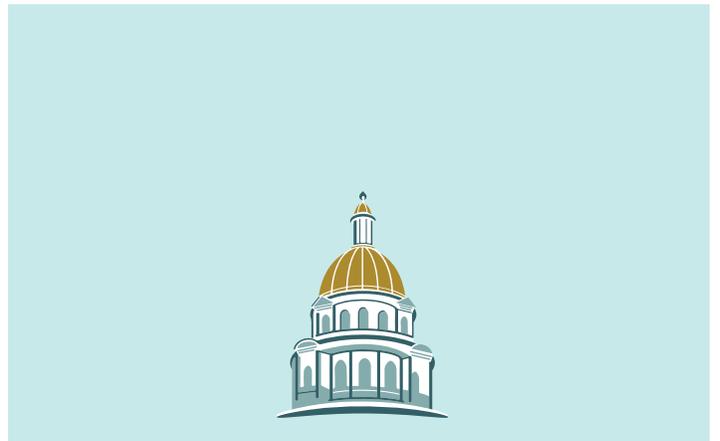




Colorado Motor Vehicle Handbook

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Alternative Fuel Vehicle Tax Credits

Since 1992, Colorado has offered the innovative motor vehicle income tax credit for people who purchase or lease alternative fuel vehicles, or who convert their existing vehicle to run on an alternative fuel source. Currently, qualifying vehicle types include electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Vehicle conversions no longer receive a credit. Electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are propelled by an electric motor with a battery or a fuel cell that converts a mix of oxygen and hydrogen to electricity. The credit is worth up to \$7,500 for passenger vehicles and more for trucks. For additional information, consult a dealership. The table below outlines the tax credits for the purchase or lease of qualifying vehicles.

State Income Tax Credits for Electric and Hybrid Electric Vehicles

Tax Year	2024	2025	2026	2027
Electric and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Motor Vehicles*				
MSRP of \$35,000 to \$80,000	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$1,500	\$1,000
MSRP under \$35,000	\$7,500	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$3,500
Light Duty Electric and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Trucks**				
Any MSRP	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$1,500	\$1,000
Medium Duty Electric and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Trucks****				
Any MSRP	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Heavy Duty Electric and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Trucks***				
Any MSRP	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$8,000

Source: Sections 39-22-516.7 and 39-22-516.8, C.R.S.

*Electric and plug-in hybrid electric motor vehicles have a GVWR of 8,500 pounds or less

** Light duty electric and plug-in hybrid electric trucks have a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or less.

*** Medium duty electric and plug-in hybrid electric trucks have a GVWR of 10,001 to 26,000 pounds

****Heavy duty electric and plug-in hybrid electric trucks have a GVWR of over 26,001 pounds



Automobile Insurance

Mandatory Automobile Insurance in Colorado

Automobile owners in Colorado are required to carry liability insurance. Liability insurance covers bodily injury to another person or property damage to another's vehicle or property when the insured is at fault for an accident. The following minimum coverages are required by the state, although higher coverages may be purchased:

- \$25,000 for bodily injury or death to any one person in an accident;
- \$50,000 for bodily injury or death to all persons in any one accident; and
- \$15,000 for property damage in any one accident.

Self-insurance. Any individual who has over 25 vehicles registered to his or her name may qualify as a self-insurer by applying for a certificate of self-insurance from the state Insurance Commissioner. The Insurance Commissioner must ensure that the individual will be able to pay the minimum coverages required by the state. For more information on self-insurance, contact the state's [Division of Insurance](#) within the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

Optional Automobile Insurance Coverage

Uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage. Uninsured/underinsured motorist (UM/UIM) coverage is optional in Colorado. This coverage pays for the insured's bodily injury losses caused by a hit-and-run driver, a driver with no automobile insurance, or a driver of an underinsured vehicle. UM/UIM coverage takes the place of the insurance the other driver should have purchased, or protects the insured when the at-fault driver's vehicle is insured, but the bodily injury liability limits of his or her policy are less than the limits of the insured's UM/UIM coverage. This coverage does not protect the other driver, and it does not cover damage to the insured's vehicle. Under current law, all insurers in the state must provide UM/UIM coverage in an amount equal to the policyholder's current level of liability coverage for bodily injury, unless this coverage is waived by the policyholder in writing. A policyholder making such a rejection may opt to carry a lower level of coverage or reject coverage completely.

Comprehensive and collision coverage. Comprehensive insurance protects the insured against other types of damage to his or her vehicle, such as falling objects, fire, natural disaster, theft, or vandalism. Collision insurance pays for damage to a vehicle from a collision with another vehicle or object, or from a rollover. While not required by law, collision coverage may be required by lenders as a condition of vehicle financing.

Medical payments coverage. An individual's health insurance may cover injuries sustained in an accident. However, depending on the health insurance plan, the injured individual may be faced with high deductibles, copayments, or other significant medical costs. As a supplement to health insurance, or in the event the individual does not have health insurance, medical payments coverage can be purchased as part of an automobile insurance package. This coverage pays for medical expenses, including copayments or deductibles, for the insured vehicle driver and passengers, regardless of fault. Insurers generally offer medical payments coverage at a minimum of \$5,000. Additional coverage may be purchased.

Automobile Insurance Resources

The Division of Insurance in DORA maintains a variety of automobile insurance resources on the DORA website.



Automobile Theft Law

Motor Vehicle Theft

Under Section 18-4-409, a person commits motor vehicle theft in the first degree if they take, operate, receive, or retain the vehicle of another person and:

- knows or reasonably should have known that the act was done without the person's permission or by threat or fraud; and
- the person has two prior convictions or adjudications for an offense involving motor vehicle theft or unauthorized use of a motor vehicle in Colorado or another state or U.S. territory.

A person commits motor vehicle theft in the second degree if they take, operate, receive, or retain the vehicle of another person and:

- knows or should have reasonably known the act was done without the person's permission or by threat or fraud; and
- engages in any actions that elevate the crime, which include but are not limited to:
 - ◇ retaining possession or control of the motor vehicle for more than 24 hours;
 - ◇ removing the motor vehicle from the state;
 - ◇ causing bodily injury to another person while exercising control of the motor vehicle.

A person commits motor vehicle theft in the third degree if the person knowingly:

- takes or operates a motor vehicle of another person and knows or should have reasonably known the act was done without the person's permission or was by threat or fraud; or
- receives or retains a motor vehicle from a person who is not the owner, operates the motor vehicle, and knows or should have reasonably known the act was done without the person's permission.

Motor vehicle theft in:

- the first degree is a class 3 felony;
- the second degree is a 4 felony;
- the third degree is a class 5 felony.

Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle

Under Section 18-4-409.5, a person commits unauthorized use of a motor vehicle if the person takes or operates the motor vehicle of another person without the owner's authorization and:

- does not commit a criminal offense other than a misdemeanor traffic offense except eluding a police officer in the course of taking or operating the vehicle; and
- the motor vehicle is returned or recovered by law enforcement within 24 hours of being reported stolen by the owner, with no damage to the motor vehicle.

Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle is a class 1 misdemeanor, except that if it is the second or subsequent violation, it becomes a class 5 felony.

Chop Shop Activity

Chop shop activity involves possessing, receiving, storing, taking apart, or changing a stolen motor vehicle or stolen major component motor vehicle part for the purpose of using, selling, or disposing of the motor vehicle or part. Major component motor vehicle parts include, among other things, the engine, transmission, catalytic converter, wheels, tires, or bumpers. A chop shop is usually the place where stolen motor vehicles or parts are stored, disassembled, or changed.

The crime of ownership or operation of a chop shop involves any person who:

- owns or operates a chop shop;
- transports a stolen motor vehicle or part to or from a known chop shop;
- sells or transfers to or purchases or receives from a known chop shop a stolen motor vehicle or part;
- or works with another person related to these acts.

Owning or operating a chop shop is a class 4 felony resulting in a fine of \$2,000 to \$500,000. Transporting a stolen motor vehicle or part and selling or transferring a stolen motor vehicle part is a class 5 felony. Altering or removing a vehicle identification number, manufacturer number, or engine number intending to misrepresent the identity of the motor vehicle or part is a class 5 felony. Class 5 felonies result in a fine of \$1,000 to \$100,000.

Purchase of Detached Catalytic Converters

Owners or operators of junk yards or salvage yards must keep the details of any purchase of a detached catalytic converter, including:

- a signed affidavit from the seller that they are the owner or are entitled to sell the converter;
- the license plate number and description of the vehicle used to deliver the converter; and
- verification of the seller's identity.

Theft of License Plates

Any person who removes, detaches, or takes a license plate from a motor vehicle or aids, abets, or assists in any such act is guilty of theft of a license plate. Theft of a license plate is a class 2 misdemeanor.



Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous vehicles rely on an automation system to drive the vehicle. Colorado law defines an "automated driving system" as an automation system that is collectively capable, without any intervention or supervision by a human operator, of performing driving tasks. The state legislature created a framework for autonomous vehicles in 2017. In 2021, the General Assembly tasked the Department of Transportation with creating a report by 2025 for the Transportation Legislation Review Committee that outlines the development and adoption of autonomous motor vehicles.



Chain Law

Under current state law, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has the authority to close any portion of a state highway to public travel or to prohibit travel by vehicles that are unprepared for the conditions. CDOT may close the highway when it considers such a closure or restriction of use necessary for the protection and safety of the public. Highway closures and restrictions occur through cooperation with the Colorado State Patrol (CSP).

The state Transportation Commission has statutory authority to promulgate rules to implement Colorado's chain laws, which apply to all state, federal, and interstate highways.

Passenger Vehicle Chain Law

During the months when snow is possible, all passenger vehicles weighing 16,001 pounds or less and accommodating up to 15 passengers must be equipped with the following:

- tire chains or an alternate traction device;
- four wheel drive or all wheel drive vehicles with tires that have 3/16-inch tread depth and are adequate for the conditions;
- manufacturer rated all-weather tires that have 3/16-inch tread depth; or
- tires that have 3/16-inch tread depth that are imprinted by the manufacturer with a mountain-snowflake (M&S, M+S, or M/S) symbol.

Between September 1 and May 31 of each year, all vehicles traveling on I-70 between Dotsero and Morrison must carry sufficient chains or an alternate traction device. For further information, about the state's passenger chain law visit [CDOT's website](#) and the [Colorado State Patrol](#).

Commercial Vehicle Chain Law

Between September 1 and May 31 of each year, all commercial vehicles traveling on I-70 between Dotsero and Morrison must carry sufficient chains. Commercial vehicles with a combined gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more are required to have four or more drive wheels covered with chains when the chain law is in effect. For more information about the state's chain law as it applies to commercial vehicles, CDOT has created [trucker information](#) on the [COtrip web page](#).

Is the Chain Law in Effect?

