

KENTUCKY POINTS--- The Way to Safer Driving

When a public safety official hands you your new license and says, "Now you are free to drive," he has chosen his words well.

A driver's license does not really give you license to drive -- it gives you freedom to drive. License is abused or unlimited liberty; freedom is responsible liberty -- liberty within the law.

Just as a burglar who takes the liberty of breaking into someone's home has that liberty taken away from him, the driver who misuses his freedom to drive can have that freedom removed.

The Kentucky Point System is the Department of Public Safety's way of determining who is not using his freedom to drive responsibly.

Under this system, the Department keeps a record of each driver's traffic violations and accidents, as they are reported to the Department by the Courts.

Kentucky Point System

Various point values are assigned to different types of traffic offenses, and when a driver amasses as many as 7-11 points, he is placed on "probation."

When a driver accumulates 12 points within a three year period, dating from his latest conviction, his license is immediately suspended for six months.

However, since the Point System is aimed at rehabilitation, not punishment, the Department offers to the driver on probation the opportunity to improve his driving ability before he reaches the 12-point level.

The probated driver is invited to discuss his driving problems with a Public Safety representative, who helps him determine if he should participate in the Department's Driver Improvement Clinic.

Driver Improvement Clinic

The purpose of the clinic, which is conducted in Frankfort and Louisville by members of the Division of Driver Licensing, is the same as that of the point system, "driver improvement, not driver removal," according to Division Director Don C. Sullivan.

"We want every qualified driver to retain his driving privilege. We offer this clinic as a helping hand to any driver with a problem in driving a motor vehicle safely," Sullivan says.

Combining lectures and films, Sullivan, Roger L. Wilhoite, Chief Hearing Officer, and Sim F. McCarty, Chief of Records and Issuance, cover the main areas of safe driving in four night sessions.

Wilhoite lectures on the traffic problem, good and bad driving attitudes, causes of traffic accidents, physical and mental factors in driving, and the art of driving.

McCarty discusses the qualifications for an operator's license, driving records, and moral responsibility in driving.

Sullivan presents the financial responsibility law, court procedures, and freeway driving.

The driver who maintains an 80 per cent average on weekly tests and passes the final examination receives a card testifying that he has



successfully completed the clinic course. Three points are deducted from his driving record.

Clinic Eams Approval

One recent clinic graduate wrote Commissioner Glen Lovern, "I feel much, much good would come from having more clinics all over the state at more frequent times and rather than be 'voluntary' be 'mandatory' for all drivers."

"I would like nothing better," says Sullivan. However, he points out that there has been no expansion of personnel and funds since the program began in April.

"Three of us can do just so much -- it's up to the Legislature to provide additional funds," he says.

Violations Equal Points

Meanwhile, Kentucky drivers are busy accumulating points in the following ways:

- speeding, under 16 MPH over speed limit--3 points; 16-25 MPH over speed limit--6 points; 26 MPH or more over speed limit--90 days suspension;
- commission of a moving hazardous violation which involves an accident--4 points;
- combination of any two or more moving hazardous violations in any one continuous occurrence--6 points;
- passing stopped school bus loading or unloading children--5 points;
- passing in area designated as "no passing" zone--5 points;
- reckless driving--4 points;
- driving on wrong side of roadway--4 points;
- following too closely for traffic conditions--4 points;
- failure to yield right of way to emergency vehicle--4 points;
- running stop sign or electric signal--3 points;
- speeding too fast for road conditions but under the posted speed limit--3 points;
- all other moving hazardous violations--3 points.

A driver may have his license suspended immediately for the following reasons:

- racing, first offense -- 90 days suspension;

(For any violation for which the suspension of the driving privilege is less than six months for the first offense, the second conviction for a similar offense results in a suspension period of not less than one year.)

second offense -- 1 year suspension; third or more offenses -- 3 year suspension.

- operating a motor vehicle in violation of restrictions imposed by the Department -- 90 days suspension.
- attempting to elude peace officer to prevent the officer from making an arrest for a moving hazardous violation -- 90 days suspension;
- speeding 26 MPH or more over the speed limit -- 90 days suspension.

