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TEXAS

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION

STUDENT MANUAL



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TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION

STUDENT MANUAL



Student's name : _____

You are soon going to find yourself behind the wheel of a motorized vehicle assuming some very serious responsibilities. Your goal will be to share the roadway with other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians by driving DEFENSIVELY, INTELLIGENTLY and COOPERATIVELY.

This text, presented in a concise, informative and instructional format, synthesizes the improvements that both science and research have made in the strategies needed to safely and intelligently operate a vehicle in this day and age on our modern highways.

Your best teacher will be experience, but it must be based on the professional training you received from a traffic safety education program. Building on this training, you have a solid foundation upon which you can continue to develop your skills. Your driving will then be a safe, pleasant, and a rewarding experience.

Charles D. Torreiro

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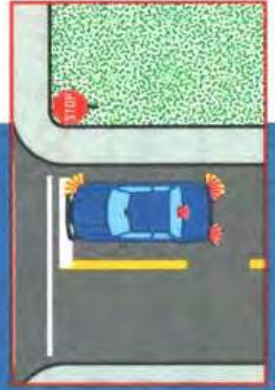
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Your License to Drive



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Texas is one of the most mobile societies in the world. A vast network of roadways has been built to accommodate the public and private vehicles that provide this mobility. From pedestrians to the largest transport trucks, they all share this system.

Each individual person, whether walking, riding a bicycle, or operating a motorized vehicle, is the nucleus of the safe and efficient operation of the Highway Transportation System or HTS.

Now that you are about to acquire your first driver's license and become a driver, you must become more familiar with this role and its responsibilities. You must also be aware of the procedures for acquiring your license and the regulations that govern this privilege.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF AND RESPOND TO:

- the safe operation of the HTS.
- the criteria for acquiring a license in Texas.
- the vehicle inspection requirements in Texas.
- the safety responsibility requirements in Texas.



I-A Understanding the HTS

As a passenger, you have more than likely experienced some of the freedom that an automobile provides.

Millions of Texas residents drive countless miles every day for a wide variety of reasons. Meanwhile, others ride bicycles or motorcycles, drive trucks, vans, or buses to earn a living, or

operate emergency or other vehicles to supply essential public services. All of these people (and others) must share the same network of public highways. This variety of road users will inevitably lead to potential conflicts.

A multitude of professionals are involved in the proper planning or improvement of this complex



system of roadways. From planning and design, to the placement of traffic control devices, engineers labor to provide a safe environment. Municipal, state and federal regulations govern all aspects of the use of the HTS.

Federal, state, and local governments cooperate to enact legislation that governs the operation of the HTS.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT passes laws setting general standards for the use of the HTS.

Some examples are:

- THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT- legislating regulations for vehicle manufacturers; such as safety features, vehicle emissions and recall of defects.
- THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT- establishes general guidelines for state regulations concerning vehicle registration and inspection, driver licensing and traffic laws.
- THE UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ACT- regulates the shape, color, and location of road signs.

TEXAS, following the guidelines set by federal laws, enacts statutes that regulate all aspects of the HTS: the ownership, registration, and inspection of vehicles; the licensing of drivers; traffic laws and courts; and highway construction/maintenance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, cities, towns, etc. pass ordinances that regulate the use of the HTS within their regions. They govern the speed limit, traffic directions, particular rules at intersections, parking rules, etc.

It is your responsibility to know the rules. The Texas Department of Public Safety issues a handbook on the specific rules and regulations that apply in Texas. **IGNORANCE OF THE LAW IS NO EXCUSE!**

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The Texas regulatory agency (Texas Department of Public Safety) authorizes individuals to operate motor vehicles by issuing licenses and

endorsements according to the class of vehicle that will be operated. Certain requirements must be met to apply for each class of license.

A driver's license is a privilege, not a right, that is granted by the state. As such, the Department of Public Safety has been empowered to restrict, revoke, or suspend the license, or driving privilege of individuals under specific conditions (administrative revocation).

The Texas Department of Public Safety is also required to keep a **record** ("**POINT SYSTEM**") on every driver in order to identify, penalize, and deny the privilege of operating motor vehicles to persons who, by their conduct and record, have demonstrated their indifference for the safety of others. These drivers have also shown their disrespect for the laws of the state, for the orders of the courts, as well as the statutorily required acts of the administrative agencies that govern the HTS.

Having a driver's license is a privilege. Once you obtain your driver's license, you must continually demonstrate you have the skill, knowledge, and attitude to drive safely, or the license may be restricted, suspended, or revoked. The Texas Department of Public Safety has access to information about all crashes, traffic law violations, and certain drug convictions. However, only those crashes that involve findings of your responsibility for civil infractions, as well as convictions for felonies or misdemeanors, are considered to be public information.

Certain violations and license suspensions under the Texas Implied Consent Law stay on your record for at least fifteen years. A no-insurance infraction as well as DWI's, MIP's, DUI's stay on your record for life

OUT-OF-STATE INFRACTIONS

The Texas Department of Public Safety is also notified of any traffic crashes, convictions, and findings of responsibility in other states or jurisdictions. These will be recorded on your Texas **driving record**, and **remain there for the same period** as any conviction that occurs in Texas (**three years for infractions/crashes**).



When your **driving record** shows, by the accumulation of a specified number of points, that you have had problems driving safely and obeying the traffic laws, you will be contacted by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

THE POLICE

All police agencies are empowered to supervise the operation of the HTS and enforce Texas traffic laws. If a uniformed law enforcement officer driving an official police vehicle signals you to stop, you are required to pull out of traffic and stop as soon as safely possible.

The officer may be stopping you for a variety of reasons. You may be receiving an emergency message, your vehicle may match the description of a stolen vehicle, it may have defective equipment, or the officer may believe you have committed a violation.

When stopped, you must be able to produce your driver's license, the vehicle registration, and proof of financial responsibility (insurance) for the officer.

Police officers may stop vehicle operators whenever they have reasonable grounds to suspect that an infraction has been committed. They may serve a citation, confiscate or mark the driver's license, destroy the driver's license in rare cases, have a vehicle towed, etc.

Drivers must stop when signaled to do so, assist at the scene of a collision upon request, sign a citation to appear in court, accompany the officer to the station when requested, submit to a breath/blood test when asked, and in general, cooperate with any instructions from the police.

THE COURTS

Under Texas law, some traffic violations are civil infractions; others are misdemeanors, or felonies. Depending on the charge and how it is resolved, a driver may be fined, referred to a special program, or in the most serious cases, sent to jail or prison.

Courts are structured to adjudicate and impose

sentences and penalties. They do not create the laws; they merely interpret and impose sentences for the infractions of the law. They decide whether drivers charged with violating the laws are guilty or innocent.

Drivers are required to appear, testify, and conform to all imposed penalties. In most cases, if a driver does not resolve a citation, his/her driver's license will be suspended until it is resolved.

If a person continues to drive after he/she has been notified of the suspension or revocation of their driver's license, he /she will be charged with a misdemeanor. The vehicle registration will be cancelled, the suspension/revocation will be extended for an additional like period, a fine and/or jail time will be imposed.

The court may also order the impoundment, for a given period, of the motor vehicle being driven at the time of the offense (provided that the defendant was an owner of the vehicle at the time of the offense and is an owner on the date of conviction).

Many other varied penalties can be imposed by the courts - special programs, community service, etc. - depending on the infraction that was committed by the person who has been found guilty.

Yet, despite all of these efforts, the safe operation of the HTS depends on the attitude and behavior of each of its users.

ROAD USER RESPONSIBILITY

With the freedom and mobility the license to drive will grant you, you must be prepared to accept the responsibilities as well. If your vehicle was alone on the road, driving would be a simple task. The fact is that the HTS is becoming more and more crowded every day. It is your duty to know and abide by the rules and further, to be courteous and communicate with other road users.

You are responsible for your safety, the safety of your passengers, and the safety of any others who share the HTS.



CLASS & BEHIND-THE-WHEEL PREPARATION

Although completing a state-approved public or private driver education course may not be required for all license applicants, it is strongly recommended that all students experience a driver education program. This program will provide the foundation of knowledge, understanding, skills, and experiences necessary for the novice driver as well as the parent, guardian, or adult mentor to launch and continue the lifelong learning process of legal and responsible reduced-risk driving practices.

This manual, the student workbook, and other supplemental materials will be valuable aids to your proper understanding of the course your school presents. Each school designs and schedules their own program within certain norms. Make sure you take note of the hours, dates, and topics that are to be given. Prepare yourself by reading the chapters prior to the class. Review the material after class by completing the review section in this book and the appropriate sections in the workbook. If anything is not understood, ask your instructor at the start of the next class.

With the same diligence, apply yourself to the

requirements for the behind-the-wheel segment of the driver education program.

Your parents, guardians, or adult mentors must become involved in this behind-the-wheel segment of the program while coordinating and communicating with your program instructors. They will provide you with the opportunity to practice the skills and knowledge provided by the Texas Driver Education and Traffic Safety Program.

DRIVING PLAN

With the assistance of your program instructors as well as your parents or guardians, you should formulate a driving plan that will enable you, at your own pace, to acquire the foundation of knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience necessary to launch and continue the lifelong learning process of legal and responsible reduced-risk driving practices in the HTS.

This driving plan should be formulated from the outset based on the material that has been presented in your driver education program. As the program progresses, the driving plan should be modified in keeping with the new material presented as well as your increasing experience.



Texas Licensing Regulations

The Texas Department of Public Safety may not grant you a driver's license unless you fulfill all of the requirements necessary to obtain your first license.

LEARNER'S PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

A learner's or instruction permit is issued with a photograph for the purpose of allowing a student driver to legally practice driving when accompanied by a licensed driver who is occupying the seat beside the driver. This licensed driver must be at least 21 years of age and have at least one year of driving experience.

To qualify for an learner's permit, you must be at least 15 years of age and be enrolled in a driver education program (parent or school). **Until you are 18 years of age**, when you apply for an learner's permit or a driver's license, you must prove that you:

- 1) Have obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent; or
- 2) Are a student enrolled in a public or private school who attended school for at least 80 days in the fall or spring semester preceding the date of application; or
- 3) Have been enrolled for at least 45 days, and are currently enrolled in a program to



TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Each school district has predetermined policies and regulations (within the norms of the Texas Education Agency) governing their Traffic Safety Education Programs. Some of these are:

- goals and course structure
- attendance requirements,
- student worksheet procedures,
- procedures for test failures,
- cheating/copying on tests or worksheets,
- scheduling on-street instruction,
- student responsibilities and opportunities,
- classroom schedule,
- assessment /grading policies,
- permit procedures,
- classroom and laboratory programs,
- parent-involvement program,
- advantages and disadvantages.

YOUR FIRST CLASS C DRIVER'S LICENSE

After successfully completing a driver education program, **if you are under 25 years of age, you must complete the Impact Texas Teen Drivers (ITTD)** course by registering on-line at <https://impacttexasteendrivers.dps.texas.gov/profile/signup.aspx>. After completion, **print the certificate and bring it to the Drivers License Office** to apply for your Class C driver's license.

At the Drivers License Office, you must:

- Present a Texas Driver Education Certificate (Form DE 964) stating that you have successfully completed both the classroom and laboratory phases of the Texas Driver and Traffic Safety Education Course.
- Present a VOE Form (proof of school attendance - under the age of 18) .
- Present the **ITTD** certificate (under age 25).
- Show evidence of financial responsibility in accordance with the Texas Motor Vehicle Safety-Responsibility Act.
- Provide index fingerprints (if not taken when applying for your learner's permit).
- Pay the required fees.



After passing a driving test administered by a DPS examiner a Provisional Class C license will be issued. This provisional license will be valid until the applicants 18th birthday, at which time, the license will be issued for up to 6 years. The Provisional (purple title) and Under 21 (red title) Licenses are issued in a vertical format (above). An ID card, which is available upon request, for those under 21 years of age will also use the vertical format and will feature a green title.

GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSE PROGRAM

The Texas Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program was implemented as a result of Senate Bill 577. This law changed original licensing requirements for persons under age 18. GDL creates two phases of driving requirements for minors as well as an additional 30 hours of parent/guardian supervised practice. Bills 2730 and 339 restrict all drivers under the age of 18 from using wireless communication devices while driving.

A person under age 18 must show proof of driver education, verification of current enrollment and attendance in school (or high school graduation or GED), proof of social security number, as well as proof of identification (TRC 521.204, 521.222 and 545.424).

SAFETY TIPS



Learning the mental and physical skills necessary to drive safely takes time. Practice with your parent/guardian or designated driver will develop the experience needed to drive in a risk-reduction collision-free manner.



Phase One

Applicants under age 18 must hold a learner's permit or hardship license for a minimum of six months prior to issuance of a provisional Class A, B, or C driver license. In addition, the minimum age of the person who must accompany any learner's permit holder during the operation of the vehicle is 21 years of age. Except for hardship licenses, a minor is not eligible to graduate to Phase Two (provisional license) for a Class A, B, or C driver license until they have completed this phase and met all other current licensing and age requirements.

Under the GDL program, there is no minimum time that a person must hold a restricted motorcycle or moped license before they can apply for a Class M license. Phase One does not apply to Class M or Hardship license holders.

The learner's permit must remain valid during the mandatory six-month period to meet this regulation. If an learner's permit expires during this period, the permit must be renewed to complete the six-month requirement.

Once the applicant has held a valid learner's permit or hardship license for a minimum of six months, has reached the age of 16 for a Class C license (17 years of age for a Class B or Class A non-CDL), and has completed both the classroom and laboratory (driving), portions of driver education, they are eligible to "graduate" to Phase Two.

Phase Two

Phase Two restricts the driving privileges of persons under 18 years of age during the twelve-month period following the issuance of an original Class A, B, or C driver license (Provisional License). These persons may not operate a motor vehicle with more than one passenger in the vehicle under the age of 21 who is not a family member. In addition, they may not operate a motor vehicle between midnight and 5:00 a.m. unless the operation of the vehicle is necessary for the operator to attend or participate in employment or a school-related activity or because of a medical emergency.

The license restriction will state, "TRC 545 424 applies until mm dd yy" and will indicate the date in which the second phase of the graduated driver license expires for the person who holds that license. Upon completion of the twelve-month period, the above time and/or passenger restrictions no longer apply. The licensee may wish to apply for a duplicate license at a driver license office to remove this restriction. A fee is required to obtain a duplicate license. If not, this restriction will be removed at the time the applicant renews the license on their next birthday, provided the Phase Two twelve-month time has lapsed.

Provisional Driver License

All original licenses, other than an learner's permit, issued to persons under 18 years of age will be marked "Provisional." The license will be vertical and will be dated to expire on the applicant's next birthday occurring after date of issuance. A fee is required to obtain this license. The renewal fee is required for each one year of renewal period. No renewal notice will be sent as it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a verification of enrollment and attendance from their school.

If the learner's permit or driver license is not due for renewal a fee is required for a duplicate learner's permit or duplicate license (i.e.: lost license, change of address, removal of GDL restrictions).

LICENSE RESTRICTIONS

A reasonable restriction may be placed on your driver's license to improve the safety of your driving. This restriction is not meant to interfere with your driving but to make you a better driver. In such cases, a code letter is placed on the license which designates the type of restriction. The following list illustrates some of these restrictions and the code letter assigned.

- A** - With corrective lenses
- B** - LOFS age 21 or over
- C** - Daytime driving only
- D** - Not to exceed 45 mph
- E** - No expressway driving
- I** - M/C not to exceed 50 cc



- J** - Licensed M/C Operator age 18 or over in sight
- K** - Moped
- S** - Outside mirror or hearing aid
- T** - Automatic transmission
- U** - Applicable prosthetic devices
- V** - Applicable vehicle devices
- W** - Power steering

Contact your local Drivers License Office or a Drivers License Trooper for the procedures to remove any restrictions from your driver's license or learner's permit. Endorsements, which can be added to your license for Commercial Driver License (CDL) purposes, require special applications and testing. Check with the above-mentioned for the information and procedures.

RENEWING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE

A renewal notice card will be mailed to you about 6 weeks before your license expires. The notice will be sent to the last address that you gave to the Department of Public Safety.

Remember, if you do not receive this notice, it is still up to you to renew your license. Application for renewal must be made in person at any Texas Drivers License Office, except licensees who have received an invitation from the Department of Public Safety to renew by an alternate means, as specified by the invitation. You will be asked questions concerning your medical history. Depending on the circumstances, your case may be referred to the Texas Medical Advisory Board for their opinion.

DRIVING WITHOUT A LICENSE PENALTIES

The penalties are:

- **1st conviction** - up to \$200 fine.
- **2nd conviction** (in 1 year) - \$25 to \$200 fine.
- **3rd conviction** (in 1 year after 2nd) - \$25 to \$500 fine and/or 72 hours to 6 months in jail, or both.



Vehicle Inspection and Registration

All motor vehicles registered in Texas including cars, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, and mopeds must be inspected each year by an official motor vehicle inspection station. An inspection station or inspector may not issue a **Vehicle Inspection Report** for a vehicle unless the owner or operator furnishes proof of financial responsibility at the time of inspection. A personal automobile insurance policy used as evidence of financial responsibility must be written for a term of 30 days or more as required by the Insurance Code.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

A motor vehicle must have the following items inspected, and they must be in proper working order for your vehicle to be considered safe:

- 1) **Brakes** (including power brakes)
 - The foot brake must stop the vehicle within 25 feet at a speed of 20 mph.
 - The parking brake must be adequate to stop and hold the vehicle.

- 2) **Lights**
 - Two headlights - one on each side of the front - with a beam indicator light showing when the high beams are illuminated.
 - Two red taillights - one on each side of the rear of the vehicle.
 - Two red brake lights - one on each side of the rear of the vehicle - that are activated when the brake is depressed.
 - Two white reverse lights - one on each side of the rear of the vehicle - that are activated when backing.
 - Electric turn signals visible from the front and rear of the vehicle that can be activated by the driver.
 - License plate light, white in color, which lights the rear license plate when any lights are activated.
 - Two red reflectors, one on each side of the vehicle, visible from 600 feet (may be in combination with taillights).
 - Parking lights, white or amber on the front



and red to the rear, activated by the driver (may be in combination with other lights).

