Massachusetts RMV Safe Driving Study Guide

The Exact Numbers, Distances, and Rules You Need to Pass

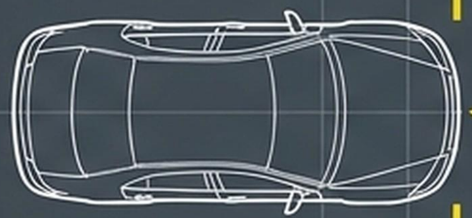


*Built exclusively from the verified Massachusetts Driver's Manual.



3 Seconds

Minimum following distance in good conditions



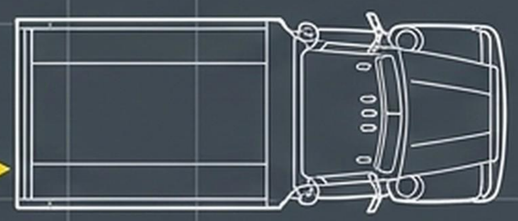
4 Seconds

Motorcycles can stop and swerve faster than you can react.



10 Seconds

Behind heavy equipment



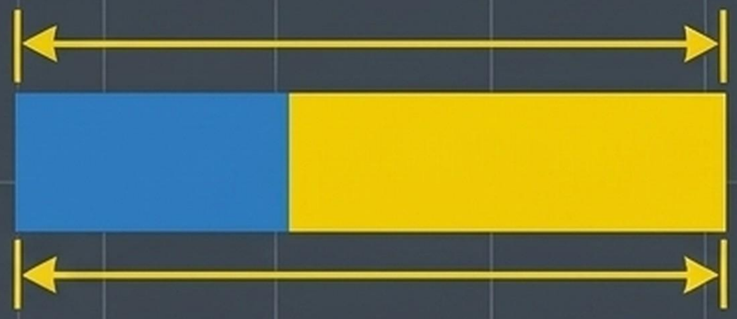


Add time for rain, snow, dark, or traffic. Three seconds is a floor, not a target.

⚠ **Penalty: Tailgating fine up to $100.**

STOPPING DISTANCES (DRY PAVEMENT)

Notice the shape of the numbers: Doubling speed from 30 to 60 nearly triples your stopping distance.



30 mph ~104 feet total.



50 mph ~215 feet total.



60 mph ~292 feet total.

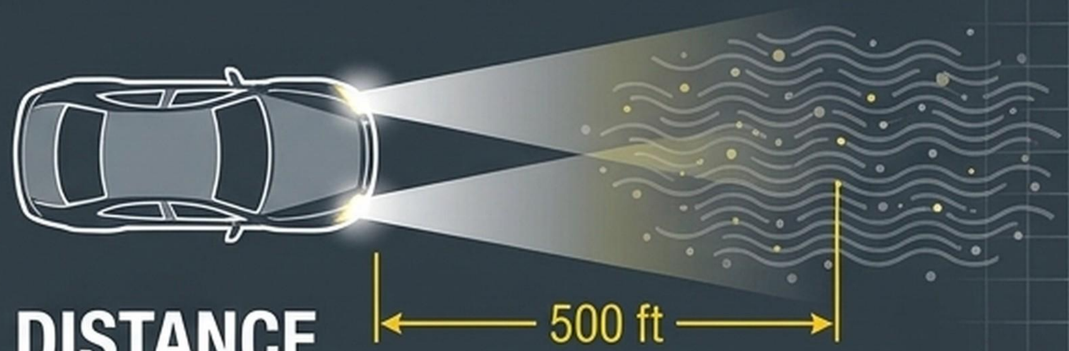
A large truck requires roughly 2× the stopping distance of a passenger vehicle.

VISIBILITY RULES: WHEN HEADLIGHTS ARE REQUIRED



TIME

½ hour after sunset to
½ hour before sunrise.



DISTANCE

When people or vehicles cannot be clearly seen 500 feet ahead.



WEATHER (THE WIPER RULE)

Whenever windshield wipers are used (rain, snow, fog).