QUICK WAYS TO LOSE YOUR LICENSE

A driver will lose his license immediately for periods ranging from six months for the first offense to an indefinite period for three or more convictions, for the following reasons:

- driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics;
- manslaughter or reckless homicide;
- perjury or false affidavit to the Department of Public Safety;
- felony involving use of a motor vehicle;
- reckless driving -- 3 convictions within 12 months;
- leaving scene of an accident -- failure to stop and render aid;
- driving while privilege is suspended or revoked;
- operating a motor vehicle without an operator's license.

Sullivan reminds Kentucky drivers that out-of-state convictions are considered for point value and suspensions.

He also points out that a driver's point record is based on reports of traffic convictions, forfeiture of bail, or payment of fines, with or without court appearances.

"Some drivers dismiss the maxim 'Drive safely, the life you save may be your own,'" continued Sullivan. "They depend on the quirks of fate to see them through."

"Therefore, the Department of Public Safety offers them this maxim with a surer reward for careless driving - 'Drive safely; the license you save may be your own.'"

of "bad luck." The State Police simply do not have time to play with every motorist who comes along, so they look for eager players at the places and times where they are most likely to appear.

The places are the scenes of past accidents; the times are the hours in which these accidents occurred.

The State Police keep maps dotted with colored pins, one for every accident. If, over a period of months, pins begin to cluster in one location, that spot becomes a prime police target.

If most of the accidents occurred from 4 to 6 p.m., police officers will be at the spot at 4 p.m. looking for playful motorists.

Not just any driver will receive a "winning" ticket. Since Selective Enforcement is not a game

"FOOL THE COP"

-- A Game of Chance?
This Is No Game

Probably every driver, at one time or another, plays the game of "fool the cop." Exceed the speed limit, watch for patrol cars in your rear view mirror, and keep an eye out for side roads, popular hang-outs for sneaky patrolmen.

What most drivers don't realize is that police officers are not playing games -- they know that Selective Enforcement is a life-and-death matter.

Enforcement officers do not pull traffic tickets out of a hat; receiving a citation is not a matter

DRIVERS TEST

GOOD -- 19 AVERAGE -- 17 to 19
FAIR -- 16 to 17 POOR -- 15 or below

The first ten questions are multiple choice. Choose the best answer. The second ten questions are true and false.

1. How much braking distance should you leave between your car and the car in front of you? (a.) at least one car length for every 10 miles per hour of speed; (b.) two feet in the city, 10 feet on an expressway; (c.) depends on the individual driver's reflexes.
2. If you are driving down a through street and a car from a side street pulls out in front of you after he has made a full stop, you should (a.) keep going -- if you callide, he will have to pay; (b.) slow down and let him go across or enter traffic; (c.) blow your horn and swerve to miss him if he keeps coming.
3. When a school or church bus is stopped on a two-lane highway to load or unload passengers, you should (a.) drive cautiously by the bus if you are approaching it from the opposite direction; (b.) stop and do not attempt to pass until the bus has been put into motion; (c.) drive past the bus at a slow speed, watching for its pedestrians and on-coming cars.

Robert B. Walsh

The author, now in his 13th year as director of public relations for one of the nation's largest motor carriers, is a former newspaperman. He has covered many stories in Kentucky.

4. If you are driving in a residential district where no speed limit is posted, you should go no faster than (a.) 45 MPH; (b.) 25 MPH; (c.) 35 MPH.
5. After an accident resulting in injury or death or apparent property damage of \$100 or more, who must file an accident report? (a.) each driver; (b.) police officer; (c.) one of the drivers.
6. Under the Kentucky Point System, you will have your license suspended when (a.) you reach the point where public safety officials feel you are a highway hazard; (b.) a police officer points out to you that you can no longer drive on the highways; (c.) you accumulate 12 points within a three year period.
7. When you see a stranded motorist on an expressway, you should (a.) stop and see if you can help; (b.) drive on by if he wants help he will flag you down; (c.) stop at the next rest stop or gas station and call the State Police or a mechanic.
8. A yellow line on your side of the white center line means (a.) do not pass; (b.) pass with caution; (c.) pass.
9. After passing, you should not return to the right lane until (a.) you can see in your rear view mirror the left headlight of the car you passed; (b.) you see a car coming toward you in the opposite direction; (c.) you think it is safe.

10. A flashing red light at an intersection means (a.) slow down and proceed with caution; (b.) come to a stop and proceed with caution when safe to do so; (c.) stop until the lights turn green.