- 3) **Horn**
Must be audible from a distance of 200 ft.
- 4) **Exhaust and emissions system**
A muffler and exhaust system to help reduce air pollution (emissions control equipment as designated by department rule).
- 5) **Safety glass**
All glass must be safety glass (replacements must meet department standards).
- 6) **License plates**
All vehicles must have one valid plate at the front and one at the rear (exceptions: dealer plates, government vehicles and some commercial vehicles).
- 7) **Windshield wipers**
Wiper blades and system for safety in inclement weather.
- 8) **Rearview mirrors**
One inside mirror as well as a left outside mirror shall be so located as to reflect a view of the road for a distance of at least 200 feet to the rear of the vehicle.
- 9) **Sunscreen**
Sunscreening devices, approved by department rule, unless the vehicle is exempt from sunscreen device restrictions under Section 547.613.
- 10) **Front seat belts**
Front seat belts are required in vehicles on which seat belt anchorages were part of the manufacturer's original equipment.
- 11) **Tires**
All vehicles must be equipped with tires that are in proper and safe condition with a minimum tread depth of 2/32nds of an inch.
- 12) **Fuel cap**
A fuel tank cap must be present and will be tested using pressurized testing equipment approved by department rule.

Antique and classic vehicles (as well as other vehicles) may be exempt from some of these regulations.

PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

Certain equipment is considered unsafe and therefore not allowed:

- a red light showing from the front of the vehicle (except emergency vehicles);
- a bell, siren, or exhaust whistle (except on an emergency vehicle);
- a muffler cutout;
- anything that extends more than three inches beyond the left side or six inches beyond the right side of the body, running board, or fenders of a vehicle; and
- flashing red lights on the front of the vehicle (except on emergency vehicles or school and church buses).

MINIMUM ROAD CLEARANCE

A vehicle must not be modified or weighted in such a manner that the body is below the lowest part of the rims of the wheels.

DISPLAYING CERTIFICATE

As of March 2015, pass your inspection and retain your **Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR)**. When you renew your registration by mail, online, or in person; your inspection status will be verified electronically. You will be issued **one sticker as proof of inspection and registration.**

Two Steps - One Sticker.



NEW RESIDENTS

When a nonresident owner or operator establishes residency in Texas or enters into gainful employment, his/her vehicle may be operated for 30 days thereafter, after which the vehicle must be currently registered in Texas.

SAFETY TIPS



You are responsible for keeping your vehicle in good condition. The Texas inspection program gives you further safety protection. Its purpose is to ensure that the Texas vehicles on the highways are in safe working condition.





The Safety Responsibility Act

Texas enacted a law to ensure that all drivers are capable of paying in case they injure or kill a person, or damage property in a collision while operating a motor vehicle. This is referred to as the ***Texas Safety Responsibility Law***.

All owners and/or operators of motor vehicles in Texas must have at least the minimum amount of liability coverage as required by this law.

The minimum auto insurance liability coverage required by Texas law is:

- \$30,000 per person,
- \$60,000 per collision (injuries), and
- \$25,000 for property damage.

When these minimum Texas insurance liability requirements are insufficient, you will be held personally responsible for any claims that exceed the dollar limits of your policy.

EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order to comply with the Safety Responsibility Act, a driver (unless exempt) must purchase liability insurance or be self-insured under the provisions of the Act.

Most drivers carry auto insurance. They pay a premium, or fee, to provide protection from financial losses which may arise from a collision or mishap in which they are involved. The insurance company issues a policy, or written contract, and proof of insurance to the individual indicating how much and under what circumstances it will pay.

To be self-insured, an owner of a vehicle must:

- deposit money or securities with the state treasurer in at least the amount (\$55,000) required by the Texas Transportation Code (TRC), Section 601.12. The state controller will issue a certificate;
- deposit a bond with the Department of Public Safety as provided by TRC, Section 601.121. The Department will issue a certificate;

- deposit cash or a cashier's check with the county judge, of the county in which the vehicle is registered, in at least the amount (\$55,000) required by TRC Section 601.123. The judge will issue a certificate; or
- hold a certificate issued by the Department of Public Safety that shows a person has more than 25 vehicles registered in his/her name.

Evidence of financial responsibility (usually proof of insurance) must be presented to the proper authorities at the time a person applies for a driver's license, registers a motor vehicle, or obtains a motor vehicle inspection certificate, or renew the license plate.

In addition, every owner or operator of a motor vehicle in Texas is required, as a condition of driving, to furnish, upon request, proof of financial responsibility to a law enforcement officer or to another person involved in a collision.

FAILURE TO SHOW PROOF

If an owner or operator fails to show proof of financial responsibility when required, he/she may receive a citation. The court will dismiss the charge if proof is provided that a liability insurance policy was in effect when the citation was issued.

Upon conviction, a driver is subject to a \$175 to \$350 fine for a first offense. Second and subsequent convictions will result in driver's license and vehicle registration suspensions, in addition to a fine of \$350 to \$1,000. The court will also order the impoundment, for a period of 180 days, of the motor vehicle being driven at the time of the offense (provided that the defendant was an owner of the vehicle at the time of the offense and is an owner on the date of conviction). Before the court orders the release of the vehicle, evidence of financial responsibility must be presented to the court.



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Right-of-Way Concepts

The adoption, promulgation, and enforcement of new laws is an important step towards road safety. These laws, whether federal, state, or municipal, govern the operation of the Highway Transportation System or HTS. They establish norms for all motorized vehicles and their manufacturers. Rules for road sharing and safety, from professional drivers to pedestrians, are specified in these laws.

The intersection is a high risk location because two or more road users often wish to occupy it simultaneously. There are right-of-way rules to control these situations. Are you certain other road users know the rules? Will they obey them? Should you yield?

Law enforcement is the responsibility of the police agencies who patrol the HTS. Judges and the court systems will apply the penalties.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO KNOW AND APPLY RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES AND PRINCIPLES AT:

- intersections.
- merge situations.
- a variety of special situations.
- railroad crossings.



Right-of-Way

Traffic laws are important because they promote the orderly operation of the HTS. They govern the behavior of all road users and assist in predicting what others will do. They include basic driving rules, rules of right-of-way, and speed laws.

BASIC DRIVING RULES:

- Always drive on the right half of the roadway, unless:
 - 1) you are passing another vehicle,
 - 2) an obstruction obliges you to move to the left, and you yield to any vehicle that is moving in the lane and presents an



immediate hazard,

- 3) you are driving on a multi-lane roadway, or
 - 4) you are driving on a one-way roadway (TRC §545.051).
- When **driving slower than the normal speed** of other vehicles, you must drive in the right-hand lane, or as close as possible to the right curb or edge of the road, unless:
 - 1) you are passing another vehicle, or
 - 2) you are preparing to turn left at an intersection or into a private road or driveway (TRC §545.051).
 - When driving on a two-way road with two or more lanes in each direction, you must not drive to the left of the center line, except:
 - 1) when a traffic control device designates the use of a specified lane to the left of center,
 - 2) when an obstruction obliges you to move to the left, and you yield to any vehicle that is moving in the lane and presents an immediate hazard, or
 - 3) when crossing the center line to make a left turn into or out of an alley, private road, or driveway (TRC §545.051).
 - **Obey all posted, official traffic control devices and signals**, unless:
 - 1) otherwise directed by a traffic or police officer, or
 - 2) operating an authorized emergency vehicle (TRC §544.007).
 - **When traffic lights are defective**, all drivers must stop (four-way stop), unless otherwise directed by a traffic or police officer.
 - **Comply with a lawful order or direction of:**
 - 1) a traffic or police officer, or
 - 2) a school crossing guard who is performing crossing guard duties in a school crosswalk (TRC §542.501).
 - Pass other vehicles on the left only when the way is clear. On multilane one-ways, passing or overtaking on the right is permitted.
 - **Always communicate your intention** to turn, change lanes, or start from a parked position by using your turn, hand or other electrical signals. You must signal continuously for not less than 100 feet of movement before a left or right turn. You must not use a turn signal when your vehicle is parked or disabled, nor as a courtesy or “do not pass” signal to other motorists (TRC §545.104).
 - Make sure that maneuvers can be **performed safely before executing them** (TRC §545.402, §545.415).
 - When following another vehicle, you must **maintain a reasonable, prudent, and assured clear distance**, taking into account vehicle speed, the road, weather and traffic conditions. You must be able to stop without colliding with the preceding vehicle or veering into another vehicle, object, or person on or near the roadway.

Truckers, drivers towing trailers, or drivers in a motorcade or caravan must leave sufficient space so that passing road users may safely enter and occupy the space (exception for a funeral procession) (TRC §545.062).
 - You must **drive at a careful and prudent speed** not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the traffic, surface, and width of the highway and any other condition then existing. You must not drive at a speed greater than that which will permit a stop within the assured clear distance ahead.
 - In ideal conditions, the ***prima facie*** (legal non-posted) **speed limits are:**
 - 1) 30 mph in an urban residential district,
 - 2) 15 mph in an alley,
 - 3) 20 mph in school zones, unless otherwise posted (sign),
 - 3) 75 mph on numbered highways and interstates,
 - 4) 60 mph in daytime and 55 mph at night on roadways outside an urban area (not numbered), and
 - 5) a school bus outside an urban area:
 - 50 mph on an interstate (60 mph with a DOT inspection sticker),
 - 50 mph on other roads (TRC §545.352).



- You may **not back your vehicle** unless the movement can be made safely without interference with other traffic. It is illegal to back on the shoulder or roadway of a limited or controlled access highway (TRC §545.415).
- You may **drive on an improved shoulder** to the right of a roadway, if that operation is necessary and may be done safely, but only:
 - 1) to stop, stand, or park,
 - 2) to accelerate to enter the flow of traffic,
 - 3) to decelerate before making a turn,
 - 4) to pass another vehicle that is slowing or stopped, disabled, or preparing to make a left turn,
 - 5) to allow another vehicle to pass,
 - 6) as permitted or required by an official traffic control device, or
 - 7) to avoid a collision,
 - 8) exception for emergency vehicles, police patrol, and bicycles (TRC §545.058).
- You may drive on an improved shoulder to the left of a divided or limited-access or controlled-access highway, if that operation may be done safely, but only:
 - 1) to slow or stop when your vehicle is disabled, and traffic or other circumstances prohibit the safe movement to the right shoulder,
 - 2) as permitted or required by an official traffic control device, or
 - 3) to avoid a collision,
 - 4) exception for emergency vehicles, police patrol, and bicycles (TRC §545.058).
- You may **not leave your vehicle unattended** without:
 - 1) stopping the engine,
 - 2) locking the ignition,
 - 3) removing the key from the ignition,
 - 4) setting the parking brake effectively, and
 - 5) if standing on a grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the roadway (TRC §545.404).

RIGHT-OF-WAY

Right-of-way is the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway, and is determined by a set of rules and guidelines as listed for merges,

intersections, and special conditions. *The prime directive requires a road user to yield the right-of-way to avoid a collision.*

In Texas, right-of-way is defined as “the right of one vehicle or pedestrian to proceed in a lawful manner in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian that is approaching from a direction, at a speed, and within a proximity that would cause a collision, unless one grants precedence to the other” (TRC §545.401(8)).

The rules apply when more than one road user wants to occupy the same space; however, **the law never specifies who has the right-of-way, rather, it specifies who must yield.**

If for example, road user A is required by law to give the right-of-way to B in a given situation, and does not do so, A may be cited and fined. Road user B does not “have” the right-of-way until it is given, and should act accordingly, even though B may be upset by this flagrant breach of the law and act of discourtesy.

In Texas, failure to yield is the number two listed cause of crashes.

PEDESTRIANS



- You must yield to pedestrians on a marked or unmarked crossing if:
 - 1) no traffic control signal is in place or in operation,
 - 2) the pedestrian is:
 - on the half of the roadway in which you are traveling,
 - approaching so closely as to be in immediate danger.

Drivers approaching from the rear of a vehicle that is stopped to yield to pedestrians may not pass (must stop) (TRC §552.003).



2

PRIVATE PROPERTY OR ROAD

- You must not drive upon or through private property in order to avoid compliance with a posted, official traffic control device.
- When entering or crossing a road, street, or highway from an alley, building, private road, driveway, or private property, you must stop prior to the sidewalk (or edge of the road), and yield to all vehicles and pedestrians who constitute an immediate hazard (TRC §545.155).



Other right-of-way concepts will be discussed in the rest of this chapter, under specific headings.

SAFETY TIPS

Right-of-way principles are based on giving the privilege of passage to others. Drivers must realize that the right-of-way cannot be taken, as it is not a right to proceed. Failure to yield is the number two listed cause of crashes in Texas!

**Intersections**

Intersections are the most dangerous areas of the HTS, because large numbers of a wide variety of road users meet there regularly. (Intersections are defined as any location where two or more roadways cross or join.) Applying the rules of right-of-way properly is essential to reducing the risk.

Statistics demonstrate that a high percentage of collisions occur here, especially those involving pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. Right-of-way rules must be applied at these crossroads in order to proceed safely. One reason for the large number of collisions is the failure of drivers to apply the SIPDE System on approaching the intersection and when interacting with other road users at the crossroad.

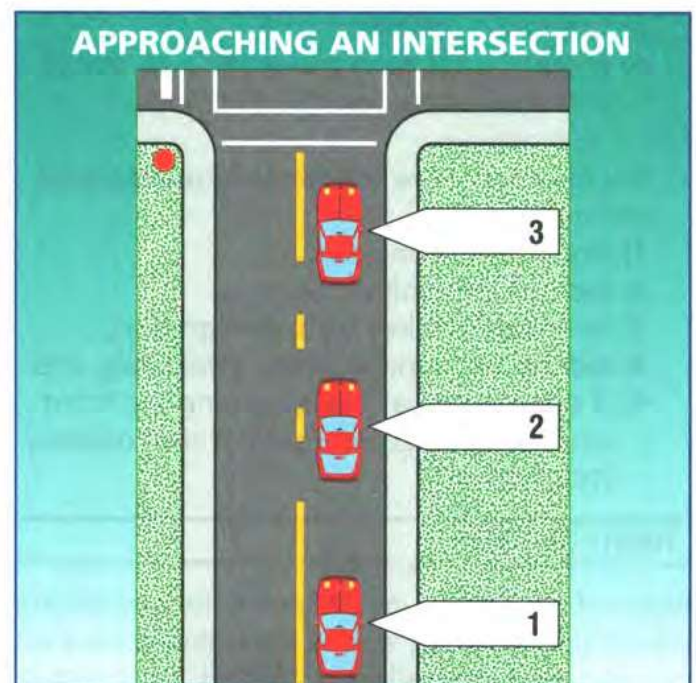
APPROACH TO THE INTERSECTION

The first step (vehicle 1 - diagram) is to search and identify the intersection, and whether or not official traffic controls are posted.

CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

Controlled intersections have signs or signals

posted to control the flow of traffic and help determine right-of-way. Most commonly - STOP signs, occasionally - YIELD signs and very frequently- signal lights may be used depending on the volume of traffic. Identification is easy!

NEARING THE INTERSECTION

Search the intersection (**vehicle 2** and below) to identify other road users, lines of sight, and whether the areas to the left and right are open and clear. Be prepared to yield to anyone who has already entered the intersection or who is so close as to constitute a hazard.

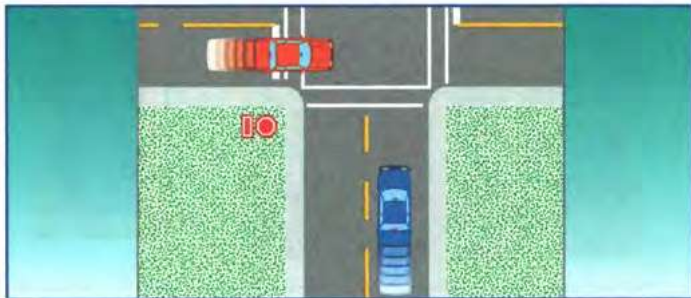
Adjust speed, maintain lane position and remain parallel to the curb.

AT THE INTERSECTION

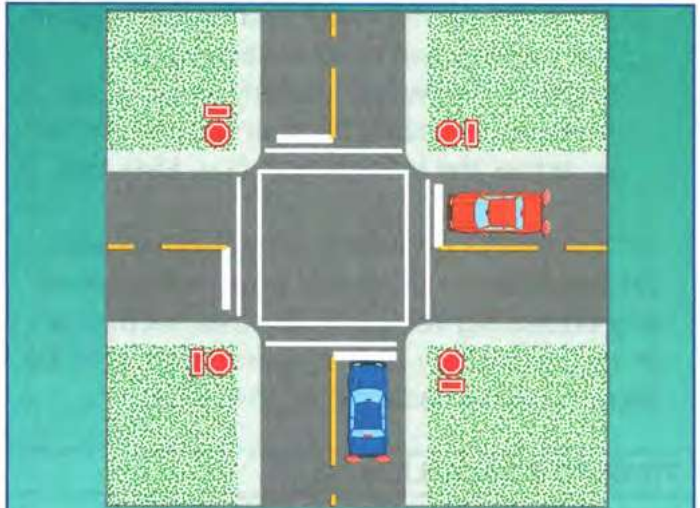
Search (**vehicle 3**) left, center, right and then left again, repeat as needed. Check for changing frontal areas, other road users, or any other factor that may present a risk. If your line of sight is clear, return to the accelerator and proceed through the open space area crossing the intersection.

INTERSECTIONS:

- You must obey all traffic control devices and signals unless otherwise directed by a police or traffic officer.
- You must yield to avoid a collision or to any other vehicles approaching on a road without traffic controls (TRC §545.151).
- Drivers approaching an intersection must yield to any road users within the intersection (TRC §545.151).



- Vehicles approaching at the same time must yield to the vehicle on the right (this also applies at a 4-way stop) (TRC §545.151); Exceptions:
 - 1) vehicles at a terminating road such as at a T-intersection, must stop and yield;
 - 2) drivers on a single lane or two-lane road intersecting with a divided roadway must yield; and
 - 3) drivers on an unpaved road at an intersection with a paved road must yield.



