

Operator's Licences.—The operator of a motor-vehicle must be over a specified age (usually 16 years) and must carry a licence, obtainable in most provinces only after prescribed qualification tests and is renewable annually. Special licences are required for chauffeurs and, in some jurisdictions, for those granted licences who have not reached the specified age.

Motor-Vehicle Regulations.—In general, all motor-vehicles and trailers must be registered annually, with the payment of specified fees, and must carry two (one only in Saskatchewan and Alberta) registration plates, one on the front and one on the back of the vehicle (one only for the back in the case of trailers). A change of ownership of the vehicle must be recorded with the registration authority. However, exception from registration is granted for a specified period (usually at least 90 days) in any year to visitors' private vehicles registered in another Province or a State that grants reciprocal treatment. Further regulations require a safe standard of efficiency in the mechanism of the vehicle and of its brakes, and stipulate that equipment include non-glare headlights, a proper rear light, a satisfactory locking device, a muffler, a windshield wiper, and a rear-vision mirror.

Traffic Regulations.—In all provinces and territories, vehicles keep to the right-hand side of the road. Everywhere motorists are required to observe traffic signs, lights, etc., placed at strategic points on highways and roads. Speed limits, usually of 50 miles per hour (60 in Alberta), are in effect; slower speeds are always required in cities, towns and villages, in passing schools and public playgrounds, at road intersections, railway crossings, or at other places or times where the view of the highway for a safe distance ahead is in any way obscured. Motor-vehicles must not pass a tram that has stopped to take on or discharge passengers, except where safety zones are provided. Accidents resulting in personal injury or property damage must be reported to a provincial or municipal police officer and a driver involved must not leave the scene of an accident until he has rendered all possible aid and disclosed his name to the injured party.

Penalties.—Penalties ascend in scale from small fines for minor infractions of any of the regulations to suspension of the operator's driving permit, impounding of the car, or imprisonment for serious infractions, recklessness, driving without an operator's licence, and especially for attempting to operate a motor-vehicle while intoxicated.

Safety Responsibility Legislation.—Each province of Canada has enacted legislation under this heading (sometimes referred to as Financial Responsibility Legislation). In general, the legislation provides for the automatic suspension of the driver's licence and motor-vehicle permit of a person convicted of an offence arising out of a motor-vehicle accident. The suspension remains effective until proof of financial responsibility is filed. The object of this law is to encourage safe driving by imposing more severe penalties for carelessness. The latest amendments to the safety legislation of the various provinces is given in the 1954 Year Book, pp. 805-808.