

# CALIFORNIA

# **DRIVER HANDBOOK**



**Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor**  
State of California

**Dale E. Bonner, Secretary**  
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

**George Valverde, Director**  
Department of Motor Vehicles

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# **Governor's Message**

## ***California Driver Handbook***

My Fellow Californians:

As Governor, I want you, your family, and all those living in our beautiful state to be safe while driving on California roadways. The *California Driver Handbook* is an educational tool written to assist you in understanding the rules of the road. I urge you to study this handbook and apply its contents to help keep you and your loved ones safe. The handbook is also available online and in audio files, at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). More than ever, Californians are saving time by utilizing the many online services offered at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). This website provides the ability to easily conduct business online, including: renewing vehicle registration or driver license; providing access to forms and driver safety information; reporting the sale of a vehicle; and many other transactions that can be completed without having to visit a field office. Doing business with the Department of Motor Vehicles has never been easier.



I trust you will find the *California Driver Handbook* helpful safeguarding our Golden State's drivers and roads, which is important to all Californians. Whenever you plan on getting behind the wheel, please remember to pay attention, do not send text messages, be a courteous driver, and *never drink and drive*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "A" at the beginning.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>NEW 2010 LAWS .....</b>	<b>VIII</b>	
New Information .....	viii	
Where to Write .....	viii	
<b>DMV INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>IX</b>	
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>1</b>	
Disclaimer .....	1	
Accurate Identification .....	1	
Basic Information .....	1	
<b>THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE ...</b>	<b>2</b>	
Who Must Have a License? .....	2	
<i>California Residents</i> .....	2	
<i>California Resident</i>		
<i>Military Personnel</i>		
<i>(U.S. Armed Forces)</i> .....	2	
<i>Nonresident Military Personnel</i>		
<i>Stationed in California</i> .....	2	
<i>New Residents</i> .....	2	
<i>Adults Visiting California</i> .....	2	
<i>Minors Visiting California</i> .....	3	
<b>OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE .....</b>	<b>3</b>	
Acceptable Documents .....	3	
Application Requirements for a		
Basic Class C Driver License .....	4	
Adults' Permit Requirements .....	4	
Adults' License Requirements .....	5	
<b>LICENSE CLASSES .....</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>THE EXAMINATION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>7</b>	
Where to Take the Tests .....	7	
DMV Examinations .....	7	
<b>SPECIAL SECTION - MINORS.....</b>	<b>8</b>	
Minors' Permit Requirements .....	8	
Minors' Permit Restrictions .....	10	
Minors' License Requirements .....	10	
Exceptions - Minors License		
Restrictions .....	10	
Traffic Violations .....	11	
<i>Teenage Traffic Deaths</i> .....	11	
Actions against the Provisional		
License .....	11	
<i>Keeping Your Provisional</i>		
License .....	11	
<i>Habitual Truant—Persons</i>		
Age 13 to 18 .....	12	
Minors and Cell Phones .....	12	
<b>MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>13</b>	
To Replace a Lost/Stolen or		
Damaged License .....	13	
Name Changes .....	13	
License Renewals .....	13	
Renewal by Mail or Internet .....	13	
License Extension .....	14	
License in Your Possession .....	14	
Address Changes .....	14	
Medical Information Card .....	14	
Organ and Tissue Donation .....	15	
Unlicensed Drivers .....	15	
Diplomatic Driver Licenses .....	15	
Identification (ID) Card .....	15	
Free ID Cards for Physical and		
Mental (P&M) Conditions .....	16	
Driving Schools .....	16	
Mature Driver Program .....	16	
Pedestrian Responsibilities* .....	16	
<b>SEAT BELTS .....</b>	<b>17</b>	
Mistaken Beliefs about		
Seat Belts .....	19	
Child Restraint System and		
Safety Seats .....	20	
Riding Safely with Air Bags .....	20	
Side-Impact Air Bags .....	21	
Unattended Children in		
Motor Vehicles .....	21	
<b>TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND SIGNS .....</b>	<b>21</b>	
Traffic Signal Lights .....	21	
Pedestrian Signal Lights .....	22	
Traffic Signs .....	23	
<b>LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD .....</b>	<b>26</b>	
Right-of-Way Rules .....	26	
General Information .....	26	
Pedestrians .....	26	
Crosswalks .....	27	
Intersections .....	27	
Roundabouts .....	28	
On Mountain Roads .....	29	
Speed Limits .....	29	
Maximum Speed Limit .....	29	
Reduced Speeds .....	29	
Heavy Traffic or Bad Weather .....	29	
Towing Vehicles, Buses, or		
Large Trucks .....	30	

<i>Around Children</i> .....	30	<i>Horn, Headlights, and Emergency Signals</i> .....	51
<i>Blind Intersections</i> .....	31	<i>Use Your Horn</i> .....	51
<i>Alleys</i> .....	31	<i>Do Not Use Your Horn</i> .....	51
<i>Near Railroad Tracks</i> .....	31	<i>Use Your Headlights</i> .....	51
<i>Light Rail Transit Vehicle Crossings</i> .....	32	<i>Use Your Emergency Signals</i> .....	52
<i>Near Streetcars, Trolleys, or Buses</i> .....	32	<i>Following Distances</i> .....	52
<i>Business or Residential Districts</i> .....	32	<i>Taking Dangers One at a Time</i> .....	52
<i>Near Animals</i> .....	32	<i>Splitting the Difference</i> .....	52
<b>TRAFFIC LANES</b> .....	<b>32</b>	<i>Problem Drivers</i> .....	53
Line Colors .....	32	<i>Merging in/out of Traffic</i> .....	53
Choosing a Lane .....	33	<i>Space to Merge</i> .....	53
Changing Lanes .....	33	<i>Space to Cross or Enter</i> .....	54
Bicycle Lanes .....	33	<i>Space to Exit</i> .....	54
Passing Lanes .....	34	<i>Passing Other Traffic</i> .....	54
Carpool/High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) Lanes .....	34	<i>Space and Speed to Pass</i> .....	54
Center Left Turn Lanes .....	35	<i>Space to Return</i> .....	55
Turnout Areas and Lanes .....	35		
End-of-Lane Markings .....	36		
<b>TURNS</b> .....	<b>36</b>		
Examples of Right and Left Turns .....	37		
Legal U-Turns .....	38		
Illegal U-Turns .....	38		
<b>PARKING</b> .....	<b>39</b>		
Parking on a Hill .....	39		
Parking at Colored Curbs .....	39		
Illegal Parking .....	40		
Special Parking Rules .....	41		
<b>SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES</b> .....	<b>41</b>		
Signaling .....	41		
<i>Steering</i> .....	45		
<i>Scanning</i> .....	45		
<i>Know What Is Ahead</i> .....	46		
<i>Know What Is at Your Side</i> .....	47		
<i>Know What Is Behind You</i> .....	48		
<i>Clean Windows and Mirrors</i> .....	49		
<i>Adjust Seat and Mirrors</i> .....	49		
<i>How Well Can You Stop?</i> .....	49		
Driving in the Fog .....	49		
Driving in Darkness .....	50		
Driving in Rain or Snow .....	50		
Driving in Hill Country .....	51		
		<b>SHARING THE ROAD WITH OTHER VEHICLES</b> .....	<b>55</b>
		Large Trucks (Big Rigs) and RVs .....	55
		<i>Braking</i> .....	55
		<i>Trucker's Blind Spots—the "No Zone"</i> .....	55
		<i>Turning</i> .....	56
		<i>Maneuverability</i> .....	56
		Buses, Streetcars, and Trolleys .....	57
		Light-Rail Vehicles .....	57
		Emergency Vehicles .....	58
		Slow Moving Vehicles .....	58
		Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV) .....	59
		Animal-Drawn Vehicles .....	59
		Motorcycles .....	59
		Bicycles .....	60
		Pedestrians Who Are Blind .....	61
		Road Workers and Work Zones ("Cone Zones") .....	62
		Double Fine Zones .....	63
		Move Over and Slow Down .....	63
		Vehicles with Hazardous Loads .....	63

<b>IMPORTANT DRIVING TIPS .....</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>ACTIONS THAT RESULT IN LOSS OF LICENSE .....</b>	<b>78</b>
Dealing with Traffic		Financial Responsibility.....	78
Congestion .....	63	Insurance .....	78
Dealing with Aggressive Drivers and Road Rage .....	65	<i>Insurance Requirements</i> .....	78
Text Messaging and Cell Phones .....	65	<i>Collisions on Your Record</i> .....	79
Collision Avoidance .....	65	<i>Collisions, Insurance, and Minors</i> .....	79
<i>Keep Your Car Visible</i> .....	65	Alcohol/Drugs while Driving .....	79
<i>What is the Road Like</i> .....	66	<i>Alcohol/Drugs and Driving Is Dangerous</i> .....	79
<i>Curves</i> .....	66	<i>Carrying Alcohol in a Vehicle</i> .....	82
<i>Driving in Heavy Traffic</i> .....	66	<i>Drivers Under 21 (Possession of Alcohol)</i> .....	82
<i>Traffic Speeds</i> .....	66	<i>Drivers of All Ages</i> .....	83
Driving Hazards.....	66	<i>Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limits</i> .....	83
<i>Water on the Road</i> .....	66	Admin Per Se .....	83
<i>Slippery Roads</i> .....	67	Court DUI Convictions .....	84
<i>Skids on Slippery Surfaces</i> .....	67	<i>Drivers 21 and Older—DUI Programs and Restricted Licenses</i> .....	85
Mechanical Tips.....	68	Designated Driver Program .....	85
<i>Acceleration Skids</i> .....	68	Getting a Ticket.....	86
<i>Locked Wheel Skids</i> .....	68	Evading a Police Officer .....	86
<i>Steering Wheel Locking Device</i> .....	68	Points on the Driver Record .....	86
Collisions are not Accidents .....	68	Vandalism/Graffiti—All Ages.....	87
<i>Causes of Collisions</i> .....	68	Speed Contests/Reckless Driving .....	87
<i>Involved in a Collision</i> .....	68	<i>Possessing Firearms</i> .....	87
<i>Reporting a Collision</i> .....	69	Traffic Violator School Dismissals .....	87
<b>ADDITIONAL DRIVING LAWS/RULES.....</b>	<b>69</b>	Suspension or Revocation by DMV .....	87
Things You Must Not Do:.....	69	Suspension by Judge .....	88
Things You Must Do:.....	71		
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY.....</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>VEHICLE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Safety for the Aging Driver.....	71	California Vehicles .....	89
Good Vision for All Drivers.....	71	Out-of-State Vehicles .....	90
Hearing.....	73	Related Fast Facts and Other Publications (available online):.....	91
Alertness .....	73	Sample Test #1 .....	93
Medications .....	73	Sample Test #2 .....	94
Health and Emotions .....	74		
Conditions Physicians Must Report.....	74		
Safety Tips.....	74		
Record Confidentiality .....	75		
Vehicle Theft Prevention Tips.....	75		
Traffic Breaks .....	76		
What a Driver Should Do During an Enforcement Stop .....	77		

# **NEW 2010 LAWS**

## ***Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Pilot Program***

*Effective July 1, 2010*

- A Driving Under the Influence (DUI) pilot program will be implemented that requires a first time or multiple DUI offender to install an Ignition Interlock Device (IID) in certain areas.
- Reduces the mandatory suspension period for a repeat DUI offender who opts for an IID restricted driver license by enrolling in or partially completing a DUI treatment program and installing an IID. These individuals must meet all other reinstatement requirements.

## **NEW INFORMATION**

- Neighbor Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV) have become fixtures on our roadways and part of the California driving culture. See the NEV and LSV section on (page 59) for more information on these new class of passenger vehicles.
- Information that applies to minors is identified by brown headings.