AT A FOUR-WAY STOP INTERSECTION

1. The vehicle that arrives at the intersection first, should go first.
2. The vehicle that enters the intersection first, should go first.
3. If two or more vehicles stop simultaneously, the vehicle on the left should yield to the vehicle on the right.

**AFTER STOPPING,
ROLL SLOWLY FORWARD.**

**OTHER ROAD USERS
CANNOT READ YOUR MIND.**

**ANNOUNCE YOUR INTENT TO PROCEED
WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN.**

PROCEED IF THE WAY IS CLEAR.

• YIELD SIGN

Approaching an intersection on a road controlled by a yield sign, you must:

- 1) slow to a speed that is reasonable under the existing conditions, and



2) yield the right-of-way to any road user in the intersection or approaching on another highway so closely as to be an immediate hazard to your movement in or across the intersection (TRC §545.153).

- To turn left at an intersection, into an alley, private road, or driveway, you must yield to any oncoming vehicle in the intersection or in such proximity to the intersection as to be an immediate hazard (TRC §545.152).

TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS:

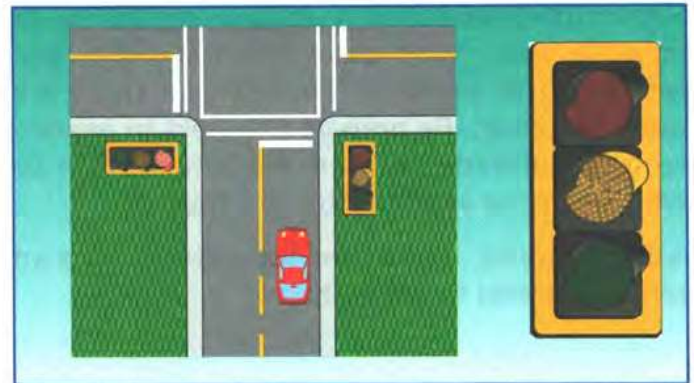
- **GREEN** - When facing a circular green signal, you may proceed straight, or turn right or left, unless a sign prohibits the turn, and as long as it is safe to enter. You must yield to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully in the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk when the signal is exhibited.



When facing a green arrow signal, displayed alone or with another signal, you may cautiously enter the intersection to move in the direction permitted by the arrow or other signal. You must yield to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully in the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk when the signal is exhibited (TRC §544.007).



- **YELLOW** - When facing a steady yellow signal, you are warned that:
 - 1) movement authorized by a green signal is being terminated, or
 - 2) a red signal is about to be given.
 You must stop before entering the nearest crosswalk or at a limit line when marked. If

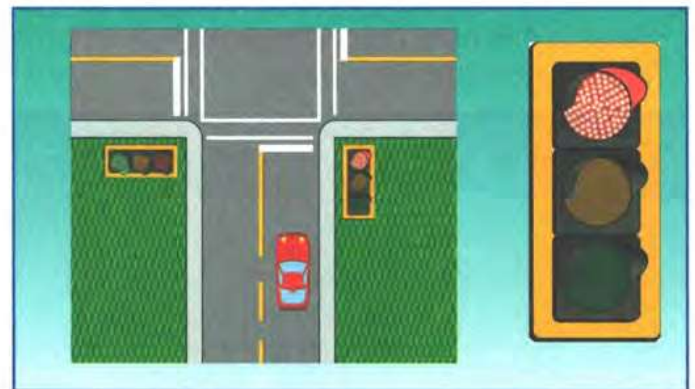


the stop cannot be made in safety (point of no return), then proceed cautiously through the intersection (TRC §544.007).

When facing a flashing yellow signal, you may proceed through an intersection or past the signal only with caution (TRC §544.008).



- **RED** - When facing only a steady red signal, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line, or if no stop line, before entering the crosswalk or the near side of the intersection. If not turning, remain standing until an indication to proceed is shown.



If you intend to turn, after stopping, standing until the intersection may be entered safely, and yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians in an adjacent crosswalk and other traffic in the intersection, you may:

- 1) turn right, or
- 2) turn left, if the intersecting roads are both one-way streets, and a left turn is permissible (TRC §544.007).

When facing a flashing red signal, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line. In absence



of a stop line, you must stop before entering the nearest crosswalk. In the absence of a crosswalk, you must stop at the place nearest the intersecting roadway where you have a view of approaching traffic on the cross street. The right to proceed is subject to the rules at a stop sign (TRC §544.008).



- **When traffic lights are inoperative**, all drivers approaching from any direction must stop, and apply the same right-of-way rules as at a four-way stop intersection.

Once the intersection is identified, check traffic to the rear (rear-view mirror), then adjust speed (cover the brake) and adjust lane position to minimize risk. Be prepared to stop your vehicle.

UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

An uncontrolled intersection does not have any traffic control devices present. (They are usually found in light traffic areas - residential.) As such, drivers may not notice the intersection, or they may assume that the cross traffic has some control device.

To avoid errors, search ahead and look for breaks in the normal environment - hedges, fences, lights, parked vehicles, etc. Check for traffic controls; if not present, reduce speed and check the cross traffic before proceeding.

- When approaching an intersection that is not controlled by any traffic control devices, you:
 - 1) must stop, yield, and grant the immediate use of the intersection to any vehicle that has entered from the right, or is approaching from the right in a proximity that is a hazard, and
 - 2) may, after stopping, proceed when the intersection can be entered safely without interference or collision with traffic using a different street or roadway (TRC §545.151).



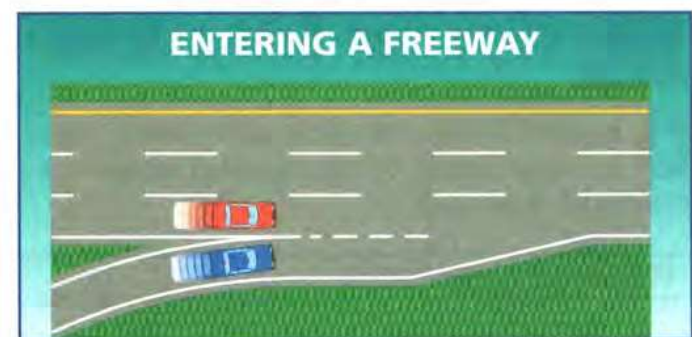
Merge Situations

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has studied a category of collisions that they call **Lane Change/Merge (LCM)** crashes. They estimate there are 630,000 LCM crashes with 225 fatalities annually nationwide.

About 60% of the drivers involved in the collisions did not see the other vehicle; about 30% of the drivers involved misjudged the position or speed of the other vehicle before they collided (see Chapter 7).

ENTERING/EXITING A LIMITED-ACCESS HIGHWAY

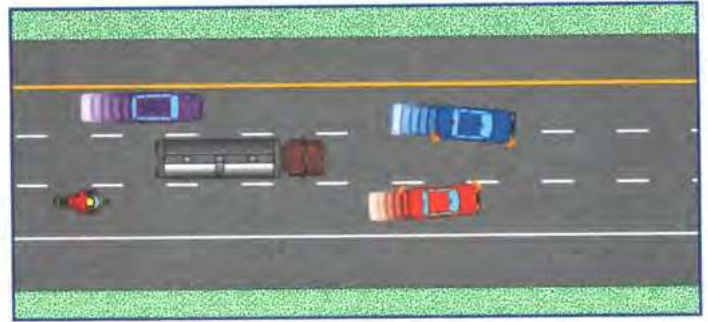
Merging with the flow of traffic on an expressway, or exiting from the freeway, can be



a hazardous situation (see Chapter 17). Ideally, you should try to avoid conflicts by thinking ahead, and adjusting speed or position (plan your arrival). Should a conflict arise, the basic rule to follow is to yield to the driver on the fast moving roadway.



- When driving on an access or feeder (frontage) road, you must yield:
 - 1) to any vehicle entering or about to enter the access or feeder road from the highway (exiting the expressway), or
 - 2) to any vehicle leaving or about to leave the access or feeder road to enter the highway (or expressway) (TRC §545.154).



lane of traffic from the left. (The vehicle entering the lane from the faster-moving lane should be given the right-of-way.)

DRIVING ON MULTI-LANE ROADWAYS

The procedures for changing lanes safely are explained in detail in Chapter 12. With respect to right-of-way, the vehicle changing lanes must always yield to any vehicle already in the lane.

On a roadway divided into three or more lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, the conflict situation of two vehicles, from opposite sides of the lane, attempting to change into the same lane occurs quite frequently (see diagram above right). The rule of thumb is for the vehicle entering the lane of traffic from the right to yield to the vehicle entering the same

TRAFFIC CIRCLE

When you approach a traffic circle, you must yield to the traffic already engaged in the circle, whether continuing around or exiting the traffic circle. Once driving in the traffic circle, drivers traveling on the outside of the circle must yield to drivers traveling closer to the interior of the circle (in traffic circles with two or more lanes of traffic).

SAFETY TIPS



You must know the right-of-way rules; however, do not expect all road users to obey them. Expect the unexpected. Add the concepts of cooperation and courtesy to the basic rules. Think ahead and try to avoid situations that could cause conflicts. You'll diminish the risk and drive more safely.



Special Situations

Despite all that has been said about right-of-way rules, some special situations should be reviewed.

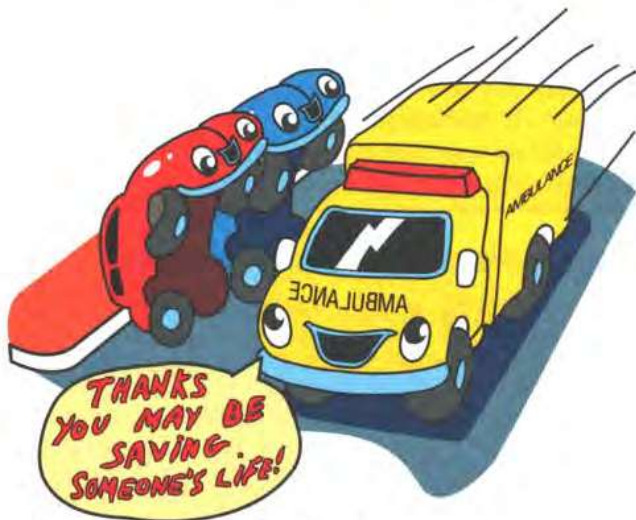
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Any emergency vehicle (police, fire, ambulance) that has its siren operating and/or its lights flashing, must be given the right-of-way.

These vehicles are responding to an emergency; it may be a matter of life and death. **Cooperate!** These drivers have a difficult job as it is! It is the law!

- On the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle using audible and visual signals, or if a police vehicle using only audible signal, you must, unless otherwise directed by a police officer:
 - 1) yield the right-of-way,
 - 2) immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection, and
 - 3) stop and remain standing until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed (TRC §545.156).





APPROACHED FROM THE REAR

While driving on a two-way roadway or a multi-lane highway, an emergency vehicle requesting passage approaches you from the rear.

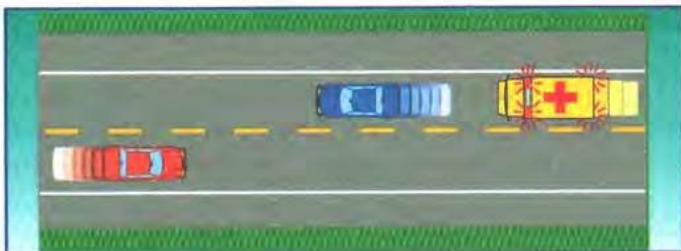
WHAT TO DO

- Check traffic and select a safe path.
- Change lanes towards the right side of the roadway (on a multi-lane, move into the right hand lane when safe).
- Stop your vehicle safely, parallel to the curb (edge of road), and clear of any intersection.
- Wait for the emergency vehicle to pass.
- Safely proceed on your way.

Be especially careful to maintain a following distance of at least 500 feet when driving behind any emergency vehicle. Pedestrians in the crosswalk should move to the nearest curb or sidewalk as quickly as possible.

MEETING AN ONCOMING VEHICLE

While driving, an emergency vehicle requesting passage (lights flashing/siren operating) approaches in an oncoming direction.



WHAT TO DO

- Check traffic, and select a safe path.
- Change lanes to the right.

- Stop your vehicle near the right curb or edge of the road.
- Remain standing until it has passed.
- Proceed safely.

STOPPED AT AN INTERSECTION

While stopped at an intersection, an emergency vehicle approaches from the rear with its siren and lights operating.



WHAT TO DO

- Check the position of the emergency vehicle in your rear-view mirror.
- Remain stationary until it passes.

If the emergency vehicle nears your vehicle in your lane, check traffic, and proceed in a safe manner to clear its path.

TEXAS MOVE OVER LAW

SB 193 requires drivers nearing stopped emergency vehicles-with lights activated to either slow down or change lanes. The law states a driver must either vacate the lane closest to the stopped emergency vehicle if the road has multiple lanes or slow down 20 miles per hour below the speed limit. (If the limit is below 25 mph, slow to 5 mph.) Emergency vehicles include police, emergency medical service and fire vehicles.

APPROACHING A CRASH SCENE

If you approach the scene of a crash, fire, etc., and the emergency vehicles are already present, **reduce speed and be prepared to stop, if necessary.** If not, proceed on your way; **don't rubberneck!**



Statistics



An average of 26 school-age children die in school transportation-related crashes each year - 7 occupants of school transports and 19 pedestrians. Half of the school-age pedestrians killed in school transportation-related crashes **were between 5 and 7 years old** (from 1991 to 2001). (NHTSA - DOT HS 809 478)

SCHOOL BUSES

Following a school bus, if the overhead yellow lights are flashing and the bus is still moving, you must prepare to stop. (The bus is preparing to stop - communication of intentions.)

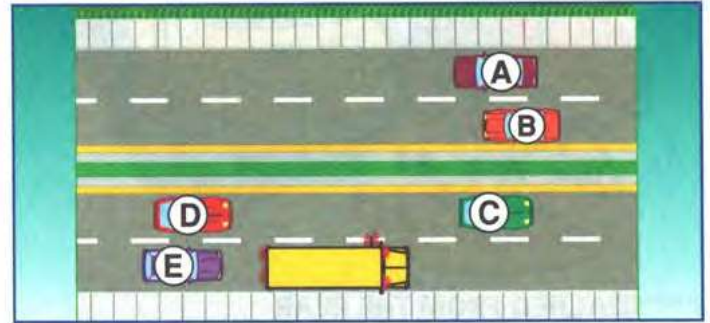
Approaching a railroad crossing behind a school bus, also be prepared to stop (the bus must stop at all railroad crossings).



When overtaking or meeting a school bus that is stopped with overhead red signal lights flashing, you are required to stop not less than 20 feet from the stopped bus, and remain standing until the bus resumes motion, the visual signals are no longer actuated, or the driver signals you to proceed.



You need not stop when meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway (divided by a median). As illustrated above right, vehicles A and B would not be required to



stop. A stop is not required when meeting or passing a school bus upon a controlled-access highway where the school bus is stopped in a loading zone and pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

PEDESTRIANS

Don't turn your vehicle into a deadly weapon. You should always be on the lookout for people on foot, whether or not they have the right-of-way.

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable and least trained of road users. Many do not drive, nor do they understand the characteristics of motorized vehicles. They may not know or obey the traffic rules and signals.

Children are unpredictable. They are smaller and more difficult to see. Their poor judgment and comprehension of the consequences may lead them to run into the roadway. Watch for them near playgrounds, schools, at the side of the road, or in many areas where they may use the street as their playground.

The elderly and the physically or visually impaired decide more slowly and take more time to cross the roadway. Avoid honking the

SAFETY TIPS



Reduce speed and search carefully when school children and school buses are visible in your environment. Stop whenever the school bus signals are flashing. Wait until the bus moves, then check carefully before proceeding.



Statistics



In 2014, **486 pedestrians were killed** and 4,426 were injured in traffic crashes in Texas. On average, a pedestrian is killed every 18 hours, and injured every 2 hours. (TXDOT) Older pedestrians (ages 70+) accounted for 18 percent of fatalities; nearly one-fifth of all traffic fatalities under age 16 were pedestrians. Alcohol involvement in nearly one-half of fatalities- either the driver or the pedestrian. (NHTSA - DOT HS 811 002)



horn or revving the engine; these noises are distracting and cover important audible cues used by the blind.

Also avoid blocking designated crosswalks. This is an inconvenience, makes crossing a street especially difficult for the blind, and violates the rule of always yielding to pedestrians. Be patient! Give them the extra time required.

Adults, who should know better, often jaywalk or dart into the roadway without looking (especially in bad weather, when jogging, or when hurrying). Be aware and watch for them.

Always yield to pedestrians, even when they make right-of-way errors in crossing the roadway. Cooperate and stop your vehicle when other drivers stop to yield to pedestrians crossing. Reduce your speed and increase your space from the curb in areas where they are present.

Communicate; tap your horn from a distance to attract their attention. Make sure they see you (make eye-to-eye contact). At intersections, always check for pedestrians before entering a turn or proceeding straight.



PEDESTRIANS

- You must yield to pedestrians on a marked or unmarked crossing if:
 - 1) no traffic control signal is in place or in operation,
 - 2) the pedestrian is:
 - on the half of the roadway in which you are traveling,
 - approaching so closely as to be in immediate danger. (TRC §552.003).
- Drivers approaching from the rear of a vehicle that is stopped to yield to pedestrians may not pass (must stop) (TRC §552.003).
- Pedestrians must obey traffic signs or signals, exercise due care, and not obstruct traffic; this does not remove the obligation for drivers to exercise due care for their safety.
- On roads without sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic.
- Drivers must yield to all pedestrians before driving over or on a sidewalk (TRC §545.155).

SAFETY TIPS



Search carefully for pedestrians and always yield the right-of-way to them. They are very vulnerable in any conflict or crash.



2

- Skiers crossing at a slow pace or riders (horseback) at a crossing marked by signs are considered pedestrians.

WHITE CANE LAW:

Drivers failing to yield to the visually impaired (white cane or guide dog) or physically handicapped, or fail to exercise all reasonable and prudent precaution to avoid injury, are guilty of a misdemeanor.



Railroad Crossings

Railroad crossings require drivers to exercise extra caution. In Texas, there are more miles of track, and more car and train collisions than in any other state in the nation.