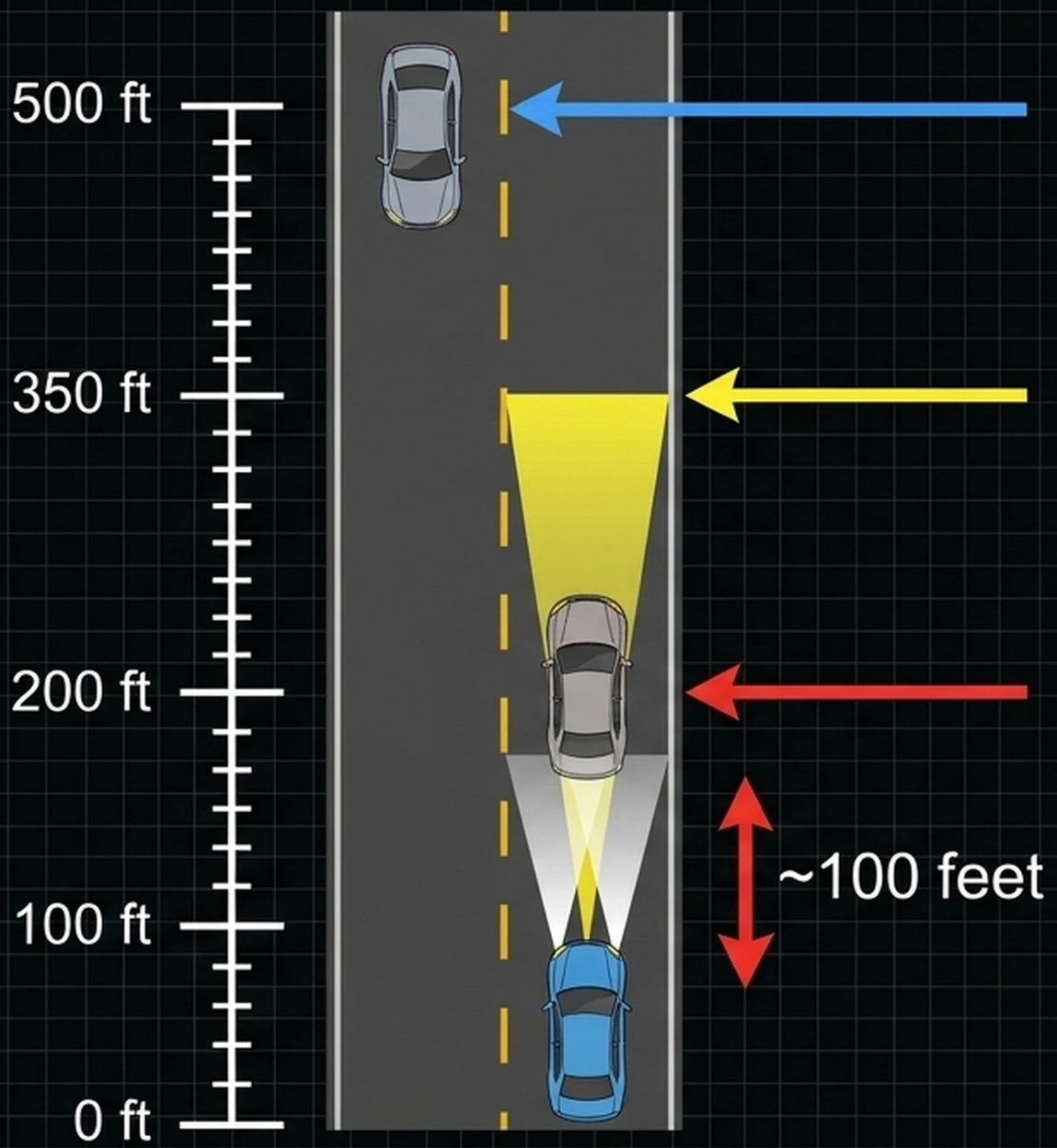
CRUCIAL RULE: Daytime running lights are NOT sufficient. Real headlights are required.



LOCATION

When driving through a tunnel.