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## **WHERE TO WRITE**

*If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this publication, please send them to:*

*Department of Motor Vehicles  
Customer Communications Section  
MS H165  
PO Box 932345  
Sacramento, CA 94232-3450*

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*Department of Motor Vehicles  
Legal Office MS C128  
PO Box 932382  
Sacramento, CA 94232-3820*

## DMV INFORMATION

DMV offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday. A few offices offer only driver license or vehicle registration services. Go online or call the toll-free number below to find the office locations and service options of an office near you. Go online at: [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) for:

- Field office locations, hours, directions, and phone numbers
- Making appointments (except for commercial driving tests)
- Ordering personalized plates
- Driver license and identification card information
- Vehicle/vessel registration information
- Downloadable forms
- Publications—handbooks, brochures, and sample tests
- Senior driver information
- Teen driver information
- Links to other state and federal agencies
- Renew your driver license or vehicle registration with the Renewal Identification Number (RIN) provided on your renewal notice
  
- Call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours to:
  - Get driver license and vehicle registration information, forms, and publications.
  - Find office locations and hours.
  - Make a driving test appointment.
  - Speak to a DMV representative.
  
- Call 1-800-777-0133 for automated service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to:
  - Access DMV's voice recognition system.
  - Renew your vehicle registration with the Renewal Identification Number provided on your billing notice and pay with a credit card.
  - Make an office appointment.

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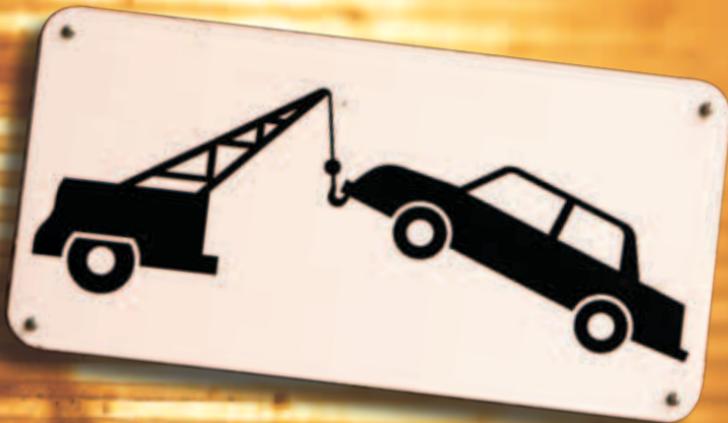
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**YOU GET TO CHOOSE.  
Valid driver's license?  
Or consequences?**



# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **DISCLAIMER**

Fees mentioned in the *California Driver Handbook* are subject to legislative change. This handbook is only a summary of the laws and regulations in the *California Vehicle Code*. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), law enforcement, and courts follow the full and exact language of the *California Vehicle Code*. The *California Vehicle Code* is available online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or at the Legislative website at [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov), or you may buy a copy at any DMV office.

## **ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION**

The reliability, integrity, and confidentiality of the California driver license (DL) and identification card (ID) is of prime concern to all levels of government, and the private sector.

It is critical that these documents be completely authenticated and accurate. The California Legislature has declared that the DL or ID card is the primary identification document in this state. California law requires that all applicants who apply for an original California DL/ID card submit proof of legal presence in the U.S. as authorized under federal law. Your true full name as shown on your legal presence document will appear on your DL/ID card.

## **BASIC INFORMATION**

A California driver license shows that you have been given permission by the state to drive on public roadways. You may apply for a driver license at most DMV offices. (See page ix.)

It is a misdemeanor to drive in California without a valid driver license. If you do, you can be cited, your vehicle may be impounded, and you may have to appear in court.

If you do not have outstanding actions on your record, you will receive a license after you pay the application fee, pass an exam about the law and safety rules, show that your physical and/or mental condition is satisfactory, and demonstrate your ability to drive safely. If you have a medical condition or a disability, DMV may require you to take a driving test and/or present a statement from your physician regarding your condition.

# THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE

## Who Must Have a License?

### *California Residents*

California residents who drive on public highways or use public parking facilities must have a California driver license, unless they are:

- Members of the Armed Forces or a United States (U.S.) Government civilian employee who only drives vehicles owned or controlled by the U.S. Government on federal business.
- Persons who drive farming vehicles not normally used on public highways.
- Persons who drive registered off-highway vehicles or snowmobiles across a highway (other than a freeway).

### *California Resident Military Personnel (U.S. Armed Forces)*

If you are out-of-state on active military duty and have a valid California driver license, your license will be valid for the full time you are absent from California and for 30 days from your discharge date, if honorably discharged outside of California. Carry both your driver license and discharge or separation papers during those 30 days. (CVC §12817)

Call 1-800-777-0133 to obtain an Extension of License for Person in Armed Forces (DL 236) card which extends your California license.

**NOTE:** Your license is not valid if it has been suspended, canceled or revoked.

Military dependents do not qualify for this extension.

### *Nonresident Military Personnel Stationed in California*

If you are 18 years of age or older, see the rules for "California Residents" and "Adults Visiting California." Licensees eligible for military extensions should carry documentation from their home state to verify their status to law enforcement.

### *New Residents*

When you become a California resident and you want to drive in California, you must apply for a California driver license within 10 days.

Residency is established by: being registered to vote in California elections; paying resident tuition at a California college or university; filing for home owner's property tax exemption; obtaining a California driver license; or receiving any other privilege or benefit not ordinarily extended to nonresidents.

### *Adults Visiting California*

Visitors over 18 years old with a valid driver license from their home state or country may drive in California without getting a California driver license as long as their home state license is valid.

### *Minors Visiting California*

Visitors between 16 and 18 years old may drive with their home state

license or instruction permit for only 10 days after arriving in California. After 10 days, they must have a:

- Current California driver license, or
- Nonresident Minor's Certificate (which is issued by DMV) to a minor with proof of financial responsibility.

## OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE

When you apply for an original DL/ID card, you must present an acceptable birth date/legal presence document and provide your Social Security Number (SSN). Depending on the birth date/legal presence document you present, your first California DL/ID card may expire on the same date as your legal presence document. If the name on your birth date/legal presence document is different from the name on your DL/ID card application, you must also bring an acceptable true full name document. Your thumb print, signature, and picture will also be taken (See page 4.) For any other DL/ID card transaction, you must present photo identification.

### ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTS

An acceptable birth date/legal presence or true full name document is issued by a county or state. This document is a certified copy of the original (the original is retained by the county or state) and contains

an impressed seal or an original stamped impression. The certified copy will be returned to you. If you make a *copy* of the certified copy, the DMV will **not** accept it for birth date/legal presence or true full name verification.

Examples of acceptable birth date/legal presence documents are: U.S. Birth Certificate, Proof of Indian Blood Degree, U.S. Passport, U.S. Armed Forces ID Cards, Certificate of Naturalization, Permanent Resident Card, or a foreign passport or Mexican Border Crossing Card with a valid I-94. A complete list of birth date/legal presence documents is available online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or in Fast Facts brochure *Birth Date and Legal Presence Requirements* (FFDL 05).

Examples of true full name verification documents are:

- Adoption documents containing your legal name as a result of the adoption.
- Name change documents containing your legal name both before and after the name change.
- Marriage Certificate.
- A certificate, declaration, or registration document verifying the information of a domestic partnership.
- Dissolution of marriage document containing your legal name, as a result of the court order.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A BASIC CLASS C DRIVER LICENSE**

To apply for a driver license, you must:

- Submit a completed and signed DMV Driver or Identification Card application (DL 44) form. Signing this form means you agree to submit to a chemical test to determine the alcohol or drug content of your blood when required by a police officer. If you refuse to sign this statement, the DMV will not issue a permit or license.
- Present an acceptable birth date/legal presence document.
- Provide your true full name.
- Provide your SSN, which will be electronically verified with the Social Security Administration.
- Pay a nonrefundable application fee when you apply for any new or change of class permit or license. This fee will not be returned. The fee is good for 12 months and allows you to take the appropriate law test(s) three times. If you fail the law test and/or drive test three times your application is void. A new application and fee is needed. This fee pays for both the instruction permit and driver license, if you qualify for both documents within the 12-month period. If the application expires, you must

resubmit documents, repay the application fee, and retake the required tests.

- Pass a vision test. You must be able to pass a vision test, with or without corrective lenses, with visual acuity better than 20/200 in at least one eye without the use of a bioptic telescopic lens or similar bioptic device to meet the minimum vision acuity standard. You are allowed to use a bioptic lens for the behind-the-wheel road test. A bioptic lens restriction and daytime driving only restriction will be added to your driver record.
- Have your picture taken.
- Give a thumb print.\*
- Sign your name.

## **ADULTS' PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

If you are at least 18 years old, meet the application requirements, and pass the required tests, you may be issued a California instruction permit.

You must have an instruction permit while learning to drive. Your accompanying driver must be 18 years of age or older and have a valid California driver license. The person must be seated close enough to take control of the vehicle at any time. An instruction permit does not permit you to drive alone—not even to a DMV office to take the driving test.

\* The term thumb print means a thumb print or fingerprint, if you have no thumbs.

If you want to obtain professional driver education and driver training, refer to page 16.

If you have a motorcycle permit, you can not carry passengers, you must ride during daylight hours only, and you can not ride on the freeway.

To get a motorcycle permit you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Complete the application requirements.
- Pass a traffic laws and road signs test.

## **ADULTS' LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

If you have never been licensed, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Comply with the requirements for a permit, and when you are ready you must schedule your behind-the-wheel driving test.
- Make an appointment and bring your instruction permit with you to your behind-the-wheel driving test.
- Pass the behind-the-wheel driving test. If you fail the test, you must pay a retest fee for a second or subsequent test and schedule a behind-the-wheel driving test for another day.

If you have an out-of-state or out-of-country driver license, you must:

- Complete all the steps required for a permit.

- Bring your valid out-of-state driver license. Your out-of-state driver license will be invalidated and returned to you unless you are applying for a commercial license.

**NOTE:** The behind-the-wheel driving test for holders of out-of-state or U.S. territory licenses are normally waived. However, the department may require a behind-the-wheel driving test for any type of driver license application. Behind-the-wheel driving tests are mandatory for out-of-country driver license holders.

## **LICENSE CLASSES**

This handbook is primarily for a basic Class C driver license.

### **Class C license -**

- *You may drive:*
  - any 2-axle vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,000 lbs. or less.
  - any 3-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or less gross.
  - any housecar 40 feet or less.
  - 3-wheel motorcycle.
  - a vanpool vehicle designed to carry more than 10, but no more than 15 persons including the driver. The driver must have a valid medical certification on file with the DMV and carry a valid medical card. The driver shall keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement, signed under

penalty of perjury, that he/she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk driving, or hit-and-run in the last five years. (CVC §12804.9[j])

- You may tow:
  - a single vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less including a tow dolly, if used.
- With a vehicle weighing 4,000 lbs. or more unladen, you may tow:
  - a trailer coach or 5th-wheel travel trailer under 10,000 lbs. GVWR when towing is not for compensation.
  - a 5th-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 lbs. but under 15,000 lbs. GVWR, when towing is not for compensation **and** with endorsement.
- A farmer or employee of a farmer may drive:
  - any combination of vehicles with a GVWR of 26,000 lbs. or less if used exclusively in agricultural operations **and** it is not for hire or compensation.

#### **NOTE:**

- Class C licensees may **not** tow more than one vehicle.
- A passenger vehicle, regardless of weight, may not tow more than one vehicle.
- No motor vehicle under 4,000 lbs. unladen weight may tow any vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or more gross. (CVC §21715)

#### **Other classes of driver licenses/endorsements are:**

- Commercial Class A
- Restricted Class A Fire Fighter
- Noncommercial Class A
- Commercial Class B
- Commercial Endorsement for Doubles/Triples
- Commercial Endorsement for Hazardous Materials
- Commercial Endorsement for Passenger
- Commercial Endorsement for Tank
- Restricted Class B Fire Fighter
- Noncommercial Class B
- Basic Class C
- Commercial Class C
- Motorcycle Class M1
- Motorcycle Class M2
- Ambulance Driver Certificate
- Verification of Transit Training Certificate
- School Bus Endorsement

Detailed information on other license types and endorsements can be found in the *California Commercial Driver Handbook*, the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers Handbook*, the *Ambulance Drivers Handbook*, the *Parent-Teen Training Guide*, and the *California Motorcycle Handbook*. Please refer to the above handbooks for additional information.

# THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

## WHERE TO TAKE THE TESTS

You may take the written, vision, and behind-the-wheel driving tests at any DMV field office which provides driver license services.

