

# RULES OF THE ROAD

All travel on public roadways is controlled by a system of signs, signals, pavement markings, driving laws, rules, and regulations. No matter what type of vehicle you are driving or what kind of road you are driving on, you must obey these “rules of the road.”

You must learn how to properly ride on:

- Streets, roads, alleys, and avenues
- Traffic rotaries (circles)
- Highways, expressways, and freeways

## SPEED LIMITS



Riding too quickly (speeding) is one of the major causes of motor vehicle crashes. To ensure safe roadways, speed laws in Massachusetts are strictly enforced and carry severe penalties. The faster you ride, the greater the distance you need to react to a situation and to stop your motorcycle safely.

The fundamental speed law for motor vehicles is that you must never travel faster than is reasonable and proper for the current conditions and public safety.

Regardless of what a posted speed limit sign says, how fast you ride must depend on several factors:

- Traffic conditions — number of vehicles on the road and the speeds at which they are traveling
- Road conditions — quality of the road surface (rough or smooth); the amount of water, ice, or snow on the road surface; and the width of the roadway
- Weather conditions and visibility — adverse situations, including rain, snow, ice, dust, and wind
- Pedestrians or bicyclists — people who might be traveling along or crossing the road

Regardless of any posted speed limit, you must decrease your speed if any hazard exists. Never ride faster than the posted speed limit. Sample speed limit signs appear on this and the next page. All speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions. If conditions are hazardous, you must adjust your speed and ride more slowly.

Most roadways in the state have posted speed limits. Be aware of changes in speed limits as you ride on different kinds of roads or enter and exit highways. Limited-access highways, like the interstate routes, have posted speed limits ranging from 50 to 65 mph, while smaller highways have limits of 55 mph or lower.

Also, be aware that some highways post minimum speed limits as well. In Massachusetts, the minimum speed on interstate and limited access highways is 45 mph.

Unless posted otherwise, your speed would not be considered reasonable and proper if you were riding over...

- 20 mph in a school zone
- 30 mph in a thickly settled or business district
- 40 mph outside a thickly settled or business district
- 50 mph on a highway outside a thickly settled or business district



## SCHOOL ZONES



The 20 mph speed limit on roads near schools can be posted in various ways. The signs stating such limits may be accompanied by flashing yellow lights or posted for certain hours of the day. Look closely for signs indicating that you are approaching or entering a school zone.

When entering a school zone, please ride carefully. Scan aggressively for children crossing the street or riding bicycles. Be aware of school safety patrols or crossing guards that may be directing traffic.

## TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Traffic signals are lights that control the movement of vehicles and pedestrians, usually at intersections. You must know what each light means and obey its signals at all times.

Traffic signals typically consist of three round lights: red, yellow, and green, from top to bottom. There are other types of signals, such as single flashing lights or colored arrows.

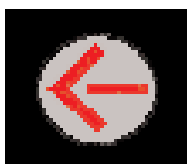
### STEADY RED



A steady red light means "STOP." Do not proceed until the light turns green. You may make a right turn on a red light only after coming to a complete stop. You must also yield to pedestrians or other vehicles in your path before turning. You may not turn on red if a NO TURN ON RED sign is posted.

If you are traveling on a one-way street and turning left onto another one-way street, you are allowed to turn left on a red light. Come to a complete stop and yield to pedestrians and other vehicles before turning.

### STEADY RED ARROW



A steady red arrow means the same as a steady red stop circular signal (see the preceding Steady Red section), but a steady red arrow applies only to vehicles intending to proceed in the direction of the arrow. The same rules apply for TURNS ON RED.