Trains travel on railroad tracks which are private property. Trains need a very long distance to stop once the engineer applies the brakes. They interact with the HTS at railroad grade crossings where the train has the right-of-way. A train can cross at any time. Combine these four concepts. You will realize that safety at railroad crossings is your responsibility.

Texas law requires:

- When approaching a railroad crossing, you must stop not closer than 15 feet or farther



- than 50 feet from the nearest rail if:
- 1) a clearly visible railroad signal warns of the approach of a train,
 - 2) a crossing gate is lowered, or a flagger warns of the approach/passage of a train,
 - 3) a railroad engine, approaching within 1,500 feet of the crossing, emits an audible signal, and the engine is an immediate hazard because of its speed or

Statistics



A total of **287 crashes** involving trains were reported in Texas during 2014. Of those crashes, 16 involved fatalities with **20 persons killed**, there were also **79 serious injuries** and **103 lesser injuries** in other crashes. (2014 Operation Lifesaver)

SAFETY TIPS



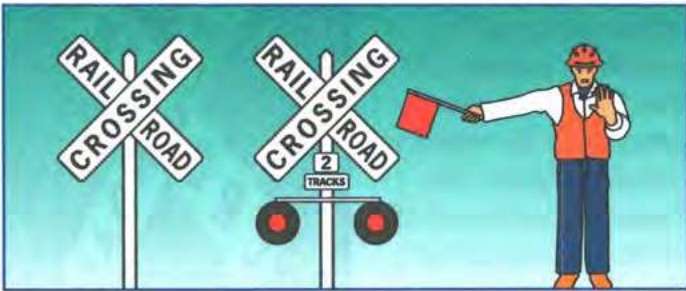
Never drive around lowered gates – it's illegal and deadly. Never race a train to the crossing – even if you tie, you lose. Do not get trapped on the tracks. Only proceed if you are sure you can cross completely without stopping (the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides). At a multiple track crossing, check the other track, in both directions.



- proximity to the crossing,
- 4) an approaching train is plainly visible, and is in hazardous proximity to the crossing, or
 - 5) you are required to stop by:
 - a) other law,
 - b) an official traffic-control device, or
 - c) a traffic-control signal.

You must remain stopped until it is safe to proceed (TRC §545.251).

- When approaching a crossing with a posted crossbuck (no other signals, gates, etc.), you must yield the right-of-way to a train in hazardous proximity to the crossing, and proceed at a speed that is reasonable for the existing conditions. If required for safety, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line (if no line, 15 feet to 50 feet from the nearest rail) (TRC §545.251).



ADVANCE WARNING

Don't take signs for granted. Reduce speed, search the controls at the crossing as well as the lines of sight. Turn off the radio, lower a



window and listen for trains. Reduce speed further when a line of sight is closed in either direction.

CROSSING CONTROLS

In Texas, 65 to 70% of crossings only have a crossbuck posted. The rest have flashing signals, bells, crossing gates and on occasion, a stop sign or flagman, depending on the circumstances at the particular crossing. The small tab under the crossbuck indicates the number of sets of rails. Trains emit an audible signal 1,500 feet before reaching a crossing.

CROSSING SAFETY

Never pass as you near a crossing. Stop at least 15 feet from the nearest rail if a train is approaching. (Prepare to stop behind a school bus, bus or vehicle transporting hazardous cargo, as they must stop at all times.) After a train passes, check for any additional trains before crossing. Make sure you can clear the tracks before starting to cross; never stop on the tracks. (Standard transmission - avoid shifting gears on the tracks.)

Trains cannot stop in time! You must protect yourself and your passengers at this high-risk intersection!

Additional safe driving procedures at railroad crossings are:

- If a railroad crossing is marked only with a crossbuck - **reduce speed, look both ways, and listen** for the audible train whistle. If a train is approaching - **STOP**; if not, proceed only upon exercising due care.
- If red lights are flashing at the level crossing - **STOP**. If a train approaches, remain stopped until the train passes by and the lights stop flashing.

SAFETY TIPS



Do not be fooled by the optical illusion – the train you see approaching is closer and faster moving than you think! Never race a train to the crossing - even if you tie, you lose. Do not get trapped on the tracks - only cross if you can cross completely. The train is 3 feet wider than the tracks on both sides. Never drive around lowered gates - it's illegal and deadly!



SAFETY TIPS



Railroad crossings require special precautions! Trains cannot stop in time! You must protect yourself and your passengers at this high-risk intersection! Always slow down and check both ways! If there is more than one set of tracks, check carefully before proceeding.

- If railroad crossing arms have been lowered - **STOP**. You must wait until the train has passed and the gates are raised.



- **Never stop on the tracks.** If your car stalls on the tracks and you cannot restart it (if no train is approaching), get out and try to push it off the tracks. If you cannot push it off the tracks, get help.

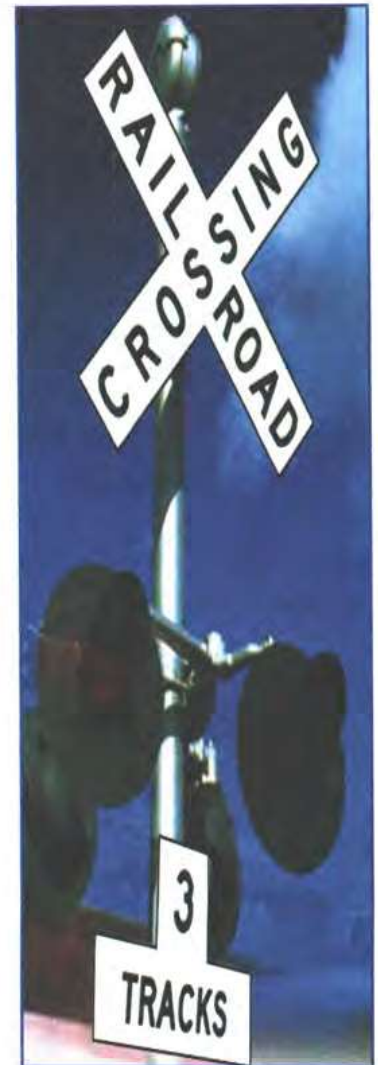
If a train is approaching, get out quickly and get clear of the tracks. Run in the direction from which the train is approaching to avoid flying debris (staying clear of the tracks).

- **Be sure all tracks are clear** before you proceed across. There may be two or more sets of tracks. One train could be blocking the view of another train (closed sightline) approaching from either direction.
- Remember, trains do not and cannot stop at crossings - **they must be given the right-of-way**. Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take more than a mile to stop once the emergency brakes are applied (about 18 football fields!).

- Audible signals or whistles may be difficult to hear as you approach a crossing. You should **open your window, turn off your radio, and listen carefully**.
- You should **ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN!** Freight trains do not follow set schedules.

GRADE SIGNAL PROBLEM

If you encounter a railroad grade crossing signal problem, please call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal, the Texas Department of Safety Headquarters Communications Center in Austin, your local police department, or county sheriffs' office. Each crossing signal has an identifying number. Please note the number and be ready to provide it when reporting a problem.



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Review

Traffic Control Devices

Could you imagine using the Highway Transportation System (HTS.) if there were no traffic control devices at all? No lines on the pavement! No signs! No signals!

Road signs and traffic signals are the visual vocabulary of all road users that facilitate the use of the H.T.S.. It is an evolving language that all road users are required to know. Fortunately, the vocabulary is based on shapes, colors, and symbols and once-learned, permits the understanding of signs that we may not know.

Attempts have been made to achieve world-wide standardization of this vocabulary in our global community. Until such time, we are responsible for interpreting these traffic control devices correctly, wherever, or however, you may use the HTS.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND, IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO:

- traffic signs, signals and pavement markings.
- traffic control persons.
- hand signals.



Traffic Signs

National standards for road signs have been set up by the National Joint Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Using shapes, colors, and symbols, as the basis of a clear and accurate language which is easily understood. It is a universal language that even the non-reader can decipher.

Before studying these signs individually, some basic principles are:

- Sign **symbols** are generally read from the bottom towards the top
- **Arrows** indicate the direction of the flow of traffic
- A **black shield** indicates a fixed obstacle.



THERE ARE FOUR CATEGORIES OF ROAD SIGNS

3

1- REGULATORY SIGNS

- Remind road users of specific rules (obligations, prohibitions, etc.) that apply in each traffic situation where they are posted.
- The background colors are red, white and black.

2- WARNING SIGNS

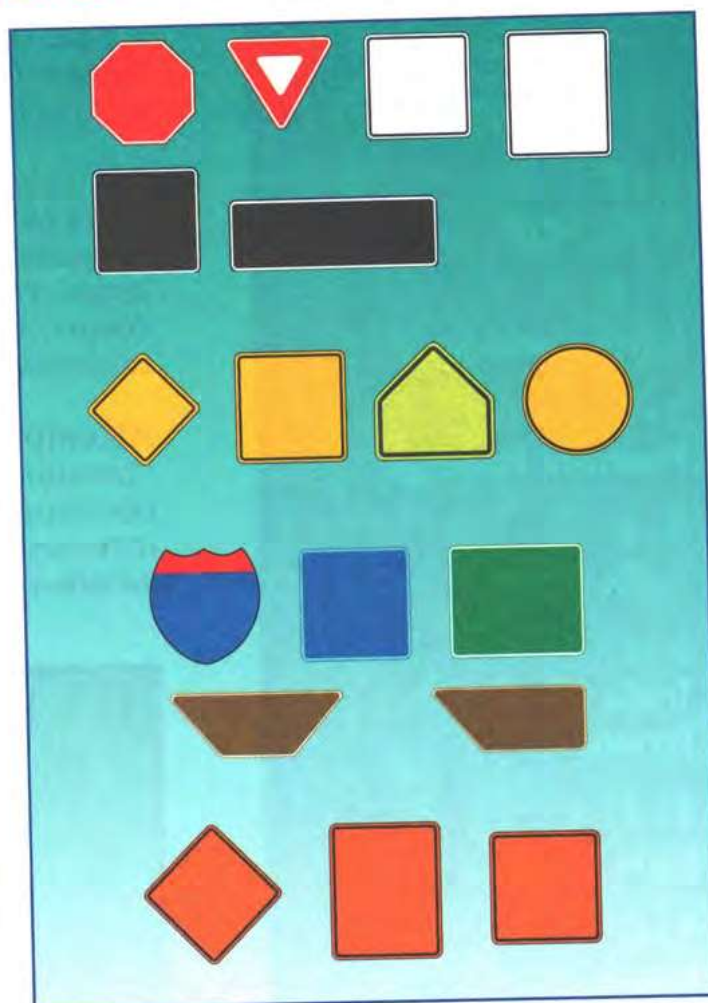
- Draw the attention to imminent danger or upcoming regulatory signs.
- The background color is yellow and fluorescent yellow-green.
- The diamond shape indicates the danger is up ahead.

3- GUIDE SIGNS

- Provide information. - route markers, directions, destinations, services, points of interest or recreation, etc.
- The background colors are: BLUE + RED, WHITE + BLACK, GREEN, BLUE, & BROWN.

4- CONSTRUCTION / WORK SITE SIGNS

- Draw the attention of road users to road repairs, detours, special road closing for sports events, etc.
- The background color is orange.
- The diamond shape indicates the danger is up ahead.



1 - REGULATORY SIGNS

Regulatory signs tell road users what they may or may not do in any specific area of the HTS. These signs are usually square or rectangular with black lettering or symbols on a white background, white lettering or symbols on a black background, or white lettering or symbols on a red background. **Some regulatory signs are exceptions; they are :**



The **STOP SIGN** is a red octagon with white markings. It requires a mandatory stop at the white line or before the crosswalk if there is no stop line. If there is neither a line or a crosswalk, stop before your vehicle reaches the cross street. Check that you may proceed safely after yielding to road users that do not have to stop.

The **YIELD SIGN** - a red and white triangle pointing downward - requires that you slow (stop if necessary - when traffic is close enough to present a hazard) and give the right of way to the other traffic. Proceed when you can do so without interfering with the flow of traffic.

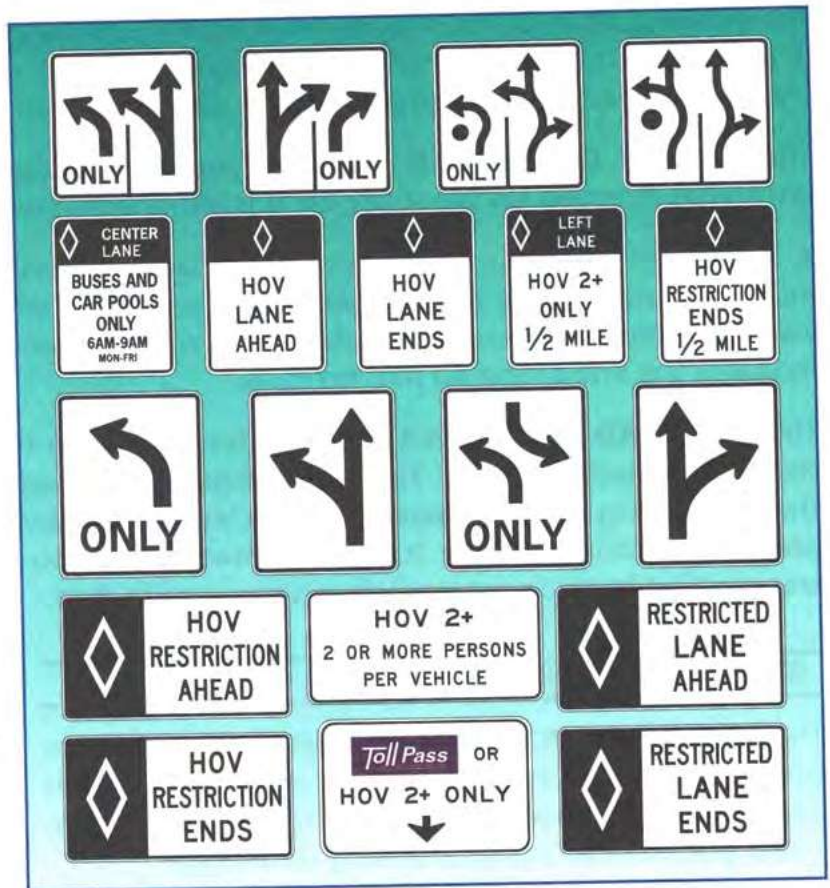


LANE-USE CONTROL SIGNS

3

LANE-USE CONTROL SIGNS whether mounted at the side of the roadway or above the lane, are white rectangles with black arrows and lettering. They oblige the driver in the lane indicated to travel in the direction shown. They also restrict the use of the lane to certain vehicles. Both of these types of signs are usually accompanied by arrows and/or symbols painted on the pavement in the applicable lanes. (Example: **HOV** or **High Occupancy Vehicle** lanes see Page 3.14.)

Drivers must plan ahead and place their vehicles in the correct lane to maneuver in the intended direction. Do not occupy the restricted lane unless permitted.



TRAFFIC DIRECTION SIGNS



TRAFFIC DIRECTION SIGNS

Black lettering or symbols on a white background, these signs **oblige drivers to pass** on the indicated side of an obstacle or median in the roadway.

PROHIBITORY SIGNS

New signs using a red circle and bar with a black symbol on a white square background are gradually replacing white rectangles with black lettering. **The red circle and bar means NO.**

TURN PROHIBITION SIGNS

When used in conjunction with black arrows it prohibits a LEFT, RIGHT, or a U-TURN, or driving STRAIGHT AHEAD.

EXCLUSION SIGNS

When used with a black symbol, it prohibits the vehicle or road user represented by the symbol from entering or using this roadway.



PARKING + STOPPING CONTROL SIGNS

These signs regulate the zones, times, and days where parking or stopping is permitted or prohibited. (Variations occur from one municipality to another.)

- **Red** - No parking, standing, or stopping.
- **Green** - Time limited parking.



PEDESTRIAN CONTROL SIGNS

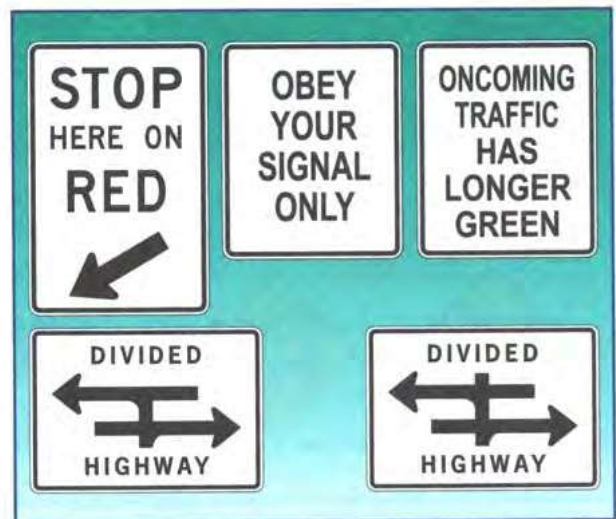
PEDESTRIAN CONTROL SIGNS remind pedestrians of the need to walk facing the traffic on rural roads where no sidewalks are provided; limit pedestrian crossing to safe places; and instruct pedestrians on the use of the traffic control lights.

OTHER REGULATORY SIGNS

The **STOP HERE ON RED** sign is posted near some intersections with traffic lights. When the stop line is abnormally far from the corner, it indicates where you must stop your vehicle when the light is red.

Signs may remind drivers to **OBEY YOUR SIGNAL LIGHT**, or that **ONCOMING TRAFFIC HAS LONGER GREEN** whenever the timing of the traffic lights is not the same for drivers in opposing directions.

The **DIVIDED HIGHWAY SIGNS** advise the driver of an upcoming intersection where the roadway is divided by a median or a separation.



HEAVY VEHICLE SIGNS

Where an extra lane has been provided on an upgrade for slow-moving traffic, signs direct them to the lane.

Due to severe weakening of the road surface, condition of the pavement, or bridges, loads may be limited.

TRUCK ROUTE and **HAZARDOUS MATERIAL** signs oblige such vehicles to follow the designated roads.



