

When travelling in Bulgaria by car - Things You Should Know

MAIN TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS AND SANCTIONS

1. What are the speed limits on Bulgarian roads and what penalties apply for speeding violations?

A. Penalties for exceeding the speed limits inside settlements are as follows:

- For exceeding the speed limit by up to 10 km/h - a fine of 10 BGN ;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 11-20 km/h - a fine of 30 BGN ;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 21-30 km/h - a fine of up to 100 BGN ;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 31-40 km/h - a fine of up to 150 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 1 month;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 41-50 km/h - a fine of up to 200 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 2 months;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 51 km/h or more - a fine of up to 250 BGN fine and suspension of the driving license for a period of 3 months.

B. Penalties for exceeding the speed limits outside settlements are as follows:

- For exceeding the speed limit by up to 10 km/h - a fine of 10 BGN;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 11-20 km/h - a fine of 30 BGN;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 21-30 km/h - a fine of up to 50 BGN;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 31-40 km/h - a fine of up to 100 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 1 month;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 41-50 km/h - a fine of up to 150 BGN fine and suspension of the driving license for a period of 2 months;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 51 km/h or more - a fine of up to 200 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 3 months.

C. Penalties for drivers of motor vehicles for passenger and dangerous cargo public transport exceeding the speed limits are as follows:

- For exceeding the speed limit by up to 10 km/h - a fine of 10 BGN;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 11-20 km/h - a fine of 30 BGN;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 21-30 km/h - a fine of 100 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 1 month;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 31-40 km/h - a fine of 200 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 2 months;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 41-50 km/h - a fine of 300 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of 3 months;
- For exceeding the speed limit by 51 km/h or more - a fine of 400 BGN fine and suspension of the driving licensee for a period of 3 months.

D. For repeated speeding by over 31 km above the limit, drivers are fined up to 300 BGN and their driving license is suspended for a period of 3 months.

2. What other traffic violations should you know about when travelling in Bulgaria?

Not stopping at a red traffic light brings a 50 BGN fine. The same amount of fine is faced by any driver talking on their mobile phone while driving, any driver whose vehicle has worn-out

tyres, any driver who incorrectly changes lanes or incorrectly parks near a pedestrian walkway, tram/bus/trolley stop or intersection. The 50 BGN fine also applies for car drivers not wearing seat-belts and motorcyclists riding without helmets. Penalties are also imposed on car passengers not wearing seat-belts – in this case the responsibility is assumed by the passengers themselves – the fine is again 50 BGN. Driving a passenger car in a marked BUS lane is prohibited, and the fine is 20 BGN.

3. What are the penalties for drink-driving?

A. For driving when blood alcohol content (ascertained by a medical test) is from 0.5 to 1.2 per mill; drivers with less than 2 years of experience face having their driving license suspended for a period of 12 months and a fine between 300 and 600 BGN. For a repeated violation, the fine is from 1000 to 2000 BGN and driving rights are suspended for a period of up to 3 years. For driving with alcohol blood content exceeding 1.2 per mill, the law provides for up to 2 years of imprisonment.

B. Drivers with more than 2 years of experience driving with blood alcohol content from 0.5 to 1.2 per mill face a fine from 200 to 500 BGN and suspension of the driving license for a period of up to 1 year. For a repeated violation, the fine is from 1000 to 2000 BGN.

C. In case of refusal to submit to an alcohol or narcotic test, the fine is from 500 to 1000 BGN and suspension of the driving license from 12 to 18 months.

4. What are the requirements for children travelling as car passengers?

Children under 12 years of age and with a height below 150 cm are not allowed to travel in the front seat. They can only travel in the rear seats of the car with special safety belts. Cars moving on the road must be equipped with reflective (high-visibility) jacket/vest, safety triangles, automobile first aid kits and fire extinguishers.

All drivers and passengers are obliged to wear safety belts when travelling. Drivers are obliged to ensure that they carry the following in their car: high-visibility vest, high-visibility triangle, first-aid kit and fire extinguisher, to be used if necessary.

CONTROL

Traffic control in the country is carried out by **uniformed police officers. They wear yellow high visibility vests and a name badge.** At night-time, traffic police patrols only operate in road sections that are sufficiently illuminated. The driver must stop when signalled with a signal-baton. The driver and passengers should not leave the vehicle after being pulled up, unless the traffic police officer allows them to do so.

In case of an accident or if you need assistance, please contact Traffic Police at 112 or 166. These are toll-free numbers irrespective of what phone you are using, including a mobile phone.

FINES AND SANCTIONS PROCEDURE

In case of a Road Traffic Act violation committed by a foreign driver passing through the country in transit, a traffic violation ticket (“akt”) is drawn up, and a Penal Decree is issued



on the same day. Any fine imposed must be paid by the driver immediately, before continuing the journey.

IMPORTANT! It is essential that the fine MUST NOT BE PAID directly to the officer issuing the ticket at the roadside, but only at a bank office via a wire transfer!

CAUTION! DANGER OF ACCIDENTS!

In summertime, traffic intensity increases dramatically, and slow-moving columns of vehicles form on major roads. Drivers should be doubly alert and disciplined to avoid accidents.

The main causes of road accidents in the country include:

- speeding over the limit indicated;
- driver tiredness and lack of sleep when driving for prolonged periods without a break;
- risky overtaking;
- not keeping distance at high speed /for instance on the highway/.

There are many cyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists and slow-moving trucks on Bulgarian roads that slow down traffic, make dangerous manoeuvres and create accident hazards.

TO AVOID TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

The main **recommendations for safe driving in Bulgaria** are: stick to the speed limit, drive only when completely sober, drive at a safe distance from the car in front, refrain from risky overtaking on two-lane, two-direction roads. If you are driving, make sure you stop for a break from time to time to avoid falling asleep behind the wheel. Be tolerant and ethical to others on the road. Be on the alert for children who would often suddenly appear on the road, particularly in residential areas.

We wish you safe and pleasant driving in Bulgaria!