system of a road vehicle is defective or out of order may have the vehicle impounded or towed to the nearest suitable place for storage at the owner's expense until the situation has been rectified.

## Alteration of seat belts

It is prohibited to drive a road vehicle in which the seat belt provided for the driver or for the seat occupied by a passenger is missing or has been modified or rendered inoperative. A fine of \$200 may be imposed.

## Air bags

Deactivation of an air bag installed in a motor vehicle is prohibited, except by means of a unit installed by the vehicle manufacturer prior to sale to the initial owner. Where an air bag requires replacement (due to deployment or damage), only new original manufacturer parts may be used. Electronic control modules for air bags and seat belts with a pretensioner also have to be replaced by new parts. Failing that, a fine of \$300 to \$600 may be imposed.

## Screens

Use of certain screens in a road vehicle is authorized if you can see the information displayed from the driver's seat and the conditions for installation and use are compliant.

For additional information on this subject or to find out which screens are prohibited in vehicles, refer to the "Road Safety" section of the SAAQ Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca).

## Radar detectors

The installation or sale of a radar detector for a vehicle is prohibited.

Driving a vehicle equipped with such a device is prohibited. A peace officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a vehicle is equipped with a radar warning device may stop the vehicle for an inspection. If a device is found, the officer is authorized to confiscate it at the owner's expense, giving the driver a receipt. The device is then turned over to the SAAQ, which may dispose of it after 90 days.

## Horns

All vehicles must be equipped with a horn, which should only be used when necessary.

Only emergency vehicles may be equipped with sirens or devices that produce a similar warning sound or with mechanisms for changing traffic lights.

Under the *Highway Safety Code*, law enforcement officers may have an unauthorized siren or similar warning device removed from a vehicle at the owner's expense. The officer gives the driver a receipt before handing the siren or device over to the SAAQ. This rule does not apply to anti-theft devices installed on vehicles.

## Exhaust system

Your vehicle's exhaust system must include all components provided by the manufacturer, such as the manifold, pipes, muffler, supports and fasteners.

These parts must all be securely fastened and none of them should have any gas leaks.

The sale of a vehicle with a sub-standard exhaust system for use on a public roadway is prohibited.

Modifying an exhaust system to make it noisier, suppress it or reduce its effectiveness is also prohibited.

## Windshields and windows

Vehicle windshields and windows must be made of transparent glass and manufactured or treated in such a way as to significantly reduce their risk of shattering or being broken. They must be free of any material that might reduce visibility for the driver.

No substance that hinders visibility or darkens the glass may be applied to or sprayed on the windshield. A strip no more than 15 cm wide may, however, be placed along the upper edge of the windshield. Side windows on either side of the driver must let in at least 70% of the light when measured with a photometer.

A peace officer can require a driver to clean or clear the windshield or windows of any matter.

## Rearview mirrors

All motor vehicles, except for motorcycles, mopeds and scooters, must have at least two securely attached rearview mirrors in good working order: one inside, in the centre of the upper part of the windshield, and one outside the driver's side.

When use of the inside mirror is impossible, an outside mirror (side mirror) must be attached to the right side of the vehicle.

Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters must be equipped with a securely attached side mirror on each side.

## Speedometer and odometer

All motor vehicles (except mopeds, scooters and motorcycles with an engine size up to 125 cc) must be equipped with a speedometer and odometer in good working order.

## Bumpers

Motor vehicle bumpers must be securely fixed in their intended location.

## Tires

Owners must ensure that their vehicles are equipped with tires that meet established standards for use on public roadways and that they are in good condition.

Using studded tires is permitted from October 15 to May 1 for commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of no more than 3,000 kg as well as for passenger vehicles and taxis, as long as the vehicles are equipped with studded tires at either end of the axle, and if they are equipped with studded tires on the front axle, then they are also so equipped on the rear axle.

## Winter driving

Under the *Highway Safety Code*, from December 1 to March 15, all taxis and passenger vehicles registered in Québec must be equipped with winter tires. This requirement also applies to rental passenger vehicles in Québec.

Before leaving, drivers must clear snow and/or ice from the windows, roof and hood of their vehicle. Drivers must also make sure that nothing can come loose and separate from their vehicle (snow, ice, etc.) while driving. **It is not only common sense, it is mandatory!**

## Winter tire exemption certificate

The regulation, which comes under the responsibility of Ministère des Transports, makes provisions for certain exemptions and cases for which a certificate authorizing a passenger vehicle or taxi to operate without winter tires may be issued.



For information about exemptions and cases where a certificate can be issued, consult the Ministère des Transports Web site.

## Fenders and mudguards

Motor vehicles or combinations of road vehicles that are not fitted with permanent mudguards that are at least as wide as the tread of the tires or whose bottom edge of the rear portion is no more than 350 mm from the ground when the vehicle is not loaded must be equipped with detachable mudguards of resistant material that are at least as wide as the tread of the tires or whose bottom edge of the rear portion is no more than 350 mm from the ground when the vehicle is not loaded. Farm tractors and agricultural machinery manufactured without fenders are not covered by this rule.

## Natural gas and propane vehicles

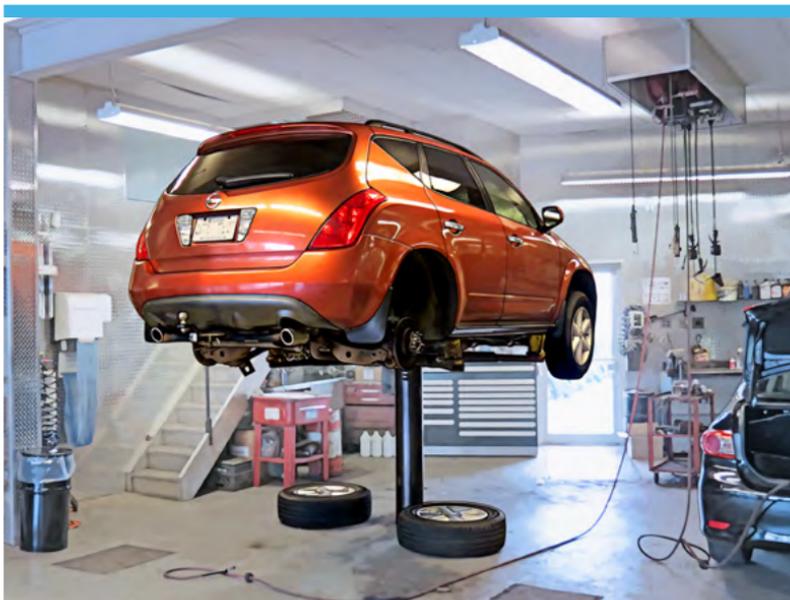
Natural gas or propane vehicles must carry a compliance sticker certifying that the vehicle's fuel system meets the requirements of the *Regulation respecting safety standards for road vehicles*. Inspections must be carried out every five years. The sticker must be affixed by a mechanic with the proper certificate of qualification, on a vehicle running on propane or natural gas, whether since its manufacture or following a conversion. Failing to comply with this requirement renders a vehicle owner liable to a \$300 to \$600 fine.

## Modifying a vehicle

Except with prior authorization by the SAAQ, no one may alter the frame, body or mechanisms of a vehicle intended for use on a public way if the alteration might decrease vehicle stability or braking effectiveness.

The SAAQ's approval is also required before making an alteration that would change the vehicle type.

# MECHANICAL INSPECTION



The SAAQ has exclusive authority over mechanical inspection of road vehicles and the issue of inspection certificates and compliance stickers.

Every year, the SAAQ inspects thousands of vehicles stopped by peace officers.

Accredited agents located throughout Québec carry out mechanical inspections. Agents are businesses accredited by the SAAQ to carry out inspections of light vehicles (gross vehicle weight rating under 4,500 kg) or heavy vehicles (gross vehicle weight rating of 4,500 kg or more), for a fee.

A law enforcement officer may require a mechanical inspection if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a vehicle has been modified or constitutes a public danger. Officers may also impound a vehicle at the owner's expense, so that an inspection can be carried out.

## Mandatory Mechanical Inspection

### Vehicles Covered

The following road vehicles must undergo mechanical inspections at least once a year (every 12 months):

- ▶ Taxis
- ▶ Motorcycles and scooters used by a driving school (including motorcycles and scooters registered for off-road use)
- ▶ Emergency vehicles
- ▶ Vehicles with a GVWR of 4,500 kg or more
- ▶ Tow trucks with a GVWR of less than 4,500 kg.

The following road vehicles must undergo mechanical inspections at least once every 6 months:

- ▶ Vehicles used by a driving school, other than motorcycles and scooters
- ▶ Vehicles used to transport school children, including taxis
- ▶ Buses and minibuses

### Vehicles Exempt

- ▶ Vehicles with a net mass of 4,000 kg or less that originally had an open truck box and a tailgate and that are registered as passenger vehicles within the meaning of the *Regulation respecting road vehicle registration*
- ▶ Combinations of road vehicles where each vehicle that is part of the combination has a GVWR of less than 4,500 kg
- ▶ Sport utility vehicles with a net mass of 4,000 kg or less
- ▶ Tool vehicles
- ▶ Farm tractors and farm machinery

- ▶ Construction and farm trailers
- ▶ Detachable axles
- ▶ Motor homes and house trailers

Law enforcement officers may also order a mechanical inspection and set the deadline for the inspection if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a vehicle has undergone changes or is in a condition that constitutes a danger.

## Inspection outcome

If the vehicle meets regulatory standards, the SAAQ or its agent issues a certificate of mechanical inspection and a compliance sticker.

Where minor repairs are needed, the owner or driver is given 48 hours to make the repairs or have the vehicle repaired. After 48 hours, the vehicle cannot be put back on the road if it has not been repaired or if compliance has not been proven to the SAAQ.

A vehicle that requires major repairs cannot be used on the road until it is shown to meet regulatory standards.

Furthermore, an owner who refuses or fails to submit a vehicle for mechanical inspection or who refuses to produce a certificate of mechanical inspection will not be allowed to drive the vehicle.

# DOING YOUR OWN INSPECTION

The vehicle equipment and features required for safe driving must always be kept in good working order.

Taking note of any odd sounds or other problems with your vehicle is a simple way of saving time and money and avoiding major headaches later. When carrying out your regular inspections, pay special attention to the following items:

2

## Brakes

Are they noisy? Does your brake pedal respond immediately to pressure? Can you hear metal surfaces rubbing together? Does your vehicle pull to the left or right when you brake, or stop slowly even when you press down hard on the brake pedal?

## Parking brake

Does it hold your vehicle stationary when you are starting the engine or on a slope?

## Rearview mirrors

Are the rearview and side mirrors securely attached? Are they cracked, chipped or tarnished so that they adversely affect visibility?

Are your mirrors adjusted properly, so that you can see well?

## Steering

Is there uneven wear on the front tires? Have you noticed too much play in the steering—a definite tendency for the vehicle to pull to the right or left? Have you had any trouble handling the vehicle? All these things are signs that your steering system should be checked and carefully adjusted. Have your wheel alignment checked at least once a year, and any time you think it might have been jolted out of line.

## Windshield wipers

What is the condition of your windshield wipers and your washer fluid distributor? Do they guarantee clear visibility at all times? Did you know that defective windshield wipers can damage your windshield?

## Tires

Check your tires regularly. Is there uneven or abnormal tire wear? Could this be caused by improper air pressure, infrequent tire rotation, or poor alignment or wheel balance?

## Exhaust system

Have you noticed any leaks in your muffler or exhaust system? You can usually hear them: louder-than-usual engine noise often indicates a problem with the exhaust system.

## Lights and headlights

Are all lights in good condition and free of matter?

## Seat belts

Have you examined your seat belt for any cuts or tears in the fabric? Are the belt buckle and locking and unlocking mechanism present and in good working order?

## Headrests

If your vehicle is equipped with a manufacturer-installed headrest, is it still in place and in good condition? Is the middle of the headrest at eye level or level with the top of your ears? Is it near your head, i.e. no further away than seven centimetres?

## Drive belts

Did you know that drive belts must be in good condition for your own safety? If the belt gives way suddenly in a vehicle with power steering, it will be difficult and even dangerous to drive.

Is the tension right? Check to make sure that belts are not cracked and that the fabric is not frayed or torn.

## Shock absorbers

Does your vehicle rock after going over a bump or coming out of a pothole? Is it very sensitive to cross-winds? Maybe your shock absorbers are defective.

To check them, push down hard on one corner of your vehicle and release. If the corner bounces more than once before resuming its initial position, the shock absorber is probably faulty. Repeat for each corner of the vehicle.

## Body condition

Are the various pieces of bodywork solidly attached? Be sure to note any holes in the floor, in particular in the trunk, because they can allow toxic gases from the exhaust to infiltrate the cab of the vehicle.

# ROAD SIGNS AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS

3

---

Under the *Highway Safety Code*, road signs and traffic signals must meet the standards set by Ministère des Transports. These signs and signals are designed to ensure the safety of road users, facilitate the flow of traffic and guide road users.

However, road signs and traffic signals are not guarantees against the risks inherent in road use. Roadways, vehicles and rules are mainly developed for ideal traffic conditions, but because traffic risks are numerous, drivers must continually adjust their conduct.

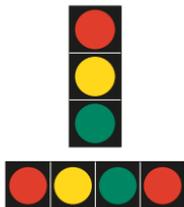
Québec road signs and traffic signals include road signs, signal lights, and pavement markings. The signs are a visual language that all road users must know and understand for their own safety and the safety of others.

# SIGNAL LIGHTS

Signal lights include all the lights that guide road users. Apart from standard traffic lights, there are flashing lights, pedestrian lights, lights for cyclists, lane use lights, railway crossing lights, parking regulation lights, work site lights, priority lights for buses and inspection station lights.

## Traffic lights

Traffic lights are generally located at intersections and used to regulate the right of way of vehicles and pedestrians based on the flow of traffic. When traffic lights are defective or not in operation, you must act as though the intersection were controlled by stop signs for all directions, except where an adequate sign or signal replaces the lights.



3

## Red light

A red light means you have to stop. Motorists and cyclists are required to bring their vehicle to a full stop at the intersection, before the pedestrian crosswalk or stop line. If there is no line, stop before the edge of the roadway you are preparing to cross. Motorists or cyclists may only proceed on the authorization of a traffic signal. If there are no pedestrian lights, pedestrians must also stop.

## Yellow (amber) light

A yellow light means that the light will soon turn red, and indicates to motorists and cyclists that they have to stop before the pedestrian crosswalk or stop line. If there is no line, stop before the edge of the roadway you are preparing to cross, unless you are already in the intersection or are so close to it that you cannot stop safely. Motorists or cyclists may only proceed on the authorization of a traffic signal. If there are no pedestrian lights, pedestrians have to follow the same rules.

## Green light

Motorists and cyclists facing a solid or flashing green light may continue on their way after yielding the right of way to vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians already in the intersection. Pedestrians facing a green traffic light may cross the roadway if there are no pedestrian lights.

A flashing green light indicates that left turns are protected, meaning that oncoming vehicles are stopped.

## Red arrow

A red arrow prohibits drivers from going in the direction to which it points.



## Yellow arrow

A yellow arrow has the same function as the yellow light, but shows the direction of traffic.



## Green arrow

A green arrow, whether flashing or not, indicates to motorists and cyclists that they must proceed in the direction indicated while following the same rules governing the right of way as those for a green light.



## Flashing lights

Flashing yellow or red lights are used as additional signals to indicate a particularly dangerous intersection.

### Flashing red light

Motorists and cyclists approaching a flashing red light must come to a stop and yield the right of way to any vehicle entering the intersection or near enough to it on the intersecting roadway that to proceed might cause an accident. Flashing red lights are used along with stop signs.

3

### Flashing yellow light

A flashing yellow light means that motorists and cyclists must slow down and proceed after yielding the right of way to other road users already in the intersection.

Flashing yellow lights accompanying regulatory or warning signs are used to direct attention to danger or an obligation.

## Pedestrian lights

Pedestrian lights regulate pedestrian movement and help pedestrians avoid conflicts with road vehicles.

There are two types of pedestrian lights: standard lights and countdown lights.

Standard lights consist of two lamps, one showing the outline of a walking person and the other showing an orange hand. Countdown lights have a third lamp that shows how much time is left.

### Pedestrian silhouette

The pedestrian silhouette means that pedestrians may cross the roadway in the area reserved for them. At certain intersections, an audio signal for the visually impaired will sound continuously while the silhouette is lit. When the silhouette starts flashing, the audio signal begins beeping and pedestrians already in the intersection must hurry to reach the sidewalk or median.



### Orange hand

The hand warns pedestrians not to enter the intersection. When the hand begins to flash, pedestrians already in the intersection must hurry to reach the sidewalk or median.



## Time counter

The time counter shows the time remaining for pedestrians to cross the intersection.



## Cyclist lights

Cyclist lights, used to regulate bicycle traffic, are made up of three vertical lights in the form of red, yellow and green bicycles. The colours of the bicycles have the same meaning as traffic lights.



3

## Lane use lights

Lane use lights consist of a red light in the shape of an X, a green light in the shape of a downward arrow and a yellow flashing light in the shape of a horizontal arrow. These lights are mounted over one or several lanes to indicate whether vehicle traffic is permitted or prohibited in the lanes. The meaning of the symbols is as follows:

### Red X

You may not drive or stop in the lane under this signal.

## Downward green arrow

You may use the lane under this signal.

## Horizontal yellow arrow

The yellow arrow usually appears in combination with the red X; it indicates that you must, with caution, change lanes either to the left or right because of lane closure ahead.

## Railway crossing signals

These warning devices, consisting of flashing red lights, are placed where a roadway and a railway intersect. When they are activated, they indicate to motorists and pedestrians that a train is coming and that they must stop before the level crossing.

## Regulated parking lights

Regulated parking lights are made up of orange lights accompanied by a regulatory sign. These signs restrict parking on the street at certain times to facilitate road maintenance. The regulation on the sign is in effect only when the lights are on.



## Work site lights

Work site lights warn road users of areas where road maintenance or repairs are being carried out. You must slow down and be cautious when nearing the work area.

### Rotating lights

A flashing or rotating yellow light on a vehicle indicates one of the following possibilities:

- ▶ The vehicle could hinder traffic;
- ▶ The vehicle might travel much slower than the maximum speed limit or slower than the minimum speed limit;
- ▶ The vehicle could be accompanying another vehicle which might hinder traffic.



3

### Signal arrows

An arrow affixed to a vehicle or trailer indicates that one lane of traffic is obstructed and that you must take the lane which remains open. The direction of the arrow indicates the lane to use. A double arrow indicates that traffic can go either to the left or right of the obstructed lane. To indicate the presence of a work site along a road with one lane of traffic in each direction or a work site on the road shoulder, only the centre bar of the signal arrow is lit.



## Accompanying vehicle

An accompanying vehicle precedes mobile or very short-term construction sites. This vehicle is mounted with a sign and travels with the work area to indicate in advance the proximity of a work area or the manoeuvres to get around the area.



## Temporary road work lights

Temporary lights may be placed near a work area to control traffic when motorists must use one lane alternately for travel in opposite directions.



## Bus priority lights

Bus priority lights are added to traffic lights to protect the movement of buses so they can more easily merge with the flow of traffic.

Bus priority lights are added to traffic lights to protect the movement of buses so they can more easily merge with the flow of traffic. These lights consist of a white bar, triangle or BUS text shining through a black lens.

These lights indicate to bus drivers the manoeuvres that are authorized and prohibited:

### White vertical bar

Only straight through movement is authorized. Left and right turn movements are prohibited.



### White horizontal bar

All priority manoeuvres for buses are prohibited.



### White bar slanted to the left

Only the left turn manoeuvre is permitted.



### White triangle

Indicates that bus drivers are allowed a clearance interval on the same principle as the yellow signal for vehicle movements.



### White bar slanted to the right

Only the right turn manoeuvre is permitted.



### BUS

Manoeuvres in all directions are permitted.



## Inspection station lights

These lights are placed only in inspection areas. The colour and symbol on the signal light indicate necessary actions to heavy vehicle drivers.

- ▶ Red light: stop for weighing;
- ▶ Upward yellow light: advance slowly;
- ▶ Yellow light pointing right: enter the weigh station and park the vehicle for inspection;
- ▶ Downward yellow arrow: back up slowly;
- ▶ Green light: weighing complete, departure permitted.



## PAVEMENT MARKINGS

Pavement markings are used to show the separation of traffic lanes, indicate the lanes to be used by certain types of vehicles or road users and the movements that are authorized. They supplement road signs and traffic signals.

### Purpose of pavement markings

Pavement markings indicate:

- ▶ The direction of traffic;
- ▶ Traffic lanes;
- ▶ Zones where passing is prohibited;
- ▶ The edge of the roadway and dangerous roadsides;

- ▶ Variations in roadway width;
- ▶ Zones reserved for buses and other heavy vehicles;
- ▶ Edges of intersections;
- ▶ Stop lines;
- ▶ Pedestrian, school and playground crosswalks;
- ▶ Parking areas;
- ▶ Commercial service areas;
- ▶ Special manoeuvres as indicated by arrows;
- ▶ Obstructions on or next to the road ahead;
- ▶ Reversible lanes;
- ▶ Bikeways;
- ▶ Reserved lanes;
- ▶ Two-way left-turn lanes;
- ▶ Runaway lanes.

## Colour of pavement markings

Two colours, yellow and white, are used to differentiate the function of pavement markings.

### Yellow markings:

- ▶ Separate traffic lanes in opposite directions;
- ▶ Indicate the left side of the road on divided roadways, highways and one-way roadways;
- ▶ Indicate the left edge of a ramp on highways;
- ▶ Indicate areas where parking is prohibited;

- ▶ Indicate areas where children, pedestrians and students must cross between intersections or intersections for which there is no traffic light or stop sign;
- ▶ Indicate the edges of the roadway for better visibility;
- ▶ Separate reversible lanes;
- ▶ Indicate two-way left-turn lanes;
- ▶ Indicate lanes reserved for oncoming or alternate traffic.

### **White markings:**

- ▶ Separate traffic lanes on a one-way roadway;
- ▶ Indicate the acceleration and deceleration lanes on a highway;
- ▶ Indicate the right side of divided roadways;
- ▶ Indicate the far sides of two-way roadways;
- ▶ Indicate parking areas;
- ▶ Indicate areas where pedestrians, children and students must cross at intersections for which there are traffic lights or stop signs;
- ▶ Guide turning manoeuvres at intersections;
- ▶ Specify where vehicles must stop;
- ▶ Indicate lanes reserved for traffic in the same direction.

