

Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Assembly

No. 02/NA

ROAD TRAFFIC LAW

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Vientiane, dated 8 April 2000**

THE ROAD TRAFFIC LAW

Chapter I
General Provisions

Article 1. Function of the Road Traffic Law

The Road Traffic Law has the function of determining principles, regulations, and measures for the establishment, operation, [and] administration of road traffic to facilitate the control of the movement of people and the use of various types of vehicles in lines of surface communication and transportation for convenience, safety, and orderliness, contributing to the protection and maintenance of roads, [and to] the environment in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and in international relations.

Article 2. Definition of Terms

1. "Road Traffic" is the movement of people or the use of various types of vehicles in lines of surface communication and transportation within the country.
2. "Traffic Regulation" is a detailed regulation that tells road users how to strictly comply with [such regulations].
3. "Traffic Signal System" is traffic signs, traffic signals, and traffic symbols.
 - "Traffic Sign" is a symbol that tells how to follow traffic regulations on a road.
 - "Traffic Signal" is the telling of traffic rules on a road by means of lights, colors, sounds, a person, or a model.
 - "Traffic Symbol" is a range of symbols installed, engraved, written, [or] drawn on the surface of the road, on the shoulder, at the roadside, [or] above a road to warn and to facilitate traffic.

Article 3. Promoting the Development of the Road Traffic System

By means of appropriate policies, the State promotes all economic parties, both domestically and abroad, to contribute to the development, construction, maintenance, installation, and protection of the road traffic system.

Article 4. Obligations of Travelers

All Lao citizens, [resident] aliens, stateless persons, and foreign persons who travel on the roads within the territory of the Lao PDR must strictly respect and adhere to the Road Traffic Law, [and

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other] traffic regulations, and [these people are also] obligated to contribute to protecting [and] maintaining the roads.

Chapter II *Road Traffic Rules*

Article 5. General Rules

Road traffic in the Lao PDR uses the right hand side [of the road]. Those using the roads must strictly adhere to the Road Traffic Law and [other] traffic regulations. It is prohibited for individuals or organizations to create obstructions or things that may cause an accident, destruction of public property or destruction of the Traffic Signal Systems along the roads.

Road traffic regulations must be integrated into curriculum at each level of schooling as appropriate.

Article 6. Officials Controlling Road Traffic

Officials who control Road Traffic are comprised of:

1. Public Roads Police who have the duty to inspect surface transportation on public roads;
2. Traffic Police who have the duty to facilitate and control traffic within a city proper or in the suburbs;
3. Those who have been officially assigned [to undertake such duties].

While fulfilling their duties, traffic control officials must wear uniforms, [and] badges, be posted at locations [where they are] easily seen, and be courteous.

In the case that on any part of a road, there is complex traffic, there are obstructions, an accident, or special traffic, road traffic control officials must promptly resolve such. Instructions, warnings, and recommendations from road traffic officials have higher authority than road traffic signs and symbols installed at that area, and travelers must comply with such instructions, warnings, and recommendations from road traffic control officials.

Article 7. Mechanized Vehicles

All types of vehicles run by engines must have a structure that properly complies with technical standards of the manufacturer factory and regulations provided by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction, i.e.:

- Have safety equipment;
- Have brakes;
- Have headlights and rear lights;
- Have complete signal lights;
- Have rearview mirrors;
- Have a horn that does not exceed standard [noise levels for vehicle horns];
- Have exhaust pipes that ensure no release of loud noise or black smoke in excess of standard, which will pollute the environment.

All types of vehicles operating on the roads must have registered plates, have complete accompanying documents, and must be insured according to Article 17 of the Surface Transportation Law.

Power tillers pulling wagons, *tok toks*, [or] trailers must have headlights and rear lights and have reflectors affixed in the front and in the rear in compliance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 8. Vehicles not Run by Engines

All types of vehicles not run by engines, i.e.: bicycles, oxcarts, pushcarts, etc., and other [vehicles] that are pulled, propelled [or] pushed by humans or animals, while operating on the roads must also strictly comply with traffic regulations. Two or three wheeled pedal-driven vehicles must have brakes, headlights, rear lights, and must have reflectors affixed at the front, rear, and sides.

Article 9. Domesticated Animals

It is prohibited to raise or release any type of animal on the roads. For the movement of animals on the roads, there must be a person controlling [the animal] and compliance with traffic regulations.

In the event of an accident from domesticated animals, the owner or the controller must be liable for damages caused by [his/her] domesticated animal as provided for in Article 12 of the Tort Law.

