

### 3 Types of Licenses and Vehicle Coverage

RT Law 84 II • III,  
85, 86

#### (1) License Classifications

Driver's licenses are classified into the following three types.

<b>First-class license (category 1)</b>	Required to operate automobiles and general mopeds. (Excludes those vehicles that require a second-class license.)
<b>Second-class license (category 2)</b>	Required to operate a bus, taxi or other vehicle that transports fee-paying passengers, or a designated driving service's regular motor vehicle. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Learner's permit</b>	Required to operate a large vehicle, a medium vehicle, a quasi-medium vehicle or regular motor vehicle for the purpose of learning to drive or taking a driving test.

\* 1

Refers to a regular passenger car operated by drivers working for a designated driving service operator (primarily for driving home people who have drunk alcohol).



#### Quick Hint

A passenger bus or taxi can be driven without a second-class license if this is to return the vehicle or for another reason that does not involve carrying passengers.

#### (2) Types of First-class Licenses

There are ten types of first-class licenses. The table below indicates which types of vehicles can be driven with each license.

Vehicle qualified to drive / Type of first-class license (minimum age)	Large vehicle	Medium vehicle	Quasi-medium vehicle	Regular motor vehicle	Special heavy equipment	Large-size motorcycle	Regular motorcycle	Special light equipment	General moped
<b>Large (21) *1</b>	●	●	●	●				●	●
<b>Medium (20) *1</b>		● *2	● *2	● *2				●	●
<b>Quasi-medium (18)</b>			● *2	● *2				●	●
<b>Regular (18)</b>				● *2				●	●
<b>Special heavy equipment (18)</b>					●			●	●
<b>Large-size motorcycle (18)</b>						● *2	● *2	●	●
<b>Regular motorcycle (16)</b>							● *2 *3	●	●
<b>Special light equipment (16)</b>								●	
<b>Moped (16)</b>									●
<b>Towing license (18)</b>	This type of license is required to tow a vehicle that weighs in excess of 750 kg by using a large vehicle, a medium vehicle, a quasi-medium vehicle, regular motor vehicle, or heavy special equipment. *4								

\* 1

Minimum age is 19 if the person is specially designated as a self-defence official, etc.

\* 2

Only automobiles with automatic transmission can be driven with a license that specifies automatic transmissions only.

\* 3

Only motorcycles with a displacement of 125 cc or less or rated motor output of 1.00 kW or less can be operated with a license that specifies small motorcycles only.

\* 4

Only camping trailers or other trailers weighing a total of less than 2,000 kg can be towed with a license that specifies small trailers only.

### 3 The Function of Sight

While driving utilizes a wide range of motor skills and sensory awareness, the most crucial role is sight.

#### (1) Eye sight

##### A Eye sight

Eyesight is measured via the International Command Visual Acuity Test chart<sup>1</sup>. However, peripheral vision is far less accurate than direct eyesight. Therefore, it is imperative for a driver to pay attention to the road in general and not fixate on a specific point.

Accurate awareness of the environment is crucial, especially at high speeds.

##### B Dynamic vision

Your vision during movement and your vision of moving things is called Dynamic vision<sup>2</sup>. Dynamic vision is less accurate than when looking at fixed objects. **As speed increases, visual accuracy decreases**, delaying the awareness of dangerous situations.

\*1  
International  
Command Visual  
Acuity Test chart

0.2	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.3	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.4	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.5	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.6	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.7	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.8	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
0.9	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
1.0	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
1.2	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙
1.5	⊖	⊕	⊘	⊙

\*2  
Dynamic vision...  

- one is moving and others are moving too.
- one is moving, but others are stopped.
- one is stopped, but others are moving.



Static vision



Dynamic vision

#### (2) Field of vision

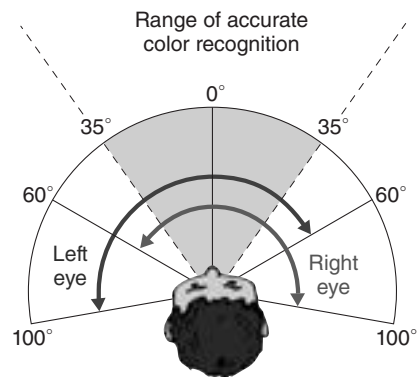
##### A Field of vision

A person's standard range of vision is called one's field of vision.

