

Under the Trooper's Hat
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On August 1, 2023, new laws passed in the North Dakota 68th Legislative Assembly will take effect. Some of the new laws are outlined below.

Primary Seatbelt Law

In the past, North Dakota seat belts laws, other than child restraint laws, were considered a “secondary offense” meaning law enforcement officers could cite a driver for not wearing a seatbelt only after stopping them for another violation.

The revised seat belt law considers the non-use of a seat belt to be a primary offense. This means if a law enforcement officer observes any person in the vehicle not wearing a seat belt, the law enforcement officer can stop the vehicle and issue the driver a citation. Each occupant in the vehicle must be seat belted, if not, the driver could be issued a citation for each person not properly belted in.

The fine for a seatbelt violation is \$20.00.

Insurance Companies and “Points” / Driving Record

On August 1, 2023, the North Dakota Department of Transportation will be able to release all violations on a drivers North Dakota driving record to insurance companies. House Bill 1417 passed this session which removed the requirement that only violations that are 3 points or more can be released to the public (insurance companies).

There are currently several violations that are less than three points that insurance companies will now have access to such as right of way violations, distracted driving violations, and speeding violations.

Turn Signal Required to Exit Rotary Traffic Island (Roundabout)

Motorists must use a turn signal before exiting a roundabout. By activating the right turn signal just prior to exiting, the driver signals their intention to other motorists that they intend to leave the roundabout.

Road Closed

The updated road closed law provides clearer language for motorists traveling on closed roads. Previously, the law stated that motorists had to knowingly pass a “road closed” sign. Often a motorist would see a “road closed” sign at one Interstate exit and drive to

the next exit where there was no “road closed” sign and then enter the Interstate from there.

NDHP Troopers witnessed this activity frequently this past winter. For example, a motorist would get to Bismarck and eastbound I-94 would not be accessible and have “road closed” signs in place. The motorist would then take ND Highway 10 or another back road to one of the next 10 exits east of Bismarck (Bismarck to Crystal Springs) where there were no “road closed” signs blocking the I-94 entrances and then enter I-94 from there. There was nothing law enforcement could do other than tell the motorist to exit the Interstate.

The new law states “The highway patrol or local law enforcement authorities having jurisdiction over a road may close a road temporarily due to hazardous conditions for the protection and safety of the public. If a closing is made, the authority ordering the closing shall make every reasonable attempt to notify the public and, when practical, may post appropriate official traffic-control devices to advise motorists of the closing. If a road closure has been announced to the public an individual may not drive on the road.”

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and NDHP use several methods to notify the public about road closures. These methods include traditional media, social media, dynamic roadway signs, road closure barriers, and the NDRoads app or webpage. This interactive map allows motorists to access the most up-to-date road information, including road closures and road conditions. NDDOT also has a free email and mobile subscription service that provides notifications on road closures; no travel advisories; travel alerts; and other roadway-related information.

Law enforcement will use common sense and reasonableness in enforcing this law. The fine for violating this law is \$250.00.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high-quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of the website: www.nd.gov/ndhp; like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol; or join us on Twitter [@NDHighwayPatrol](https://twitter.com/NDHighwayPatrol) or Instagram, www.instagram.com/ndhighwaypatrol, to learn more about traffic safety, get tips, and read NDHP news.