## Lines, arrows and symbols



White or yellow lines, as well as arrows and other symbols, are painted on roadways to remind you of certain rights, obligations and restrictions. Each type and colour of line has a particular meaning.

### Broken and solid single lines

Broken and solid single lines divide traffic lanes. The lines are white when separating one-way traffic lanes and yellow when separating two-way traffic lanes.

You may cross a broken line under certain circumstances but not a solid line.

## Solid double lines

Two solid yellow lines next to one another separate two-way traffic lanes. They may not be crossed.

## Combined lines

A solid yellow line alongside a broken yellow line also separates two-way traffic. You may cross these lines under certain circumstances, if the broken line is on your side.

White combined lines may also separate one-way traffic lanes. You may cross these lines only if the broken line is on your side.

## Lane lines

Lines that separate lanes of traffic in the same direction are generally white and broken; however, in order to limit or prohibit lane changes, the lines may be solid, single, double, or combined, such as at the approach of another roadway or in a tunnel.

## Reversible lane

Parallel yellow broken lines mark a lane on either side in urban areas where the direction of traffic alternates.

## Two-way left-turn lane

In some cases, an additional lane is designed to facilitate left turns by traffic in both directions. This lane is located in the middle of the roadway and is marked on either side by parallel yellow lines, one solid and one broken. Yellow lane selection arrows also mark the pavement to clearly indicate that only a left turn is allowed from the lane.

## Reserved lane

Pavement markings for a lane that is reserved at all times are double solid lines, while those marking a reserved lane for certain hours are double broken lines.

Diagonal broken white lines on the pavement in the reserved lane indicate to drivers in the adjacent lane that shared use of the lane is allowed on the condition they turn at the next intersection.

## Slow-moving vehicle lane

An additional lane for slow-moving vehicles is set aside in places where the grade or length of a slope causes some heavy vehicles to slow considerably.

3

## Stop line

The white stop line is painted across the roadway, perpendicular to an intersection with traffic lights or a stop sign. It indicates the point at which a vehicle must stop.

## Pedestrian crosswalk

At intersections with traffic lights or stop signs, two parallel solid white lines or a “zebra crossing” painted on the roadway indicate the area where pedestrians must cross. Elsewhere, pedestrian crosswalks are indicated by yellow pavement markings.

## Parking areas

White lines on the pavement identify areas where parking is allowed; yellow lines indicate that parking is prohibited.

## Wheelchair

A white wheelchair symbol indicates parking spaces or access ramps designed for persons with physical disabilities.

It is accompanied by a regulatory parking sign on parking spaces indicating that these parking spaces are reserved exclusively for physically disabled individuals who have a disabled parking permit.

## Bus stop zone

Stop zones for city buses are marked by a rectangle with a yellow zigzag pattern. The left side of the rectangle is marked with a white broken line.

## Vehicle sensor

This symbol is painted on the pavement to highlight the presence of vehicle sensors and help you stop your vehicle at the designated place for the mechanism to transmit a signal to traffic lights. The symbol is placed on the centre of the sensor and is designed to reduce waiting times at intersections.



## Aircraft patrolled

Yellow equilateral triangles on the pavement or shoulder identify areas where traffic is subject to surveillance from aircraft.



## Arrows and symbols

White arrows may be painted on the roadway. They indicate lane direction.



An elongated white diamond on pavement indicates a lane reserved for certain types of vehicles.



A bicycle symbol painted on the roadway indicates a bikeway.



## ROAD SIGNS

Road signs use pictograms and instructions to ensure road users' safety and facilitate the flow of traffic

In many instances, smaller tabs are attached to signs to specify the message conveyed by the road sign.

There are four types of road signs:

### Regulatory signs

Regulatory signs indicate your obligations and the restrictions placed upon you by the *Highway Safety Code*.

## Warning signs

Warning signs draw attention to road sections where you must be particularly cautious due to obstacles or hazards on or alongside the roadway. The signs warn drivers to slow down, stop or change directions.

## Information signs

Information signs provide simple indications about destinations: distance, direction, street name, point of interest, service or information.

## Road work signs

Road work signs signal construction or maintenance being carried out on or alongside a roadway and provide useful indications on how to get through the work area safely. Road work signs can either be regulatory signs, warning signs or information signs.

## Shapes and colours of the main types of signs

The message conveyed by a road sign depends on the shape, colour and alphanumerical information or symbol used.

The choice of colour is based on North American conventions. In general, the following colours are used to distinguish between the different categories of signs:

**Black and white:** regulatory signs

**Yellow:** danger warnings

**Orange:** road work

**Green, brown or blue:** information signs

The shape of a sign may sometimes identify its category. For example, danger and work site signs are diamond shaped. In addition, some shapes are reserved for particular signs. For example, octagons are reserved for stop signs and pentagons are reserved to identify school zones.

Regulatory, warning and road work signs convey their messages using arrows and symbols, whereas information signs bear written information.

Category	Shape	Colour	Comments
Regulatory		Red	Reserved for <b>stop</b> signs
		Red or white	Reserved for <b>yield</b> signs
		Black	
	 	White	
		Black	Reserved for <b>one-way</b> signs

Category	Shape	Colour	Comments
Warning and road work		Fluorescent yellow-green	Reserved for signs indicating the beginning of a <b>school zone</b>
		Fluorescent yellow-green	Reserved for <b>advance school zone</b> or <b>school crossing</b> signs
		Yellow	Reserved for danger warnings
		Orange	Reserved for work sites
		Yellow	Danger warnings
		Orange	Work sites
		Yellow	Danger warnings
		Orange	Work sites
		Red and white	Reserved for <b>warning chevrons</b>

Category	Shape	Colour	Comments
Indication		Blue	Reserved for highways
		Green	Reserved for roads
		Blue	Tourist information
		Brown	Public tourist attractions
		Red	Emergency facilities
		Green	Highways, roads and bikeways
		Green	Highways, roads and bikeways
		Blue	Private tourist facilities and services off highways
		Brown	Public tourist attractions and points of interest
		Yellow	Reserved for highway exits

## Pictograms

Pictograms such as symbols, arrows and silhouettes are used to replace words in order to make road signs easier to understand.

### Arrows

Arrows are used to indicate areas controlled by regulation, to announce upcoming signs, and to indicate clearances, lanes to follow or use, detours, manoeuvres and destinations.

### Silhouettes

Silhouettes indicate the people and things affected by the sign. They indicate specific configurations, encourage road users to be particularly careful, and convey information.

### Prohibition symbol

This symbol, a red circle with a red diagonal bar, indicates that anything within the circle is prohibited.



### Mandatory symbol

This symbol, a green circle, indicates that anything within the circle is compulsory.



## Identification and meaning of road signs and traffic signals

### Regulatory signs

#### Stop

Indicates that you must come to a full stop at an intersection.

All-way stop: this sign, placed below stop signs at intersections, tells users coming from all directions that they must come to a full stop. The shape on the sign shows the layout of the intersection (+, T, Y).



#### Do not enter

Access to a roadway or traffic lane is prohibited for all types of vehicles because entry could result in a head-on collision.



This tab accompanies the "Do not enter" sign and specifies its meaning.



## Yield

Yield the right of way to vehicles travelling on the road you are about to enter.



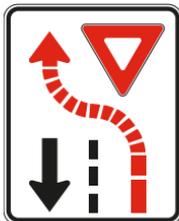
### Traffic circle yield

Yield the right of way to vehicles that are travelling in the traffic circle you are about to enter.



When encountering these signs, some drivers believe they can continue driving without slowing down. Other drivers systematically come to a full stop. Both disrupt the flow of traffic. The goal is to merge with traffic without stopping, and without hampering the progress of those who are already in the circle. You should only stop when it is impossible to do otherwise.

Yield the right of way to oncoming vehicles. This sign is used at work sites where no flagperson is available, in places where a single lane is available for vehicles travelling in both directions and on some narrow bridges.



## Stop line

Line on the roadway at which vehicles must stop.



## Speed limit

Maximum and minimum speeds legally permitted.

The last digit is always zero.



This tab accompanies a speed limit sign for a maximum speed in all of similar streets within a generally urban area. These signs must be installed in all of access roads to an area where no higher speed limit is allowed in all streets or sub-sectors.



Maximum speed that applies in a school zone and the hours, day and months during which the speed limit is in effect.



## One-way traffic

Traffic is allowed only in the direction indicated.



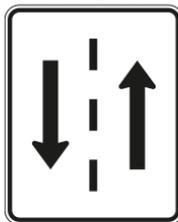
## Beginning of one-way traffic

Two-way traffic ends and one-way traffic begins.



## Two-way traffic

One-way traffic ends and two-way traffic begins.

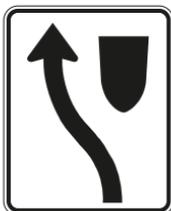


## Obstruction

Obstacle that must be passed on the right.



Obstacle that must be passed on the left.



Obstacle that must be passed either on the right or left.



## Lane direction signs

The following signs indicate the direction of travel allowed. You must travel in the proper lane to proceed in the desired direction. If the arrow is split into two or three directions, you may travel in any one of the directions indicated.

**These signs indicate that the vehicle in the lane must:**

Turn left



Turn right



Proceed straight ahead



Proceed straight ahead or turn right



Proceed straight ahead or turn left



Turn right or left



These signs indicate that the centre lane is reserved for left turns from either direction.

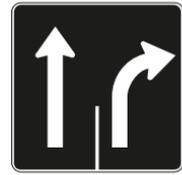
VOIE DU CENTRE



Vehicles in right lane must proceed straight ahead; vehicles in left lane must turn left.



Vehicles in right lane must turn right; vehicles in left lane must proceed straight ahead.



Vehicles in right lane must proceed straight ahead; vehicles in left lane must proceed straight ahead or turn left.



Vehicles in right lane must turn right or proceed straight ahead; vehicles in left lane must proceed straight ahead.



Vehicles in right lane must proceed straight ahead or turn right; vehicles in left lane must turn left.



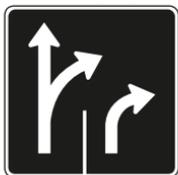
Vehicles in right lane must turn right; vehicles in left lane must proceed straight ahead or turn left.



Vehicles in right lane must proceed straight ahead or turn left; vehicles in left lane must turn left.



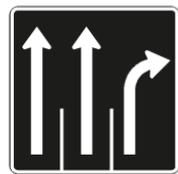
Vehicles in right lane must turn right; vehicles in left lane must proceed straight ahead or turn right.



Vehicles in right and centre lanes must proceed straight ahead; vehicles in left lane must turn left.



Vehicles in right lane must turn right; vehicles in left and centre lanes must proceed straight ahead.



Vehicles in the two right-hand lanes must turn right.

VOIES DE DROITE



Vehicles in the two left-hand lanes must turn left.

VOIES DE GAUCHE



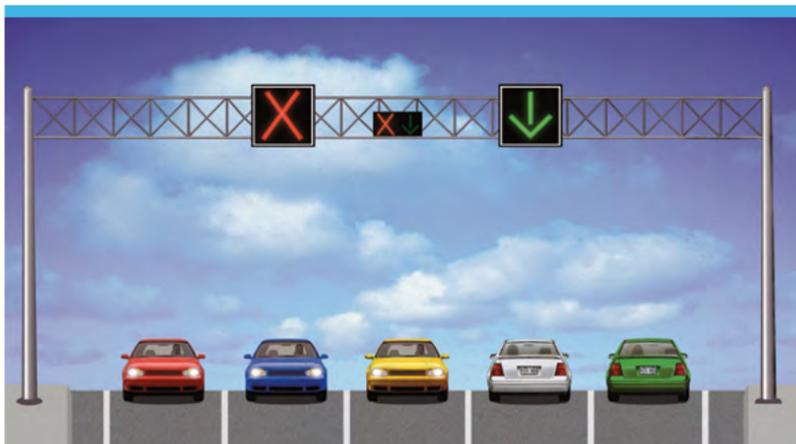
Vehicles in the left lane must turn left; vehicles in the right lane must turn left, proceed straight ahead or turn right.



Vehicles in the left lane must turn left, proceed straight ahead or turn right; vehicles in right lane must turn right.



## Reversible lane



A reversible lane is a lane where the direction of traffic changes depending on the time of day or traffic conditions. In the illustration above, the centre lane is a reversible lane.

When there is a reversible lane, signs are installed above the roadway.

You may use the lane underneath a green arrow. A red X indicates that the lane is reserved for oncoming traffic.

## Mandatory or prohibited movement at certain intersections

In this section, green circles do not simply mean that you are allowed to do something; they mean that you must do something. No other manoeuvre except the one depicted on the sign is allowed.

### A. These signs indicate that you must:

Proceed straight ahead



Turn left



Turn right



Proceed straight ahead or turn right



Proceed straight ahead or turn left



Turn right or left



### B. These signs indicate that you cannot:

Proceed straight ahead



Turn left



Turn right



Make a U-turn  
at an intersec-  
tion or median



Turn right when the light is red. If the prohibition is limited to specific time periods, these periods are indicated on the tab.



Xh - Yh

These signs indicate the mandatory or prohibited manoeuvre is limited to certain periods or do not apply to certain categories of vehicles. The exception to the U-turn prohibition, when the "Excepté véhicules autorisés" tab is placed under the no U-turn sign, means that emergency vehicles, public security vehicles and road construction or maintenance vehicles are allowed to make U-turns.

Xh - Yh  
LUN À VEN

EXCEPTÉ  
AUTOBUS

Xh - Yh  
LUN À SAM  
EXCEPTÉ TAXIS

EXCEPTÉ  
VÉHICULES  
AUTORISÉS

## No passing

Beginning of a no-passing zone.



This tab may be placed beneath a no-passing sign to indicate the end of a no-passing zone.



## Controlled parking

These signs indicate areas where parking is prohibited or permitted. Where specified, different symbols or indications identify the categories of vehicles, minutes, hours, days, months or extent of the zone to which the sign applies (identified by an arrow).



Areas where parking is allowed only for people with physical disabilities.



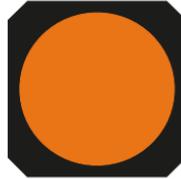
This tab, located beneath controlled parking signs, indicates that vehicles in violation may be towed.



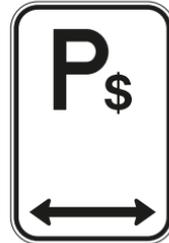
This sign is used in some municipalities to prohibit parking during the winter or to specify the restrictions that apply to certain categories of vehicles.



This sign is used in conjunction with orange lights to prohibit parking when road maintenance operations are underway.



This sign indicates authorized pay parking.



This tab indicates the location of a pay and display machine for pay parking.



## No stopping

Stopping in the area indicated by the sign is prohibited. These signs may include the same type of arrows and indications as controlled parking signs.



## Crossing signs

Indicate designated areas where pedestrians can cross. Motorists must be vigilant and be prepared to stop as soon as a pedestrian enters a crosswalk or signals his or her intention to cross by:

- ▶ Walking toward the pedestrian crosswalk;
- ▶ Waiting to cross;
- ▶ Making eye contact;
- ▶ Gesturing with his or her hand.

The motorist must come to a stop to allow the pedestrian to cross safely.

Pedestrian  
crosswalk



School  
crosswalk



Crosswalk  
for people  
with physical  
disabilities



Crossing  
for visually  
impaired  
people



Playground  
crosswalk



Pedestrian and  
bicycle crossing



## Other

Littering is prohibited.



Vehicles are prohibited from having radar detectors  
on board.



Obligation to close and seal gas  
tanks in order to board a ferry.



## Seat belt

Wearing a seat belt is mandatory.



## Mandatory route for certain types of vehicles

These signs show the routes that different types of vehicles must follow.

Trucks



Motorcycles



Cars



A tab displaying an arrow shows the direction of the mandatory route.



## Mandatory route for trucks in transit

An arrow shows the direction of the mandatory route for trucks in transit; a truck is considered to be in transit when travelling over an area where no local deliveries are scheduled. Tool vehicles and equipment transport vehicles are also covered by the obligation. However, tow trucks, farm vehicles and machinery, and oversize vehicles with a special travel permit expressly giving the vehicle access to a public roadway are not subject to the signs.



**NB:** The same type of sign is used to indicate other directions.

This sign allows trucks to use the roadway to make local deliveries even though it is normally prohibited to trucks.

 Visit the Ministère des Transports Web site to see all the variations of this sign.



Indicates that trucks, tool vehicles and equipment transport vehicles must use that lane. When this obligation continues for more than 2 km, a tab indicates the total distance.



### Access prohibited

These signs indicate the roads or lanes where access is prohibited for certain types of road users or types of vehicles.

Cars



Motorcycles



Bicycles



Cars and motorcycles



Cars and  
bicyclesAll-terrain  
vehicles  
(quads)

Pedestrians

Pedestrians and  
motorcyclesPedestrians  
and bicycles

Equestrians



Snowmobiles



City buses



Intercity buses



Minibuses



School buses



In-line skaters



3

Recreational  
vehicles



Vehicles pulling  
a trailer



## Trucks, tool vehicles and equipment transport vehicles prohibited

These signs indicate that use of the roadway by trucks and most tool vehicles and equipment transport vehicles is prohibited if the vehicle's load, size or number of axles exceeds the maximum limits authorized on that roadway. However, the prohibition does not apply in the case of local deliveries, if specified on the sign



EXCEPTÉ  
LIVRAISON  
LOCALE



This sign tells truck drivers they are travelling along a delivery route and allows them to use a normally prohibited roadway and side streets to make local deliveries.



No trucks allowed in the lane specified by the sign.



3

### Transportation of hazardous material

These signs indicate that vehicles carrying hazardous materials must use the route indicated or that they are prohibited from using a roadway. They are mainly intended for industrial and commercial carriers, who should be aware of their obligations. However, the signs may sometimes concern individual motorists if they are carrying unusual amounts of fuel, explosives or chemicals.

Vehicles carrying hazardous materials must use the mandatory route indicated by the tab with an arrow.



Vehicles carrying hazardous materials are prohibited from using this roadway.



This sign placed above a lane indicates that vehicles carrying hazardous materials must use this lane.



Vehicles carrying hazardous materials must not travel in the lane indicated by the arrow on this sign.



### Exemption from stopping at a level crossing

These signs indicate that vehicles normally required to stop at a level crossing, such as buses and vehicles carrying hazardous materials, are not required to do so. The signs are used near abandoned tracks or ones on which rail traffic is infrequent and special measures have been put into place to ensure safety when there is train movement.



## No stopping on railway

Prohibits vehicles from stopping on the railway tracks.



## Weight restriction

Road vehicles of all categories whose gross weight exceeds the maximum weight indicated on the sign may not use certain bridges or overpasses.



This tab, located under the weight restriction sign, indicates the distance from the intersection to the bridge or overpass to which the restriction applies.



This tab, located under the weight restriction sign, indicates that the bridge or overpass can only support one such vehicle at a time.



Trucks whose weight exceeds the legal limit may not use certain bridges or overpasses, unless expressly authorized by a special travel permit.



## Load limits during thaw periods

Drivers must obey the legal weight restrictions in effect during thaw periods.



## Lane for slow-moving traffic

Slow-moving vehicles must use the right-hand lane. Although the pictogram shows a truck, this obligation applies to any slow-moving vehicle.



## Brake check

Drivers of road vehicles or a combination of vehicles weighing 3,000 kg or more must check their brakes by stopping in the area indicated by a stop sign.

A tab may indicate the distance or direction to the brake check area.



This sign, installed in a brake check area, indicates that a maximum of 30 metres remain before the stop sign installed at the exit of the area.



## Inspection station

Inspection station for trucks, tow trucks, equipment transport vehicles, tool vehicles and vehicles with a trailer or semitrailer more than 10 metres in length where they must stop for applicable inspections.



These tabs indicate the distance and direction to the weigh station.



When the lights are flashing, the driver of a straightbody truck or road tractor whose net weight is over 4,500 kg must stop at the inspection station.



Direction to be taken by vehicles at an inspection station whether they are loaded or not.



## Reserved lane

An elongated white diamond on a red or black background in the upper left-hand corner of the sign indicates a reserved lane.

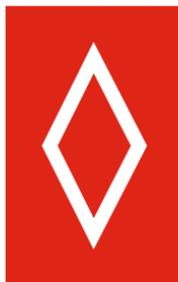
### Black background

Vehicles in the reserved lane have to move in the direction of traffic.

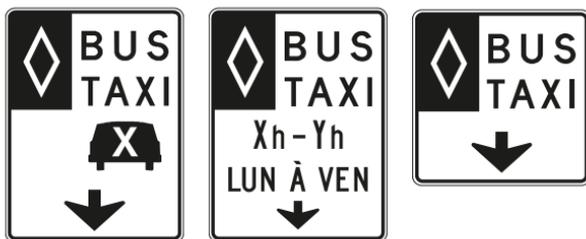


### Red background

Lane is reserved for oncoming traffic or for alternating traffic in either direction.



These signs indicate that a lane is reserved for the types of users indicated and, if applicable, the period during which the reserved lane is in effect. The arrow shows which lane is reserved.



Marks the end of reserved lanes.



The carpool symbol shows a number on the outline of a vehicle. It indicates the minimum number of occupants a vehicle must have for it to be allowed to use the reserved lane.



## Warning signs

Warning signs do not all require the same response from drivers. Depending on the circumstances, drivers are required to:

- ▶ Change lanes;
- ▶ Stop;
- ▶ Reduce speed;
- ▶ Be more alert and vigilant.

### Advance stop sign

Warns of a stop sign ahead.



### Advance yield sign

Warns of a yield sign ahead.



Warns of a yield to oncoming traffic sign ahead.



### Change to existing signs and new signs

This type of sign warns drivers of a change to traffic control signs at an intersection.

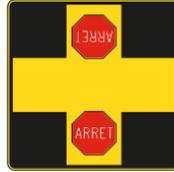
Date on which a stop sign will be removed.



Date on which a stop sign will come into effect.



These signs show the position of stop signs installed at an intersection and are accompanied by a tab.



**NB:** The word STOP may replace ARRÊT in the above signs.

Date on which traffic lights will be removed.



