



American Association of
Motor Vehicle Administrators

Rules *Licensing*
of the Road
MODEL
Renewal
TESTING
Requirements



AAMVA Model Driver's License Manual



August 2022

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American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators

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This manual is a supplement to the state's driver manual which covers rules of the road,
signs, signals, roadway markings and safe driving practices.

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Section One The Driver's License

This Section Covers

- About This Manual
- Licensing Requirements
- Types of Driver's Licenses and Driver's Permits
- Required Noncommercial License Tests
- [Out-of-State License or Driving on an Existing License]
- Driver License Renewal
- Loss of Driving Privileges

About This Manual

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on how to use this manual.]

Licensing Requirements

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on licensing requirements.]

Types of Driver's Licenses and Driver's Permits

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on driver's licenses and driver's permits including graduated licensing requirements, if applicable.]

Required Noncommercial License Tests

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on the noncommercial license tests and information on requirements for passing all required tests.]

Out-of-State License or Driving on an Existing License

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on out of state licenses or driving on an existing license.]

Driver License Renewal

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on driver license renewal.]

Loss of Driving Privileges

[Insert jurisdiction-specific information on loss of driving privileges.]

Section Two State, Provincial, and Territory Laws and Rules of the Road

This Section Covers

- State, Provincial, and Territory Laws
- State, Provincial, and Territory Rules of the Road

State, Provincial, and Territory Laws

[Insert content specific to state, provincial, or territory laws and rules of the road.]

State, Provincial, and Territory Rules of the Road

[Insert content specific to state, provincial, or territory laws and rules of the road.]

Section Three Be in Shape to Drive

This Section Covers

- Vision
- Fatigue
- Driver Distractions
- Aggressive Driving
- Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Driving
- Emotions

Driving is one of the most risky tasks that you will do during your lifetime. Your ability to drive safely depends on good health and making correct decisions.

Vision

Good vision is important for safe driving. If you cannot see clearly, you will have trouble identifying traffic and roadway conditions, spotting potential trouble, and responding to problems in a timely manner.

Because seeing well is so important to safe driving, you should have your eyes checked regularly by an eye doctor. If you are required to wear corrective lenses:

- Always wear them when driving.
- Avoid using dark or tinted corrective lenses at night that will cut down the light.
- [Insert jurisdiction-specific information in relation to vision.]

Fatigue

Fatigue is physical or mental tiredness that can be caused by physical or mental strain, repetitive tasks, illness, or lack of sleep. Fatigue can affect your vision and increase the time to make decisions. Avoid driving if you are tired or fatigued. You do not want to fall asleep when you are driving.

Before a Trip, Do the Following:

- Get adequate sleep—most people need 7 to 9 hours to maintain proper alertness during the day.
- Plan to stop about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips.

- Arrange for a travel companion—someone to watch your driving.
- Check the labels of your medications and be aware if they cause drowsiness.
- Do not use alcohol and other drugs when driving.

Ways to Avoid Fatigue

- If you start feeling tired, stop driving, and pull off at the next exit or rest area to take a 15 to 20 minute nap or find a place to sleep for the night.
- Try consuming caffeine before taking a short nap to get the benefits of both.
- Try not to drive late at night.
- The best way to avoid fatigue is to get plenty of rest.

Driver Distractions

A distraction is anything that takes your attention away from driving. Distracted driving can cause crashes, resulting in injury, death, or property damage. Taking your eyes off the road or hands off the steering wheel presents obvious driving risks. Mental activities that take your mind away from driving are just as dangerous.

When driving:

- Do not use cell phones or text.
- Avoid arguments and stressful or emotional conversations with passengers.
- Avoid eating while driving.



- Be sure children are properly and safely buckled up.
- Properly secure pets in a pet carrier or portable kennel.

You must pay attention to the driving task. You are responsible for operating your vehicle in a safe manner.

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving occurs when an individual intentionally commits an action that endangers other persons or property.

Some behaviors typically associated with aggressive driving include speeding, following too closely, unsafe lane changes, improperly signaling, and failing to obey traffic control devices (stop signs, yield signs, traffic signals, railroad grade cross signals, and so on).

Concentrate on your driving. Be patient and courteous to other road users.

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Driving

Alcohol and other impairing drugs are involved in approximately 40% of all traffic crashes in which someone is killed each year. If you drink alcohol or use other impairing drugs and drive, even a little, your chances of being in a crash are much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol or use any other drugs.

If You are Under 21

If you are under the age of 21, it is illegal to purchase, possess, and drink alcoholic beverages. Alcohol and other impairing drugs affect a person's ability to perceive their surroundings, react to emergencies, and skillfully operate a motor vehicle. For new drivers learning complex skills, the effects of alcohol and other impairing drugs is greater. All states have "zero tolerance" laws (no alcohol in the circulatory system) or similar laws for drivers under the age of 21.

Effects of Alcohol and Other Impairing Drugs

Alcohol and other impairing drugs reduces your:

- *Judgment:* Judgment is a brain-centered activity that stores all of your experiences and knowledge so it can be used quickly when you face a new problem.
- *Vision:* Blurs your vision, slows your ability to focus, causes double vision, and reduces the ability to judge distance, speed, and the movement of other vehicles. Vision is impacted at 0.02 blood alcohol content (BAC) for all drivers. The most important sense you use in driving is vision.
- *Color distinction:* Reduces your ability to distinguish colors.
- *Reaction time:* Slows your ability to process information and respond to the driving task.

The best advice is not to drive a vehicle of any kind if you have consumed alcohol or other drugs. Impairment starts with the first drink. Even one drink of alcohol can affect a person's ability to operate a motor vehicle. With one or more drinks in the bloodstream, a person is visibly impaired and could be arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Never let a friend or relative drive if he or she has been drinking.

Alcohol and the Law

[If you are over [0.08] BAC, you are in violation of the law. If you are arrested for drinking and driving, the penalties are severe. If you have a BAC of [0.08] or more, your driver's license and driving privileges may be suspended for [90] days, and you may be subject to criminal penalties. In [State/Province/Territory], if you are under [21], you can also be arrested for alcohol impairment at [0.02%]. BAC is the percentage of alcohol in relation to the amount of blood in your body. Even under [0.08],



you are still impaired. Under the law, you can still be convicted for driving impaired.]

[An alcohol concentration test measures how much alcohol is in your system and is usually determined by a breath, blood, or urine test. You are required to take a BAC test if asked by a police officer due to [State/Province/Territory] implied consent law. [State/Province/ Territory] implied consent law is based on the principle that when you get your driver's license, you have implicitly consented to a lawfully requested test to determine the alcohol content of your blood, breath, urine, or other bodily substance if suspected of impaired driving. [You can lose your driver's license for [one year] if you refuse to take a BAC test.]

[Although implied consent laws vary by state, the law applies to the state where you were arrested, not the state where you got your license. That is, if you have a license in a state with no implied consent laws and you are arrested in a state that does have implied consent laws, you are subject to that state's implied consent laws.]

[If you are found guilty of an alcohol violation and it is your first conviction, you may be fined from [\$300 to \$1000] plus court costs. You could be sentenced to [15 to 360] days in jail, and your license could be suspended [or revoked] for [90 to 360] days. For second and subsequent convictions, the penalties are much worse.]

[Note: this section provides an example for alcohol and the law. The jurisdiction should insert information and language pertaining to its alcohol laws.]

Other Impairing Drugs and Driving

Besides alcohol, many other drugs can affect your ability to drive safely. These drugs can have effects similar to those of alcohol or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs and even many of the drugs you can buy over the counter without a prescription.

Over-the-Counter Drugs

Over-the-counter drugs taken for headaches, colds, hay fever, or other allergies or those to calm nerves can make you drowsy and affect your driving. Pep pills, "uppers," and diet pills can make you feel nervous, dizzy, and unable to concentrate, and they can affect your vision. Check the label on the product before you take an over-the-counter drug for warnings about its effect. If you are not sure if it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects.

Prescription Drugs

Some prescription drugs can impact your driving and can affect your reflexes, judgment, vision, and alertness in ways similar to alcohol. Prescription drugs, such as antidepressants, pain reducers, sleep aids, and sedatives, have an impact on driving safely. Check the label on the prescription and packaging before you take a drug for warnings about its effect. If you are not sure if it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects.

Illegal Drugs

Illegal drugs can impact your driving and can affect your reflexes, judgment, vision, and alertness in ways similar to alcohol. [If you are found guilty of a drug violation while driving and it is your first conviction, you may be fined from [\$300 to \$1000] plus court costs. You could be sentenced to [15 to 360] days in jail, and your license could be suspended [or revoked] for [90 to 360] days. You may also be subject to other criminal penalties. For second and subsequent convictions, the penalties are much worse.]

[Note: This section provides an example for illegal drugs and the law. The jurisdiction should insert information and language pertaining to its illegal drug laws.]

Combining Alcohol and Other Impairing Drugs

Never drink alcohol while you are taking other drugs. These drugs could multiply the effects of alcohol or have additional effects of their own. You cannot drink alcohol or use other impairing drugs and operate a vehicle safely.

Emotions

Emotions can increase your risk by interfering with your ability to think, creating a lack of attention and interrupting your ability to process information. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry, or depressed.

There are ways of dealing with your emotions:

- If you are angry or worried, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary, take a short walk or nap, but stay off the road until the symptoms have passed.
- Give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early.
- Have someone else drive.

Section Four Before You Drive

This Section Covers

- Inspecting Your Vehicle
- Adjusting Seat and Mirrors
- Using Safety Belts
- Air Bags
- Child Passenger Safety Laws
- Secure Your Load

Inspecting Your Vehicle

When it comes to road safety, you can't control other drivers or road conditions, but one thing you can control is proper maintenance of your vehicle and tires.



Crashes due to tire maintenance are preventable, and simple steps can save lives. Driving on underinflated or overinflated tires or tires with low tread can lead to safety issues on the road.

Check Tire Pressure with a Pressure Gauge Monthly

- Buy a tire pressure gauge if you don't have one already.
- Open your car door; on the inside jamb, you should see a sticker. Write down or take a picture of the number that says "PSI" (the measurement for tire pressure).
- Remove the cap from the valve stem and use the pressure gauge to check the tire pressure (make sure you check when they are cold).
- Compare the number on the gauge with the number you wrote down. If the number is too high, let air out of your tires. If the number is too low, inflate your tires until the numbers match.



