

Pennsylvania Highway Safety Laws

Fact Sheet

In an effort to educate motorists about some of the Commonwealth's newer traffic safety laws, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has designated the week of February 22-28, 2015, as "Highway Safety Law Awareness Week." Detailed below are four laws which are being highlighted in 2015.

Left Lane Passing Law

Pennsylvania's Vehicle Code stipulates that on limited access highways having two or more lanes for traffic moving in the same direction, vehicles shall be driven in the lane nearest the right-hand edge of the roadway, except: 1) when overtaking (passing) another vehicle; 2) moving to the left lane to allow traffic to merge; 3) for up to a distance of two miles in preparation for a left turn at an intersection, exit, or private road or driveway where such a turn is legally permitted; or 4) as directed by official traffic control devices, police officers, or appropriately attired persons authorized to divert, control, or regulate traffic. Drivers found in violation of this law can be fined up to \$100.

Headlights and Wipers Law

As of January 2007, motorists must turn on their headlights any time their vehicles' wipers are in continuous or intermittent use due to weather or other atmospheric conditions such as fog or mist. Motorists who do not comply with the law could face a fine of \$25, but with fees and other associated costs, the penalty could approach \$100.

Snow and Ice Law

Drivers face severe fines if snow or ice that falls from their vehicle causes injury or death to other motorists or pedestrians.

Enacted in May 2006, the law states that when snow or ice is dislodged or falls from a moving vehicle and strikes another vehicle or pedestrian causing death or serious bodily injury, the operator of the vehicle from which the snow or ice came is subject to a fine of \$200 to \$1,000 for each offense.

Steer Clear Law

Pennsylvania's "Steer Clear" law took effect in 2006 and requires motorists to move over or slow down when they encounter an emergency scene, traffic stop, or disabled vehicle. The law requires motorists to move to a lane that is not adjacent to the scene of an emergency response, police stop, or a tow truck picking up an abandoned vehicle. If drivers cannot move over because of traffic or other conditions, they must reduce their speed.

The law applies any time an emergency vehicle has its lights flashing and where road crews or emergency personnel have lighted flares, posted signs, or tried to warn motorists. Failure to move over or slow down can result in a summary offense that carries a fine of up to \$250. In addition, fines for other traffic violations which occur in the emergency response area will be doubled. If the violation leads to a worker being injured, a 90-day suspension could result.

In cases where law enforcement is not present, the law allows road workers and emergency responders to report violations by motorists. Law enforcement can issue citations based on these reports.