To save time, make an appointment online: [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours.

**NOTE:** To allow you sufficient time for testing the DMV will not administer written or audio exams after 4:30 p.m.

Written and vision tests are required when you apply for an original or upgrade to a different class of driver license.

The use of testing aids is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: The *California Driver Handbook*, cheat sheets, or electronic communication devices such as a cell phone, etc. If any testing aid(s) are used during the written test, the written test will be marked as a "failure." An action may also be taken by the DMV against your driving privilege or the driving privilege of anyone else who assists the applicant in the examination process.

## DMV EXAMINATIONS

Your driver license examinations include:

- A vision test. (Bring your eyeglasses or contact lenses to the exam.)

- A test of traffic laws, and road signs.
- A behind-the-wheel driving test, if required. You must have an appointment to take the behind-the-wheel driving test. For the test, bring:
  - your old driver license or instruction permit, if you have one.
  - a licensed driver age 18 years or older with a valid driver license.
  - proof that the vehicle is properly insured.
  - a vehicle that is safe to drive with valid registration and displays a front and rear license plate. The vehicle's brake lights, horn, parking brake, and electric signals must work properly, and the vehicle can not have bald tires. The driver's side window must roll down. The windshield must allow a full unobstructed field of vision and there must be two rear view mirrors (one on the left outside of the vehicle).

**NOTE:** The behind-the-wheel driving test will be rescheduled if the vehicle does not meet the above requirements, or if you refuse to use your seat belt during the driving test. For more information, refer to the Fast Facts brochure *How to Prepare for Your Driving Test* (FFDL22) and sample tests which are available online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

## SPECIAL SECTION - MINORS

### MINORS' PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

A minor is a person under 18 years of age. Minors must have their application for a driver license, or any change of driver license class, signed by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

**NOTE:** Minors may not work as a driver for pay and they may not drive a school bus containing pupils.

To get a permit you must:

- Be at least 15½, but under 18 years of age.
- Complete the Driver or Identification Card application (DL 44) requirements. (See pages 3 and 4.)
- Have your parent(s) or guardian(s) sign the DL 44.
- Pass a traffic laws and road signs test. If you fail the test, you must wait one week before taking the test again.
- If you are 15½ to 17½ years of age, you will need to provide proof that you:
  - Completed driver education (Form DL 387 Certificate of Completion of Classroom Driver Education or OL 237 Certificate of Completion of Driver Education) **OR**
  - Completed driver education and driver training (DL 387, DL 387A-E, DL 388A-C Certificate of Completion of Driver Training, OL 237, Certificate of Completion of Driver Education, or OL 238, Certificate of Completion of Behind-the-Wheel Training) **OR**
  - Are enrolled and participating in an approved integrated driver education/driver training program (DL 400). Certificate of Enrollment in an Integrated (Classroom) Driver Education and Driver Training Program.

The provisional permit is not valid **until you start** your behind-the-wheel driver training with an instructor or reach age 17½.

If you are applying for a motorcycle learner's permit, you must be between the ages of 15½ and 17½ and provide proof of driver education and driver training completion.

If you have a permit and you plan to drive outside of California, check licensing requirements in that state or country.



When a car is  
no longer a toy...

Visit **dmv.ca.gov** for the  
Parent-Teen Training Guide



**NOTE:** If you are at least 17<sup>1/2</sup>, you may obtain a permit without completing driver education or driver training. However, you can not get a license before you are 18 years old, or you must provide proof of driver education and driver training completion.

## **MINORS' PERMIT RESTRICTIONS**

You must practice with a licensed California driver: parent, guardian, spouse, or an adult 25 years of age or older. The person must sit close enough to you to take control of the vehicle at any time. A provisional permit does not allow you to drive alone—not even to a DMV office to take a driving test.

If you have an M1 or M2 motorcycle permit, you can not carry passengers, you must ride during daylight hours only, and you can not ride on the freeway.

## **MINORS' LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

You must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Prove that you have finished both driver education and driver training. (DL 387, DL 387A–E, DL 388A–C, OL 237 or OL 238)
- Have had a California instruction permit for at least six months.
- Provide parent(s) or guardian(s) signature(s) on your instruction permit stating you have completed the 50 hours of supervised driving practice (10 hours must be night driving) as outlined in the

*Parent-Teen Training Guide (DL 603).* Visit the Teen Website at [www.dmv.ca.gov/teenweb/](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/teenweb/) or call 1-800-777-0133 to request this booklet.

- Pass the behind-the-wheel driving test. You have three chances to pass the test while your permit is valid. If you fail the behind-the-wheel driving test, you must pay a retest fee for a second or subsequent test and wait two weeks before you are tested again.

Once you have your provisional license, you may drive **alone** as long as you do not have any collisions or traffic violations.

When you become 18 years old, the “provisional” part of your license ends. You may keep the photo license you have or pay a fee for a duplicate license without the word “provisional.”

During the first 12 months after you are licensed, you can not drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. **and** you can not transport passengers under age 20 unless you are accompanied by your licensed parent or guardian, a licensed driver 25 years of age or older, or a licensed or certified driving instructor.

## **EXCEPTIONS - MINORS LICENSE RESTRICTIONS**

The law allows the following exceptions when reasonable transportation is not available, and it is necessary for you to drive. A signed note must be kept in your possession for any of

the following exceptions explaining the necessity to drive and the date when the driving necessity will end (except emancipated minors):

- Medical necessity to drive when reasonable transportation alternatives are inadequate. The note must be signed by a physician with the diagnosis and probable date of recovery.
- Schooling or school-authorized activity. The note must be signed by your school principal, dean, or designee.
- Employment necessity and the need to operate a vehicle as part of your employment. The note must be signed by your employer verifying employment.
- Your necessity to drive an immediate family member with both a physician's note and a note signed by your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) stating the reason and probable end date of necessity.

**EXCEPTION:** These requirements do not apply to emancipated minors. You must have declared yourself emancipated and provided DMV with Proof of Financial Responsibility (SR1P) in lieu of your parent(s) or guarantor(s) signature(s).

## TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

Nearly half of the drivers between ages 15 and 19 years old are convicted of a traffic violation in their first year of driving.

The most common is speeding, which often results in loss of vehicle control and accounts for about 50% of all teen traffic convictions.

When you violate traffic laws, you increase your chances of having a collision.

## Teenage Traffic Deaths

Drivers 15–19 years old have the highest traffic conviction, collision, and injury rates of any other group. Traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for teenagers. If you are under 18 years old, your risk of a fatal collision is about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times that of the “average” driver. Your risk of an injury collision is three times higher than the average driver.

## ACTIONS AGAINST THE PROVISIONAL LICENSE

Teenagers as a group average twice as many collisions as adult drivers, while driving only half as many miles. This makes the teenage collision rate per mile four times as great as that of adult drivers.

Studies show that the traffic deaths of new drivers are deadly combinations of their inexperience, lack of familiarity with their vehicle, and need to push themselves and their vehicle to the limit.

## Keeping Your Provisional License

The DMV will be tracking your driving record and will take actions based upon any collisions or violations as follows:

- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to appear in court, the DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you appear in court.
- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to pay the fine, the DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you pay the fine.
- If you have one “at fault” collision or conviction within 12 months, the DMV will send you a warning letter.
- If you have a second “at fault” collision or conviction (or combination of both) within 12 months, you can not drive for 30 days unless accompanied by your licensed parent or other licensed adult who is at least 25 years of age.
- If you have a third “at fault” collision or conviction (or any combination) within 12 months, you will be suspended for six months and placed on probation for one year.
- If you have additional “at fault” collisions or point count convictions while you are on probation, you will be suspended again. (Traffic law violations resolved in Juvenile Court are also reported to the DMV.)
- If you are convicted of using alcohol or a controlled substance and you are between the ages of 13 and 21, the court orders the DMV to suspend your driver license for one year. If you do not have

a driver license the court orders DMV to delay your eligibility to apply for a driver license. You can also be required to complete a Driving-Under-the-Influence (DUI) program.

Any restriction, suspension, or probation will continue past your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for its full term.

Other, *stronger* actions can be taken if your driving record justifies them. Remember, if your driving privilege has been suspended or revoked, **you may not drive** in California.

### ***Habitual Truant— Persons Age 13 to 18***

The court will suspend, restrict, delay, or revoke your driving privilege for one year if you are convicted of being a habitual truant from school.

### **MINORS AND CELL PHONES**

- It is against the law for a minor to use a cell phone while driving. If your cell phone rings, do not answer the call.
- Convictions for violations of this law are subject to fines.
- Exceptions: You can use a cell phone to contact law enforcement, a health care provider, the fire department, or another emergency entity in an emergency situation.

## MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING INFORMATION

### To Replace a Lost/Stolen or Damaged License

If your driver license is lost, stolen, or damaged, you must go to a DMV office and pay a fee for a replacement. You should also present photo identification. If the DMV can not confirm your identity, you will not be issued a temporary license.

If you are a minor, your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign the DMV application form (DL 44).

Once a replacement license has been issued, the previous license is no longer valid. Destroy the license if you find it later.

### Name Changes

When you change your name because of marriage or for other valid reasons, change your name with the Social Security Administration (SSA).

Bring your driver license to DMV in person, along with your marriage certificate or other acceptable verification of your “true full name.” (See page 3.) You must complete the Driver License or Identification Card application (DL 44) and pay the applicable fee. DMV will electronically verify your name, birth date, and social security number (SSN) with the SSA.

A new picture, thumb print, and signature will be taken. Your old photo DL/ID card will be invalidated and returned to you.

### LICENSE RENEWALS

The DMV sends a renewal notice to your address of record about two months before your license expires. Follow the instructions on the renewal notice. If you do not receive a renewal notice, go online or call to make an appointment. (See page ix.)

Qualified drivers may be eligible to renew by mail or online at the DMV’s website.

The DMV issues a driver license for five years. The license expires on your birthday in the year shown on the license. It is against the law to drive with an expired driver license.

A driving test may be required as part of any driver license transaction. Driving tests are not required simply because of age.

If the DMV can not confirm your identity, you will **not** be issued a temporary license.

For other types of licenses refer to the *California Commercial Driver Handbook*, the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers Handbook*, or the *California Motorcycle Handbook*.

### RENEWAL BY MAIL OR INTERNET

If you have not received two consecutive five-year extensions, you may be eligible to renew by mail, without taking a law test, if:

- Your current license expires before age 70.
- You do not have a probationary license. (CVC §14250)
- You have not violated a written promise to appear in court or to pay a fine within the last two years.
- You are not suspended for driving with an illegal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level, or for refusing, or for failing to complete, a chemical or preliminary alcohol screening test within the last two years.
- You do not have a total violation point count greater than one point.

**NOTE:** You may renew by Internet, if your renewal-by-mail notice includes a Renewal Identification Number (RIN).

### LICENSE EXTENSION

If you are away from California (up to one year), you may request a free one-year extension **before your driver license expires**. Limited term drivers are not eligible for this extension. Mail your request to DMV, PO Box 942890, Sacramento, CA 94290-0001. Include your name, driver license number, birth date, California residence address, and your out-of-state address.

### LICENSE IN YOUR POSSESSION

You must always have your driver license with you when you drive. Show it to any police officer who asks to see it. If you are in a collision, you must show it to the other driver(s) involved. (See page 68.)

### ADDRESS CHANGES

When you move, you must give the DMV your new address within 10 days. There is no fee to change your address. You may notify DMV of your address change for your driver license, identification card, and vehicle(s) online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). You may also download a Change of Address (DMV 14) form and mail it to the address on the form, or call DMV at 1-800-777-0133, and request that a DMV 14 form be mailed to you.

A new driver license is not issued when you change your address. A space is provided on the back of your driver license or identification card to record your address change.

You may also type or write your new address on a small piece of paper, sign, and date the paper and carry it (do not use tape or staples) with your driver license or identification card.

If you change your address at a field office, the DMV representative will give you a Change of Address Certificate (DL 43) to complete and carry with your license.

**REMINDER:** The U.S. Postal Service does not forward DMV correspondence.

### MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD

Call 1-800-777-0133 to obtain a free Medical Information Card (DL 390) to list your blood type, aller-

gies, name of your physician, and other medical information. It can be carried along with your DL/ID card.