Check Tread Depth with a Penny

- Hold a penny with Abraham Lincoln's body between your thumb and forefinger.
- Place Lincoln's head first into the deepest-looking groove.
- Can you see all of his head? If yes, your tires are too worn—don't drive on them, and make sure to get them replaced.



Adjusting Seat and Mirrors

You should be seated upright with your back against the seat and feet on the floor. Improper seating positions, such as slouching, can result in reduced effectiveness of the vehicle's restraint system. Adjust your seat and mirrors before you start to drive so you can see clearly and have full control of the vehicle's foot pedals and steering wheel with appropriate space for airbag deployment.



- Your foot should be able to pivot smoothly from brake to accelerator while your heel is kept on the floor.
- The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the top of your shoulders and below chin level.

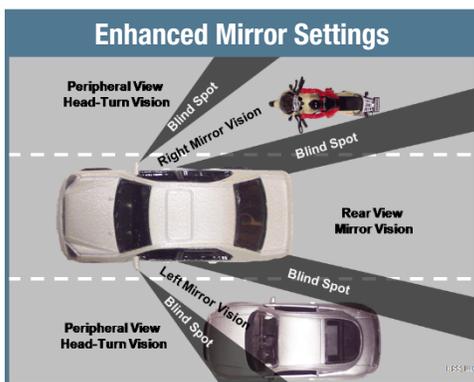
- There should be 10 inches between your chest and the steering wheel. Do not move the seat so far forward that you cannot easily steer and do not recline the seat.
- Head restraints are designed to prevent whiplash. Head restraints should be adjusted so the head restraint contacts the back of your head and not below the level of your ears.

Adjusting Your Mirrors

The inside mirror is the primary mirror for view to the rear. Adjust your rearview mirror so that it frames the rear window. You should be able to see traffic flow to the rear of the vehicle with the rearview mirror. If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set for the time of day you are driving.

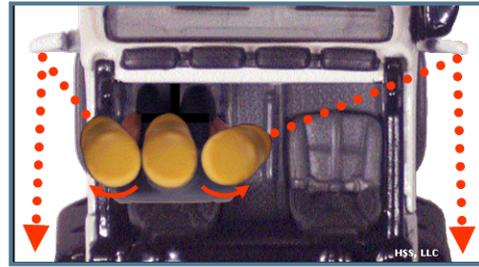
Outside mirrors should be adjusted to reduce blind spots and to provide maximum visibility to the side and rear on both sides of the vehicle. To reduce your blind spots, you are encouraged to use this method for adjusting your outside mirrors.

- To set the left side mirror, the driver must rest his or her head against the closed window and set the mirror to barely show the rear edge of the vehicle.



- To set the right side mirror, the driver should lean to the right so his or her head is directly below the rearview mirror or above the center console. The mirror should be adjusted the same way as the left side, so that the edge of the right side of your vehicle can barely be seen.

- The driver will not see the left and right sides of the vehicle when glancing in the outside mirrors; however, this adjustment adds 12 to 16 degrees of additional viewing area to each side of the vehicle.

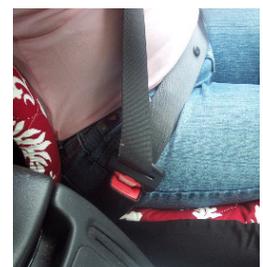


Using Safety Belts

Always fasten your safety belt and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints. Studies have shown that if you are in a crash while using safety belts, your chances of injury or death are greatly reduced. Safety belts keep you from being thrown from the vehicle and help you keep control. In [state, province, or territory], it is illegal to drive or to be a front-seat passenger without wearing safety belts. [Safety belts may be required under Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) for drivers or all occupants of the vehicle. Insert state-specific information about safety belt laws].

It is important to wear the safety belt correctly.

- A shoulder harness is worn across the shoulder and chest with minimal, if any, slack. The shoulder harness should not be worn under the arm or behind the back. Wearing the harness the wrong way could cause serious internal injuries in a crash.
- The lap belt should be adjusted so that it is snug and lies low across your hips after fastening. Otherwise, in a crash, you could slide out of the belt, resulting in injury or death.



Safety belts should be worn even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. [The law requires that all children under the age of [12] must be secured in the rear seat and wear appropriate safety restraints while the vehicle is in motion.]

Air Bags

Air bags are supplemental restraints and are designed to work best in combination with safety belts. In a crash, air bags and safety belts reduce the chance that your head and upper body will strike some part of the vehicle's interior. Safety belts help to properly position your body to maximize the air bag's benefits and help restrain you during the initial and any after crashes. It is extremely important that safety belts are always worn, even in air bag-equipped vehicles.

Read your vehicle owner's manual for specific information about the air bags in your vehicle.

Child Passenger Safety Laws

If using a child safety seat, make sure it is installed properly in your vehicle and used correctly. Check to be sure that all children age 12 and younger are properly restrained in the back seat and that a rear-facing child safety seat is never placed in front of an active passenger air bag.

- Children age 12 and younger should sit in the rear seat of the vehicle to avoid injury from an air bag in the event of a crash.
- Read your vehicle owner's manual and child restraint directions for more specific information on child restraint systems.
- [Insert jurisdictional laws concerning child passenger safety laws.]

Secure Your Load

Driving with an unsecured load is both against the law and extremely dangerous. Drivers who fail to properly secure their load may face a [costly fine and jail time] if they cause a crash. A load must be securely fastened and is only considered secure when nothing can slide, shift, fall, or sift onto the roadway or become airborne.

To secure your load in your vehicle or trailer:

- Tie it down with rope, netting, or straps.
- Tie large objects directly to your vehicle or trailer.
- Consider covering the entire load with a sturdy tarp or netting.
- Do not overload your vehicle or trailer.
- Always double check your load to make sure it is secure.
- Don't forget that animals should also be properly secured.

Before you drive, ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any chance of debris or cargo falling or blowing out of my vehicle?
- Is my load secured at the back, sides, and top?
- What would happen to my load if I had to brake suddenly, I hit a bump, or another vehicle hit me?
- Would I feel safe if I were driving behind my vehicle?

What Are Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) Safety Features

Many newer vehicles on the road today have driver assistance safety features designed to save lives and prevent injuries, if used properly. Some of the driver assist safety features sense and monitor conditions; identify present and potential dangers; and may help you avoid a potential crash. These safety features may provide alerts, such as sounds or vibration or may take control of the vehicle, such as adjusting the braking or steering. Safety features include, but are not limited to: blind spot warning, back up camera, forward collision warning, automatic emergency braking, lane keeping assistance, and active parking assist.

[When taking your driving test, you will not be allowed to use certain safety features, such as parking assist and cruise control.]

Safety features are meant to assist you in the driving task, they are not there to drive the vehicle.

You must remain engaged and focused on the driving task at all times. It is your responsibility to be aware of everything around you by performing head checks and



using mirrors and cameras to observe traffic and other roadway users. You are responsible for the safe operation of your vehicle at all times. Do not rely on safety features alone. It is important to follow the tips below when driving vehicles equipped with safety features:

- It is your responsibility to always stay focused when driving.
- Read your Vehicle Owner's Manual to learn how your vehicle's safety features operate.
- Know the limitations of your vehicle's safety features.
- Be aware that safety features may not work properly in certain conditions such as rain, snow, ice, fog, hills, and curves.
- Always keep vehicle sensors clean and damage free.
- Always keep software technology up to date (if applicable) and follow your vehicle manufacturer's recommendations.

ADAS safety features provide many benefits and have great potential to assist drivers in reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities when used properly.

For Additional Information:

<https://mycardoeswhat.org/>
www.trafficsafetyeducationfoundation.org
www.nhtsa.org

Section Five Basic Driving

This Section Covers

- Starting the Engine
- Moving the Vehicle
- Stopping the Vehicle
- Steering
- Backing Up

Starting the Engine

Check the vehicle owner's manual for how to start the vehicle. To start the engine, place your right foot on the brake pedal



and check the gear selector lever for park. Place the key in the ignition and turn the ignition switch to the on position. Check indicator lights and gauges (fuel level, ABS, air bags, and so on).

Moving the Vehicle

Move gear selector lever to "D" (drive). Check forward for safe path and check for traffic to the sides and behind. Signal and if safe; move your foot to the accelerator and press gently. Accelerate gradually and smoothly with the top of your foot on the pedal and the heel of your foot on the floor.

Stopping the Vehicle

Check your mirrors for traffic to the rear of your vehicle. Move your foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal. Press with steady pressure until your vehicle comes to a stop.

Steering

The steering wheel is always turned in the direction you want the vehicle to move, whether moving forward or in reverse.

Hand Position

Both hands should be placed on the outside of the steering wheel on opposite sides, at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions, to maintain control of the vehicle. Placing your hands at the 2 and 10 o'clock positions is no longer recommended because it can be dangerous in a vehicle equipped with air bags. Your grip on the steering wheel should be firm but gentle. Use your fingers instead of the palms of your hands and keep your thumbs up along the face of the steering wheel. Never turn the wheel while gripping it from the inside of the steering wheel.

Backing Up

To safely back up your vehicle, you should:

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children and small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.



- Place your foot on the brake and shift to reverse. Grasp the steering wheel at the 12 o'clock position with your left hand. Place your right arm on the back of the seat and look directly through the rear window. Use your mirrors for backing up but keep in mind that these mirrors do not show the area immediately behind your vehicle.
- Accelerate gently and smoothly, keeping your speed slow. Your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing up. Steer slightly in the direction the rear of the vehicle should move. If backing up while turning, make quick checks to the front and sides. Continue looking to the rear until coming to a complete stop.

