

SPRING CLEANING FOR Georgia TRAFFIC LAWS

As I write this, on March 28, the calendar says it is spring, even if the weather outside doesn't feel that way. With spring comes the annual rite of spring cleaning.



While cleaning out closets, pressure washing the driveway, planting flowers and putting out fresh pine straw is important, you might also think about "spring cleaning" as it applies to your driving. Here are some things you might want to do:

1. Check your Georgia driver's license to make sure it is valid. In other words, have you checked to make sure your license did not expire on your last birthday?
2. Is your Georgia driver's license suspended? You might remember my story of finding out my license had been suspended for a year, ONLY when I went to DDS to change my address. Apparently a female driver had been in an accident in Cobb County and failed to pay her ticket; the police officer mistakenly put my license number on the ticket, and hence MY license was suspended for nonpayment, not hers. It took me an entire day to sort this out with DDS. If I had been stopped for any reason, I would have been arrested and taken to jail because the computers would have shown my license suspended! To check on your license status, go to www.dds.ga.gov, "Driver History". There is a fee of either \$6.00 (3 year history) or \$8.00 (7 year history)
3. Are you a teenage driver in Georgia and have just turned 18? Make sure you change your driver's license from a Class D to a Class C; this prevents you from being charged with curfew violations.
4. Make a copy of your driver's license and keep it in a safe place; since social security numbers can no longer be used as drivers license numbers, you may want to have a copy so you can remember your license number.
5. Check all of your car's lights to make sure they are working properly; one of the most common police stops of cars involves improper lighting; check your head lights, brake lights, taillights, and definitely do not forget your TAG lights!
6. Is your registration valid? Again, make sure you renewed the registration in the past year.
7. Is your insurance policy valid? Call your agent and make sure you have the proper coverage and limits.

8. Do you have a current Georgia driver's license and you moved in the past year? Have you changed your address on your license? You can go to www.dds.ga.gov and change the address for free.
9. Did you move to Georgia in the past year? If you have not gotten a Georgia drivers license do so immediately! Go to www.dds.ga.gov, "New to Georgia", for more info.
10. Do you have www.mrgadui.com and <http://defendingdriversrights.com> bookmarked? Do you have my phone number saved in your mobile phone?

WATCH OUT FOR "MOVE OVER LAW" in Atlanta Metro Counties



Scene: You are traveling on a road with 4 lanes; you are in the lane closest to the curb; as you approach a police car which has another car stopped on the right shoulder. Another car is in the lane on your left, so you cannot change lanes; you pass the police car; a few seconds later another police car turns on their blue lights and stops you. What Georgia driving law did you violate?

You may have violated Georgia's "move over law", which has been in existence since 2003. The move over law, found in OCGA 40-6-16, was originally passed for the safety and protection of police officers (mostly state troopers) engaged in a traffic stop on heavily traveled roadways. This Georgia driving law, as so often happens, is now being used by cities as a revenue generator.

The law says that if you approach an emergency vehicle or tow truck which is displaying flashing lights, you should "approach with due caution". This means you should 1. Make a lane change if possible; or 2. Reduce your speed to a "reasonable and proper speed".

The law says that the fine for this offense "cannot be more than \$500." It originally set the fine as a minimum of \$500.00, but now the fine can be anywhere from \$1.00 to \$500.00.

WATCH OUT FOR "MOVE OVER LAW" (cont.)

The law is probably unconstitutional for vagueness, but that issue is for the Courts to decide; in the meantime, you need to know what is going on with this driving law in at least 3 cities in Gwinnett and North Fulton counties: Johns Creek, Duluth, and Suwanee have set up "stings", where 2 or 3 police cars are all in the same vicinity; as soon as one car has someone stopped; the others stop those cars that do not change lanes. I have NEVER seen the police officers take into account part 2 of the law, which says "you don't violate the traffic law if you can't change lanes but you still slow down." I actually had a Johns Creek case where video showed that my client could not safely change lanes, and slowed, but was stopped anyway. Duluth and Suwanee police are notorious for such operations, and worse, are fining people \$650.00 to \$700.00! If you receive a move over ticket in Georgia, call me before you pay the ticket!

IS YOUR TEEN DRINKING?



As a parent, I understand the challenges of raising a teenager. You want to do everything you can to keep your teen safe; but as they grow older, teens naturally want to push the limits and expand boundaries.

Of the many dangers teens face perhaps the most dangerous is underage drinking; studies have shown that compared with non drinking teens, drinking teens are more likely to die in a car crash, get pregnant, flunk out, be sexually assaulted, and commit suicide.

The following are some clues that may indicate your teen is drinking:

- Alcohol is missing from your frig or bar
- Breath mints or mouth wash (These may be an attempt to mask the smell of alcohol)
- More sluggish than usual
- Doesn't care as much about former interests or appearance
- Is unusually aggressive or rebellious
- Hanging around with different friends and is more secretive than usual
- Skipping school
- Grades dropping
- Borrowing more money than usual
- Drunk or intoxicated behavior (Slurred speech, unsteady walk, a dull &/or unfocused look, bloodshot eyes).

***The above list was obtained from MADD web site.*

HOW TO CONTROL ANGER/HOSTILITY



America seems to be filled with anger these days; just turn on Fox or CNN news and you will see all sorts of folks with red faces and strained necks hollering and shouting at each other.

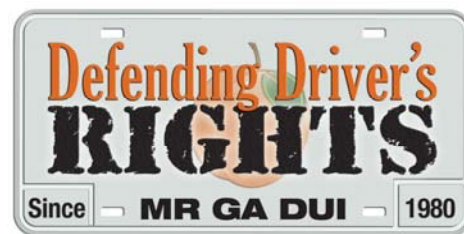
Do you find yourself spending a lot of time and energy being angry at someone or something? Anger is a generic term that includes being irritated, annoyed, critical, belligerent or hostile. Anger has many disadvantages, and really no advantages, to making our lives better; next time you feel yourself becoming angry, stop for a second and before reacting with anger, think:

Are you happy when you are angry?

Do you communicate effectively when you are angry? After you have lashed out in anger, do you regret the things you may have done or said?

How do you appear to others when you are angry? Does your anger promote mutual respect, harmony or friendship?

Next time you find yourself in a situation where anger may arise, try this: Ask yourself "Can I do something about it?" if you can, anger is out of place because you can improve the situation; if you can't, anger is useless because nothing can be done.



Don't forget to check out my blog!

defendingdriversrights.com

Let me know if there are any topics you would like me to discuss in an upcoming blog or podcast.

Atlanta Law Practice dedicated exclusively to aggressive defense of those accused of DUI and serious traffic offenses since 1980.

PHONE: 770-923-4948

WEBSITE: www.mrgadui.com

EMAIL: mickey@mrgadui.com