



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

President's Office

No. 12/PO

DECREE
of the
PRESIDENT
of the
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

On the Promulgation of the Law on Land Traffic

Pursuant to Chapter 5, Article 53, point 1 of the Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic;

Pursuant to Resolution No. 02/NA, dated 8 April 2000, of the National Assembly regarding the adoption of the Law on Land Traffic; and

Pursuant to Proposal No 06/NASC, dated 17 April 2000, of the National Assembly Standing Committee.

**The President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
Decrees That:**

Article 1. The Law on Land Traffic is hereby promulgated.

Article 2. This decree shall enter into force on the date it is signed.

Vientiane, 22 May 2000
The President of the Lao People's
Democratic Republic

[Seal and Signature]

Khamtai SIPHANDON



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

National Assembly

No. 02/NA
8 April 2000

LAW ON LAND TRAFFIC

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Article 1. Function of the Law on Land Traffic

The Law on Land Traffic has the function to define principles, regulations and measures on the establishment, activities and management of land traffic to facilitate and control the circulation¹ of human beings and the use of various vehicles on the roads, and land communication and transport, in order to ensure convenience, safety and order, to contribute to the protection and maintenance of the roads and the environment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and for international integration.

Article 2. Definitions

1. "Land traffic" refers to the circulation of human beings or the use of various vehicles for communication and transport on roads within the country;
2. "Traffic regulations" refers to detailed regulations that are enforceable against persons who travel along² roads, who shall strictly implement [them];
3. "Traffic signal system" refers to traffic signs, traffic signals and traffic marks.
 - "Traffic signs" refers to signposts directing the implementation of land traffic regulations;
 - "Traffic signalling" refers to the directing of traffic regulations on roads by using lights, colours, sounds, human beings or models;

¹ The literal translation of this term is "movement in and out".

² The literal translation of this term is "move from one place to another".

- “Traffic marks” refers to marks installed, marked, written or drawn on roads, road shoulders, or road signs, or that are erected over roads to signal or facilitate land traffic.

Article 3. Promotion of the Development of the Land Traffic System

The State promotes, through appropriate policies³, all economic sectors within the country and overseas to contribute in the development, building up, maintenance, installation and protection of the land traffic system.

Article 4. Obligations of Commuters

Lao citizens, apatrids⁴, aliens, and foreign individuals who are commuting on the roads within the territory of the Lao PDR have the obligation to respect and strictly implement the Law on Land Traffic and traffic regulations, and also have the obligation to protect and maintain the roads.

Chapter 2 Land Traffic Regulations

Article 5. General Regulations

Road traffic in the Lao PDR is on the right hand side. Road users shall strictly implement the Law on Land Traffic and traffic regulations. It is prohibited for individuals and organisations to cause obstacles or construct anything on any road that may lead to accidents, or that may cause damage to the property of the public or the traffic signal system.

Road traffic regulations shall be incorporated into the teaching and learning materials in different schools, as appropriate.

Article 6. Traffic Control Officers

Traffic control officers consist of:

1. Public road police who have the duty to inspect transport along public roads;
2. Traffic police who have the duty to facilitate and control traffic in urban and municipal areas;
3. Persons officially assigned to undertake such duties.

During the implementation of their duties, traffic control officers shall put on uniforms, place on marks, undertake their duties in easily-visible places and exhibit good behaviour.

³ The term “policies” in this context takes the meaning of “privileges”.

⁴ Readers may wish to refer to the Law on Lao Nationality for the distinction between aliens, apatrids (i.e. persons unable to certify their nationality) and foreign individuals.

When there is traffic congestion, or when there are traffic obstructions, accidents or special traffic [conditions], traffic control officers shall deal with the situation immediately. The signalling, warnings and instructions of traffic control officers supersede⁵ traffic signs and traffic marks located in commuter areas and [commuters] shall implement the directions, warnings or instructions of such traffic control officers.

Article 7. Mechanised Vehicles⁶

All types of mechanised vehicles shall have frames in accordance with the technical standards of the production factories and the regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, and they should have:

- Safety equipment;
- Brakes;
- Headlights, backlights and a complete set of signal lights;
- Rear-view mirrors;
- A working horn not exceeding the [noise] standard;
- Exhaust pipe(s) not exceeding the noise and emission standards that may cause pollution to the environment.

All types of vehicles travelling on the roads shall have licence plates⁷, shall be accompanied by a complete set of documents, and shall have insurance in accordance with Article 17 of the Land Transport Law.

Two-wheeled hand tractors, two-wheeled trailer-pulling tractors and trailers shall have headlights, backlights, and reflectors, in the front and at the back of the vehicles in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Article 8. Non-mechanised Vehicles

All types of non-mechanised vehicles, such as: bicycles, carts pulled by animals, push-carts and others that are pushed or pulled by human beings or animals moving along the road shall strictly comply with traffic regulations. For bicycles and tricycles, there should be brakes, headlights, backlights and reflectors in the front, at the back and on the sides.

