DRIVING IN THE U.S.

WELCOME

Presenters:
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Overview

Part I (60 min)
- Driving in the U.S. requires drivers to follow appropriate State Laws
- Communicating to others using the road
- Managing safety and risk: drive defensively, not offensively!

Part II (30 min)
- MI driver’s license information
Primary seat belt laws

Michigan:
- All front seat passengers
- All passengers under age 16
Booster seat laws

• All children under 8 must be in an approved child safety seat or booster seat, unless 4’9” or taller.
• Children under 4 must be positioned in a rear seat.
• Warning: never leave your child alone in a car!
Unique Michigan Laws

• For all of the following, you must yield to pedestrians and approaching traffic

• Right turn on Red
  – Unless there is a “no turn on red” sign you may turn right at a red light after coming to a complete stop

• Left turn on Red
  – Unless there is a “no turn on red” sign you may turn left at a red light if entering a ONE-WAY street
Cell Phone Use

• Text messaging while driving is prohibited

• Detroit has a prohibition on using handheld cell phones while driving

• In Troy, drivers are prohibited from using handheld cell phones or engaging in any activity that diverts driver attention
Signs, Signals and Markings

In many countries Traffic Signals, Signs and Road Markings may be ignored. Examples include:

- Not stopping per regulatory signal or sign
- Failure to yield
- Driving on the wrong side of the road
- Speeding

In the U.S. failure to obey signals, signs and road markings will result in traffic violation point ranging from 3 to 6 and a fine starting at $100.
Traffic Signals

Traffic control signals must be followed:

- Other drivers rely on them for traffic flow and indications when it is safe to proceed
  
  - A **RED** light means STOP. You must stop behind the crosswalk of stop line at an intersection
  
  - **Yellow** light means the green has ended and signal is about to become red. You are required to stop for a Yellow light and can be ticketed for running the intersection if you proceed
  
  - **Green** light means proceed with caution
Flashing Traffic Lights

- A Flashing Red Light means you must come to a complete stop and proceed when the road is clear.
- A Flashing Yellow Light means proceed carefully through the intersection.
- A Steady Green Arrow means you may proceed in the direction of the arrow if the way is clear of other users of the road.
- A Steady Yellow Arrow allows you to proceed with caution if oncoming traffic and other users of road way have cleared.
- A Steady Red Arrow means you must stop and cannot turn until the signal changes.
Speed Limits

• **Miles per hour vs Kilometers per hour**
  - 50 mph = 80 kph
  - 60 mph = 96 kph
  - 70 mph = 112 kph (max Mich. posted speed)

• **Speed limits are intended to inform drivers of the maximum reasonable and safe travel speed.** For example:
  - 15 mph in mobile home parks and some municipal parks;
  - 25 mph in school zone [*Watch for signs since posted speed limits and times may vary*];
  - 55 mph – Unless otherwise posted, on all streets that are not designated freeways and on all highways;
  - 70 mph maximum/55 mph minimum - On all freeways unless posted otherwise

• **The price of speeding.** For example:
  - 1-5 mph over limit (2) $90.00
  - 6-10 mph over limit (2) $105.00
Communication

Is it common in your country to:
• Use your horn frequently?
• Not use turn signals?
• Not check the next lane before changing lanes?
• Not checking for on coming traffic and pedestrians before turning?

If you drive with these behaviors in the U.S. you will
• Probably get a ticket/fine
• Make the other drivers sharing the road with you angry
• Cause a traffic collision or worse.

Do not be the cause of Road Rage in other drivers and place yourself in danger!
• Horns are used infrequently for communication in the U.S. They are used in some special circumstances:
  – Short blast is appropriate to notify another roadway user of your vehicle if you believe they have not seen you
  – Another vehicle is about to hit you
• Most other times, horn use is considered rude and inappropriate
Headlights

• Headlights are used to light your path and make your vehicle more visible to others

• They should not be used:
  – to indicate you are proceeding through an intersection
  – to encourage someone out of your way or to drive faster
Turn Signals

- Turn Signals **MUST** be used for all turns and lane changes (anytime you change direction)
  - Signal should be engaged 100 feet in advance of where you plan to turn
  - Prior to turning or changing lanes you must:
    - Signal, ensure the space you wish to occupy is clear
    - Ensure you will not be forcing another vehicle to change speed or spacing
    - Ensure you legally can make the turn or lane change.
Managing Safety

Looking behind: Awareness of Traffic Around You

Check your rearview and side mirrors to see if anyone is following too closely, coming up fast or preparing to pass and glance over your left or right shoulder to check your blind areas.

