

Traffic Law in Bangladesh

Traffic laws in Bangladesh are primarily governed by the Road Transport Act 2018, which replaced the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983, and are enforced by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA). These laws aim to ensure road safety, regulate vehicle operations, and reduce accidents caused by reckless driving, overloading, or non-compliance with traffic rules. The Road Transport Act 2018, effective from November 1, 2019, introduced stricter penalties and updated definitions for offenses, significantly increasing fines and imprisonment terms compared to the previous ordinance. Additional regulations, such as the Bengal Motor Vehicles Tax Act 1932 and the Motor Vehicles Rules 1940, address vehicle taxation and operational standards. The laws cover drivers, vehicle owners, and pedestrians, with a point-based licensing system where accumulating 12 points for violations leads to license revocation. Below is an overview of key traffic laws and their punishments for violations, presented in a clear, copyable format. For official texts, refer to bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd or brta.gov.bd.

Key Traffic Laws and Punishments:

- **Driving Without a License (Section 66, Road Transport Act 2018):** Operating a vehicle without a valid license is punishable by up to 6 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 25,000 taka, or both. Previously, under the 1983 Ordinance, the penalty was up to 4 months' imprisonment or a 500 taka fine.
- **Driving Unregistered or Unfit Vehicles (Section 66):** Driving a vehicle without registration or a fitness certificate carries up to 6 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 50,000 taka (for unregistered vehicles) or 25,000 taka (for unfit vehicles), or both. Under the old law, penalties were 3 months' imprisonment or 2,000 taka fine.
- **Illegal Vehicle Modification (Section 66):** Modifying a vehicle's body, brakes, gears, or exhaust system without approval is punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment, a fine up to 3 lakh taka, or both. Previously, the fine was 2,000 taka.
- **Reckless Driving or Risky Overtaking (Section 66):** Driving recklessly or overtaking dangerously carries up to 3 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 10,000 taka, or both. Repeat offenses double the fine. The 1983 Ordinance set fines at 300-500 taka.
- **Driving Under the Influence (Section 66):** Operating a vehicle while intoxicated or staying in a vehicle in an inebriated state is punishable by up to 3 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 10,000 taka, or both.
- **Using Banned Horns (Section 66):** Using hydraulic or prohibited horns carries up to 3 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 10,000 taka, or both. The old fine was 100 taka.

- Disobeying Traffic Signals (Section 42, 44): Ignoring red lights or police orders is punishable by a fine up to 500 taka (previously 500 taka, doubling to 1,000 taka for repeat offenses).
- Driving on Wrong Side of One-Way Road (Section 44): Driving against traffic flow carries a fine up to 200 taka, doubling for repeat offenses.
- Overloading Vehicles (Section 66): Exceeding approved vehicle weight limits is punishable by up to 1 year's imprisonment, a fine up to 1 lakh taka, or both. Previously, fines were 1,000-2,000 taka.
- Using Mobile Phone While Driving (Section 66): Using a mobile phone (except for navigation with hands-free devices) while driving carries a fine up to 5,000 taka or 3 months' imprisonment.
- Not Wearing Seatbelt (Section 66): Drivers or front-seat passengers not wearing seatbelts face a fine up to 5,000 taka.
- Causing Death by Rash Driving (Section 304B, Penal Code 1860): Rash or negligent driving causing death, not amounting to culpable homicide, carries up to 3 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both. Serious accidents may fall under Section 302 (murder, death penalty) or 304 (culpable homicide, up to life imprisonment).
- Causing Injury or Property Damage (Section 53): Victims of accidents due to traffic violations are entitled to compensation. Offenders face up to 6 months' imprisonment, a fine up to 25,000 taka, or both under Section 66.
- Illegal Parking or Road Obstruction (Section 66): Parking illegally or obstructing public roads carries a fine up to 500 taka (previously 500 taka).
- Using Vehicle Without Permission (Section 66): Unauthorized use of another's vehicle is punishable by a fine up to 750 taka.
- Black Smoke Emission (Section 66): Vehicles emitting excessive black smoke face a fine up to 200 taka.
- Speeding (Section 42, 44): Exceeding speed limits (varying by road type, e.g., lower in urban areas) results in fines up to 10,000 taka or license suspension. Specific limits are set by BRTA guidelines.
- Using Illegal Lane (Section 66): Driving in a prohibited lane carries a fine up to 1,000 taka.

Implementation and Additional Notes:

The Road Transport Act 2018 introduced a point-based system where violations like speeding or honking deduct points from a driver's license; 12 points lead to revocation. However, enforcement remains challenging due to non-digital licenses and lax implementation, especially in Dhaka, where traffic police were initially lenient. The act aims to reduce road accidents, which claim thousands of lives annually (e.g., 224 deaths in 12 days of August 2019). Pedestrians, especially in Dhaka, face high risks, with 80% of accidents involving fuel-based vehicles hitting walkers. Fines under the 2018 Act range from 5,000 to 5 lakh taka, a significant increase from the 100-5,000 taka range under the 1983 Ordinance. Non-bailable offenses, like causing death by rash driving, may lead to detention without bail under Penal Code sections. Public awareness is low, contributing to frequent violations, and corruption in licensing processes undermines enforcement. Compensation for victims is available under Section 53, but strict compliance is needed to reduce accidents. For updates, consult bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd or brta.gov.bd