Chapter III
Vehicle Drivers

Article 10. Age of Vehicle Drivers

- A bicycle driver must be no younger than twelve years old;
- A motorcycle driver must be at least fifteen years old or older. A person who is [at least] fifteen, but not yet eighteen years old is permitted to drive only motorcycles of 110 cc or less;
- A driver of a three-wheeled vehicle, a power tiller, a *tok tok*, and vehicles with four or more wheels run by an engine must be at least eighteen years old;
- A passenger transport vehicle driver must be at least twenty-five years old.

Article 11. Drivers Licenses

A driver of a vehicle run by an engine must hold a drivers license.

Testing and issuing drivers licenses must strictly comply with regulations issued by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Those who will receive driver's licenses must pass a test according to a complete drivers training courses.

A driver's license has a term of five years and can be extended after each expiration. An applicant requesting an extension to a driver's license must be in good health, and must have a proper health certificate from a doctor.

Foreign drivers posted in the Lao PDR including diplomats, experts, [and] staff of international organizations must use Lao PDR driver's licenses. Driver's licenses issued by other countries can be exchanged for Lao PDR driver's licenses. For foreign drivers who are citizens of member countries to treaties or conventions regarding mutual recognition of driver's licenses in which the Lao PDR

participates, can use their own driver's licenses without exchanging them for Lao PDR driver's licenses.

Article 12. Driver Qualifications

Drivers must meet the following qualifications:

- Have a drivers license in compliance with rules;
- Be in good health;
- Strictly comply with traffic regulations;
- Drive not in excess of time periods provided for by regulations;
- Not drive a vehicle while intoxicated and not be addicted to narcotics.

Article 13. Rules for Driving and Transporting

Drivers of all types of vehicles must strictly comply with traffic regulations, i.e.:

- For bicycles, it is permitted that no more than two persons are authorized to ride [such];
- For motorcycles, it is permitted that only one adult and one other child not older than eleven years old ride pillion;
- For three-wheeled pedal vehicles and three-wheeled vehicles with motorcycles attached to the sides, it is permitted for three persons to ride [in those vehicles] including the driver;
- For three-wheeled vehicles and vehicles with four or more wheels, that are run by an engine, are permitted to [undertake] transport as provided for in Article 9 of the Surface Transportation Law, and rules from the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction;
- All motorcycle passengers must wear helmets that meet [certain] standards;
- It is prohibited for motorcycle drivers or bicycle drivers to drive more than two abreast;
- It is prohibited to drive in excess of predetermined [speed limits];
- It is prohibited to park where there are signs prohibiting parking and vehicles must be parked [in an] orderly [manner];
- It is prohibited to transport goods or passengers in excess of determined weights and quantities;
- It is prohibited for a driver to use a telephone or watch television while driving a vehicle;
- It is prohibited to transport dangerous substances without permission as provided for in Article 23 of the Surface Transportation Law.

In the event of meeting with an accident [and] there are injured persons, [a driver] must assist in transporting such injured persons to a hospital and notify traffic police or the public roads police.

Chapter IV *Administration of Vehicles*

Article 14. Registration of Civilian Vehicles

All types of civilian vehicles run by engines, including heavy machinery, i.e.: bulldozer, excavator, street cleaner, steamroller, and other heavy machinery, must be registered and have proper plates in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Only authorized State organizations can produce and issue drivers licenses, vehicle registration, and license plates.

Article 15. Registration of National [Armed] Forces and Peace Keeping Forces

Vehicles run by engines, which directly serve national defense or peace keeping are registered and have plates from the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of Interior.

Vehicles run by engines, which serve administrative duties and other service tasks of the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of Interior must be registered and must have license plates according to regulations regarding civilian vehicles.

Article 16. Vehicle Imports

All types of vehicles run by engines imported for registration and permanent use in the Lao PDR must have structural features that comply with the manufacturer's technical standards, must have left-hand steering and must possess quality in accordance with technical standards provided by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 17. Vehicle Assembly and Modifications

The assembly or modification of vehicles run by engines must meet the manufacturer's technical standards, and must comply with technical standards provided by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 18. Vehicle Repair

Vehicle repair must guarantee safety and comply with technical standards provided by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 19. Technical Inspection of Vehicles

All types of vehicles run by engines must pass technical inspection in accordance with rules provided by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 20. Moving Heavy Machinery

Moving heavy machinery must make use of a trailer or a transportation vehicle that complies with technical [standards] for transporting [such heavy machinery].

