



*Senator*  
**JOSE PERALTA**  
13TH SENATE DISTRICT

**Albany Office:**

415 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247 • (518) 455-2529



**District Office:**

32-37 Junction Blvd.  
East Elmhurst, NY 11369 • (718) 205-3881

Web: [peralta.nysenate.gov](http://peralta.nysenate.gov)  
Email: [jperalta@nysenate.gov](mailto:jperalta@nysenate.gov)



**NEW YORK STATE SENATOR JOSE PERALTA**

*Driving Rights and Responsibilities*

**SEE INSIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR NEW YORK STATE DRIVERS**

*A Glaring Concern*

Glare can cause fatigue and stress, making driving more difficult and increasing your chances of an accident.

Here are a few tips to help you minimize the effects of glare while you are driving:\*

- \* If headlights from oncoming cars are too bright, keep your eyes straight ahead or look slightly to the right.
- \* Adjust your side mirrors to properly minimize glare from vehicles behind you.
- \* Make sure all the glass on your vehicle (headlights, windshield, windows and mirrors) is clean! Dirty glass surfaces create glare.
- \* Make sure headlights are aimed correctly (and clean); do not use fog lights if there is no fog present.
- \* If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, ALWAYS wear them when driving. Make sure they are clean and free of scratches. Anti-reflective materials (such as zircon and silicon) also help reduce glare.

\* (compiled from Westways Magazine archives)

*Important Informational Websites  
& Toll-Free Telephone Numbers:*

**NYS Senior Citizens' Hot Line**  
*1-800-342-9871*

**NYS Consumer Protection Board Helpline**  
*1-800-697-1220*

**NYS Police Emergency**  
*911*

**Deaf/Hearing Impaired (Voice & TDD)**  
*1-800-342-4357*

**NYS Dept. of Transportation**  
*[www.dot.ny.gov](http://www.dot.ny.gov)*

**Senior Drivers Info**  
*[www.seniordrivers.org](http://www.seniordrivers.org)*

**Road Conditions & Construction Updates**  
*1-800-THRUWAY (1-800-847-8929)*

**Suspected Drunk Driver**  
*911*

## Do's And Don'ts

**Do...** Remember, that air bags and children do not mix. Buckle all children up whether they use child safety seats or the vehicle's seat belts. Children under the age of 12 should ride in the safest place in the car — the back seat.

**Do...** Make sure that you and your front-seat passengers wear seat belts whenever the car is in motion. Failure to buckle up could not only jeopardize your safety, but your wallet as well.

**Do...** Use a child safety seat to protect your young ones when they're riding with you in the car. Remember to buckle up youngsters under 16 if they're back-seat passengers.

**Do...** Obey state law by turning on your headlights in rain, snow and other inclement weather. Your visibility will be improved, and just as important, other drivers will be able to see you.

**Do...** Make sure that all of your lights, turn signals and your automobile horn are in proper working order. To avoid accidents and traffic tickets, be aware that other drivers need to be able to see you, hear you and know where you're going.

**Don't...** Park in a spot reserved for the disabled when you aren't eligible to use it — not even for a minute. Illegally using a spot designated as parking for the disabled is cruel and could subject you to a hefty fine (up to \$75 for a first offense).

**Don't...** Drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You could hurt yourself and others. Depending on your offense, you could be charged a steep fine, lose your license, or do time in jail. Wouldn't it be better to call a taxi or a friend for that ride home?

**Don't...** Fail to yield the right of way to emergency vehicles. That fire truck could be rushing to your house and that ambulance might be taking someone you care about to the hospital.



## What You Should Know About Graduated Licensing

Most teenagers are eager to receive their drivers license and the freedom that goes with it. But along with this privilege comes much responsibility and strict restrictions.

Graduated licensing is a law that affects drivers under the age of 18, known as "junior drivers", and details the rights and restrictions that apply to drivers between the ages of 16 and 18.

If you have a junior driving license, or are learning to drive with a learner's permit, you are allowed limited driving privileges.

There are, of course, general rules that apply to all drivers of any age with learner's permits. In addition, there are also special rules if you have a junior learner permit or a junior driver's license. The general and special rules restrict:

- Where in New York State you can drive;
- The time of day you can drive; and
- In what other situations you can drive.

The restrictions for junior permits and driver licenses are based on the region of New York State in which you will be driving. For more information, visit [www.nysdmv.com/younger\\_driver](http://www.nysdmv.com/younger_driver).

As of February 22, 2010, the following changes were made to the New York State Graduated License law that affect young drivers:

- Reduced from two to one the number of non-family passengers under age 21 riding in a motor vehicle operated by a junior license holder when not accompanied by a licensed parent or guardian.
- Eliminated the limited use junior license and a requirement that a junior permit be held for at least six months before a junior or senior license may be issued.
- Increased the number of supervised driving hours before scheduling a road test from 20 to 50 hours, which includes 15 hours of driving after sunset.

As of November 1, 2009, it is illegal for **all** drivers to text or use any portable electronic device while the vehicle is in motion.

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*Riding without a seat belt carries a fine up to \$50. The fine is \$100 if a motorist is stopped for having a person less than 16 years old unrestrained.*



# Cell Phone Safety While Driving



Cell phones are a convenient way to stay in touch with family and friends, as well as meet business needs away from the office. But using one while driving can create dangerous circumstances — for you and others.