Section Six Rules of the Road

This Section Covers

- Yielding Right of Way
- Traffic Control Devices
 - Traffic Signals
 - Traffic Signs
 - Pavement Markings
 - Other Lane Controls

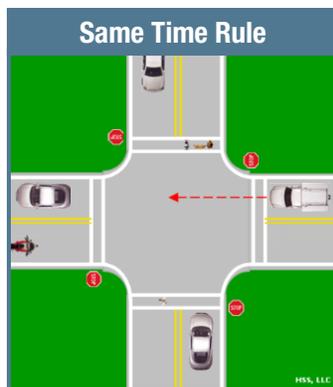
Yielding Right of Way

Yielding right-of-way rules provide drivers with guidance for situations when other drivers or pedestrians are present. These rules determine which driver should yield the right of way and the sequence for entering and driving through an intersection or other driving scenarios.

Although yielding right-of-way rules provide a guide to determine who should yield the right of way, no one should assume he or she automatically has the right of way. The situation and circumstances at the intersection must always be considered.

You should yield the right of way to:

- the driver who is at or arrives before you at the intersection;
- drivers in the opposing traffic lane when you are making a left turn;
- the driver on your right at a four-way intersection controlled by stop signs if both of you arrive at the intersection at the same time;



- drivers on a public highway if you are entering the highway from a driveway or a private road;
- drivers already on a limited access or interstate highway if you are on the entrance or acceleration ramp; and
- pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers who are still in the intersection.

Traffic Control Devices

Traffic control devices include traffic signals, signs, pavement markings, and directions provided by law enforcement, highway personnel, and school crossing guards.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals are lights that tell you when or where you should stop and go. Traffic lights are usually at intersections and are red, yellow and green from top to bottom, when on the same signal. There are some intersections and other locations where there are single green, yellow, or red lights. In some metropolitan areas, traffic lights are horizontal, instead of vertical, and the red light is on the left, the yellow light is in the middle, and the green light is on the right.

GREEN Traffic Light—

This means you may go through the intersection if it is clear to do so, with caution.



YELLOW Traffic Light—This means the traffic light is about to change to red.

RED Traffic Light—This means stop before entering the intersection. You must wait behind the stop line,

crosswalk, or intersection until the traffic light turns green. [Insert jurisdiction-specific information if needed.]

Flashing YELLOW Traffic Light—This means slow down and proceed with caution. You should be prepared to stop for any traffic flow that may be entering the intersection.

Flashing RED Traffic Light—This means you must stop behind a stop line, crosswalk, or intersection before entering and use the same procedure as you would at a stop sign, by coming to a complete stop, looking both ways before entering the intersection, and yielding right of way.

Traffic Signs

Traffic signs tell you about traffic rules, hazards, roadway location, roadway directions, and the location of roadway services. The shape, color, symbols, and words of these signs give clues to the type of information they provide.

Warning Signs—These signs tell a driver of possible danger that might be ahead, such as warning you to slow down and be prepared to stop if necessary or a hazard or special situation on the roadway that is ahead. These signs are usually yellow with black lettering or symbols and are diamond shaped. Some warning signs may be fluorescent yellow, such as school zones, school crossing, and pedestrian crossing. Some common warning signs are shown below.



Railroad Crossing Warning Signs—Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to caution you about highway-railroad grade crossings. Some common railroad crossing warning signs and signals are shown below.

- A round yellow warning sign with an “X” symbol and black “RR” letters is placed along the road before a highway-railroad grade crossing. The sign cautions you to slow down, look and listen for a train or railroad vehicle, and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.



- A white, X-shaped sign with “Railroad Crossing” printed on it is located at the highway-railroad grade crossing. When a train or railroad vehicle is approaching the intersection, you must stop behind the stop line or before the intersection until the intersection is clear.

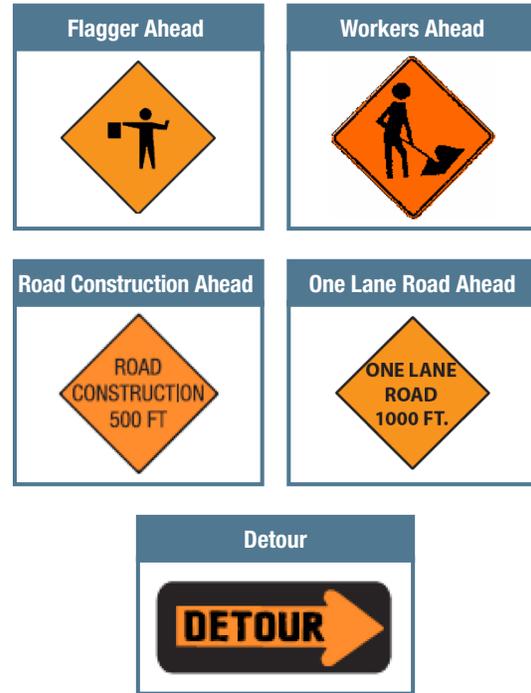


- At highway-railroad grade crossings with more than one train track, the number of tracks will be posted. These signs warn you that there is more than one track and there may be more than one train crossing. Not all highway-railroad grade crossings with more than one train track will have these signs, so it is important to check for more than one track, train, or railroad vehicle at each highway-railroad grade crossing. Not all railroad grade crossings have lights.



When you need to cross railroad tracks, look both ways and cross the tracks quickly, without stopping. If a train is crossing the highway, you must wait to cross a highway-railroad grade crossing until the train is well down the track or railroad devices, such as lights and gates, indicate it is safe to cross. If you are approaching railroad tracks and you need to stop for traffic or a signal, stop at the stop line before the railroad tracks.

Work Zone Signs—These are generally diamond or rectangular shaped and orange with black letters or symbols. These construction, maintenance, or emergency operation signs alert you to work zones ahead and warn you that people are working on or near the roadway. These warnings include workers ahead, reduced speed, detours, slow-moving construction equipment, and poor or suddenly changing road surfaces.

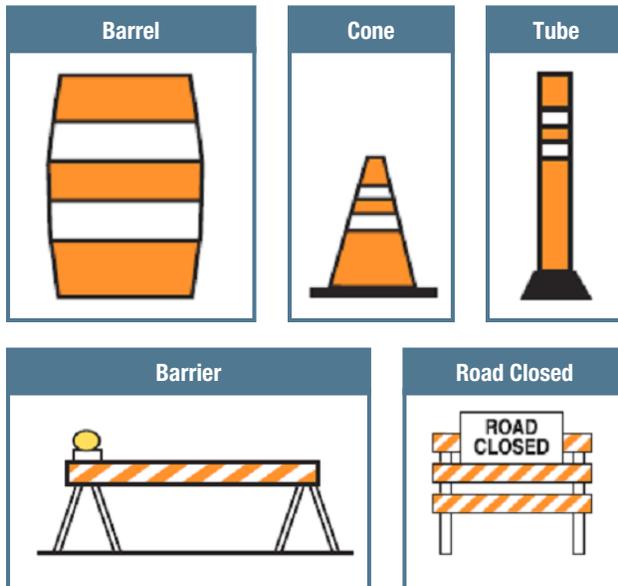


In work zones, traffic may be controlled by a person with a sign or flag to tell you which direction to travel or to slow down or stop. You must follow their instructions.



Barriers, such as drums, cones, and tubes (panels), are used to keep traffic out of hazardous work zones. Along with signs and road markings, they guide you safely through the work zone. Barriers may be used to keep drivers from entering closed roads or other

areas where it is dangerous to drive. Temporary traffic signals may be used in work zones. You may see a warning sign showing a symbol of a traffic signal. Stop at the white line, if present.



Give construction workers a “brake.” Reduce your speed in work zones and be prepared to stop suddenly. Do not tailgate in work zones. [\[Fines for speeding in a work zone are doubled.\]](#)

Regulatory Signs—These signs are square or rectangular or have a special shape and are white with black, red, or green letters or symbols. These signs tell you about specific laws that you must obey, such as rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking, and other special situations. Some regulatory signs have a red circle with a red slash over a symbol, which prohibits certain actions.

Common types of regulatory signs are:



Speed Limit Signs—These black and white signs indicate the maximum legal speed allowed in ideal conditions.



Stop Sign—A stop sign has eight sides and is red with white letters. You must stop behind the stop line or crosswalk, if one is present. Look for crossing vehicles and pedestrians in all directions and yield the right of way.



Yield Sign—A yield sign is a red and white downward-pointing triangle with red letters. It means you must slow down and allow traffic that has the right of way to cross before entering.



Shared Center Lane Left Turn Only—This sign tells you where a lane is reserved for the use of left turning vehicles from either direction and is not to be used for through traffic or passing other vehicles.



One-Way Street—These signs tell you that traffic flows only in the direction of the arrow. Do not turn in the opposite direction of the arrow. Never drive the wrong way on a one-way street.

Guide Signs—These signs are square and rectangular and are green, brown, or blue. They give information on intersecting roads, help direct you to cities and towns, and show points of interest along the highway. Guide signs can also help you find hospitals, service stations, restaurants, and hotels.



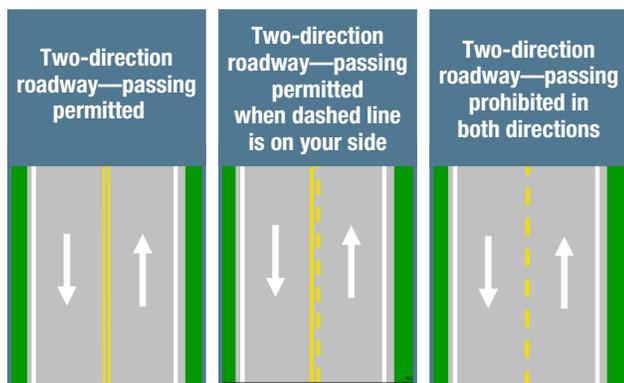
Route Number Signs—The shape and color of route number signs indicate the type of roadway: interstate, U.S., state, city, county, or local road. When planning a trip, use a road map to determine the route. During the trip, follow the route signs to prevent you from getting lost in an unfamiliar area.



Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are lines, arrows, words, or symbols painted on the roadway to give you directions or warnings. They are used to divide lanes, tell you when you may pass other vehicles or change lanes, tell you which lanes to use for turns, define pedestrian walkways, and show where you must stop for signs or traffic signals.