Drivers can call 511 to determine whether the chain law is currently in effect. Further information about the chain law, including the location of chain-up stations for commercial vehicles, and tips for chaining vehicles, is available on [COtrip web page](#).



Commercial Vehicle (Motor Carrier) Regulation

Under Colorado law, a commercial vehicle is defined as a vehicle used in commerce that weighs at least 16,001 pounds and is self-propelled, towed, or designed to transport 16 or more passengers. Vehicles that used for the commercial transportation of other motor vehicles or for hazardous materials transportation are included with the definition of a "commercial vehicle." School buses and certain agricultural vehicles are excluded from the definition.

Commercial Vehicle Driver Licenses

Commercial driver licenses are required for all persons operating a commercial vehicle. Visit the [Driver License](#) section of this guide for more information.

Minimum Standards for Commercial Vehicles

Any person operating a commercial vehicle on a public highway must comply with [Colorado State Patrol rules](#). Visit the Colorado State Patrol's website for more information on [Motor Carrier Safety](#).

Hours of Service

Federal regulations govern the maximum number of hours that commercial motor vehicle driver may be "on-duty." These rules limit commercial drivers to working a maximum of 14 hours within any 24-hour period. Further, commercial motor carrier drivers:

- may only drive up to 11 hours of the 14-hour "on-duty" period;
- must take 10 consecutive hours of off-duty time after driving 11 hours;
- may not extend the 14-hour on-duty window with off-duty time, meals, or fuel stops; and
- may not be on duty more than 60 hours in 7 consecutive days or 70 hours in 8 consecutive days.

Sleeper berth. A sleeper berth is a sleeping compartment typically accessible from the driver's seat in a commercial vehicle. In order to comply with hours of service restrictions, a driver using a sleeper berth must spend at least eight consecutive hours in the berth, and two more hours in either the berth or off-duty.

Penalties for violations. Potential penalties for drivers who violate the federal hours of service rules include:

- being placed "out-of-service" until the driver meets off-duty time requirements;
- fines by federal, state, or local enforcement officials;
- a downgrade of the motor carrier's safety rating; or
- federal criminal penalties against carriers or drivers knowingly and willfully violating hours of service regulations.

Size and Weight Limitations

Vehicle size and weight limits on state and interstate highways are established by the state and federal governments. In Colorado, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for regulating the movement of oversize and overweight vehicles on the state's highways. CDOT accomplishes this by issuing permits and providing route guidelines for commercial vehicles that exceed the normal size and weight limits allowed by law. The table below outlines state and federal limitations for vehicle size and weight.



Federal and State Motor Vehicle Size and Weight Limits

		Federal Regulations	State Law
Overall Vehicle Length		No federal length limit is imposed on most truck tractor-semitrailers operating on the National Highway System (NHS). However, on the NHS, combination vehicles designed and used specifically to carry automobiles or boats in specially designed racks may not exceed a maximum overall vehicle length of 65 feet, or 75 feet, depending on the type of connection between the tractor and trailer.	45-foot maximum overall single vehicle length; 70-foot combination length on all roads
Trailer Length		Federal law provides that no state can impose a length limitation of less than 48 feet (or longer if provided for by grandfather rights) on a semitrailer operating in any truck tractor-semitrailer combination on the NHS. A state may permit longer trailers to operate on its national network highway. Similarly, federal law provides that no state can impose a length limitation of less than 28 feet on a semitrailer or trailer operating in a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combination on the NHS.	57.3 foot semitrailer on state, supplemental, and NHS highways; 28.5 foot trailer length on state, supplemental, and NHS highways
Vehicle Width		On the NHS, states are restricted to vehicle width limitations of 8.5 feet.	8.5 feet
Vehicle Height	None		14.5 feet on NHS highways; CDOT designates highways with overhead structures that have a clearance of less than 14.5 feet
Single Vehicle Weight w/2 Axles	36,000 pounds		36,000 pounds NHS highways; 40,000 pounds state highways
Single Vehicle Weight w/3 or More Axles	54,000 pounds		54,000 pounds
Truck/Trailer or Combination of Vehicles	80,000 pounds		85,000 pounds

Source: Sections 42-4-502 through 42-4-509, C.R.S.

Vehicle weight. A commercial vehicle's gross combined weight rating (GCWR) is the maximum permissible loaded weight for a towing vehicle and its trailer. This includes the vehicle's fuel, passengers, and cargo. Trucks and truck/trailer combinations with an empty weight exceeding 16,000 pounds and any vehicle with a GCWR exceeding 26,000 pounds must receive clearance through the state's [ports of entry](#) managed by the Colorado State Patrol (CSP). Commercial vehicles must also clear all ports of entry that are within five miles of the route on which they are traveling, unless the operator has previously secured a clearance or obtained a special permit.

A vehicle's empty weight is captured during the titling process with the Department of Revenue (DOR). The state's registration and taxation systems rely on vehicle weight to:

- determine the vehicle's base registration fees;
- determine whether the vehicle must participate in the Federal Heavy Vehicle Use Tax program; and
- capture the operating gross vehicle weight maximum limit to print on the registration card that is used by port of entry and law enforcement.

Depending on the vehicle's tax class, the DOR also determines in which gross vehicle weight registration type the vehicle owner will participate (i.e. private carrier or commercial carrier), or, for tax class A vehicles, reports the weight to the International Registration Plan (IRP). The IRP is an agreement between the U.S. and Canada for payment of commercial motor carrier registration fees.

Oversize vehicles. If a commercial vehicle exceeds the size or weight standards established in law, the vehicle's operator must obtain an oversize or overweight permit from CDOT, which will allow the vehicle to operate legally on designated highways. For oversize and overweight vehicles operating on city and county roads, the operator must also obtain permission or the appropriate permit from the local government to operate. More information on commercial vehicle permits may be found on [CDOT's website](#).

Special permits. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) issues permits relating to the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles moving extra large loads on the state's highways. These permits include "extra legal" permits for exceptions to size and weight limitations and "super load" permits for vehicles that weigh 500,000 pounds or more or that occupy two lanes and for unladen combination vehicles that occupy two lanes. Costs for the permits vary by the weight, size, and number of trips taken by the vehicle. More information about these permits can be found at CDOT's Commercial Vehicle Permits webpage. CDOT also accepts permit applications through its online permitting portal.

Penalties. Motorists in violation of size or weight limitations are subject to fines and surcharges.

Further information. More information is available in the Legislative Council Staff [Issue Brief](#) on oversize and overweight commercial vehicles. CDOT currently maintains detailed maps and information about state highway structures with less than 14 feet and 6 inches of vertical clearance on its website.

Hazardous Materials

Commercial carriers transporting hazardous materials in Colorado must obtain a permit from CDOT. Permitting and safety requirements for the transportation of such materials are enforced by the [Colorado State Patrol \(CSP\)](#). Vehicles carrying hazardous materials are subject to inspection by the CSP, must provide proof of liability insurance, may be taken out of service for violations, and are subject to fines and criminal penalties. Single-trip permits for hazardous materials transportation (for up to a 72-hour period) may be obtained from a port of entry or from CDOT. Additional permitting and fee requirements apply to permits for the transportation of radioactive materials. Certain radioactive materials are excluded from these permitting requirements, including radioactive materials used for research or medical purposes, radioactive ores, and radioactive materials used in national security activities.

CSP regulates and enforces both the interstate and intrastate transportation of hazardous materials in Colorado. CSP has the authority to designate which public roads may be used by vehicles transporting hazardous materials. Counties, municipalities, and CDOT may currently apply for new hazardous materials route designations or request changes to existing routes. CSP must provide adequate public notice before approving a hazardous materials route designation.

Fuels Impact Enterprise. The Fuels Impact Enterprise in CDOT aims to improve the transportation of fuel and monitor vehicle emissions. The enterprise imposes a fuels impact reduction fee of up to 0.6125 cents per gallon of fuel on licensed fuel excise tax distributors and licensed fuel distributors. The fee funds the Fuels Impact Reduction Grant Program, which makes grants to certain communities, governments, and transportation corridors for improving hazardous waste mitigation and projects related to emergency response, environmental mitigation, or fuel transportation.

Mud Flap Laws

Colorado law requires the use of splash guards, also referred to as "mud flaps," to minimize the spray of water and other road substances. This requirement is applicable to large trucks operating on Colorado highways. Flaps must be installed and functioning at all times. Torn or damaged flaps must be replaced at the first reasonable and safe opportunity to exit the road.

Commercial Vehicle Chain Laws

For more information about the state's chain law as it applies to commercial vehicles, CDOT has created [trucker information_COtrip](#). For general information about chain law, visit the [Chain Law](#) subsection of this handbook.



Departments and Agencies Involved in Transportation Issues

The state departments that play a role in motor vehicle regulation in Colorado are the Energy Office and the Departments of Public Health and Environment, Public Safety, Regulatory Agencies, Revenue, and Transportation.

Colorado Energy Office (CEO)

The [Colorado Energy Office \(CEO\)](#) is a department within the Governor's office, tasked with reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and consumer energy costs. The transportation programs focused on this effort include the following.

E-bikes. CEO offers a state rebate program for e-bikes and helps local communities start rebate programs.

Transit. The Ozone Season Free Transit Grant Program offers grants to the Regional Transportation District and local transportation agencies. The grants provide free or reduced rides during the 30-day summer ozone season to reduce emissions that can adversely affect health.

Electric vehicles. In order to increase adoption of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure,

the office provides education and resources for the general public and fleet owners.

Zero emissions. The office is responsible for statewide goals to reduce GHG emissions and strategies for the transportation sector to meet those goals.

Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

The Department of Public Health and Environment includes the Motor Vehicle Emissions Program within the Air Pollution Control Division, which administers programs designed to reduce motor vehicle pollution in Colorado. For more information about the state's emissions programs, see the [Emissions](#) section.

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

The Department of Public Safety includes the Colorado State Patrol, which enforces traffic laws on interstates, state highways, and county roads, among other general law enforcement responsibilities.

Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA)

The Department of Regulatory Agencies includes the Division of Insurance and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The Division of Insurance regulates the insurance industry in the state, including automobile insurance and insurance agents. The PUC's Transportation Section regulates transportation network companies (i.e. Lyft and Uber), common carriers (taxis, sightseeing services, shuttles), contract carriers (which provide service pursuant to a contract that addresses unique customer requirements at a price not less than a common carrier – i.e. children's activity bus), and towing companies. The PUC's Rail/Transit Section has primary jurisdiction over all public highway-rail crossings.

Department of Revenue (DOR)

The Department of Revenue includes the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which administers the state's motor vehicle laws through four sections. Driver Control and Traffic Records; Driver License; Emissions; and Titles and Registration. Below is an overview of each DMV section. Visit the [Contact Us](#) page of the DMV website to contact any of these sections. The DOR's annual report is available [here](#).