## **ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION**

You may sign up to donate your organs and tissue for transplantation after your death. When you apply for or renew your driver license or ID card, check “YES! I want to be an organ and tissue donor” to place your name on the *Donate Life California Organ Tissue Donor Registry*. You may also financially contribute at this time, or by visiting the *Donate Life California* website.

If you are older than 13, and under 18, you may still register with *Donate Life California*, provided your parent(s) or guardian(s) authorize the donation.

For more information about the donor registry, adding restrictions to your gift, and the donation process, visit the *Donate Life California* website at [donateLIFEcalifornia.org](http://donateLIFEcalifornia.org), or call 1-866-797-2366.

## **UNLICENSED DRIVERS**

It is against the law to loan your vehicle to a person who is unlicensed or whose driving privilege has been suspended. If the person is caught driving, *your* vehicle may be impounded for 30 days. (CVC §14607.6)

No person of any age may drive on a highway or in a public parking facility unless the person has a

valid driver license or permit. The law also states that you must not employ, permit, or authorize any person to drive your vehicle on a public street or highway, unless the person is licensed to drive that class of vehicle.

A person must be at least 21 years old to drive most commercial vehicles for hire in interstate commerce and to transport hazardous materials or wastes.

## **DIPLOMATIC DRIVER LICENSES**

Nonresidents who possess a valid diplomatic driver license issued by the U.S. Department of State are exempt from California’s driver licensing requirement.

## **IDENTIFICATION (ID) CARD**

DMV issues ID cards to persons of any age. To obtain an original ID card, you must present a birth date/legal presence verification document (see page 3) and provide your social security number (see page 13.) The ID card is good until the sixth birthday after it is issued. The fee for an ID card may be reduced if you meet certain income requirements for specific public assistance programs.

**NOTE:** Governmental or non-profit organizations determine whether an individual meets the requirements for a reduced-fee ID card.

If you are age 62 or over, you may obtain a **free** Senior Citizen ID card that is good for 10 years.

## **FREE ID CARDS FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL (P&M) CONDITIONS**

Drivers with physical or mental (P&M) conditions may need to be reexamined from time to time by a physician, **or** be retested more often than every five years (limited term license status), by a DMV examiner. Drivers who are no longer able to drive safely because of a P&M condition may exchange their valid driver license for a no-fee ID card, if certain guidelines are met. Go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133 for additional information.

## **DRIVING SCHOOLS**

When learning to drive, you should seek qualified instruction, either in an accredited public or private high school, or in a state licensed professional driving school.

DMV licenses professional schools and instructors in California that meet rigid qualifying standards. Schools must carry liability insurance, be bonded, and maintain complete records for DMV inspection. Vehicles are subject to annual inspection. Instructors must pass a written examination every three years or show proof of continuing education in the traffic safety field. If you use the services of a professional driving school, ask to see the instructor's identification card. Go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or refer

to the fast fact brochure *Selecting a Driving School* (FFDL 33) for additional information.

## **MATURE DRIVER PROGRAM**

The Mature Driver Program is an eight-hour course for drivers age 55 and older. The course covers a variety of topics of special interest to the mature driver and is available from course providers approved by the DMV.

Your insurance company may offer discounts for those who complete the class and receive a completion certificate. The certificate is valid for three years and can be renewed by completing a four-hour course.

## **PEDESTRIAN RESPONSIBILITIES\***

Pedestrians should practice defensive walking and be aware of traffic conditions around them. Look out for aggressive drivers before assuming that you have the right-of-way. Be aware that hybrid and electric vehicles are virtually silent when running on electric power and you may not hear them approaching an intersection.

Yield the right-of-way to vehicles when you cross a street between intersections, where no pedestrian crosswalks or signals are provided.

**REMEMBER:** Making eye contact with the driver does not mean that the driver will yield the right-of-way.

Do not suddenly leave a curb or other safe place and walk or run into the

\*Joggers must obey pedestrian rules.

path of a vehicle close enough to be a danger to you. This is true even though you are in a crosswalk. The law states that drivers must always yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian—but if the driver can not stop in time to avoid hitting you the law will not prevent you from being hit.

Always obey traffic signals. Whether the intersection has pedestrian signals or traffic lights, you must obey the pedestrian rules. (See pages 22-23.) At an intersection where traffic is not controlled by signals, drivers are required to yield the right-of-way to you within any crosswalk, marked or unmarked.

When a signal first changes to green or “WALK”, look left, right, and then left again, and yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection before the signal changes.

If the signal begins blinking or changes to “DON’T WALK,” or to an upraised hand after you have gone part way across a divided street, you may continue across the street.

Do not stop or delay traffic unnecessarily while crossing a street.

Pedestrians are not permitted on any toll bridge or highway crossing unless there is a sidewalk and signs stating pedestrian traffic is permitted.

If there are no sidewalks, walk facing oncoming traffic (see the picture). Do not walk or jog on any freeway where signs tell you that pedestrians are not allowed.



At night, make yourself more visible by:

- wearing white, light, or reflective material clothing.
- carrying a flashlight.

## SEAT BELTS

Seat belts, both the lap belt and shoulder harness, must be in good working order. You may not operate your vehicle unless you and all your passengers 6 years of age or over, or who weigh 60 lbs. or more, are wearing seat belts. You and your passengers must wear seat belts while your vehicle is moving on public roads and on private property, such as public parking lots. If seat belts are not worn, **you** may be given a traffic ticket. Also, you will be given the ticket if a passenger, younger than 16, is not wearing his/her seat belt.

Always use your seat belts (including the shoulder harness) even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. You can have shoulder harnesses or seat belts installed in older vehicles. Even if you wear only a lap belt when driving, your chances of living through a collision are twice



**It may be boring,  
but it's the law-  
CLICK IT OR TICKET!**

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as high as someone who does not wear a lap belt. If you wear a lap and shoulder belt, your chances are three to four times better to live through a collision.

Pregnant women should wear the lap belt as low as possible under the abdomen, and the shoulder strap should be placed between the breasts and to the side of the abdomen's bulge.

**WARNING:** Using seat belts reduces the chance of being thrown from your vehicle in case of a collision. If you do not install and use a shoulder harness with the seat (lap) belt, serious or fatal injuries may happen in some crashes. Lap-only belts increase the chance of spinal column and abdominal injuries—especially in children. Shoulder harnesses may be available for your vehicle, if it is not already equipped with them.

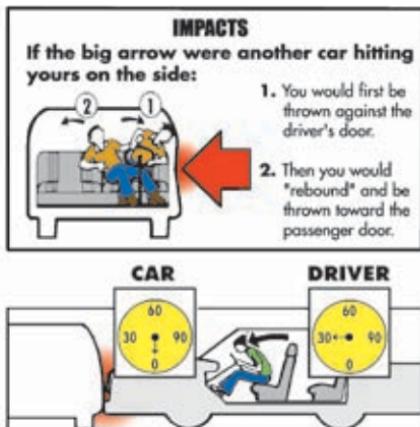
## MISTAKEN BELIEFS ABOUT SEAT BELTS

Many studies and actual crash tests have proven safety belts can reduce injuries and deaths. Have you heard these myths?

- “Seat belts can trap you inside a vehicle.” It actually takes less than a second to take off a seat belt. This myth often describes a vehicle that caught fire or sank in deep water. A seat belt may keep you from being “knocked out.” Therefore, your chances to escape are better if you are conscious.

- “Seat belts are good on long trips, but I don’t need them if I’m driving around town.” More than half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Do not take chances with your life or the lives of your passengers. Buckle up every time you drive regardless of travel distance.
- “Some people are thrown from a vehicle in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch.” Your chances of surviving a collision are five times better if, upon impact, you are not thrown from the vehicle. A seat belt can keep you from being thrown into the path of another vehicle.
- “I’m only going to the store. My little brother or sister doesn’t need to be secured in a safety seat.” Car collisions are the number one preventable cause of death for children. Buckle children into a federally-approved child passenger restraint system. The law requires that you do.

The following pictures illustrate what can happen in a collision. Your vehicle stops when you collide, but you keep going at the same speed you were traveling until you hit the dashboard or windshield. At 30 mph this is like hitting the ground from the top of a three-story building.



If you were struck from the side, the impact could push you back and forth across the seat. Belts and straps keep you in a better position to control the vehicle.

## CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEM AND SAFETY SEATS

Any child under the age of six years and weighing less than 60 lbs., must be secured in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system and ride in the back seat of a vehicle.

Proper child passenger restraint system installation can be checked by contacting local law enforcement agencies or fire departments, who may provide this service or refer you to a Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Technician in your area. As your child grows, check with these agencies to confirm that the car seat is the correct size for your child.

A child under the age of six years, and weighing less than 60 lbs. may ride in the front seat of a vehicle when:

- There is no rear seat or the rear seats are either side-facing jump seats or rear-facing seats.
- The child passenger restraint system can not be installed properly in the rear seat.
- All rear seats are already occupied by children under the age of 12 years.
- A medical reason requires the child to ride in the front seat.

A child may not ride in the front seat of an airbag-equipped vehicle if the child:

- Is under one year of age.
- Weighs less than 20 lbs.
- Is riding in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.

Children ages six years and older, but less than 16 years, and children under age six years, who weigh more than 60 lbs., must be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system or safety belt which meets federal safety standards.

## RIDING SAFELY WITH AIR BAGS

Most people can take steps to eliminate or reduce air bag risk without turning off air bags. The biggest risk is being too close to the air bag. An air bag needs about 10 inches of space to inflate. Ride at least 10 inches (measured from the center of the steering wheel to your breastbone) from the air bag cover, if you can do this while maintaining full control of the vehicle. If you can

not safely sit 10 inches away from the air bag, contact your vehicle dealer or manufacturer for advice about additional ways of moving back from your air bag.

Passengers should also sit at least 10 inches away from the passenger-side air bag.

## SIDE-IMPACT AIR BAGS

Side-impact air bags can provide extra safety benefits to adults in side-impact crashes. However, children who are seated next to a side air bag may be at risk of serious or fatal injury. Since there are differences in the design and performance of side air bags, you should consider the benefits and risks associated with the use of side air bags if you transport children. Studies have shown that children who are leaning against a side air bag when it inflates are at risk of serious injury. These studies also show that children who are traveling in a *correctly installed child restraint system* appropriate to age and weight, are not at risk of serious injury. These children are usually not in the path of a side air bag when it inflates.

## UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN MOTOR VEHICLES

It is illegal to leave a child six years of age or younger unattended in a motor vehicle. Be aware if:

- Weather conditions or other conditions present a significant risk to the child's health or safety.

**Example:** Leaving a child in a closed vehicle on a very hot day.

- The vehicle's engine is running, keys are in the ignition, or both. Children may start or move the vehicle causing injuries and/or deaths to themselves or others.

**EXCEPTION:** The child may be left under the supervision of a person 12 years of age or older.

The court may fine violators and require the person to attend a community education program. Also, the DMV and court penalties for leaving an unattended child in a vehicle are more severe if the child is injured, requires emergency medical services, or dies.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND SIGNS

### TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS

**Solid Red**—A red signal light means “STOP.” You can make a right turn against a red light after you stop then yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles close enough to be a hazard. Make the right turn only when it is safe. Do not turn if a “NO TURN ON RED” sign is posted.



**Red Arrow**—A red arrow means “STOP.” Remain stopped until the green signal or green arrow appears. Do not turn against a red arrow.



**Flashing Red**—A flashing red signal light means “STOP.” After stopping,



you may proceed when it is safe. Observe the right-of-way rules.

**Solid Yellow**—A yellow signal light means “CAUTION.” The red signal

is about to appear. When you see the yellow light, stop if you can do so safely. If you can not stop safely, cross the intersection cautiously.

**Yellow Arrow**—A yellow arrow means “protected” turning time period is ending. Be prepared to obey the next signal, which could be the green or red light or the red arrow.

**Flashing Yellow**—A flashing yellow signal light warns you to “PROCEED WITH CAUTION.” You do not need to stop for a flashing yellow light, but you must slow down and be especially alert before entering the intersection.

**Flashing Yellow Arrow**—This signal means turns are permitted (unprotected), but you must first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians and then proceed with caution.