Date on which traffic lights will be in service.



Date on which a new lower speed limit will come into effect.



New yield sign, new traffic lights or a change in the direction of one-way traffic.



Change of speed limits. It is placed under the sign showing the speed limit.



## Advance warning of traffic lights

Warns of traffic lights ahead.



## Prepare to stop

Intersection with traffic lights ahead or level crossing on a road way where you might not expect to see them. The flashing yellow lights indicate that the light at the intersection or level crossing is about to turn red. It is important to be prepared to stop.



## Advance speed limit sign

Zone ahead where the speed limit has been lowered by at least 30 km/h.



When an advance sign is used before a school zone where a speed limit is in effect during specific periods, this tab specifies the time, days and months the speed limit is in effect.



## Two-way traffic

---

Two-way traffic ahead.



## Divided roadway

---

Warns of a divided roadway ahead, which must be accessed by the right only.



Motorists may pass on either side of an obstacle in the roadway.



End of a divided roadway.



## Advance lane direction signs

These signs indicate in advance the lanes which motorists must use for various manoeuvres at an intersection.



3

 Visit the [Ministère des Transports Web site](#) to see all variations of these signs.

## Curves

Warns of left curve ahead.



Warns of sharp left curve ahead.



Warns of reverse curve ahead.



Warns of sharp reverse curve ahead.



Winding road ahead; three or more successive curves within 150 metres of one another.



Distance over which there are curves, if it exceeds one kilometre.



Warns of a curve of more than 90° ahead.



**NB:** The same type of sign is used for warning of right turns or successive right turns ahead.

## Recommended speed

This tab shows the recommended speed when driving around an obstacle or a hazard on a public roadway.



Recommended speed on highway exits, which would allow drivers a sufficient safety margin for emergency braking on a curve on wet pavement.



## Merging traffic sign

Warns that traffic merges into the lane in which you are driving.



Warns of a traffic lane reserved for buses merging ahead.



## Parallel lanes

There are one or more distinct adjacent traffic lanes, so there is no need to change lanes for at least one kilometre.

**NB:** Merging lanes or parallel lanes may be on the left or right.



## Intersections

The pictogram warns of an intersection ahead and indicates the layout of the intersection.

Crossroad  
ahead



T-intersection  
ahead



The following  
signs indicate  
the layout of  
the roadway  
as seen from  
the angle of  
the driver



Y-intersection ahead



T-intersection in a curve ahead



Warns that the roadway intersects another roadway where lanes are separated by a very large median.



Traffic circle, also known as a roundabout, ahead.



### Narrow passage

Warns that a bridge or tunnel is narrower than the approach.



Warns that only one lane is open to traffic and that the roadway is no more than six metres wide.



### Overhead clearance

Indicate the overhead clearance of bridges, overpasses and tunnels. The diamond-shaped sign is an advance warning, while the square sign is placed on the bridge, overpass or tunnel.



## Advance level crossing sign

Level crossings less than 50 metres from an intersection in urban areas and less than 125 metres in rural areas.



The signs below warn of a level crossing ahead and show the angle at which the railway tracks cross the road.



This sign is installed to warn truck drivers of a level crossing ahead and requires them to significantly reduce their speed because of the crossing design.



## Restricted visibility

Visibility is limited or nil due to an abrupt slope in the road.



## Roadway narrows

These signs indicate that the roadway narrows without a reduction in the number of lanes. They do not require any particular manoeuvre on your part, but call for increased alertness. Not to be confused with lane ending signs.

Roadway narrows on both sides



Roadway narrows on the right



Roadway narrows on the left



## Lane ending

These signs indicate that a lane ends. They require drivers in the lane about to end to change lanes after yielding the right of way to vehicles in the remaining lane. Not to be confused with roadway narrows signs. Pavement markings may accompany these signs.



**NB:** Signs may also indicate lanes ending on the left rather than the right.

This tab indicates the distance at which the lane ends.



## Lane or road ends

Warns of the end of a roadway or lane.



## Steep grade

These signs indicate the grade of a slope in percentage terms when it is at least 6% (a drop of 6 metres over 100 metres); the higher the percentage, the steeper the hill. These slopes require greater caution from heavy vehicle drivers, but may also be hazardous for other drivers, especially if they are winding or have a slippery road surface.

Maximum grade of the slope in percentage



Slope ahead with a length of more than one kilometre.

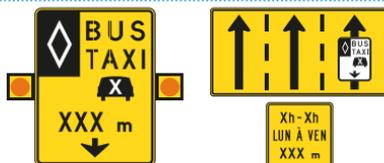


These signs are used for two successive steep slopes with different grades. The total distance is indicated if it exceeds one kilometre.



## Reserved lane ahead

These signs indicate that the lane ahead is reserved for the types of vehicles depicted. The flashing lights indicate that the regulation is in effect and the tab specifies the period during which it is applicable.



Lane at the cross street of an intersection is reserved, and motorists turning right must use the adjacent lane.



## School bus stop ahead

Possible presence of a school bus that has stopped ahead to take on or let off passengers. This sign is used only when a curve or hill prevents motorists from seeing the stopped bus ahead of time. Because a stopped school bus may force motorists to stop, it is essential that they be prepared to do so. The sign also warns of the possible presence of children near the roadway.



## Beginning of a school zone

Presence of a school zone, that is, a road segment adjacent to the premises of an elementary or secondary school. Between September and June, the maximum speed limit in school zones is 50 km/h. This is in effect from Monday to Friday, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. If the municipality prescribes a limit below 50 km/h in a school zone, a speed limit sign accompanies this sign and indicates the speed limit, times, days and months the limit is in effect. A sign posting the speed limit outside of the school zone indicates the end of the school zone.



## Advance crossing signs

These signs warn motorists that they are approaching an area where pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles or horses and other animals may cross.

Pedestrian  
crosswalk  
ahead



School zone  
or school  
crosswalk  
ahead



Playground  
crosswalk  
ahead



Crossing  
for people  
with physical  
disabilities  
ahead



Crossing  
for visually  
impaired  
persons ahead



Bicycle  
crossing  
ahead



3

Pedestrians  
and cyclist  
crossing ahead



Truck  
crossing ahead



Logging  
trucks ahead



Snowmobile  
crossing ahead



All-terrain  
vehicle  
crossing ahead



Crossing for  
equestrians  
ahead



Successive all-terrain vehicle and  
snowmobile crossings ahead



Warning of  
wild animals in  
the vicinity



Crossing for farm animals



## Designated shared roadway

Cyclists and motorists are both travelling on a roadway recognized as a bikeway. Motorists should expect to see more cyclists. Caution and courtesy are called for.



## Advance designated roadway sign

Change of a bike lane or path to a designated roadway, or a designated roadway ahead.



## Advance end of highway sign

These signs indicate the distance remaining before the end of the highway and show the layout of the road at the place the highway ends.



## Hazard markers

These signs warn of the presence of obstacles on the roadway or shoulder and the narrowing of a public roadway. The diagonal bands always point toward the side of the roadway you must use to avoid the hazard. Hazards are generally obstacles such as boulders or bridge railings. It is important to move in the right direction.

You must pass on the right or left the obstacle.



You must pass on the right of the obstacle.

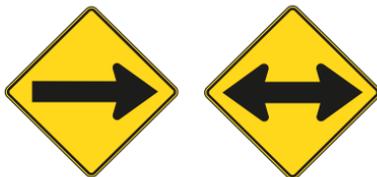


You must pass on the left of the obstacle.



### Directional arrows

Particularly hazardous point in a very sharp curve or at a T-intersection. Sharper curves are marked with delineators or chevron patterns.



### Delineators

Delineators are placed along the edge of the road to warn motorists of sharp curves. They help guide motorists driving at night or in poor visibility, especially when the pavement is wet or snow-covered. A directional arrow points in the direction of a curve; sharp curves are indicated with alignment markers.

Placed on left



Placed on right



### Alignment markers

Mark a sharp curve. When placed in a curve, the chevron pattern warns that the curve is extremely sharp.



Installed at the centre of a traffic circle, this sign indicates the direction of traffic within the circle.



### Slippery surface

Warns that the road surface in certain areas may be slippery when wet.



Warns that a roadway along the shore may be slippery due to spray.



Warns motorcyclists that the road surface may be particularly slippery when wet.



### Icy pavement

Warns that a roadway, bridge or overpass may become icy or frosted when temperatures are around freezing.



### Flooded roadway

Warns that water may cover the roadway at certain points.



### Pavement change

Warns of grooved pavement ahead or a metal grid surface on a bridge.



### End of paved surface

Warns that pavement ends and a gravel or dirt surface begins.



### Bumpy road ahead

Warns of surface irregularities.



### Falling rocks hazard

Warns of the possibility of falling rocks or landslides from an unstable slope alongside a roadway.



### Drawbridge ahead

Presence of a drawbridge.



### Low-flying aircraft

Possibility of low-flying aircraft manoeuvres near the roadway.

Airport



Certified  
public  
or private  
airport



Seaplane base



Heliport



### No entry ahead for trucks except local delivery

Access to the roadway ahead is prohibited for trucks except those making local deliveries.



### Risk of getting stuck

Vehicle could get stuck further ahead; usually found at runaway lane stop beds.



### Fog warning

Warns of a possibility of fog; the flashing lights indicate the presence of fog.



### Blowing snow

Warns of the possible presence of snow; the flashing lights indicate snow blown by high winds.



## Be visible

Advance warning that vehicle headlights and tail lights must be on when using a tunnel in order for vehicles to be visible.



## Road work signs

Work site signs have an orange background. They may be regulatory, information or warning in nature.

### Barriers

When work is in progress, barriers close part or all of a road to traffic. They are placed at the beginning of a work site.



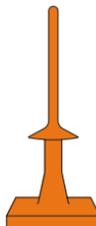
### Visual markers

Visual markers indicate the boundaries of a work site (area where work is in progress) and the narrowing of a traffic lane before a work site. They show the direction to follow, warn of road painting in progress or direct traffic.

Direction marker



Painting underway



Work site marker used to manage traffic.



Traffic cone



Safety flare



Barrel



### Distance to road construction site

Distance to a work site.



### Distance to end of work site

Length of work site in kilometres



End of work site.



## Speed limit

Orange speed limit signs indicate the maximum speed permitted near a work site. Unlike yellow signs, which indicate the recommended speed, orange signs have the same force of law as the equivalent white sign.



Moreover, the amount of the fine is doubled for any speeding offence committed in a road construction zone indicated by signs and signals.

The diamond-shaped sign indicates the new speed limit ahead.



3

## Advance road work signs

Work site ahead and the type of work being carried out.

Road work



Equipment working above roadway



Surveying



Roadwork in exit ramp



Heavy machinery in use



Length of the work site.



Grader or snowblower operating in a traffic lane or nearby.



Emergency response team on or alongside the road.



This sign, placed on an accompanying vehicle, warns of stalled traffic ahead due to road work or rearrangement of traffic lanes.



Road closed due to a sporting event



## Flagperson's sign

The front and back of a flagperson's sign is used to direct and control traffic near a work site.



A flag may also be used for slowing or stopping traffic.



3

## Flagperson's signals

Stop



Proceed



Slow down



## Flagperson ahead

Warns of the presence of a flagperson ahead directing traffic. This sign calls for extreme caution, because traffic must be slowed, detoured or stopped temporarily because of workers and machinery on the roadway. A flagperson's orders must be obeyed.



## Parking temporarily prohibited

These signs temporarily prohibit parking on the road to facilitate road work, special events or maintenance operations.

The sign may indicate the times, days and area where parking is prohibited.



### Area ahead temporarily closed to traffic

These signs indicate that an area ahead is temporarily closed to traffic.



### Area temporarily closed to traffic

These signs indicate that an area is temporarily closed to traffic. They are accompanied by a detour sign.



## Local traffic only

Indicates that the roadway is closed to all but local residents and business customers. It may also indicate which services remain available.



## Lane merge

This type of sign indicates that one lane is temporarily closed and that the lane that remains open must be used.



## Detour

Detour route to follow around a road work site.



Indicate in advance the detour route to take due to closure of a traffic lane or exit.



### Alternate route

Indicate the alternate route suggested to drivers due to risks of congestion caused by work ahead.



### Directional arrow

Before road work, indicates the direction to follow to change lanes or roadways.



3

## Warning chevron

Warns of an obstacle on the roadway, which may be passed to the left or right.



## Low shoulder

Shoulder lower than the roadway.



## Blasting zone

For safety reasons, radio transmitters and cell phones should be turned off in a blasting zone.



## Wet paint

Installed primarily on accompanying vehicles, this sign warns that pavement markings are being painted.



Installed on the marker vehicle.



### Traffic survey

Warn of the presence of survey personnel on the road.



ENQUÊTE DE  
CIRCULATION



MERC

### Horizontal clearance

Warns that construction work obstructs part of the roadway and horizontal clearance is less than the road width indicated.



### Loose gravel

Warns of the possibility that debris may be thrown by vehicles travelling over a section of roadway where work is in progress.



### Truck crossing ahead

Loaded truck may use the roadway from an access road ahead.



## Temporary use of road shoulder

Traffic is allowed or prohibited temporarily on the road shoulder near a work site.



## Duration of road work

Period during which road work will be ongoing.



## Lane diverted

This type of sign warns that traffic ahead is diverted because of road work.



Visit the [Ministère des Transports Web site](#) to see all variations of these signs.

## Information signs

There are six types of information signs:

- ▶ Destination guide;
- ▶ Route locator;
- ▶ Nearby services;
- ▶ Information;
- ▶ Tourist facilities;
- ▶ Fuel and food service on highways.

### Destinations

#### Advance sign for several exits for a municipality



Highway passes near a municipality served by a succession of interchanges. The sign shows the number of exits or announces the last exit.

#### Succession of exits

Upcoming exits and the distance to each exit.



#### Advance exit sign

Number of the connecting road ahead, the main destinations served by the interchange, the exit number and distance to the exit.



### Exit direction

Repeats the information found on the advance exit sign. An arrow indicates the beginning of the interchange's deceleration lane.



### Diagrammatic sign

Informs drivers of the direction to take in a complex interchange with several exits.



### Destination confirmation

Destination of the highway and the lanes to use to get there.



### Exit lane only sign

Advance exit sign



Exit direction



Exit confirmation



Traffic travelling in that lane must take the exit. Exclusive exit lanes are always identified by a sequence of three signs so drivers have time to change lanes if they do not want to exit the highway.

### Exit confirmation

Beginning of the exit ramp, its direction and the exit number.



### Directional sign

Major destinations that can be reached from each of the branches forming the intersection.



Direction of a traffic circle.



### Distance reminder

Shows the distance to travel to reach the destinations indicated.



### Vacation community

Vacation community, the direction to take and remaining distance.



## Route locators

### Route markers

Numbered road



Highway



Trans-Canada  
Highway  
segment



Highway name



Road name



### Highway access sign

Accesses to a highway in terms of the destinations which may be reached by the highway.



### Tourist roads and routes

Indicates a tourist road or route and directs road users toward them.



Start of a tourist road or route.



### Road information service

Abbreviated telephone number to dial in order to obtain road-related information.



### Borders

The two following signs indicate to drivers that they are entering the provincial boundaries of Québec.

Marks the Québec border on roads numbered 100 to 199, on highways and at the exit of international airports.



3

Marks the Québec border on roads numbered 200 to 399 or on unnumbered roads.



Indicates the name of the tourist area you are entering.



Indicates the limits of a community or an Indian reserve.



### Bridge

Bridge and its name as it appears on the Québec Official Road Map (*Carte routière officielle du Québec*).



**NB:** The Québec Official Road Map can be purchased from Les Publications du Québec and is available in bookstores.

### Compass points

These signs indicate the general direction of the road.



They may appear with a blue background.

### End of highway

End of a highway that continues as another numbered highway or road.



Indicates the end of a numbered road or highway that continues under another number and is accompanied by a sign identifying the numbered road or highway.



### Distance

Tab showing the distance to reach a particular facility or road feature.

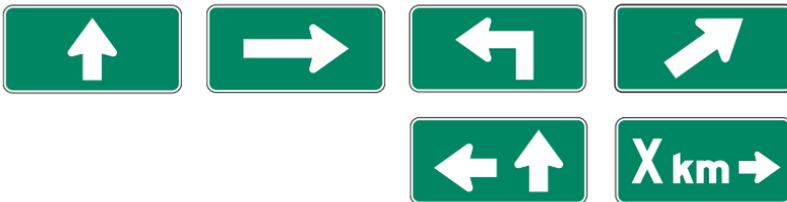


### Directions

Direction of a highway, numbered road or a particular facility.

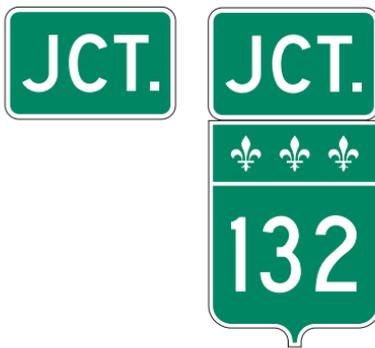


The signs below indicate the general direction of numbered roads. The arrow points in the direction to follow.



### Junction

Intersection with a numbered road.



3

### Kilometre post

Marks the distance from the starting point of a highway or road.



Marks the beginning and end of an isolated road with no services.



## Geographic locations

This type of sign indicates the name of lakes, rivers, mountains, waterfalls and reservoirs visible from the road.

Mont **ROUGEMONT**

Réservoir **CABONGA**

Rivière **RICHELIEU**

Lac **MÉGANTIC**

Chute **LYSANDER**

## Services

### Emergency facilities

#### Police station

Sûreté du Québec (provincial police force) station.



Police station other than a Sûreté du Québec station.



Telephone numbers to reach the Sûreté du Québec.



### Medical assistance

Nearby hospital, university health centre or emergency station providing continuous services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and having emergency hospital-type services.



Nearby local community health centre (CLSC).



### Emergency parking area

Highway parking area for use in the event of an emergency.



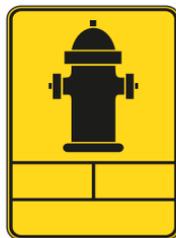
### Emergency telephone

Emergency telephone



### Fire hydrant

Fire hydrant and its features, which are necessary for firefighters and maintenance personnel.



### Distressed vehicle detector

Vehicle needs assistance. This sign is not visible except if an accident has just occurred. If a vehicle breaks through a safety barrier and plunges into a deep ditch along an isolated stretch of road, a special mechanism immediately triggers the sign. This means that road users need help; you should act immediately to help and notify the police.



### Transport facilities

These signs direct road users to the illustrated facility.

#### Airport

Presence and direction of a major airport with a fixed arrival and departure schedule. The front of the plane points in the direction to follow.



Presence and direction of a public or private airport offering certain services.



Seaplane base



Heliport



Name of an airport (or train station) and direction to follow.



Name of an airport (or train station), direction to follow and distance.



### Train station

Nearby train station.



Nearby intercity bus station.



### Ferry

Direction or distance to a car ferry wharf and point of departure and arrival.



Ferry operation is closed.



## Park and ride signs

These signs indicate the presence of a parking facility that is specially designed to promote the use of public transportation.

### Suburban train



### City bus



### Ferry



### Subway station



### Waiting area

Area specially designed for waiting for or picking up passengers at public transportation stops.



## Parking area

Parking areas, whether open to everyone or reserved for certain categories of vehicles.

For all vehicles



Reserved  
for taxis



Reserved  
for buses



Reserved  
for motorcycles



Reserved  
for trucks



## Sanitary landfill site

Sanitary landfill site



## Industrial facilities

Industrial park



Direction and distance to a technological park.



Shipping port



### Other facilities

These signs indicate the presence of other services.

#### Boat launch

Ramp to launch boats.



### Customs

Customs house at the Canadian-American border.



Arena



Community centre



Library



Public market



Church



Indoor public swimming pool



Outdoor public swimming pool



Municipal park



Cégep (college)



University



Court house



## Information signs

### Dead end

Road or street with no exit.



## Turnaround

Area in the median intended exclusively for vehicles to make U-turns.



## Priority turn on flashing green light

Green light includes a flashing sequence that gives priority to turning vehicles.



## Pedestrian or bicycle crossing light activator

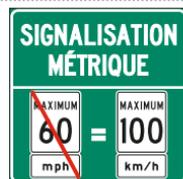
Pedestrians or cyclists must press the button to obtain a crossing signal.



 See the Ministère des Transports Web site to see all variations of these signs and their meaning.

## Metric signs

Informs visitors from the U.S. that Québec road signs use the metric system.



### Aircraft patrolled

Possibility of traffic surveillance from the air.



### Runaway lane

Approaching steep hill with a runaway lane.



Runaway lane with an arrester bed in which vehicles with a defective braking system can stop safely.



3

### Passing lane

Additional lane to allow for passing.



### Road without services

Distance separating the next gas stations along the road.



## Exclusive towing rights



Towing on a particular section of the road is handled exclusively by the company whose telephone number appears on the tab.

## Traffic surveillance

These signs indicate an area that is subject to surveillance by a photo radar device or a photographic traffic control system.



 See the Ministère des Transports Web site to see all variations of these signs and their meaning.

## Tourist facilities

### Rest areas

Rest area run by the Québec government. These landscaped areas are located alongside roads for drivers who wish to rest. The services available are shown by the appropriate symbols. In the case of rest areas operated by a municipality, the fleur-de-lys symbol is replaced by the words “Halte municipale”. The sign may also indicate the distance to the next two rest areas.



Area for truckers to rest or check their load and vehicle.



Services available alongside a road, including a parking lot, gas station, restaurant or any other facility.



### Lookout

Lookout alongside a roadway that offers a scenic view; the field glass points to the direction of the lookout.



### Covered bridge

Covered bridge of heritage value.



### Wildlife reserves, refuges or parks



Wildlife reserve or refuge, park or historical site under provincial or federal jurisdiction.

Used for Canadian national parks under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada.



The maple leaf crown is used to identify parks administered by the National Capital Commission of Canada.



National parks whose territory is under the jurisdiction of the Québec's Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs.



### Tourist information office

There are four types of tourist information centres: Infotouriste centres, regional and local tourist information offices and tourist information stands.

Centre operated by Tourism Québec providing information on the province.



Regional tourist information office providing information about the region.