HEADLIGHT DIMMING RULES & DISTANCE DIAGRAM

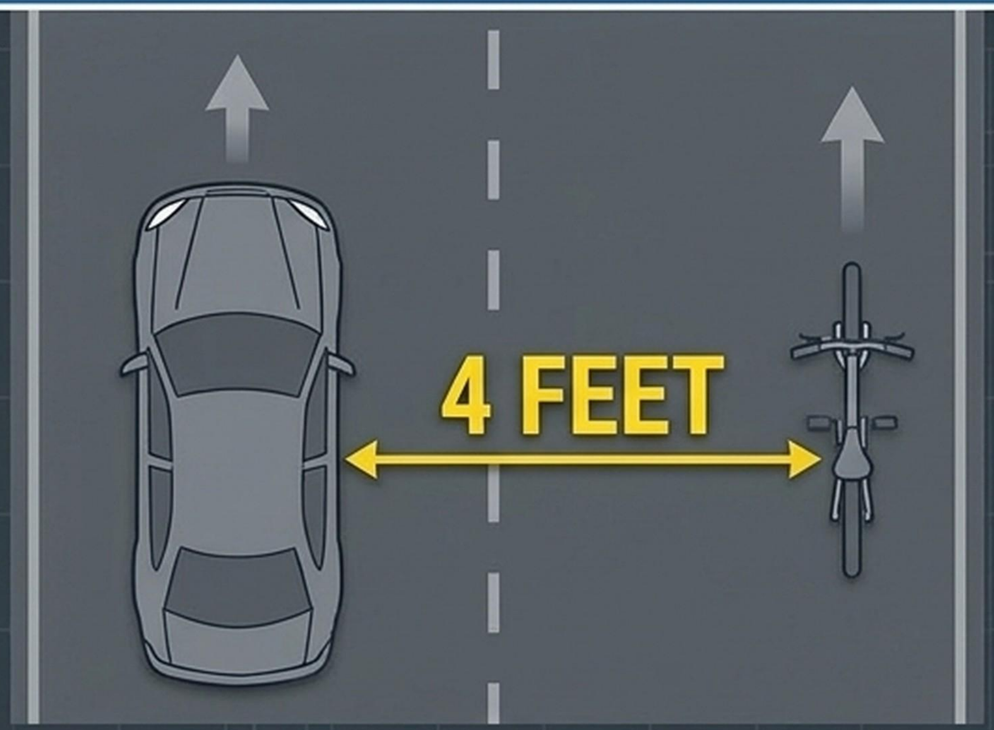


Oncoming Dimming Zone: Dim to low beam within 500 feet of a vehicle coming toward you.

High Beams: ~350 feet

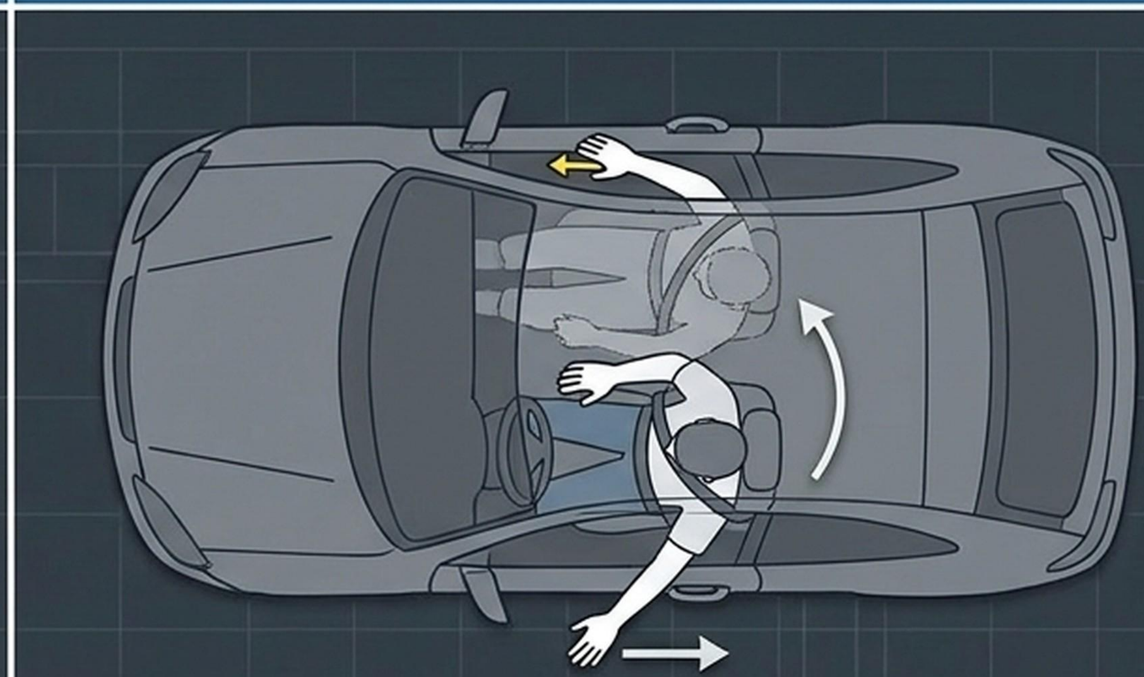
Dimming Zone Ahead: Dim to low beam within 200 feet of a vehicle traveling in front of you.

