



## **LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New traffic laws impact DWI convictions, driving on flooded roads and off-road vehicles**

Several new highway safety laws are now in effect in Louisiana, including stiffer penalties for DWI convictions, new laws concerning driving through flooded areas and the use of off-road vehicles on public roads.

The new laws were passed during the 2018 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature. Most of the new laws became effective on August 1, according to Louisiana Highway Safety Commission Executive Director Lisa Freeman.

"The overall tone of the new legislation is one of seriousness toward traffic safety, as well as respect for measures of accountability," Freeman said.

Act 198 levies an additional \$50 fine for use of a breath-testing instrument for anyone convicted of driving while intoxicated. "Convictions for impaired driving carry significant financial consequences, and this new law demonstrates that by the notable increase from \$75 to \$125 for this special assessment," Freeman said.

Act 508 allows judges to extend probation for up to eight years for people convicted of third- and fourth-offense DWI in a "specialty court program," making substance abuse treatment a more feasible possibility. "This new law recognizes the importance of a specialty court program, such as DWI court, and the appropriateness of extended substance abuse treatment for repeat impaired drivers," Freeman said.

Careless operation of a motor vehicle during flood conditions is a new law designed to protect lives and property from drivers who cause dangerous wakes. The new law carries a penalty of up to 250 hours of community service and a two-year driver's license suspension.

Three-wheelers, four-wheelers, dirt bikes and other all-terrain vehicles not designed for public road use are now subject to a new law. Reckless operation of an off-road vehicle on a public road can carry a penalty of up to \$500 and 90 days in jail, plus forfeiture and destruction of the off-road vehicle. The new law defines reckless operation as forcing another vehicle to leave the road, colliding with a vehicle or person, speeding, going the wrong way, disregarding traffic signs or signals, impeding traffic, wheelies and stunts, harassing other drivers and corraling an occupied vehicle or pedestrian.

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