The Driver Control/Traffic Records Section of the DMV maintains the driving records of licensed Colorado drivers, including suspension and revocation of driver licenses, convictions for traffic violations, and accident records. The section also investigates misconduct and criminal activity involving motor vehicle records and related fraud, provides assistance to law enforcement in the prevention and detection of fraud, and administers the state's motorist insurance database. Visit the [DMV's Motor Vehicle Record](#) page for more information about accessing copies of your motor vehicle record.

The Driver License Section of the DMV issues Colorado driver licenses, commercial driver licenses, identification cards, and instruction permits. Visit the [DMV's Licenses](#) page or the [Driver Licenses](#) section of this handbook for more information about licenses, identification cards, and instruction permits.

The Emissions Section of the DMV administers enforcement and financial management aspects of the Automobile Inspection and Readjustment (AIR) program, while the Motor Vehicle Emissions Program in the Department of Public Health and Environment's Air Pollution Control Division certifies the AIR program's testing procedures and equipment, program development, and data analysis. The AIR program is designed to reduce motor vehicle pollution in the state by requiring motor vehicles operated in Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, and parts of Adams, Arapahoe, Larimer, and Weld Counties to undergo emissions testing and be subject to requirements for emission-related repair work. To learn more about the state's emissions requirements, visit the [Emissions section](#) of this handbook.

The Titles and Registrations Section of the DMV administers the titling and registration of motor vehicles and performs a number of enforcement and fee collection functions involving commercial vehicles and the trucking industry. The section ensures that commercial vehicle operators and their motor vehicles are in compliance with all relevant state and federal laws and regulations including: compliance with weight and size limits, safety and insurance requirements, and possession of required licenses, registrations, and permits. Visit the [DMV's International Registration Plan page](#) for more information related to motor carriers. Specific travel permitting requirements are handled by the [CDOT Commercial Vehicle Permits Office](#). Visit the [DMV's Titling a Vehicle page](#) for information related to titling a vehicle. Visit the [DMV's Registration Requirements page](#) for information related to vehicle registration.

Department of Transportation (CDOT)

The Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining, repairing, and plowing Colorado's state highway system, which includes interstates, U.S. highways, toll roads, and numbered state highways in Colorado, under the policy direction of the 11-member Transportation Commission.

Regional transportation plans. The state's transportation planning process begins at the regional level. CDOT gathers input from the [15 planning regions](#) to develop [regional transportation plans](#) for each region. The plans typically establish a region's long-term transportation investment priorities, and are incorporated in the [Statewide Transportation Plan](#).

Statewide Transportation Plan. State law requires CDOT to produce a 20-year plan, updated every five years. The current [Statewide Transportation Plan \(2045\)](#) estimates needs and revenue from 2020 to 2045. The plan outlines CDOT's overall funding plan, identifies the future needs of Colorado's transportation system, establishes CDOT's vision and goals for the state, and outlines strategies to achieve these goals.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Federal regulations require CDOT to develop a [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\)](#), which is a four-year planning document for state transportation projects. CDOT updates this plan annually. Projects included in the annual plan come from the 20-year statewide transportation plan.

CDOT resources. CDOT maintains information about road and weather conditions at www.cotrip.org or by calling 511. Construction reports can also be accessed through [CDOT's Travel Center](#). For information about CDOT's safety initiatives, visit the [CDOT Safety page](#). This resource guide also includes more information about [High Occupancy Vehicle and Toll lanes](#); visit CDOT's website for general information about [Express Lanes](#).



Distracted Driving and Cell Phone Use

Adult drivers. Colorado law permits regular cell phone use for voice calls. Headphones may be worn in one ear for this purpose. However, adult drivers are prohibited from manual data entry and transmission on a cell phone (i.e., to send a text message or browse the internet) while behind the wheel.

Minor drivers. Any driver under 18 years of age is prohibited from using a cell phone while driving. The prohibition includes phone calls, text messaging, or similar forms of manual data entry and transmission. See the [Minor License subsection](#) for more information about rules related to minor drivers.

Exceptions. Exceptions to the law are provided under specified circumstances. Drivers, regardless of age, may use a wireless device for phone calls or sending or receiving text messages either to contact a public safety entity or during an emergency. An emergency is defined as any situation in which the following may occur:

- a person has reason to fear for his or her life or safety, or believes that a criminal act may be perpetrated against him or her or against another person;
- reporting of a fire, serious traffic accident, serious road hazard, or a medical or hazardous materials emergency; or
- reporting of a person who is driving in a reckless, careless, or unsafe manner.

Penalties. The table below lists penalties assessed for violating state laws pertaining to cell phone use and text messaging while driving and indicates fines for both initial and subsequent offenses. In addition to fines set in statute, offenders are assessed a surcharge credited to the Victims and Witnesses Assistance and Law Enforcement Fund and the Crime Victim Compensation Fund.

Penalties for Improper Cell Phone Use While Driving

Category	Violation	Points	Fine
Minor Drivers (all cell phone use)	Initial Violation		
	Class A Traffic Infraction	1	\$50
Adult Drivers (text messaging)	Subsequent Violation		
	Class A Traffic Infraction	1	\$100
Adult Drivers (text messaging)	Initial Violation		
	Class 2 Misdemeanor Traffic Offense	4	\$150-\$300, 10-90 days, or both
	Bodily Injury or Proximate Cause Of Death to Another, Class 1 Misdemeanor	4	\$300-\$1,000, 10 days-one year imprisonment, or both.

Source. Section 42-4-239, C.R.S.

Enforcement. Distracted driving violations are primary offenses. Current law states that a law enforcement officer must see the use of the mobile device to transmit data and that the driver was operating the motor vehicle in a careless or imprudent manner in order to issue a citation.

Driver Licenses

Regular Driver Licenses

All persons operating a motor vehicle on any public street or highway must hold a valid driver license or instruction permit. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) administers the required physical, vision, physical aptitude, written, and driving tests. Applicants for a driver license, identification card, or instruction permit must provide proof of age, identity, and lawful presence in the United States (see the [Real ID Act subsection](#) for more information on this requirement). Driver licenses are categorized by vehicle type and by age group. Vehicle type licenses include: personal/passenger, motorcycle, and commercial. Age group licenses include adult and minor. Visit the [DMV's website](#) for more information on driver licenses. Use [this map of state DMVs](#) to find the DMV closest to you. DMV appointments for nearly all locations may be [scheduled online](#).

Minor Drivers

Affidavit of liability. A minor driver application for an instruction permit must include an affidavit of liability, signed by the parent, stepparent, or grandparent. If the minor driver is a foster child they may be exempt from providing the affidavit if they have insurance in their name or the affidavit may be signed by a foster parent, guardian, or county department of human services.

Driver log. Drivers under the age of 18 must hold a permit for at least one year before applying for a driver license. In addition, minor drivers must submit a log sheet certifying that they have completed at least 50 hours of actual driving experience, including 10 hours driving at night. The only driving that counts toward the required hours of the log sheet are those hours that were supervised by:

- the person who signed the liability affidavit;
- the person appointed by the person who signed the liability affidavit; or
- the driver education instructor.

Anyone older than 21 with a valid driver license who provided driver instruction may sign a foster child's driver log. Individuals include aunts, uncles, grandparents, mentors, faith leaders, and others if they provided driver instruction.

Driver education. In Colorado, a driver education course is required for minors between 15 and 16 to obtain a minor's instruction permit. The course must include a minimum of six hours behind-the-wheel driving training with a certified education instructor. If no entity offers this type of training from a permanent location within 30 miles of the permit holder's address, or if the entity is open less than 20 hours a week, the minor driver may receive 12 hours of behind-the-wheel driving training from a parent, legal guardian, or an alternate permit supervisor instead. Minor drivers under 16 have three available options for driver education:

- At the age of 15, drivers can hold a minor instruction permit if enrolled in a driver education course, which is a 30-hour program that includes six hours behind the wheel training with an instructor. The permit is available to drivers at the earliest age of 15 years to 15½. The minor driver must hold the permit for 12 months before obtaining a driver license.
- A minor driver aged 15½ can obtain a minor instruction permit by completing an approved driving awareness program lasting five hours or less. The minor driver must hold the permit for 12 months, which would allow a minor to obtain a license, at the earliest, at the age of 16½. The four-hour driving awareness classes are offered through instructors approved by the Department of Revenue (DOR).
- If an underage driver chooses not to participate in a driver education or driving awareness course, the individual can obtain a temporary instruction permit at the age of 16, hold the permit for 12 months, and obtain a driver license at the age of 17.

Driver education programs must be approved by DOR. Visit DOR's website for a [list of approved driver education schools](#).

The table below summarizes the requirements for minor drivers to obtain a driver license.

Obtaining a Minor Driver License

Age*	Description	Earliest Age Possible to Obtain Driver License
15 to 15½	Minor instruction permit available to minors enrolled in a driver education course.	16 years. If driver education permit is obtained at 15 years, driver license can be obtained at 16 years of age.
15½ to 16	Minor instruction permit available to minors who complete a driver awareness program or substitute a driver education course.	16½ years. If driver awareness permit is obtained at 15½ years, driver license can be obtained at 16½ years of age.
16 to 18	Temporary instruction permit available to all individuals in age group.	17 years. If instruction permit is obtained at 16 years, driver license can be obtained at 17 years of age.

Source: Section 42-2-101, et seq., C.R.S.

*Age groups represent the earliest age individuals can participate in educational programs. Individuals older than the ages listed for each category may also enroll.

The DMV maintains [information related to minor driver licenses on its website](#). The [Passenger and Curfew Laws for Minor Drivers](#) section of this handbook explains these laws related to minor drivers on the road.

Driver License Renewal

Online license renewal. Drivers renewing their license online will not be issued a temporary document, and the license may take up to 30 business days to be delivered. Males between the ages of 18 to 25 will automatically be registered for selective service when renewing online. If you are registered to vote in Colorado, your voter registration will automatically update with the information provided on the application. In order to renew a license online, an individual must have had an eye examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist within the last year. In order to be eligible to [renew online](#), the following criteria must be met:

- U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or undocumented resident;
- 21 years or older;
- current adult license is valid or expired for less than one year;
- last license was issued in an office or was not renewed online the last two times;
- name on current driver license has not changed;
- the photograph on your license is not older than 10 years;
- social security number is on file with the Department of Revenue;
- no tests are required to renew the license;
- no pending actions on driving record;
- all outstanding tickets are paid; and
- no bad checks on file.

Office renewal. Drivers can schedule an appointment online to renew their driver license at an office. U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and individuals with lawful status in the U.S. may want to contact a driver license office during normal hours before visiting to see if visits without an appointment are allowed. When going to an office to renew a driver license, the following are required:

- a valid (or expired less than one year) Colorado driver license, instruction permit or identification card;
- social security number;
- proof of current Colorado address; and
- applicable fee.

