

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Connector October 2018 newsletter

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on Connector October 2018 newsletter [Wis. Stat. ch. 346], a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's website: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/dot/guidance-docs?guidDocId=OPA167>

2. Mailing written comments to:

Office of Public Affairs
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsindot.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

AGENCY CONTACT

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The Connector

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Program allows even exchange of military CDL to Wisconsin CDL

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Drive on the bright side: LED light retrofit project saving state money

Parents encouraged to help their teen drivers be better decision makers

Wisconsin DOT - October 23

Last year 75 teenagers were killed in automobile crashes in Wisconsin. National Teen Driver Safety Week, October 21 to



27, is dedicated to raising awareness and seeking solutions to teen deaths and injuries on the road.

"Teen drivers have a higher rate of fatal crashes, primarily because of their lack of experience, skills and maturity," WisDOT Secretary Dave Ross said. "As a parent and grandparent, I know the concerns of handing over the car keys to a young driver." Teens tend to speed, drive aggressively, not buckle up and are prone to distracted driving. Inexperience behind the wheel contributes to this, putting them at a higher crash risk than adults with more experience.

Parents can be positive influences by helping their children make better decisions behind the wheel and mentoring them while they gain driving experience. WisDOT offers a [parent's supervised driving program](#) to guide them through the steps they need to know to help their teenagers become skilled drivers.

[State law](#) prohibits drivers with an instruction permit or probationary license, which includes many teenagers, from using a cell phone while driving, except to report an emergency. Another state law prohibits texting while driving for all motorists. Despite these laws, too many teens still talk or text on mobile devices when all their attention should be focused on driving.

Traffic safety officials stress that the risk of a crash increases significantly when teen drivers have teen passengers in their vehicle. To combat this statistic, Wisconsin has a [graduated driver license](#) requirement for new drivers younger than age 18 that helps them gain valuable driving experience while limiting the number of teen passengers in their vehicles. Since the law was enacted in 2000, teen-involved traffic fatalities have decreased by 46 percent.

"Through education, enforcement and innovative engineering we're having a positive impact on reducing risky teen behavior and improving safety to keep everyone traveling safely on Wisconsin roads safe," said Ross.

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DMV program allows 'even exchange' of military CDL to Wisconsin CDL

Terry Walsh - October 22

Current and former members of the United States armed forces with a military commercial driver license (CDL) may be eligible to waive the skills test required to receive a Wisconsin CDL.

Wisconsin is currently one of only three states to establish this [fast-track CDL process](#), enabling military personnel to exchange their military CDL for a civilian CDL and get their trucking careers rolling.

"Wisconsin has a historically strong and growing economy, and our small businesses are prospering and expanding. However, our trucking industry, which is a key component to every industry in our state, is facing a serious shortage of drivers," Governor Scott Walker said. "Wisconsin's implementation of this "even exchange"

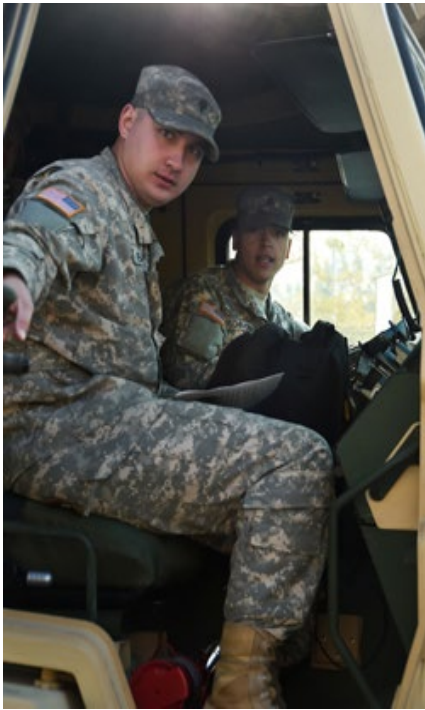


Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin National Guard.

between licenses will get our veterans back into the civilian workforce much more quickly. Not only is this a great benefit for the veterans, who bring valuable experience and skills to our workforce, but Wisconsin businesses will gain by being able to quickly and easily recruit and hire trained and experienced drivers.”

Wisconsin DMV moved quickly to get this process in place for active duty personnel after recent changes to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rules. Wisconsin DMV will now waive CDL knowledge tests—in addition to the current skills test waivers and fee waivers for commercial licenses—for certain classes and endorsements of commercial motor vehicles. This “even exchange” of a military CDL to a Wisconsin CDL is similar to the seamless exchange for a driver moving to Wisconsin from another state.

