

Making Ontario's  
roads safer.



New laws for distracted driving, impaired driving, cycling and pedestrian safety, as well as better conditions for tow truck operators, will require increased levels of caution, alertness and focus by all road users. In addition to the new laws that may require road users to improve their behaviours and break a few bad habits, there are higher fines and demerit points for some convictions.

*Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015* and its supporting regulations aim to make conditions safer for everyone travelling on the roads: drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

With an objective to reduce fatalities and injuries on Ontario's roads, the following information highlights why Ontario's laws are changing and the increased fines and penalties.

For information on how to improve your driving and to ensure you're following the new road rules, visit **[headsupontario.ca](https://headsupontario.ca)**.





# Heads Up!

## Why Ontario's laws have changed.

It's no secret that when drivers take their eyes off the road, even for a split second, a potentially life-altering or fatal collision can occur. Here are some recent statistics that show what can happen when drivers stop paying attention:

- In 2015, the Ontario Provincial Police reported 69 deaths caused by distracted driving-related collisions. If current collision trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving in the near future.
- Between 2009 and 2013, the number of cyclist fatalities increased 92% (from 13 to 25) and the number of cyclist injuries increased 4% (from 2,390 to 2,481). (2013 ORSAR)
- Every year across North America, about 100 tow truck drivers providing roadside assistance are killed by oncoming drivers who have not given them enough space when passing. (CAA)

As a result of the *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015*, several updates have been made to the Highway Traffic Act in an effort to make our roads safer for everyone.

## Distracted driving.

Since 2009, it has been illegal for drivers in Ontario to talk, text, type, dial or email using cell phones and other hand-held communication and entertainment devices. Despite this ban, distracted driving has become more prevalent.

### It's the law!

Drivers who are caught breaking the law will now face a minimum fine of \$490 plus 3 demerit points upon conviction. If the case is brought to court, a judge could increase the fine to as much as \$1,000.

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### Novice drivers, take note!

Under Ontario's graduated licensing system, holders of G1, G2, M1 and M2 licences are considered "novice" or new drivers. This group of motorists is still gaining important driving experience before getting a full licence.

Regulatory amendments made in support of the *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015* include **adding distracted driving convictions for novice drivers to the existing escalating sanctions regime**. This will result in a minimum 30-day licence suspension for novice drivers caught using their cell phones while driving, in addition to a fine.

Young drivers are more likely to use hand-held devices while driving and are less likely to view them as dangerous. According to a study conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, over one-third of licensed Ontario students in grades 10 to 12 – an estimated 108,000 adolescent drivers – reported texting while driving at least once in the past year.

If you're a teen or a parent of one, visit **[driveright.caa.ca](http://driveright.caa.ca)** for helpful tools and resources on teen driving.



## Cycling.

With more and more people cycling, it's important that laws are in place to protect cyclists when they're riding on Ontario roads. What's more, both cyclists and drivers need to be aware of potential dangers so they can share the road safely.

The *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015* includes new legislation for cycling safety, with increased fines and demerit points for some existing laws.

# HEADS UP!



The fine for cyclists who don't comply with **proper lighting on their bicycles is \$110.**

### It's the law!

#### Keep a Safe Distance

Motor vehicle drivers must keep a minimum distance of one metre (where possible) when passing cyclists.

- The fine for drivers not leaving enough space when passing cyclists is \$110.

#### Dooring Legislation

"Dooring" refers to the opening of motor vehicle doors without care and attention to the movement or safety of other persons or vehicles, including cyclists, which could result in injuries.

- The penalty for dooring is a minimum \$365 fine and, upon conviction, 3 demerit points.

#### Cyclists on Paved Shoulders

Cyclists are allowed to ride on the paved shoulders of highways that aren't controlled access. This new road rule improves safety for both drivers and cyclists and creates more space for everyone to share the road. Cyclists should note that riding on controlled-access highways such as the 400 series continues to be prohibited.

#### Visibility Requirements

To ensure safe visibility in low-light situations, bicycles are required to have a white or amber light on their front and a red light or reflector on their rear. In addition, white reflective material should be on the front forks and red reflective material on the rear.

- The fine for cyclists who don't comply with proper lighting on their bicycles is \$110.