⁵ The literal translation of this term is “have higher authority”.

⁶ The literal translation of this term is “vehicles running with machines”.

⁷ The literal translation of this term is “vehicle registration plates”.

Article 9. Animals

It is prohibited to graze and release animals on the roads. When animals are moved along the roads, there should be an animal herder and [the move] shall comply with traffic regulations.

When there is an accident caused by animals, the owners or the herders of such animal shall be liable for the damage caused by the animal that arises from the fault of the owners or animal herders as provided in Article 12 of the Tort Law.

Chapter 3 Vehicle Operators

Article 10. Age [Requirements] of Vehicle Operators

- Cyclists shall be at least 12 years of age;
- Motorcyclists shall be at least 15 years of age. Persons above 15 years of age but under 18 years of age shall [only] be allowed to operate motorcycles under 110 cc;
- Operators of tricycles, pedicabs, two-wheeled hand tractors, two-wheeled trailer-pulling tractors and four-wheeled vehicles shall be from 18 years of age;
- Drivers of public transport vehicles shall be at least 25 years of age.

Article 11. Driving Licence

Operators of mechanised vehicles shall have driving licences⁸.

Examinations to obtain, and issuance of, driving licences shall be in strict compliance with the regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

To receive a driving licence, a person must pass examinations based on the complete curriculum of driving schools.

The term of a driving licence is five years, and may be extended after the term expires. The applicants shall have good health and have health certificates from medical personnel.

Foreign drivers who are undertaking assignments in the Lao PDR, including diplomats, experts, and officers of international organisations, shall use the driving licence of the Lao PDR. Driving licences issued by other countries can be exchanged for driving licences of the Lao PDR. Foreign drivers who are citizens of countries that are parties to international conventions or agreements on mutual recognition of driving licences to which

⁸ The literal translation of this term is “vehicle operation licences”.

the Lao PDR is also a party may use their own driving licences without exchanging them for driving licences of the Lao PDR.

Article 12. Qualifications of Vehicle Operators

Vehicle operators shall [comply with]⁹ the following conditions:

- Have a driving licence in accordance with regulations;
- Have good health;
- Strictly comply with traffic regulations;
- Drive under the speed limit defined in regulations;
- Not drive when drunk and not be addicted to addictive drugs.

Article 13. Driving Regulations and Loading

Operators of all types of vehicles shall strictly comply with all types of traffic regulations, such as:

- No more than two persons shall be allowed to ride on a bicycle;
- For motor bicycles, only one adult person and one child under 11 years of age are allowed to sit at the back;
- Only three persons are allowed on tricycles and motor cyclos, inclusive of the operator;
- Mechanised three-wheeled cars or four-wheeled cars are allowed to be loaded in accordance with Article 9 of the Land Transport Law and regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction;
- People on motorcycles shall wear standard helmets;
- It is prohibited for motorcyclists and cyclists to ride alongside one another;
- It is prohibited to drive over the speed limit;
- It is prohibited to park vehicles at a place with a no-parking sign and vehicles shall be parked in an orderly manner;
- It is prohibited to overload goods or passengers in respect of either their weight or the number of permitted passengers;
- It is prohibited for vehicle operators to use telephones or watch television while operating their vehicles;
- It is prohibited to load dangerous materials without authorisation as provided in Article 23 of the Land Transport Law.

In the event of an accident causing injury to any person, [a person witnessing such accident] shall send the injured person to a hospital and report the accident to the traffic police or public road police.

⁹ The literal translation of this term is “have”.

Chapter 4 Management of Vehicles

Article 14. Registration of Civilian Vehicles

All types of mechanised vehicles of civilians, including heavy machinery, such as: bulldozers, excavators, motor graders, compactors, and other heavy machinery, shall be registered and shall have licence plates in accordance with the regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Only authorised State organisations may produce and issue driving licences, vehicle registrations and licence plates.

Article 15. Registration of Vehicles of National Defence and Security Forces

Mechanised vehicles that are directly used for the activities of the National Defence and Security Forces shall be registered with, and have licence plates of, the Ministry of National Defence or the Ministry of the Interior¹⁰.

Mechanised vehicles that are used for public administration and technical activities of the Ministry of National Defence or the Ministry of the Interior shall have civilian registrations and licence plates.

Article 16. Importation of Vehicles

All types of mechanised vehicles imported to be registered and used permanently in the Lao PDR shall have structures in accordance with the technical standards of the production factories, steering wheels on the left hand side, and qualities in accordance with the technical standards issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Article 17. Assembly and Modification of Vehicles

The assembly and modification of mechanised vehicles shall comply with defined factory standards and with the technical standards issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Article 18. Repair of Vehicles

The repair of vehicles shall [be conducted so as to] ensure safety and compliance with technical standards issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

¹⁰ This Ministry is now referred to as the Ministry of Security.