Customers with an expired driver license must bring proof of lawful presence in the U.S. If an individual's driver license has been expired for more than one year, he or she will be required to pass a written exam, purchase an instruction permit, and successfully pass the drive skills test before purchasing a new license.

Drivers over 80. Drivers over the age of 80 may renew their driver license online with a signed statement from an optometrist or ophthalmologist, attesting that the driver has had an eye exam within the preceding 6 months and include the results of the exam. First-time applicants must visit an office.

Commercial Driver Licenses

Persons must be at least 18 years of age and hold a driver license to apply for a commercial driver instruction permit or commercial driver license (CDL). To apply for the instruction permit, applicants must provide a social security number, proof of physical address in Colorado, and proof of identity. Applicants must also pass a medical examination and show a current DOT medical card, the CDL Information System and National Driver Register records checks, the required CDL knowledge tests, and Entry Level Driver Training from an approved school. Commercial driver instruction permits are valid for 180 days and may be renewed once for an additional 180 days.

Persons may also test to receive CDL endorsements to operate double or triple trailers, passenger vehicles, tanker vehicles, vehicles hauling hazardous materials, school buses, or hazardous materials/tanker combination vehicles. Persons holding a CDL instruction permit may only operate the class of vehicle shown on the permit when accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years of age and who holds a valid CDL of the same class of license or higher, with the required endorsements for the vehicle being operated. Further information on CDLs can be found on the DMV's website, along with the CDL manual.

The table below summarizes the types of Commercial Driver Licenses.

Types of Commercial Driver Licenses

<p>Class A Combination Vehicles</p>	<p>Any motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight or combination vehicle weight rating equal to or greater than 26,001 pounds. Most Class A vehicles are trucks such as tractor-trailer or truck and trailer combinations. Skills for operating a Class A vehicle include those required for operating a Class B or Class C vehicle. Therefore, a driver holding a Class A license may also operate a Class B or Class C vehicle.</p>
<p>Class B Heavy Straight Vehicles</p>	<p>Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a GVWR not greater than 10,000 pounds. Class B vehicles include straight trucks and large buses. Skills for operating a Class B vehicle include those required for operating a Class C vehicle. Therefore, a driver holding a Class B license may also operate a Class C vehicle.</p>
<p>Class C Small Vehicles</p>	<p>Any single vehicle, or combination of vehicles, that does not meet the definition of Class A or Class B, but is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver. Class C vehicles also include any vehicle used to transport hazardous materials as defined by the federal hazardous material regulation.</p>

Source: Section 42-2-401, et seq., C.R.S.

Disability Identifier on License or ID

House Bill 21-1014, the Disability Symbol Identification Document Act, allows Coloradans who might not be able to effectively communicate with first responders due to a cognitive, neurological, mental health, sensory needs, chronic illness, chronic pain and/or physical disability to add a disability symbol identifier to their driver license or identification card.. A person may remove the symbol at any time after the addition. The Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) began allowing those eligible to add the disability symbol identifier to their driver license or identification on July 1, 2022.

Interested Coloradans must bring an [Application for Disability Identifier Symbol](#), completed by a health care provider, to a [state driver license office \(appointment needed\)](#). The "i" symbol from the Invisible Disabilities Association is the symbol that will be printed on the driver license or ID card.

The symbol is placed on the front of a driver license or identification card to the lower right of the photograph. See samples of the identifier on the divisions [website](#) under the frequently asked questions, number five.

Motorcycle Endorsement

See the [Motorcycles](#) section for more information on licensing requirements for motorcyclists.

Noncitizen Driver Licenses (SB 13-251)

The Colorado Road and Community Safety Act, Senate Bill 13-251, allows the state to issue a driver license, minor's instruction permit, or identification card to a noncitizen resident of Colorado who cannot provide proof of lawful presence in the United States. There are currently eight DMV offices that issue identity documents to individuals who cannot demonstrate lawful presence: Alamosa; Aurora; Centennial; Colorado Springs; Denver Northeast; Durango; Ft. Morgan; Glenwood Springs; Golden; Grand Junction; Greeley, Lakewood Westgate; Lamar; Montrose; Northglenn; Parker; Pueblo; and Sterling. .

Individuals seeking to obtain SB 13-251 documents are currently required to meet several documentation requirements, which include:

- an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) issued by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a letter from the IRS, a certified state tax return, or a social security number;
- proof of Colorado income tax return filing for the immediately preceding year or documents demonstrating current, one-year prior, and two-year prior residency, including: first class mail (with dated postmark), credit card statement, insurance policy, typed rent receipt, phone bill, bank statement, pay stub, utility bill with service address, mortgage statement or lease agreement, and/or vehicle registration or title; an. one of the following from the applicant's country of origin: a passport, a consular identification card, or a military identification document.

Online renewals. Undocumented residents may renew a license online. Temporary legal residents must visit a driver license office to renew a license.

Real ID Act

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act authorizes the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to establish national standards for state-issued driver licenses and identification cards. The act requires:

- individuals to present verifiable forms of identification in order to apply for a driver license or identification card;
- state motor vehicle departments to verify and retain a copy of each identification document used to obtain a driver license or identification card; and
- that states include nine specific types of information on driver licenses and identification cards.

The act also prohibits certain individuals from obtaining a permanent driver license or identification card, requires that states participate in a national motor vehicle shared database, and prohibits individuals without a valid driver license or identification card from accessing specified federal services.

In accordance with the REAL ID Act, the Colorado DMV must verify an applicant's full legal name, identity, date of birth, and lawful presence in the United States when issuing a Colorado driver license or state identification card. [Click here to view the DMV identification requirements.](#)

All applicants who do not hold a valid Colorado driver license, identification card, or instruction permit are required to provide their Social Security number (SSN) either verbally or by

presenting a document that shows your social security number, such as a:

- Social Security Account Number card (not laminated);
- W-2 form; or
- SSA-1099 form.

The DMV must also verify an applicant's SSN with the Social Security Administration (SSA). In order for the SSA's on-line verification system (SSOLV) to positively identify the applicant's SSN, the applicant's name on file with the SSA must appear identical to the full legal name of the applicant. This means that the SSA must have the full first, full middle, and current last name of the applicant on file. If the SSA has a middle initial on file, the applicant will not be approved for a Colorado driver license or identification card and will need to update his or her information with the SSA to include the full middle name before a license or identification card can be issued. [Click here for more information on updating a name with the SSA.](#)

Exceptions Processing

In order to be issued a Colorado driver license, instruction permit, or identification card, an applicant must prove his or her full legal name, identity, age, and lawful presence in the United States. The DMV has a [list of official documents](#) that an applicant may use to prove these four criteria. If an applicant does not provide the required documentation to prove name, identity, age, and lawful presence, he or she will be given a notice of incomplete application. The applicant can then return to the DMV with the required documentation, or, if the required documentation is not available, he or she can request to go through exceptions processing. Exceptions processing allows a person to prove the four criteria with additional or alternative documents.

To apply for exceptions processing, an individual must complete an [application](#) and visit [one of three regional driver license offices](#) (in Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, and Grand Junction), along with his or her additional documentation and the notice of incomplete application. These applications are processed the same day.

If a person cannot get to one of the three regional offices in order to have his or her application processed, he or she can submit an application for remote exceptions processing at any driver license office in the state. Such applications are forwarded to the regional centers for processing. It can take up to two to three weeks for an application to be processed remotely.



Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Ability Impaired

The two primary alcohol- and drug-related driving offenses in Colorado are driving while under the influence (DUI) or driving while ability impaired (DWAI). Except in certain circumstances, both of these offenses are misdemeanors. In 2015, Colorado enacted House Bill 15-1043 which establishes a felony offense for the fourth and subsequent offense of DUI, DUI per se, DWAI, or other serious vehicular crimes involving drugs and alcohol. For more information, please reference the Department of Revenue's website on [Alcohol DUI](#), or the Department of Transportation's website on [Alcohol and Impaired Driving](#).

To report a DUI Driver, dial *277 (*CSP). For more information on this program, visit the Colorado State Patrol's website.



Electric Bicycles and Electric Scooters

Electric bicycle and electric scooter riders are exempt from motor vehicle registration and license requirements. All electric bicycles in Colorado are required to conform to one of three classifications shown in the table below, and have a label showing the bicycle's classification, top assisted speed, and motor wattage. Any modification to an electric bicycle that changes the speed capability or motor wattage requires an updated label.

Classification of Electric Bicycles

Class 1	An electric bicycle that only provides assistance when the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 20 miles per hour (mph).
Class 2	An electric bicycle that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 20 mph.
Class 3	An electric bicycle that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 28 mph. Class 3 electric bicycles must have a speedometer.

Source. Section 42-1-102 (28.5), C.R.S.

Electric scooters. An electric scooter is defined as a device:

- weighing less than 100 pounds;
- with handlebars;
- that is powered by an electric motor; and
- that has a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by the electric motor.

Local laws pertaining to electric scooters must be no more restrictive than those pertaining to class 1 electric bicycles.

Permissible routes for electric bicycles and scooters. Unless otherwise restricted, Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles, and scooters are allowed on the same bicycle and pedestrian paths as conventional bicycles. Class 3 electric bicycles may not be on a bicycle or pedestrian path unless the path is within a street or highway or permitted by the local jurisdiction. Local jurisdictions have the authority to prohibit the operation of electric bicycles and scooters on any bicycle or pedestrian path under its jurisdiction.

Age restrictions and helmet laws. No one under the age of 16 may ride a Class 3 electric bicycle, except as a passenger. Anyone on a Class 3 electric bicycle who is under the age of 18 must wear a helmet.

Penalties. Anyone who violates regulations pertaining to the manufacturing standards and classification of electric bikes and scooters is subject to a class B traffic infraction, with a fine of \$15 and a surcharge of \$6.

For information on e-bike rebates, visit the Colorado Energy Office [Community Access to Electric Bicycles Rebate Program](#) webpage or seek resources from the city or town where you live.



Emissions

Emissions testing of gas- and diesel-powered vehicles is required when registering or selling vehicles in Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties, and in portions of Adams, Arapahoe, Larimer, and Weld counties, as shown in the [Air Care Colorado program area maps](#). Parts of El Paso County also require diesel vehicles to obtain emissions testing prior to sale. Emissions tests for 1982 or newer motor vehicles are valid for 24 months, and tests for 1981 or older motor vehicles are valid for 12 months.

Required emissions testing. The table below highlights the vehicles requiring testing in Colorado emissions areas.

Does My Vehicle Need an Emission Test?