True or False

1. You cannot be arrested for speeding if you are not exceeding the posted speed limit. T-F
2. Turn on your lights one-half hour after sunset. T-F
3. If you are meeting a driver who fails to dim his headlights at night, you should put your lights on "bright" to remind him of his error. T-F
4. If you have a blow-out, apply your brakes as quickly as possible. T-F
5. Signal at least a half-block before you plan to turn. T-F
6. At an intersection not marked with a light or stop sign, look to each side and proceed with caution. T-F
7. If you desire to turn around on a main highway, slow down, pull into a driveway, and back into the main highway. T-F
8. When a car is trying to pass you, speed up so he won't think you're a dawdler. T-F
9. All operator's licenses expire July 31. T-F
10. If you miss your exit off an expressway, cross the median on the next maintenance cross-way and go back to the exit. T-F

DRIVE THE WAY THE PRO'S DO DEFENSIVELY

By
Robert B. Walsh
Director of Public Relations
Roadway Express, Inc.

In his earlier years he was also a professional driver and still holds a commercial license. He is probably the only public relations man in the trucking industry checked out as a qualified driver.

DRIVE THE WAY THE PRO'S DO DEFENSIVELY

"Make sure your car is in proper mechanical condition. Check your tires, brakes, or whatever could become faulty on your car."

"Make an allowance for the car with the out-of-state license. The driver might be unfamiliar with the route and make an unexpected stop or turn."

"Don't be a lone straddler."

The trucking industry long has sponsored safety programs to improve the safety records of its drivers. And with results. Look at the record. Trucks represent about 17 per cent of the registered vehicles in the country, yet less than 11 per cent of the accidents in which they were involved.

But this is only part of the story. Studies show that truck drivers have been blameless in 80 per cent of the accidents in which they were involved.

Today more than 5,000 of the nation's truck drivers have gone to truck drivers school. Perhaps the best known of these institutions is the North Carolina State College Truck Driver School.

After he is hired, he is put through extensive classroom and over-the-road training in safety laws, driving proficiency, courtesy, vehicle maintenance and emergency procedures. Trucking companies employ professionally trained safety supervisors responsible for such safety programs.

The American Trucking Associations, the national trade organization representing the trucking industry, sponsors a National Truck Roadsee each year to promote greater highway safety. Drivers who win in state roadsee compete for the national honors. This year 26 states will send their top drivers to the annual event. At the Roadsee, they pilot their vehicles through obstacles which the average motorist would find difficult to duplicate in a compact car.

The entire safety program of the industry is based on the premise that there is no such thing as an accident. Truck drivers keep this in mind. And the average motorist should also.

As pointed out, the planned approach to safety has produced results. Truck accident rates have steadily declined -- while rates for other highway users have increased.

Long active in numerous safety organizations, he has written several articles on highway safety. The accompanying story was written exclusively for Kentucky's traffic safety supplement.

The following safe driving rules, followed by professional drivers, are appropriate for any driver:

1. Check your brakes, lights, tires and other equipment before you start, and periodically during each trip.
2. Leave all your personal problems at the curb when you start to drive ... it requires your undivided, full-time attention.
3. Drive "defensively." Be ready to reduce speed or stop the instant you see a potential danger ... it may become a real danger. In short, drive so that your vehicle is under complete control at all times.
4. Observe all traffic laws ... don't speed, cross center lines, or pass on hills or curves. Pass only when there is a clear, safe distance ahead. Signal for stops or turns.
5. Observe laws of common sense. Adapt your driving to weather and traffic conditions. Regardless of the posted speed limit, reduce your speed when traffic is heavy or there is ice or snow on the road.
6. Don't tailgate. Maintain sufficient distance between your vehicle and the one ahead to allow faster vehicles to pass and occupy the space.
7. Make every proper effort to permit faster traffic to pass on long grades, by keeping to the right ... permit delayed traffic to pass you after you reach the top of any long grade.
8. Watch out for children or pedestrians ... not only at intersections but behind parked cars.
9. Never debate right-of-way. Give it!
10. Never drink before, or while driving.
11. Don't fight sleep. If you feel drowsy, get off the road and take a short rest.
12. Most important of all, be courteous and give other drivers the breaks that you wish they'd give you.

These rules are, for the most part, applicable to the driver of a car. But while tips help, no set of rules will guarantee your safe driving. There's an old cliché the pros follow, and it's one that every driver can adopt - it is, "Safety is no accident." Keep it in mind next time you climb behind the wheel.