“We are hopeful that the adoption of the knowledge test waiver, in addition to the current waiver of the skills test and licensing fee, will lead to more veterans moving into this line of work,” said Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary Dave Ross.

Information on the CDL exchange program, including links to the necessary forms, are on WisDOT's [military CDL waiver programs page](#).

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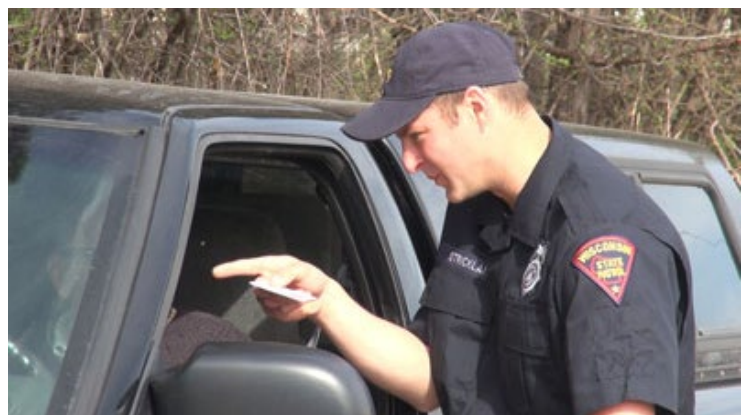
What to do when stopped by law enforcement

Wisconsin DOT - October 22

Being stopped by law enforcement can be a difficult experience, but understanding state law and knowing what to do can enhance safety for everyone. The Wisconsin State Patrol offers these guidelines for when motorists are pulled over by law enforcement.

Know the law

The best place to start is understanding the [Wisconsin law](#), which requires a driver to pull over immediately when they observe emergency lights approaching from either direction. Move out of the lane of traffic and stop as near as possible on the right-hand shoulder of the roadway. Do not continue traveling to a location believed to be more suitable for stopping. A police officer may be responding to a crash, robbery, medical emergency or other



The Wisconsin State Patrol conducted more than 245,000 traffic stops in 2017.

incident and remaining in the traffic lane may inhibit law enforcement from reaching the incident.

When stopped by law enforcement

Remain calm. Remember that the law enforcement officer's top priority is public safety. They are trained to consider the totality of a situation before making any enforcement-related decision.

Once vehicle is stopped:

- Place the vehicle in park;
- turn off the ignition; and
- place the keys on the dashboard.

Do not exit the vehicle, unless asked to do so.

At night or during low-light conditions:

- Turn on the vehicle's interior dome light: and
- be prepared for the officer to shine a light into the vehicle. This is for the officer's safety.

Place hands in plain sight, preferably on the top of the steering wheel.

Keep movement to a minimum. Refrain from reaching into clothing, glove box, console, etc. Wait for the officer to request a driver license, registration, insurance card or anything they might need.

When the officer arrives at your window (this could be driver or passenger side):

- Comply with any orders.
- Provide clear and concise answers to the officer's questions.
- Be polite and patient. The officer will likely need time to retrieve and verify information.
- If given a citation, don't argue. You will have an opportunity to contest the citation before a judge or court.

After the stop is complete, merge carefully when reentering the highway.

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Following school bus safety laws essential to keeping Wisconsin children safe

State Patrol conducted more than 10,000 school bus inspections in 2017

[Wisconsin DOT](#) - October 22

There are more than 10,000 school buses operating in Wisconsin and with the school year now in full swing, these buses are on the roads transporting students.

October 22-26 is National [School Bus Safety](#) Week, a time to remind motorists about laws and responsibilities designed to keep students safe.

"Children, especially younger ones, are not always looking for vehicles when they cross the road," said Wisconsin State Patrol Lieutenant Karl Mittelstadt. "Drivers need to use extra caution when they see a school bus and assume that there are children about."

A law that took effect in August 2016 requires many Wisconsin school buses to be equipped with flashing amber lights. When



activated, the amber lights inform motorists that the school bus will stop soon.

"When you see a school bus with amber lights activated, it does not mean to speed up and hurry around the school bus," Mittelstadt said. "It means you should slow down because children are present and the bus is about to stop."

When a school bus's flashing red warning lights are activated, drivers in front and behind the bus **must stop at least 20 feet** from the bus. One exception is for drivers going the opposite direction on a divided highway separated by a median, barrier or other space not intended for vehicular traffic.

The penalty for illegally passing a school bus includes a \$326.50 fine and assessment of four demerit points.