Vehicle Type	Emission Test Needed?	Notes
New car (gasoline)	No	Vehicles purchased from a dealer are exempt from testing for the first seven model years.
1982-and-newer gasoline vehicles over seven model years old	Yes	Every two years.
1981-and-older gasoline vehicles	Yes	Every year.
Selling car/Change of ownership	Yes	Responsibility of seller; if a vehicle is purchased with 12 or more months left on original seven-year exemption, no test is required at the time of sale.
Commuters (vehicles registered outside emissions area but driven into area 90 or more days per year for work or school)	Yes	Vehicle model year rules apply. Must inform county when no longer commuting.
Hybrids	Yes	Every two years for model year 2010 or older.
Collector vehicle model year 1975-and-older	No	Must be registered as a "collector's item."
Collector vehicle model years 1976 to 1985	Varies	If vehicle was registered as a collector's item prior to Sept. 1, 2009, and the registration has never lapsed or expired, no test is needed.
Alternative fuel vehicles	Varies	Vehicles that run on the following fuel types require emissions testing: ethanol, natural gas, propane, methanol, bio-diesel, propane/gas, methanol/gas, natural gas/diesel, natural gas/gas, and ethanol gas.
All electric vehicles (with no gas tank or tail pipe emission)	No	However, if the vehicle is a hybrid, an emissions test is required (see Hybrids).
Light-duty diesel vehicles 2007 and older	Yes	Every year.
Light-duty diesel vehicles 2008 and newer	Yes	Every two years.
New light-duty diesel vehicles	No	New vehicles are exempt from testing for the first four years.

Source: Section 42-4-301, et seq., C.R.S.

Exemptions. As noted above, there are several exemptions to emissions requirements. New vehicles are exempt from emissions testing requirements for the first seven model years. In addition, when a newer vehicle is sold with 12 months or more left on the original seven-year emissions inspection exemption, the vehicle does not require testing at the time of sale. Vehicles that are all-electric are exempt from emissions testing. New diesel vehicles are exempt for the first four model years. Heavy-duty diesels (26,000 GVWR or more) model year 2015 and newer are exempt from testing for the first six model years.

Waivers. The state Division of Motor Vehicles can issue repair or economic hardship waivers for the emissions test requirement under specific circumstances:

- **repair waivers:** 1968 or newer vehicles with \$715 in emissions-related repairs and 1967 or older vehicles with \$75 in emissions-related repairs; and
- **economic hardship waivers:** if a vehicle has failed at least one emissions test, no repairs are necessary, and the owner is receiving need-based financial assistance.

RapidScreen. RapidScreen is the mobile emissions testing program in Colorado. Instead of testing a vehicle at an emission testing location, owners drive by a mobile testing unit. Vehicles must drive by a testing unit and receive two clean readings at least 60 days prior to a vehicle's registration renewal month. If the vehicle passed inspection, owners will receive notification on their next renewal registration statement. Motor vehicle owners simply pay the emission testing fee during their registration renewal. RapidScreen unit locations can be found [here](#).

Smoking vehicle. Report excessive smoking vehicles to the Smoking Vehicle Hotline at 303-692-3211.

For more about emission testing in Colorado, visit:

- [Air Care Colorado](#);
- [Colorado Department of Revenue](#); or
- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#).



Fraud

Driver record. The Colorado Division of Motor Vehicle's Investigations Unit works to investigate and prevent fraud concerning the use of driver licenses, identification cards, motor vehicle titles and registrations, and other documents issued by the division. If you have reason to believe that your motor vehicle record has been impacted by fraud, contact the Investigations Unit at 303-205-8383 or dor_investigationsunit@state.co.us.

Website. The official website of the Colorado DMV will always contain www.colorado.gov in the URL. If this is not in the link, the website is not associated with the Colorado DMV.



High Occupancy Vehicle/Toll Express Lanes

CDOT, the Colorado Investment Transportation Office, and its partners manage several high-occupancy vehicle and/or toll (HOV/HOT) lanes in the Denver metropolitan area and on I-70 in the mountains. These [Express Lanes](#) permit only vehicles carrying a specified number of persons (HOV) or that pay a toll (HOT).

Any traveler may use Express Lanes:

- for free with a motorcycle or if they have at least three passengers in the vehicle;
- by riding priority buses or bus rapid transit; or
- by paying the toll as a solo driver.

While the Express Lanes have the capability to charge license plate tolls at a higher rate, regular users of these lanes can register an ExpressToll account and install a switchable transponder in their vehicle – which has the ability to be switched into HOV mode when enough occupants are present – or a sticker on their motorcycle. Free transponders are currently available for HOV-only travelers who travel in the I-25 and US 36 Express Lanes. Please visit CDOT's [website](#) for further information on transponder fees.

The table below provides an overview of the HOV/HOT lanes currently operational or planned for the state highway system. Visit CDOT's [website](#) for a [map of the Express Lane corridors](#).

Express Lanes and Toll Roads in Colorado

Corridor	Express Lanes	
	Location	Year Opened/Opening
I-25 Corridor		
. I-25 Central	20th Street to I-25/US 36	2006
. I-25 Central	Central I-70	2022
. I-25 North	I-25/US 36 to 120 th Avenue	2016
. I-25 North	120 th Avenue to Northwest Parkway/E-470	2019
. I-25 North	Johnstown to Fort Collins	TBD
. I-25 South	Castle Rock to Monument	2022
US 36	I-25/US 36 to Table Mesa Drive	2015
I-70 Mountain	Empire to Veterans Memorial Tunnels	2015
C-470	I-25 to Wadsworth Boulevard	2020
I-70 Central	I-25 to Chambers Road	2022
Toll Roads		
Public Highway Authority	Participating Local Governments	
E-470	Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties; the cities of Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City, and Thornton; and the town of Parker	
Northwest Parkway	Weld County, Broomfield City and County, and the City of Lafayette	

Sources. Colorado Department of Transportation, E-470, and Northwest Parkway.

Mountain Express Lane. Additionally, the I-70 Mountain Express Lane is a 13-mile HOT lane on eastbound I-70. This lane is open for up to 100 days per year when the highway experiences high traffic congestion.

E-470. E-470 is primarily a 75 mile-per-hour (mph), four-lane toll highway that runs about 47 miles along the eastern perimeter of the Denver metropolitan area, connecting I-25 North to I-25 South. E-470 was formed in 1985, opened its first segment in 1991, and was completed in 2003. Toll rates for two-axle vehicles start at \$2.60 and vary depending on distance traveled, time of day, and use of ExpressToll or License Plate Tolling. Commercial vehicles with more than two axles incur additional charges.

HOV3. Express Lanes require at least three passengers (HOV3) to be eligible for HOV travel. Visit [CDOT's website for more information on HOV3](#). Any person who uses a HOV lane outside of current procedures commits a class A traffic infraction.



License Plates

Standard License Plates

At registration, the owner of a motor vehicle receives two license plates (one license plate for motorcycles) and two validating tabs. The validating tabs indicate the month and year of expiration and are affixed to the lower left (month) and right (year) corners of the rear license plate. License plates must be renewed within one month of their date of expiration (see the [Vehicle Registration and Titling subsection](#) for more information). Motor vehicle owners must notify their county motor vehicle office of changes in their name or address within one month of the change.

Group Special License Plates

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offers over 125 license plates types, including: military, alumni, and group license plates. Click the following link for more information on the license plate types available: [Special License Plates](#).

Collector's Vehicles

Motor vehicles that are collectors' items are registered for periods of five years. The taxes and fees imposed for each five-year period of registration are equal to five times the annual taxes and fees that would otherwise be imposed for the [registration of a motor vehicle](#). Visit the DMV's website for more information about [other vehicle license plate types](#).

Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Revenue issues identifying license plates and placards to qualified persons with disabilities to park in reserved parking spaces. To apply for an identifying license plate or placard, a [DR 2219 Persons with Disabilities Parking Privileges Application](#) must be completed and submitted to the County Motor Vehicle Office.

To be considered "disabled" and eligible for an identifying license or placard, an applicant must meet one of the following criteria as outlined in the DR 2219:

- **Mobility.** Persons who cannot walk two-hundred feet without stopping to rest;
- **Assisted Mobility.** Persons who cannot walk without the use of, or assistance from, a brace, cane, crutch, another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair, or other assistive device;
- **Respiratory.** Persons who are restricted by lung disease to such an extent that the person's forced (respiratory) expiratory volume for one second when measured by spirometry is less than one liter, or the arterial oxygen tension is less than sixty mm/hg on room air or at rest;
- **Oxygen.** Persons who use portable oxygen;

- **Cardiac.** Persons who have a cardiac condition to the extent that the person's functional limitations are classified in severity as class III or IV according to the standards of the American Heart Association; and
- **Other.** Persons who are severely limited in their ability to walk due to an arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition.

The table below outlines penalties for offenses related to disabled parking privileges:

Offenses Related to Disabled Parking Privileges

Offense	Classification and Penalty under Current Law
Attempting to obtain a disabled parking plate or placard while revoked	Class A traffic infraction, punishable by a \$32 surcharge and fines of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$350 to \$1,000 for first offense; • \$600 to \$1,000 for second offense; • \$1,000 to \$5,000 and up to 10 hours of community service for third and subsequent offenses.
Parking in reserved parking without a disabled parking plate or placard	Class A traffic infraction, punishable by \$32 surcharge and fines of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$350 to \$1,000 for first offense; • \$600 to \$1,000 for second offense; • becomes misdemeanor and fined \$1,000 to \$5,000 and up to 10 hours of community service for third and subsequent offenses.
Blocking reasonable access	Class A traffic infraction, punishable by \$32 surcharge and fines of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$350 to \$1,000 for first offense; • \$600 to \$1,000 for second offense; • becomes misdemeanor and fined \$1,000 to \$5,000 and up to 10 hours of community service for third and subsequent offenses.
Fraud and trafficking of disabled parking plates or placards	Class A traffic infraction

Source: Sections 42-3-204 and 42-4-1208, C.R.S.

Remuneration exempt parking. Under current law, a person is exempt from paying at a meter if his or her vehicle bears a disability placard or license plate, and the method of payment is not reasonably accessible to a person with the disability. The Department of Revenue issues remuneration exempt placards. Only individuals with the remuneration exempt placard will be exempt from paying at meters. To qualify for this placard, individuals must have a qualifying disability that limits their:

- fine motor control in both hands;
- ability to reach a height of 42 inches from the ground; or
- ability to reach or access a parking meter due to the use of wheelchair or other device.



Low-Power Scooters

A "low-power scooter" is a self-propelled vehicle with no more than three wheels in contact with the ground, no manual clutch, and either a cylinder capacity under 50 cubic centimeters if powered by internal combustion, or a wattage under 4,476 watts if electric-powered.

In Colorado, an operator of a low-power scooter is required to have a valid driver license. **Registration** for a low-power scooter is evidenced by a numbered decal on the frame, with registration lasting for three years. In order to register a low-power scooter, the owner must have a motor vehicle insurance policy or a certificate of self-insurance. Low-power scooters may not drive on the interstate system (except where bicycles are allowed) or on any limited-access road of the state highway system. Persons under the age of 18 may not operate or ride on a low-power scooter without a protective helmet. Unless wearing a helmet with eye protection, all persons must wear eye protection when operating a low-power scooter on public highways. Local authorities may regulate low-power scooter operation under their jurisdiction.