Article 19. Technical Inspections of Vehicles

All types of mechanised vehicles shall pass technical inspections in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Article 20. Removal of Vehicles

The removal of heavy vehicles shall be done by flatbed tow trucks or other transport trucks that meet technical standards.

**Chapter 5
Management of Public Road Police and Traffic Police**

Article 21. Management of Public Road Police and Traffic Police

The public road police and traffic police belong to the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction and the Ministry of the Interior, respectively.

Article 22. Management by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction

The Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction is to manage the public road police and traffic police in the following aspects:¹¹

1. To build up and train in political, ideological, traffic and transport expertise;
2. To make recommendations to the Ministry of the Interior for promotion, transfer, reward or imposition of discipline;
3. To provide vehicles for the implementation of duties;
4. To develop the budget plan for administration costs, salaries, rewards, and other policies;
5. To direct, and directly command, the public road police and traffic police in the implementation of their duties relating to the inspection of land transport and traffic throughout the country.

Article 23. Management by the Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior is to manage the public road police and traffic police in the following aspects:¹²

1. To build up and train in police techniques;
2. To commission, promote, reward and impose discipline;
3. To provide uniforms, weapons and other necessary equipment;
4. To determine salaries and other financial policies.

¹¹ The objects of items 1 to 4 in this list are not mentioned but, from the lead-in language, it is clear that the object of every clause is “the public road police and the traffic police”.

¹² *Ibid.*

Chapter 6 Traffic Control

Article 24. Rights and Duties of Public Road Police and Traffic Police

The public road police and traffic police have duties to facilitate and control traffic, and to monitor adherence to the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations; and have rights to inspect vehicle documents and driving licences, to educate and fine violators, and to compel [such persons] to comply with the above-mentioned laws and regulations.

When it is necessary to detain persons, or to confiscate or detain vehicles for legal proceedings in connection with violations of the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations, the public road police and traffic police shall preserve the vehicles and the equipment installed in the vehicles in their original condition. It is prohibited to use confiscated or detained vehicles, to destroy evidence, or to appropriate or cause vehicles or equipment to be damaged or lost.

Article 25. Rights and Duties of Officers of the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction

Officers of the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, at both central and local levels, have the rights and duties to coordinate and cooperate with the public road police and traffic police in the control and inspection of the loading of vehicles that transport goods and passengers, as provided in the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations.

Article 26. Inspection and Handling of Accidents

When an accident happens in a certain location, the traffic police or public road police shall undertake inspection, recording, and filing, and undertake investigation and collection of evidence for legal proceedings in accordance with the laws and regulations.

When a vehicle stalls or is damaged on the road, the vehicle operator shall be responsible for removing [such vehicle] from the path of traffic.

Article 27. Inspection of Documents and Driving Licences

Officers in charge of controlling traffic have the right and duty to inspect vehicle documents and driving licences of vehicle operators on the roads only in certain appropriate community places.

There shall be at least two officers during such inspection.

Chapter 7 Management of Land Traffic

Article 28. Management Agencies on Land Traffic

Management agencies on land traffic consist of two levels:

- At the central level: the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction and the Ministry of the Interior;
- At the local levels: the communication, transport, post and construction division in each province, Vientiane prefecture and special zone district, and the communication, transport, post and construction office in each district.

Article 29. Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction

In the management of land traffic, the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction has the following main rights and duties:

1. To develop strategic plans on the management of land traffic for the short, medium, and long term, and then to propose to the government;
2. To issue traffic regulations that apply throughout the country, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations in coordination and cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior;
3. To manage and inspect vehicle registrations, license plates and driving licenses throughout the country;
4. To study and analyse road accident statistics and the volume of traffic throughout the country;
5. To cooperate with international organisations and seek funding for the development of land traffic;
6. To exercise such other rights and perform such other duties as assigned by the government.

Article 30. Rights and Duties of the Ministry of the Interior

In the management of land traffic, the Ministry of the Interior has the following main rights and duties:

1. To develop the budget plan for building up and training the traffic police and public road police in police techniques;
2. To coordinate and cooperate with the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction to handle issues relating to the management of traffic, the issuance of regulations on the inspection and control of compliance with the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and

- traffic regulations, and to summarise road accident statistics throughout the country;
3. To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the above-mentioned laws and regulations;
 4. To exercise such other rights and perform such other duties as assigned by the government.

