

cans that previously contained alcohol can be considered an open container. The passenger area is any place designed to seat the driver or a passenger or any place that is readily accessible to the driver or passenger from their seating position.

4. Transporting Children

If you are convicted of a drunk or drugged driving offense with a child or children in your vehicle, your fine and jail time can be doubled by the judge in court.

B. Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

Aggressive drivers demonstrate behaviors like speeding, tailgating, failing to obey traffic signals and devices, erratic or improper lane changes, failing to yield the right-of-way and improper passing. Some factors that may produce aggressive driving are crowded roads, unexpected delays, rushing, road construction, and stress.

Drivers must respect and cooperate with all other road users and conform to specific rules in order to maintain order and avoid crashes. Some tips to reduce the possibility of becoming involved in an aggressive driving incident are:

- allow extra time to travel;
- be patient;
- be courteous;
- concentrate on your driving behavior;
- always signal your intentions;
- obey all traffic laws, signs, signals and pavement markings;
- yield the right of way;
- avoid competing with other drivers.

A good general rule is to treat other drivers and road users like you would like to be treated.

C. Distracted Driving

Concentration is essential for safe driving. You should be constantly aware of the road and the other vehicles around you. Keep alert and you may be able to foresee a crash and avoid it. Constantly check the position of vehicles behind you, as well as those beside and ahead of you.

The term “distracted driving” refers to anything that takes your eyes, hands or especially your mind, away from driving. Distracted driving is the most common contributing factor in police-reported traffic crashes. Distractions of any sort cause drivers to miss key visual and audio cues needed to avoid a crash.

Many activities contribute to distracted driving. Some examples include:

- eating and/or drinking;
- adjusting the radio and/or a portable music system;
- adjusting or programming a GPS;
- attending to children and pets;
- loose objects moving in the vehicle;
- talking and/or texting on a cell phone;
- smoking;
- putting on makeup;
- shaving;
- reading;
- interaction with others in the vehicle.

Cell Phones

Maryland Vehicle Law prohibits the use of hand-held cell phones, including texting, while operating a motor vehicle. Although hands-free devices are permitted, drivers should minimize calls and focus on the following safe driving practices:

- use your cell phone only in emergencies; if possible, have a passenger make the call;