# Slow down, move over.

Every year tow truck drivers are injured or killed by passing vehicles. Everyone deserves a safe place to work, and for tow truck drivers their workplace is the roadside. When approaching an emergency vehicle with flashing red lights or red and blue lights, or a tow truck with flashing amber lights stopped on the side of the highway, drivers are required to slow down and proceed with caution. If it is safe to do so, drivers should change lanes.

## It's the law!

- The fine for not complying with the Slow Down, Move Over law is a minimum \$490, along with 3 demerit points, upon conviction.



# Impaired driving.

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal. Ontario is a leader in combating impaired driving through some of the toughest laws and programs in North America. It is a crime to drive with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level above the legal limit of 0.08, and the consequences are serious.

## It's the law!

In addition to Criminal Code penalties, drivers convicted of impaired driving will face the following provincial administrative sanctions:

First Offence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mandatory Remedial Measures education or treatment program</li><li>• Min. 1-year ignition interlock condition</li><li>• Min. 1-year driver's licence suspension</li><li>• \$180 Reinstatement Fee</li></ul>
Second Offence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mandatory Remedial Measures education or treatment program</li><li>• Min. 3-year ignition interlock condition</li><li>• Min. 3-year driver's licence suspension</li><li>• \$180 Reinstatement Fee</li></ul>
Third Offence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mandatory Remedial Measures education or treatment program</li><li>• Variable ignition interlock periods (up to a lifetime requirement)</li><li>• Lifetime driver licence (reducible to 10 years if certain criteria are met)</li><li>• \$180 Reinstatement Fee</li></ul>
Fourth and Subsequent Offence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• not eligible for reinstatement</li></ul>

## The BAC warn range.

The warn range is a BAC of 0.05–0.08. If your BAC is in the warn range, you will face provincial administrative penalties.

For more details, visit [mto.gov.on.ca](https://mto.gov.on.ca).

## Novice drivers, take note!

In Ontario, there is zero tolerance for impaired driving for novice drivers and drivers 21 years of age and younger. These drivers must have a BAC level of 0 to legally operate a motor vehicle.

### Young drivers (21 and under) caught with a BAC above zero face:

- Immediate 24-hour licence suspension.
- If convicted, a fine up to \$500, and a 30-day licence suspension.

### Novice Drivers (G1, G2, M1, M2) caught with a BAC above zero face:

- Immediate 24-hour licence suspension.
- if convicted, a fine up to \$500, and escalating sanctions of 30 day licence suspension on a first offence, 90 day licence suspension on a second offence, and licence cancellation for subsequent offences.

## It's the law!

The *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015* contains various amendments to address the issue of impaired driving by drugs and alcohol.

While these amendments are not yet in force, drivers should be aware of the following changes that are coming to Ontario's impaired driving laws:

- New penalties for drug-impaired driving that mirror penalties for alcohol-impaired driving. *(Target Implementation 2016)*
- Extending remedial measures and ignition interlock requirements to any accumulation of alcohol/drug impaired driving under the Highway Traffic Act. *(Target Implementation 2016)*
- Extending the Reduced Suspension with Ignition Interlock Conduct Review Program to repeat offenders. *(Target Implementation 2017/2018)*







**Drivers and cyclists must wait for pedestrians and school crossing guards** to cross the entire roadway at pedestrian crossovers and school crossings.

## Pedestrian safety.

It's important to remember that pedestrians are road users, too. They use intersections, crosswalks and roads in school zones every day. Motorists must look out for pedestrians, and pedestrians must follow the rules of the road in order to stay safe.

### It's the law!

Drivers, including cyclists, are required to follow the law when interacting with pedestrians at pedestrian crossovers, school crossings and crosswalks.

The consequences for not doing so include:

- Drivers and cyclists may face a fine of \$150-\$500. Drivers may also face 3 demerit points.
- Fine for running red lights ranges from \$200-\$1,000.

These fines are doubled in Community Safety Zones where public safety is of special concern.

Drivers and cyclists are now required to stop and yield the entire roadway to pedestrians and school crossing guards before proceeding at pedestrian crossovers and school crossings.

This does NOT apply to pedestrian crosswalks at intersections controlled by signs or traffic control signal systems, unless there is a school crossing guard present.



For more information, visit  
**[headsupontario.ca](https://headsupontario.ca)**.



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