**Solid Green**—Give the right-of-way to any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian in the intersection. A green light means “GO.” If you are turning left, make the turn only if you have enough space to complete the turn before creating a hazard for any oncoming vehicle, bicyclist, or



pedestrian. Do not enter the intersection if you can not get completely across before the light turns red. If you block the intersection, you can be cited.

**Green Arrow**—A green arrow means “GO.” You must turn in the direction

the arrow is pointing after you yield to any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian still in the intersection. The green arrow allows you to make a “protected” turn. This means oncoming vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians are stopped by a red light as long as the green arrow is lighted.

**Traffic Signal Blackout**—If a traffic signal light is not working, proceed as if the intersection is controlled by a stop sign in all directions.

## PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL LIGHTS

Pedestrian signals show words or pictures similar to the following examples:



“Walk” or “Walking Person” lights mean it is legal to cross the street.



“Don’t Walk” or “Raised Hand” lights mean you may not start crossing the street.



Flashing “Don’t Walk” or Flashing “Raised Hand” lights mean do not start crossing the street because the traffic signal is about to change. If the flashing starts after you have already started to cross, finish crossing the street as quickly as possible.

**Countdown signals** indicate how many seconds remain for crossing, and allows pedestrians the flexibility to speed up if the crossing phase is about to expire.

Some signals may provide a **beeping** or **chirping** sound or a **verbal message**. These signals are designed to help blind or visually impaired pedestrians cross the street.

At many traffic signals, you need to push the pedestrian push button to activate the “**Walk**” or “**Walking Person**” signal. If there are no pedestrian signals, obey the traffic signal lights.

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

The shape and color of a sign gives you a clue about the information contained on the sign. Here are the common shapes used:

An **eight-sided red STOP sign** means you must make a full “STOP” whenever you see a **STOP sign**. Stop before entering a crosswalk or at a white limit line which is a wide white line painted on the street. If a crosswalk or limit line is not painted on the street, stop at the corner.



A **three-sided red YIELD sign** means you must slow down and be ready to stop, if necessary, to let any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian pass before you proceed.



A *square red and white regulatory sign* means you must follow the sign’s instruction. For example, the **DO NOT ENTER** sign means do not enter a road or off ramp where the sign is posted, usually on a freeway off ramp. The **WRONG WAY** sign may or may not be posted with the **DO NOT ENTER** sign. If you see one or both of these signs, drive to the side of the road and stop. You are going against traffic. When safe, back out or turn around and return to the road you were on. At night if you are going the wrong way, the road reflectors will shine red in your headlights.

If a sign has a *red circle with a red line through it*, it always means “NO.” The picture inside the circle shows what you can not do. The sign may be shown with or without words.

A *yellow and black circular sign* means you are approaching a railroad crossing.



*X-shaped signs* with a white background that states **RAILROAD CROSSING** means you must slow down and be ready to stop, if necessary, to let any trains pass before you proceed.



A *five-sided sign* means you are near a school. Stop if children are in the crosswalk.



## Red and White Regulatory Signs



No U-turn

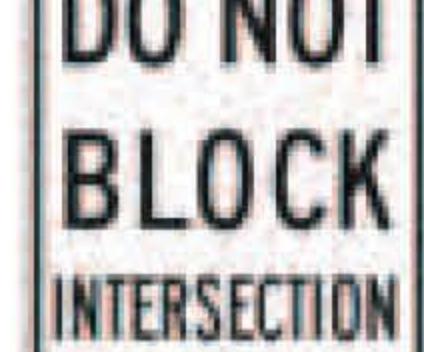
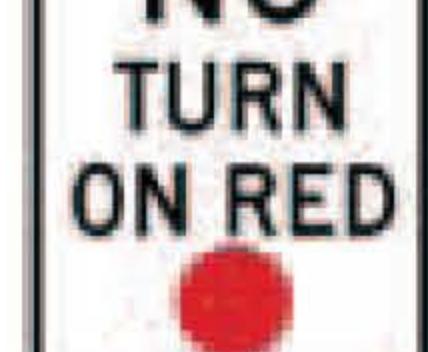
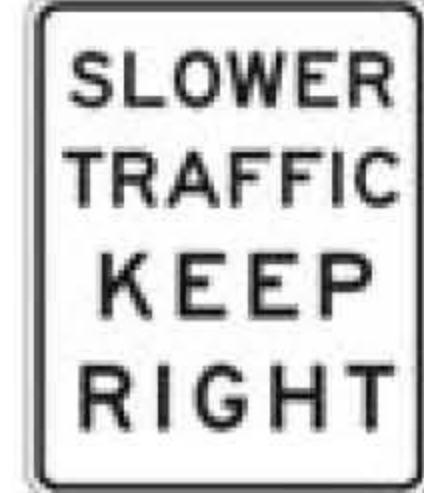
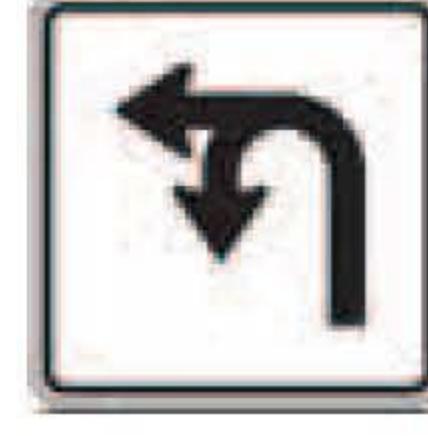
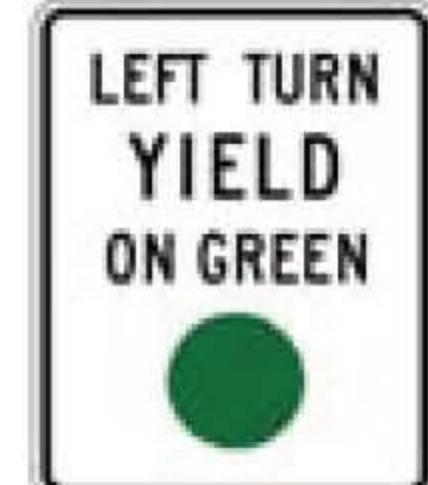
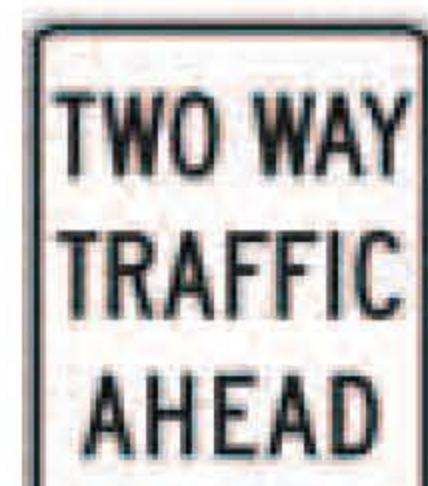


No Left Turn



No Right Turn

## White Regulatory Signs



## Highway Construction and Maintenance Signs



## Guide Signs



TROLLEY

## Hazardous Loads Placards



## Slow Moving Vehicle



## *Warning Signs*



Slippery  
When Wet



Merging  
Traffic



Divided  
Highway



Sharp  
Turn



Two Way  
Traffic



Lane  
Ends



End Divided  
Highway



Traffic  
Signal  
Ahead



Pedestrian  
Crossing



Added Lane



Crossroad



Stop Ahead



Yield Ahead



Curve



“T”  
Intersection



Directional  
Arrow



Reverse  
Turn



Winding  
Road

*A four-sided diamond-shaped sign* warns you of specific road conditions and dangers ahead. Many warning signs are diamond-shaped. *A white rectangular sign* means you must obey important rules.

Some warning signs have a fluorescent yellow-green background. These signs warn of conditions related to pedestrians, bicyclists, schools, playgrounds, school buses, and school passenger loading zones. Obey all warning signs regardless of their shape.

See the pages 24 and 25 for examples.

## LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD

### RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES

#### *General Information*

Right-of-way rules, together with courtesy and common sense, help to promote traffic safety. It is important to respect the right-of-way of others, especially pedestrians, motorcycle riders, and bicycle riders. Never assume other drivers will give you the right-of-way.

**Respecting** the right-of-way of others is not limited to situations such as yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks, or watching carefully to ensure the right-of-way of bicyclists and motorcyclists. Motorists must **respect** the right-of-way of others by not violating traffic laws such as failing to stop at a stop sign

or traffic light, speeding, making unsafe lane changes, or illegal turns. Statistics show that right-of-way violations cause a high percentage of injury collisions in California.

#### **Pedestrians**

Pedestrian safety is a serious issue. A pedestrian is a person on foot or who uses a conveyance such as roller skates, skateboard, etc., other than a bicycle. A pedestrian can also be a person with a disability on a tricycle or quadricycle or in a wheelchair.

One-in-six traffic fatalities is a pedestrian. Drive cautiously when pedestrians are near because they may cross your path.

Since hybrid and electric vehicles are almost silent when operating, pedestrians may be at risk when crossing roads and walking through parking lots because they can not hear the vehicles as they approach. Use extra caution when driving near pedestrians.

- **Respect** the right-of-way of pedestrians. Always stop for any pedestrian crossing at corners or other crosswalks, even if the crosswalk is in the middle of the block and at corners with or without traffic lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted lines.
- Do not pass a vehicle that has stopped at a crosswalk. A pedestrian you can not see may be crossing.

- Do not drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it at a driveway or alley. When crossing, yield to any pedestrian.
- Do not stop in a crosswalk. You will place pedestrians in danger.
- Remember, if a pedestrian makes eye contact with you, he or she is ready to cross the street. Yield to the pedestrian.
- Allow older pedestrians, disabled pedestrians and women with young children more time to cross the street.
- **Important:** Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to be aware of your vehicle's presence, so it is important that you stop your vehicle within 5 feet of the crosswalk. Drivers of hybrid or electric vehicles need to remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may lead a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue:

When a blind person pulls in his/her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means for you to go. Additional information regarding blind pedestrians can be found on pages 61 and 62.

### **Crosswalks**

A crosswalk is the part of the roadway set aside for pedestrian traffic. Most intersections have a pedestrian crosswalk whether or not there are

painted lines on the street. Most crosswalks are at corners, but they can also be in the middle of the block. Before turning a corner, watch for people about to cross the street. **Pedestrians have the right-of-way in crosswalks.**

Crosswalks are often marked with white lines. Yellow crosswalk lines may be painted at school crossings. Most often, crosswalks in residential areas are not marked.

Some crosswalks have flashing lights to warn you that pedestrians may be crossing. Look for pedestrians and be prepared to stop, whether or not the lights are flashing.

### **Intersections**

An intersection is any place where one line of roadway meets another. Intersections include cross streets, side streets, alleys, freeway entrances, and any other location where vehicles traveling on different highways or roads join each other.

Driving through an intersection is one of the most complex traffic situations motorists encounter. Intersection collisions account for more than 45% of all reported crashes and 21% of fatalities according to the Federal Highway Administration.

- At intersections without “STOP” or “YIELD” signs, slow down and be ready to stop. Yield to vehicles and bicycles already in the intersection or just entering it. Also, yield to the vehicle or bicycle which arrives first, **or**

to the vehicle or bicycle on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as you do.

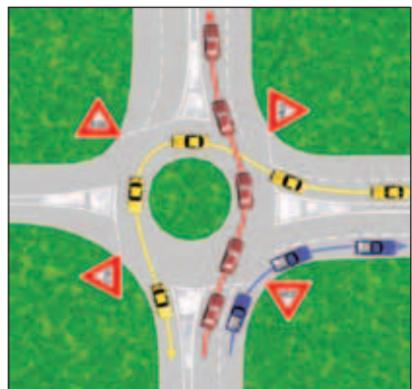
- At “T” intersections without “STOP” or “YIELD” signs, yield to vehicles and/or bicycles on the through road. They have the right-of-way.
- When you turn left, give the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching that are close enough to be dangerous. Also, look for motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. When you turn right, be sure to check for pedestrians crossing the street and bicyclists coming up behind you on the right. On divided highways, or highways with several lanes, watch for vehicles coming in any lane you cross. Turn either left or right only when it is safe.
- When there are “STOP” signs at all corners, stop first then follow the above rules.
- If you have parked off the road or are leaving a parking lot, etc., yield to traffic before entering the road again

**Safety suggestion:** While waiting to turn left keep your wheels pointed straight ahead until it is safe to start your turn. If your wheels are pointed to the left, and a vehicle hits you from behind, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic.