Yellow Lane Markings



White Lane Markings



[Crosswalks and Stop Lines]

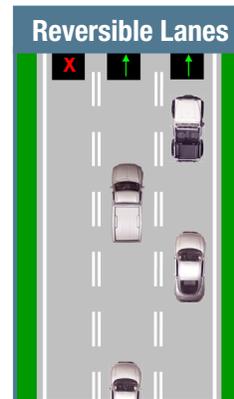
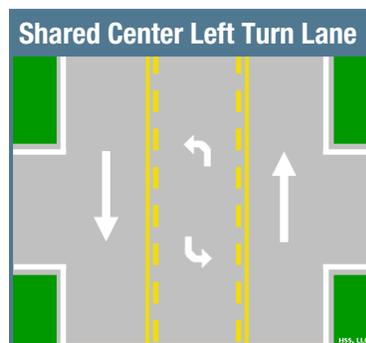
[Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians may cross the roadway. When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop behind the stop line, crosswalk, or stop sign or signal. You must yield to pedestrians entering or in a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked. Be alert for pedestrians when crossing intersections. If crosswalks are not apparent, then you must stop before entering the intersection. If there is a stop line before the crosswalk, the stop line must be obeyed first.]

The following are some of the most common types of crosswalk markings.



Other Lane Controls

Shared Center Left Turn Lane



Section Seven General Driving

This Section Covers

- Turning and Turnabouts
- Intersections
- Roundabouts and Traffic Circles
- Rules for School Buses
- Parking
- Changing Lanes
- Entering a Multi-lane Highway and Exiting a Roadway
- Passing

Turning and Turnabouts

When turning, you should:

- Search all corners for traffic controls, pedestrians, other vehicles, and so on and signal your intentions.
- Enter and maintain proper position in the lane that is closest to the direction you want to go.
- Look through the turn to the farthest point possible along the intended path.
- Accelerate smoothly to appropriate speed, make sure your turn signal is cancelled, and check traffic to the rear.

Right turns

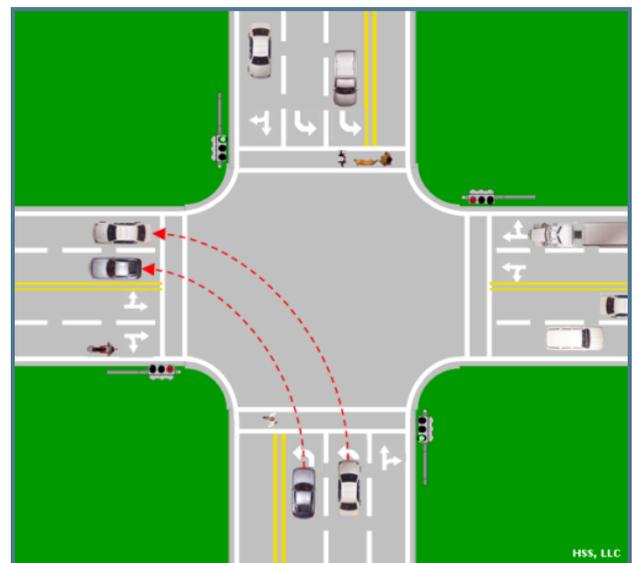
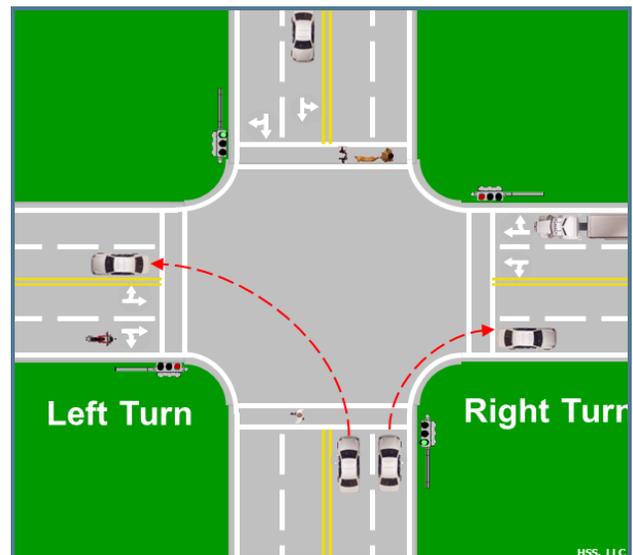
- Avoid swinging wide to the left before making the turn.
- Always turn right from the right-most portion of your lane.

Left turns

- When making a left turn, yield to oncoming traffic.
- Always turn left from the left-most portion of your lane.

Multiple lanes turning

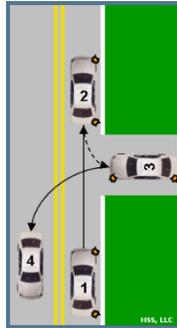
- Identify and enter the lane from which you will turn.
- Stay in that lane until the turn is completed.



Two-Point Turnabout—In this type of turn, a street, alley, or driveway is used to reverse the direction you are traveling when it is not practical or possible to drive around a block.

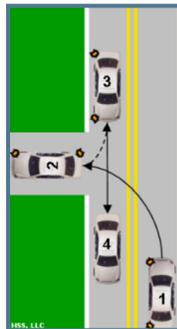
■ **Reverse Two-Point**

Turnabout—Signal your intention to turn right; stop and check traffic to the sides and rear of the vehicle. Move back until the rear bumper of the vehicle reaches the near edge of the driveway. While backing slowly, steer rapidly all the way to the right. As the vehicle centers in the driveway, straighten the wheels and stop. Shift to drive and check in both directions; if clear, signal and turn left into the proper lane and accelerate as appropriate.



■ **Forward Two-Point**

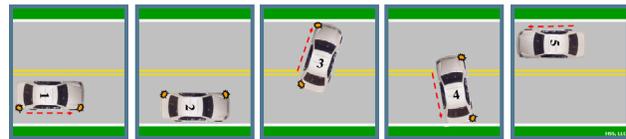
Turnabout—Check your mirrors and signal your intention to turn left. Move close to the center of the road and turn into the driveway or alley as near as possible to the right side. Stop as the rear of the vehicle clears the curb or edge of the driveway. Check in all directions for traffic, signal a right turn, and shift to reverse. When the path is clear, move slowly back while turning the steering wheel quickly all the way to the right. As the vehicle centers in the nearest lane, straighten the wheels, stop, shift to drive, cancel the right signal, and move forward.



Three-Point Turnabout—Use this type of turnabout only when the road or street is too narrow to make a U-turn and you cannot go around the block. This type of turn should only be used on a two-lane roadway.

To perform a three-point turnabout:

- Check the mirrors and activate your right turn signal to communicate your intention to pull off to the right side of the road. Stop on the right side of the road.
- Activate your left turn signal, check traffic, and check blind spot by looking over your left shoulder. When traffic is clear, turn hard left to the other side of the road and stop when you have reached the other side.
- Place the vehicle in reverse, check traffic, and check blind spots on both sides by looking over your shoulders. When traffic is clear, turn hard right to the other side of the road and stop.
- Place the vehicle in drive, activate the left turn signal, and check traffic and blind spots. When traffic is clear, turn hard left and drive forward into the right lane of traffic heading in the new direction. Check traffic and make sure your turn signal has cancelled. Continue driving straight in the new direction.



Intersections

At all intersections, reduce your speed and search for:

- traffic control devices,
- oncoming and cross traffic,
- pedestrians and bicyclists,
- the roadway condition, and
- areas of limited visibility.

Do not rely on other road users to obey traffic control signals or signs. Some road users may not yield the right of way. Be prepared to avoid a crash.

Before moving after stopping at an intersection, take the extra time to check for crossing traffic and

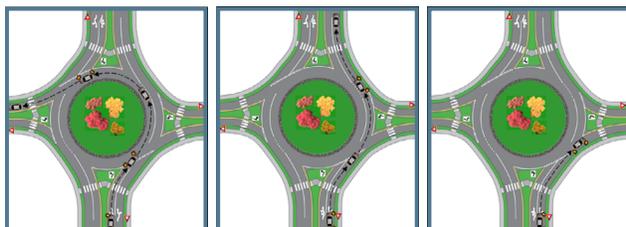
bicyclists. It is recommended that you look left and then right and left again before entering the intersection. At a traffic signal when the light turns green, avoid immediately moving into the intersection. Take the time to make sure your path of travel is clear and there is no crossing traffic. You need a large enough gap to get your vehicle across the roadway. You need enough space to turn into the appropriate lane and get up to speed.

Never assume another driver will share space with your vehicle or give your vehicle any additional space. Do not turn into a lane just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal active. The driver with an active turn signal may plan to turn after they go past your vehicle or may have forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn.

Roundabouts and Traffic Circles

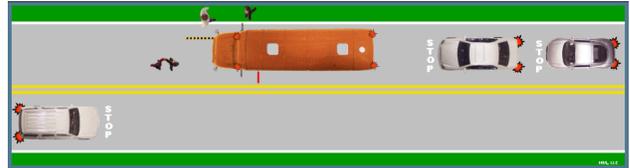
A roundabout or traffic circle is a circular intersection with design features that promote safe and efficient traffic flow. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right of way to circulating traffic. When using roundabouts or traffic circles:

- Slow down to enter the roundabout or traffic circle. A sign, like the one shown, warns of a roundabout or traffic circle.
- Yield to the traffic in the roundabout or circle.
- Enter a roundabout or traffic circle in a counterclockwise direction.
- Proceed to the appropriate exit, signal intent, and exit.



Rules for School Buses

You must stop for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing or stop arm extended at all times unless the roadway is separated by a physical barrier. After the school bus' red lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm is no longer visible, proceed, slowly watching for children.



Parking

You are responsible for making sure that your vehicle is not a hazard when it is parked. [\[Insert jurisdiction-specific information here\]](#).

- Always park in a designated area.
- When parking along the roadway, park your vehicle as far away from the flow of traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as possible.

No-Parking Zones—There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs or painted curbs that may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by colored curb markings.



Perpendicular and Angle Parking

- Entering a Perpendicular or Angle Parking Space
 - Identify the space in which you will park and check traffic.
 - Signal your intentions.
 - Move forward slowly, turning the steering wheel left or right as appropriate, until the vehicle reaches the middle of the space.
 - Center the vehicle in the space.