Local tourist information office providing information on one or more municipalities. A tab often indicates the direction and distance to the office.



Tourist information stand that provides information by means other than staffed personnel.



Foreign currency exchange office.



### Private tourist facilities



Tourist facility and the distance and the direction to its entrance or access route.

## Historic area

Historic area



## Fuel and food service signs on highways

### Exit confirmation sign

Notifies drivers travelling on a highway of the proximity of fuel or food services.



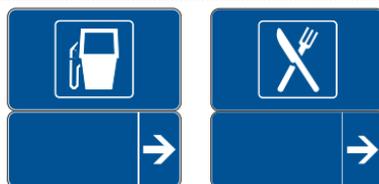
### Itinerary

Direction and distance to the facilities indicated on the highway, which are identified by their logo or name.



### Entrance to facility

Access to identified facilities.



### Types of fuel

Types of fuel available other than gasoline, along with the establishment logo or name.

**D:** diesel

**N:** natural gas

**P:** propane



## Off-road cycling route

Bikeway with an exclusive right of way that is separate from automobile traffic and specifies if the route is a recognized Route verte (described in section 4.6). The sign indicates whether the bikeway is open to another sport in the winter.



## Signs for cyclists

Cyclists can ride on the majority of roads in Québec, with the exception of highways. Drivers must therefore exercise caution when they see cyclists on the side of the road. There are four types of infrastructures intended to make cycling safer: paved shoulders, shared roadways, bike lanes, and bike paths.

Paved shoulders, marked off with a solid white line, allow cyclists to ride in the direction of traffic, alongside motor vehicles.

Bike lanes in urban areas occupy part of the roadway, but are marked off or physically separated from traffic lanes and reserved exclusively for cyclists.

Shared roadways are usually found where motor vehicle traffic is light and slow moving. There are no protected corridors, merely signs.

Bike paths are designed exclusively for the use of cyclists, often away from motor vehicle traffic.

As with motor vehicles, signs for cyclists come in four types: regulatory, warning, work site and information signs.

**NB:** The signs presented in this section are the ones that do not appear in any other section.

## Regulatory signs

### Bicycle tab

Draws the attention of cyclists to any regulatory sign concerning them only, meaning that it is not addressed to other road users.



### Mandatory route for cyclists and pedestrians

Route cyclists must take.



Respective side of the shared lane cyclists and pedestrians must use.



Cyclists and pedestrians must share the portion of the roadway; there is no exclusive corridor for either.



### Cyclists must dismount

Cyclists must dismount and walk beside their bicycle.



### Children must ride with an adult

Cyclists under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult to ride on a public roadway where the posted speed limit is over 50 km/h.



### No passing

Indicates that cyclists may not ride side-by-side and marks the beginning of a no-passing zone.



End of a no-passing zone.



## Bicycle symbol at a pedestrian light

Cyclists must cross on the walk signal.



## Warning signs

### Steep uphill and steep downhill signs

Indicate a slope whose grade is greater than 6% (a rise or drop of 6 metres every 100 metres).



### Busy public access

Warns cyclists of the proximity of a public access where road vehicles may cross frequently.



### Bicycle crossing or bicycles ahead

Warns of a nearby bicycle crossing.



When this tab accompanies the preceding sign, it warns road users of the presence of cyclists on a paved shoulder along a cycling route.



### Slippery surface

Warns that the road surface may be slippery in some places.



### Work site signs

#### Bikeway closed

Bikeway is temporarily closed.



#### Detour

Direction of the detour route that cyclists must follow because of road work.



### Information signs

#### Direction to a bikeway

Used to direct cyclists to a bikeway.



## Direction

Bikeways and specific facilities which may be reached from a bikeway intersection as well as their distance in kilometres from the intersection. In cases where cyclists must share the route with pedestrians, a human silhouette is shown on the sign.



## Bikeway identification

Name and direction of a bikeway.



## Parking area

Informs cyclists of the presence of an area specially designed for parking bicycles.



## Parking area for bikeway connection

Motor vehicle parking area that provides access to a bikeway.



## Route verte identification

Bikeways that are part of the Route verte.

The Route verte is a cycling route more than 5,000 km long that stretches north to south, east to west, throughout the province. It is comprised of off-road paths, paved shoulders and sections of small, quiet roads.



## Beginning

Beginning of a bikeway.



3

## Closed for season

Time of year the bicycle path is not open to cyclists.



## Private tourist facilities

Tourist attractions, activities and services accessible from the bicycle path.



## Commercial services

Food and bicycle repair services located near a bicycle path.



## Public services

These signs indicate the services accessible to cyclists along a bikeway.

Shelter



Heated shelter



Tourist information office



Drinking water



Rest area



Air pump



Telephone



Washroom



# HIGHWAY SAFETY CODE PROVISIONS CONCERNING ROAD SIGNS AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Only the person responsible for maintaining a public roadway may erect road signs or traffic signals, which must meet standards set by Ministère des Transports.

No person may:

- ▶ Erect a signal, sign, indication or device on a public highway without the authorization of the person responsible for the maintenance of that roadway;
- ▶ Erect or display on private property a signal, sign, indication or device that encroaches on a public roadway or that could create confusion or obstruct any sign erected on a public roadway;
- ▶ Travel on private property to avoid compliance with a road sign or traffic signal.

All persons must:

- ▶ Comply with a road sign or traffic signal erected on a roadway under the *Highway Safety Code*;
- ▶ Obey the orders or signals of a peace officer, school crossing guard or flagperson in charge of directing traffic around a work site, even if contrary to existing traffic signs or signals.



# TRAFFIC RULES

4

---

The *Highway Safety Code* sets out the traffic rules for all users of public roadways, particularly motor vehicle operators. Pedestrians, motorcyclists, moped or motorized scooter operators and cyclists also have certain rights and obligations when using a public roadway. For safety's sake, it is important to know these rules and follow them.

# PROTECTION

## Seat belts

Seat belts are not simply an accessory. They are an important safety feature that can save lives, and wearing one is mandatory.

All occupants sitting in the front or back seat of a moving motor vehicle, with the exception of children whose sitting height is less than 63 cm (starting on April 18, 2019, children must be at least 145 cm tall or 9 years old), must wear and properly fasten the seat belt provided. Driving a road vehicle is prohibited if the driver or passenger seat belt is missing, unusable or has been altered.

If you are driving, you are also responsible for making sure that passengers under age 16 are wearing their seat belt properly.

As stated above, a child whose sitting height is less than 63 cm, measured from the seat to the top of the head, must be placed in a restraint system or booster seat in compliance with the applicable regulations of the *Motor Vehicle Safety Act*. However, as of April 18, 2019, a new measure will be in effect, and children who are 145 cm tall or less or under 9 years old must be secured in a car seat suitable for their weight and height.

The restraint system or booster seat must, in accordance with the accompanying manufacturer's instructions, be suited to the child's weight and height, and be properly installed in the vehicle. This obligation does not apply in taxis or police vehicles, in which case the child must be restrained by the seat belt available.

However, the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) may, for exceptional medical reasons, issue a certificate exempting a person from wearing or partially wearing a seat belt or authorizing them, in particular, to add devices to the seat belt or vehicle seat.

Taxi drivers operating a vehicle as part of their job on a public roadway with a speed limit set by a municipality or on an unnumbered roadway are also exempt from the obligation to wear a seat belt.

You are not required to wear a seat belt when backing up or when riding in a passenger seat of a police wagon.

## Air bags

Air bags are proven safety devices. Front air bags are designed to prevent the occupants of a vehicle from striking their head, neck or chest against the dashboard, steering wheel or windshield in a head-on collision. They also provide effective protection against potentially fatal or disabling injuries. We know that the combined use of air bags and seat belts reduces the risk of severe head injury by 75% and severe chest injury by 66%.

Other types of air bags exist, such as curtain air bags, side air bags, knee air bags or inflatable seat belts. These devices are designed to increase the safety of occupants in various types of accidents (head-on or side collisions and rollovers).

Air bags are deployed by an electronic command module that activates them only if the accident is serious enough. Air bags contain tiny holes, which enable them to deflate upon absorbing the momentum from the occupant.

Some measures should be taken to reduce risks during air bag deployment:

- ▶ Infants must always be seated in a rear-facing infant safety seat that is secured to the back seat (in the middle, vehicle permitting);
- ▶ Children age 12 and under must always be seated in the back seat and, where required, in a seat that is suited to their weight and height, and secured to the back seat;
- ▶ Always wear a seat belt;
- ▶ Move the driver's seat back to ensure that there is a distance of at least 25 cm between the centre of the air bag cover and the middle of your chest area.

The SAAQ may authorize an air bag to be deactivated if one of the drivers of a vehicle or a passenger is at risk when an air bag deploys. Applications should be filed using the *Declaration of Requirement for Air Bag Deactivation* form (available in the E-forms section of the SAAQ Web site at [saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)).

## Headrests

Thousands of Quebecers suffer whiplash injuries in automobile accidents each year. Only 10% of drivers adjust their headrest properly.

If your headrest is placed too low, behind the neck, it is of little use because in the event of a rear-end collision, your head will be violently thrust back, causing a neck injury.

Maximum protection is provided when:

- ▶ The distance between the headrest and the back of your head is not greater than seven centimetres;
- ▶ The middle of the headrest is level with your eyes or top of your ears.



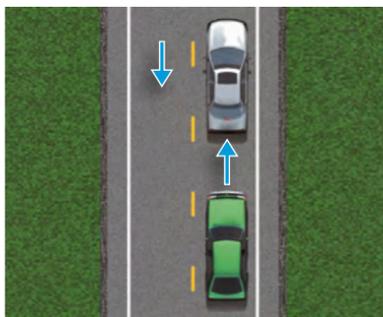
# TRAFFIC RULES

Whether turning, changing lanes, passing or carrying out another manoeuvre, you have to follow particular rules in each case.

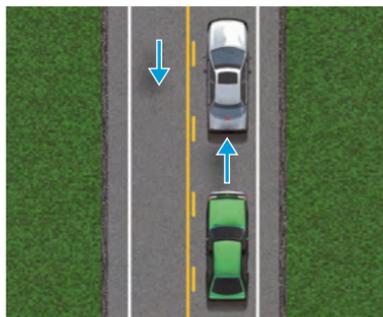
## Traffic lane divisions

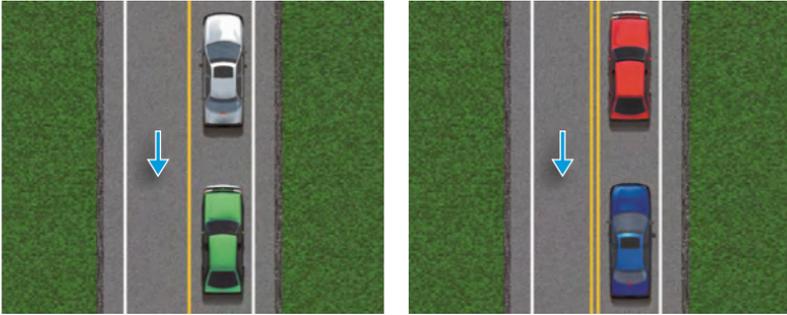
Some lines separating traffic lanes may be crossed, while others may not.

You may cross a **broken line** after ensuring that you can do so safely.



A **broken line next to a solid line** means passing is allowed if the broken line is on your side at the start of the manoeuvre. Passing must be completed before the broken line ends.





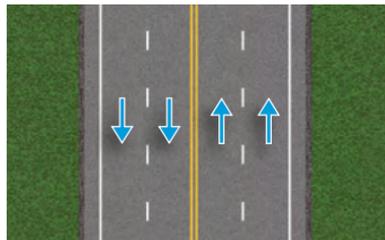
In general, you are not allowed to cross a **solid single line** or **solid double line**.

However, these lines may be crossed if the traffic lane is obstructed or closed, or to make a left turn onto another roadway or into a private driveway. They can also be crossed to pass farm machinery, farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles, bicycles or vehicles with a slow-moving vehicle warning sign (orange triangle with reflectorized dark red edges).

## Lane use

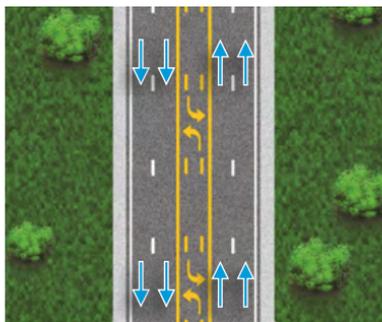
### Two or more lanes of two-way traffic

When travelling on a roadway, use the right-hand lane. You may use the left lane, however, to pass another vehicle or to avoid an obstacle after making sure the left lane is free before entering it.



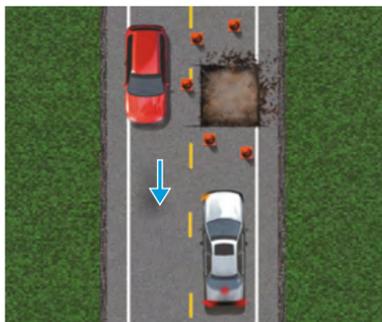
## Centre left-turn lane

On two-way roadways that have three or five lanes, the centre lane is reserved exclusively for making left turns (both directions). The procedure is to travel in the right-hand lanes and use the centre lane only to turn left.



## Closed lane

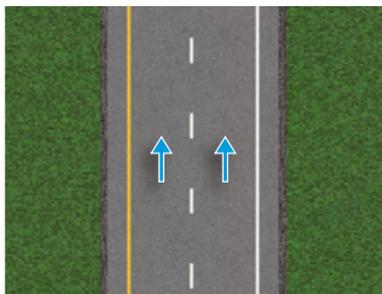
If one or more lanes in the direction you are travelling are closed or obstructed, you may use the nearest free lane intended for oncoming traffic, after yielding the right of way to any vehicle in that lane.



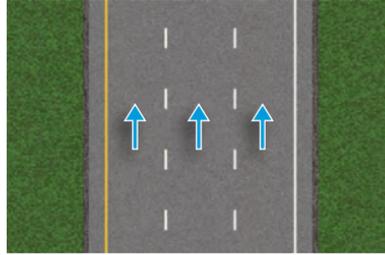
4

## Two or three lanes of one-way traffic

You should generally keep to the far right when there are two lanes for traffic in the same direction.



When there are three lanes, you should generally use one of the right-hand lanes.



### Particular circumstances:

- ▶ On highways, you may use the far left lane to pass other vehicles, turn left, avoid obstacles, or move toward an exit lane.
- ▶ Slowing down in the left-hand lane is permitted, as long as you signal your intention to turn left or stop on the left side of the lane.
- ▶ However, when the speed limit is below 80 km/h, for instance on an urban boulevard, you may use either lane. Travelling faster than a vehicle in another lane is not considered passing.

## Roadway separated by a median or other divider

Do not cross medians or other dividers separating traffic lanes, except in those places indicated by the appropriate signs.

## Highway access and exit ramps

To enter or exit a highway, use designated access and exit lanes.

## Intersections

In intersections, the risk of danger or an accident is high. This is the reason why it is prohibited to come to a stop, block a lane or change lanes in an intersection.

## Speed limits and distance between vehicles

Any action or speed likely to endanger people's lives or safety or property is prohibited. These obligations apply on all public roadways and on private roadways open to public road vehicle traffic and on land occupied by shopping centres or other land where public traffic is allowed.

Obey the following speed limits:

- ▶ On highways:
  - ▷ 60 km/h minimum;
  - ▷ 100 km/h maximum.
- ▶ On roads with a concrete or asphalt surface:
  - ▷ 90 km/h maximum.
- ▶ On gravel roads:
  - ▷ 70 km/h maximum.
- ▶ In a school zone:
  - ▷ 50 km/h maximum unless a sign indicates a different speed, which you must obey.
- ▶ In cities, towns or villages, unless otherwise indicated:
  - ▷ 50 km/h maximum.

Reduce speed when travelling after dark, in fog, rain, snow or other conditions that limit visibility, as well as on a road surface that is slippery or not entirely cleared. You must also slow down when approaching road construction.

However, it is prohibited to travel so slowly as to hinder the flow of traffic.

## Distance between vehicles

When travelling behind another vehicle, maintain a reasonable, safe distance from the vehicle ahead so that you can stop without causing an accident if you need to brake quickly. Take into account traffic speed, traffic density, weather conditions and the state of the road surface. The “two-second rule” can be used to estimate the distance between two vehicles. This rule is described and illustrated in the publications on driving techniques: *Driving a Passenger Vehicle*, *Operating a Motorcycle*, and *Operating a Moped or Scooter*.

If you are travelling in a convoy on a public roadway where the maximum speed is 70 km/h or higher, leave sufficient space between the vehicles and allow other drivers to pass you.

## Passing

Several situations may call for passing another vehicle. You have to follow certain rules when doing so.

Before passing another vehicle:

- ▶ Make sure passing is allowed (broken lines between lanes);
- ▶ Make sure that the left lane is free and that no other vehicle coming from behind is going to occupy that lane;
- ▶ Make sure that the lane you wish to enter is unoccupied for a sufficient distance;
- ▶ Signal your intention to pass using turn-signal lights.

Passing should be avoided when travelling in fog or in conditions with decreased visibility.

Use the left lane to pass. A passing vehicle must return to the right-hand lane once the manoeuvre is complete.

## Passing a bicycle

If you want to pass a bicycle, you must leave a distance of:

- ▶ 1 m on a road of 50 km/h or less;
- ▶ 1.5 m on a road of over 50 km/h.

If there is not enough room to perform the manoeuvre, you must stay in your lane, reduce your speed and wait behind the cyclist until there is an opportunity to pass.

## Passing a pedestrian

If you meet an oncoming pedestrian or wish to pass a pedestrian walking on the roadway or the shoulder, you must leave a distance of:

- ▶ 1 m on a road of 50 km/h or less;
- ▶ 1.5 m on a road of over 50 km/h.

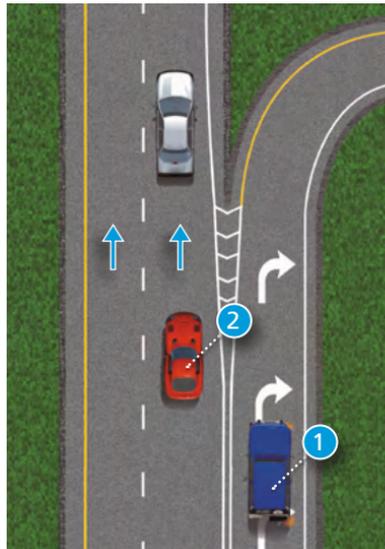
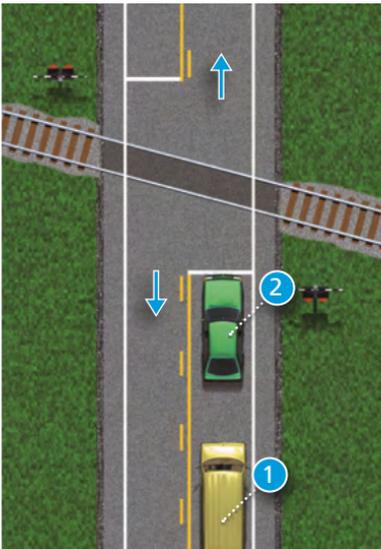
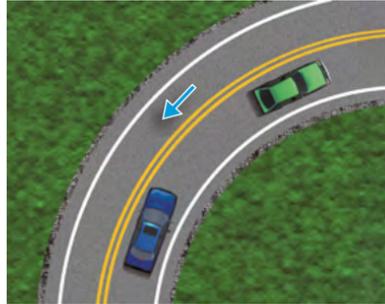
## Being passed

If you are being passed or about to be passed by another vehicle, do not accelerate. You could slow down out of courtesy to make it easier.

## Passing prohibited

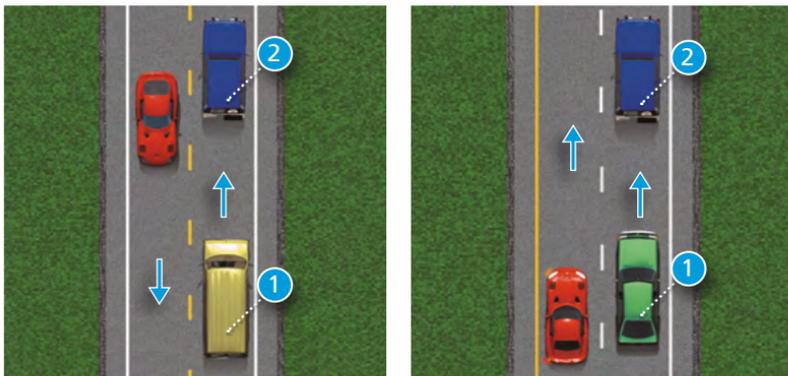
If you need to use a lane reserved for oncoming traffic in order to pass, avoid doing so:

- ▶ When approaching or on top of a hill;
- ▶ In a curve;
- ▶ When approaching or crossing a marked pedestrian crosswalk, a level crossing or a tunnel;
- ▶ Any other place where signs or pavement markings indicate that passing is prohibited.



In all these situations, vehicle 1 may not pass vehicle 2.

Passing is also prohibited when there are vehicles in the left lane, or if a vehicle behind has signaled the intention to pass, or has begun to do so. In situations like those illustrated below, the driver of vehicle 1 may not pass vehicle 2.



When driving on a road way with two or more lanes of one-way traffic, avoid:

- ▶ Weaving in and out of traffic;
- ▶ Passing on the right, except:
  - ▷ When passing a vehicle making a left turn or heading toward a highway exit ramp;
  - ▷ When passing a vehicle performing maintenance in the left lane.

At no time may your vehicle leave the roadway (for example, driving on the shoulder) to pass.

## Passing in a slow lane

When signs indicate a far right-hand lane for slow-moving vehicles, drivers travelling slowly must use it. Slow lanes, created to maintain traffic flow, are usually found in mountainous areas. Any vehicle can use them—not just trucks.

Since some of these lanes are longer than two kilometres, a broken line may be used over a certain distance to allow vehicles driving downhill to pass other vehicles.

If you are travelling in the slow lane on the right-hand side, you are prohibited from re-entering the main lane if a solid line is painted on the pavement.