Chapter V

Public Roads Police and Traffic Police Administration

Article 21. Public Roads Police and Traffic Police Administration

Public roads police and traffic police are under the administration of the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction and the Ministry of Interior.

Article 22. Ministry of Communication, Transport, Posts, and Construction Administration

The Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction administers public roads police and traffic police in the following aspects:

1. Build and strengthen them politically, ideologically, [and build their] traffic and surface transportation expertise;
2. Propose promotions, move, commend, and impose discipline to the Ministry of Interior;
3. To provide necessary service vehicles for fulfilling [one's] duties;
4. To draw up financial budgets, administrative expenses, salaries, bonuses and the application of [other] policies;
5. To direct and directly command public roads police and traffic police in the implementation of transportation and road traffic inspection duties throughout the country.

Article 23. Ministry of Interior Administration

The Ministry of Interior administers the public roads police and traffic police in the following aspects:

1. Build and strengthen police expertise;
2. To decorate, promote, move, commend, and impose discipline;
3. To provide uniforms, weapons, and [other] necessary equipment;
4. Establish salaries and [other] allowances.

Chapter VI
Traffic Control

Article 24. Rights and Duties of the Public Roads Police and Traffic Police

Public roads police and traffic police have the responsibility to facilitate [and] control traffic, and inspect the adherence to the Road Traffic Law, and the Surface Transportation Law, and the Public Roads Law, [and] traffic regulations, and have the right to inspect vehicle documents and driver documents, educate and train, fine offenders, and enforce compliance to the laws and regulations referred to above.

In the case that it is necessary to detain a person, seize or detain a vehicle that has violated the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, the Public Roads Law and traffic regulations to undertake case processing at that place, public roads police and traffic police must protect that vehicle and that vehicle's accessories [and keep such] in its original condition. It is absolutely prohibited to use seized or detained vehicles, to destroy evidence, embezzle legal exhibits, or cause damage or loss to such vehicles or accessories.

Article 25. Rights and Duties of Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Officials

Officials of the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction, at both central and local levels, have the duty to coordinate with public roads police and traffic police in controlling and inspecting load weights of transportation vehicles and passenger vehicles in accordance with the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, the Public Roads Law, and traffic regulations.

Article 26. Inspecting and Resolving Accidents

Wherever an accident occurs, it is mandatory that the traffic police or public roads police undertake an inspection, make a record of, and compile documents for investigation and interrogations, and provide truthful information and evidence in order to prosecute a case under the law and regulations.

In the event that a vehicle has broken down on a road, the driver must be responsible for removing that vehicle from lanes of traffic.

Article 27. Inspecting Documents and Drivers

Traffic control officials have the right and the duty to inspect vehicle and driver documents on the roads at any appropriate community checkpoint.

Each inspection must [be undertaken] by at least two officials.

Chapter VII
Road Traffic Administration

Article 28. Road Traffic Administration Agencies

Road Traffic Administration Agencies are comprised of two levels as follows:

- At the central level, there are: the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction, and the Ministry of Interior;
- At the local level there are: the Provincial, Prefectural, and Special Zone Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Divisions and District Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Bureaus.

Article 29. Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction

In administering road traffic, the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction has the following primary rights and duties:

1. To draw up long, medium, and short-term strategic plans regarding the development of road traffic to submit to the Government;
2. To issue regulations regarding traffic administration throughout the country, to monitor, inspect, and evaluate the implementation of the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, and Public Roads Law and traffic regulations in coordination with the Ministry of Interior;
3. To administer, inspect vehicle registration certificates, license plates and drivers licenses throughout the country;
4. To research and analyze accident statistics and the volume of traffic throughout the country;
5. To cooperate with foreign parties and to seek funding sources to develop road traffic;
6. To exercise rights and fulfill other duties as assigned by the Government.

Article 30. Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Interior

In administering road traffic, the Ministry of Interior has the following primary rights and duties:

1. To draw up a budget plan for building up and strengthening police expertise in the traffic police and the public roads police;
2. To coordinate with the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction in resolving problems regarding traffic administration, in issuing regulations regarding the inspection [and] control of the implementation of rules and the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, the Public Roads Law, and traffic regulations, and to compile statistics regarding road accidents throughout the country;
3. To monitor, inspect, and evaluate the implementation of the rules and laws mentioned above;
4. To exercise rights and fulfill other duties as assigned by the Government.