- Move to the front of the parking space, stop, and secure the vehicle.
- **Exiting a Perpendicular or Angle Parking Space**
 - Check for traffic in all directions.
 - Continue to check traffic and move straight back until your front bumper clears the vehicle parked beside you.
 - Then turn the steering wheel sharply in the direction that the rear of your vehicle should move.
 - When the vehicle clears the parking area space, stop and shift to drive.
 - Accelerate smoothly, steering as needed to straighten wheels.



Parallel Parking

ENTERING A PARALLEL PARKING SPACE



- Identify the space where you will park, check traffic, and signal.
- When traffic is clear, shift to reverse and look to the rear in the direction the vehicle will be moving.

- Back slowly while turning the steering wheel rapidly in the appropriate direction. Continue backing up until your front bumper is in line with the rear bumper of the vehicle you are parking behind.
- Back up slowly while turning the steering wheel rapidly to center the vehicle into the space.
- Stop before touching the bumper of the vehicle to the rear. Shift to drive and adjust the vehicle in the parking space.

EXITING A PARALLEL PARKING SPACE

- Check traffic in all directions, place your foot on the brake, shift to reverse, and back as much as possible to the vehicle parked behind you.
- Check for traffic and signal. Shift to drive and move forward slowly, steering into the lane.
- Make sure that the front bumper of the vehicle will clear the vehicle ahead; if not, reverse and correct steering.
- Move forward into the appropriate lane of traffic when the door post of the vehicle clears the rear bumper of the vehicle parked ahead of you.

Changing Lanes

When changing lanes:

- Check your mirrors.
- Check your “blind spots,” or areas around your vehicle that cannot be seen by other vehicles, by turning your head and looking over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move.
- Identify a gap in traffic, signal, and look again in the direction of the lane change. Adjust speed and steer into lane.

Entering a Multi-lane Highway

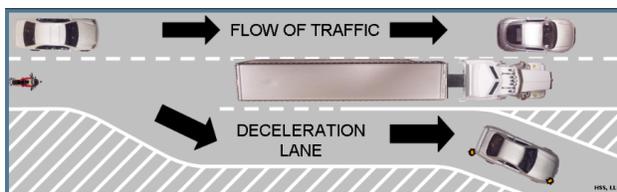
- Use the acceleration lane to reach the speed of other vehicles before pulling onto the roadway. Identify a gap in traffic and merge with the traffic flow. Cancel your turn signal.



Exiting a Roadway

It is important to know where you are exiting the roadway.

- Plan to move to the lane closest to your existing point early to avoid a quick lane change.
- Maintain your vehicle speed as long as you are on the main roadway.
- Signal your intention, move to the deceleration lane, and slow to your existing speed.
- Check the posted speed for the deceleration lane.



Passing

On multi-lane roads, the left-most lane is intended to be used for passing slower vehicles. Never pass on the shoulder, whether it is paved or not.

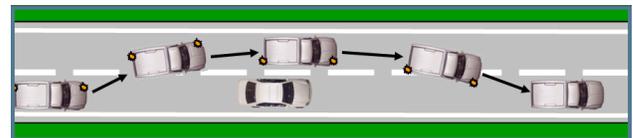
When passing another vehicle, pass the vehicle as quickly and safely as possible. The longer your vehicle stays alongside the other vehicle, the longer you are in danger of the other vehicle moving toward your lane.

To pass:

- Check for oncoming traffic.
- Check your mirrors and over your shoulder for following or passing vehicles.
- Signal your intentions when it is safe to pass.
- Steer smoothly into the passing lane.
- Maintain or adjust speed as necessary.
- Continue to pass until the complete front of the passed vehicle is visible in your rearview mirror.
- Signal your intention to return back to the lane.
- Steer smoothly into the lane, maintaining or adjusting speed as appropriate.

When being passed:

- Stay in your lane.
- Maintain a constant speed to allow the driver to pass you.
- [Insert state/province/territory-specific laws here].



Do not attempt to pass when an oncoming vehicle is approaching, your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, at intersections, or before a highway-railroad crossing or bridge.



When passing a bicyclist, slow down and allow as much space as possible, and consider the bicyclist's speed when you pass.

Section Eight Safe Driving Tips

This Section Covers

- Visual Search
- Speed Management
- Stopping Distance
- Space Management
- Communicating

Driving requires skills you can only gain through practice and experience. The following section offers some driving tips that you can practice to help you become a safer and more skillful driver.

Visual Search

You must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind the vehicle. You should develop a searching pattern that you can use every time you are driving.

Searching helps you to see situations that could cause a problem and gives you time to change speed or roadway position. Avoid staring. Keep your eyes moving and searching for possible problems.

Look ahead.

Looking well down your planned path of travel will help you see the road, other road users, and traffic



conditions and gives you time to adjust and plan your driving movements. This additional time will allow you to make better decisions and possibly avoid being forced to use emergency braking and steering. Ideally, you should try to look at what is occurring 20 to 30 seconds in front of your car.

How far you look down the road depends on where you are driving. In cities and urban areas, you may not be able to see as far as when you are driving on a highway. Avoid getting into situations that could limit how far you can see such as following too close to a larger vehicle. Adjust your speed and road position so you can see.

Look to the sides. You should search to the sides to make sure other roadway users will not cross your travel path.

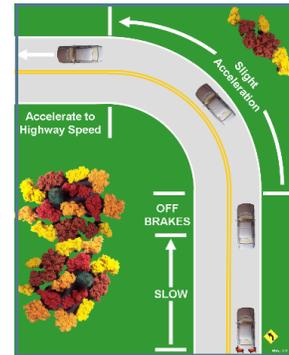
Look to the rear. You need to be aware of traffic behind your vehicle. Use your mirrors to check this traffic. It is very important to check traffic behind you when changing lanes, slowing down or stopping, and entering an intersection.

Speed Management

Driving safely means adjusting your vehicle speed for roadway and traffic conditions, providing an adequate following interval, and obeying the appropriate speed limits.

Adjusting To Roadway Conditions

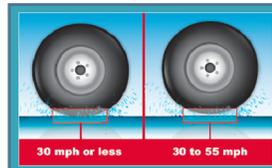
Curves—Always reduce speed before entering the curve to a safe speed (a speed that allows you to apply slight and constant acceleration through the curve). Reduce speed more when traction is poor, when following other vehicles, and when you cannot see the end of the curve. Hard braking after entry to a curve could cause the vehicle tires to lose traction.



Slippery roads—Reduce speed at the first sign of rain, snow, sleet, or ice. When the roadway is slippery, your tires do not grip as well. It will take longer to stop, and it will be harder to turn without skidding. Always reduce your speed if the road is wet or covered with snow or ice.

Hydroplaning—

Hydroplaning occurs when the steering tires start to ride up on any pooled water, similar to the action of water skis. The best way to avoid traction loss from hydroplaning is to slow down in the rain or when the road is wet with pooled water or water puddles.



Flooded roadways—Do not drive through large bodies of standing water on a road. If you see a flooded roadway, find another route to get to your destination.



Stopping Distance

Total stopping distance is the distance your vehicle travels, in ideal conditions, from the time you realize you must stop until your vehicle stops. Several things may affect your stopping distance:

- **Speed—**The faster you are traveling, the more time and distance is needed to stop.
- **Your perception time—**This is the time and distance it takes you to recognize you must stop. The average perception time for an alert driver is $\frac{3}{4}$ second to 1 second.
- **Your reaction time—**This is the time and distance it takes for you to react and move your foot from the gas pedal and begin applying the brakes. The average driver has a reaction time of $\frac{3}{4}$ second to 1 second.
- **Braking distance—**This is the time and distance it takes for your brakes to slow and stop your vehicle. At 50 mph on dry pavement with good brakes, it can take about 158 feet.

Space Management

Providing an Adequate Following Distance

You will share the road with a variety of other roadway users. You will need time and space to adjust and

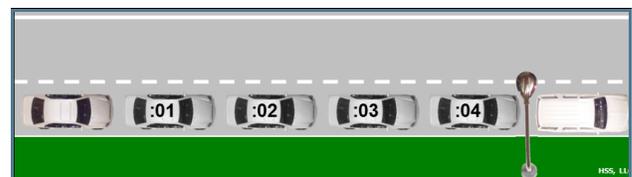
react to these other road users. The more space you allow between your vehicle and other roadway users, the more time you have to react. This space is usually referred to as a space cushion. Always try to maintain a safe space cushion around your vehicle.

Space in Front

Following the vehicle in front of you closely limits your vision of the road and does not allow you enough time to react to avoid a crash. You should always try to keep a minimum following distance of 4 seconds between your car and the vehicle in front.

To determine your following distance:

- Watch when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign, pole, or any other stationary point.
- Count the seconds it takes you to reach the same sign, pole, or any other stationary point (“One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four”).
- You are following too closely if you pass the stationary point before counting to one thousand four.
- Reduce speed and then count again at another stationary point to check the new following interval. Repeat until you are following no closer than “four seconds.”
- After practicing, guess how many seconds away you are from an object and then count the seconds it takes to reach the object to see how accurate you are.



4 Second Minimum Following Distance

There are certain situations when you would need more space in front of your vehicle. Increase your following distance:

- On slippery roads
- When following large vehicles such as trucks, buses, recreational vehicles, and vehicles pulling a trailer

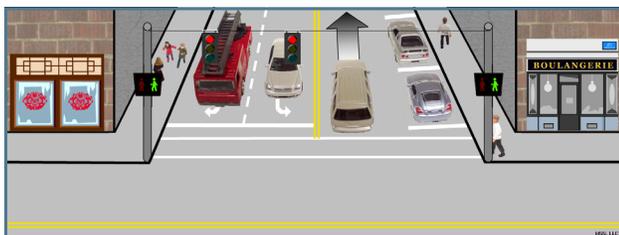


- At night, in fog, or in bad weather
- When following vehicles required to stop at railroad crossings, such as transit buses, school buses, or vehicles carrying hazardous materials

Space to the Side

A space cushion on the sides of your vehicle allows you to move right or left.