2 - WARNING SIGNS

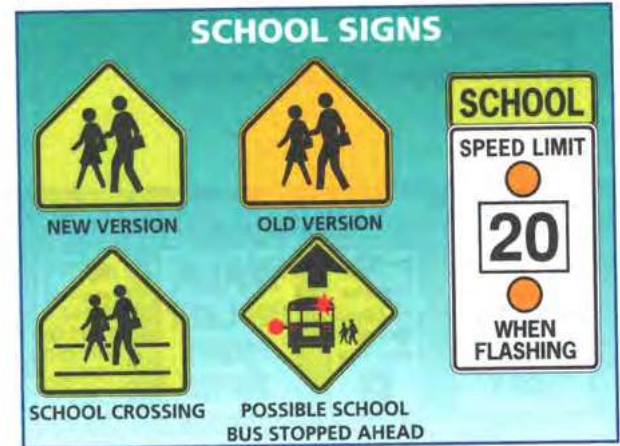
WARNING SIGNS draw the attention of road users to imminent or upcoming danger or, on occasion, upcoming regulatory signs.

3

- The background color is yellow (or fluorescent yellow) with black lettering or symbols.
- The diamond shape is the most common and warns of upcoming danger. The pentagon, circle, and rectangle are also used in specific circumstances.

SCHOOL SIGNS

The yellow (old) or green-yellow fluorescent (new) pentagon with black symbols of school children warns the driver of the beginning of a **SCHOOL ZONE** or a **SCHOOL CROSSING AHEAD**. Whether or not special speed limits are present, prudent drivers will slow down and be extra vigilant for the possible presence of children. The addition of crossing lines on the pentagon indicates the location of the **SCHOOL CROSSING**. The possible presence of crossing guards or school patrols will help control the traffic.



ADVANCE REGULATORY SIGNS

The **STOP AHEAD**, **YIELD AHEAD**, **SIGNAL AHEAD** and **REDUCED SPEED AHEAD** warning signs (whether using the symbols or the word messages) are intended for use on the approach to a regulatory sign.

They are posted when the regulatory signs are **not clearly visible for a sufficient distance** to permit drivers to bring their vehicles to a stop or adjust speed in time under normal driving conditions. The problem may be a curve in the roadway or an overpass that obstructs the approaching driver's view.

A **TAB** (e.g. 200') indicating the distance to the regulatory sign may be installed below the warning sign.

Drivers should reduce speed and be prepared to stop or yield.

ADVANCE INTERSECTION SIGNS

ADVANCE INTERSECTION SIGNS indicate the presence of obscured junctions ahead. The symbol represents the situation graphically, and the relative widths of the lines demonstrate the importance of the intersecting roads. These signs are not usually posted where junction or directional signing is already present.

Drivers should verify the situation ahead, be prepared for unexpected entries into the roadway, and remember that passing maneuvers are illegal when approaching intersections.



ADVANCE TURN OR CURVE SIGNS

These warning signs, posted before turns and curves, are primarily for the benefit of drivers unfamiliar with the road. They do, however, by their symbol, inform all drivers what to expect.

The **ADVISORY SPEED PLATE** may accompany a curve sign and recommend the maximum safe speed in ideal conditions.

The **CHEVRON ALIGNMENT** may replace delineators on a curve.

The **LARGE ARROW** (on a yellow rectangle) when posted in a curve warns of an especially dangerous point in the curve.



ADVANCE CROSSING SIGNS



ADVANCE CROSSING SIGNS

ADVANCE CROSSING SIGNS alert drivers to unexpected entries into the roadway. The type of possible entry is symbolized on the sign.

If such crossings occur at a particular location, a tab or auxiliary distance sign may supplement these signs to indicate the distance to the exact location.

At the particular location a **CROSSING SIGN** may be posted. (The addition of crossing lines to the same sign).

Drivers should reduce their speed in order to be able to stop if necessary.

LANE REDUCTION SIGNS

LANE REDUCTION signs warn drivers of the loss of one or more traffic lanes on a multi-lane roadway. Drivers should safely enter the continuing lane as soon as possible, and/or facilitate the lane change maneuver for other drivers.

The **NARROW BRIDGE** sign warns the driver to adjust his speed so that he will reach the bridge before or after the oncoming traffic.

LANE REDUCTION SIGNS



DIVIDED HIGHWAY SIGNS

DIVIDED HIGHWAY ENDS warns the driver that the highway ahead will no longer be divided by a physical barrier.

3

DIVIDED HIGHWAY AHEAD is posted on the approaches to a section of roadway where the traffic will be separated by a physical barrier.

The **TWO-WAY TRAFFIC** sign supplements the message (divided highway ends) and may be posted at intervals to remind drivers that they are no longer on a divided highway.



RAILROAD SIGNS

The round, yellow sign, with a black X and two R's, is a warning of a **RAILROAD CROSSING AHEAD**. Slow down, be prepared to stop, and check both ways carefully.

The tab **EXEMPT** under, this sign indicates that drivers normally required to stop, are free from that obligation in this situation, **UNLESS A TRAIN IS COMING**.

CONVERGING ROADWAYS

The **MERGE SIGN** warns motorists that possible vehicles on an entrance ahead will attempt to join the flow of traffic. Drivers should be prepared to facilitate the merging maneuvers; if possible, change lanes to the left.

The **ADDED LANE SIGN** is posted in advance of a point where two roadways converge and merging maneuvers are not required - a parallel lane exists for the entering traffic. Drivers should still exercise caution as some vehicles might try to enter their lane.



OBSTACLES IN THE ROADWAY

Signs posted on obstacles within or at the side of the road to warn and to direct drivers. The **DOUBLE ARROW** indicates traffic may pass on either side of the obstacle.

The **HAZARD MARKERS** channel traffic to the lower end of the stripes: to the right or to the left.

WARNING - NO PASSING ZONE - SIGN

The yellow pennant posted on the left side of the roadway indicates the beginning of the **NO-PASSING ZONE**. The high visibility of this sign in passing maneuvers warns drivers from an adequate distance of the no-passing zone.



HILL SIGNS

The **HILL** sign is posted in advance of a downgrade that requires some special precautions. Supplemental plaques with respect to the grade and the length may be installed.

Drivers should check their brakes by applying the brake pedal and also prepare to downshift to an appropriate gear to take advantage of engine compression on the slope.



3



HAZARDOUS ROAD SIGNS

BUMP or **DIP** signs warn of a sharp rise or depression that creates discomfort for passengers or may deflect a vehicle from its true course. Drivers should reduce speed to minimize any possible effect on their vehicle.

PAVEMENT ENDS warns of a change in the road surface ahead. Drivers should slow down prior to the change as traction will decrease and there could be potholes at the end of the pavement.

The **SOFT SHOULDER** advises that the shoulder cannot safely support the weight of a vehicle. Drivers should avoid using the shoulder and proceed to a paved area if they must leave the road.

The **SLIPPERY WHEN WET** sign warns of a section of roadway where traction is severely reduced when wet. Drivers should reduce speed when wet.

SAFETY TIPS



WARNING SIGNS ALERT YOU TO SITUATIONS ON OR NEAR THE ROADWAY AHEAD.

- You should reduce your speed and proceed cautiously.
- You should increase your visual search pattern to locate the hazards.
- You should manage your speed, time, and space to reduce the level of danger (**RISK**).

3 - GUIDE SIGNS

GUIDE SIGNS are essential to direct drivers along roadways; to inform them of interesting routes; to guide them to cities, towns or villages; to identify nearby rivers, streams, parks, or historical sites; and to inform them of available roadside services. These signs are usually square or rectangular and color-coded as to their purpose.

INTERSTATE ROUTE MARKERS

INTERSTATE MARKERS identify and mark all numbered interstate highways. Even numbers denote east-west; odd for north-south highways.



ROUTE MARKERS

3

ROUTE MARKERS are distinctive in shape and color and are used on that respective system and the approaches thereto. Even numbers denote east-west; odd for north-south. Auxiliary tabs such as **TO**, arrows, cardinal directions, or distances are often added to form trailblazer assemblies. The use of the tab with the word **TO** indicates that where the marker is posted is not a part of the indicated route, merely a progressive direction to the route in question. These trailblazers inform road users and guide them to the nearest access point of the designated facility.



DESTINATION SIGNS



DESTINATION SIGNS

DESTINATION SIGNS are green horizontal rectangles of varying sizes with white lettering, symbols, and numbers. They are posted to assist travelers to their destination. Arrows to indicate the direction as well as the distance to the destination. The number of the roadway to be used may also be included. The word **EXIT** at top indicates which side to exit. On major highways, there are at least 3 signs posted prior to the exit that is identified.

Drivers should have plenty of time to prepare to exit.

RECREATION SIGNS

A brown background (square, rectangle or trapezoid in shape) with white lettering or symbols is reserved for **RECREATIONAL** and **CULTURAL INTEREST** signs.

They may be posted on any **conventional roadway** or **expressway** to direct motorists to facilities; to identify recreational areas and services; and to inform of cultural interest structures and places.

The concept is to guide motorists to a general area and then to specific amenities within the area without confusing these signs with other traffic control signs.



ROADSIDE SERVICES

On conventional highways, services are generally within sight and available to the traveler at reasonably frequent intervals along the route. The blue square or rectangular **SERVICE** signs are not posted on these roadways.

When such services are infrequent and are found on intersecting highways and at crossroads, these signs will be posted to advise travelers as to the location, distance, and direction.

The service legends may be either symbols or word messages - they should not be mixed.

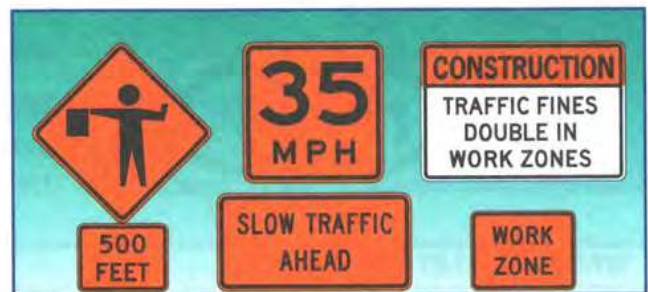


4 - CONSTRUCTION / WORK ZONE SIGNS

Signs with an orange background and black symbols or lettering are used when traffic must be moved through or around road construction work, maintenance operations, utility work, and special sporting events on or adjacent to the roadway. These signs (both construction and temporary signs) have to control a wide variety of situations and conditions and as such they present a wide assortment of messages.

SPEED

A **FLAGPERSON AHEAD** may slow or stop the traffic (see 2-E Traffic Control Persons) as the situation requires. The driver is well advised to reduce speed to the **SUGGESTED SPEED**, the **POSTED SPEED LIMIT**, or to a speed in keeping with the abnormal driving conditions.



WORK ZONE LIMITS

These signs indicate the **DISTANCE TO THE WORK SITE**, the **LENGTH OF THE WORK AREA** and the **END OF THE ZONE**.

A **DETOUR** sign indicates that traffic must deviate around the work in progress up ahead. Square detour signs are posted to delineate the route to be followed.



CONDITIONS IN THE WORK ZONE

3 These signs inform of the type of activity in the area, the conditions, changes in the number or position of lanes, etc.

A reduced speed and increased visual scanning will permit the driver to adapt. This will produce extra time to judge, decide and react to these conditions.



3-B International Signs

As more people travel internationally, the need to recognize international signs increases every year. Local auto clubs should be consulted prior to road excursions in foreign lands; they can supply pertinent information with respect to signs and laws for the country where you intend to travel. INTERNATIONAL signs convey their message with symbols, colors, numbers, and shapes rather than words.

SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

White numbers on a blue circle indicate the minimum speed. Black on a white circle with a red border indicate maximum speed. In some cases, the words maximum replace the words speed limit. Remember the speed limit is posted in kilometers per hour (Km/H).



REGULATORY SIGNS

PROHIBITION SIGNS - a white circular sign with a red border and slash means NO. The black symbol indicates what is prohibited.

OBLIGATION SIGNS - white squares with green circles and black symbols oblige all of the traffic to proceed in the indicated direction.

WARNING AND GUIDE SIGNS

WARNING SIGNS- white triangles with red borders warn of hazards. The black symbol illustrates the upcoming danger.

GUIDE SIGNS- white squares on blue rectangular backgrounds provide information about services that are adjacent to the roadway. The symbols indicate the services.





Pavement Markings

Lines, lettering, symbols and occasionally shading painted directly on the road surface make up **PAVEMENT MARKINGS**. Sometimes special markings may also be painted on curbs and other surfaces. They are normally white or yellow in color and are used to assist in regulating the flow of traffic. These markings define lanes, delineate roadways, reinforce information given by signs or signals, and sometimes warn of possible dangers.

The most common pavement markings are lines. They are painted in two colors: **yellow lines** that separate traffic traveling in opposite directions and **white lines** that separate lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction (the thicker the line, the more hazardous the situation).

YELLOW LINES

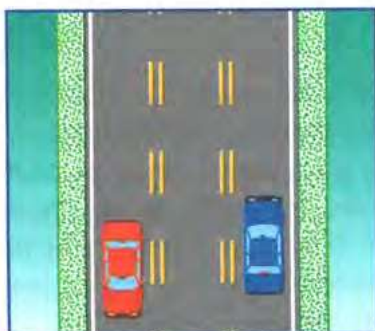
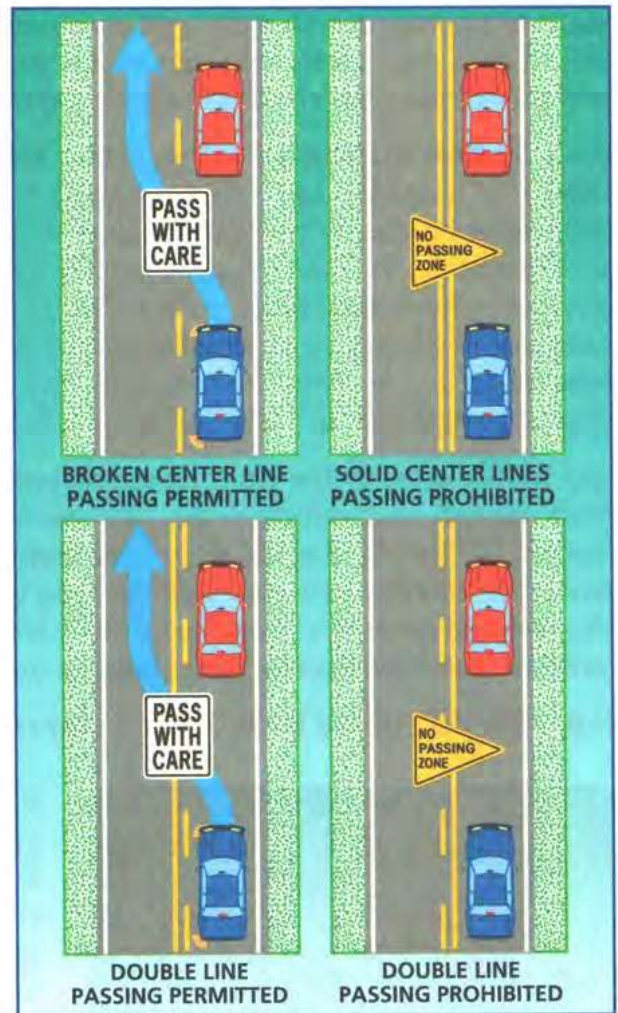
A **CENTER LINE**, yellow in color, need not be at the geometric center of the roadway. It may be a single **BROKEN LINE** which permits passing if the way is clear; or a solid yellow line which prohibits passing (except in special cases: slow-moving vehicles, bicycles, etc.).

EXCEPTIONS : A driver may cross a single or double solid line if the maneuver can be performed safely, when the lane is blocked or closed to traffic; to pass farm machinery, a tractor, or an animal drawn vehicle; to pass a bicycle; or to pass a slow-moving vehicle (sign on rear of the vehicle).

Center lines composed of double lines with one broken line and one solid line permit passing for drivers travelling beside the broken line and prohibit passing for drivers beside the solid line.

While driving on a two-lane roadway, you are required to use the right lane. You may use the left lane to pass another vehicle or in the event that your lane is obstructed or closed to traffic.

Before entering the left lane, you must yield the right-of-way to any oncoming traffic. The complete procedures for passing maneuvers will be discussed later in Chapter 15.



ALTERNATING TRAFFIC LANE

A **DOUBLE BROKEN YELLOW LINE** on either side of a lane indicates the lane is designed to carry traffic in one direction at certain times, and in the opposite direction at other times (in urban areas as well as on bridges - as shown).

Before entering the lane, check for signs at the side of the road or special lane-use lights (see Page 3.18) installed above the lane to determine if you are permitted to access the lane at the present time.



SAFETY TIPS



3 If you ever notice that a yellow line is on your right, you are traveling the wrong way. Immediately move onto the shoulder and when it can be done safely, and turnabout. Many highways use raised lane markers (reflectors attached to the pavement or Pott's Dots) to guide motorists. They should appear white or yellow depending on the line they represent. Should they appear red in color, you are traveling in the wrong direction.

On **4-LANE ROADWAYS**, a double yellow median line or divider (median strip) should not be crossed in either direction. On divided roads, a solid yellow line borders the median divider on both sides.

You should drive in the right lane. The left lane should be used for passing, avoiding dangers on the shoulder (e.g. Move Over Law), and approaching hidden entrance ramps or entrance ramps with vehicles entering the roadway.

On a **5-LANE ROADWAY** (often called **TWO-WAY LEFT TURN LANES** or **SHARED LEFT TURN LANE**) the center lane is delineated by double yellow lines (one solid and one broken) on either side. This lane is reserved for vehicles turning left driving in both directions, as well as turning left into the roadway from alleys, driveways, and parking lots (*not at intersections*). At major intersections, the lane markings will change to highlight the left turn lanes in both directions.

You should drive in the right lane; however, to turn left, you must position your vehicle in the 2nd lane in time to enter the marked left turn lane at the major intersection. For left turns at any other location, you may cross the solid yellow line to enter this reserved lane after checking carefully that no other vehicle (oncoming or from the rear) is entering or using the lane.

N.B. : DO NOT DRIVE IN THIS LANE (for more than 300')!