While most motorists stop for red warning lights, some make the illegal and dangerous decision to pass. School bus drivers have the authority to submit reports on violators to local law enforcement detailing the time of the incident, approximate location, license plate number and details about the vehicle. An officer will investigate the incident and determine if enforcement action is appropriate.

Many buses are equipped with cameras recording activities in and outside the vehicle. While there may be differences between the bus driver's report and the motorist's account, camera footage will often address any discrepancies. The penalty for illegally passing a school bus includes a \$326.50 fine and assessment of four demerit points.

Along with enforcing traffic laws, State Patrol **inspects every Wisconsin school bus** annually. Inspectors look at a bus's braking system, steering components, suspension, tires, lights, crossing gates, seats, emergency equipment and exits, among other things. In 2017, the State Patrol conducted more than 10,000 school bus inspections, including annual reviews, spot checks and pre-sale examinations. When problems are discovered, a bus can be placed out of service until necessary repairs are completed.

Mittelstadt said today's school buses are among the safest vehicles on the road because they are designed and built with one primary mission: safely transporting students.

"It's all steel construction from the floor to the walls to the ceiling," Mittelstadt said. Wrapping it all together are rub rails – steel reinforced bands that tie into the vehicle, connecting the steel-plated sides and bus frame to reinforce stability and absorb impact

in case of a crash.

Impact absorption features extend inside the bus through what is called compartmentalization. Each seat is padded over its steel frame. Tall seatbacks and seats spaced closer together than what is typically found in a passenger vehicle further protect passengers from injury in a crash. Emergency exits at the front, rear, roof and windows allow passengers plenty of escape routes in case of a crash. Along with all the safety features, at the helm of each school bus is a licensed driver.



State Patrol inspections include a bumper-to-bumper examination of every Wisconsin school bus and education of bus drivers and carriers.

Bus drivers are [required to fulfill specific requirements](#) before they may operate a school bus in Wisconsin. They must have commercial driver licenses, pass skills tests and a background check, and be medically approved to drive. They must also pass drug and alcohol tests before being hired, and are subject to random drug and alcohol tests. State Patrol inspectors take time during their inspections to talk with bus drivers and carriers about school bus safety.

“It’s an opportunity to provide educational outreach to make sure they are doing things appropriately in transporting children safely,” Mittelstadt said. “The more they know and understand the laws, the better equipped they are to keep passengers safe.”

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Visually impaired pedestrians need time, space to safely cross traffic intersections

Governor Walker proclaims October 15 White Cane Safety Day in Wisconsin

[David Hunt](#) and [Joe Starr](#) - October 12

Crossing at a busy traffic intersection can be challenging for anyone, but imagine making the crossings without sight.

Traffic is heard whizzing by as you try to deduce speed, direction and whether vehicles are coming to a stop. It is impossible to know who is paying attention behind the wheel and who is distracted as you step off the curb into the crosswalk.

This might sound nightmarish, but it is reality for an estimated [200,000 Wisconsinites](#) who have a severe visual impairment or are blind, the majority using white canes or service animals as travel aids.



Patty Zallar is one of them. She enjoys taking walks around her neighborhood in Madison with the help of a service dog. She is blind in one eye and has very limited tunnel vision in the other.

Zallar and her service dog Kannon take daily walks along streets near their home in Madison. Those walks involve crossing busy traffic intersections. The most important piece of advice she has for drivers is to drop distractions, focus on the road and always be on the lookout for pedestrians.

Her experience on the road runs the gamut – courteous drivers, not-so-courteous drivers, well-designed intersections, not so well-designed intersections and an even more current problem – hybrid-electric vehicles so quiet they are nearly impossible to hear.

Zallar said the key is to remain cautious and aware of surroundings. Never assume what a driver will do.

“When it comes to my well-being and a moving vehicle, I am not going to win,” she said. “In the case of an injury or fatality between a pedestrian and a moving vehicle, there are no second chances.”

White Cane Law

Wisconsin law affords additional protections to visually impaired pedestrians. Vehicles are required to give at least a 10-foot buffer to pedestrians using white canes or service animals for guidance. WisDOT is among government entities and organizations to observe White Cane Safety Day, a national effort to spread awareness about the rights of visually impaired pedestrians. Governor Scott Walker issued a recent proclamation for White Cane Safety Day to be observed statewide on October 15.

“Drivers should always be on the lookout for all pedestrians, but this becomes especially important with sight-impaired pedestrians,” said WisDOT Transportation Safety Program Grants Specialist Ian Wright.