- Avoid driving next to other vehicles for long periods of time. You may be in their blind spot, and it reduces the space you may need to avoid a crash.
- Avoid crowding the center line marking. Try to keep as much space as possible between you and oncoming traffic.
- Make space for vehicles entering a multiple-lane or limited access roadway by moving over a lane or adjusting your speed.



- Give extra space to pedestrians, especially children and bicyclists.

- When a passing vehicle is a tractor trailer, leave a little more space by moving to the outside portion of your lane space away from the tractor trailer as it passes.

Space Behind Affects Your Following Distance

It is not always easy to maintain a safe following distance behind your vehicle. However, you can help keep the driver, behind you, at a safe distance by keeping a steady speed, signaling in advance, and keeping more space to the front of your vehicle before reducing speed or turning.

Communicating

It is important that you let other roadway users know where you are and what you plan to do.

Letting Others Know You Are There

It is your responsibility to make your vehicle is visible to other roadway users.

Use headlights—Turning on your headlights helps other roadway users to see you. Especially:

- On rainy, snowy, or foggy days. [\[Insert jurisdiction/province/territory information here\]](#).
- When it begins to get dark. When driving away from a rising or setting sun.

Using your horn—Your vehicle's horn, if used properly, can be used to get the attention of other road users. A light tap on the horn should be all that is needed under normal circumstances. You may want to give your horn a light tap when:

- Pedestrians or bicyclists appear to be moving into your lane of travel
- Passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane
- A driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you

Not using your horn—You should only use your horn when you need to communicate with other road users. Using your horn inappropriately could scare or anger another road user. You should not use your horn when near blind pedestrians.

Signaling Your Movements

You must use the appropriate turn signal before changing direction or slowing the vehicle to inform and warn other roadway users.



Signal before changing direction—An appropriate signal gives other roadway users time to react to your vehicle movements. You should use a turn signal when changing lanes, turning left or right, or when merging into traffic. Make sure you cancel your signals to avoid confusing other drivers.

Signal when reducing speeds—Brake lights let other roadway users know that the vehicle in front is slowing down. Signal before reducing speed when:

- Turning off a roadway that does not have separate turning or exiting lanes
- Parking or turning before an intersection

Section Nine Emergency Situations and Avoiding Crashes

This Section Covers

- Emergencies and Avoiding Crashes
- Vehicle Malfunctions

Emergencies and Avoiding Crashes

All drivers eventually will find themselves in an emergency situation. As careful as you are, there are situations that could cause a problem for you. If you are prepared, you may be able to prevent any serious outcomes. All drivers have the responsibility to prevent crashes. You have three options to avoid the crash or to reduce its impact. These options are braking, steering, or accelerating.

Braking

The first reaction for most drivers to avoid a crash is to stop the vehicle. Most new vehicles are equipped with ABS (anti-lock braking system). The ABS will allow you to stop your vehicle without skidding and keep steering control. Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. The ABS system will allow you to stop without skidding. The general guidelines for using ABS are:

- Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep applying pressure.
- ABS will work only if you keep the pressure on the brake pedal. You may feel the pedal vibrate, and you may hear a clicking noise. This is normal.
- You can still steer your vehicle.

If your vehicle is not equipped with ABS, refer to your vehicle's owner's manual for proper braking procedure.

Steering

You may be able to avoid a crash by quickly steering around a problem. This is sometimes referred to as "swerving." To quickly steer around a problem:

- Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel.
- Steer in the direction you want to go but try to avoid other traffic.
- When you have cleared the problem, steer in the opposite direction to straighten out your vehicle, gain control, and start slowing.

Accelerating

It may be necessary to accelerate to avoid a crash. This may happen when another vehicle is about to hit you from behind or the side.

Dealing with Skids

Skids are caused when you are traveling too fast for conditions, when you stop too suddenly, or when the tires can no longer grip the roadway. When you begin to skid, you have little control of your vehicle. If your vehicle begins to skid:

- Release pressure from the brake or accelerator.
- Look where you want to go.

Uneven Surface Drop-Offs

Uneven surface drop-offs can cause serious crashes if you react improperly. Avoid panic steering in which

you try to return to the pavement as soon as your wheels leave the pavement. If your vehicle leaves the paved road surface, slow down gradually, when safe to do so, and turn quickly back onto the pavement.

Vehicle Malfunctions

There is always a chance of a vehicle problem while driving. You should follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in the vehicle owner's manual. Following these preventive measures greatly reduces the chance that your vehicle will have a problem.

Brake Failure

It is important to check your warning lights to be sure your vehicle works correctly. A brake warning light will tell you your brakes are not working properly. Do not drive if you see this warning light, however, if your brakes stop working while driving:

- Use the parking brake. Pull on the parking brake handle in the center console or push the parking brake foot pedal slowly so you will not lock the rear wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if the vehicle does start to skid.
- If that does not work, turn off the engine and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure the vehicle is off the roadway. Do not continue to drive the vehicle without working brakes.

Tire Blowout

Tire blowout is a rapid deflation of air from the tire. If a front tire blows out, the vehicle will pull sharply in the direction of the blowout. If a rear tire blows out, the vehicle will wobble, shake, and pull some in the direction of the blowout. If a tire blows out or suddenly goes flat:

- Grip the steering wheel firmly and keep the vehicle going straight.

- Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the accelerator pedal.
- Do not brake. Allow the vehicle to slow by itself or brake gently if necessary.
- Do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place and turn on emergency flashers.
- Have the tire changed and replaced.

Power Failure

If the engine shuts off while you are driving:

- Keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Be aware that the steering wheel may be difficult to turn, but you can turn it.
- Look for an escape path. Do not brake hard; instead, brake with steady pressure on the pedal, slow down, and then pull off the roadway.
- Stop and try to restart the engine; if unsuccessful, raise the hood and turn on the emergency flashers. Call for help.

Stuck Accelerator

If your vehicle is accelerating out of control, you should:

- Turn off the engine.
- Shift to neutral and search for an escape path.
- Steer smoothly, brake gently, and pull off the roadway.
- Have the pedal repaired at a service center before driving again.

Vehicle Breakdown

If your vehicle breaks down on the highway, you should make sure that other roadway users can see your disabled vehicle. All too often, crashes occur because a driver did not see a disabled vehicle until it was too late to stop.

If available, use your cell phone or other device to notify authorities that your vehicle or another vehicle has broken down. Many roadways have signs indicating the telephone number to call in an

emergency. If you are having vehicle trouble and have to stop:

- Get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic, if possible.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show your vehicle is disabled.
- Try to warn other roadway users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares about 200 to 300 feet behind the vehicle, giving other drivers some time to change lanes if necessary.

Section Ten Sharing the Road

This Section Covers

- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists
- Motorcyclists
- Interacting with Commercial Vehicles
- Emergency Vehicles
- Police and Traffic Stops
- [Move-Over Laws]
- Slow Moving Vehicles

Everybody has a right to the roadway. Remember to be courteous and communicate your presence and intentions to avoid crashes.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians are difficult to see and it is difficult to determine their intentions. As a driver:

- You should always be prepared to yield to pedestrians even if they are not in a crosswalk.
- You must yield when a pedestrian is in a crosswalk, even if it is unmarked, including mid-block crosswalks marked by warning signs and pavement markings.
- You must always yield the right of way to persons who are visually impaired. When a pedestrian is crossing a street guided by a dog or carrying a white cane, you must come to a complete stop.
- You must yield the right of way to all pedestrians in the intersection even if the traffic light is green.
- When making a right or left turn on red, you must be prepared to yield the right of way to pedestrians.
- When driving next to parked or stopped vehicles, pedestrians can walk out between these vehicles. Slow down and do not pass until you are sure there are no pedestrians crossing in front of it.



- Check for pedestrians in your path before backing, especially in parking lots or places where there are many pedestrians.

- Be careful in playground and residential areas where children could run out from between parked vehicles. It is a good idea to drive slower than the speed limit in these areas and be prepared to stop quickly.



- In a school zone when lights are flashing or children are present, you must obey a slower speed limit. At a school crossing where there is traffic patrol, stop and yield if you are signaled to do so.



Bicyclists

Bicycles are considered vehicles when on roadways. Bicyclists are required and expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorized vehicles. As a motorist, you should know that a bicyclist has the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as you. Respect for each other will aid in the smooth flow of traffic.

Bicyclists may not be easily seen in traffic. You must be alert for bicyclists and be extra careful when approaching them. Just as motorists have different levels of skill, bicyclists also have varying levels of skills. A skillful bicyclist rides predictably and holds a steady line. An unskillful bicyclist may swerve unpredictably, ignore traffic signs and signals, and ride without a light at night. If you see, an unskillful bicyclist, be ready for any sudden movements.

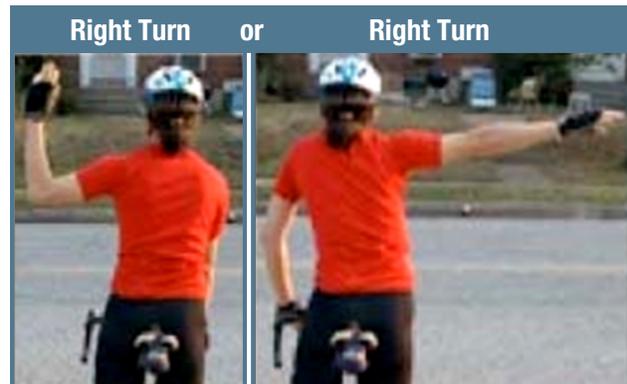
As a driver, you must:

- Yield to bicyclists in intersections as you would for pedestrians and other vehicles.



- Yield right of way when a bicycle path or bike lane intersects a road. Do not stop, park, or drive on a designated bicycle path or lane unless you are entering or leaving an alley or driveway, performing official duties, directed by a police officer, or an emergency situation exists.
- Allow as much space as possible and slow down when approaching or passing a bicyclist. You should slow down and let the cyclist clear the intersection before making your turn.
- Avoid slowing down or stopping quickly. A motor vehicle's brakes are more powerful than a bicycle's and you could cause a crash.
- Avoid sounding your horn close to bicyclists unless there is a chance of a crash. Sounding your horn to alert your presence may startle bicyclists and cause them to steer into your path and crash.
- Watch carefully for bicyclists entering your lane. Be especially careful if you see children riding bikes on the sidewalk. They may come onto the road.
- Avoid turning sharply in front of a bicyclist and do not force a bicyclist off the road.
- Although bicyclists are required to ride in the direction of traffic, you should look for them riding anywhere on the roadway.
- Be particularly careful around bicyclists when the roadway is wet or covered with sand or gravel. These conditions affect bicycles much more than vehicles.