**With one eye, the usual range when motionless is about 160 degrees. With both eyes, it is about 200 degrees.**

Color can only be correctly identified within **a range of 35 degrees**. Beyond this point, color is almost impossible to recognize accurately.

Therefore, if one is not paying attention, they may misread traffic lights or signs.



**B The relation between field of vision and speed.**

As the vehicle's speed increases, the field of vision becomes narrower and the driver tends to focus into the distance. In turn, less attention is paid carefully to areas closer to the vehicle and thus pedestrians, bicycles or other obstacles may be overlooked.



Field of view at low speed



Field of view at high speed

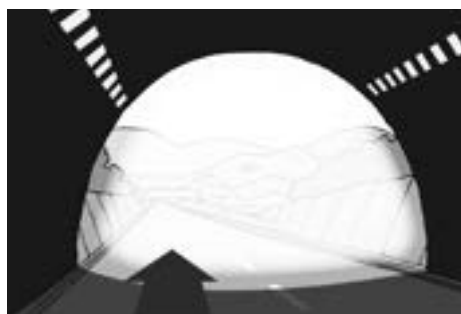
**(3) Adaptation**

When exposed to light, people react to glare and cannot see well. As the eyes adjust to the light, vision returns. This is called **light adaptation**.

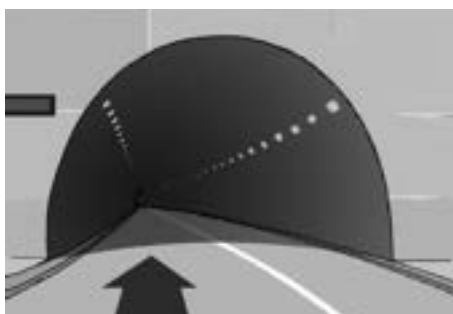
Conversely, when light is suddenly extinguished, vision is severely impaired. However, vision slowly returns as the eyes adjust to the light change. This is called **dark adaptation**.

**Dark adaptation takes longer than light adaptation.**

Drivers should be careful and reduce speed when entering and exiting tunnels<sup>1</sup>.



Light adaptation



Dark adaptation

\* 1

At dusk as well, the eyes are unable to adjust to the speed with which the surroundings grow dark, reducing the driver's visibility. See P.209 for details.

**4 Judgment of Distance and Speed**

Drivers frequently judge distances without confirming their own speed. Accurate evaluation of speed and distance is difficult and people often make incorrect judgments.

In order to improve accuracy, drivers should confirm their speed by checking the speedometer.

Especially, drivers should pay close attention not to drive too fast when getting off expressways.



**Quick Hint**

How to use time to measure distance

You can use time to measure distance and keep an appropriate space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front.

When the vehicle in front of you passes a certain point and your vehicle reaches the same point at least 2-3 seconds later, you are maintaining a safe distance from the vehicle in front. On expressways, an interval of at least four seconds is needed.



Keeping a safe distance?



Looking at the speedometer?

In the following adverse conditions, accuracy is further decreased.

① **At night**

A driver's judgment is impaired at night leading to inaccurate judgments. If the driver maintain distance judging by the lights of the leading vehicle, may lead to inaccurate distance.

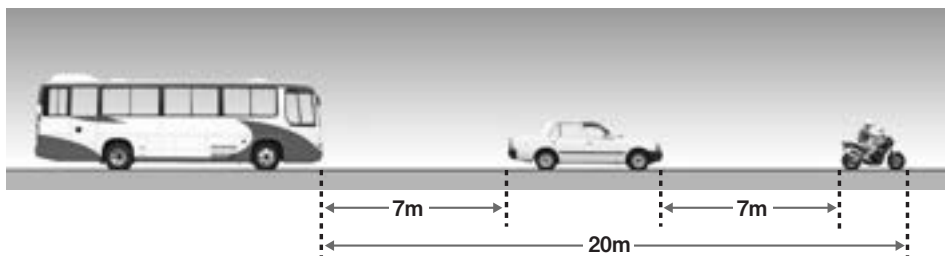
② **Expressway**

Driver's have a wide view of their surroundings, so they feel that they are traveling slower than actually are.