It’s the type of law where, even if you’ve never heard of it, it really should just come natural to any driver who is attentive behind the wheel. Wright says that drivers who regularly look for pedestrians are more apt to be aware and prepared when encountering a visually impaired person preparing to cross the road.

“Remember 10 feet is the least distance you can give between your vehicle and a visually impaired pedestrian, so more is better,” he said.

Sight-impaired pedestrians need that room to cross and if a car is too close – or worse yet in the crosswalk itself – their crossing may be hindered. Staying back a car length also allows drivers in other lanes to better see the crosswalk and any pedestrians crossing. It is also important for drivers

to allow pedestrians - especially those who are sight impaired - to cross completely before going forward.

Safety Engineering

In recent decades, with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, increased focus has been placed on best practices to construct public facilities to ensure equal access. There are more than 45,000 curb ramps throughout Wisconsin's state highway system alone. WisDOT recently took inventory of curb ramps and sidewalks to help guide future improvement priorities, as part of [WisDOT's ADA Transition Plan](#).

Planning and design of curb ramps has evolved over time based on research with continued focus to meet accessibility compliance requirements. Slope, grade, width, color and materials have been examined and evaluated at both the state and federal levels, and WisDOT has updated planning and design materials accordingly.

Each curb ramp component has a specific function. For example, the detectable warning fields found at the bottom of the curb ramp opening, where the sidewalk transitions to the street, are a distinctive surface pattern of truncated domes which have specific height, depth, and spacing dimensions to be detectable by cane or underfoot to alert people with vision impairments that they are approaching a street crossing or hazardous drop-off. In Wisconsin, these detectable warning fields or panels are made from cast iron. WisDOT uses cast iron based on experience and research that has proven its durability in the elements, especially being able to stand up to the occasional snow plow blade.

Other efforts that WisDOT engineers have worked on include installing accessible pedestrian signals (APS) and push buttons. APS communicate audible information about "Walk" and "Don't Walk" at signalized intersections. Designers also have considered countermeasures such as curb bulb-outs or high-visibility crosswalk markings to calm traffic while improving the safety and mobility of walkers.

Every improvement helps to enhance safety for everyone on the road, said Jill Mrotek Glenzinski, WisDOT's State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.

Picture moms with strollers, for example. Imagine that you just broke a leg and need crutches. Aging populations need additional time to cross streets. Younger people may choose to walk or bike instead.

"A focus on accessibility benefits everyone," says Mrotek Glenzinski.

What Can I Do?

For starters, always expect pedestrians - no matter where you are driving. Every driver has the opportunity to not only create safer streets, but to set the right example for others on the road.

Stop the "rolling stops." Sure it can be tempting to slow up near a stop sign and keep going if nobody is there, but it is still illegal, not to mention a bad driving habit that creates unnecessary danger. What if someone's coming who you simply don't see? Always come to a complete stop, and make sure it is clear to go.

Never assume anyone sees you. Especially if you have a quiet engine or automatic shut-off for short stops, visually impaired pedestrians who rely on hearing may have a hard time detecting your vehicle. Remember, there are roughly 200,000 fellow Wisconsinites who have severe visual impairments.

Give driving undivided attention. There are roughly three distracted driving crashes every hour in Wisconsin. Do your part to eliminate distractions and avoid becoming part of the problem.

Plan ahead and leave early. Rushed drivers are more prone to make mistakes. Use services like 511wi.gov to understand congestion and drive times before you head out the door.

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Drive on the bright side: LED light swap saves state money

Joe Starr - October 5

A switch in how Wisconsin is lighting its highways is beginning to brighten motorists' lives while saving the state money.

WisDOT launched a 2-year, \$6.2 million project this year to retrofit 20,500 of the state's highway lighting fixtures from high pressure sodium, or HPS, to light emitting diodes – better known as LEDs. The project will upgrade approximately 75 percent of the fixtures with additional funding for retrofitting remaining fixtures.

"This is an opportunity to improve the safety of our state's highways and interchanges while also saving taxpayer money by using more cost-efficient lighting technology," said Electrical and Lighting System Engineer and LED Retrofit Project Leader Ahmet Demirbilek.