- Cooperate with bicyclists. They are required to use hand signals, as shown, when turning and stopping. However, keep in mind that bicyclists may be unable to signal if road or traffic conditions require them to keep both hands on the handlebars. Look for other clues of a bicyclist's intent, such as turning his or her head or looking over his or her shoulder before changing lane position.

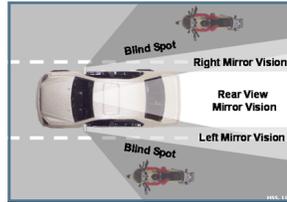


- When parked on the street, check to the sides and rear for bicyclists before you open your vehicle door.
- You should check for bicyclists in your path before backing. Be especially cautious near schools or residential areas where bicyclists may be present.
- [Insert jurisdiction information pertaining to riding a bicycle while impaired.]

Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other drivers. However, it may be more difficult to see them. There are special situations and conditions we need to be aware of so we can safely share the road with motorcycles:

- Allow a motorcyclist a full lane width. Do not share the lane. The motorcycle needs space for the motorcyclist to react to other traffic.



- Motorcycles are small and therefore more difficult to see. Be aware that motorcycles can be part of the traffic mix. Always check your mirrors and blind spots for them.
- Before turning left, be alert for motorcycles by looking carefully to the front and sides of your vehicle.

- Do not assume a motorcycle is turning when you see its turn signal flashing. Motorcycle turn signals may not self-cancel, and the motorcyclist may have forgotten to turn them off. Wait to be sure the rider is going to turn before you proceed.



- When following a motorcyclist, allow for a minimum 4-second following distance or more in wet conditions, or you may not have enough time or space to avoid a crash. Motorcycle riders may suddenly need to change speed or adjust



lane position to avoid hazards such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement, which can be deadly to a motorcyclist.

- Keep in mind that scooters and mopeds travel at much lower speeds than motorcycles.

Interacting with Commercial Vehicles

More than 250,000 crashes occur between cars and commercial vehicles each year. Many of these crashes could be avoided by keeping these points in mind:

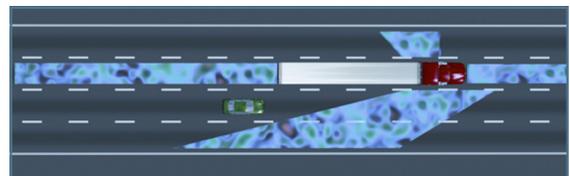
- Commercial vehicles are generally larger vehicles and less maneuverable than cars.
- These vehicles have much larger blind spots than cars.
- They have longer stopping and accelerating distances and need more room to turn.



The No Zone

The no zone is the area around large trucks or buses where vehicles disappear from the commercial driver's view into blind spots. These blind spots are on the sides, rear, and front of the large vehicle.

- **Side No Zones**—Large trucks and buses have big no zones on both sides. They are much larger than your vehicle's blind spots. Trucks have a larger blind spot on their right side starting behind the cab and extending up to the length



of the truck. If you cannot see the driver's face in the side view mirror, he or she cannot see you. Avoid driving alongside a large vehicle for any longer than required under any circumstances.

If the driver needs to swerve or change lanes, the chances of a crash are greatly increased.

■ **Front No Zones—**

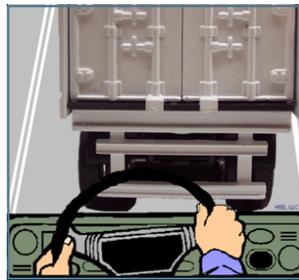
Because of a large vehicle's size and weight, they take longer to stop than cars.



A loaded truck with good tires and properly adjusted brakes, under ideal conditions, traveling at 55 mph requires a minimum of 335 feet before coming to a complete stop, or greater than 1½ times the stopping distance of a car. Therefore, it is essential not to enter a roadway in front of a large vehicle or change lanes in front of a large vehicle. When passing a large vehicle, look for the whole front of the vehicle in your rear-view mirror before pulling in front and maintaining speed.

■ **Rear No Zones—**

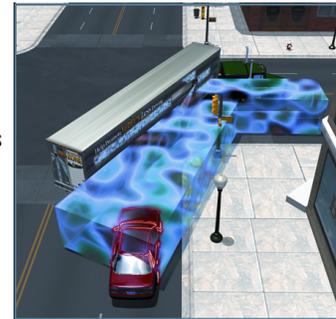
Unlike cars, large vehicles have huge blind spots directly behind them that extend up to 200 feet. If you are too close, the large vehicle cannot see your car, and you cannot see what is ahead of you. If the large vehicle brakes or stops suddenly, you have no place to go and could run into the vehicle. To prevent this you need to pay close attention when following a large vehicle. Avoid following the vehicle too closely and position your vehicle so the driver can see it in his or her side mirrors. When traveling up or down steep hills, large vehicles must drive slowly, approximately 35 mph and therefore use the right lane. Avoid driving in the right lane, if possible, when traveling up or down hills, as well as near truck weigh stations, where large vehicles will be attempting to re-enter faster moving traffic. By avoiding the right lane in these



areas, you will reduce the possibility of a crash with a large vehicle.

Turning

Pay close attention to large vehicles turn signals and give them plenty of room to maneuver.



When a truck or bus needs to make a right turn, the driver will sometimes swing the vehicle wide to the left to safely turn right and clear the corner of a curb or other obstruction. Sometimes space from other lanes is used to clear corners. If you try to get in between the truck or bus and the curb, you will be squeezed in between the vehicle and could suffer a serious crash. To avoid a crash, do not turn until the truck or bus has completed its turn.

Keep in mind:

- When you meet a truck coming from the opposite direction, keep as far as possible to the right side of the roadway to avoid a side-swept crash and to reduce the wind turbulence between the two vehicles, which pushes the vehicles apart.
- Many crashes with large vehicles occur at intersections because motorists are unable to judge accurately the speed of a truck approaching before making a left turn. When in doubt about the speed of an oncoming truck or bus, do not turn left in its path. The truck or bus may be going faster than you think, and it takes longer for the truck or bus to stop than a car.
- Many intersections are marked with stop lines to show where you must come to a complete stop. These stop lines help to set you farther back at an intersection to give larger vehicles more turning space. Always stop behind stop lines.
- Do not cut off a large vehicle in traffic or on the highway to reach an exit or turn or to beat a

truck into a single-lane construction zone. The few seconds that might be saved are not worth a life.

Emergency Vehicles

Emergency vehicles will be equipped with sirens, flashing lights, and special horns to help them move through traffic.

As a driver:



- You must yield right of way to an emergency vehicle when the flashing lights and siren are on by pulling over to the edge of the road so the emergency vehicle(s) may pass. Avoid blocking intersections.

What to Do and Expect When Pulled Over by Law Enforcement

Knowing what to do during a traffic stop will help ensure your safety. When you see emergency lights behind you, remember to:

- Activate your turn signal and pull off or to the side of the roadway as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Turn off the engine and any audio devices.
- Stay in your vehicle unless directed by the officer to exit.

The officer may approach either side of the vehicle.

Remember to:

- Roll down the window so you and the officer can better communicate.

- Wait for the officer's instructions before reaching for your driver's license or vehicle documents.
- Answer the officer's questions fully and clearly.
- If you have questions, respectfully ask the officer.
- If you disagree with the officer's course of action, do not prolong the contact by arguing. You may contest the officer's actions through established legal channels. Your acceptance and signature on a traffic ticket is not an admission of guilt.

Note: The above represents a portion of AAMVA's What to Do and Expect When Pulled Over by Law Enforcement information which can be found on our website at: [What to Do and Expect When Pulled Over by Law Enforcement – American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators – AAMVA](#)

[Move-Over Laws]

[The incidents of law enforcement officers, emergency medical services, and fire department personnel being struck while performing duties at the roadside are increasing at a frightening pace. To lessen the problem, move-over laws have been enacted, which require drivers to slow and change lanes when approaching a roadside incident. Signs are posted on roadways in states that have such laws].

[When approaching an authorized emergency vehicle stopped on the roadside, you should proceed with caution by slowing and yielding the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not next to that of the authorized emergency vehicle if safety and traffic conditions permit. If a lane change is unsafe, slow down and proceed with caution while maintaining a safe speed for traffic conditions].

Trains

See Section 7: Rules of the Road

Slow-Moving Vehicles

Be alert for slow moving vehicles, especially in rural areas. A fluorescent or reflective orange and red triangle displayed on the rear of vehicles drawn by animals, farm equipment, or construction equipment means the vehicle is traveling less than 25 mph. Use caution when approaching a slow moving vehicle and be sure it is safe before you pass.



- **Farm machinery**—Watch for tractors, combines, and other farm equipment moving across the road and traveling on state highways in rural areas. Pass with caution and remember that the operator of the farm machinery cannot hear approaching vehicles. [Insert jurisdiction/province/territory laws relating to farm equipment operations.]

- **Animal-drawn vehicles and horseback riders**—In some rural areas, you may be sharing the road with animal drawn vehicles and horseback riders. They have the same rights to use the road as a motor vehicle and must follow the same rules of the road. They are subject to heavy damage and injury to the occupants if hit by a vehicle. Pass with caution and do not use your horn or “rev” the engine because this may scare the horse and cause a crash. To avoid other possible crashes, you should anticipate left turns made by animal-drawn vehicles into fields and driveways. Warning signs will be posted in areas where you are likely to find animal-drawn vehicles and horseback riders, so be alert.