## Turning

Before making a turn at an intersection:

- ▶ Make sure the manoeuvre can be performed safely;
- ▶ Signal your intention to turn using turn-signal lights;

- ▶ Yield the right of way to pedestrians and cyclists crossing the roadway you are about to enter;
- ▶ Yield the right of way to vehicles travelling on the intersecting roadway, oncoming vehicles, or vehicles approaching or already in the intersection.

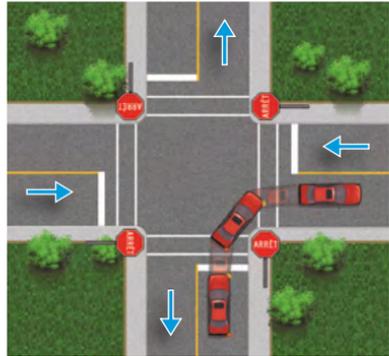
You must turn as soon as the way is clear. If, when preparing to turn, you are unable to move into the designated turning lane, continue and turn at another intersection.

The following illustrations show the rules to follow when making the most common right and left turns.

## Right turns

To make a right turn onto a roadway with one or more lanes, whether for one- or two-way traffic:

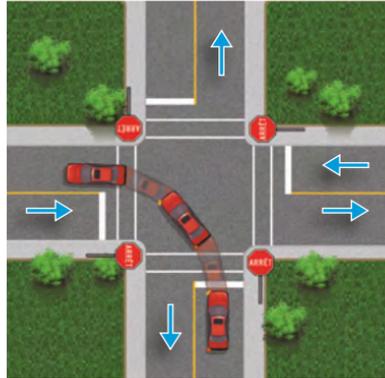
- ▶ Move to the far right-hand side of the roadway or to the lane designated for turning right;
- ▶ Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- ▶ Turn sharply and enter the far right-hand lane of the other roadway without encroaching upon the left lane or any bicycle lane or reserved lane.



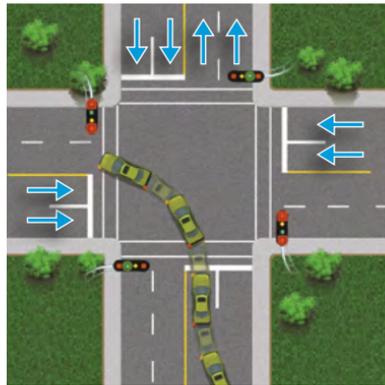
## Left turns

To make a left turn at the intersection of roadways with two-way traffic:

- ▶ Stay in the centre of the lane in which you are travelling;
- ▶ Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- ▶ As soon as the way is clear, turn into the nearest lane (furthest to the left) for the direction you want to travel.

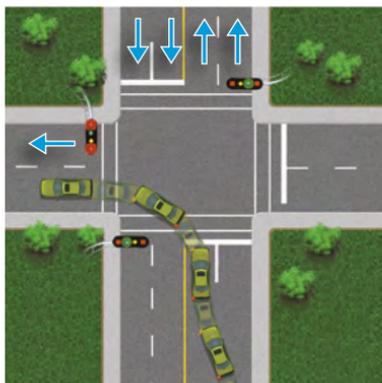


- ▶ Move over to the left lane or to a lane designated for turning left;
- ▶ Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- ▶ As soon as the way is clear, turn into the nearest lane (furthest to the left) for the direction you want to travel.



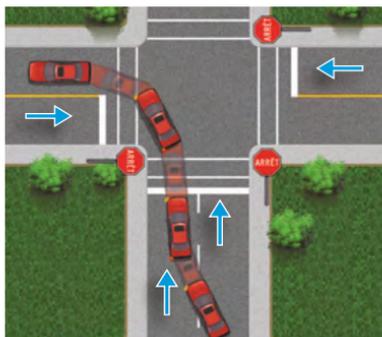
When turning from a road with two-way traffic onto a one-way road:

- ▶ Move over to the left lane or a designated turning lane;
- ▶ Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- ▶ As soon as the way is clear, enter the far left lane of the other roadway.

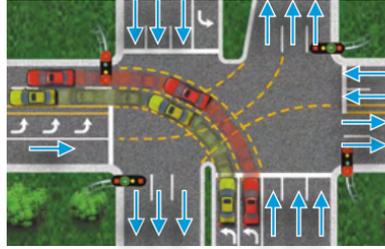


When turning from a one-way road onto a road with two-way traffic:

- ▶ Move over to the far left-hand lane or a designated turning lane;
- ▶ Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- ▶ Turn into the nearest lane (furthest to the left) for the direction you want to travel.

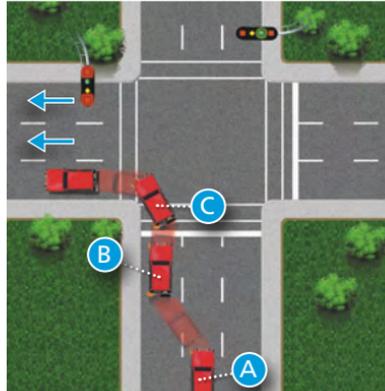


If there are two designated turning lanes, the turn should be completed in the corresponding lane of the other roadway.



When turning from a one-way road onto another one-way road:

- A. Move over to the far left-hand lane or any other designated turning lane;
- B. Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- C. Turn into the far left lane of the other roadway.



## At an intersection where several vehicles are turning at the same time

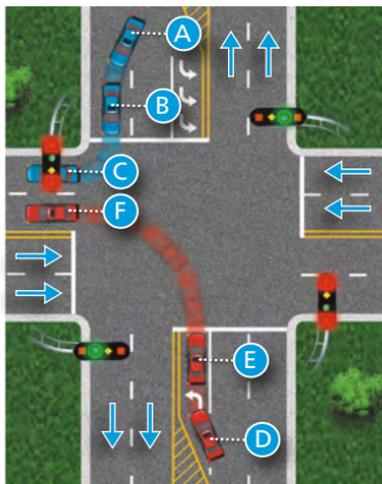
At an intersection of two roads with more than one lane in both directions, when these manoeuvres are performed simultaneously by several vehicles, it is essential that each driver direct his or her vehicle into the correct lane.

If you are turning right:

- A. Move into the lane on the extreme right or into a designated turning lane;
- B. Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- C. Turn sharply and enter the right-hand lane of the other roadway without encroaching upon the left lane or any bicycle lane or reserved lane.

If you are turning left:

- D. Move over to the left lane or a designated turning lane;
- E. Advance in a straight line to the point where the two roadways meet;
- F. As soon as the way is clear, turn into the furthest left-hand lane for the direction you want to travel, without encroaching upon the right lane.



## Turning right on a red light

To safely turn right at a red light, motorists must follow these steps:

### 1. Stop:

- ▶ Come to a complete stop at the stop line or before the pedestrian crossing. Be careful not to block the pedestrian crossing.

### 2. Look twice:

- ▶ Make sure that turning right on the red light is allowed;
- ▶ If there is no prohibiting sign, or outside of the time period indicated on the tab accompanying a prohibiting sign, or outside the island of Montréal, make sure that turning right on the red light can be done safely:
  - ▷ Yield the right of way to pedestrians and cyclists in the intersection or about to enter it. Pedestrians always have the right of way when facing a green traffic light or a pedestrian light allowing them to cross;
  - ▷ Look left, ahead and right (mirror and blind spot) and look left again;
  - ▷ Yield to vehicles so as to not impede traffic;
- ▶ Be extra careful in the presence of children, the elderly, people with reduced mobility or anyone crossing slowly.

### 3. Decide:

- ▶ Turning right on a red light is not mandatory. It should be done only if the way is clear.

## Traffic circles

A traffic circle is a roadway configuration that contains one to three lanes and encompasses a central island. Traffic flows counterclockwise.



### Basic principles

1. You always enter a traffic circle **from the right**.
2. You must **yield the right of way to drivers who are already travelling** in the circle.
3. If there is a **pedestrian crosswalk**, you must yield them the right of way.

### How to drive through a traffic circle

To drive through a traffic circle, you must:

#### 1. Reduce your speed

Slow down as you approach the traffic circle and observe the signs. Be prepared to come to a complete stop:

- ▷ If a pedestrian is crossing or about to do so;
- ▷ If a vehicle is already in the traffic circle, to the left.

#### 2. Yield the right of way

Before entering, yield to vehicles that are already in the traffic circle, as they have the right of way.

#### 3. Enter from the right

Enter the traffic circle when it is safe to do so.

#### 4. Travel in the same direction as traffic

Do not pass other vehicles or stop unless in the case of an emergency, such as to avoid a collision.

#### 5. When exiting the traffic circle:

- ▷ Signal your intention using your turn signals;
- ▷ Exit the traffic circle (watch for pedestrians).

## Indicating your intentions and presence

### Signalling your intentions

Before changing lanes, making a U-turn (unless prohibited by a road sign), passing, turning or entering a roadway from the shoulder or a parking area, indicate your intentions using the vehicle's turn-signal lights continuously over a sufficient distance to ensure your safety and that of other road users.

### Using hazard lights

If you have to drive very slowly, use your vehicle's hazard lights. Hazard lights should only be used for reasons of safety (such as a broken-down or stalled vehicle on the roadway at night).

### Using headlights and running lights

At night or in poor weather conditions, make sure that your vehicle's headlights and running lights are on.

At night, switch from high beams to low beams:

- ▶ When coming within 150 metres of an oncoming vehicle;
- ▶ When coming within 150 metres of the vehicle ahead;
- ▶ When the roadway is sufficiently well lit.

## Yielding the right of way

The *Highway Safety Code* describes many situations where road users must yield the right of way.

### In the presence of pedestrians

Drivers must yield the right of way to pedestrians crossing or preparing to cross:

- ▶ At a green light;
- ▶ At a pedestrian light (white), flashing or not;
- ▶ At an intersection regulated by one or several stop signs;
- ▶ At an intersection regulated by a yield sign.

### At a pedestrian crosswalk

Drivers must yield the right of way to pedestrians who are crossing or clearly signalling their intention to cross the road by:

- ▶ Walking toward the pedestrian crosswalk;
- ▶ Waiting at a pedestrian crosswalk;
- ▶ Making eye contact with the driver;
- ▶ Gesturing with their hand.

### In the presence of a group of cyclists

Unless authorized to do so by a peace officer, drivers cannot pass a group of cyclists travelling on a road with one lane of traffic in each direction. If the group is travelling against oncoming traffic, the driver must slow down and maintain a buffer lane.

Drivers can pass a group of cyclists travelling on a road with two or more lanes of traffic in each direction. The driver must first slow down and then move to the other lane heading in the same direction as he or she is travelling, provided this manoeuvre can be made safely and without danger.

## Yield signs

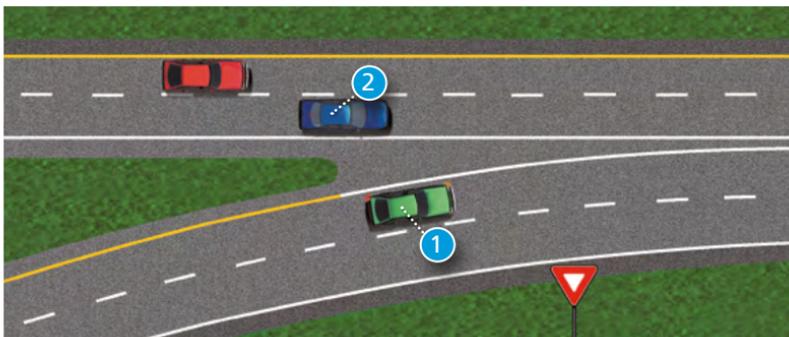
The driver of vehicle 1 has to yield the right of way to vehicle 2 before entering lane A.



## Entering a highway

The driver of vehicle 1 has to merge with the flow of traffic on the highway while yielding the right of way to vehicle 2. In the example illustrated, the driver has to pull in behind vehicle 2.

The driver of vehicle 2 must consider that vehicle 1 is trying to merge with traffic on the highway, and should display courtesy and change lanes if possible.



## At a mandatory stop

At an intersection controlled by a stop sign for one roadway only:

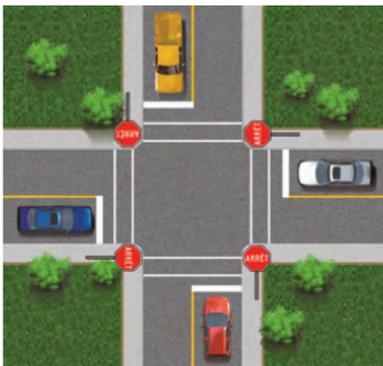
Drivers and cyclists required to stop at an intersection or flashing red light must yield the right of way to any vehicle on the other roadway already in the intersection or near enough to the intersection that entering it would be dangerous.



At an **all-way stop**:

Drivers and cyclists required to stop at an intersection regulated by an all-way stop must yield the right of way to any vehicle that reaches the intersection before them.

In both of these cases, drivers and cyclists are also required to yield the right of way to pedestrians and cyclists crossing or travelling alongside the roadway that they are about to cross or enter.



## At certain traffic lights

At any of the following traffic lights:

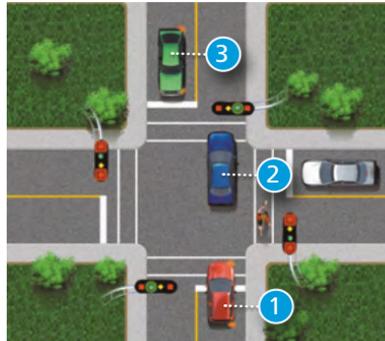
- ▶ Flashing red light;
- ▶ Flashing yellow light;
- ▶ Solid or flashing green light;
- ▶ Green arrow;

drivers and cyclists have to yield the right of way to anyone already in the intersection or make sure that they can make it across the intersection safely.

## Turning at an intersection

Drivers and cyclists are required to:

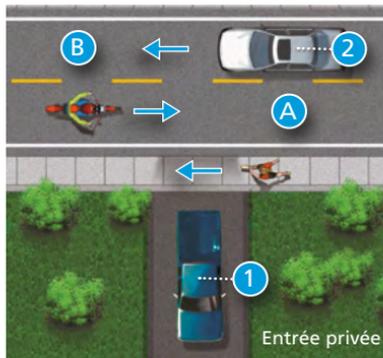
- ▶ Yield the right of way to pedestrians and cyclists who are crossing or travelling alongside the roadway that they wish to cross or enter. In the example illustrated, the driver of vehicle 1 yields the right of way to the pedestrian;
- ▶ Yield the right of way, when making a left turn, to any oncoming vehicle. In the example illustrated, vehicle 3 yields the right of way to vehicle 2, the pedestrian and vehicle 1.



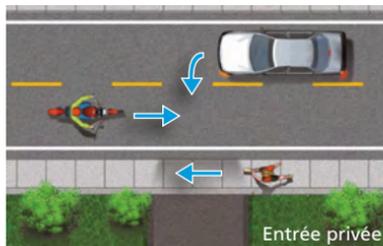
## Entering or exiting private property

Drivers and cyclists wishing to enter or exit private property should first signal their intentions and then yield the right of way to any vehicle or pedestrian travelling on the public roadway.

In this illustration, before entering lane A or B, the driver of vehicle 1 has to yield the right of way to the pedestrian, motorcyclist and vehicle 2.



In the situation illustrated here, the driver has to yield the right of way to the motorcyclist and pedestrian before entering the private driveway.



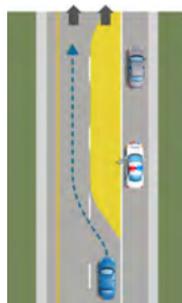
## Emergency vehicles

Drivers must yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle whose flashing or rotating lights and/or sirens are activated. Remain calm and provide room for such vehicles to pass, regardless of where they are or which direction they are travelling (oncoming lane, behind you, beside you, etc.).

### Procedure to follow

- ▶ Reduce your speed;
- ▶ Keep as far to the right as possible;
- ▶ Come to a stop, if necessary.

Stay clear of intersections and never turn in front of an emergency vehicle (it is better to backtrack, if necessary) or attempt to follow closely behind one. Adopting good behaviours helps to save lives; every second counts.



## Interception by a police vehicle

If a driver is being followed by a police vehicle whose flashing or rotating lights and/or sirens are activated, the police officer may have observed an offence. Remain calm and follow the required procedure.

### Procedure to follow

- ▶ Activate your turn signals;
- ▶ Pull over to the side of the road as soon as you can do so safely;
- ▶ Come to a stop;
- ▶ Place your hands on the steering wheel so they are visible.

The police officer will inform you of the reason for the interception and ask questions, which you are obligated to answer. Be cooperative. If the interception takes place at night, do not be surprised if the police officer points a flashlight at you and the inside of the vehicle.

## Move-Over Law

The purpose of a Move-Over Law is to ensure the safety of certain workers who must exit their vehicle to perform their tasks. When approaching stopped vehicles with flashing or rotating lights or a yellow arrow signal light, you must:

- ▶ Reduce your speed;
- ▶ Distance yourself as far as possible from the stopped vehicle after ensuring that you can do so safely;
- ▶ Come to a stop, if necessary.

### Stopped vehicles that require a Move-Over Law

- ▶ Emergency vehicles: police vehicles, ambulances, fire department vehicles, Contrôle routier Québec vehicles;
- ▶ Surveillance vehicles equipped with a yellow arrow signal light;
- ▶ Tow trucks.

### Procedure to follow

The procedure is different depending on whether you are travelling on a two-way road or a multi-lane road.

#### ▶ Two-way road

- ▷ Move as closely as possible to the middle line to distance yourself from the workers;
- ▷ Return to the centre of the lane after passing the workers and their vehicles.

#### ▶ Multi-lane road

- ▷ Move over to the left lane after ensuring that you can do so safely;
- ▷ Return to the right lane after passing the workers and their vehicles.

## Buses

On public roads with a maximum speed limit under 70 km/h, yield the right of way to a bus whose driver wishes to re-enter the lane the bus occupied before stopping. The bus driver must make sure that it is safe to do so and indicate intentions using the turn-signal lights.

## School buses

Drivers must always be prepared to stop when near a school bus.

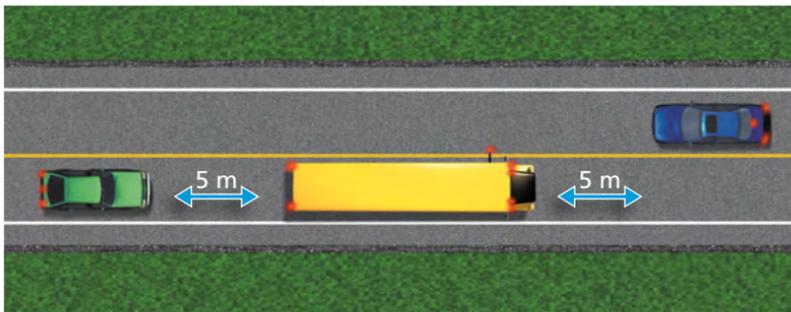
School buses make frequent stops to pick up and drop off children. To avoid causing other drivers to slow down or accelerate without warning, the school bus driver who intends to stop must warn other drivers by advance signalling a mandatory stop.

Remember these two steps:

- ▶ **Prepare to stop**  
when the school bus's flashing amber lights or hazard lights are activated;
- ▶ **Come to a complete stop**  
when the bus's flashing red lights or stop sign are activated.

You must come to a stop at least five metres from a school bus when its flashing red lights are activated or its mandatory stop sign is extended. You may proceed when the flashing lights are turned off, the stop sign is retracted and it is safe to advance.

This obligation applies to drivers who are travelling on the same roadway as a school bus, regardless of its location (in front of you or on a perpendicular roadway). However, if the roadway is separated by a median or another type of divider, this obligation does not apply.



## Level crossings

At a level crossing, drivers and cyclists must stop their vehicle at least five metres from the railway where red flashing lights, a lowered gate or a railway employee signals an approaching rail vehicle.

Do not enter a level crossing if there is not enough free space ahead to clear the crossing completely.

Unless otherwise indicated, the driver of a bus, minibus or vehicle carrying hazardous material must stop at least five metres from a level crossing at all times and may continue only when they are certain they can cross safely.

4

## Backing up

When backing up, make sure the manoeuvre can be performed safely and without impeding traffic.

Driving in reverse is prohibited on highways and on their access and exit ramps.

## Shared streets

A shared street is a street on which pedestrians have the right of way. Road vehicles are also authorized to travel on such streets.

- ▶ The speed limit is 20 km/h.
- ▶ Pedestrians can walk in any direction and cross at any time or location.

## Bicycle boulevards

A bicycle boulevard is a street on which cyclists have the right of way and can travel along the entire width of the lane. Road vehicles are also authorized to travel on such streets.

- ▶ The speed limit is 30 km/h.
- ▶ Signs indicate the start and end of a bicycle boulevard.
- ▶ Cyclists can ride side by side, except when travelling against oncoming traffic.

## Sharing the road with heavy vehicles

All car, motorcycle and truck drivers have their own reasons for using the road network. Each is required to behave responsibly. Here are a few safety rules that call for courtesy and tolerance when sharing the road with other users.

It is important to be aware of the limitations of driving a heavy vehicle in order to have a better understanding of the manoeuvres required of truck drivers and to drive defensively. Since trucks are longer, wider and heavier than other vehicles, they are more difficult to handle and react more slowly.

For example, trucks require greater time and distance to stop. If you are travelling in front of a heavy vehicle, signal your intentions to turn or change lanes well ahead of time. Sudden moves such as quickly cutting in front of a heavy vehicle must be avoided at all costs. Plan for the extra time and distance before passing a truck.

When a truck driver signals a turn at an intersection, all other drivers should cooperate by remaining behind and allowing the heavy vehicle to complete the turn without getting in its way.

Given the length and height of their vehicles, heavy vehicle drivers have difficulty seeing other road users. There are blind spots at the front, rear and side of the vehicle. For example, if you are travelling behind a truck and do not see any of the truck's side mirrors, you are too close. You should also avoid travelling alongside a heavy vehicle and taking too much time to pass it, because the driver cannot see you.

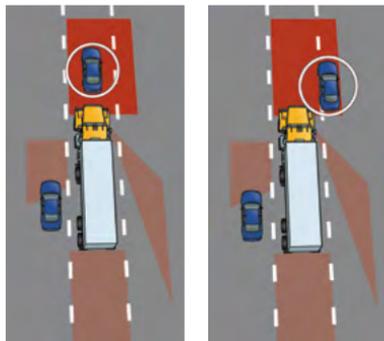
## Heavy vehicle blind spots

Driving near a heavy vehicle requires you to exercise extra care. Blind spots are those areas of the road that a heavy vehicle driver cannot see because of the vehicle's size. Drivers cannot see other road users when they are in those areas, and the risk of collision is higher. A heavy vehicle's blind spots are at the front, rear and sides. For greater road safety, avoid staying in a heavy vehicle's blind spots and make sure that the driver sees you when you have finished passing.