### **Roundabouts**

A roundabout is an intersection where traffic travels around a central island in a counter-clockwise

direction. Vehicles entering or exiting the roundabout must yield to vehicles, motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.



**Multiple and single lane roundabout**

When you approach a round-about:

- Slow down as you approach the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the roadway.
- Watch for signs and/or pavement markings that guide you or prohibit certain movements.
- Enter the roundabout when there is a big enough gap in traffic.
- Drive in a counter-clockwise direction. Do not stop or pass other vehicles.
- Use your turn signals when you change lanes or exit the roundabout.
- If you miss your exit, continue around until you return to your exit.

For roundabouts with multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane

based on your destination as shown in the graphic. For example, to:

- Turn right at the intersection, choose the right-hand lane and exit in the right-hand lane (blue car.)
- Go straight through the intersection, choose either lane, and exit in the lane you entered (red car.)
- Turn left, choose the left lane, and exit (yellow car.)

### ***On Mountain Roads***

When two vehicles meet on a steep road where neither can pass, the vehicle facing downhill must yield the right-of-way by backing up until the vehicle going uphill can pass. The vehicle facing downhill has the greater amount of control when backing.

### **SPEED LIMITS**

California has a “Basic Speed Law.” This law means you may never drive faster than is safe for current conditions. For example, if you are driving 45 mph in a 55 mph speed zone during a dense fog, you could be cited for driving “too fast for conditions.” You may never legally drive faster than the posted speed limit, even if you think it is safe to do so.

Regardless of the posted speed limit, your speed should depend on:

- The number and speed of other vehicles on the road.
- Whether the road surface is smooth, rough, graveled, wet, dry, wide, or narrow.

- Bicyclists or pedestrians walking on the road’s edge or crossing the street.
- Whether it is raining, foggy, snowing, windy, or dusty.

### **MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT**

The maximum speed limit on most California highways is 65 mph. You may drive 70 mph where posted. Unless otherwise posted, the maximum speed limit is 55 mph on two-lane undivided highways and for vehicles towing trailers.

Other speed limit signs are posted for the type of roads and traffic in each area. All speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions. Construction zones usually have reduced speed zones.

Driving faster than the posted speed limit or than is safe for current conditions, on any road, is dangerous and illegal. High speed increases your stopping distance. The faster you go, the less time you have to avoid a hazard or collision. The force of a 60 mph crash is not just twice as great as a 30 mph crash, it’s four times as great!

### **REDUCED SPEEDS**

#### ***Heavy Traffic or Bad Weather***

You must drive slower when there is heavy traffic or bad weather. However, if you block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic by driving too slowly, you may be given a ticket. If you choose to drive slower than other traffic, do

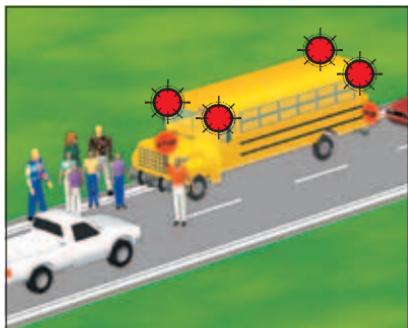
not drive in the “Number 1” (fast) lane. (See page 33.) When traveling below the speed limit always move to the right when another driver is close behind you and wishes to drive faster, unless you are already in the extreme right lane.

### **Towing Vehicles, Buses, or Large Trucks**

When you tow a vehicle or trailer, or drive a bus or three or more axle truck, you must drive in the right hand lane or in a lane specially marked for slower vehicles. If no lanes are marked and there are **four** lanes or more in your direction, you may only drive in either of the two lanes closest to the right edge of the road.

### **Around Children**

When driving within 500 to 1,000 feet of a school while children are outside or crossing the street, the speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted. Also, if the school grounds have no fence and children are outside, never drive faster than 25 mph. Some school zones may have speed limits as low as 15 mph. Always drive more carefully near schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential areas because children may suddenly dart into the street. Also, many children have not yet developed the ability to judge speeds and distances well enough to cross streets safely when cars are moving fast.



**All vehicles must stop**

Near schools, look for:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians.
- School safety patrols or school crossing guards and obey their directions. For the crossing guard’s safety, allow him or her to safely get to the side of the road before driving ahead.
- Stopped school buses and children crossing the street. Some school buses flash yellow lights when preparing to stop to let children off the bus. The yellow flashing lights warn you to slow down and prepare to stop. When the bus flashes red lights (located at the top front and back of the bus), you must stop from either direction until the children are safely across the street and the lights stop flashing. The law requires you remain stopped as long as the red lights are flashing (CVC §22454). If you fail to stop, you may be fined up to \$1,000 and your driving privilege could be suspended for one year. If the school bus is on the other side of a divided or multilane highway

(two or more lanes in each direction), you do not need to stop.

### ***Blind Intersections***

The speed limit for a blind intersection is 15 mph. An intersection is considered “blind” if there are no stop signs at any corner and you can not see for 100 feet in either direction during the last 100 feet before crossing. Trees, bushes, buildings, or parked cars at intersections can block your view to the side. If your view is blocked, edge forward slowly until you can see.

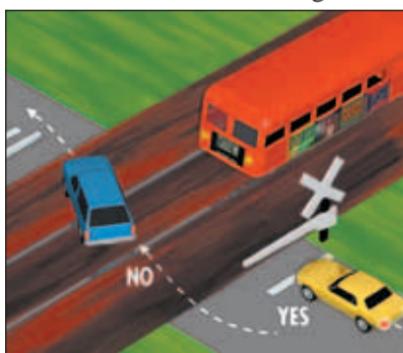
### ***Alleys***

The speed limit in any alley is 15 mph.

### ***Near Railroad Tracks***

The speed limit is 15 mph within 100 feet of a railroad crossing where you can not see the tracks for 400 feet in both directions. You may drive faster than 15 mph if the crossing is controlled by gates, a warning signal, or a flag man.

At railroad or train crossings:



- Look in both directions and listen for trains. Many crossings have multiple tracks, so be ready to

stop before crossing, if necessary. Cross railroad tracks only at designated crossings and only when it is safe to do so.

- Expect a train on any track at any time traveling in either direction. If you need to stop after crossing the tracks, make sure your vehicle clears the tracks before you stop.
- Never stop on the railroad tracks. Remember that a train can not stop quickly or swerve out of the way. If you are on the tracks you risk injury or death.
- Watch for vehicles that must stop before they cross train tracks. These vehicles include buses, school buses, and trucks transporting hazardous loads.
- Remember that flashing red lights mean STOP! Stop at least 15 feet, but not more than 50 feet, from the nearest track when the crossing devices are active or a person warns you a train is coming. Stop if you see a train coming or you hear the whistle, horn, or bell of an approaching train.
- Do not go under lowering gates or around lowered gates. Flashing red lights indicate you must stop and wait. Do not proceed over the crossing until the red lights stop flashing, even if the gate rises. If the gates are lowered and you do not see a train approaching, call the posted railroad emergency toll-free number or 9-1-1. Be ready to give a detailed description of your location.

## **Light Rail Transit Vehicle Crossings**

The same rules apply to light rail transit vehicle crossings as to freight train crossings. Do not proceed across the tracks until you can see clearly in both directions and are sure there are no light rail transit vehicles or trains coming. Do not go around or under any lowered gate.

**NOTE:** Light rail transit vehicles are very quiet and accelerate more quickly than freight trains.

## **Near Streetcars, Trolleys, or Buses**

The passing speed limit, when safe to pass, is no more than 10 mph. This speed limit applies at a safety zone or an intersection where a streetcar, trolley, or bus is stopped and traffic is controlled by a police officer or traffic signal. A safety zone is marked by raised buttons or markers on the road and is set aside for pedestrians. You will most often see safety zones in areas where street cars or trolleys and vehicles share the roadway.

## **Business or Residential Districts**

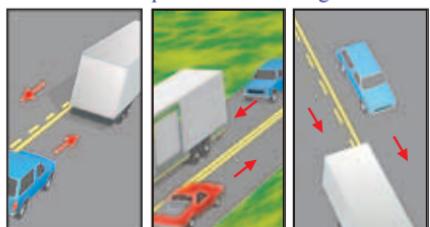
The speed limit is 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.

## **Near Animals**

If you see animals or livestock, slow down and follow directions from the person in charge of the animals. If you see a stray animal in your path, slow down or stop, if safe to do so.

## **TRAFFIC LANES**

Examples of lane markings



- (1) **Solid yellow line:** No passing if solid yellow line is on your side.
- (2) **Double solid lines:** DO NOT pass.
- (3) **Broken yellow line:** May pass if movement can be made safely.

## **LINE COLORS**

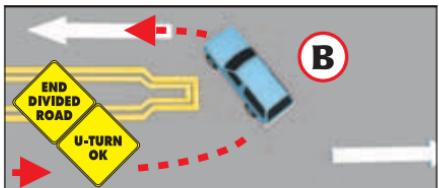
**Solid yellow lines** mark the center of a road used for two-way traffic.

**Broken yellow lines** mean you may pass if the broken line is next to your driving lane.

**Two solid yellow lines** mean no passing. Never drive to the left of these lines unless you are:

- Turning left at an intersection.
- Turning into or out of a private road or driveway.
- In a carpool lane that has a designated entrance on the left.
- Instructed by construction or other signs to drive on the other side of the road because your side is closed or blocked.

**Two sets of solid double yellow lines spaced two or more feet apart** are considered a barrier. Do not drive on or over this barrier or make a left turn or a U-turn across it except at designated openings. (See diagram .)



**Solid white lines** mark traffic lanes going in the same direction, such as one-way streets.

**Broken white lines** separate traffic lanes on roads with two or more lanes in the same direction.

## CHOOSING A LANE

Traffic lanes are often referred to by number. The left or “fast” lane is called the “Number 1 Lane.” The lane to the right of the “Number 1 Lane” is called the “Number 2 Lane”, then the “Number 3 Lane”, etc.

### Example of numbered traffic lanes



Drive in the lane with the smoothest flow of traffic. If you can choose among three lanes, pick the middle lane for the smoothest driving. To drive faster, pass, or turn left, use the left lane. When you choose to drive slowly or enter or turn off the road, use the right lane.

If there are only two lanes in your direction, pick the right lane for the smoothest driving.

Do not weave in and out of traffic. Stay in one lane as much as possible. Once you start through an intersection, keep going. If you start to make a turn, follow through. Last second changes may cause collisions. If you miss a turn, continue until you can safely and legally turn back.

## CHANGING LANES

Changing lanes includes:

- Moving from one lane to another.
- Entering the freeway from an on-ramp.
- Entering the road from a curb or the shoulder.

Before changing lanes, signal, look in all your mirrors, and:

- Check traffic behind and beside you.
- Glance over your left or right shoulder to make sure the lane you want is clear.
- Look for vehicles, motorcyclists, and bicyclists in your blind spot.
- Be sure there is enough room for your vehicle in the next lane.

## BICYCLE LANES

A bicycle lane is shown by a solid white line along either side of the street, four or more feet from the curb. The white line will usually be broken near the corner and the words “BIKE LANE” will be painted in the lane. When you are making a right turn and are within 200 feet of the corner or other driveway entrance, you must enter

the bicycle lane to make the turn. Do not drive in the bicycle lane at any other time.

You may park in a bicycle lane if your vehicle does not block a bicyclist and/or there is not a “No Parking” sign posted.

Pedestrians are not allowed in bicycle lanes when sidewalks are available. Drivers of motorized bicycles should use bicycle lanes carefully to avoid collisions with bicyclists.

