

The following text covers various aspects of specialized driving scenarios, including mountain driving, rural driving, and navigating construction zones. It emphasizes the unique challenges and hazards drivers may encounter in these situations, such as steep hills, wildlife, road conditions, and construction hazards. Additionally, it provides guidelines for safe driving practices, such as using lower gears on steep hills, being cautious of hidden intersections in rural areas, and obeying construction zone signage and speed limits. Overall, the text highlights the importance of remaining attentive, cautious, and focused while driving in diverse environments to ensure the safety of both drivers and workers.

MOUNTAIN DRIVING Mountain driving can be very different from normal driving conditions. As a driver, you should be aware of steep hills, changing weather, bicyclists, wildlife and rocks on the roadway. Shift to lower gears to control speeds when driving down steep hills or mountains. It is illegal to use the oncoming travel lane to pass others if you are approaching the crest of a hill, a curve or in any other situation where visibility of oncoming traffic is obstructed. Be prepared for intersections hidden by trees, brush or crops and for animals on or near the roadway. If your vehicle has difficulty traveling up steep roadways, pull off the road at the first place you can do so safely or stay in the right lane to allow other vehicles to pass. Remember, vehicles going uphill have the right-of-way over vehicles going downhill.

RURAL DRIVING Rural highways are the most dangerous roads and have the highest fatality rate per mile driven of any roads in the U.S. When driving in rural areas, there are some special situations that require your attention:

- Rural roads can have a lot of sharp curves, blind curves, steep hills and dips.
- Rural roads may not have adequate guide signs, and some of the signs might be hidden by trees or bushes.
- Rural roads are narrow, which can make it difficult to pass other vehicles.
- Many rural roads have no shoulders.
- Some rural roads have no guard rails.
- There are blind driveways, T-intersections, side streets that are not visible due to trees, crops and bushes.
- There may be obstacles on the road such as rocks, debris, animals, farm vehicle crossings, unmarked railroad crossings and slow moving or smaller vehicles like bicycles.
- Rural road pavements are usually rough and may be in need of maintenance. In some areas, the rural roads are unpaved (dirt or gravel) resulting in less traction.
- Washboarding, which is a series of potholes that can affect steering and vehicle control, can often be found on gravel roads. Roads with potholes may cause your vehicle to bounce or jolt as you drive over them and can cause your tires to lose traction. Many bicyclist fatalities happen on rural roads due to higher speeds. Stay alert and watch for bicyclists who might be riding on the shoulder, or riding in the travel lane if there is no shoulder or it has debris. Slower speeds and more than the required three feet of passing distance are also advised when passing bicyclists on rural roads due to dangerous wind blasts that can cause vehicles to hit bicyclists.

CONSTRUCTION ZONES Drivers regularly encounter roadway construction and maintenance projects, which are designed to improve the safety and efficiency of our transportation systems. Every construction or maintenance project creates a work zone with equipment, workers and, in some cases, daily changes to the routes. Signs, cones and other warning devices are placed before construction projects and hazards to warn you about the changing conditions. These changes require you to stay alert and focused at all times while driving. Be prepared to stop suddenly and do not tailgate in a work zone. Large construction projects can have complex work zones with flaggers, portable concrete barriers, complicated directional signing and reduced speed limits to safely direct you through the work zone. Reduced speed limits are critical because they give drivers more time to understand and react to the information and allow more time to safely drive through the complex assortment of devices, workers and equipment. Watch

for pedestrians and bicyclists who are also navigating construction and whose safest routes may be compromised. Unfortunately, there is no way to completely separate drivers from work zone hazards leaving construction crews unprotected. Not only are these workers dealing with heavy equipment, excavation, power lines and other activities but they are constantly on guard for drivers that may stray into the work area. Increased police enforcement is routinely added to construction projects to ensure drivers understand the importance of complying with work zone signs and directions. Like school zones, the fines are doubled in work zones. Remember, if you encounter a work zone, for your own safety and the safety of the workers:

- Pay attention, use extra caution and stay focused on the driving task.
- Obey construction signs, including work zone speed limit signs, and flagger instructions.
- Watch the vehicle in front of you — most work zone crashes are rear-end collisions due to an inattentive driver.

Your safety, your passengers' safety, and the safety of these workers depends on you.