



TwiTips:  
US Road Rules  
& Driving Details

<http://TourTheTwilightSaga.com>

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

## *Tour the Twilight Saga*

# US Road Rules and Driving Details

### Are You Licensed to Drive in the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State?

To legally drive within any US state:

- US Twilighters must have a valid driver's license issued by their home state.
- Canadian and other foreign Twilighters must have a valid driver's license issued by their home province or country, no less than 12 months prior to driving in the US.

### What is an International Driving Permit?

An International Driving Permit (IDP) is a booklet, about the size of a passport, which provides a translation of your existing driver's license into different languages. It is designed to be used in combination with—not *in place of*—your valid driver's license. In other words: by itself, no legitimate IDP grants driving privileges to anyone, anywhere.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Driving\\_Permit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Driving_Permit)

<http://businesstravel.about.com/od/internationaltravel/a/International-Drivers-Permit-For-USA.htm>

### Who Needs an IDP?

Twilighters from countries where English is the primary language **do not need** an IDP to drive in the US or Canada.

Twilighters from all other countries **should have one**.

- If a car rental agent cannot read and understand your driver's license, good luck getting a car.
- If stopped by a law enforcement official—for any reason—plan on experiencing a significant delay getting back on the road if the officer cannot read and understand your driver's license.

<http://answers.usa.gov/system/templates/selfservice/USAGov/#!/portal/1012/article/2815/International-Driving-Permit-IDP>

### The US Does Not Issue IDPs to Foreign Nationals

To learn how you can apply for an IDP, visit your government's website and look for a Department of Transportation section, or the like. Be sure to begin IDP application at least a month (preferably 3 months) in advance of your holiday.

### Beware of Scam IDP Websites

Scam IDP websites are out there and eager to take your money. When applying for an IDP, use only the Internet sources recommended by your government.

<http://businesstravel.about.com/od/internationaltravel/a/International-Drivers-Permit-Scam.htm>



### Know Before You Go

Even if you're an experienced driver, it's a good idea to read up on **US Driving Regulations** before driving in the US. Below is a link to the Washington State Drivers' Manual.

<http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/guide.html>

The English version is available in PDF, ePub, and Kindle formats. PDFs are available in several other languages.

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Although the file is 120 pages long, you don't need to read all of it. Below are the sections you *should* read.

- Inside Front Cover (Signs)
- Rules of the Road
- Safe Driving Tips
- Be in Shape to Drive
- Emergencies
- Inside Back Cover (Signs)

### **Parking Rules in the US**

In the Washington State Drivers' Manual **Rules of the Road** section, you'll learn all about US Parking Rules—applicable also in Canada. Oddly enough, you won't find an explanation of the US/Canadian **Parallel Parking Rules** in that chapter. So, we've provided them below.

- First, parallel parking refers to parking a vehicle with its wheels parallel and next to the curb or side of the road.
- While in the US or Canada, unless there are signs (or angled, white lines) indicating that vehicles should be parked at an angle, park parallel to the curb on roads where parking is allowed.
- In the absence of signs saying otherwise, you can parallel park on both sides of a one-way road.



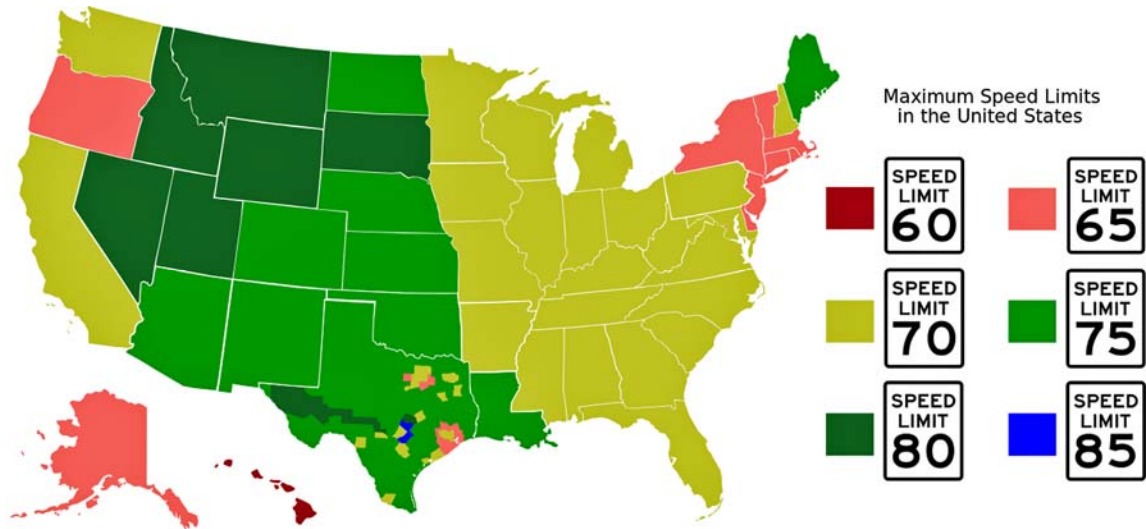
[©2010 Lauren Hall-Lew, image segment (enhanced)]

### **The most important parallel parking rule in the US or Canada:**

Your parked vehicle must be **facing in same direction** as the nearest lane's **direction of traffic**.

The image above was shot in the UK. If this photo was shot in the US or Canada, one of these vehicles would be sporting a costly parking ticket.