THE 4-FOOT RULE



Leave at least 4 feet of safe passing distance. You may use the adjacent lane and cross the center line if necessary and safe.

THE DUTCH REACH

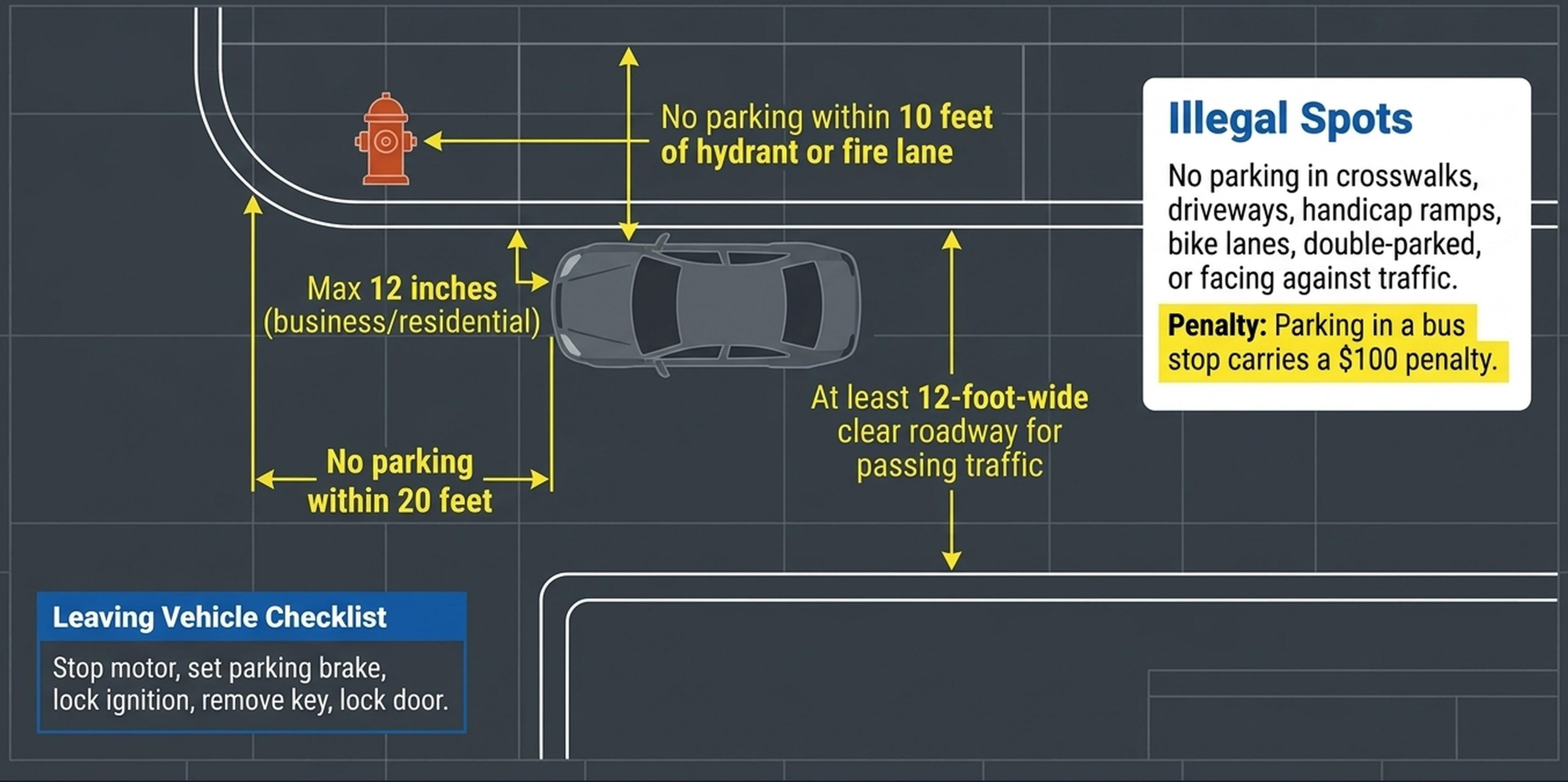


Open the door with the hand farther from it to force your body to look back for cyclists.

Dooring fine up to $100.

WHITE CANE LAW: Complete stop for a blind pedestrian.