In 2001, New York State enacted a statewide law that prohibits the use of handheld cell phones while driving. The law was designed to reduce traffic accidents caused by distracted driving. While the law bans the use of handheld phones, drivers are still permitted to use hands-free models that allow them to keep both hands on the wheel while making calls. However motorists are encouraged to refrain from making and receiving calls under any traffic condition.

In New York State, it is illegal to use portable electronic devices, such as cell phones and smart phones, to make or accept calls, send text messages or e-mail while driving. The penalty for a violation of this law is a fine of up to \$150 and three driver record penalty points.



## Safety Concerns and Tips for Older Drivers

With the number of elderly drivers increasing in recent years, many people have begun to worry that seniors who drive may pose a safety risk to themselves and their passengers, as well as to pedestrians and the occupants of other cars on the road. In fact, age alone is not an accurate indicator of a person's ability or inability to operate a motor vehicle.

More importantly, you or the older driver you care about should pay close attention to health conditions, prescription drug combinations and physical limitations that could hinder a person's ability to drive safely. Below are some possible safety concerns that you should be aware of, as well as some tips for older drivers.

### Tips for Older Drivers

- \* Enroll in an AARP 55 Alive/Mature Driving Program, which is an accident prevention program specifically geared toward older drivers.
- \* Check that your vehicle, or the vehicle you are purchasing, has automatic transmission, power brakes and steering, and air bags.
- \* Position your seat so that you are sitting 10 inches from the steering wheel in order to prevent being injured if your air bag is deployed during an accident.
- \* If you have a physical disability, you can purchase equipment to accommodate your physical limitations. These include:
  - \* Seat belt adapters;
  - \* Full view inside mirrors and side "spot" mirrors;
  - \* Brighter and extra loud turn signals;
  - \* Left-foot accelerator if limited/no use of right foot;
  - \* Scooter and wheelchair loading devices; and
  - \* Keyless ignition.

### Indicators of Unsafe Driving by an Individual

- \* Doesn't obey traffic signals
- \* Drives well below the speed limit
- \* Gets lost in familiar areas on a regular basis
- \* Drives aggressively or stops inappropriately
- \* Doesn't pay attention to other vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians or road hazards
- \* Has trouble staying in designated lane
- \* Has been ticketed frequently or involved in numerous fender benders

If you or an older person you care about demonstrates more than one of these behaviors, you — or they — may want to either consider arranging alternate transportation or utilizing public transportation.

For information about AARP's Driver Safety Program,  
call 1-888-227-7669 or visit the AARP website at [www.aarp.org/](http://www.aarp.org/)



*Dear Friend,*

Our state is home to many picturesque roadways lined with natural beauty and priceless views, such as those along the Hudson River, the Catskill Mountains and the Adirondacks. The luxury of owning a vehicle allows us to take advantage of New York's scenic drives. Every weekend many people load up their car, truck or motorcycle to take advantage of a few hours on the open road.



But along with the freedom and pleasure that driving can bring comes responsibility — for your own safety, the safety of your passengers and other motorists sharing the road.

To make your life a little easier, I've prepared this brochure. It provides information on the

State's Motor Vehicle laws, safety tips for older drivers, facts about the state law regarding cell phone use while driving, as well as other useful advice.

I hope you find this compilation helpful. As always, if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Jose Peralta".

Senator Jose Peralta  
13<sup>TH</sup> Senate District

## *School Buses and Traffic Safety*



According to estimates by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, 50,000 cars and trucks illegally pass school buses every day. In the past four years, 37 students were hit by motorists in New York State passing stopped school buses.

**REMEMBER** — If the bus' red lights are flashing, **YOU MUST STOP**. It's the law!

### *Penalties for Passing a Stopped School Bus*

By Conviction	Minimum Fine	Maximum Fine	Possible Imprisonment
1 <sup>st</sup> Conviction	\$250	\$400	Up to 30 days
2 <sup>nd</sup> Conviction	\$600	\$750	Up to 180 days
3 <sup>rd</sup> or Subsequent Convictions (within 3 years)	\$750	\$1000	Up to 180 days

*\*Along with monetary penalties, you will be assessed 5 penalty points.*

## *Rules of the Road*

*Here's a sampling of motor vehicle laws that all New York drivers should know about-*

### *Drive 65 — Here and There:*

New York law permits motorists to drive 65 miles per hour, instead of 55, on parts of several major roadways in the State. The law made New York the 46<sup>th</sup> state to raise its maximum speed limit to 65 and applies to a number of major highways, including much of the New York State Thruway (I-87 & I-90) and the Adirondack Northway (I-87).

### *Running a Red Light is a Costly Mistake:*

Those who habitually race red lights — and lose — will need to reach deep into their pockets to satisfy stiff fines. In addition, they may also have to spend some time behind bars.

### *Lights On, Lower Premiums:*

If you drive a car with daytime running lamps — headlights that come on every time you start the vehicle — you may be eligible for a break on your auto insurance premium. The headlights must be factory installed, and the premium reduction only applies to non-commercial policies.

### *Different Rates for Different Drivers:*

A multi-tier program for motor vehicle insurance allows insurers to offer a series of different basic rates to motorists based on their driving records. This is intended to offer greater options for motorists, allowing participating insurers to provide coverage for both good drivers and those with spotty records who might otherwise be forced to seek insurance in the expensive assigned risk market.

### *Carjacking Penalties Steep:*

To provide strict punishments for crimes in which motor vehicles are forcibly stolen, often with violence while a driver is behind the wheel, a state law calls for specific penalties for so-called "carjacking" offenses. Under the law, carjacking is a second-degree robbery, a class "C" felony carrying a maximum sentence of up to 15 years in prison.