Article 31. Rights and Duties of the Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Divisions

In administering road traffic, the provincial, prefectural, and special zone Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Divisions have the following primary rights and duties:

1. To propagate strategic and master plans regarding development of road traffic to transform such into detailed plans for implementation;
2. To administer road traffic, which is comprised of the following primary tasks:
 - Organize orderly road traffic;
 - Establish and administer road signs [and] road traffic symbols for convenient and safe road traffic;
 - Compile statistics on accidents and the volume of traffic;
 - Organize, train, and test for drivers licenses;
 - Inspect and issue technical certificates for vehicles;
 - Issue vehicle registration, driver's licenses, and license plates as assigned by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction;
 - Educate, train, propagandize and disseminate rules and the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, the Public Roads Law and traffic regulations;
 - Research and comment on drafting road traffic regulations and establishing car parks;
 - Administer and directly supervise the public roads police and the traffic police in the implementation of the duty to inspect surface transportation and road traffic at one's locality;
3. To exercise rights and fulfill other duties as assigned by the Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction.

Article 32. Rights and Duties of District Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Bureaus

In administering road traffic, the District Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Bureaus have the following primary rights and duties:

1. Educate, train, propagandize and disseminate the rules and the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, the Public Roads Law and traffic regulations;
2. Protect and maintain the sign systems, [and] Traffic Symbols;

3. Participate in resolving accidents that occur within one's district.
4. Exercise other rights and fulfill other duties as assigned by Provincial, Prefectural, or Special Zone Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction Divisions.

Chapter VIII

Policy towards those who are Productive and Measures against Offenders

Article 33. Policy towards those who are Productive

Any person or organization productively participating in road traffic administration, ensuring safety, order, maintaining cleanliness, the environment, the Traffic Signal System, State and individual properties on roads will be commended and will benefit from appropriate policies that will be determined in detail by the Government.

Article 34. Measures against Offenders

Any person or organization violating any provision of this Law, causing damages to the public, to other's lives, health, property, hygiene, or to the environment will be educated and trained, will be fined, or will be criminally punished depending on the seriousness of the case.

Article 35. Education and Training Measures

Any person or organization committing a minor violation of any provision of this Law, i.e.:

Forgetting [to carry on them] a drivers license or vehicle documents, [have] expired [or] dirtied vehicle documents, broken, unreadable, or improperly affixed license plates will be educated and trained according to rules.

Article 36. Fines

Any person or organization violating any provision of this Law, i.e.:

- Violating traffic lights;
- Violating Traffic Signals;
- Fail to have a drivers license; not have vehicle documents;
- Drive a vehicle in the wrong direction;
- Drive a vehicle while intoxicated;
- Drive a vehicle that [emits] loud sounds in excess of standard;
- Turn on high beams in conflict with rules;
- Fail to turn on lights during night time;
- Turn on only one light (for four wheeled vehicles and above);
- Fail to turn on lights during the day time when the weather is bad, i.e.: heavy rain or thick fog;
- [Emit] black smoke in excess of standard;
- Vehicle has no brakes;
- Deface and create obstructions on roads;
- Fail to have rearview mirrors;
- Fail to wear standard helmets while driving a motorcycle;
- Transporting [items] in excess of weight limits;

- A vehicle lacks the necessary complete accessories to keep it in a condition to allow it to be used in compliance with technical safety standards, and other violations of traffic regulations will be fined according to rules;

The Ministry of Communications, Transportation, Posts, and Construction is assigned to research and draft rules regarding violations and rates for fines to submit to the Government for approval.

Article 37. Criminal Measures

Any individual committing a criminal offense, i.e.:

- Committing a traffic safety offense;
- Forging drivers licenses, documents, license plates, vehicle engine or chassis numbers;
- Steal or damage signs, sign posts, Traffic Symbols or destroying roads;
- Hooligan-like behavior in traffic;
- Violating the Road Traffic Law, the Surface Transportation Law, and the Public Roads Law or traffic regulations causing accidents, injury, disability, or death.

shall receive criminal punishment.

Article 38. Additional Punitive Measures

In addition to the primary penalties provided for Article 35, Article 36, and Article 37 of this Law, offenders will receive additional penalties as follows, i.e.: have traffic-related licenses suspended [or] withdrawn, have the vehicle used in committing the offense seized or nationalized.

Chapter IX *Final Provisions*

Article 39. Implementation

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is assigned to implement this Law.

Article 40. Effectiveness

This Law is valid ninety days from the date that the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic issues an Executive Decree promulgating it.

Terms and provisions conflicting with this Law are hereby repealed.

Vientiane, date 08 April 2000
President of the National Assembly

[seal of the President of the National Assembly]
[signature]

Samane Vignaket