Stay stopped. Never honk, wave them on, or pass a stopped vehicle.

STREET PARKING RULES & DIMENSION MAP



Illegal Spots

No parking in crosswalks, driveways, handicap ramps, bike lanes, double-parked, or facing against traffic.

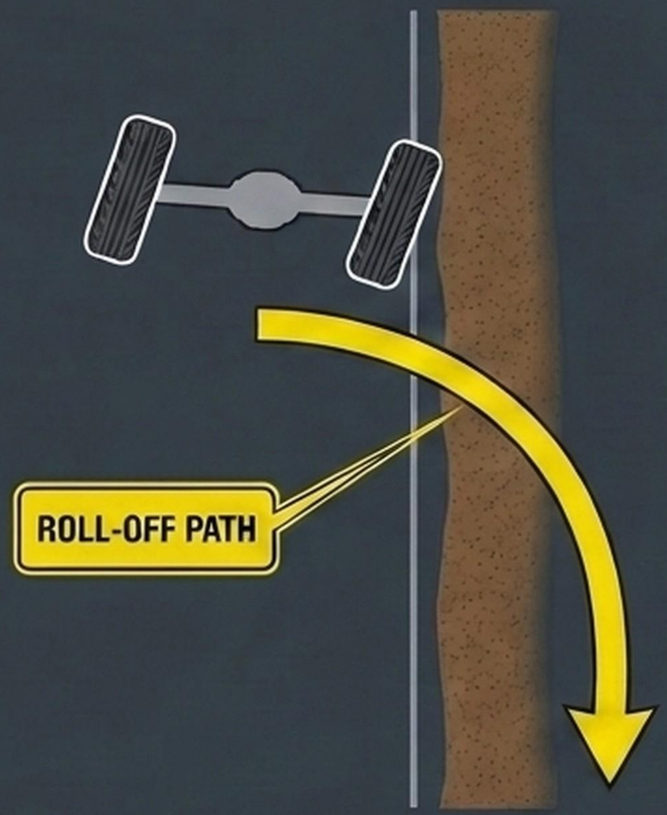
Penalty: Parking in a bus stop carries a $100 penalty.

Leaving Vehicle Checklist

Stop motor, set parking brake, lock ignition, remove key, lock door.