Article 31. Rights and Duties of Provincial Communication, Transport, Post and Construction Divisions

In the management of land traffic, the communication, transport, post and construction division at each province, Vientiane prefecture or special zone district has the following main rights and duties:

1. To elaborate on the strategic plans and master plan on the development of land traffic into detailed action plans for implementation;
2. To manage land traffic, including to engage in the following activities:
 - To ensure orderliness in land traffic;
 - To install and manage traffic signs and marks in order to ensure convenience and safety in traffic;
 - To summarise road accident statistics and traffic volume;
 - To organise training and examination for the issuance of driving licences;
 - To conduct technical inspections and issue technical inspection certificates;
 - To issue vehicle registrations, driving licences and licence plates, as assigned by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction;
 - To educate on and to disseminate laws and regulations on land traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations;
 - To study and provide opinions on draft traffic regulations, and to develop parking lots;
 - To manage and directly control the public road police and traffic police in the implementation of their duties relating to the inspection of land transport and land traffic in its locality;
3. To exercise such other rights and perform such other duties as assigned by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction.

Article 32. Rights and Duties of District Communication, Transport, Post and Construction Offices

In the management of land traffic, the communication, transport, post and construction office at each district has the following rights and duties:

1. To educate on and disseminate laws and regulations on land traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads and traffic regulations;
2. To protect the system of traffic signs and marks;
3. To participate in the handling of accidents that occur within its district;
4. To exercise such other rights and perform such other duties as assigned by the communication, transport, post and constructions divisions in the provinces, Vientiane prefecture, and special zone districts.

Chapter 8

Policies Towards Persons with Outstanding Achievement and Measures¹³ Against Violators

Article 33. Policies Towards Persons with Outstanding Achievement

Individuals or organisations that participate in the management of land traffic effectively and that ensure safety and orderliness, or preserve and protect cleanliness, the environment, the traffic signal system, or the property of the State and individuals along the roads will be rewarded and receive other policies, as appropriate, that will be determined in detail by the government.

Article 34. Measures Against Violators

Individuals or organisations that violate any provision of this law, thus causing damage to the public, to the life, health, property or capacities of others, or to the environment, will be re-educated¹⁴, fined or subject to criminal sanctions, depending on the severity of the case.

Article 35. Re-Education Measures

Individuals or organisations that commit a minor violation of any provision of this law, such as: forgetting [to have their] driving licences or the documents that must accompany their vehicles, [or] having expired documents, dirty documents, or broken licence plates that cannot be read or that are mounted in the wrong place, will be re-educated in accordance with regulations.

Article 36. Fines

Individuals or organisations that violate any provision of this law, such as:

- Disobeying traffic lights;
- Disobeying traffic signs;

¹³ The term “measures” is often used as an indirect way of referring to “sanctions”.

¹⁴ Here, “re-education” does not mean the same as “re-education without deprivation of liberty” referred to in the Penal Law.

- Not having [their] driving licence or the documents [that must] accompany [their] vehicles;
- Operating on the wrong side of the road;
- Driving vehicles when drunk;
- Operating vehicles that emit noise above the standard;
- Turning on the high beam headlight in violation of regulations;
- Not turning on lights in the evening;
- Turning on the light(s) on only one side (for three-wheeled vehicles);
- Not turning on lights during the daytime when the weather causes poor visibility, such as: heavy rain, thick fog;
- Emission of smoke beyond the standard;
- Having a vehicle without brakes;
- Causing dirt and obstacles on the roads;
- Having no rear view mirror;
- Not wearing standard helmets when travelling on motorcycles;
- Overloading;
- Lacking necessary working equipment in accordance with technical standards for safety, and violations of other traffic regulations, shall be fined in accordance with regulations.

The Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction is assigned to study and develop draft regulations on measures for violations and the rate of fines to present to the government for consideration and approval.

Article 37. Criminal Measures

Any individual who commits an offence, such as:

- An offence relating to traffic safety;
- Falsification of driving licences, documents, licence plates, engine numbers or serial numbers of vehicles;
- Stealing or destroying signs, milestones, traffic marks, or destroying the road;
- Engaging in hooligan-like behaviour in traffic;
- Violating the Law on Land Traffic, the Land Transport Law, the Law on Public Roads, [or] traffic regulations, leading to an accident that causes any individual to be injured, to become an invalid or to lose his life, shall be subject to criminal sanctions.

Article 38. Supplementary Measures

In addition to the main measures provided for in Articles 35, 36 and 37 of this law, offenders shall be liable to supplementary measures such as suspension or removal of licences or authorisations relating to traffic, or the confiscation or seizure of any vehicle used in an offence.

Chapter 9 Final Provisions

Article 39. Implementation

The government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is assigned to implement this law.

Article 40. Effectiveness

This law shall come into effect after ninety days from the date of the promulgating decree issued by the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Provisions and regulations that contradict this law are null and void.

Vientiane, 8 April 2000
President of National Assembly

[Seal and Signature]

Samane VIGNAKET