③ **Size of vehicles**

Even if the vehicles are at the same distance, **larger vehicles seem to be closer** and **smaller vehicles seem to be farther away**.

From 100 meters away, a large sized vehicle, a passenger vehicle and a two-wheeled vehicle look like they are almost at the same distance. Actually, as shown in the picture below, the distance between the two-wheeled vehicle to the large sized vehicle is 20 meters.



# 2 Factors Affecting Recognition, Judgment and Operation

There are various factors that can easily lead to unfavorable consequences that affect recognition, judgment and operation.

Some factors, such as drinking or fatigue, can be prevented in advance.

## 1 Drinking

### (1) The influence of alcohol

The effects of drinking are different from person to person.

Nevertheless, while drinking may temporarily relieve tension and help one relax, it can also give people a euphoric feeling and the illusion that their mind is working perfectly fine and clear.

However in actual reality, drinking dulls brain functions, and makes it impossible to judge and think logically.

Since judgment and self restraint are impaired after consuming alcohol, accurate and safe driving becomes impossible.

### (2) The dangers of drunken driving

Drunken driving can lead to fatal or other such major traffic accidents. Even simply thinking that because some time has passed since drinking, and that it is thus alright to drive, can be extremely dangerous.

**DO NOT DRIVE** even if you have only had a little to drink!!

Do not allow or encourage someone who has plans to drive to drink<sup>1</sup>.



#### Quick Hint

The influence of alcohol

- You become over-confident.
- You drive too fast.
- Your field of vision narrows.
- Your sense of distance is dulled.

RT Law 65

\*1

Penalties for drunken driving are particularly severe.

- ① Driving while drunk: Up to five years' imprisonment or a fine of up to one million yen.
- ② Driving under the influence of alcohol (Breath-alcohol concentration of 0.15 mg/l or more): Up to three years' imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen.

Further, persons who give alcohol to a driver or provide a vehicle to someone who is drunk may be charged and penalized heavily for aiding and abetting the act of drink-driving.



### Quick Hint

How long alcohol stays in your system

Depending on how much you have drunk, alcohol can stay in your system until the next morning.

Simply "sleeping it off" overnight may not necessarily be enough. If you plan to drive the next day, you need to be careful about how much you drink. Also, you should refrain from driving the day after drinking heavily.

## Point

### Amount of alcohol consumed and states of intoxication

Although there are individual differences, the amount of alcohol consumed generally leads to the following states of intoxication:

Amount of alcohol consumed	Breath-alcohol concentration	State of intoxication
Medium beer bottle: Up to 1 bottle Sake : Up to 1 go (approx. 180ml)	0.1mg/l ~ 0.2mg/l	Judgment becomes slightly impaired
Medium beer bottles: 1-2 bottles Sake : 1-2 go (approx. 180-360ml)	0.25mg/l ~ 0.5mg/l	Hand movements become active
Medium beer bottles: Up to 3 bottles Sake : Up to 3 go (approx. 540ml)	0.55mg/l ~ 0.75mg/l	Unsteady on feet when standing
Medium beer bottles: 4-6 bottles Sake : 4-6 go (approx. 720-1,080ml)	0.8mg/l ~ 1.5mg/l	Staggering gait
Medium beer bottles: 7-10 bottles Sake : 7-10 go (approx. 1,260-1,800ml)	1.55mg/l ~ 2mg/l	Unable to stand
Medium beer bottle: Over 10 bottles Sake : Over 1 sho (approx. 1.8 l)	2.05mg/l ~	Cannot be woken up even if shaken

※ Based on a male weighing 60 kg.