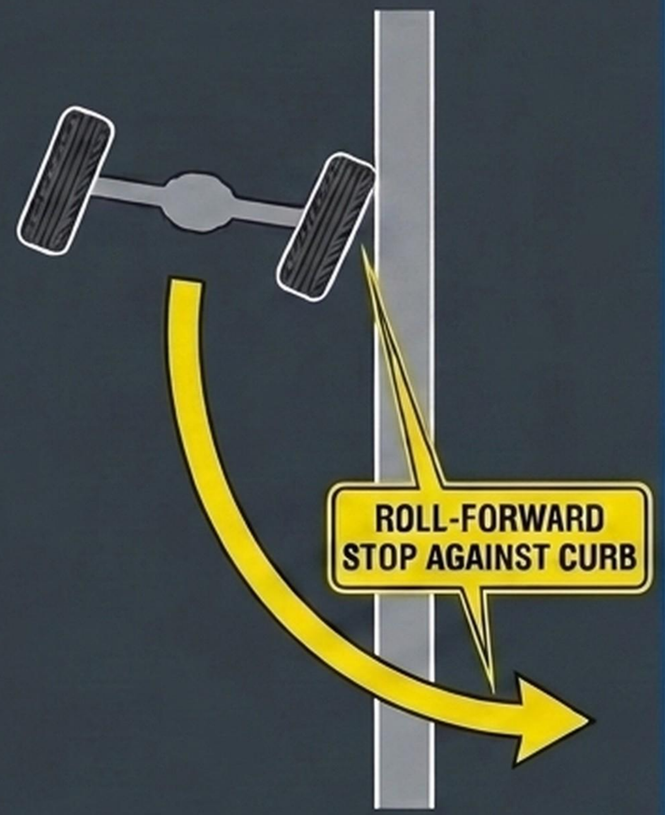
ALWAYS: SET THE PARKING BRAKE ON EVERY HILL, EVERY TIME.

NO CURB



WHEELS INWARD
(toward the edge of the road).

DOWNHILL (WITH CURB)



WHEELS INWARD
(toward the curb).

UPHILL (WITH CURB)



WHEELS OUTWARD
(toward the travel lane).

POST-CRASH LEGAL DUTIES

RMV/Safety

Immediate Duty: STOP. Never leave the scene.

Driver Removal Law

If Property Damage Only (no injuries), move vehicles out of travel lanes to a safe location.

Exchange Information

- Name
- Address
- Vehicle registration
- Driver's license number
- Insurance

The RMV Reporting Threshold

If injury, death, or $1,000+ in property damage occurs

RMV

Must file Motor Vehicle Crash Operator Report with RMV & local police within 5 DAYS.

RMV

Hit an unattended vehicle or animal?
Notify local police and/or owner.

The RMV Numbers Cheat Sheet

Seconds & Dollars

3s minimum gap

4s behind motorcycles

10s behind heavy equipment

$100 tailgating, dooring, bus stop fines

Distances (Speed & Vehicles)

30 mph ≈ 104 ft

104 ft

50 mph ≈ 215 ft

60 mph ≈ 292 ft

Truck = 2× stopping distance

4 ft bicycle passing gap

4 FT

Distances (Light)

350 ft high beam reach

350 ft

100 ft low beam reach

500 ft dim for oncoming

200 ft dim for ahead

Distances (Geometry) & Reporting

12 inches from curb

12 IN

12 feet clear roadway

12 FT

10 feet from hydrant

10 FT

$1,000+ damage or **5 days** RMV Crash Report

$1,000+

5 DAYS

5-QUESTION SELF-CHECK

QUESTIONS

Q1: State the following-distance rule and its bigger-gap exceptions.

Q2: At 60 mph on dry pavement, stopping distance? Truck comparison?

Q3: Wipers running in daylight rain—what lighting rule applies?

Q4: Parked downhill against a curb vs uphill?

Q5: $900 crash damage, no injuries. Report required? $1,200?

ANSWERS

A1: 3 seconds minimum in good conditions; 4 seconds behind a motorcycle; 10 seconds behind heavy equipment.

A2: ~292 feet. A large truck may need twice the stopping distance.

A3: Headlights must be on. Daytime running lights are not sufficient.

A4: Downhill = inward. Uphill = outward. Always set the parking brake.

A5: No at $900. Yes at $1,200—must file Motor Vehicle Crash Operator Report with RMV & police within 5 days.

Keep practicing — free, no sign-up

Massachusetts Safe Driving study guide, practice tests & flashcards:

drivinglicensetest.org/ma

Sources verified November 14, 2026