### Five situations

#### In front of the vehicle

A collision may occur when the driver of a light vehicle cuts quickly in front of a heavy vehicle, from the left or right lane and slows down once in front.



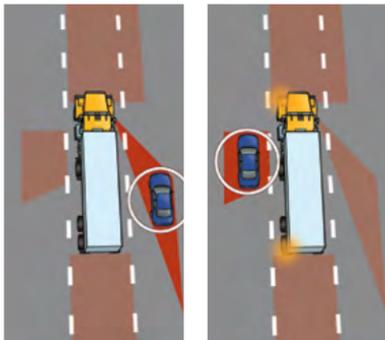
#### Behind the vehicle

A collision could occur when the driver of a light vehicle is following a heavy vehicle too closely, and the latter stops or slows suddenly.



## On either side of the vehicle

There are blind spots on either side of a heavy vehicle, because these areas are not covered by the truck's side mirrors. A collision could occur when a light vehicle is travelling in one of these blind spots and the heavy vehicle moves to the left or right.



## WHEN NEARING A WORK SITE

A series of orange diamond-shaped signs indicate that road work is being carried out further ahead. Work areas may be identified by cones, barrels, barriers, signs, pavement markings, flashing arrows or temporary signal lights.

Be particularly careful when nearing a work site and obey the following traffic rules:

- ▶ Be patient. The purpose of road work is to improve traffic conditions. Some inconvenience to motorists cannot be avoided.
- ▶ Obey all traffic signs, including the speed limit posted in road work areas, which carry the same legal obligations as regular posted speed limits.

- ▶ Reduce speed and maintain a greater distance from the vehicle ahead to allow enough time to react safely to the warning signs.
- ▶ Scan the road ahead and on the sides, and check your rearview and side mirrors frequently.
- ▶ Watch for site personnel, vehicles or equipment, which might appear unexpectedly. These are all necessary for carrying out road work. Respect the workers; their work is important.
- ▶ Exercise caution when coming to areas where the roadway narrows or lanes merge, which can create a bottleneck and slow traffic. Move into the lane that remains open as soon as you see the sign. Don't wait until the last minute, because you will have more difficulty finding space to merge.
- ▶ Exercise extreme caution when temporary detours are used to divert traffic. Shoulders may be lower than the road.
- ▶ Obey the signals from the flagperson directing traffic in or near work sites.
- ▶ The amount of the fine is doubled for any speeding offence committed in a road construction zone indicated by signs and signals.



# STOPPING AND PARKING

Just as vehicle movement is regulated, stopping is also subject to various rules.

## Obligations

You have to park your vehicle in the same direction as the flow of traffic and no more than 30 cm from the edge of the roadway. When parking on a slope:

- ▶ Engage the parking brake;
- ▶ Turn the wheels to ensure that any movement of the vehicle's front will be made toward the nearest curb.

Do not leave your vehicle without removing the key from the ignition and locking the doors. Also, no child under age 7 is to be left unattended in a vehicle.

Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters may be parked diagonally to the edge of the nearest curb in the same direction as the flow of traffic.

If you have to stop temporarily on the roadway at night, leave your running lights or hazard lights on. You may also signal the presence of your vehicle using lights or flares that are visible for a distance of at least 150 metres.

## Restrictions

Only in cases of necessity may you stop or park your vehicle in such a way that it blocks a road sign, hinders traffic, road construction or maintenance work or blocks access to private property.

Parking or stopping is prohibited:

- ▶ At any place where parking is prohibited by a sign;
- ▶ On a sidewalk or the median strip of a roadway;
- ▶ Less than:
  - ▷ 3 metres from a fire hydrant;
  - ▷ 5 metres from a police or fire station;
  - ▷ 5 metres from an intersection, pedestrian crosswalk, bicycle crossing or level crossing;
  - ▷ 8 metres from the opposite side of a road facing a police or fire station;
- ▶ In an intersection, a pedestrian crosswalk, a bicycle crossing or a level crossing;
- ▶ In a traffic circle;
- ▶ On highways and on their access and exit ramps;
- ▶ On an elevated lane, a bridge or an overpass, or in a tunnel;
- ▶ On the travelway of a public roadway where the speed limit is 70 km/h or more;
- ▶ In a traffic lane reserved exclusively for certain vehicles;
- ▶ In zones reserved for buses and identified as such;
- ▶ In loading zones;
- ▶ In front of a sidewalk ramp specially built for people with a disability;
- ▶ In a parking space reserved for the exclusive use of people with a disability.

Despite the prohibitions, you may stop in these locations to take on or drop off a person with a disability, where this can be done safely.

To use a parking space reserved for people with a disability, the vehicle must display a parking permit for that purpose.

No person may abandon a road vehicle on a public roadway. Any vehicle abandoned on the roadway will be removed and impounded at the owner's expense.

## Spaces reserved for people with a disability and disabled parking permits

### Passenger vehicle

To use a parking space reserved for people with a disability:

- ▶ Display the parking permit issued by the SAAQ in the name of the driver or the person accompanying the person with a disability;
- ▶ Hang the permit from the rearview mirror and make sure it is visible from outside the vehicle;
- ▶ Have the attestation certificate in your possession.



## Motorcycles and scooters

In order to park a motorcycle or a scooter in a parking space reserved for people with a disability, you must:

- ▶ Have a sticker issued by the SAAQ affixed in the upper right corner of the licence plate;
- ▶ Have the accompanying attestation certificate in your possession.

Parking spaces reserved for people with a disability may also be used by someone who has a sticker, plate or permit displaying the international wheelchair symbol, issued by another Canadian or American jurisdiction or a member country or associate member country of the International Transport Forum.

To qualify for a disabled parking permit, you must meet the requirements set out in the *Regulation respecting identification stickers for parking spaces reserved for handicapped persons*, that is, have a disability lasting at least six months that:

- ▶ Results in a loss of independence;
- ▶ Risks compromising your health and safety in movement between the parked vehicle and the destination.

To obtain one of these permits, fill out the appropriate application form and submit it to the SAAQ along with the required payment. In some cases, you may be required to provide, at your own expense, a professional assessment demonstrating that the eligibility requirements are met.

A permit is issued to a person with a disability and may not be loaned to anyone.

The SAAQ may also issue a permit to a public establishment as defined in the Act respecting health services and social services, if the establishment owns a vehicle equipped with securement devices for wheelchairs.

At the request of a peace officer, the driver or passenger must immediately produce the certificate issued by the SAAQ attesting that a permit has been issued.

The SAAQ must be informed within 30 days of a change of address or the destruction or loss of a parking permit or related certificate.

The parking permit and certificate must be returned to the SAAQ if they are no longer used or if the conditions listed on the certificate no longer apply to the holder.

## UNLAWFUL PRACTICES

### Driving prohibited – where and when?

Certain manoeuvres and behaviour, whether a vehicle is stopped or in motion, are strictly prohibited or restricted in order to ensure the safety of all road users.

#### On the shoulder

Under no circumstances may you drive on the shoulder except in case of necessity (closed or obstructed lane or emergency) or unless authorized by a sign or signal.

#### Emergencies

Do not drive a vehicle when and where prohibited by the authorities for emergency reasons or because of thaw, rain or flooding.

#### Races or rallies

Driving a vehicle on a roadway for a wager or race is prohibited except in the case of a rally organized in accordance with established standards.

## Too many passengers

You may not carry more passengers than the number of seat belts available in the vehicle.

No passengers may ride in a trailer or semi-trailer or the load space of a moving vehicle unless it is specially designed and the road used is closed to traffic.

## Alcohol or drugs

All vehicle occupants are prohibited from consuming alcohol or drugs while in a moving vehicle or while parked in a public place.

## Unlawful practices involving the vehicle

### Doors

Opening the doors of a moving vehicle is prohibited. The vehicle must be stopped, and the manoeuvre done safely.

### Car surfing

Holding onto, being pulled or pushed by a vehicle or standing on the running boards, another exterior part or the box or dump body of a moving vehicle are irresponsible behaviours that are strictly prohibited by the *Highway Safety Code*, whether on a public or private roadway. Do not tolerate such practices.

Any driver having the care or control of the vehicle apprehended while street racing and people participating in car surfing will have their licence or right to obtain one suspended immediately for 30 days. The vehicle involved will be seized and impounded for 7 days for a first offence, and for 30 days for any subsequent offence.

## Licence plate

Vehicles whose licence plate permits them to be driven only on private property or roads may not be driven on a public roadway. However, the driver of such a vehicle, excluding vehicles with metal treads, is authorized to cross public roadways other than highways.

## Squealing tires

Squealing your vehicle's tires or braking abruptly is prohibited unless necessary for reasons of safety.

## Towing

You may not use a road vehicle for towing another road vehicle whose wheels remain on the ground, unless the vehicle is firmly held by a bar.

## Headphones, screens, radar detectors

You may only wear one earphone when driving. Apart from the exceptions provided for in the regulation respecting distractions while driving, it is prohibited to use a display screen unless it meets all of the following conditions:

- ▶ It only displays information that is of use when driving or related to the operation of the vehicle;
- ▶ It is built into the vehicle or mounted on a bracket that is attached to the vehicle;
- ▶ It is placed in a location where it will not obstruct the driver's view, interfere with driving manoeuvres or prevent equipment from operating;
- ▶ It is positioned and designed so that the driver can operate it with ease.

It is also prohibited to drive a vehicle that has a radar detector on board.

No person may drive a road vehicle in which a passenger, an animal or an object obstructs the driver's view or interferes with the proper handling of the vehicle.

## Restrictions on the use of public roadways

### Objects and obstacles

Generally, throwing or dumping snow or ice on a public roadway is prohibited. It is also forbidden to throw any object whatsoever on the roadway or to put any obstacles in the way of traffic.

### Animal crossings

Farm animals may not be herded onto or across a public roadway unless accompanied by two people with red flags. They may not be herded at night and are not to be herded on a highway under any circumstances.

### Horseback riding

It is forbidden to ride a horse on a highway or its access or exit ramps, or anywhere else where prohibited by the appropriate signs.

# SPECIAL RULES FOR CERTAIN ROAD USERS

The rules in this section apply specifically to certain categories of users and supplement the traffic rules already presented.

Some regulations concerning other aspects of driving may apply to certain categories of users, for example the *Regulation respecting road vehicles used for the transportation of school children*, the Act respecting off-highway vehicles and a number of regulations that apply to heavy vehicle users. Refer to these regulations to find out what other obligations these users have.

All road users must be careful and considerate when travelling on a public highway, especially toward more vulnerable users. Vulnerable users, for their part, have a duty to adopt behaviours that enhance their own safety.

## Pedestrians

### Mandatory identification

Pedestrians are road users and are required to state their name and address or present their driver's licence when asked to do so by a law enforcement officer who believes that a *Highway Safety Code* offence has been committed.

## Obligations

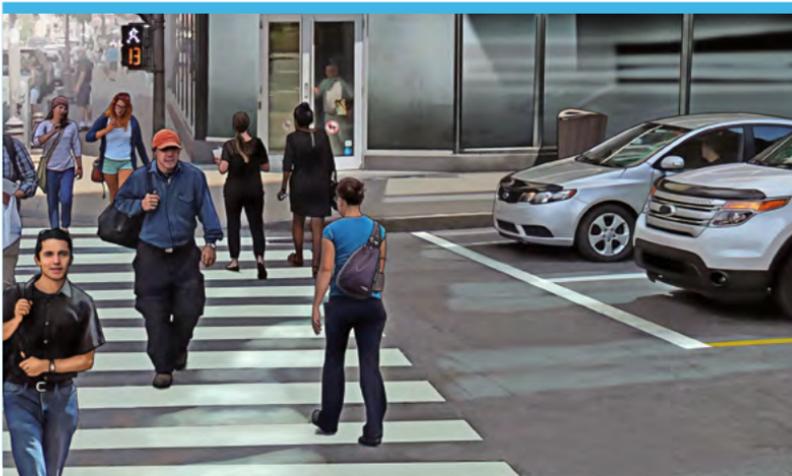
If you are a pedestrian, you must use the sidewalk along the roadway. If there is no sidewalk, use the shoulder or walk along the edge of the roadway, facing oncoming traffic.

If there is an intersection or a pedestrian crosswalk nearby, use it to cross the public roadway. Before crossing, make sure that you can do so safely.

To cross a public roadway when there are no intersections or pedestrian crosswalks in the immediate area, yield the right of way to the road vehicles and cyclists travelling on it.

Obey the pedestrian lights installed at intersections. The white signal authorizes you to cross, while a flashing signal indicates that pedestrians who have already started to cross should hurry to reach the other sidewalk or safe zone. An orange signal prohibits you from starting across the roadway.

If there are no pedestrian lights, obey traffic lights.



## Restrictions

The *Highway Safety Code* prohibits pedestrians from:

- ▶ Crossing an intersection diagonally, unless a sign or signal expressly allows them to do so;
- ▶ Hitchhiking by standing on the roadway or in a location where passing is prohibited;
- ▶ Standing on a roadway to speak with the occupant of a road vehicle;
- ▶ Walking along a highway or its access or exit ramps, except if necessary. You may cross highways only at traffic lights;
- ▶ Using skates, skis, skateboards or toy vehicles on the roadway.

## A few safety tips

Before crossing the street, look over your shoulder to make sure that no vehicle is approaching from behind to turn onto the road you are crossing. Look left, then right and left again before starting across; also learn to correctly estimate the time needed to cross the road safely.

At night, wear brightly-coloured clothing to be more visible. Reflector tape on clothing and school bags improves the visibility of children walking to and from school.

## Cyclists



Cycling has become increasingly popular over the past few years. Cycling as a means of transportation is an effective way of protecting the environment, improving health and reducing traffic congestion. Cycling, however, is not without its risks and each year many cyclists are accident victims.

As a cyclist, you are subject to the same basic traffic rules as other road users, as well as certain additional provisions. The *Highway Safety Code* requires that cyclists identify themselves to any police officer who believes that an offence has been committed.

## Mandatory accessories

### At the front

Bicycles must be equipped with one white reflector, as well as at least one headlight or a white light with a flasher setting for nighttime use.

### At the rear

Bicycles must be equipped with one red reflector at the rear, as well as a red light with a flasher setting for nighttime use.

### On the pedals

Bicycles must be equipped with a yellow or white reflector on each pedal. Otherwise, the cyclist must wear a reflective band around each ankle or shoes with reflective strips.

### Front wheel

Bicycles must be equipped with one of the following visibility accessories:

- ▶ Yellow or white reflector attached to the wheel spokes and visible on both sides of the bicycle;
- ▶ Tire with reflective sidewalls;
- ▶ Continuous reflective strip along the entire circumference of the wheel (both sides).

If there are no such reflective devices, you must install a yellow or white reflective strip on each side of the bicycle fork.

### Rear wheel

Bicycles must be equipped with one of the following visibility accessories on the rear wheel:

- ▶ Red or white reflector attached to the wheel spokes and visible on both sides of the bicycle;
- ▶ Red or white reflective strip on each seat stay;

- ▶ Tire with reflective sidewalls;
- ▶ Continuous reflective strip along the entire circumference of the wheel (both sides).

If there are no such reflective devices, you must install a red reflective strip on each seat stay.

A bicycle must be equipped with a rear wheel braking system, at a minimum, capable of blocking the wheel immediately.

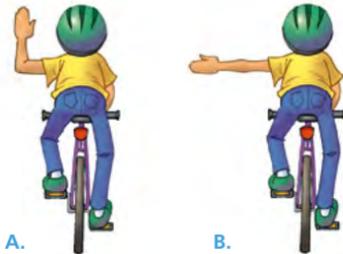
## Cycling rules

Hold onto the handle bars at all times and ride in single file when travelling in a group of two or more (up to a maximum of 15 cyclists). Ride as closely as possible to the edge of the roadway or the right side of the road, in the same direction as traffic, except:

- ▶ When the way is blocked; or
- ▶ When preparing to turn left.

You must obey road signs and traffic signals, and use hand signals to make your intentions known to other road users, in particular:

- A. To turn right, by holding the left forearm up at a right angle or by holding the right arm out horizontally;
- B. To turn left, by holding the left arm out horizontally.



Cyclists are not obligated to signal their intention to turn if the signalling manoeuvre endangers their safety.

Note that using bikeways is not mandatory. Moreover, if there is a shoulder on the side of the road, cyclists can travel on it in the same direction as traffic.

Riding a bicycle is prohibited on highways, their access or exit ramps, as well as between two rows of vehicles, except if the lane on which the cyclist is travelling is adjacent to a right-turn lane.

Cycling is prohibited on public roadways with a maximum speed limit over 50 km/h, unless:

- ▶ The road has a clearly indicated and physically separated bikeway;
- ▶ The cyclist is at least 12 years old; or
- ▶ The cyclist is taking part in an excursion supervised by an adult.

Consuming alcohol or drugs while cycling is forbidden, as is carrying a passenger on a bicycle that is not equipped with a fixed seat for that purpose. You may not ride on the sidewalk unless you have to or are permitted to do so by the appropriate signs, in which case, you must travel at a reasonable and safe speed, and give pedestrians the right of way.

In addition, you cannot hold onto a moving vehicle or wear any type of headphones while riding.

## For increased safety

Wearing light or bright-coloured clothing makes you easier to see in traffic.

Note that using bikeways is not mandatory. Moreover, if there is a shoulder on the side of the road, cyclists can travel on it in the same direction as traffic.

A pennant on an arm at the side of a bicycle forces motorists to leave more space between their vehicle and the bicycle when passing.

Using a basket or baggage carrier if needed will increase safety.

Frequently check your bicycle's condition and the solidity of its components and accessories such as handlebars, brakes, rims, tires and chain.

## Power-assisted bicycles

To ride a power-assisted bicycle, you must:

- ▶ Be at least age 14;
- ▶ Wear a bike helmet;
- ▶ If between the ages of 14 and 17, hold a licence authorizing you to drive a moped or scooter.

Anyone age 18 or over does not require such a licence to ride a power-assisted bicycle.

The features of an electric power-assisted bicycle must comply with the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the *Highway Safety Code*. The bicycle must be designed to operate on two or three tires and be equipped with pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 500 watts of power, which ceases to generate power once the bicycle reaches a speed of 32 km/h.

A power-assisted bicycle may not be used to pull another person.

## Foot scooters

For improved road safety, use of a foot scooter on a public road is prohibited at night unless it is equipped with a white reflector or white reflective material at the front, red reflector or red reflective material at the rear and on each side near the back of the scooter. If a scooter is not equipped with reflectors, you must wear reflective material on clothing or an accessory to be visible to other road users at night. A foot scooter must be equipped with a rear wheel braking system at a minimum.

## Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters

When operating a motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter, remain seated and hold the handlebars when the vehicle is in operation. When riding, keep the white headlight on at all times. Passengers should be seated facing the handlebars, with their feet on the footrests. Operators younger than 16 may not carry passengers. If riding in a group of two or more in one traffic lane, drive in zigzag formation.



4

Wear a helmet that meets safety standards. The same applies to rear or sidecar passengers. Both operators and passengers are required to produce their helmets for inspection at the request of a peace officer.

It is prohibited to ride a motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter:

- ▶ Directly between a moving vehicle and the shoulder of the road;
- ▶ Directly between a row of moving vehicles and a row of parked vehicles;
- ▶ Between two rows of moving or parked vehicles.

Moreover, it is prohibited to ride a motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter with a cylinder capacity of 125 cc or less on highways and their access or exit ramps.

You may not carry a passenger unless your motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter is equipped with a permanently fixed seat designed for that purpose as well as footrests mounted on each side.

A child who requires a booster seat or a restraint system is not permitted to ride in the sidecar of a motorcycle.

Riding on a sidewalk is prohibited except if necessary or where permitted by the appropriate sign.

Obey all road signs and traffic signals when riding a motorcycle, moped or motorized scooter.

## Make sure you can be seen

Motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters must be equipped with at least one white headlight, one red tail light, two turn-signal lights at the front and at the rear and a red brake light. In addition, motorcycles must have two yellow reflectors at the front and two red reflectors at the rear (one on each side). Sidecars must be equipped with a red light at the rear, located as far to the right as possible.

Since 80% to 90% of the information needed to drive is gathered visually, those who ride motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters must constantly make sure that they are seen by other drivers. This is why your headlight must be on at all times. It is also recommended that you use high beams at full strength during the day, especially when driving in metropolitan areas where there is an overabundance of visual information.

Another way to ensure that you are seen is to remain in the proper lane position at all times and wear brightly coloured clothing with reflective strips at night.

## Emergency vehicle drivers

If driving an emergency vehicle, only activate flashing signal lights or sirens or any other accessory in the exercise of your duties and when justified by circumstances.

You are then exempt from traffic rules concerning speed limits, passing, stopping and parking, road signs, traffic lights and pavement markings, and right of way.

## School transport drivers

When driving buses or minibuses used to carry school children, you may not carry more passengers than the number of available seats.

Do not set the vehicle in motion unless everyone is seated and ensure that passengers remain seated throughout the trip.

You must warn other road users that the vehicle has stopped to allow passengers to get on or off by using the red flashing lights and activating the stop arm until the passengers are safe and have reached the sidewalk or the side of the road.



If you are stopped in traffic behind another vehicle used to carry school children whose red lights are flashing, activate the red flashing lights and extend the stop arm as well. In other circumstances, avoid operating the red flashing lights or extending the stop arm.

## Vehicles travelling on logging roads



Since April 1, 1999, certain sections of the *Highway Safety Code* apply on logging roads just as they do on all of Québec's public roadways.

**4**

### No drinking or drugs while driving

Anyone suspected of driving on a logging road while impaired may be stopped by a law enforcement officer and submitted to a breathalyzer test.

### Speed limit

A speed limit of 70 km/h must now be observed on logging roads, unless signs indicate otherwise. It is also important to adjust driving to road conditions.

When driving, you must carry your valid driver's licence for the appropriate class of vehicle, the vehicle's registration certificate and proof of liability insurance.