Low-Speed Electric Vehicles

A low-speed electric vehicle (LSEV) is a vehicle that:

- is self-propelled utilizing electricity as its primary propulsion method;
- has at least three wheels in contact with the ground;
- does not use handlebars to steer; and
- displays a VIN pursuant to state law

LSEVs can only operate on a roadway that has a speed limit of 35 mph or less, but they may cross a roadway with a speed limit of greater than 35 mph at an at-grade crossing. LSEVs are not allowed on limited-access highways.

LSEVs can operate on or cross a state highway with a speed limit of 40 mph if:

- the roadway's lane width is eleven feet or greater;
- the roadway has two or more lanes in either direction; and
- the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) determines, in consultation with local government and law enforcement, upon the basis of a traffic investigation, or survey, that the operation of LSEVs on the roadway poses no substantial safety risk or hazard to motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, or other persons.

LSEVs are titled and registered as tax class C vehicles, and registration fees for LSEVs are the same as other passenger vehicles of the same size and weight.

Class B low-speed electric vehicles. Class B LSEVs are motor vehicles with speed capabilities of 25 to 45 mph, and are only permitted to be on roads with 45 mph. They may cross a roadway that has a speed limit above 45 miles per hour in an at-grade crossing.

The state Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will not register or issue a title for class B LSEV until the U.S. Department of Transportation adopts motor vehicle safety standards for LSEVs that authorize operation at greater than 25 mph and less than 45 mph.

For more information on LSEVs, visit the [DMV's LSEV webpage](#).



Motorcycles

A motorcycle is a motor vehicle that uses handlebars or any other device connected to the front wheel to steer, a seat the rider sits astride, and is designed to travel on no more than three wheels; except that the term does not include farm tractors, low-power scooters, or low-speed electric vehicles.

In Colorado, motorcycle operators must obtain a [motorcycle endorsement](#) on their driver license, marked by either the letter "M" or a "3". An "M" endorsement permits the operator to drive either a two-wheeled or three-wheeled vehicle. The "3" endorsement permits the operator to drive only three-wheeled vehicles. There are two ways to obtain a motorcycle endorsement. The first method requires an operator to pass a written exam, purchase a motorcycle instruction permit, and pass a driving test. If the operator seeks the "M" endorsement, the driving test must be taken on a two-wheeled vehicle. If the operator seeks the "3" endorsement, then the driving test is taken on a three-wheeled vehicle. The second method requires an operator to complete a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course and present their original Motorcycle Safety Foundation Card in a driver license office.

Motorcycles must meet [motor vehicle registration and insurance requirements](#), but are exempt from emissions testing requirements. Persons under the age of 18 may not operate or ride on a motorcycle or scooter without a [protective helmet](#). Unless wearing a helmet with eye protection, all persons must wear eye protection when operating on public highways in the state. In Colorado, motorcycles may not pass a vehicle in the same lane as the vehicle being overtaken, nor can a motorcycle operate between lanes of traffic or rows of vehicles. Motorcycle drivers may not operate more than two abreast in a single lane.

Currently, the Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS) offers a Motorcycle Operator Safety Training (MOST) program, which is funded by a \$2 surcharge for a motorcycle endorsement on a driver license and a \$4 surcharge on the registration of a motorcycle. For information about the training program, visit [CDPS' MOST page](#).

A motorcycle may drive through a malfunctioning traffic signal. A malfunctioning traffic signal is defined as one that does not recognize a motorcycle, is out of order, or stays steady red or yellow through several cycles.

Autocycles. An autocycle is a three-wheeled motor vehicle. Drivers and passengers ride in a fully or partly enclosed seating area that is equipped with safety belts for all occupants. An autocycle is not a motorcycle. A driver does not need a motorcycle endorsement on his or her driver license to operate an autocycle, but must possess a driver license. Additionally, autocycles are no longer subject to a \$2 license fee and \$4 registration fee for motorcycle operator safety training, but will otherwise continue to pay the same taxes and fees for licensing, titling and registration, and will continue to use motorcycle license plates.



Motor Vehicle and Powersports Industries Laws & Regulations

For information about the laws and regulations governing the motor vehicle and powersports industry, as well as recent legislation affecting motor vehicle law in general, visit [DORA's Auto Industry Division webpage](#).



Off-Highway Vehicles

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) include motorcycles, dirt bikes, three-wheelers, ATVs, surplus military vehicles, and dune buggies that are operated on public lands and trails in Colorado. OHVs must be registered with [Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#). All OHVs owned and operated in Colorado must display current registration stickers when in an OHV staging area or operated on designated trails or routes. OHVs from out of state must also display a current Colorado OHV use permit sticker. The annual registration fee is \$25.25, and registrations are valid from April 1 to March 31 every year.

Local enforcement. Under current law, local governments may enact an ordinance or resolution requiring OHV operations to:

- have a driver license;
- carry liability insurance;
- use seatbelts;
- use child restraint systems;
- use eye protection;
- use a helmet (for riders 18 and younger); or
- limit the number of occupants in an OHV.

Ordinances will vary by county. For example, on the Alpine Loop Trail in southwest Colorado, which cuts through Hinsdale, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties, all OHV operators are required to possess a valid driver license and carry liability insurance.



Passenger and Curfew Laws for Minor Drivers

Unless a minor driver's parent or legal guardian is present, state law prohibits any driver under age 18 from driving with:

- any passenger under age 21 who is not a member of the driver's immediate family until having held a driver license for at least six months; and
- two or more passengers under age 21 who are not members of the driver's immediate family until having held a driver license for at least one year.

In addition, occupants of vehicles driven by persons under the age of 18 must wear a seatbelt or be properly restrained.

The law allows exceptions to the passenger restrictions when:

- the minor's parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult who has legally signed an affidavit of liability is in the vehicle;
- an adult who has held a valid driver license for at least one year is in the vehicle;
- a passenger who is under the age of 21 is in the vehicle due to a medical emergency; or
- a passenger who is under the age of 21 is an immediate family member and wearing a seatbelt.

Minor drivers who have not held a driver license for at least one year are also prohibited from driving between the hours of 12:00 and 5:00 a.m. Exceptions are provided if:

- the driver's parent or legal guardian is present in the vehicle;
- the vehicle contains a person over age 21 who has held a valid driver license for at least one year;
- or the minor is driving on account of medical emergency, to school or a school-related activity, or to his or her place of employment.

A person in violation of the requirements commits a traffic infraction punishable by:

- 8 to 24 hours of community service;
- a fine of up to \$50; and
- an assessment of two license suspension points.

A second or subsequent violation results in:

- 16 to 40 hours of community service;
- a fine of up to \$150; and
- an assessment of two license suspension points.

Visit the [Division of Motor Vehicles](#) for additional information about minor drivers.



Ports of Entry

The State of Colorado created its first port of entry in 1927, primarily for tax collection purposes. Since that time, the role of the ports of entry has expanded to include enforcement of truck size and weight restrictions, safety inspections, collection of fees and fines, and checks of required permits, vehicle registrations, operator licenses, and directing traffic when necessary. The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) operates ten fixed ports in the state. Cortez, Dumont, Fort Collins, Fort Morgan, Lamar, Limon, Loma, Monument, Platteville, and Trinidad. The fixed ports are strategically located in positions throughout the state that receive high volumes of truck traffic.

The following vehicles are required to clear a port of entry:

- all commercial vehicles in excess of 16,000 pounds empty weight;
- all commercial vehicles in excess of 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating;
- all vehicles displaying apportioned or gross vehicle weight license plates; and
- any vehicle carrying an amount of hazardous materials requiring a placard.

Further information on ports of entry, permits, fees, and related topics can be found on the CSP's website.



Regulation of Vehicles and Traffic

Colorado Driver Handbook

The Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles and the Colorado State Patrol maintain the [Colorado Driver Handbook](#), which provides extensive information on the following topics:

- driver licenses;
- understanding Colorado motor vehicle laws;
- safe driving tips;
- emergencies;
- pedestrians and bicycles;
- organ donation; and
- service centers.

Traffic Rules and Guidelines

Several Colorado municipalities have adopted a set of traffic rules known as the [Model Traffic Code for Colorado Municipalities](#), last updated in 2020, to promote a unified state policy on rules of the road. Additional traffic manuals and guidelines are available on [CDOT's Traffic Manuals and Guidelines](#) webpage.



Road Conditions

The Colorado Department of Transportation maintains cotrip.org, which provides drivers with a variety of trip planning tools:

- travel alerts;
- route information;
- road conditions;
- speeds;
- road work;
- snowplows; and
- chain laws in effect.

Most of these tools are available through an interactive map that features live video and recent snapshots of the state highway system.



Safety

Seat Belt Law

Colorado law requires the driver and every front seat passenger of a motor vehicle and the driver and every passenger in an autocycle equipped with a safety belt system to wear a seat belt whenever the vehicle is in operation on a street or highway. In addition, Colorado's child restraint law requires that children 15 years old and younger riding in a vehicle be properly secured regardless of seating position (see below). This requirement does not apply to individuals with a diagnosed physical or psychologically disabling condition preventing the use of a seat belt, or if federal law does not mandate that the vehicle be equipped with seat belts. Violating the seat belt law is a secondary offense, meaning that drivers may not be cited for failure to wear a seat belt unless stopped by a law enforcement officer for an alleged violation of another law. A driver in violation of the seat belt law commits a Class B traffic infraction and is subject to a \$65 fine and a \$6 surcharge.

Child Restraint Requirements

Colorado law requires that children up to 15 years old riding in a motor vehicle be properly secured. Children under 8 years old must be restrained in the appropriate child restraint system. Older children must use a seat belt or a child restraint system. A child restraint system is defined as a seating system that meets federal motor vehicle standards which is permanently attached to a motor vehicle or its safety belt system and is designed to protect, hold, or restrain a child so as to prevent or minimize injury.

The table below presents child restraint requirements by age and size of a child.

Colorado Child Restraint Requirements

Child Age/Size	Statutory Requirement
Less than 1 year and weighing less than 20 pounds	Properly secured in a rear-facing child restraint system in a rear seat of the vehicle
1 year to 4 years, and weighing 20 to 40 pounds	Properly secured in a rear-facing or forward-facing child restraint system
Children up to 8 years	Properly secured in a child restraint system, such as a booster seat, according to the manufacturer's instructions
8 to 15 years	Properly restrained in a safety belt or child restraint system according to manufacturer's instructions

Source: Sections 42-4-236 and 42-4-237, C.R.S.

Child restraint requirements do not apply to a child who:

- is less than 8 years of age and is being transported in a motor vehicle as the result of a medical or other life-threatening emergency and a child restraint system is not available;
- is being transported in a commercial motor vehicle that is operated by a child care center; or
- is being transported in a motor vehicle operated by, or on behalf of, a common carrier, contract carrier, or luxury limousine service.