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[©2015 Andros 1337]

### US Speed Limits

Highway distances in the US are measured in **miles**—not kilometers. Thus, speed limits are posted in **miles-per-hour (mph)**.

**\*Please Note:** As soon as you arrive in the US, adjust the settings of your GPS/SatNav device to display miles instead of meters/kilometers, and mph instead of km/h. Your device may not offer this option until you are actually in the country.

Because most US speed limit signs don't include the mph identifier, Canadian Twilighters driving their personal vehicle to the US, or anyone who rents a car in Canada and drives to the US, easily can find themselves inadvertently driving far slower than the posted limit. This can anger those driving behind you, especially when traveling on small Olympic Peninsula highways where passing isn't convenient, and may lead to other drivers engaging in unsafe passing practices. Wherever you go, it is best to ensure that you drive at the speed limit.



[©2013 CD Miller] [©2006 Sav127 at wikipedia]

### Speedometer Conundrums

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Canadian Twilighters driving their personal vehicle to the US, or anyone who rents a car in Canada and drives to the US, will see **kilometers-per-hour (km/h)** in large print on the speedometer. The mph speed equivalent usually will be seen in smaller print. [Pic above, left.] If you rent a car in the US, the opposite will be true. [Pic above, right.] Thus, you'll have no worries while driving in the US.



[©2014 the Toronto Star]

### Unfortunately, Speedometer Design Varies Widely

As seen in the pic above, some Canadian automobile speedometers show *only* km/h. Others may show the mph equivalent in such small or dull-colored print that it will be particularly difficult to judge your speed in mph.

Thus, we created a **Speed Limit Conversion Table PDF** that you can print and bring with you, then tape to the dash of your car. It is freely posted on our website.

*Tour the Twilight Saga*  
Speed Limit Conversion Tables

For Canadian Auto in the US		For US Auto in Canada	
Sign Says: mph	Drive At: km/h	Sign Says: km/h	Drive At: mph
20	32	20	12
25	40	30	18
30	48	40	25
35	56	45	28
40	64	50	31
45	72	55	34
50	80	60	37
55	88	70	43
60	96	80	50
65	105	90	56
70	113	100	62
75	120	110	68
80	128	120	75

<http://www.TourTheTwilightSaga.com/Tips/SpeedTables.pdf>

Our PDF also includes a Speed Limit Conversion Table for Twilighters driving a US automobile in Canada. (*Tour the Twilight Saga Book Two—Vancouver, British Columbia*)

Because of the difference between mph and km/h, Twilighters operating a US car in Canada easily can find themselves inadvertently speeding. In 2013, it was almost an hour after crossing the

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US/Canadian border before CD Miller finally realized that she'd been driving at a rate of 30 *mph* in a 30 *km/h* speed zone—18 *km/h* over the limit.

**\*Please Note:** As soon as you arrive in Canada, adjust the settings of your GPS/SatNav device to display meters/kilometers instead of miles, and *km/h* instead of *mph*.



### Gas in the US

Gas (petrol) is dispensed and priced differently in the US than in Canada and the UK.

- US gas is sold by the **gallon**, not by the **liter**.
- The price per gallon of gas is posted in US **dollars**, not **cents**.
- One gallon of gas equals 3.79 liters of petrol.

**This can be somewhat confusing for Canadian and UK Twilighters who drive in the US.**

Happily, all you really need to know is that gas is far less expensive in the US than it is in Canada or the UK.



## Automobile-Related US Terminology with UK Translations

### Common US Automobile Terms

Blinkers or Turn Signals = Indicators

Car Rental = Car Hire

Dimmer Switch = Dip Switch

Fender = Wing

Gas Station = Petrol Station

Glove Compartment = Glove Box

Hood = Bonnet

License Plate = Number Plate

Motorcycle = Motorbike

Parking Brake = Handbrake

Parking Lot = Car Park

Pavement, Blacktop = Road Surface

Pedestrian Crosswalk = Zebra Crossing

Rest Area or Rest Stop:

In the US these range from simple, roadside picnic areas ... to large picnic areas with several parking lots and a building with public toilets—neither of which have fuel available—to full service plazas with gas stations, restaurants, and stores, similar to Motorway Service Areas or Welcome Breaks in the UK.

Semi-Truck or 18-Wheeler = Juggernaut

Sidewalk = Pavement

## *Tour the Twilight Saga* TwiTips: US Road Rules & Driving Details

Trailer = Caravan

Truck = Lorry

Trunk = Boot

Windshield = Windscreen

### **Common US Roadway Terms**

Beltway, Freeway, Highway Loop = Ring Road

Detour = Diversion

Divided Highway = Dual Carriageway:

Two roadways containing one or two lanes of traffic traveling in opposite directions, separated by a median (a central reservation).

Highway = Main Road

Intersection = Crossroads

Interstate, Expressway, or Freeway = Motorway:

A major highway consisting of two multi-lane roadways with traffic traveling in opposite directions, separated by a median.

Main Street = High Street

Median = Central Reservation

Overpass = Flyover

Single-Lane Road = Single-Track Road:

One lane shared by motorists traveling in both directions. You'll not see many of these in the US, however some rural areas have small bridges or underpasses that are single-lane. The first vehicle to arrive has the right of way. It is safest (and most polite), however, to wave the other vehicle forward and wait for it to pass.

Speed Bump = Hump: a rounded mound built into the road to slow down vehicles

Undivided Highway = Single Carriageway:

A road with one or two lanes of traffic traveling in opposite directions *without* a median between them.