6-LANE ROADWAYS - The center line may be a double-yellow, though usually a median strip or concrete divider. Drive in the right lane in order to exit or to drive at less than the posted speed limit. The second lane should be used when driving at the speed limit as well as to pass or avoid dangers from the right. The left lane should be reserved for passing. Check for reserved lanes, left exits and vehicles at high speed approaching from the rear before entering the left lane.

RESERVED LANES - One or more lanes may be reserved for special vehicles. They are delineated by double yellow lines and a white diamond on the pavement. Signs posted at the side of the road, or above the lane, designate their use for "Bus," "Bicycle," or "HOV" (high occupancy vehicle and the number of occupants required), etc. Do not drive in these lanes unless your vehicle qualifies.



WHITE LINES ON THE PAVEMENT

WHITE LINES separate traffic moving in the same direction. They channel traffic into orderly lanes and assist drivers to control their path of travel. **Lines are also used as:**

EDGE LINES:

- mark the right edge of the roadway
- on one-way streets, the left edge line should be painted yellow but is often white in color.

CROSSWALKS:

- at intersections, wide perpendicular or horizontal lines mark walkways to guide pedestrians and warn drivers. Elsewhere, the crosswalks are yellow.



STOP LINES:

- wide lines that mark where vehicles must stop at red traffic signal lights and stop signs. These lines will be painted from one curb to the other (all the way across) on one-way streets.



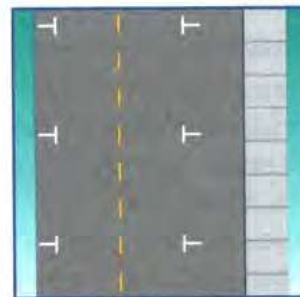
OBSTRUCTION MARKINGS:

- guide traffic around fixed obstructions
- slanted (zebra) stripes indicate where you should not pass.



PARKING SPACES:

- controlled by white lines on the pavement. They encourage an orderly and efficient use of space while preventing encroachment on bus stop zones, fire hydrant zones, etc.



WHITE LETTERING AND SYMBOLS

WHITE LETTERING or **SYMBOLS** painted on the pavement may supplement signs posted overhead or at the side of the roadway. They may designate lanes, warn of hazards, provide information, etc. **Some examples are:**

LANE DESIGNATION:

- arrows indicate the direction drivers in a given lane must travel. May be accompanied by signs overhead or at the side of the road.
- the word **ONLY** indicates one direction of travel is permitted.



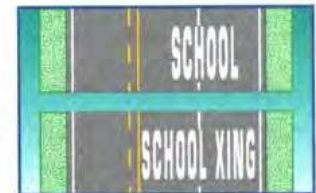
RAILROAD CROSSINGS:

- are delineated by a white crossbuck and double R.



SCHOOL ZONES:

- indicated by the word **SCHOOL**.
- **SCHOOL X-ing** indicates where students cross.



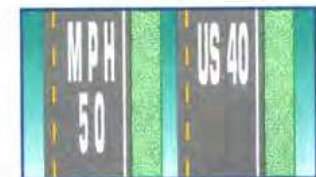
WARNINGS:

- stops and signal lights may be lettered on the pavement.



INFORMATION:

- speed limits, route numbers, etc. may be painted on the roadway.



RESERVED PARKING:

- handicapped symbol reserves the space for the disabled (identified by the color blue).



RESERVED LANES:

- white diamonds painted on the lane identify reserved lanes (**HOV lanes**).



CURB MARKINGS:

- white, yellow, blue, green and red may be used to control parking.





Traffic Signals

3 Traffic control signals are valuable devices for the regulation and orderly movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. They control traffic at one location and are clearly visible, mounted on posts at the corners of intersections or hung over the roadway. The position and colors of the signals are standardized. **When lights are inoperative, drivers should stop (proceed as if it were a four-way stop intersection).**

RED SIGNAL LIGHT

The **RED** signal light is located at the top when mounted vertically or on the left when horizontal. If the **RED LENS IS LIT**, drivers must stop their vehicles at the indicated stop line; if none is marked, before reaching the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection.



Unless a sign indicates otherwise, the driver may then cautiously enter the intersection in order to turn right. (Also to turn left onto a one-way street after stopping and yielding to traffic.)

WARNING: turns on red lights are not universal; check with local authorities.

If the driver intends to proceed straight, he must wait for the signal to change to continue.



RED ARROW:

- Stop. Turns prohibited in the direction of the arrow.



FLASHING RED LIGHT:

- Stop, then proceed only when it is safe to do so (similar to a stop sign).

TRANSIT PRIORITY SIGNAL

A signal light (at the top) with a white vertical bar on a black background allows transit buses to proceed before other traffic. Only buses (and

taxis in a reserved lane, where so indicated) may proceed when the **TRANSIT PRIORITY SIGNAL** is shown, while other vehicles must remain stopped. (This signal is accompanied by a steady red light - as illustrated - for the few seconds that it is lit.)



YELLOW (AMBER) SIGNAL LIGHT

The **YELLOW** signal light is located in the middle whether mounted vertically or horizontally. If the **YELLOW LENS IS LIT**, the green signal has ended and the signal is about to change to red.

Drivers are required to stop. However, if it changes to yellow and you cannot stop safely, you may proceed with caution.

Crossing an intersection on a yellow signal is a hazardous maneuver! **You are highly recommended to stop.** In order to do this, good drivers are continually aware of the traffic situation, the signals ahead and the traffic both ahead and behind. Approaching intersections, you should "**cover the brake,**" and be prepared to stop.

How long has the signal been green? Will the traffic behind be able to stop? How much space will you need to stop? These questions should be considered while nearing any green signal.



The basic concept is, when a signal light changes to yellow, **you should stop!**



YELLOW ARROW:

- If you were intending to turn, you should stop.



FLASHING YELLOW ARROW:

- Slow down, yield to any road users in the intersection and any oncoming traffic. Turn when it is safe to do so.



FLASHING YELLOW:

- Cover the brake, proceed with caution, check left and right before entering the intersection.



GREEN SIGNAL LIGHT

The **GREEN** signal light is at the bottom when mounted vertically and on the right when horizontal. When the **GREEN LENS IS LIT**, the driver is authorized to proceed into the intersection. *This does not guarantee that the way is clear.*

When a red light changes to green (**fresh green**), you should yield to any other vehicles or pedestrians that have not cleared the intersection. There is also a possibility of late arrivals who tried to "**run the yellow.**" **Check the traffic to the left, center, right and left again before entering (count of three technique).** Do not enter if other road users do not appear to be stopping or are still engaged.

SAFETY TIPS



In major cities, a device called an "**OPTICON**" may be installed at signal light controlled intersections. The device resembles a camera with a white lens. It receives a signal from approaching emergency vehicles and assigns right-of-way to them (pre-emptive control of traffic signal operation). It flashes to indicate an emergency vehicle is traveling on this road, or a steady white when an emergency vehicle is crossing the intersection.

When approaching a green signal light, is it a "**stale green?**" (It has been green for some time, since you first noticed it. It might be ready to change to yellow any second.) "**Cover the brake**" and check traffic to the rear, be prepared to stop safely prior to entering intersection.

If the light is still green when you pass the "**point of no return**" (the last chance to stop safely prior to entering the intersection), check the cross traffic and then proceed to cross the intersection while returning to your normal cruising speed.

GREEN ARROW:



- You may turn in the direction of the arrow after checking and yielding to pedestrians (any road users in intersection).
- This light may accompany a red signal. You may move in the direction of the arrow (oncoming vehicles **may also** be turning left).
- This is called a protected left turn.



- **You may still turn left when the light changes to a green traffic signal**, as illustrated (no red left-turn arrow visible), but only after yielding to oncoming traffic, pedestrians and any other road users in the intersection (no longer a protected left turn).

PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS are used at intersections or crossings for the exclusive purpose of controlling pedestrian traffic.



The concept is to regulate the flow of traffic in order to allow pedestrians time to cross while minimizing the possibility of conflicts.

3

Pedestrians are still required to check traffic with due care before crossing and to avoid causing untoward delays for traffic.

Drivers must yield to pedestrians and pay special attention to those who are visually (white cane/guide dog) or hearing impaired.



- The illuminated **WALK** or a walking person symbol indicates pedestrians may enter the crosswalk.



- When flashing**, hurry to safety. Some signals indicate time remaining.



- The illuminated **DON'T WALK** or orange hand symbol prohibits entering the crosswalk.



- When flashing**, hurry to safety.

In some areas, an **audio signal** assists the visually impaired. It makes a continuous sound to cross; an intermittent sound when the lights flash; and no sound at all when they should not cross the intersection.



Numeric countdown lights may be installed to assist pedestrians and warn of the time left to cross.



LANE-USE SIGNALS

Special overhead signals control the use of lanes on bridges, in tunnels, reversible lanes, etc. They inform road users of the availability of the lanes ahead.



A **STEADY RED X** identifies the lane below the signal as a lane that you may not use.



A **STEADY DOWNWARD GREEN ARROW**, indicates you are permitted to drive in the lane under this signal.



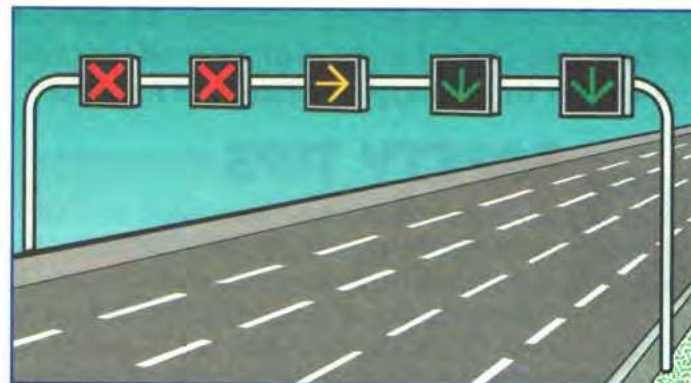
A **STEADY YELLOW X** means you should prepare to vacate the lane under the signal in a safe manner.



A **FLASHING YELLOW X** identifies a lane reserved for left turns in both directions.



A **FLASHING HORIZONTAL YELLOW OR GREEN ARROW** indicates the direction in which you should direct your vehicle to change lanes in complete safety.

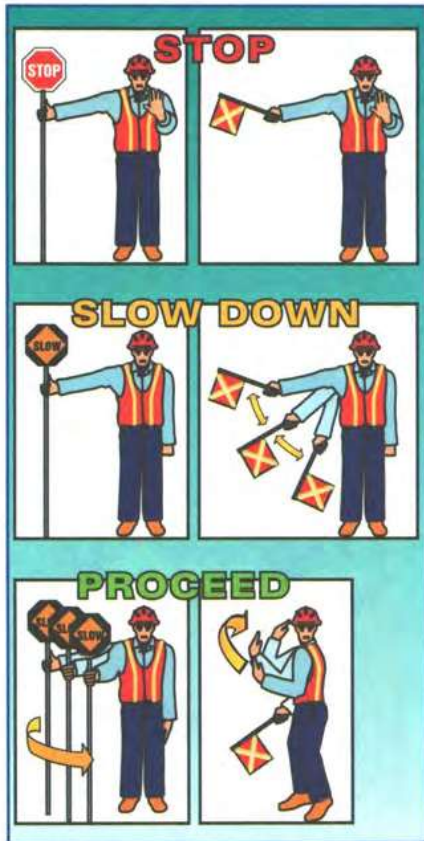


3-E

Traffic Control Persons

3

Traffic control persons are authorized to direct and control the traffic flow for a specific purpose. Failure to obey them is hazardous, as well as entailing penalties similar to passing a traffic signal. Some examples of traffic control persons are:



FLAGGERS (FLAG PERSONS):

- using a flag or a standard, they control traffic at construction or road work sites, etc.

POLICE OFFICERS:

- using hand signals and/or a whistle, they direct traffic.



CROSSING GUARDS: using a stop sign symbol, they control traffic to protect students while they are crossing.



SAFETY TIPS



In any situation where there is a traffic signal or sign, as well as a peace officer or other traffic control person, **you must obey the directions given by the person directing the traffic.**



3-F

Hand Signals

Hand signals must be used to communicate road users intentions on vehicles without electrical turn signals or when the signals may not be operative.

Road users may supplement the mechanical signals with a manual signal. This adds a personal aspect to the communication and can be more effective. Positive results from other road users are much more likely.

You must signal your intentions (by law) with respect to any maneuvers - turns or lane changes - by signalling steadily for a sufficient distance (at least 100 feet - at urban driving speeds, otherwise 200 feet, in most cases). Doing so will permit other drivers to react and be able to take appropriate action should it be necessary.



SAFETY TIPS



COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL TO SHARING THE HTS SAFELY.

Hand signals can be used in conjunction with the electric turn signals. They often result in a more positive response from other road users. Other hand signals can be used too. For example, a gesture to proceed at a four-way stop intersection might be appropriate.



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- 4-A
Passing and Being Passed
- 4-B
Turns
- 4-C
Stopping, Standing, and Parking
- 4-D
Speed and Speed Limits
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Special Situations
- 4-F
Winter Driving Concerns

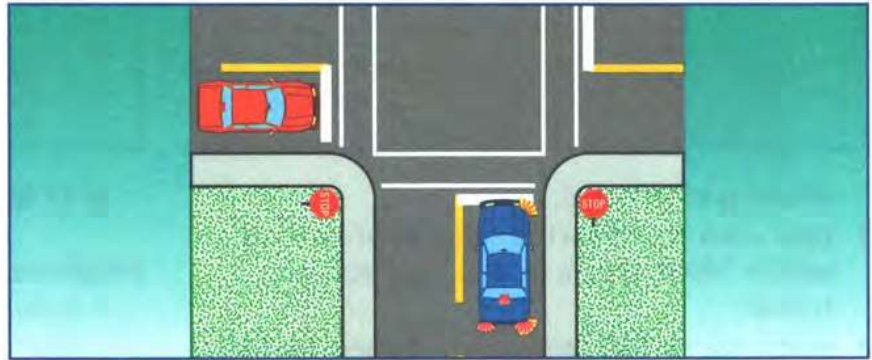
Controlling Traffic Flow

A good driver always communicates with other road users. A surprise move often results in conflicts and collisions. Moreover, all drivers expect other road users to abide by the rules. When they do not, crashes occur. To reduce risk, you must learn to expect the unexpected.

4

In this chapter, you will examine the rules that apply to a wide variety of maneuvers, from interacting with others when you are passing, are being passed, or are performing a turning maneuver to the rules governing stopping, standing, and parking.

You must obey maximum and minimum speed limits; however, good drivers know when to adjust their speed to road and weather conditions, as well as to the traffic density. This is especially important in winter driving.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO LIST THE LAWS RELATING TO AND TO DESCRIBE :

- the processes for passing and being passed.
- right and left turn procedures.
- procedures for stopping, standing, and parking
- speed limits and related stopping procedures in all conditions.

Passing and Being Passed

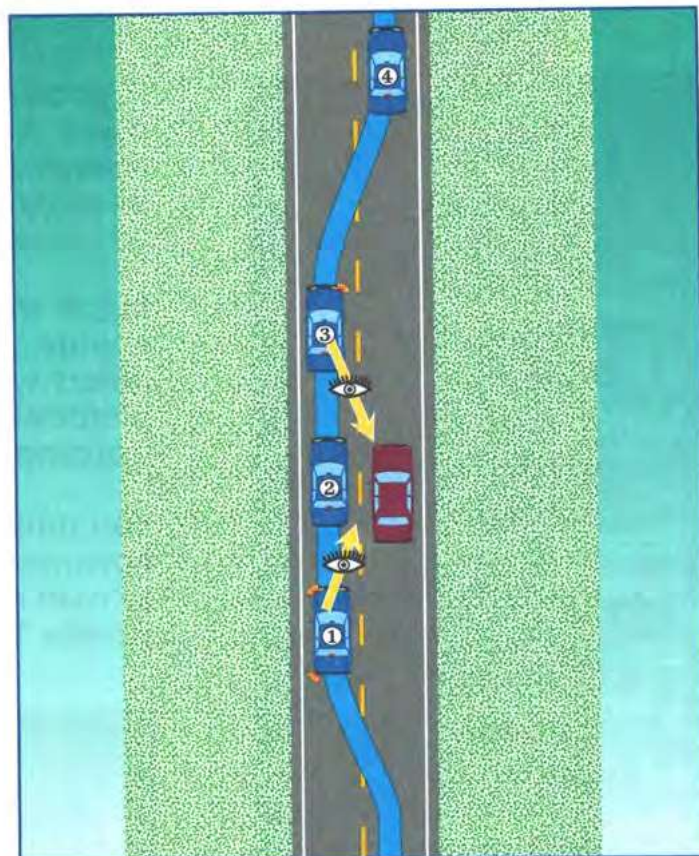
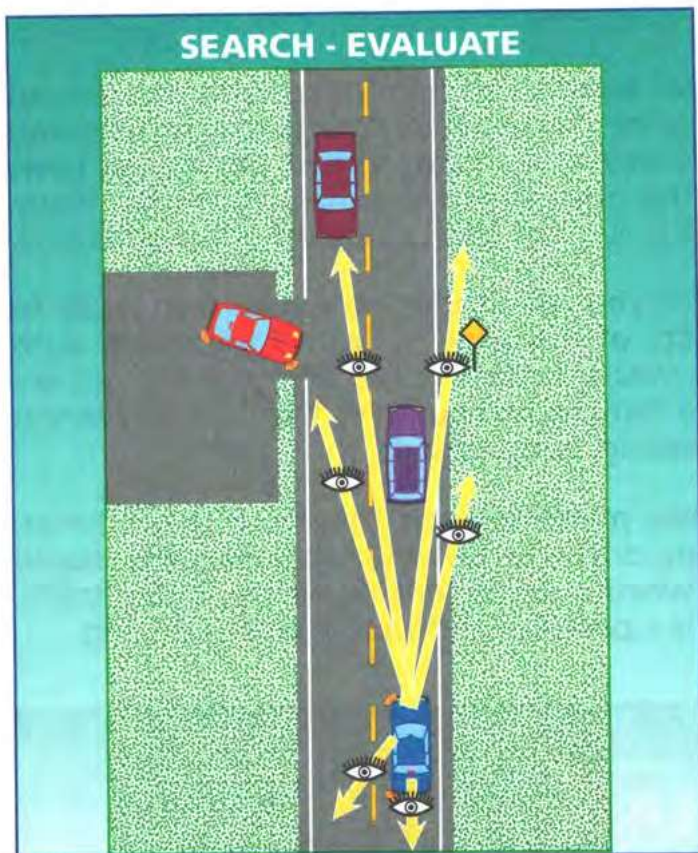
Passing is one of the most dangerous driving maneuvers. It is not always safe to pass. Before passing, you must decide whether it makes sense under the existing road, traffic, and weather conditions. You should be patient and wait until the time is right. Collisions that result from improper passing can be deadly. (See Chapter 16 for more details.)