## Seat belts

On logging roads, drivers and passengers must wear their seat belt.

## A vehicle in good working condition

All vehicles travelling on logging roads must be in good working order. Loads must also be securely attached in compliance with the standards for securing loads and dimensions set out in the *Highway Safety Code*.

## Driving on the right

Logging roads are used by all sorts of vehicles: cars, vans, recreational vehicles, etc. However, they are especially used by trucks carrying heavy loads. Be very careful at all times and always drive on the right-hand side of the road when meeting another vehicle—especially in curves and on slopes.

## Safety rules

Driving safely on logging roads is a matter of common sense.

- ▶ Reduce your speed before crossing a bridge. There is often only one lane on a bridge.
- ▶ Park your vehicle on the side of the road so that it is visible but out of the way of traffic. Never park it in a curve or on a slope. The same rules apply when observing wildlife by the road.

- ▶ Use a CB radio to signal your position to other vehicles on the logging road.
- ▶ If you need to pass another vehicle, proceed at a moderate speed to avoid projecting gravel or pebbles onto the other vehicle's windshield.
- ▶ Be extra careful at the beginning and end of the day to avoid hitting an animal.
- ▶ Before you set out, make sure that you have two spare tires.
- ▶ Drive with your headlights on at all times.

## Vehicles carrying loads



4

The *Highway Safety Code* requires drivers of vehicles carrying loads to:

- ▶ Observe regulations concerning the transport of hazardous materials, to follow the instructions of a law enforcement officer who asks to inspect the cargo, to provide the officer with any documents concerning the cargo or that attest to the driver's qualifications for carrying hazardous materials;

- ▶ Put a red flag or reflective panel on the back of a load extending more than one metre beyond the rear of the vehicle. If the vehicle is driven at night, it must be equipped with a red light visible at a distance of at least 150 metres from the rear and sides.

**NB:** You need a special travel permit to be authorized to drive on public roadways with a load exceeding the rear of the vehicle by more than two metres or the front of the vehicle by more than one metre.

Any road vehicle travelling at less than 40 km/h must bear a warning sign (orange triangle).

The *Highway Safety Code* prohibits anyone from operating a vehicle or allowing operation of a vehicle whose cargo:

- ▶ Is not properly secured so that none of its parts can move;
- ▶ Reduces the driver's field of vision or covers the headlights or other lights;
- ▶ Interferes with the stability or handling of the vehicle.

Do not allow passengers to ride in a trailer, semi-trailer or the dump body of a vehicle in motion

## Heavy vehicle drivers

If you are the driver, owner or operator of a heavy vehicle (road vehicle or combination of road vehicles whose net weight is 4,500 kg or more [truck tractor, truck, straight-body truck, trailer, semitrailer, etc.]) you have to obey several rules that apply specifically to heavy vehicles<sup>1</sup>.

1. For more information on driving a heavy vehicle, read *Driving a Heavy Vehicle and Circle Check Guide*, or visit the SAAQ Web site ([saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)).

## Circle Check

If you are the driver, you must make sure that your vehicle does not have any defects. To drive safely, you must perform a circle check of your vehicle before getting behind the wheel, record your observations regarding the vehicle's mechanical condition in the circle check report, and immediately notify the operator of any mechanical defects. You must make sure the circle check report for the heavy vehicle you are driving is always up to date and kept on board. Failing to keep this report on board the vehicle is an offence.

If you are the operator, you are required to place a list of defects and a circle check report in the vehicle. Make sure that drivers keep these documents on board the heavy vehicle and write all required information in the circle check report. You must also inform the owner of any defects noted and send the owner a copy of the heavy vehicle's circle check report. Do not use a heavy vehicle that has a major defect.

If you are the owner of a heavy vehicle, correct any mechanical defects reported to you. Minor defects have to be repaired within 48 hours, whereas driving a vehicle with major defects is prohibited. You must also ensure that you obtain a copy of the circle check report when the heavy vehicle is used by the operator.

## Driving and off-duty time

Drivers must observe the regulatory standards governing hours of driving and rest by keeping a daily log of their hours, and keeping the daily driving and off-duty time logs for preceding days on board, using the given reference period to calculate the authorized number of hours.

Operators must ensure that drivers enter the required information in the daily driving and off-duty time log and that they keep them in the heavy vehicle.

Operators must also make sure that drivers respect the number of driving and off-duty hours and hand in a copy of their daily logs upon their return.

## Driver's licence

Heavy vehicle drivers must have a driver's licence corresponding to the type of vehicle used and including the appropriate endorsements, such as for a manual (standard) transmission, air brakes or a road train.

They must also inform the operator, owner or any person who provides driving services if their driver's licence is revoked or suspended and of any change of class that would disqualify them to drive the vehicle.

Drivers must comply with the demands of a law enforcement officer who takes their driver's licence away because they have exceeded the number of hours of service and driving provided for by regulation for the period corresponding to the prescribed number of hours of rest.

## Other obligations

Heavy vehicle drivers must pull into an inspection station on the orders of an authorized officer or signal. This requirement does not apply to drivers of an emergency vehicle responding to a call or returning to post.

They must not drive a vehicle whose load has not been placed, secured or covered in accordance with the *Regulation respecting standards for the securing of loads*, which sets forth standards based on the type of load carried.

Drivers must also ensure that the vehicle's length and width are within prescribed limits and that the load does not exceed norms.

Owners or lessees of oversized vehicles must obtain a special travel permit to operate them. Drivers must carry this permit with them when driving and abide by their conditions.

## Heavy vehicle drivers and alcohol

Heavy vehicle drivers are subject to special conditions depending on the type of vehicle they are driving<sup>2</sup>.

## Extra rules for buses

When allowing passengers to get on or off a bus, drivers must stop the bus on the far right-hand side of the roadway or in areas set aside for that purpose, after ensuring that they can do so safely. Doors should be opened only once the vehicle has reached a full stop.

Baggage and cargo should be distributed properly in the bus.

School bus drivers may not take on more passengers than the number of seats available. This rule does not apply to any other city or other buses or minibuses used in or outside cities, provided that the number of passengers in excess of the amount of seating available is no more than one passenger per row of seats.

4

2. To find out more, see "Penalties for impaired driving" in Chapter 1.

## Oversight of heavy vehicle users

The *Act respecting owners, operators and drivers of heavy vehicles* is meant to increase the safety of the users of the road network. In accordance with the Act, the conduct of heavy vehicle drivers, operators and owners is subject to particular oversight.

### Registration

To put into operation (owner) or operate (operator) a heavy vehicle, owners and operators must register with the Registre des propriétaires et des exploitants de véhicules lourds at the Commission des transports du Québec. An identification number for the Registre and a security rating are assigned to the owner or operator. Heavy vehicle drivers do not need to register with the Registre, but their conduct is monitored.

### Record

The SAAQ creates a record for each heavy vehicle owner or operator registered with the Registre. It also creates a record for heavy vehicle drivers if it is informed that an event concerning the driver occurred (offence, accident, etc.).

These records are used to protect the road network, assess the conduct of heavy vehicle owners, operators and drivers and intervene with those who are most at risk regarding road safety.

### Penalties

The SAAQ intervenes progressively with all heavy vehicle owners, operators and drivers who seem to exhibit risky conduct on the basis of the severity of events or their frequency. When needed, the SAAQ notifies the Commission, who may then change their security rating and impose appropriate measures depending on the wrongful conduct.

## Sharing the road and handling heavy vehicles

The consequences of an accident involving a heavy vehicle are serious enough for defensive driving to be practised at all times. Since many drivers are unaware of the limits of driving a heavy vehicle, they are not really in a position to anticipate truck drivers' manoeuvres.

As regular road users, truck drivers should help other drivers by signaling their intentions. If you are a truck driver, to ensure that other drivers see you, you should, like other vehicles, drive with your headlights on. The use of reflector strips on trucks is also recommended.

To avoid slowing down traffic, use the far right-hand lane if you are travelling more slowly. Use the special lane reserved for slow-moving vehicles if there is one.

Because trucks require more time and a greater distance to stop than a car, you must never exceed the maximum load or the speed limit. Ensure that brakes are always in good working order, obey speed limits and be extra careful at night or in poor weather conditions or poor road conditions. Always avoid tailgating.

## Drivers of off-road vehicles

The following are considered off-road vehicles:

- ▶ Snowmobiles with a net weight of 450 kg or less and a width, including accessories, of no more than 1.28 metres;
- ▶ All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) with handle bars and at least two wheels which can be straddled and whose net weight is no more than 600 kg;
- ▶ Other motor vehicles intended for use off public roadways and provided for by regulation.

Off-road vehicles, ATVs and snowmobiles are very popular. Unfortunately, carelessness and a lack of proper safety equipment have resulted in serious injury and even death for many riders. If you fail to follow the traffic rules governing these vehicles, you are breaking the law and endangering your life and the lives of those around you.

## Rules for using off-road vehicles

You must be at least 16 years old to drive an off-road vehicle.

If you are under 18, you have to hold a certificate issued by the Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec or the Fédération québécoise des clubs quads, which attests that you hold the skills and knowledge necessary to operate such a vehicle.

In order to use an off-road vehicle on a public roadway, you need a licence that authorizes you to do so, under the *Highway Safety Code*, and you must abide by its conditions and restrictions. Those age 16 or over need to have a Class 5 or 6 (6A, 6B or 6C), whereas those under 16 need to hold a Class 6D licence authorizing them to drive a moped or motorized scooter.

Owners of off-road vehicles must take out a third-party liability insurance policy for at least \$500,000 that guarantees compensation for bodily injury or property damage caused by the vehicle.

When driving an off-road vehicle, always carry the vehicle's registration certificate issued under the *Highway Safety Code*, proof of third-party liability insurance, proof of age and, if applicable, your qualification certificate or authorization to drive.

If the vehicle is leased or rented from a dealer for less than one year, also carry proof of the duration of the lease or a copy of the contract with the dealer.

No more passengers may be carried on an off-road vehicle than the number indicated by the manufacturer.

If the manufacturer of the off-road vehicle does not specify the maximum number of passengers allowed on the vehicle, only one passenger may be carried on a snowmobile and no passengers may be carried on other off-road vehicles.

An extra passenger may be carried if the vehicle has accessories designed for this purpose and if they are installed in accordance with the standards of the manufacturer of the off-road vehicle.

Towing more than one sled or trailer at a time with an off-road vehicle is prohibited.

Anyone travelling on an off-road vehicle or on a sled or a trailer pulled by an off-road vehicle must wear the following equipment, which must meet regulatory standards:

- ▶ A helmet;
- ▶ Goggles, if the helmet does not have a visor;
- ▶ Any other equipment prescribed by regulation.

The consumption of alcohol or drugs is prohibited on off-road vehicles and on sleds or trailers towed by off-road vehicles.

All off-road vehicles must be equipped with the following accessories, which must meet regulatory standard:

- ▶ A white headlight;
- ▶ A red tail light;
- ▶ An exhaust system;
- ▶ A brake system.



Furthermore, all off-road vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1998 must be equipped with:

- ▶ One red stop light at the rear;
- ▶ A rearview mirror securely attached to the left side of the vehicle;
- ▶ A speedometer.

Equipment installed by the manufacturer that is required for the operation of an off-road vehicle, sled or trailer must not be removed.

Any modification to the vehicle that might decrease its stability or the effectiveness of its brakes or increase its acceleration capability is prohibited.

## Rules for operating off-road vehicles

Off-road vehicles are allowed to use private roads and roadways open to public road vehicles. The owner of the road or the person in charge of its maintenance may, however, place signs prohibiting use of the road or restricting its use to certain types of off-road vehicles or to certain times of the year.

Operating off-road vehicles is prohibited on a public roadway, within the meaning of the *Highway Safety Code*.

Driving an off-road vehicle at a distance less than that stipulated under a municipal bylaw or, failing that, within 30 metres of a dwelling, health facility or recreational, sports, cultural or educational area is prohibited unless:

- ▶ Expressly authorized by the owner or tenant of the house or the special area;
- ▶ On a public roadway under the conditions provided for by the *Act respecting off-highway vehicles*;
- ▶ On a private road open to public road vehicle traffic;
- ▶ On a trail created along a disused railway right-of-way and shown on the development plan of a regional county municipality or an urban community.

Off-road vehicles may however:

- ▶ Be used on a road for a maximum distance of one kilometre, if the driver is a worker who requires use of the vehicle to perform his or her work, provided that the worker obeys traffic rules;
- ▶ Cross a roadway at right angles, on the condition that a road sign indicates a crossing for off-road vehicles;
- ▶ Be used off the roadway, shoulder, sidewalk and ditch area, (with or against the flow of vehicular traffic), on the conditions fixed by regulation;
- ▶ Be taken on the road for a maximum distance of 500 metres in order to reach a trail, service station or another place open to the public, where authorized by a road sign;
- ▶ Travel on a road where road traffic is closed because of a special event or due to weather conditions, with the authorization of the person in charge of maintaining the road and on the conditions determined by that person;
- ▶ Travel on all or part of a roadway that a government department or municipality is in charge of maintaining as determined by regulation, and subject to the conditions, time periods and type of vehicle specified in the regulation, provided the driver obeys the traffic rules.

When driving an off-road vehicle, obey road signs and traffic signals and the orders and signals of a law enforcement officer or trail supervisor.

The maximum speed limit for snowmobiles is 70 km/h and the speed limit for other off-road vehicles is 50 km/h.

Keep your white headlight and red tail light on.

You may not travel on a trail unless you are on an off-road vehicle authorized for use on the trail. Keep to the right of the trail.

# ACCIDENTS

5

---

Some 200,000 accidents occur each year in Québec, with victims numbering in the tens of thousands. You are entitled to compensation under our public automobile insurance plan, which covers you if you are a Québec resident and provides compensation for bodily injury regardless of where an accident occurs or who is at fault.

Coverage may also extend to non-residents for injuries sustained in a road accident in Québec.

# AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

## In Québec

If you are a vehicle owner, remember that:

- ▶ Under the *Automobile Insurance Act*, you are required to hold a third-party liability insurance contract covering property damage for a minimum amount of \$50,000. This type of coverage is available from private insurers;
- ▶ The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) compensates, regardless of fault, all Quebecers who suffer bodily injury in a road accident occurring inside or outside Québec.



The public insurance plan, which has been in effect since 1978, protects all residents of Québec. It compensates victims of bodily injury without determining who is responsible for the accident. Proceedings before civil courts have therefore been eliminated.

Of course, people may still be prosecuted for dangerous driving and related offences under the *Highway Safety Code* or the *Criminal Code*.

## Outside Québec

Quebecers injured in a road accident outside the province are entitled to the compensation for bodily injury that is provided under the public automobile insurance plan, regardless of whether they are responsible for the accident.

However, if you are responsible for an accident outside Québec, you may be sued before the courts of the jurisdiction where the accident occurred for the bodily injury or property damage you caused. In those cases, you are protected by third-party liability insurance taken out with a private insurer, which is mandatory for travel in North America. That coverage must be sufficient to compensate all injuries.

Before travelling in another Canadian province or in the United States, you should check with your private insurer to make sure that your liability insurance is sufficient to cover the bodily injury and property damage another party could sustain in the event of an accident. When driving a motor vehicle in other parts of the world, you are also advised to find out how much coverage is necessary to be well protected.

If you are not responsible for the accident, you retain the right to sue for any amount of compensation in excess of what the SAAQ pays in the jurisdiction where the accident occurred, if this is allowed by law there.

## Non-residents of Québec

If your permanent residence is located outside Québec, you are covered by the public insurance plan if you are a driver or passenger travelling on Québec roads in a vehicle registered in Québec, regardless of whether you are the vehicle's owner. Non-residents are entitled to the same benefits as Quebecers if they are involved in an accident.

Other non-residents of Québec who are involved in an accident while travelling in a vehicle that is not registered in Québec or as pedestrians receive compensation from the SAAQ if they are not responsible for the accident.

## Accidents that are not covered

Some types of accidents are not covered by the public plan, and the people involved are not entitled to compensation.

This is the case for:

- ▶ An accident that occurs in an automobile race, contest or show, on a track closed to all other traffic, either temporarily or permanently, regardless of whether the victims are drivers, passengers or spectators;
- ▶ An accident involving a snowmobile or other off-road vehicle (such as an all-terrain vehicle), unless the collision involves a moving automobile (e.g.: car-snowmobile collision);
- ▶ An accident that occurs off a public road and in which injuries are caused by a farm tractor or trailer or an equipment vehicle or trailer, except if a moving automobile is involved in the accident (e.g.: car-tractor collision);
- ▶ Bodily injury caused by equipment that can function independently from the vehicle of which it is part when that vehicle is not moving on a public roadway.

In these cases, the vehicle or equipment owners must take out appropriate coverage with a private insurer for any bodily injury or property damage that might be caused by their vehicle or equipment.

## Special cases

### On-the-job accidents

Any claim for compensation in connection with road accidents that occur on the job must be submitted to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) .

If you have been turned down by the CNESST, you may then file a claim for compensation with the SAAQ, enclosing the letter of rejection from the CNESST.

### Victims of criminal acts or persons injured while assisting someone in distress

Victims of an assault in which a road vehicle caused injury have the option of being compensated under the *Crime Victims Compensation Act* or the *Automobile Insurance Act*.

A person injured in a road accident while assisting someone in distress may elect compensation either under the *Act to Promote Good Citizenship* or the *Automobile Insurance Act*.

Note that a person who chooses to be compensated under either the *Crime Victims Compensation Act* or the *Act to Promote Good Citizenship* must contact the nearest CNESST regional office.

## Compensation

After an accident, the SAAQ may award victims one or more of the following indemnities:

- ▶ An income replacement indemnity;
- ▶ An indemnity for loss of employment;
- ▶ An indemnity for care expenses;
- ▶ A lump sum for after-effects such as loss of enjoyment of life, pain and suffering;
- ▶ The reimbursement of certain expenses resulting from the accident, such as medical and paramedical expenses, transport by ambulance, purchase of prostheses or orthoses, replacement of damaged clothing, medication, personal home assistance expenses, etc.;
- ▶ A lump sum for the loss of a school year or a semester at the postsecondary level;
- ▶ Reimbursement of care expenses or personal home assistance expenses;
- ▶ Reimbursement of substitute labour costs for a person working without pay in a family business;
- ▶ Death benefits;
- ▶ A lump sum to cover funeral costs.

To ensure that compensated victims maintain their purchasing power, the gross income amount which is used to calculate the income replacement indemnity is indexed every year on the anniversary date of the accident. Many other indemnities prescribed by the *Automobile Insurance Act* are indexed on January 1 every year.

The SAAQ may take any necessary measures to contribute to a victim's rehabilitation, to lessen or cure any disability resulting from bodily injury and to facilitate a return to a normal life or reintegration into society or the labour market. For instance, the SAAQ may cover the cost of adapting a victim's home or vehicle, expenses for job training or retraining or the purchase of special equipment if it considers them essential to the rehabilitation of the victim.

## Right of appeal

If you believe you have been wronged by a decision rendered by the SAAQ, you may apply for a review of the decision within 60 days of notification of the decision. To apply for a review, you must submit a duly completed *Application for Review* form to the review office before the end of the allotted time. You need to show evidence of entitlement to the compensation you are claiming and should therefore include supporting documents where possible. You must sign the application form. The form may be obtained on the SAAQ Web site or by contacting the SAAQ.

If you are still dissatisfied following the SAAQ's review decision, you may contest it within 60 days before the Administrative Tribunal of Québec.

## PROPERTY DAMAGE

Liability insurance for property damage to another party is mandatory in Québec. When a collision occurs between at least two vehicles whose owners are known, each owner must file a claim with his or her own insurer (Direct Compensation Agreement).

# HIT-AND-RUN AND INSOLVENCY

Some accident victims find themselves without coverage when faced with insolvency on the part of the person responsible for the accident or in the event of a hit-and-run. In certain cases, the SAAQ may compensate such victims for both property damage and bodily injury sustained in the accident.

## Accidents involving property damage

If you sustained damage to your vehicle or to other property in a road accident, you may be compensated in the following situations:

- ▶ If a Québec court has handed down a decision in your favour which cannot be satisfied because the party responsible for the accident is insolvent or did not have sufficient liability insurance coverage;
- ▶ The identity of the owner or driver of the vehicle that caused the accident is not known (hit-and-run).

Victims of a road accident may apply for compensation of property damage if the accident did not occur on a public roadway and was caused by a farm tractor or trailer, a snowmobile, an equipment vehicle or trailer, or any vehicle not meant to travel on a public roadway:

- ▶ When a court has handed down a decision in their favour which cannot be satisfied because the party responsible for the accident is insolvent or did not have sufficient liability insurance coverage;
- ▶ When the identity of the owner or driver of the vehicle that caused the accident is not known.

# IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT



If you are injured in a road accident, follow these five essential steps:

- ▶ Call the police so an accident report can be made.
- ▶ See a physician as soon as possible and have all signs of injuries related to the road accident entered on the medical report.
- ▶ Contact the SAAQ as soon as possible to file a claim for compensation by calling 1 888 810-2525.
- ▶ Notify your insurer of any property damage.
- ▶ Make sure that the physician who has treated you following the accident sends the medical report to the SAAQ.

As soon as you contact the SAAQ, an information officer will send you the documents needed to file a claim for compensation and provide technical assistance for completing the form. If needed, the officer may send a person to your home to help fill out the claim. Forms are also available in SAAQ service centres.

If you are involved in a collision with an inanimate object, an animal weighing over 25 kg or an unoccupied vehicle and you are unable to contact the owner of the damaged property or his or her representative at the scene of the accident or nearby, contact the nearest police station immediately to report the accident and give the above information.

Failure to comply is punishable by a fine.

## At the scene of an accident

The first motorist to arrive at the scene of an accident must:

- ▶ Park his or her vehicle on the shoulder, some 30 metres away;
- ▶ Warn other road users of the accident by turning on hazard lights. Flares can also be very useful;
- ▶ Ask people to direct traffic at a reasonable distance from the site of the collision and in a suitable location to warn other drivers;
- ▶ Turn off the ignition of the cars involved in the accident and make sure that no one smokes because of the danger of fire or explosion;
- ▶ Provide first aid to victims to the best of his or her knowledge of first aid techniques. Otherwise, avoid handling the injured;
- ▶ Report the accident by telephone to the nearest police station, specifying as accurately as possible the location of the accident, and the number of injured victims and damaged vehicles.