Source : "Alcohol Health Guidance Manual, 2003" edited by Susumu Higuchi.

## 2 Fatigue

### (1) Factors causing fatigue

The following are causes of fatigue while driving.

- A Disruptions in lifestyle such as lack of sleep.
- B Old age or inexperience.
- C Time of day, temperature, road conditions, traveling distance, conditions inside the vehicle and so on.

### (2) Effects of fatigue

When one is fatigued, symptoms such as yawning, dozing off, and so forth, lead to slower reaction times.

Symptoms that one can not see are increased heart rate and blood pressure.

It is important to immediately take a rest when feeling even slightly drowsy.



★dozing off= falls to asleep

## 2 Automobile Inspections

### (1) The Duty to Have One's Automobile Inspected

Every automobile (excluding compact cars excluded from inspection<sup>1</sup> and light special equipment) must undergo a compulsory safety inspection (“shaken”) at fixed intervals, and must receive a **motor vehicle inspection certificate** before it can be driven.

#### Point

#### Inspection (Shaken) Period -- Major vehicles --

Automobiles to be inspected annually	Automobiles to be inspected every two years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commercial use Automobiles (excluding vehicles with a total displacement of 660cc or less, and large-size motorcycles, and regular motorcycles)</li> <li>● Private use                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Regular trucks (excluding 660cc or less)</li> <li>② Passenger automobiles with a seating capacity of 11 passenger or more</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Rental cars (excluding 660cc or less)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Private use                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Passenger automobiles with a seating capacity of 10 passengers or less</li> <li>② Regular trucks of 660cc or less</li> <li>③ Large-size motorcycles</li> <li>④ Regular motorcycles (excluding 250cc or less)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Rental cars (660cc or less)</li> </ul>

Note: Of the automobiles to be inspected every two years, the first required inspection is in the third year for new motorcycles and private passenger automobiles (restricted to gross weight less than 8 tons).

### (2) The Inspection Sticker

When an automobile passes inspection, it is issued a vehicle inspection certificate and **inspection sticker**. The inspection sticker must be displayed by sticking onto the inside front windshield<sup>2</sup> to be easily visible facing forward and from the driver's seat.

The inspection sticker indicates **the next inspection month** (and year).



“8” indicates the year in which the inspection certificate expires, and “11” indicates the month in the inspection sticker.

## 3 Motor Vehicle Inspection Certificate and Compulsory Automobile Liability Insurance Certificate

Automobiles that require inspection must have a **valid motor vehicle inspection certificate** and a **compulsory automobile liability insurance** (CALI or “jibaiseki hoken”) **certificate** or **mutual relief system insurance** (“sekinin kyosai”) **certificate**<sup>3</sup>.

Automobiles excluded from inspection and mopeds must not be driven without a compulsory automobile liability insurance or mutual relief system insurance certificate.

Before driving an automobile or moped, confirm that it is covered by such insurance and that the term of validity has not expired.

RTV Law 58, 61, 62, 66  
RTV Law Enforcement Regulations 37-3

\* 1  
Compact cars excluded from inspection...

Refers to motorcycles with an engine displacement of 250 cc or less and vehicles with an engine displacement of 660 cc or less that use caterpillar tracks or sleds.

\* 2  
Two-wheeled vehicles, etc...

For vehicles without a cabin or front windshield, such as large-size and regular motorcycles, the emblem must be stuck onto the license plate at the rear of the vehicle, in the upper left corner so that it is easily visible.

#### Quick Hint

##### Insurance Sticker

Compact cars excluded from inspection and mopeds are required to display the “insurance sticker” that indicates that the vehicle is covered by compulsory automobile liability insurance.



Note:  
The color of this sticker changes from year to year in the following order: blue, orange, purple, yellow-green, red, yellow, green.

RTV Law 66 I  
MVDI Law 8, 9-5

\* 3  
Mutual relief system...

Refers to compulsory automobile liability mutual aid, which serves the same purpose as compulsory automobile liability insurance and is offered by organizations such as agricultural associations and consumer cooperatives.

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