You should never drive on the left half of the roadway (pass) when:

- you must cross a solid yellow line;
- a "no-passing" sign is posted or the triangular "no-passing zone" sign is posted on the left;
- approaching a hill or curve where your view



4



- ahead is obstructed;
- your view is obstructed upon approaching within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct or tunnel;
- when within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing;
- when there are two or more lanes of traffic in each direction;
- oncoming traffic is too close; and
- you cannot see ahead clearly.

When passing is permitted by law, your line of sight, your speed, and the situation ahead are items to be taken into consideration. When the vehicle ahead is driving at least 10 mph slower than both your speed and the speed limit, and the maneuver can be performed safely, you might come to the decision that you should pass.

PASSING ON THE LEFT SAFELY

EVALUATE

- Is passing permitted?
- Check the situation all around your vehicle.
- Check your mirrors and left blind spot (someone may be passing you).

IS IT SAFE TO PASS?

PREPARE

- Activate the left turn signal.
- Alert the driver ahead (honk - **Texas law** - or flash the high beams).
- Accelerate - get a running start.
- Recheck the situation ahead of and behind your vehicle.

EXECUTE

- Target and steer into the passing lane (change lanes to the left).
- Firmly maintain speed while moving by the vehicle.
- Make sure you can see **both front tires of the vehicle you have just passed** in your rearview mirror.
- Activate the right turn signal.
- Check the right blind spot.
- Target and steer into the right lane (lane change right).
- Cancel the turn signal.
- Maintain speed until you have a safe space cushion behind your vehicle, then ease off the accelerator (return to normal cruising speed).



PASSING ON THE RIGHT SAFELY

In Texas, and many other states, you may pass on the right. You may pass on the right only under conditions permitting such movement without conflict and in complete safety.

You may pass:

- When the road is clear of parked vehicles or other hazards and is wide enough for two or more lanes in each direction.
- When you are on a one-way road.
- Using the paved shoulder of the roadway, when the vehicle you are passing is slowing or stopped on the main traveled portion of the roadway, disabled on the roadway, or preparing to make a left turn.

Never pass on the right by driving off of the paved portion of the highway or shoulder.

BEING PASSED

When a vehicle passes you, you should:

- Refrain from increasing speed.
- Stay in your lane.
- Move to the right as far as you can when the lanes are not marked.
- Make it as safe as you can for the other driver to pass you.

4



Turns

Turning a corner appears to be a simple operation. However, much confusion in traffic and many collisions are caused by drivers who do not turn correctly.

In general, there are seven steps to performing a good turn. They are:

- Make up your mind before you get to the turning point. Never make a “last minute” turn. It is too dangerous.
- Look behind and to both sides to see where other vehicles may be before you change lanes.
- Move into the proper lane as soon as possible. The faster the traffic is moving, the sooner you should move into the proper lane. If you cannot get into the lane at least one-half block prior to the turn, you should not turn, but continue straight ahead.
- Give the proper turn signal at least 100 feet prior to the turning movement. If you use a hand signal (not as visible at night), hold it until you are close enough to the intersection for others to know what you

intend to do (communication). Do not hold the signal while making the turn; you need both hands on the wheel.

- Slow down to a reasonable turning speed (5 to 10 mph). Do not use the brake or clutch while actually turning.
- Make the turn correctly. This will be easy if you are in the proper lane and proceeding slowly enough at the time you begin to turn.
- Finish the turn in the proper lane. Watch for pavement markings or signs permitting turns from, or into, two or more traffic lanes, or giving other special turning or lane information.

RIGHT TURNS

In order to perform a right turn, your vehicle should be in the right lane in lane position 1 (lane center-position) at least 200' prior to the intersection (lane change if not in the correct lane). You should input steering control at the standard front reference point.



EVALUATE

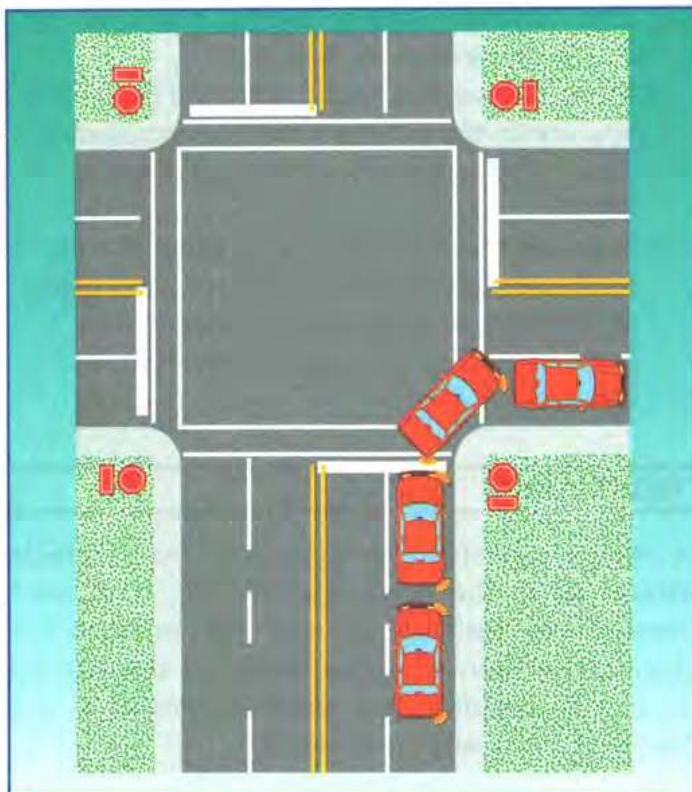
- Is a right turn permitted?
- Search the intersection.
- Check the rear-view mirrors.
- Check your right blind spot (for cyclists, motorcycles, etc.).

4**IS THIS MANEUVER SAFE?****PREPARE**

- Activate the right turn signal.
- Tap the brake, check the rear-view mirror, and then reduce speed (Standard- shift to 2nd gear).
- Re-search the intersection.
- Recheck mirrors and blind spot.
- Move to the right in your lane (lane position, visual reference).

EXECUTE

- Check that the front wheels reach the curve of the curb (front visual reference point).
- Look through the turn (target intended path of travel).
- Release the brake.
- Steer quickly using hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering (following the intended path of travel).
- Target ahead in the right lane (or other lane, in some instances - see Chapter 16).



- Accelerate gently.
- Straighten the steering wheel.
- Accelerate to normal speed.
- Check the rear-view mirror.
- Verify the turn signal is off.

When performing a right turn from a stop, begin turning the steering wheel (visual reference point) as you advance slowly into the intersection to check traffic. When the way is clear, accelerate gently while using the hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering technique (see Chapter 10).

LEFT TURNS

To perform a left turn, you must be in the furthest left lane that you may use. Often, a designated left turn lane may be available (if delineated by lines; be careful not to enter the lane too soon). Occasionally, more than one lane may be permitted to turn left (see Chapter 16). On a two-way road, you must occupy the lane nearest the yellow center line; on a one-way road, use the lane closest to the left side of the road. This may necessitate one or more lane changes prior to the turn.

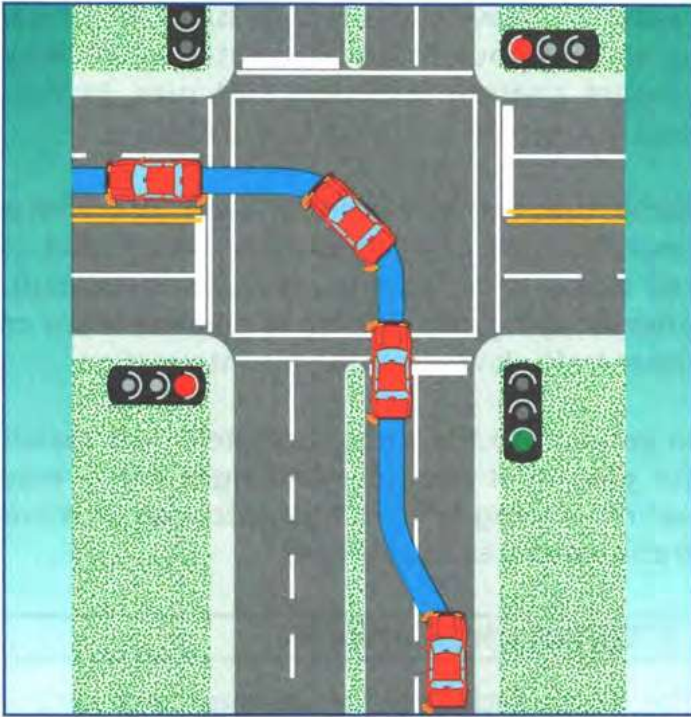
FROM A TWO-WAY TO ANOTHER TWO-WAY**EVALUATE**

- Is a left turn permitted (signs, signals, and pavement markings)?
- Search the intersection.
- Check the rear-view mirrors.
- Check your left blind spot.

IS THIS MANEUVER SAFE?**PREPARE**

- Activate the left turn signal.
- Tap the brake then reduce speed smoothly (Standard- downshift to second gear).
- Advance until your vehicle nears the center of the intersection (front reference point).
- Re-search the intersection and the oncoming traffic.
- **Stop with the front tires straight if pedestrians or oncoming traffic impede the turn** (Standard- shift to first gear).
- Check mirrors and blind spot.



**EXECUTE**

- Target the center of the intended lane (path of travel).
- Release the brake pedal.
- Steer quickly using hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering (following the intended path of travel).
- Accelerate smoothly.
- Aim ahead into the left lane (target your intended path of travel).
- Straighten the steering wheel.

- Accelerate to normal speed.
- Check the rear-view mirror.
- Verify the turn signal is off.

As soon as possible after straightening in the left lane, perform a lane change to the right (if a lane is available) to move out of the passing lane. The left lane should be kept clear whenever possible, and you are also required by law to drive as much to the right as possible.

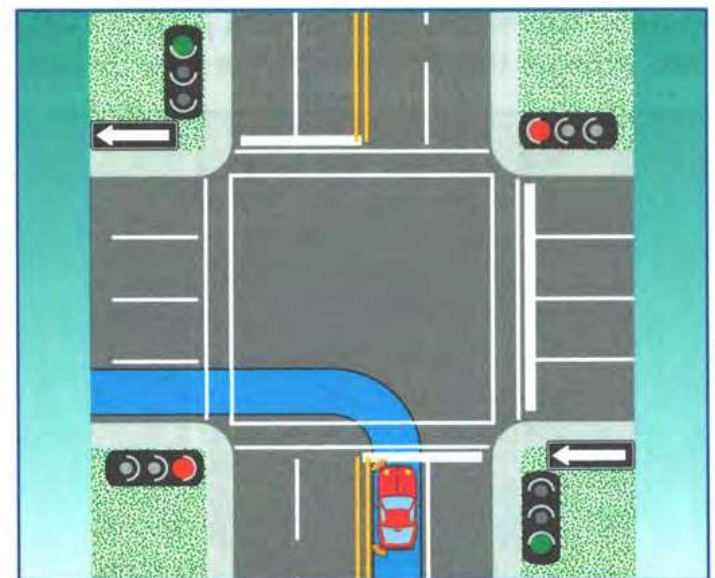
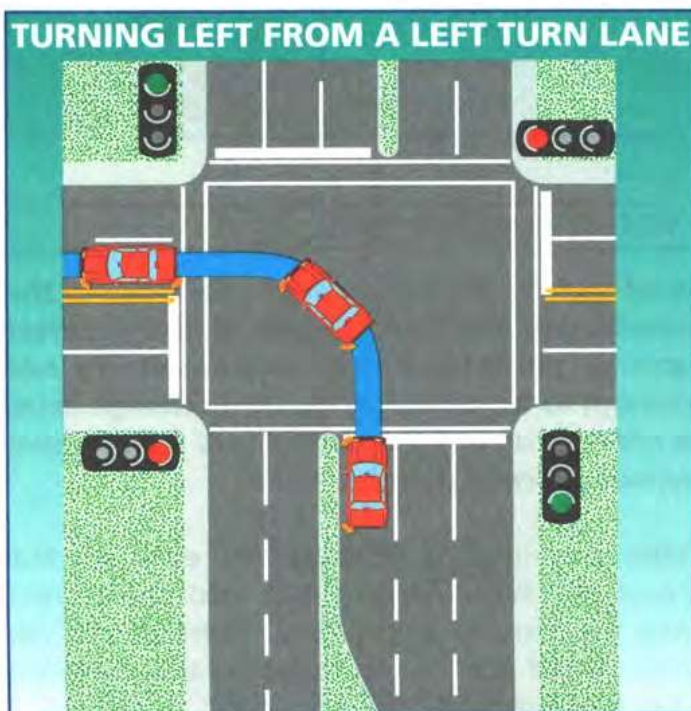
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Special attention must be focused on space areas, gaps in traffic, sightlines, etc. prior to the left turn maneuver, as you will be crossing oncoming traffic from ahead, as well as cross traffic from the left and from the right.

At many intersections, special turn signal lights (three left arrows) may control traffic to provide a protected left turn. This does not relieve the driver of the obligation to exercise due care and to yield to any other road users within the intersection or so close thereto as to constitute an immediate hazard.

FROM A TWO-WAY TO A ONE-WAY

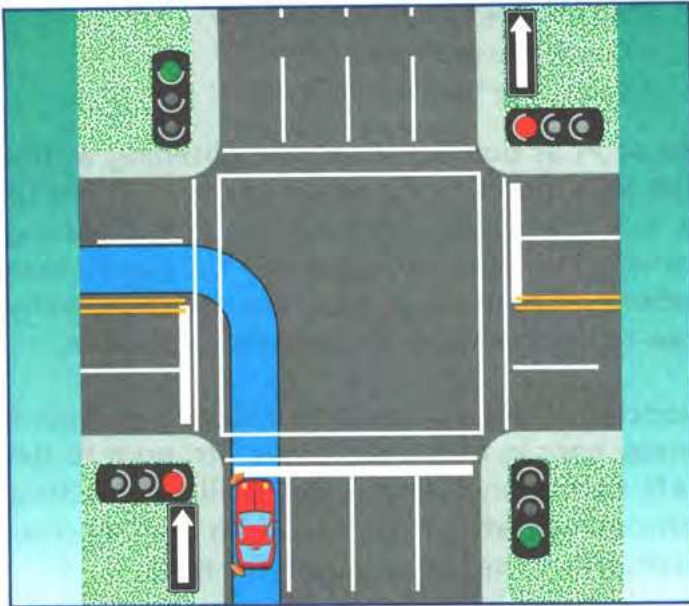
The intended lane is the one beside the left curb. Stop, or begin the turn, when the front of your vehicle reaches the crosswalk. The remaining procedures are the same as the two-way to a two-way turn.

**FROM A ONE-WAY TO A TWO-WAY**

To perform a left turn, you must occupy the farthest left lane that you are legally permitted



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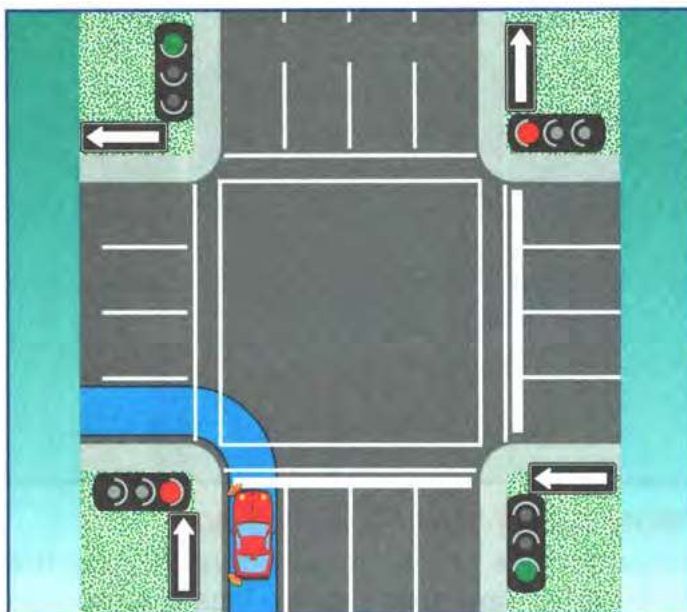
to occupy. On a one-way road, this lane is the lane closest to the left curb. Change lanes into the lane closest to the left curb at least 200 feet (one-half block) prior to the turn. Reduce speed and signal your intention to turn from a distance of 100 feet prior to the turn.

Follow the same procedures as for a two-way to a two-way left turn.

FROM A ONE-WAY TO ANOTHER ONE-WAY

Follow the procedures for a right turn replacing the word "left" for the word "right".

When the left turn is completed, you should change lanes to the right if this is possible. Take into account the concepts of the lane of least



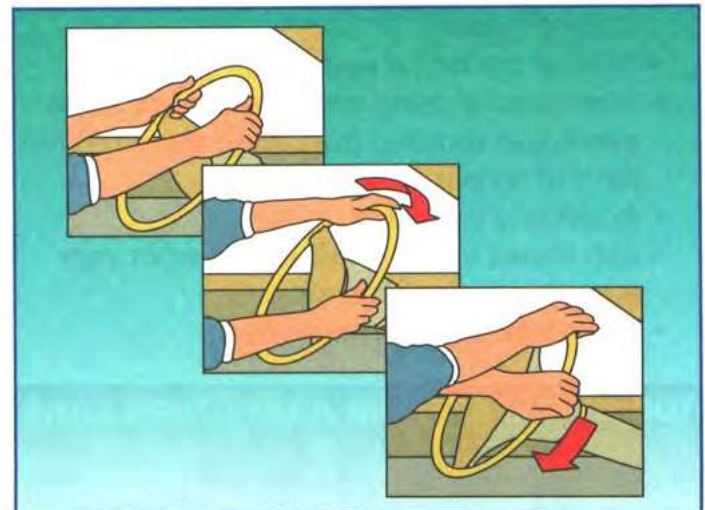
resistance, leaving the left (passing) lane free, as well as your intended route, which may require another imminent left turn. In that case, you would not move to the right.