Never move an injured person unless there is imminent danger of fire or collision with another vehicle.

## First aid

Prudent drivers should always have a first-aid kit in their vehicle and provide first-aid in the following way:

- ▶ **Injuries:** while awaiting the arrival of ambulance attendants or a physician, stanch the flow of blood through pressure applied with a pad, a thumb or a hand, if you know first aid. Cover the injury with a clean dressing and make a sturdy bandage. If necessary, apply a tourniquet.
- ▶ **Burns:** use a clean dressing to protect the burned area from exposure to the air and cover with a bandage. Never break blisters or remove a victim's clothing.
- ▶ **Other precautions:** keep the victim warm and comfortable under a blanket. Do not give anything to eat or drink to an accident victim who is unconscious or could be bleeding internally. Otherwise, wet the person's lips and give sweet warm tea or coffee, a little at a time.

# OFFENCES AND CONSEQUENCES

6

---

The main Québec statute governing traffic offences is called the *Highway Safety Code*.

Drivers should know that payment of a fine is equivalent to an admission of guilt; failure to pay can lead to prosecution before the courts.

In addition to fines imposed, some offences result in demerit points being entered on your driving record. The *Highway Safety Code* also provides for specific consequences for certain *Criminal Code* offences committed on the road network.

The following pages are tables about fines, demerit points and specific measures for the **main offences** under the *Highway Safety Code* and *Criminal Code* offences committed on the road network.

# OFFENCES AND FINES



## Driver's licence

Offences	Fines <sup>1</sup>
Failure to carry one's driver's licence, learner's licence, probationary licence or restricted licence	\$30 to \$60
Failure on the part of a licence holder to inform the SAAQ within 30 days of a change of address	\$60 to \$100
Knowingly giving false or misleading information on a licence application	\$300 to \$600
Driving a vehicle on a public roadway without holding a driver's licence of the appropriate class	\$300 to \$600
Driving a vehicle despite a revoked or suspended licence, or suspension of the right to obtain a licence, for a reason other than demerit points or a driving-related criminal offence	\$300 to \$600
Driving or having care or control of a vehicle after consuming alcohol, if the person holds a learner's licence, probationary licence, is age 21 or younger or is under 22 and has held for less than five years a licence to drive only a moped or scooter (Class 6D) or farm tractor (Class 8)	\$300 to \$600
Allowing vehicle operation by someone who does not hold a licence of the corresponding class or who is under penalty for a reason other than accumulated demerit points or a <i>Criminal Code</i> driving offence	\$300 to \$2,000
Driving a vehicle despite a revoked or suspended licence, or suspension of the right to obtain a licence, due to accumulated demerit points	\$600 to \$2,000
Driving a vehicle despite a revoked or suspended licence, or suspension of the right to obtain a licence, due to a criminal conviction for a driving-related criminal offence	\$1,500 to \$3,000

1. Other fees are added to the fine, based on the amount of the penalty, as well as a mandatory contribution to the IVAC crime victims compensation program.

## Vehicle registration

Failure to carry one's registration certificate, certificate of liability insurance or of financial responsibility, proof of the duration of a vehicle loan or a copy of the lease contract	\$60 to \$100
Failure to inform the SAAQ within 30 days of a change of address	\$60 to \$100
Operating a motor vehicle fitted with a licence plate corresponding to another class of vehicle or one that was issued for another vehicle	\$200 to \$300
Installing an imitation licence plate or one that was issued for another vehicle	\$200 to \$300
Failure to return one's licence plate to the SAAQ following registration suspension	\$300 to \$2,000
Fabrication of a false licence plate	\$600 to \$2,000

## Vehicle and accessories

Operating a poorly maintained heavy vehicle	\$60 to \$100
Operating a heavy vehicle not equipped with two rearview mirrors	\$100 to \$200
Operating a heavy vehicle or a combination of vehicles not equipped with at least one brake system in good working order	\$100 to \$200
Operating a heavy vehicle that is equipped with substandard tires on a public road	\$200 to \$300
Operating a motor vehicle on which the brake system has been modified or altered to reduce its effectiveness	\$200 to \$300
Removing or altering a seat belt, or rendering it useless	\$200 to \$300
Deactivating an air bag	\$300 to \$600
Installing a radar detector on a motor vehicle	\$500 to \$1,000
Modifying, defacing, rendering illegible, replacing or removing a road vehicle's identification number without prior authorization from the SAAQ	\$600 to \$2,000

## Traffic

Braking suddenly without reason	\$30 to \$60
Leaving a child under age seven unsupervised in a motor vehicle	\$60 to \$100
Failure to use low beams within 150 metres of an oncoming vehicle, the vehicle ahead or on a sufficiently lighted road	\$60 to \$100
Driving a motor vehicle with a passenger under age 16 who is not secured by a seat belt or restraint device that meets standards	\$80 to \$100
Failure to yield the right of way to a pedestrian at a pedestrian crosswalk	\$100 to \$200
Failure to obey road signs and traffic signs on a public roadway	\$100 to \$200
Failure to yield the right of way to a pedestrian at a green light or pedestrian light	\$100 to \$200
Failure to use a turn-signal light to signal the intention to pass another vehicle	\$100 to \$200
Following another vehicle at an unsafe or unreasonably close distance	\$100 to \$200
Increasing one's speed when being passed or about to be passed	\$200 to \$300
Driving or travelling in a motor vehicle on a public roadway without wearing a properly fastened seat belt	\$200 to \$300
Passing or driving by a school bus or minibus when its flashing lights are in operation	\$200 to \$300
Passing on the right, except to overtake a vehicle making a left turn or a vehicle about to exit	\$200 to \$300
Passing a bicycle when there is not enough space in the traffic lane to do so safely	\$200 to \$300
Successively passing vehicles in a zigzag pattern	\$200 to \$300
Crossing a solid line to pass a vehicle	\$200 to \$300
Failure to stop more than five metres away from a school bus or minibus when its red flashing lights are operating	\$200 to \$300
Failure to obey orders and signals given by a peace officer, a school crossing guard or a flagperson in charge of directing traffic around a work site	\$200 to \$400

Drinking alcohol in a motor vehicle	\$300 to \$600
▶ driver	\$200 to \$300
▶ passenger	
Driving while using an electronic device	\$300 to \$600
▶ for the first offence	\$600
▶ for a repeat offence*	
Operating a motor vehicle for a wager, stake or race with another vehicle, other than in a rally approved under the <i>Act respecting safety in sports</i>	\$1,000
Hanging on to a road vehicle in motion or being pulled or pushed by such a vehicle or, as a driver, tolerating such a practice	\$1,000
Riding on the running board or on any outer part of a road vehicle in motion, or riding in the box or dump body of a road vehicle in motion, or as a driver, tolerating such a practice	\$1,000

\* 2-year reference period.

## Buffer lanes (Move Over law)

Not slowing down and yielding the right of way to an oncoming vehicle before changing lanes to create a buffer lane, or not changing lanes or not keeping one's distance from an emergency vehicle whose flashing lights or siren are operating

\$60 to \$200

## Speeding

Driving at an unsafe speed or committing an act liable to endanger life, property or public safety	\$1,000 to \$3,000
--	--------------------

### Speeding offences and fines

Offence	Fines	
Speed 1 to 20 km/h over the limit	\$15, plus \$10 for each additional 5 km/h above the speed limit	\$15 to \$55
Speed 21 to 30 km/h over the limit	\$15, plus \$15 for each additional 5 km/h above the speed limit	\$75 to \$105
Speed 31 to 45 km/h over the limit	\$15, plus \$20 for each additional 5 km/h above the speed limit	\$135 to \$195*
Speed 46 to 60 km/h over the limit	\$15, plus \$25 for each additional 5 km/h above the speed limit	\$240 to \$315*
Speed 61 km/h or more over the limit	\$15, plus \$30 for each additional 5 km/h above the speed limit	\$375 and more*
Driving too fast for weather or traffic conditions	\$60 to \$100 fine	

\* NB: These amounts are **doubled** when a driver is convicted of an excessive speeding offence or any speeding offence committed in a road construction zone indicated by signs and signals. If you are found guilty of an excessive speeding offence and have three or more previous convictions for excessive speeding within the past 10 years, fines are **tripled**.

Offences	Fines
<b>Example</b> Speed limit: 50 km/h Recorded speed: 75 km/h 25 km/h over speed limit	$\$15 + (5 \times \$15) = \$90$
<b>Example of excessive speeding</b> Speed limit: 70 km/h Recorded speed: 120 km/h 50 km/h over speed limit	$\$15 + (10 \times \$25) = \$265$ $\$265 \times 2$ (excessive speeding) Total = \$530

## Mechanical inspection

Putting a vehicle in need of minor repair back on the road after 48 hours without proving it meets <i>Highway Safety Code</i> standards	\$100 to \$200
Putting a vehicle in need of major repair back on the road without proving it meets <i>Highway Safety Code</i> standards	\$300 to \$600

## Motorcycles, mopeds and scooters

Failure to remain seated while riding or to hold onto the handlebars at all times	\$100 to \$200
Failure to wear a helmet	\$200 to \$300
Failure to wear eye protection (visor, face shield or protective goggles)	\$80 to \$100
Failure to ride in staggered formation when travelling as a pair or group	\$100 to \$200
Carrying a passenger when the driver is under age 16 (moped or scooter)	\$100

<p>Driving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ between two rows of vehicles travelling in adjacent lanes</li> <li>▶ directly between a moving vehicle and the shoulder of the road</li> <li>▶ directly between a moving vehicle and a parked vehicle (on the left or right side of the road)</li> </ul>	\$100 to \$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Failure to comply with the midnight to 5 a.m. driving curfew applicable to novice motorcycle drivers while they are in training</li> </ul>	\$200 to \$300

## Bicycles

Modifying, defacing, making illegible, replacing or removing a bicycle's identification number without prior authorization from the SAAQ	\$30 to \$60
Holding onto a moving power-assisted bicycle or being pulled by one	\$30 to \$60
Riding a bicycle without mandatory accessories, or without a white reflector at the front and a red tail light at night	\$80 to \$100
Failure to ride astride a bicycle or not holding onto the handlebars at all times	\$80 to \$100
Riding a bicycle between two contiguous lanes of vehicles	\$80 to \$100
Carrying a passenger on a bicycle not equipped with a seat designed for that purpose	\$80 to \$100
Failure to ride single file when travelling as a pair or group	\$80 to \$100
Failure to ride as closely as possible to the edge of the roadway or the right side of the road and in the same direction as traffic	\$80 to \$100
Failure to obey traffic rules or traffic signs and signals	\$80 to \$100
Failure to ride on a bicycle path or lane that is part of the roadway	\$80 to \$100

Failure to obey orders and signals given by a peace officer, a school crossing guard or a flagperson in charge of directing traffic around a work site	\$80 to \$100
Handling an electronic device while riding a bicycle	\$80 to \$100
Wearing headphones	\$80 to \$100
Riding a power-assisted bicycle on a public roadway when under age 18 without a licence authorizing the use of a moped or scooter or failing to respect the conditions and restrictions of this licence	\$100 to \$200
Failure to wear a helmet while riding a power-assisted bicycle on a public roadway	\$100 to \$200
Riding a power-assisted bicycle that fails to comply with the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the <i>Highway Safety Code</i> on a public roadway	\$100 to \$200

## Foot scooters

Failure to equip a foot scooter with the necessary brake system	\$15 to \$30
Use of a foot scooter at night that is not equipped with the necessary reflectors or reflective material or failure to wear clothing or an accessory on which reflective material has been affixed	\$25 to \$50

## Pedestrians

Failure to obey pedestrian signs or signals	\$80 to \$100
Crossing a public roadway other than at a nearby intersection or pedestrian crosswalk	\$80 to \$100

# OFFENCES AND DEMERIT POINTS

## Speed-related offences that result in demerit points

Speeding		Demerit points		
Exceeding the legal or posted speed limit		Zone of 60 km/h or less	Zone of 60 km/h to 90 km/h	Zone of 100 km/h
from 11 to 20 km/h		1	1	1
from 21 to 30 km/h		2	2	2
from 31 to 45 km/h	31 to 39 km/h	3	3	3
	40 to 45 km/h	6	3	3
from 46 to 60 km/h	46 to 49 km/h	10	5	5
	50 to 59 km/h	10	10	5
	60 km/h	10	10	10
from 61 to 80 km/h		14	14	14
from 81 to 100 km/h		18	18	18
from 101 to 120 km/h		24	24	24
from 121 km/h or more		30 or more	30 or more	30 or more

■ Excessive speeding

## What is excessive speeding?

You commit an excessive speeding offence when you exceed the speed limit by:

- ▶ 40 km/h or over in a zone of 60 km/h or less;
- ▶ 50 km/h or over in a zone of more than 60 km/h but not more than 90 km/h;
- ▶ 60 km/h or over in a 100 km/h zone.

### Other offences that result in demerit points

Offences	Demerit points
Accelerating when being passed by another vehicle	2
Failure to yield to pedestrians and cyclists at an intersection	2
Failure to yield to oncoming traffic	2
Passing a bicycle too closely in a travel lane	2
Tailgating	2
Sudden braking without cause	2
Driving too fast for weather or traffic conditions	2
Prohibited passing on the right	3
Prohibited passing on the left	3
Prohibited driving in reverse	3
Failure to stop before turning right on a red light (where permitted)	3
Failure to wear a seat belt	3
Failure to wear a helmet (motorcycle, moped or scooter)	3
Failure to obey orders or signals given by a school crossing guard, flagperson or peace officer	4
Driving while using an electronic device	5
Crossing a solid line marking off lanes, where prohibited	3
Failure to make a mandatory stop at a level crossing	3
Failure to obey a stop sign or red light	3
Successive passing of multiple vehicles in a zigzag pattern	4

Passing where prohibited in the lane reserved for oncoming traffic	4
Speeding or driving recklessly	4
Failure to yield to an emergency vehicle whose lights or sound producing device are in operation	4
Failure to slow down or change lanes when approaching a stopped road vehicle with its flashing or rotating lights or yellow arrow signal light activated	4
Driving in a race or for a wager or stake	12
Holding or gripping a moving vehicle, or tolerating such a practice	12
Prohibited use of a tunnel by a vehicle carrying dangerous substances	9
Failure of a driver involved in an accident to do his or her duty	9
Failure to stop at a level crossing when driving a bus, a minibus or a road vehicle carrying certain dangerous substances	9
Failure to stop when approaching a school bus or minibus with its flashing lights or stop sign in operation or illegal passing of such a vehicle in either direction	9

For holders of a learner's licence, a probationary licence or a driver's licence with an alcohol ignition interlock requirement, as well as **for persons under 22 years of age** or holders of a driver's licence who have held a licence to drive only a moped, scooter or farm tractor for less than five years.

Driving without an accompanying rider (learner's licence holder)	4
Driving with the presence of alcohol in the body	4
Failure to provide a breath sample	4
Driving without an accompanying rider (learner's licence holders) or during the driving prohibition period	4
Driving with certain passengers during the driving prohibition period (probationary licence holders aged 19 or under)	4

## Penalties and costs for impaired driving

If you drive while impaired, you could be subject to stiff penalties under the *Criminal Code* and the *Highway Safety Code*. This page summarizes the penalties for a first offence. For full details, consult the *Highway Safety Code*, the *Criminal Code* or the website [educaloi.qc.ca](http://educaloi.qc.ca). Penalties may differ depending on the person's situation.

### Penalties for a first offence

	<i>Highway Safety Code</i>	<i>Criminal Code</i>
Upon arrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Immediate licence suspension: 24 hours or 90 days (depending on the situation)</li> <li>▶ Immediate vehicle seizure and impoundment: 30 days (depending on the situation)</li> </ul>	
Following a criminal conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Licence revocation: 1 or 3 years (depending on the situation) or longer (depending on the decision of the court)</li> <li>▶ Program to assess and reduce the risk of impaired driving (depending on the situation)</li> <li>▶ Alcofrein program (depending on the situation)</li> <li>▶ Mandatory alcohol ignition interlock device (variable duration, depending on the situation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Criminal record</li> <li>▶ Mandatory minimum fine of \$1,000</li> <li>▶ Prohibition from driving for a minimum one-year period</li> </ul>

## Costs related to a first offence

\$1,750 minimum, in addition to non-quantifiable inconveniences and variable costs, such as:

- ▶ Criminal record;
- ▶ Lawyer's fees;
- ▶ Costs related to the use of an alcohol ignition interlock device (which vary depending on the duration);
- ▶ Increased automobile insurance premiums;
- ▶ Other costs such as court fees, a contribution to the crime victim's compensation plan (IVAC), etc.

## In the case of a repeat offence

The penalties under the *Highway Safety Code* and the *Criminal Code* include:

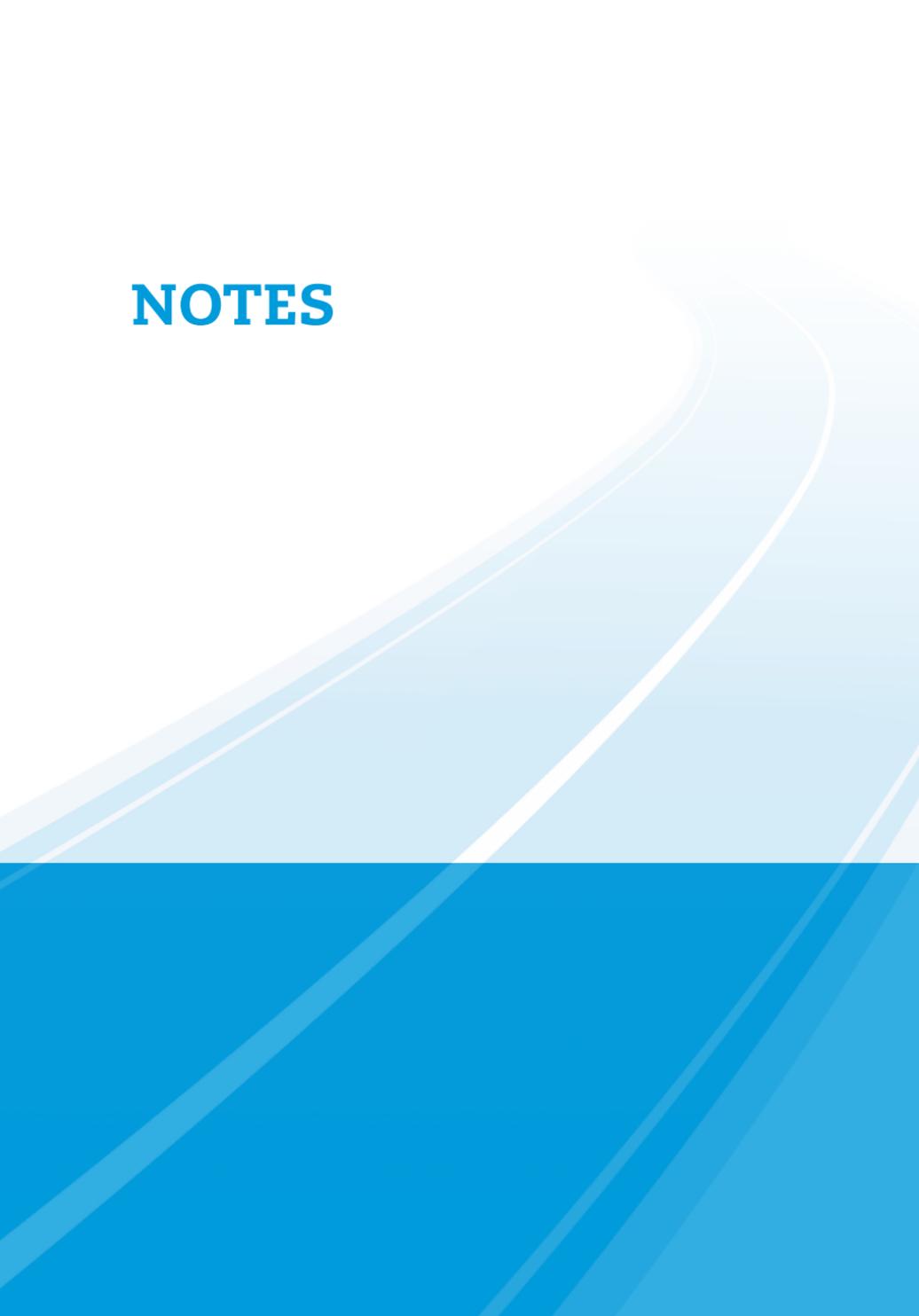
- ▶ Immediate vehicle seizure and impoundment: 90 days;
- ▶ Prohibition from driving for a minimum period of two years;
- ▶ Imprisonment;
- ▶ Prohibition from registering, acquiring, renting or leasing a vehicle, or putting a vehicle into operation under your name;
- ▶ Alcohol ignition interlock device for life.



For details on the penalties prescribed by the *Criminal Code* and the *Highway Safety Code*, consult the SAAQ Web site ([saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://saaq.gouv.qc.ca)).



# NOTES

The background of the page features a large, stylized graphic element. It consists of several overlapping, curved bands that sweep from the bottom left towards the top right. The top portion of these bands is white, while the bottom portion is a solid, vibrant blue. The curves are smooth and fluid, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and professional.

















Printed in april 2019  
by Imprimerie Solisco inc.  
Scott (Québec)



2ND EDITION

Amendments  
to the Highway  
Safety Code  
included

# DRIVER'S HANDBOOK



The *Driver's Handbook* provides key information on:

- ▶ drivers and their responsibilities
- ▶ driver's licences
- ▶ vehicle registration
- ▶ traffic rules
- ▶ requirements for motor vehicles and their features
- ▶ Québec road signs and traffic signals
- ▶ offences and their consequences
- ▶ insurance coverage and what to do in the event of an accident

This guide outlines the rights, responsibilities and duties of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, passengers and motorists in all types of vehicles.

The *Driver's Handbook* is an indispensable tool for preparing for your tests to obtain a driver's licence. Other documents are also essential for your learning process, depending on the class of licence you want to obtain. To find out more about these documents, visit our Web site at [www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca), in the Driver's Licence section.

Société de l'assurance  
automobile

Québec 

ISBN 978-2-551-26246-5



Printed in Québec, Canada

20,95 \$