Be sure to check the traffic behind you:
• Before changing lanes
• Develop the habit of turning your head slightly in the direction you plan to move to check for vehicles you may not see in your mirrors.
• Driving down a long or steep hill
• Backing up
• If you brake abruptly
• If you approach an intersection.
Distracted Driving

- Accounts for 25 to 30 percent of all crashes nationally
- Don’t be a statistic and remove all distractions
  - Do not answer your cell phone while driving
  - No texting or reading messages
  - Change radio stations when stopped
  - Avoid eating while driving
  - Make sure all equipment is adjusted before you start driving
  - Avoid intense conversations
  - Be familiar with your vehicles controls (light switch, climate control, hazard warnings, etc.)
Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

- It is illegal to drive intoxicated or visibly impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs and certain medications
- Alcohol content of .08 or more is intoxicated
- If you are under 21 it is illegal at an alcohol content of .02 or more. Zero tolerance!
- Michigan has an Implied Consent Law
  - If arrested you will be required to take a chemical test for your Bodily Alcohol Content
  - If you refuse the test, you will get 6 points on your record and your license will be suspended for one year
Driving When Visibility is Poor

- Regardless of your driving experience, the odds are greater that you’ll have a collision in wet weather

- Hard rain can limit visibility so that you can’t see the edges of the road, traffic signs or other vehicles on the road
Tips to help when visibility is poor

- Keep your windshield & windows clean (inside & out)
- Use your headlights. Keep your headlights clean, stop periodically during long trips to clean them.
- Reduce your speed
- Increase your following distance
- Avoid using cruise control in wet-weather driving conditions
- Make sure tires are properly inflated and have adequate tire tread
Other Users of the Road

• **Commercial Vehicles**
  – They can not stop quickly
  – If you can not see the drivers face in the vehicles side mirror, the vehicle driver can not see you.
  – Give Trucks extra space

• **Motorcycle Operators**
  – Have full rights to the roadway
  – Are at times hard to see so check your blind spot before changing lane

• **Bicycles**
  – Are allowed on roads but are suppose to stay to the right unless turning left.
  – Have same rights as vehicles for road use
Other Users of the Road

• **Pedestrians**
  – Should always be given the right-of-way even when they are where they should not be!

• **Blind Pedestrians**
  – Michigan law requires you to stop or yield right-of-way when you see a pedestrian with a white cane or guide dog

• **Emergency Vehicles**
  – You must yield to emergency vehicles from any direction when they have their flashing warning lights/or sounding a siren. This means you must move over to the shoulder of the road or the far right lane and stop.
School Buses

- When the overhead red lights are flashing you must stop no closer than 20 feet from the bus.
- When overhead alternative flashing Red and Yellow lights are flashing you must stop no closer than 20 feet from the bus.
- You can not move until the lights are turned off.
- Fines
  - Failure to stop 20 feet or more from a school bus: 2 points and $135
  - Failure to stop for a school bus: 3 points and $180
  - Failure to stop which causes an accident: 3 points and $205
What to do if you are stopped by the police

• Pull over to the side of the road
• Keep your hands on the steering wheel where police officer can see them
• Remain in your vehicle
• Follow the instructions of the officer
  – Will probably need to provide license, proof and insurance and vehicle registration
  – Do not reach for these items until requested by the officer
• Do not try to argue or negotiate with the officer
• Make sure you understand the violation and next steps if issued a ticket
What to do if you are involved in a car accident

• Protect the scene
• Call for assistance
• Exchange information with the person that is involved in the crash with you:
  – Name, address, phone number
  – Vehicle registration number
  – Driver’s license number
  – Insurance Company Name & Number
Insurance

- Insurance is **required** in the State of Michigan
  - If you purchase a vehicle and wish to register it in the state of Michigan you must purchase Michigan no-fault insurance on the vehicle before registration.
  - There are a variety of policy options available
- AAA Michigan can assist you in obtaining vehicle Insurance
  - Call 1-800-AAA-MICH (1-800-222-6424) or visit a branch office for more information
- Michigan AAA (safety, insurance, driver training, accident or road assistance, etc.): [http://michigan.aaa.com/](http://michigan.aaa.com/)
If you would like more information regarding Driver Improvement or on-the-road instruction, please contact:

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Part II: MI Driver’s License

• Written test: What Every Driver Must Know
• Driving skills test (road test): Driving Skills Test Study Guide

Please complete the workshop evaluation.