## PASSING LANES

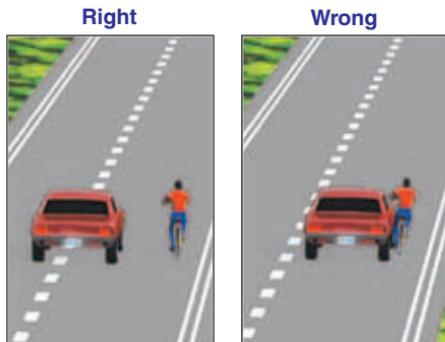
Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane.

Never drive off the paved or main-traveled portion of the road or on the shoulder to pass. The edge of the main-traveled portion of the road may have a painted white line on the road’s surface. Passing other vehicles at crossroads, railroad crossings, and shopping center entrances is dangerous.

Pass traffic on the left. You may pass on the right only when:

- An open highway is clearly marked for two or more lanes of travel in your direction.
- The driver ahead of you is turning left and you do not drive off the roadway to pass. Never pass on the left, if the driver is signaling a left turn.

Be patient when passing a bicyclist, and pass on the left. Slow down and pass only when it is safe. Do not squeeze a bicyclist off the road, and allow a safe clearance when passing a bicyclist.



## CARPOOL/HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLES (HOV) LANES

A carpool lane is a special freeway lane only for motorcycles, buses, and/or carpools. You may use a carpool lane or on-ramp if your vehicle carries the minimum number of people required for the carpool lane, **or** you drive a low-emission vehicle displaying a special DMV-issued decal. Motorcycle riders may use designated carpool lanes, unless otherwise posted.



Signs at the on-ramp or along the freeway tell you the minimum number of people per vehicle required for

the carpool lane(s). They also list the days of the week and the hours when the carpool requirement applies. The pavement in this lane is marked with a diamond symbol ♦ and the words “Carpool Lane.” These lanes are also known as high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Do not cross over double parallel solid lines to enter or exit any carpool lane except at designated entry or exit places.

Vehicles towing trailers are typically not allowed to use carpool lanes, because they must drive more slowly and are usually restricted to the right-hand lane.

## CENTER LEFT TURN LANES

A center left turn lane is in the middle of a two-way street and is marked on both sides by two painted lines. The inner line is broken and the outer line is solid. If a street has a center left turn lane, you must use it when you turn left (CVC §21460.5 [c]) or start a permitted U-turn. You

Make sure the lane is clear in both directions and then turn only when it is safe. Look for vehicles coming toward you in the same lane to start their left turn.

When turning left from a side street or driveway, signal and wait until it is safe. Then you may drive into the center left turn lane. Enter traffic only when it is safe.

You may drive across a center left turn lane to turn left or to turn into a driveway.

## TURNOUT AREAS AND LANES

Special “turnout” areas are sometimes marked on two-lane roads. Drive into these areas to allow cars behind you to pass.



Some two-lane roads have passing lanes. If you are driving slowly on a two-lane highway or road where passing is unsafe, and five or more vehicles are following you, drive into the turnout areas or lanes to let the vehicles pass.



may only drive for 200 feet in the center left turn lane. This lane is not a regular traffic lane or a passing lane. To turn left from this lane, signal, look over your shoulder, and drive completely inside the center left turn lane. Do not stop with the back of your vehicle blocking traffic.

## END-OF-LANE MARKINGS

Freeway lanes, as well as some city street lanes, which are ending will usually be marked by large broken lines painted on the pavement. If you are driving in a lane marked with these broken lines, be prepared to exit the freeway or for the lane to end. Look for a sign that tells you to exit or merge, etc.



## TURNS

**Left turns**—To make a left turn, drive close to the center divider line or into the left turn lane. Begin signaling about 100 feet before the turn. Look over your left shoulder and reduce your speed. Stop behind the limit line. Look left, then right, then left again, and make the turn when it is safe. When you turn left, do not turn too soon and “cut the corner” of the lane belonging to the vehicles coming towards you.

### Example of a left turn



**Safety suggestion:** While waiting to turn left, keep your wheels pointed straight ahead until it is safe to start

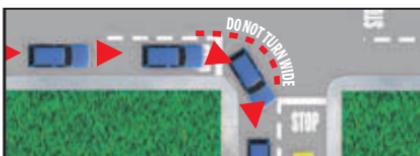
your turn. If your wheels are pointed to the left and a vehicle hits you from behind, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic.

Left turn against a red light can only be made from a one-way street onto a one way street. Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the limit line or corner. You may turn left into a left-moving, one-way street if there is no sign to prohibit the turn. Yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, or other vehicles moving on their green light.

**Right turns**—To make a right turn, drive close to the right edge of the road. If there is a bike lane, drive into the bike lane no more than 200 feet before the turn. Watch for bicyclists or motorcyclists who may get between your vehicle and the curb.

Begin signaling about 100 feet before the turn. Look over your right shoulder and reduce your speed. Stop behind the limit line. Look both ways and turn when it is safe. Do not turn wide into another lane. Complete your turn in the right lane.

### Example of a right turn



**Right turn against a red light**—Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the limit line or at the corner. If there is no sign to prohibit the turn, you may turn right. Yield to pedestrians,

motorcyclists, bicyclists, or other vehicles moving on their green light.

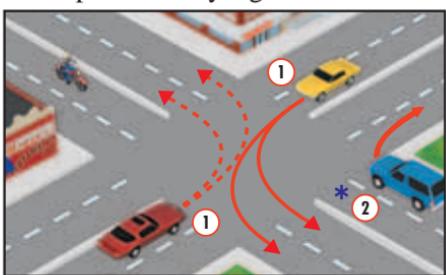
**No turn against a red arrow**—You may not turn right or left against a red arrow.

## EXAMPLES OF RIGHT AND LEFT TURNS

The numbers on the cars in the diagrams refer to the numbered sentences on these pages. Always use your turn signals.

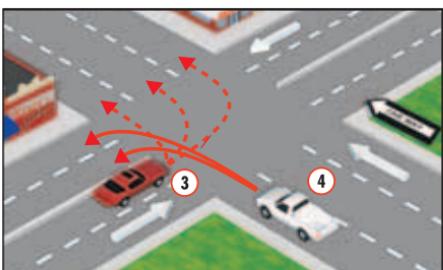
### 1. Left turn from a two-way street.

Start the turn in the left lane closest to the middle of the street. Complete the turn, if safe, in either lane of the cross street (shown by arrows.) Use the center left turn lane if there is one. A left turn may be made from the other lane, if permitted by signs or arrows.



2. Right turn. Begin and end the turn in the lane nearest the right-hand curb. Do not swing wide into another lane of traffic. Watch for pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists between your vehicle and the curb. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane as shown by the \*.

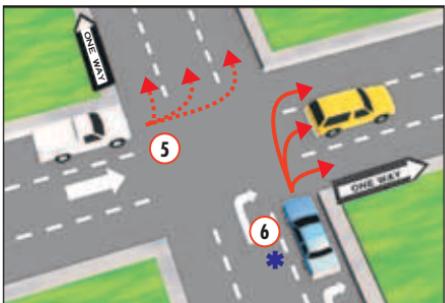
3. Left turn from a two-way street into a one-way street. Start the turn from the lane closest to the middle of the street. Turn into any lane that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.



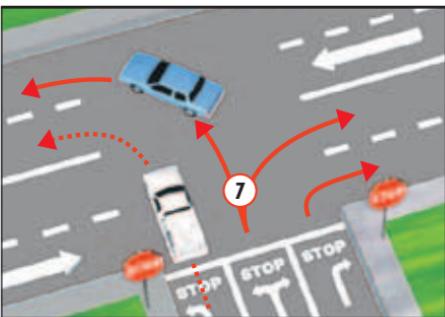
4. Left turn from a one-way street into a two-way street. Start the turn from the far left lane. Turn into either of the lanes that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.

5. Left turn from a one-way street into a one-way street. Start the turn from the far left lane. Watch for pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists between your vehicle and the curb because they can legally use the left turn lane for their left turns. Turn into any lane that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.

6. Right turn from a one-way street into a one-way street. Start the turn in the far right lane. If safe, you may end the turn in any lane. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane as shown by the \*.



7. Turn at a "T" intersection from a one-way street into a two-way street. Through traffic has the right-of-way. You may turn either right or left from the center lane. Watch for vehicles, motorcyclists and bicyclists inside your turn.



## LEGAL U-TURNS

A U-turn is turning your vehicle around in the street to go back the way you came. To make a U-turn, signal and use the far left lane or the center left turn lane. You may make a legal U-turn:

- Across a double yellow line when it is safe and legal.
- In a residential district:
  - If there are no vehicles approaching you within 200 feet.

- Whenever a traffic sign, light, or signal protects you from approaching vehicles.

- At an intersection on a green light or green arrow, unless a "No U-turn" sign is posted.
- On a divided highway, only if an opening is provided in the center divider.

## ILLEGAL U-TURNS

Never make a U-turn:

- At or on a railroad crossing.
- On a divided highway by crossing a dividing section, curb, strip of land, or two sets of double yellow lines.
- Where you can not see clearly 200 feet in each direction because of a curve, hill, rain, fog, or other reason.
- Where a "No U-Turn" sign is posted.
- When other vehicles may hit you.
- On a one-way street.
- In front of a fire station. Never use a fire station driveway to turn around.
- In business districts. Areas with churches, apartments, multiple dwelling houses, clubs, and public buildings (except schools) are also considered to be business districts. Turn only at an intersection or where openings are provided for turns.

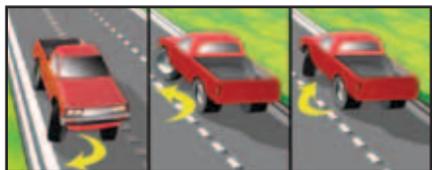
# PARKING

## PARKING ON A HILL

When you park:

- On a sloping driveway, turn the wheels so the vehicle will not roll into the street if the brakes fail.
- Headed downhill, turn your front wheels into the curb or toward the side of the road. Set the parking brake.
- Headed uphill, turn your front wheels away from the curb and let your vehicle roll back a few inches. The wheel should gently touch the curb. Set the parking brake.
- Headed either uphill or downhill when there is no curb, turn the wheels so the vehicle will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

Always set your parking brake and leave the vehicle in gear or in the “park” position.



down hill      up hill      no curb-up hill  
or down hill

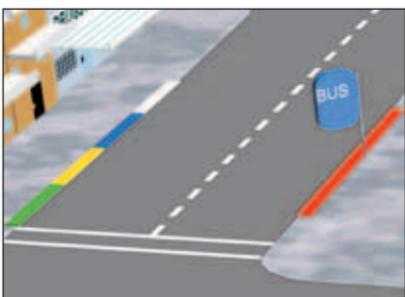
## PARKING AT COLORED CURBS

Painted colored curbs have the following special parking rules:

**White**—Stop only long enough to pick up or drop off passengers or mail.

**Green**—Park for a limited time. Look for a sign next to the green zone for time limits or for the time limit painted on the curb.

**Yellow**—Stop no longer than the time posted to load or unload passengers or freight. Drivers of noncommercial vehicles are usually required to stay with the vehicle.



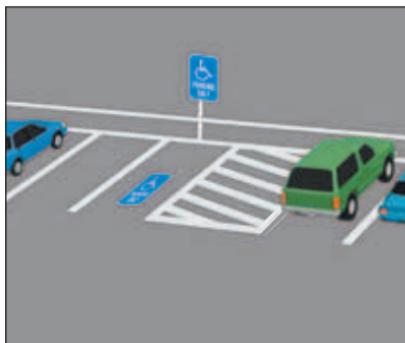
**Red**—No stopping, standing, or parking. (Buses may stop at a red zone marked for buses.)

**Blue**—Parking is permitted only for a disabled person who displays a placard or a special license plate for disabled persons or disabled veterans. Disabled people with a placard or special plates may park in special areas for unlimited periods of time, regardless of time restrictions. No one else may park there. A **crosshatched (diagonal lines) area** adjacent to a designated disabled parking space is a **no parking** area. Qualified persons may apply at any DMV office or visit the DMV website at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) to obtain a form for a parking placard or special plates.



An identification card will be issued to holders of disabled person or disabled veteran license plates.

#### **Example of crosshatched (diagonal lines) area**



**NOTE:** Placard abuse results in loss of special parking privileges. It is also a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment in county jail for up to six months, or both.