Section Eleven Special Driving Situations

This Section Covers

- Night Driving
- Work Zones
- Rural Road Driving

Night Driving

Driving at night is more difficult and hazardous than daytime driving. The distance you can see in front is limited by light provided by your headlights. Here are some things you can do that will help when you are driving at night:

- Use your high beams whenever there are no oncoming vehicles. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams.
- Dim your high beams for approaching traffic. If a vehicle comes toward you with their high beams on, look toward the right side of the road to keep from being distracted or momentarily blinded by their headlights.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle.
- In fog, rain, or snow, use your low beams. Light from your high beams may cause glare and make it more difficult to see ahead. Some vehicles have fog lights that you can use in fog, snow or rain.
- Avoid looking directly into oncoming headlights. Keep your eyes searching the road in front of your vehicle.



- Try to search well ahead of your headlight beams, looking for dark shapes on the roadway.
- Glance occasionally to the right and left to determine the location of the edge of the pavement and hazards that may come from the sides.
- Do not wear sunglasses or colored lenses when driving at night or on overcast days. Tinted or colored lenses reduce your vision.
- Increase your following distance by adding at least one additional second for night driving conditions and at least two additional seconds for driving on unfamiliar roadways at night.

Work Zones

A work zone is an area where roadwork takes place and may involve lane closures, detours, and moving equipment.



Work zones have become increasingly dangerous places for both workers and drivers. Approximately 40,000 people per year are injured as a result of motor vehicle crashes in work zones.

When approaching a work zone, watch for signs, cones, barrels, large vehicles, and



workers. Work zone signs have an orange background and black letters or symbols. Always reduce your speed in a work zone, even if there are no workers. The narrower lanes and rough pavement can create a hazardous condition. [\[Insert state/province/territory-specific information here about work zone laws\]](#).



As a driver, in a work zone, you should:

- Reduce your speed, increase your following distance, watch the traffic around you, and be prepared to stop.
- Use extreme caution when driving through a work zone at night whether workers are present or not.
- Adjust your lane position to allow space for workers and construction vehicles.
- Observe the posted work zone signs until you see “End Road Work.”
- Expect delays, plan for them, and leave early to reach your destination on time.
- When you can, use alternate routes and avoid work zones.

Rural Road Driving

Driving on rural highways can be dangerous. Stay alert, watch for warning signs, and obey the speed limit. Some road conditions and driving hazards are unique to rural roads. It is important to understand the different road conditions that you may experience on rural roads:

- **Gravel or dirt**—Traction can be reduced on gravel or dirt roads. You should reduce your speed, increase your following distance and realize you may skid when trying to stop your vehicle.

- **Narrow roads**—Rural roads are generally narrower and may have ditches or drop offs instead of shoulders. You should reduce your speed, center your vehicle in your lane, and watch for oncoming traffic that may attempt to share your lane.
- **Narrow and single-lane bridges**—You should look for warning signs identifying narrow or single-lane bridges. Take turns crossing the bridge; generally, the first driver to the bridge has right of way.
- **Open bridge gratings or steel bridges**—These can reduce your traction. Reduce your speed, increase your following distance and maintain a firm grip on the steering wheel.
- **Areas of reduced vision**—Blind corners created by wooded areas, crops growing in fields and steep hills can limit how far you can see. In areas with reduced vision always reduce your speed and be prepared to stop.
- **Uncontrolled intersections**—Some intersections on rural roads are not controlled by yield or stop signs. These intersections can be very dangerous if you do not approach them with caution. When approaching an uncontrolled rural intersection slow down and be prepared to stop for crossing or oncoming traffic.

Safe Trailering

Towing a Trailer

Many people are surprised at the extent of trailer towing. Trailers are towed billions of miles every year. Mobility, increased leisure time, popularity of do-it-yourself projects and cost consciousness have created a need which can be best satisfied by vehicles towing trailers. Thus, even though towing a trailer may be an occasional practice for individuals, it is a common occurrence everyday across the nation.



The Most Important Part... You

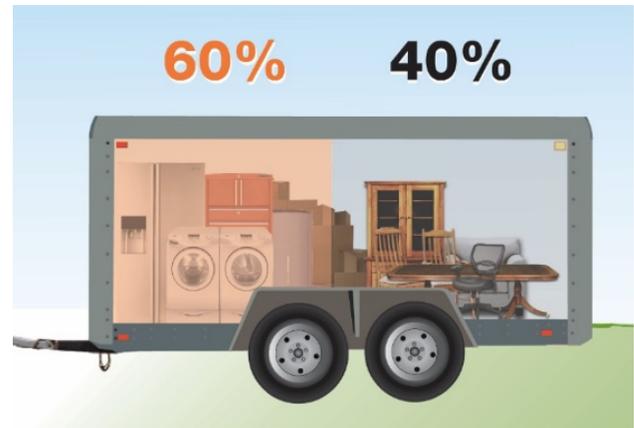
Your judgment and common sense are key to a safe trailering experience. Driver error is a contributing factor in the large majority of crashes involving vehicle-trailer combinations. It is vital that you make sure to hook up, load, and operate the vehicle-trailer combination properly.

Connecting a Trailer

The connection or hookup is an important step that must be done carefully each time you tow a trailer. Learn the proper hook up for your vehicle and trailer combination. Know how to correctly attach the coupler to the hitch-ball, connect the safety chains, and plug in the lights. When you begin to hook up a trailer, don't pause or stop to do something else, always finish the process first. Before leaving, check the connection to be sure the coupler and hitch-ball are properly connected. Make sure your vehicle is equipped with clean, undamaged mirrors on both sides as dirty or inadequate side mirrors restrict what you can see behind you.

Loading a Trailer

Trailers must be loaded heavier in the front. Loading heavier items in the front of the trailer reduces the possibility of sway. Failure to load the trailer heavier in the front is a leading cause of vehicle-trailer mishaps. Sixty percent of the cargo weight of a trailer should go in the front (nearest the towing vehicle) and 40 percent in the back.



If the trailer begins to sway or whip, steer straight and reduce speed gradually; do not apply the brakes. Never increase speed. Stop as soon as you can safely get completely off the roadway. Check the cargo first to be sure the trailer is loaded heavier in front. Reload if necessary. Keep heavy items on the floor of the trailer, not packed on top of other items. Pack your cargo tightly, and secure any partial loads with tie-downs or straps and packing material. Do not overload the trailer. Exceeding the trailer manufacturer's maximum gross weight can lead to damage or failure of the trailer's components.

Safe Driving With a Trailer

Safe trailering simply involves adopting a good compensatory attitude. Even the most experienced drivers will compensate for the peculiarities of the vehicle they are driving. Trailering is no different. No matter how much experience people have, they cannot change the vehicle they are operating to fit their driving habits, but instead must change their driving to fit the vehicle. The mind must be adjusted to accept a slower pace of travel. Drive more slowly when towing. The maximum recommended speed for most vehicle-trailer combinations is 55 mph. Driving slower also saves fuel and reduces your chances of losing control. Never exceed the posted speed limit. If driving

conditions worsen, you must reduce speed even more. When going down a grade, slow down BEFORE starting down the hill.

A vehicle-trailer combination requires more distance to stop. Allow extra space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you when towing. When driving in rain, snow, or fog, allow even more space. When towing, your vehicle will require more time and distance to pass. Have plenty of clear highway ahead, and never pass on hills or curves. When making turns while towing a trailer, remember that the trailer does not follow directly behind the car. The trailer may require extra room to safely turn.

When backing up a trailer, go slowly. Keep your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel. To move the trailer left, move your hand to the left. To move to the right, move your hand to the right. If the trailer starts to jackknife – STOP – and pull ahead to straighten out; then start again.

“Pro” Driving Tips

- If you are unsure how to properly hookup, load, or drive with a trailer, seek advice from a trailer professional.
- Recognize you are no longer driving a vehicle but a vehicle-trailer combination.
- Before driving and at each fuel stop, walk around the vehicle-trailer combination and recheck the hitch and coupler tightness, safety chains attachment, lights, and tire pressures.
- If, while driving, you hear an unusual noise or suspect trouble, stop at a safe place off the roadway to check on the problem.
- If you are driving a long distance, don’t attempt to drive “straight through.” Plan a rest stop so you can drive in daylight while rested and alert.

SAFE TRAILERING CHECKLIST

- Load Heavier in Front
- Hitch Tight
- Chains Attached
- Lights Working
- Tire Pressures OK
- Reduce Speed
- Think Ahead
- Stop Often for Rest
- Inspect Often
- Load Secure
- Wear Your Seat Belt

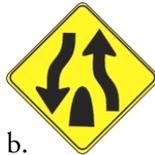
Section Twelve Test Your Knowledge

This Section Covers

- Sample Knowledge Test Questions

Select the alternative (a, b or c) that best answers the question.

1. Alcohol and other impairing drugs
 - a. reduce your judgment.
 - b. decrease your reaction time.
 - c. improve your ability to focus.
2. A yellow dashed line on your side of the roadway only means
 - a. passing is prohibited on both sides.
 - b. passing is permitted on both sides.
 - c. passing is permitted on your side.
3. If you arrive at a four-way intersection controlled by stop signs at the same time as another driver, you should
 - a. continue through the intersection.
 - b. yield the right of way to the driver on your right.
 - c. let the driver on your left go first.
4. Which sign warns a divided highway begins?



5. This road sign means
 - a. right curve.
 - b. curvy road ahead.
 - c. sharp curve ahead.

6. Regulatory signs are:
 - a. green.
 - b. yellow.
 - c. white.
7. If a pedestrian is crossing in the middle of the street, not at a crosswalk (also known as jaywalking), even if it is illegal, you
 - a. must stop for them.
 - b. do not have to stop for them.
 - c. should honk your horn at them.
8. Motorcycle operators have the right to
 - a. use a complete traffic lane.
 - b. share a traffic lane with a vehicle.
 - c. use the shoulder of a roadway.
9. When approaching or passing a bicyclist, you should
 - a. slow down and allow as much space as possible.
 - b. sound your horn to alert your presence.
 - c. speed up and quickly pass the bicyclist.
10. When driving at night use your high beams when
 - a. fog, rain, or snow is present.
 - b. following another vehicle.
 - c. there is no oncoming traffic approaching.

Correct Answers:

1. a; 2. c; 3. b; 4. a; 5. c; 6. c; 7. a; 8. a; 9. a; 10. c

OUR VISION

Safe drivers

Safe vehicles

Secure identities

Saving lives!



American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators

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