

# DRIVER EDUCATION

## NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 3 | July/August/September

### Driver Education Program Updates:

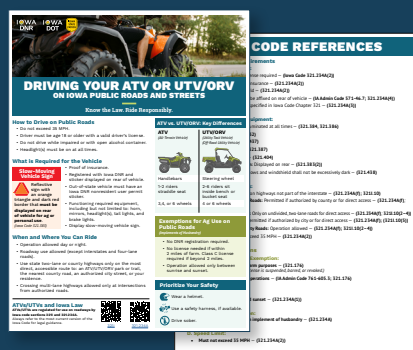
We're excited to share the 2025 Smart Start Behind-the-Wheel (BTW) Driver's Education Annual Online Conference is now available! This course is designed to reinforce your skills and knowledge as a Driver's Education Behind-the-Wheel Instructor and is required to maintain your BTW Certification with the Iowa DOT.

An email will be sent to Behind-the-Wheel Instructors required to take the refresher course in 2025. If you are interested in taking the free course, please contact [mvd.learninganddevelopment@iowadot.us](mailto:mvd.learninganddevelopment@iowadot.us).

### ATV and UTVs

Drivers may see more ATV and UTVs out on the road this summer. The Iowa DOT, DNR, and ISP have teamed up to develop an educational flyer that highlights the laws and requirements for driving these vehicles on public roads.

**GET A COPY OF THE FLYER**



### Summer Driving Dangers for Teens in Iowa

As the weather heats up, Iowans will see more vehicles on the roadway for vacation travel, farm equipment (planting season), and out of town guests. With summer on the brain, it's important to review the following topics, tips, and tricks:

#### Distractions and Blind Spots

- Rolling down the windows might be relaxing, but stay focused on the road ahead and travelers beside you.
- Beware of intersections in rural areas where the corn will grow tall and can create limited visibility. All drivers should use caution, slow down, and be prepared to stop for oncoming traffic. And remember, you can't always rely on dust clouds to determine if crossing vehicles are approaching.

#### Farm Equipment

- Summer season is planting season in Iowa! Farmers across the state will be traveling in large tractors, pulling wide equipment, and utilizing semis to transport products. Slow down when approaching these vehicles, and use extreme caution if attempting to pass.

#### Weather

- An Iowa summer is a variety of hot sun, strong wind, intense rain, thunderstorms, and possible tornadoes. Make sure to update your car kit with appropriate summer essentials such as water, flashlight, first aid kit, jumper cables, sunscreen, etc.

#### Sharing the Road

- Motorcycle riders follow the same rules of the road, but they are more vulnerable due to their size. Make sure to provide enough space between your vehicle and the motorcycle.
- Keep an eye out for bicycles, mopeds, and pedestrians as you travel through residential areas, intersections, and crosswalks.



## Drive Clean Iowa



Drive Clean is a social media platform built on educating, encouraging, and empowering young drivers to use Unleaded 88 fuel to better the planet, save money, and support Iowa farmers! Unleaded 88:

- Is often 5 to 10 cents cheaper per gallon than regular gasoline.
- Burns cleaner to reduce emissions.
- Boosts engine performance with higher octane.
- Supports Iowa's agricultural economy by using locally grown corn for ethanol production.

When new drivers pull up to the pump, choosing which fuel to use can be overwhelming. Each fuel varies in octane, ethanol percentage, and price. The Drive Clean Iowa campaign helps explain what the differences are, and which fuels are approved for every vehicle.

Drive Clean Iowa offers educational materials for driver education and agriculture teachers, including PowerPoints, educational videos, handouts, and swag for the students.

## Driver Education Instructor Meetings

The Driver Education Manager will be hosting quarterly meetings for all program owners, classroom and behind-the-wheel instructors. Join us to hear updates from the Iowa DOT, Driver Education stakeholders and learn from guest speakers!

Meetings will be conducted on Microsoft Teams Live and will be recorded for future viewing. Meetings are not required but highly encouraged.

**REGISTER FOR MEETINGS**

# HANDS-FREE DRIVING

IT'S THE LAW

New legislation prohibits drivers from using electronic communication devices while driving—**unless the device is used hands-free.**

## "HANDS-FREE" MEANS:



**You can't** hold your phone in any way.



**You can't** manually scroll, type, or interact with your phone in any way.



**You can't** enter in an address to GPS while driving.



**You can't** stream videos or make video calls, even with voice commands.



**You can't** view texts, videos, or social media.



**You can't** call, text, or dial unless using hands-free or voice activation.

## WHAT COUNTS AS AN "ELECTRONIC DEVICE"



Cell phones



Laptops



PDAs



Tablets



Gaming devices

## Hands Free Bill

Starting July 1, 2025, there is a new law that prohibits holding or manually operating a cell phone or other electronic device while driving. For more information, please contact the Driver Education Manager, Vania Boyd at [vania.boyd@iowadot.us](mailto:vania.boyd@iowadot.us).

## Honoring the Gift of Life: A Summer Reminder on Safe Driving and Organ Donation

Each summer, we see a rise in referrals related to motor vehicle crashes—a sobering trend that reminds us of the importance of safe driving. In 2024 alone, 48\* individuals became organ and/or tissue donors following motor vehicle crashes. Of those, 20\* gave the gift of life during the third quarter of the year.

These generous donors and their families helped transform countless lives through organ and tissue donation—an act of compassion and courage that often emerges from tragedy. Their stories serve as powerful reminders of how precious and fragile life is. One donor, Amanda Wilken, was involved in a motor vehicle crash in 2021. Her gifts of tissue have transformed over 200 lives, and her legacy will continue to live on for years to come. You can watch Amanda's story, and see the incredible difference that one "yes" can have [here](#).

As we move into the summer months, there is an important opportunity to encourage students and community members to practice safe driving and remain vigilant on the roads, especially around bicyclists, motorcycle riders, and pedestrians. By fostering safer roadways, we help prevent crashes and save lives. At the same time, in tragic situations where a loss does occur, those safe practices may increase the potential for successful donation, potentially saving or healing others through the gift of donation.

*\*Please note: This figure reflects the reported cases where a motor vehicle crash led to donation. In some cases, the specific circumstances of death are not available.*

## CURRENT IOWA TRAFFIC FATALITIES

The Iowa DOT provides a daily report of Iowa traffic fatalities organized by year, month, type, and county.