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STATE POLICE

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PennDOT, State Police Highlight Traffic Law Updates, Importance to Highway Safety

Harrisburg, PA – To reinforce the importance of specific state laws, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Leslie S. Richards and Acting Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Commissioner Robert Evanchick today urged drivers to review and obey driver safety laws that were recently updated and impact crash rates yearly.

“Highway Safety Law Awareness Week is one of our most popular ways to raise state awareness on laws that are very important to our residents’ safety,” Richards said. “We continue to use education, community outreach, and social media, with partners, like the Pennsylvania State Police, to create behavioral change.”

Ahead of the state’s Highway Safety Law Awareness Week, which runs from February 17-23, the agencies advised drivers of the following updates and safety reminders. Each law will be the subject of a short video shared on the [PennDOT Facebook page](#) throughout the week:

- Automated speed enforcement came to Pennsylvania in 2018 and may be used only when a work zone is active. Drivers going more than 11 miles per hour over the posted speed limit in a work zone are subject to the following penalties: first offense is a written warning, second offense is a \$75 fine, and the third or following offense is a \$150 fine.
- Pennsylvania’s “Steer Clear” law was enacted to help prevent injuries and save lives of first responders. It requires drivers to move over or slow down when they encounter an emergency scene, traffic stop, or disabled vehicle. Drivers must move over or slow down for all responders, including police, fire, and ambulance crews, as well as stopped tow trucks and maintenance vehicles. In 2018, a similar regulation went into effect to protect trash and recycling workers. Drivers must slow down and move one lane away (if possible) when approaching a stationary trash or recycling truck.
- Pennsylvania recently enacted harsher penalties for drivers convicted of DUI. A fourth DUI in 10 years is now a felony. A third DUI offense in 10 years may also be a felony, depending on the driver’s blood alcohol content. Legal consequences for homicide by vehicle while DUI were also strengthened.
- Removing snow and ice on vehicles and headlights before driving is essential during the winter season. If snow or ice falls from a vehicle and strikes another vehicle or pedestrian causing death or serious bodily injury, the driver faces a fine of up to \$1,000.
- “Turn Around, Don’t Drown” is a reminder that motorists may not drive past, around or through a sign or traffic-control device closing a road or highway due to an existing or hazardous condition. This is a summary offense and is punishable by a fine of up to \$250. If the violation results in the use of services of a first responder or emergency medical or rescue personnel

(including a tow service), the fine increases to a maximum of \$500 -- and the driver is responsible for all the emergency response costs.

- “Right-of-way for pedestrians in crosswalks” is a state law mandating that when a traffic-control device is not in place or not in operation, the driver of a vehicle will yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway at an intersection with a marked or unmarked crosswalk. This is a summary offense and is punishable by a fine of \$50.

“By learning and obeying the rules of the road, we can all do our part to reduce the number of crashes, injuries, and deaths on Pennsylvania’s roads,” said Acting Commissioner Evanchick. “Safe driving starts with wearing a seat belt – every trip, every time – and never driving aggressively, distracted, or while impaired.”

Join the conversation on social media using #PATrafficLaw on Twitter and Facebook.

For more information on highway safety, visit www.PennDOT.gov/safety.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Ashley Schoch, PennDOT, 717-783-8800; Ryan Tarkowski, PSP, 717-783-5556