Violating Colorado's child restraint law is a primary enforcement action. This means a driver does not have to be stopped for another driving offense before he or she can be ticketed for not properly securing a child in the vehicle. A driver in violation of this law commits a Class B traffic infraction and is subject to a \$65 fine and a \$6 surcharge.

Seat Belt Requirements for Minor Drivers

Drivers under the age of 18 years whose occupants in motor vehicles are not properly restrained or wearing a seat belt commit a Class A traffic infraction. The table below summarizes the penalties for violations of the minor driver seat belt laws.

Penalties for Violation of Minor Driver Seat Belt Laws

Violation	Fine	Hours of Community Service	License Suspension Points
1 st offense	up to \$65	8 to 24	2
2 nd offense	up to \$130	16 to 40	2
Subsequent Offense	\$195	16 to 40	2

Source: Section 42-2-105.5, C.R.S.



Helmets

Any motorcycle, auticycle, or low-power scooter operator or passenger under age 18 is required to wear a helmet while in motion. A person under age 18 driving or riding in an auticycle does not need to wear a helmet if the auticycle has only three wheels, a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour or less, a windshield, and seatbelts. A person in violation of the requirements commits a class A traffic infraction.

Online Accident Report

The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) offers the [Colorado Online Accident Report](#) application. For questions about your accident, contact the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the location of your accident.

Traffic Safety Statistics

The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) evaluates the safety of state roads by monitoring the fatality rates. The statistics and the CSP's strategic plan are available on the [CSP's Community Outreach](#) page.



Specific Ownership Tax

The specific ownership tax was enacted in 1937 and is contained in Article X, Section 6, of the Colorado Constitution. The tax is based on the value of the vehicle and is paid each year that a vehicle is registered in Colorado. It is imposed on cars, trucks, trailers, mobile homes, and special mobile machinery. Further information on the specific ownership tax is available in [Legislative Council Staff's Issue Brief on the Specific Ownership Tax](#).



Speed Limits

State Speed Limits

Colorado law establishes speed limits for roads and highways within the state. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and local authorities may change the speed limit for any road under their respective jurisdictions if the department or local authority determines that the speed limit established by law is greater or less than what is reasonable or safe for road or traffic conditions. Neither CDOT nor any local authority, however, may increase the speed limit above 75 miles per hour (mph) on any highway. The table below provides speed limits on Colorado roadways.

State Speed Limits

Type of Road or Highway	Speed Limit
Narrow, winding mountain highways, or blind curves	20 mph
Any business district	25 mph
Any residential district	30 mph
Open mountain highways	40 mph
Open highways that are not a part of the interstate system and are not four-lane freeways or expressways	55 mph
Surfaced, four-lane highways that are a part of the interstate system or expressways	65 mph

Source: Section 42-4-1101, C.R.S.

If hazardous conditions exist on a roadway, Colorado drivers must slow to a reasonable and prudent speed, although this may require driving at a speed below the posted limit. Colorado law also grants cities and towns in the state authority to adopt maximum speed limits for their jurisdictions. CDOT and local authorities may also set minimum speeds. Colorado law prohibits motor vehicle operators from driving at such a slow speed that they impede the normal and reasonable forward movement of traffic, unless their slow speed is necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle. In these situations, the driver must drive in the right-hand lane if there is one available on the roadway, or pull off the roadway when possible to allow any impeded traffic to pass.

In addition, Colorado law prohibits driving on a 6 percent uphill grade of I-70 at a speed that is less than 10 miles per hour below the speed limit or less than the minimum speed set by CDOT, except if necessary to:

- obey traffic control devices;
- enter or exit I-70;
- compensate for weather or traffic conditions; or
- navigate a lane closure or blockage.

Also, current Colorado law states that a driver must mov. one lane over or, if moving over is not

possible, reduce and maintain a safe speed when overtaking an emergency, tow, public utility vehicle, or any other stationary vehicle giving a hazard signal. Safe speed, if conditions allow, is defined as:

- 25 miles per hour (mph) if the speed limit is less than 45 mph; or
- 20 mph less than the speed limit if the speed limit is 45 mph or higher.

CDOT is required to post signs notifying drivers of the restriction.

Penalties for Speeding Violations

Under Colorado law, a violation of driving 1 to 24 mph over the posted speed limit is a Class A traffic infraction. A violation of driving 25 mph or more over the posted limit is a Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense. A violation of driving 25 mph or more over the posted limit in a construction zone is a Class 1 misdemeanor traffic offense. Failure of a driver to reduce vehicle speed to a reasonable and prudent level under hazardous conditions is a Class A traffic infraction.

Traffic infractions in Colorado are separated into two categories: Class A traffic infractions and Class B traffic infractions. Generally, the penalty range for the commission of Class A or Class B traffic infractions is a fine of \$15 to \$100, although higher penalties are specified for certain infractions.

Misdemeanor traffic offenses in Colorado are separated into Class 1 misdemeanor traffic offenses and Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offenses. Persons convicted of a Class 1 misdemeanor traffic offense are subject to a minimum sentence of 10 days in jail or a \$300 fine, or both, and a maximum sentence of one year in jail or a \$1,000 fine, or both. Persons convicted of a Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense are subject to a minimum sentence of 10 days in jail or a \$150 fine, or both, and a maximum sentence of 90 days in jail or a \$300 fine, or both. Persons convicted of Class 1 or Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offenses must also pay restitution and may be sentenced to community service.

In addition to fines, surcharges are assessed for traffic infractions. Revenues generated by these surcharges are credited to the Crime Victim Compensation Fund and the Victims and Witness Assistance and Law Enforcement Fund.

Statutory penalties for violations that are traffic infractions and misdemeanor traffic offenses are shown in the table below.

Penalties for Speeding Violations

Violation	Fine	Surcharge	Jail Time
1 to 4 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph (Class A traffic infraction)	\$30	\$6	None
5 to 9 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph (Class A traffic infraction)	\$70	\$10	None
10 to 19 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph (Class A traffic infraction)	\$135	\$16	None
20 to 24 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph (Class A traffic infraction)	\$200	\$32	None
25 or more mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph (a fine, or jail time, or both may be imposed) (Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense)	Minimum \$150 Maximum \$300	Not Applicable	Minimum 10 days Maximum 90 days
25 or more mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph in a construction zone (a fine, or jail time, or both may be imposed) (Class 1 misdemeanor traffic offense)	Minimum \$300 Maximum \$1,000	Not Applicable	Minimum 10 days Maximum 1 year
Driving at a speed that is not reasonable and prudent given road conditions (Class A traffic infraction)	\$100	\$10	None
Driving at such a slow speed that the normal and reasonable forward movement of traffic is impeded (Class A traffic infraction)	\$50	\$6	None
Exceeding a safe speed on a bridge or elevated structure (Class A traffic infraction)	\$30	\$6	None

Source: Section 42-4-1701 (4)(a)(I)(L), C.R.S.

Point Suspension

Colorado law permits the point suspension of licenses of drivers who have been convicted of traffic violations and have exceeded a threshold number of points. Traffic citations received by drivers may result in a certain number of points being recorded against a driver license. Drivers who exceed the threshold within a certain time period are at risk of having their licenses suspended.

State law sets forth a schedule of points that may be assessed for specific traffic violations. The number of points necessary for the point suspension of a license and the periods during which these points may be accumulated vary with the age of the driver. The table below provides point assessments specifically for speeding violations.

Points Assessed against Driver Licenses for Speeding

Speeding Violation	Points Assessed
1 to 4 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph	0
5 to 9 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph	1
10 to 19 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph	4
20 to 39 mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph	6
40 or more mph over the reasonable and prudent speed, or over the maximum lawful speed of 75 mph	12
Driving at a speed that is not reasonable and prudent given road conditions	3

Source: Section 42-2-127 (5)(f), C.R.S.



Speed Photo Radar and Red Light Cameras (Automated Vehicle Identification Systems)

Automated Vehicle Identification Systems (AVIS) include red light cameras and photo speed vans. State law establishes the maximum original penalty for traffic violations detected by these systems. The maximum penalty for a violation captured by a red light camera is \$75. The maximum penalty for a speed violation captured by a photo speed van is \$40. However, the photo speed van maximum is doubled in a school zone and does not apply within a maintenance, construction, or repair zone. If it is an individual's first offense captured by a photo speed van and he or she is detected driving less than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit, the governmental entity is required to issue a warning. Subsequent fees for violations captured by either system may apply due to failure to respond, personal service, and default. In the case of default, the penalty may be sent to a collection agency.

AVIS cannot be used to detect a violation unless a sign is posted to notify the public that such a system is in use. A penalty assessment notice or summons must be delivered within 30 days after the alleged violation if the motor vehicle involved is registered in the state, and 60 days if the motor vehicle involved is registered outside of the state. Governmental entities are not permitted to enforce a penalty by immobilizing a vehicle or reporting it to the Division of Motor Vehicles. No points may be assessed against an individual's driver license for a violation detected through the use of AVIS. There are limits on the use of photo speed van enforcement that do not apply to red light cameras, which limit the use of photo speed van use to school zones, residential neighborhoods, within maintenance, construction, or repair zones, or along a street that borders a municipal park.

Citation issuance. Current law requires that penalty assessment notices or summons and

complaints are issued to the registered owner of a motor vehicle. State and local governments may not require that a registered owner of a vehicle disclose the identity of the driver of vehicle, but registered vehicle owners may be required to submit evidence that the owner was not the driver at the time of the alleged violation. For example, if a husband was driving a car registered to his wife alone, his wife would receive the summons for the traffic violation. The spouse could be required to prove that she was not the person driving the car at the time of the incident, but would not have to provide her husband's identity as the driver.

As of 2022, 12 local governments use AVIS: Aurora, Boulder, Cherry Hills Village, Colorado Springs, Commerce City, Denver, Fort Collins, Greenwood Village, Lone Tree, Northglenn, Pueblo, and Sheridan. The state of Colorado does not currently use AVIS to enforce traffic laws on state highways.

Legislative Council Staff has prepared an [Issue Brief on AVIS](#), which provides more information about these regulations



Transportation Network Companies

Colorado has a limited regulatory structure for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, which sets forth certain requirements for both the driver and the TNC. Legislative Council Staff has prepared an [Issue Brief on Transportation Network Companies](#), which provides more information about these regulations.



Transportation Systems in Colorado

Colorado's transportation system consists of the state highway system, county and municipal roads, mass transit, airports, railroads, and bicycle and pedestrian routes. The system is primarily managed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Cities, counties, transit authorities, regional transportation authorities, public highway authorities, and the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) also manage portions of the system. The Colorado Transportation Commission provides direction to CDOT, a role authorized by the General Assembly in state law. Both state and local governments administer the transportation system using federal, state, and local funding.