Remember, you may perform a left turn from a one-way road onto another one-way road at red signal lights (unless otherwise indicated), after stopping and yielding to all pedestrians or other traffic lawfully using the intersection.

In addition to the turns illustrated here, watch for pavement markings and signs which may permit turning left from or into two or more traffic lanes (see Chapter 16).

STEERING WHILE TURNING

The correct technique for steering input control while turning is either the hand-to-hand or the hand-over-hand steering method (see Chapter 10).



WRONG LANE FOR TURN

In all turning situations, if you are close to the intersection and find yourself in the incorrect lane to perform a turn maneuver, do not attempt to turn. Do not suddenly change lanes in order to occupy the correct lane for the turn; instead proceed straight ahead.

After crossing the intersection, evaluate the situation, then change lanes into the correct lane for turning at the next intersection. Or, make three right turns to access the intended road (left turn).





Stopping, Standing, and Parking

You must realize and accept the heavy responsibility that rests on the shoulders of every driver. Operating a vehicle improperly, without due respect for its lethal capabilities, is unacceptable. You must develop defensive driving skills and attitudes that will permit you to drive collision-free.

Not all crashes occur while vehicles are being driven; an improperly parked vehicle may become a runaway and cause a collision. You must act responsibly at all times, including when you park your vehicle and while your vehicle is parked, even though you are not in your vehicle.

PARKING RESPONSIBILITY

You must decide where to park in compliance with parking control signs, curb markings, fire hydrants, etc. When parking parallel to the curb, your vehicle must be within 12 inches of the nearest curb.

PROHIBITED PARKING

A vehicle shall not be parked, except if necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, in compliance with the law, or the directions of a police officer or traffic control device, **in any of the following places:**

- a) on a sidewalk;
- b) in front of a public or private driveway;
- c) within an intersection;
- d) within 15 feet of a fire hydrant;
- e) on a crosswalk;
- f) within 20 feet of a crosswalk, or if no crosswalk, within 15 feet of the property lines at an intersection;
- g) within 30 feet of the approach to a flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic control signal;
- h) between a safety zone and the curb or within 30 feet of the end of the safety zone;
- i) within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing;
- j) within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to a fire station and on the opposite side of the

- k) alongside or opposite a street excavation or obstruction if the stopping, standing, or parking would obstruct traffic;
- l) on the roadway side of a vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street (double parking);
- m) upon a bridge or other elevated highway structure, or within a tunnel;
- n) at a place where an official sign prohibits stopping or parking;
- o) within 500 feet of a collision at which a police officer is in attendance (outside of a city or village);
- p) in front of a theater;
- q) in a place or manner that blocks an emergency exit of a building;
- r) in a place or manner that blocks a fire escape from a building;
- s) in a parking space reserved for use by the disabled, or adjacent striped space;
- t) within 300 feet of a fire at which fire apparatus is in attendance; exception for volunteer fire fighters and vehicles legally parked previous to the fire;
- u) in violation of an official sign restricting the period of time for or manner of parking;
- v) in a space controlled or regulated by a meter when the time has expired;
- w) on a street or highway in such a manner as to obstruct the delivery of mail to a rural mailbox; and
- x) in a place or manner which blocks the use of an alley.

Temporarily stopping to comply with signs, signals, etc. is not considered parking or standing.

Outside of a business or residential district (rural area), never park or leave your vehicle standing on the paved part of any roadway when you can park off the roadway. If you cannot park off the road, you should:

- Leave plenty of room for others to pass.
- Make sure that your vehicle is visible for at



least 200 feet in both directions.

- Use your parking lights or low beam headlights at night.

4

If you are the registered owner of the vehicle (your name appears on the registration), you will be held responsible for parking violations. If the owner did not commit the infraction, he/she will surely want the person who was in charge of the vehicle at the time to repay them.

It is also common sense to secure articles, that are in your vehicle, in the trunk, or at least out of sight, in order not to encourage thieves to break in. Park in a lighted area, and be aware of your surroundings and who is around the vehicle in parking lots. Consider buying a vehicle alarm.

Your vehicle should always be locked when parked to avoid theft and to make it child-proof. Too many joy-rides and eventual collisions result from careless drivers who forgot to lock their vehicles. In Texas, you must apply the parking brake, shift into Park, stop the engine, turn the ignition switch to lock, remove the key, and when standing on a grade, turn the front wheels to the curb or side of the roadway whenever you leave your motor vehicle unattended.

When parking, after you stop your vehicle, it would be a good habit to apply the parking brake immediately, then ease up on the brake pedal to make sure the vehicle does not move. This tells you that the parking brake is engaged and operating before you shift into Park and turn off the ignition switch. In this way, your vehicle is secure and less likely to roll (most roads have a slight slope for water drainage) and become a runaway.

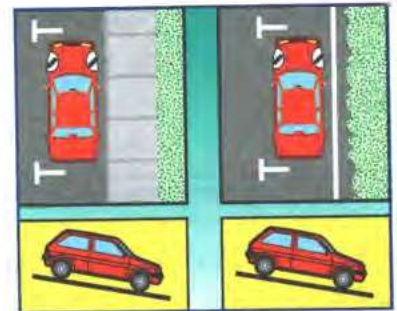
You should also check over your shoulder for any oncoming traffic before exiting.

PARKING ON A HILL

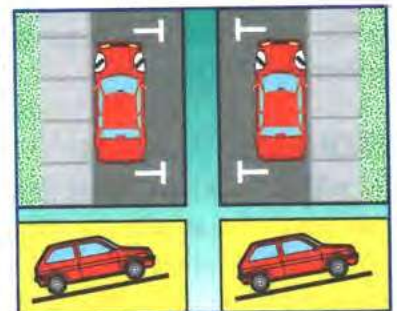
When you park on a hill or a sloping driveway, there is one extra precaution to observe. You must turn the front tires in such a manner as to cause the vehicle to roll out of traffic or against the curb should the vehicle start to move on its own. The parking brake and the shifter lock mechanism have been known to break or slip.

You will be held responsible for any damages that your vehicle may cause if it does move and becomes a runaway. A mechanical malfunction will not be acceptable as an excuse in a court of law!

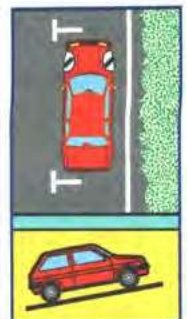
When parking downhill, whether or not there is a curb, the tires should be turned toward the near side of the road.



When parking uphill with a curb, the tires should be turned away from the near side of the road. Ideally, you should allow the vehicle to roll lightly against the curb before applying the parking brake.



When parking uphill without a curb, the tires should be turned toward the near side of the road. The vehicle will roll backwards off the roadway if it should move downhill.



SAFETY TIPS



When leaving a parking space, exercise due care when backing. Children often play between parked cars. Look back before and while backing. Ideally, park so you can drive forward out of the parking space and avoid these potential risks.





Speed and Speed Limits

Generally, you should drive at the same speed as the flow of traffic. However, you must obey the maximum and minimum speed limits (except in adverse driving conditions, when the minimum limit no longer applies). You should always be aware of how fast you are traveling and the posted speed limit.

To be a good driver, you must do more than merely obey the speed limit. You must maintain a safe following distance (see Chapter 11) from the vehicle ahead. The faster you go, the greater the distance you should keep from the vehicle ahead. The absolute minimum would be to apply the "Two Second Rule" in ideal driving conditions.

When the driving environment changes, you must know when to reduce your speed. Many drivers find out too late what a little rain can do. Roads become slippery when wet (rain, snow, and sleet, see Chapters 20 & 21), making it harder to control your vehicle on reduced traction conditions. The only wise thing to do is to reduce speed in proportion to the reduced traction. Make sure you have complete control of the situation at all times. You must be able to stop your vehicle in complete safety, regardless of the road conditions.

The volume of traffic around your vehicle is another driving environment condition that requires you to adapt. When the road is crowded, reduce your speed and increase your

following distance. This will give you an extra margin of safety if anything unexpected should occur.

Visibility conditions (see Chapter 20) are another factor that good drivers adapt to by slowing down. You should always be able to stop within the distance that you can see ahead clearly. In darkness or bad weather, do not overdrive your range of vision ahead.

Good drivers always adjust their speed according to their own physical condition (see Chapter 13) and the condition of their vehicle. If you are tired or not feeling well, don't drive. Never force yourself to drive.

SPEED LIMITS

All drivers are required to obey posted maximum and minimum speed limits, which are designed to provide for the orderly flow of traffic under ideal driving conditions. When any of these conditions change, you must adapt your speed to reduce risk and avoid collisions.

BASIC SPEED LIMITS (unless otherwise posted)

In miles per hour	DAY	NIGHT
Urban District	.30	.30
Alley, Beaches & adjacent County Roads	.15	.15
Numbered Highways & Farm/Ranch to Market Roads		
- all vehicles (except school buses)	.75	.75
- school buses (commercial inspection)	.50	.50
Non-numbered Highways		
- all vehicles (except school buses)	.60	.55
- school buses (commercial inspection)	.50	.50

Statistics



The economic cost of speeding-related crashes is estimated to be \$58.4 billion dollars each year in the United States. In 2013, 35 percent of male drivers 15 to 20 years old and 21 to 24 years old involved in fatal crashes were speeding. NHTSA - DOT HS 812 162

SAFETY TIPS



The Texas Department of Public Safety has identified **speeding as the number one cause of crashes in Texas**. SLOW DOWN AND SURVIVE! Respect the posted speed limits and adapt your speed to the driving conditions.





Special Situations

4

Never drive when you become sleepy. It is much more dangerous to drive at night than during the day. You cannot see as well after sundown. When taking a trip, do your driving in the daylight; it's safer.

HEADLIGHTS

When driving at night (see Chapter 20), reduce your speed. Make sure you can stop within the distance illuminated by your headlights.

Use the low beams when you are:

- Within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle.
- Following closely (within 300 feet) behind another vehicle.
- Driving on lighted roads.
- Driving in fog, heavy rain, sleet, snow, or dust.

If you must park on an unlit highway at night, leave your parking lights or low beam headlights activated. Turn signals flashing on only one side of the vehicle should never be used on parked or disabled vehicles to communicate their presence. Activate the hazard lights (emergency flashers).

You must use the headlights from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, or at any other time when persons or vehicles cannot be seen clearly for at least 1,000 feet.

Avoid looking into the oncoming headlights. You should shift your eyes to the right side of your traffic lane, allowing you to use your peripheral vision to see oncoming traffic.



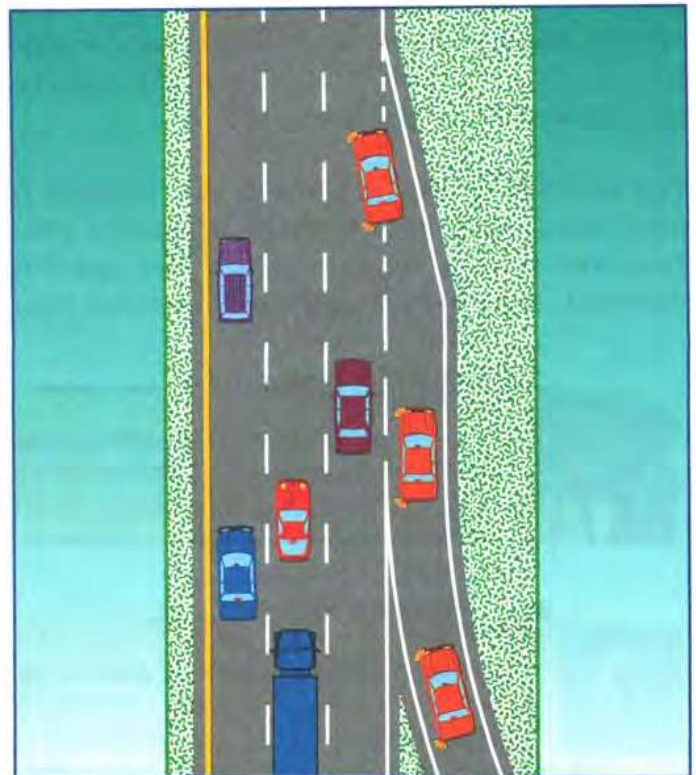
FREEWAY DRIVING

Within the last few years, many thousands of miles of super highways have been built. Depending on where you are, they are known as freeways, toll roads, throughways, turnpikes, and expressways. These roads have been designed for maximum safety, but you must know how to use them properly (see Chapter 17). In Texas, a freeway is defined as "A divided arterial highway with full control of access and with no crossings at grade."

Before you use a freeway, plan your trip in advance so that you know your entrance, direction, and exit. Make sure you and your vehicle are in good condition. If you cannot or do not wish to drive at or above the posted minimum speed limit, do not use the freeway.

ENTERING THE FREEWAY

You must yield the right-of-way to vehicles already on the freeway. Enter the acceleration lane, keep to the right in this lane, activate the left turn signal, and when the way is clear,



increase your speed so you can merge with the flow of traffic on the freeway.

DRIVING THE FREEWAY

On the freeway, you should look twice before altering your speed or changing lanes, and always signal.

If you wish to drive at the minimum speed limit or below the normal flow of traffic, you should use the right-hand lane. When traveling at the speed of traffic (or faster), you should use the middle or left-hand lane. While driving, search ahead for signs instructing you as to which lane you must use to head for your destination. When you approach your intended exit, change to the exit lane as soon as possible.

Once you have chosen your lane on the freeway, stay in the middle of your lane. Do not weave in and out of traffic. Maintain a constant speed, keeping pace with the flow of traffic. Keep a minimum 3 to 4 second following distance from the vehicle ahead. In bad weather, increase the interval to at least 5 seconds. Search the vehicles ahead. Reduce speed as soon as you see brake lights illuminate ahead. Be ready if a vehicle ahead should stop suddenly.

Cooperate with other drivers. Adjust your speed to assist others to enter the freeway safely when you approach an entrance.



Be prepared to move to another lane (toward the right) to allow faster traffic to pass. Use the left-hand lane for passing only, not for cruising with the flow of traffic.

LEAVING THE FREEWAY

You should know which exit you wish to use. Move into the proper lane well in advance of the exit. The greater the traffic, the earlier you should move into the proper lane. Exit signs are usually placed at least 1,000 yards ahead of the exit turn-off.

Maintain your speed until you reach the deceleration lane, and enter the speed change lane as soon as possible. Reduce speed quickly, check for suggested speed signs, and check your speedometer. Continue slowing while you exit, so that by the time you are off the freeway, you are traveling within the slower speed limit. Check the speedometer frequently until you become accustomed to the slower speed.

HIGHWAY HYPNOSIS

A condition of drowsiness can be brought about by reduced activity and steady sounds of wind, engine, and tire hum. This is known as highway hypnosis. To counteract this danger, stop and rest regularly, every two hours or 100 miles. Do not drive more than eight hours per day. Force your eyes to search near and far, left and right, and in the rearview mirror. Read the road signs. Keep your mind active.

EXTRA FREEWAY TIPS

Keep a window open slightly so that there is always fresh air in your vehicle to help keep you alert and awake. On sunny days, wear a good pair of sunglasses. (Never wear sunglasses at night.) Stay out of other driver's blind spots; traveling where a driver cannot see you can be dangerous. This applies especially around large vehicles that have larger (and extra) blind spots.

SAFETY TIPS



Apply a driving strategy to the freeway environment to help reduce risk. Remember to increase your following distance (to 4 seconds or more) due to the higher speed. Your level of experience with this environment will play an important role in your ability to adapt. Stay alert. Search far ahead to reduce risk!





Winter Driving Concerns

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Most drivers realize that winter conditions create special problems and additional hazards for vehicles, but many of them don't know what to do about it. There are a few simple precautions which you should follow.

TIRES AND CHAINS

Equip your vehicle with snow tires and chains. Chains are by far the most effective in deep snow and ice situations, and they should be used where ice and snow remain on the roadway.

One word of caution - neither chains nor snow tires will permit you to drive on slick pavement at normal speeds due to inability to stop and steer effectively, so don't let yourself get a false sense of security. Drivers may find themselves going faster than they realize when turning or stopping is required.

MAINTAIN A SAFE INTERVAL

You must increase the distance from the vehicle ahead (following interval) in bad weather conditions. Many needless rear-end collisions occur in winter conditions because drivers forget to leave a following interval in keeping with the conditions of the pavement (traction). Snow tires will slide on ice or packed snow.

To keep safe, you must keep your distance, regardless of the natural tendency to drive closer together in snow and fog conditions. A minimum six second interval is highly recommended.

REDUCE SPEED

There is no recommended speed for snow and ice conditions. You must be extremely cautious until you are able to determine how much traction you can expect from your tires. Every

city block and every mile of roadway may be different, depending upon sun, shade, and the road surface.

You must travel at a speed that allows you to stop or steer without losing traction. **Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS)** and **Traction Control Systems (TCS)** technology will help, but will not allow you to drive at a higher speed because the vehicle is so equipped.

KEEP WINDOWS CLEAR

Remove snow and ice before you drive to allow for the best possible line of sight and visibility around your vehicle, even if you are just going to the corner store. Make sure the wipers and defroster are working properly and use them.



WATCH FOR DANGER SPOTS

There may be ice on bridges or elevated highways when the rest of the pavement is clear. Snow melts more slowly in shady areas. Ice often forms in the braking zone near intersections. Take precautions when approaching any of these areas.

Curves, stops and turns are also critical. Get the feel of the roadway; test your brakes gently to determine how much traction is available. Start out slowly. Slow down earlier than usual.

SAFETY TIPS



The Texas Department of Public Safety has identified speeding - both driving above the posted speed limit, as well as driving too fast for conditions - as the number one cause of crashes in Texas. SLOW DOWN AND SURVIVE! Adapt to the driving conditions.