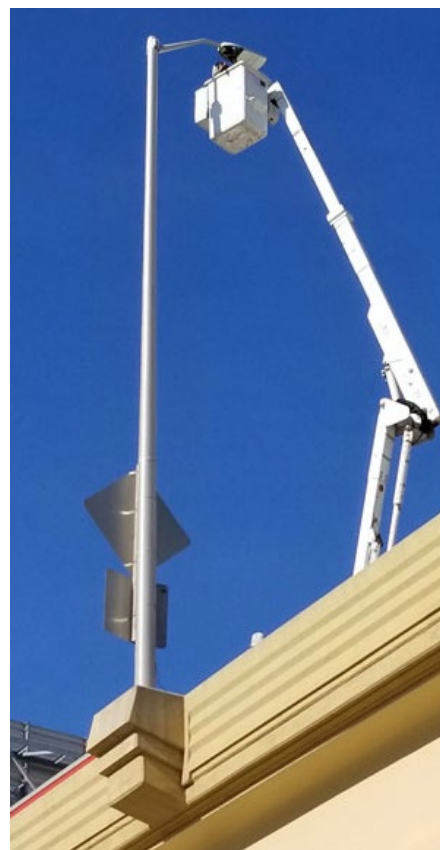
Between an anticipated \$850,000 annual savings in energy and maintenance and nearly \$1.4 million savings through expanded bid options and efficient energy rebates, Demirbilek says this project is expected to pay for itself in about five years.

Demirbilek began advocating a switch to LEDs soon after coming to WisDOT, stressing how these fixtures use half the energy of their HPS counterparts. Soon after taking the lead on the project, he and his team began developing a strategy that went beyond the retrofit itself, pinpointing ways to further improve on cost efficiency. Opportunities for additional savings were found through offering different installation methods for the state's regions to choose from, procurement of energy saving incentive rebates and encouraging more competitive bidding.

"We look at it as a win-win," said Don Gutkowski, director of WisDOT's Bureau of Traffic Operations. "Modernizing the system will help to save money in the long run."

Under the old light fixture bidding process, fixture options were limited so there were very few lighting suppliers that carried the specified fixtures. Demirbilek and his team expanded the fixture specifications, thus opening opportunities for more bids.

"When we streamlined the specs on what lighting fixture types are accepted, it opened the door for suppliers to submit new products and more competitive bids," said Demirbilek. The effect was Wisconsin having the lowest bids nationwide, resulting in more than \$850,000 in savings.



A 2-year, \$6.2 million project is underway to retrofit 20,500 of the state's lighting fixtures.

“Transportation safety and efficiency are at the heart of our mission at WisDOT, We are always searching for new and creative ways to fulfill those goals.”

—Ahmet Demirbilek

Taking saving a step further, Demirbilek discovered \$453,000 in incentive rebates through Focus on Energy, Wisconsin's energy efficiency and renewable resource program. This was in addition to nearly \$582,000 annual savings coming from the increased efficiency of the new fixtures themselves. Not only are the new fixtures less expensive than the HPS counterparts, they also last about four times longer at 15 years. That longer lifespan and improved reliability means a \$274,000 annual maintenance cost savings.

Further efficiencies were woven into the project by allowing each of the state's five regions to choose from three methods for implementing their allocated budget for the LED retrofit.

The methods vary from whether that region's office managed everything from fixture purchasing and installation to having the purchasing and work done by contractors. The latter method works well for the heavily urban Southeast Region where 55 percent of the state's highway lighting exists, allowing contractors to manage everything from the fixture purchase to installation. But in the state's mostly rural Northwest and North Central regions, with only 16 percent of fixtures, the former method of managing purchases and installations internally made the best economic sense.

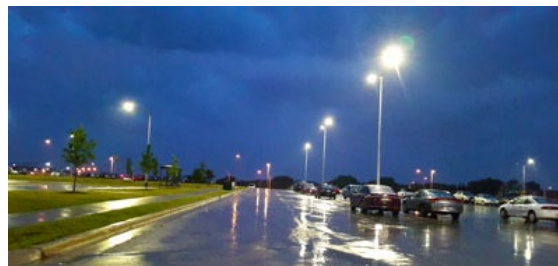
Another efficiency has come from collaboration between Demirbilek's team and road construction project managers as he ensures that his lighting installations coincide with upcoming construction projects. If there is a construction project scheduled for a section that also has a scheduled fixture retrofit, he says they coordinate with that project team to have fixtures installed as part of that project, saving time and money while keeping Wisconsin's traveling public safe.

“Transportation safety and efficiency are at the heart of our mission at WisDOT, We are always searching for new and creative ways to fulfill those goals.”

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The LED retrofit includes every highway, exchange, bridge, park-and-ride lot, weigh station, and rest area throughout Wisconsin

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