For more information on Colorado's transportation system, Legislative Council Staff has prepared an in-depth [Transportation Handbook](#) that covers infrastructure, organization, planning, and funding.



Vehicle Identification Number

A vehicle identification number (VIN) verification is a physical inspection to determine whether the VIN on a vehicle matches the VIN on the title. The verification also entails checking the VIN number on the vehicle against state and national databases of wanted and stolen vehicles. Vehicle owners new to the state of Colorado, or who recently purchased a vehicle with an out-of-state title, must get a VIN verification. VIN verifications are performed by Colorado law enforcement officers, licensed motor vehicle dealers, and licensed emissions testing stations, such as Air Care Colorado.

Certified VIN Inspections

In some cases, a certified VIN inspection is required. The inspection conducted by a Peace Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) certified inspector uses forms provided by the Department of Revenue. The certified inspector checks both the public VIN (on the dashboard or another highly visible area) and discreet VINs (location provided by the vehicle manufacturer to law enforcement). The inspector checks both VINs against state and national databases of wanted and stolen vehicles. The following vehicles require a certified VIN inspection:

- bonded title vehicles;
- rebuilt vehicles;
- reconstructed vehicles; and
- vehicles assembled from a kit (including trailers).

The Colorado State Patrol conducts certified VIN inspections. A list of CSP locations and other agencies offering certified VIN inspections is available on the [CSP website](#).



Vehicle Titling and Registration

In Colorado, motor vehicles are titled and registered through the county clerk's office in the motor vehicle owner's county of residence. The owner may be able to title and register their vehicle at a self-service kiosk, located in specific counties throughout Colorado. Visit the [self-service kiosk](#) section of the DMV website for more information. Title and registration is required in Colorado:

- within 60 days of purchase;
- within 90 days of becoming a Colorado resident;
- within 45 days after returning to the United States from a foreign jurisdiction;
- for an owner of a foreign vehicle operated within the state; and
- for nonresident business owners who own and operate a motor vehicle trailer, a semi-trailer, or a trailer coach.

Vehicle Titling

The following documents are required when titling a vehicle in Colorado.

- proof of insurance (if registering the vehicle at the same time);
- identification;
- the current title or other ownership documents properly endorsed by the previous owner;
- proof of a [Colorado vehicle emissions test](#), if applicable;
- complete odometer disclosure;

- a bill of sale for sales tax purposes;
- if a lien is to be recorded, an acceptable mortgage document or security agreement that contains the vehicle description, including year, make, VIN, lienholder's name and address, lien amount, and owner's signature;
- if the vehicle has never been titled before in Colorado, manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO) and valid registration or title with a weight slip.
- if the vehicle has more than one owner, all owners are required to declare their intent to have the Certificate of Title issued in Joint Tenancy with Rights of Survivorship. This may be accomplished by completing the Joint Tenancy with Rights of Survivorship Acknowledgement of Intent form located within the [Title and/or Registration Application](#).
- if the vehicle was titled in another state or is being transferred on an out-of-state MSO, a Verification of VIN form is required to be completed by either a:
 - Colorado law enforcement officer;
 - licensed Colorado motor vehicle dealer; or
 - licensed Colorado emissions testing station.

Visit the [DOR's Taxes and Fees](#) page for more information about vehicle title fees, registration fees, and applicable sales taxes. For general information about vehicle titling, visit the [DOR's Titling a Vehicle](#) webpage.

Vehicle Registration

The requirements for completing vehicle registration can be found [here](#). Vehicles in Colorado are registered for a 12-month period, with registration expiring on the last day of the month of the 12-month registration period. Certain vehicles (utility trailers, special mobile machinery) qualify for a five-year registration period. Vehicles may be registered at intervals of less than one year to allow a multi-vehicle owner's registrations to expire simultaneously.

Persons titling or registering a vehicle in Colorado pay registration fees and surcharges, specific ownership taxes, and title fees. Registration fees are based on the empty weight and type of vehicle. The table below provides a summary of fees and their use.

Motor Vehicle Fees

Motor Vehicle Fee	Fee Amount	Use
Registration Fee	\$3.00 for motorcycles and autocycles	This fee is credited to the Highway Users Tax Fund, counties, and cities. (Section 42-3-306 (2), C.R.S.)
	\$6.00 for passenger vehicles up to 2,000 pounds, plus \$0.20 extra per 100 pounds up to 4,500 pounds; and	
	\$12.50 for passenger vehicles 4,500 pounds or more, plus \$0.60 each additional 100 pounds	
Road Safety Surcharge	\$16.00 for motorcycles, autocycles, trailer coaches, and vehicles weighing 2,000 pounds or less;	This fee is credited to the Highway Users Tax Fund. (Section 43-4-804 (1), C.R.S.)
	\$23.00 for vehicles weighing 2,001 to 5,000 pounds;	
	\$28.00 for vehicles weighing 5,001 to 10,000 pounds;	
	\$37.00 for passenger buses and vehicles weighing 10,001 to 16,000 pounds; and	
	\$39.00 for vehicles weighing more than 16,000 pounds.	
Bridge Safety Surcharge	\$13.00 maximum surcharge for motorcycles, trailer coaches, multipurpose trailers, and any vehicle weighing 2,000 pounds or less;	This fee is credited to the Bridge Special Fund. (Section 43-4-805 (3)(a), C.R.S.)
	\$18.00 maximum surcharge for vehicles weighing 2,001 to 5,000 pounds;	
	\$23.00 maximum surcharge for vehicles weighing 5,001 to 10,000 pounds;	
	\$29.00 maximum surcharge for vehicles weighing 10,001 to 16,000 pounds or passenger buses; and	
	\$32.00 maximum surcharge for vehicles weighing more than 16,000 pounds.	

Motor Vehicle Fee	Fee Amount	Use
Public Highway Authority Fee	No more than \$10.00	This fee is collected annually for vehicles registered within public highway authority boundaries. The fee is applied to the financing, construction, operation, or maintenance of public highways. (Section 43-4-506 (1)(k), C.R.S.)
Emissions Control Fees	\$0.50 for all vehicles, plus \$0.70 extra, to be collected and retained by the county, for vehicles in the emissions program area; and \$1.50 for vehicles in the emissions program area.	These fees are assessed at registration and are credited to the AIR account. The fees are used for emissions program enforcement efforts and administration of the program by the Department of Public Health and Environment and the Department of Revenue. (Section 42-3-304 (18)(a) and (18)(b), C.R.S.)
Additional Highway Fee (based on the age of the vehicle)	\$9.00 for vehicles under 7 years old; \$7.00 for vehicles between 7 and 10 years old; an. \$5.00 for vehicles 11 years old and older	There is a temporary reduction of these fees through June 30, 2026. \$1.00 is credited to the Licensing Services Cash Fund to assist in collecting late registration fees. The remainder of these fees is credited to the Highway Users Tax Fund, counties, and cities. (Section 42-3-306 (2)(b)(II), C.R.S.)
Emergency Medical Services Fee	\$2.00	This fee is credited to the Emergency Medical Services Account in the Highway Users Tax Fund. (Section 42-3-304 (21), C.R.S.)
Additional Registration Fee	\$0.50 for motor vehicles not exempted from the Motor Insurance Identification Fee; and \$0.10 for motor vehicles exempted from the Motor Insurance Identification Fee.	This fee is credited to the Colorado Driver License, Record, Identification, and Vehicle Enterprise Solution Vehicle Services Account in the Highway Users Tax Fund. (Section 42-3-306 (14)(a), C.R.S.)
Motorist Insurance Identification Fee	adjusted annually	This fee is credited to Colorado State Titling and Registration Account. (Section 42-1-211 (2), C.R.S.)
Motorcycle Surcharge Fee	\$4.00	This fee is collected for all motorcycle registrations and credited to the Motorcycle Operator Safety Training Fund. (Section 42-3-304 (4),C.R.S.)

Motor Vehicle Fee	Fee Amount	Use
Diesel Fee	\$10.00	This fee is collected for all qualified diesel vehicles registering within the AIR program area and credited to the AIR account in the Highway Users Tax Fund. (Section 42-3-304 (20), C.R.S)
Peace Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Board Fee	\$1.00	This fee is collected at registration on Class A, B, and C vehicles to support the training activities of the P.O.S.T. Board. (Section 42-3-304 (24), C.R.S)
County Road and Bridge Fees	\$.94	The fee is adjusted annually until June 30, 2026. This fee is collected for the maintenance of county highways, roads, and bridges. (Section 42-3-310, C.R.S.).
Electric Motor Vehicle Fee	\$50.00	This fee is adjusted annually for inflation. \$30 of the fee is credited to the Highway Users Tax Fund, and \$20 is credited to the Electric Vehicle Grant Fund. (Section 42-3-304 (25)(a), C.R.S.)
Electric Motor Vehicle Road Usage Equalization Fee	\$3.0 to \$96 depending on type of car and year registered	After FY 2031-32, the fee is adjusted for inflation. The fee is credited to the Highway Users Tax Fund, counties, and cities. (Section 42-3-304 (25)(a.5), C.R.S.)

Prepared by Legislative Council Staff

Late Vehicle Registration Fees

Failure to register a vehicle on time results in a \$25-per-month late fee after the 90-day period during which initial registration was required, up to \$100 total. Vehicle owners must pay the taxes and fees to register the vehicle and pro-rated taxes and fees from the date the vehicle should have been registered to the date the owner registered the car. A supplemental unregistered vehicle fine may be imposed if a person is convicted of misdemeanor, knowingly failing to register a vehicle, within 90 days of becoming a resident of the state.

Exemptions from the late fee include vehicles that are:

- used for operating a commercial business and were idled for a full registration period;
- owned by military personnel serving outside Colorado when the grace period for renewal has passed and the vehicle is not operated on a public highway until re-registration; and
- stolen, and the registration expired during the time, or duration of, the theft.
- The division may establish rules for additional exemptions including:
- acts of God and weather-related delays;

- office closures and furloughs;
- medical hardships; and
- information technology failures.



Towing and Booting

The [Public Utilities Commission](#) oversees towing and vehicle booting companies. Companies must have a permit to operate in the state. Application for a permit must include evidence of insurance and financial responsibility. Vehicles and facilities are subject to inspection by the commission or State Patrol.

Vehicle booting involves the placement of a wheel clamp to immobilize a vehicle, typically for too many parking tickets or other fines. Nonconsensual towing involves law enforcement or a private lot owner requesting that a car be towed. These tows usually occur because of illegal parking. Permanent parking signs at the entrances and on lamp posts in a private lot must notify vehicle owners about infractions that could result in booting or towing. The [Towing Task Force](#) handles issues related to towing charges and overcharges. For in-depth information about towing and booting, reference the staff issue brief, [Vehicle Towing and Booting](#).



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