Examples of placard abuse:

- Using a placard after it has been reported lost/stolen (the person finds the placard after reporting it lost and then continues to use it without reporting it has been found)
  - Loaning your placard to friends or family members (disabled or not)
  - Interchanging placards with friends or family members
  - Using a placard when the person it was issued to is not in the vehicle with you (disabled child, family member, deceased person, etc.)
- ## **ILLEGAL PARKING**
- Never park or leave your vehicle:
- Where a “No Parking” sign is posted.
  - On a marked or unmarked crosswalk, on a sidewalk or partially blocking a sidewalk, or in front of a driveway.
  - Within three feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons **or** in front of or on a curb which provides wheelchair access to a sidewalk.
  - In a disabled person parking space, **unless** you are disabled and display a placard or special plates.
  - In the space next to a disabled person parking space, if it is painted in a crosshatched (diagonal) pattern. (CVC §22507.8)
  - In a space designated for parking or fueling zero-emission vehicles which display an identifying decal.
  - In a tunnel or on a bridge, except where permitted by signs.
  - Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or a fire station driveway.
  - On or within  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet of a railroad track.
  - Between a safety zone and the curb.
  - “Double parked.” (Parking in the street when all legal parking places at the curb are taken.)
  - On the wrong side of the street.

- At a red curb.
- On a freeway, except:
  - in an emergency, or
  - when an officer or device requires a stop, or
  - where a stop is specifically permitted. A vehicle (even if disabled) that is stopped, parked, or left standing on a freeway for more than four hours may be removed. (CVC §22651[f])

**NOTE:** If you must stop on a freeway, park completely off the pavement and stay in your vehicle with the doors locked until help arrives. Leave enough space for other vehicles to pass freely. Your vehicle should be visible at least 200 feet in each direction.

## SPECIAL PARKING RULES

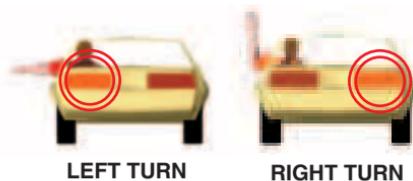
- When you park alongside a curb on a level street, the front and back wheels must be parallel and within 18 inches of the curb. Park parallel to the street if there is no curb.
- Never leave your vehicle until you have stopped the engine and set the parking brake.
- Do not open the driver's side door unless it is safe and you do not interfere with traffic. Look for passing vehicles, bicyclists, and motorcyclists. Do not leave the door open any longer than necessary.

## SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES

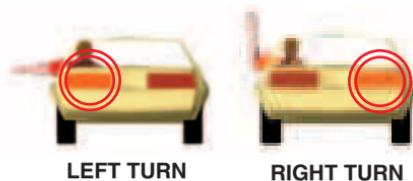
### SIGNALING

Always signal to other drivers and pedestrians when you plan to turn left, right, slow down, or stop. Signals may be given by hand-and-arm positions or by using the vehicle's signal lights. If bright sunlight makes the signal lights hard to see, use hand-and-arm signals also.

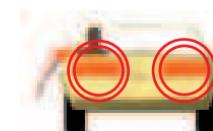
Motorcyclists often use hand signals to make themselves more visible. Bicyclists may give right turn-signals with their right arm held straight out, pointing right.



LEFT TURN



RIGHT TURN



SLOW or STOP

Always signal:

- Your left or right turn during the last 100 feet before reaching the turning point. Caution!—Even though you signal, do not automatically assume that the space you want to occupy is clear.

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# **EXPRESS YOURSELF.**

## Signaling can save lives.

Visit **dmv.ca.gov** for the  
California Driver Handbook



- Before every lane change. Also, look over your shoulder and check your blind spot before changing lanes.
- At least five seconds before you change lanes at freeway speeds.
- To let other drivers and pedestrians know your plans.
- Before pulling next to or away from the curb.
- When you change directions.
- Even when you do not see other vehicles around. A vehicle you do not see might hit you.

If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, start signaling when you are in the intersection. If you signal too early, the other driver may think you plan to turn into the intersection and he/she may pull out in front of you. Remember to cancel your signal after turning.

### ***Steering***

**Steering Control**—Modern vehicles require very little steering to turn. Look at the steering wheel as a clock face and place your hands at 9 and 3 o'clock or slightly lower at 8 and 4 o'clock. These are the desired hand positions that reduce the possibility of turning the wheel too sharply.

To reduce forearm and hand injuries, hands should be placed on the lower half of the steering wheel, with knuckles on the outside and thumbs stretched along the rim of the steering wheel.

**Pull-Push Steering**—Use pull-push steering for most turning maneuvers. Put your hands in the 8 and 4 o'clock positions. Pull down with one hand and push up with the other. This results in smooth steering and reduces the potential for over steering, which can lead to loss of control. Keep your hands and thumbs on the outside of the wheel.

**Hand-Over-Hand Steering**—Use hand-over-hand steering when steering movements are critical, such as when:

- Parking.
- Performing sharp right turns.
- Correcting a skid.

Use quick movements on entry to the maneuver, and then use slow, smooth movements when straightening the wheel.

**One-Hand Steering**—Use one-hand steering for:

- Backing maneuvers that do not require full left or right turns, or
- When operating vehicle controls for information, safety, or comfort.

Steering errors are directly related to vision errors

### **SCANNING**

Scanning your surroundings (keeping your eyes moving) includes keeping a safe distance around your vehicle. When another driver makes a mistake, you need time to react. Give yourself this time by keeping a “space cushion” on all sides of your

vehicle. This space cushion will give you room to brake or maneuver if you need it.

### ***Know What Is Ahead***

To avoid last minute moves, look down the road 10 to 15 seconds ahead of your vehicle so you can see hazards early. Constantly staring at the road just in front of your vehicle is dangerous. As you scan ahead, be alert for vehicles around you.

#### **Where is the green vehicle headed?**



Use your mirrors. Allow enough space between you and the vehicle ahead to give yourself an “out.” Mistakes cause collisions. In the city, 10 to 15 seconds is about one block. On the highway, 10 to 15 seconds is about a quarter of a mile.

**Take in the whole scene**—If you only look at the middle of the road, you will miss what is happening on the side of the road and behind you. Scanning helps you to see:

- Cars and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them.

- Signs warning of problems ahead.
- Signs giving you directions.



**The shaded areas are your blind spots.**

Before changing lanes, look into your rear view mirror for nearby vehicles and also over your shoulder to check your blind spots. These blind spots can hide a motorcyclist, a bicyclist, or a vehicle. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street or a vehicle door opening.

**Watch for hazards**—Look beyond the vehicle ahead of you. Do not develop a “fixed stare.” Keep scanning. Check your rear view mirrors every two to five seconds so you know the position of vehicles near you.

On the freeway, be ready for changes in traffic conditions. Watch for signals from other drivers. Expect merging vehicles at on-ramps and interchanges. Be prepared for rapid changes in road conditions and traffic flow. Know which lanes are clear so you can use them if necessary.

**Do not be a tailgater!** Many drivers do not see as far ahead as they should because they follow too closely (tailgate), and the vehicle ahead blocks their view.

The more space you allow between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead, the more time you will have to see a hazard and the more time you will have to stop or avoid that hazard.

Most rear end collisions are caused by tailgating. To avoid tailgating, use the “three-second rule.” When the vehicle ahead of you passes a certain point such as a sign, count “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three.” This takes about three seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely. You should allow a four-second or more cushion when:

- Being crowded by a tailgater. Allow extra room ahead, do not brake suddenly. Slow down gradually or merge into another lane to prevent being hit from behind by the tailgater!
- Driving on slippery roads.
- Following motorcyclists on wet or icy roads, on metal surfaces (e.g., bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and on gravel. Motorcyclists can fall more often on these surfaces.
- The driver behind you wants to pass. Allow room in front of your vehicle so the driver will have space to move into.
- Towing a trailer or carrying a heavy load. The extra weight makes it harder to stop.

- Following large vehicles that block your view ahead. The extra space allows you to see around the vehicle.
- You see a bus, school bus, or a placarded vehicle at railroad crossings. These vehicles must stop at railroad crossings, so slow down early and allow plenty of room.
- Merging onto a freeway.

If you follow too closely and another driver “cuts” in front of you, just take your foot off the gas. This gives you space between your vehicle and the other driver, without having to slam on your brakes or swerve into another lane.

### ***Know What Is at Your Side***

Any time you come to a place where people may cross or enter your path **or** one line of traffic meets another, you should look to the left and right sides of your vehicle to make sure no one is coming. Always look to each side at intersections, crosswalks, and railroad crossings.

At intersections:

- Look both ways even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign:
  - Look to the left first, since vehicles coming from the left are closer to you than vehicles coming from the right.
  - Look to the right.
  - Take one more look to the left in case there is a vehicle or a pedestrian you did not see the first time.

- Do not rely on traffic signals. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals so before you enter an intersection, look left, right, and ahead for approaching traffic.

To maintain a space cushion on each side of your vehicle:

- Do not stay in another driver's blind spot. The other driver may not see your vehicle and could change lanes and hit you.
- Avoid driving directly alongside other vehicles on multilane streets with or without traffic in the opposite direction. Another driver might crowd your lane or change lanes without looking and crash into you. Drive either ahead of or behind the other vehicle.
- If possible and when safe, make room for vehicles entering freeways even though you have the right-of-way.
- At freeway exits, do not drive alongside other cars. A driver may decide to exit suddenly or swerve back on to the freeway.
- Keep a space between yourself and parked cars. Someone may step out from between them. A vehicle door may open or a vehicle may pull out suddenly.
- Be careful when driving near motorcyclists or bicyclists. Always leave plenty of room between your vehicle and any motorcyclist or bicyclists.

## ***Know What Is Behind You***

It is very important to check behind you before you:

- Change lanes. Look over your shoulder to make sure you are not getting in the way of vehicles in the lane you want to enter.
- Reduce your speed. Take a quick glance in your mirrors. Also check your mirrors when you are preparing to turn into a side road or driveway and when you are stopping to pull into a parking space.
- Drive down a long or steep hill. Watch for large vehicles because they can gather speed very quickly.
- Back up. Backing up is always dangerous because it is hard to see behind your vehicle. When you are backing out of a parking space:
  - check in front and behind the vehicle before you get in.
  - know where your kids are. Make sure they are away from your vehicle and in full view before moving your vehicle.
  - if other children are nearby, make sure you can see them before backing up.
  - do not depend only on your mirrors or only looking out a side window.
  - turn and look over your right and left shoulders before you begin backing. As a safety measure, also look over your

right and left shoulders again while backing.

- back slowly to avoid collisions.

Check traffic behind you often to know if you are being tailgated (another driver is following too closely). If you are being tailgated, be careful! Brake slowly before stopping. Tap your brakes lightly a few times to warn the tailgater you are slowing down.

“Lose” the tailgater as soon as you can, by changing lanes and allowing the tailgater to pass you or slowing down to allow enough “cushion” between you and the car in front of you. If this does not work, pull off the road when it is safe and let the tailgater pass.

### **Clean Windows and Mirrors**

Keep your windshield and side windows clean inside and out. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty window make it hard to see out. Clear off ice, frost, or dew from all windows before you drive.

Make sure you can see and be seen. If you drive in rain or snow, you may have to stop sometimes to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.

### **Adjust Seat and Mirrors**

Adjust your seat before you put on your seat belt. You should sit high enough to see the road. If you still can not see, use a seat cushion.

Adjust your rear and side mirrors before you start driving. If your vehicle

has a day/night mirror, learn how to use it. The night setting reduces the headlight glare from the cars behind you and helps you see better.

### **How Well Can You Stop?**

If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to stop. Assuming you have good tires, good brakes, and dry pavement:

- At 55 mph, it takes about 400 feet to react and bring the vehicle to a complete stop.
- At 35 mph, it takes about 210 feet to react and bring the vehicle to a complete stop.

Adjust your driving speed to the weather and road conditions (“Basic Speed Law” page 29.) Turn on your lights during the day, if it is hard to see or you can not see at least 1,000 feet ahead of you.

### **DRIVING IN THE FOG**

The best advice for driving in the fog is DON’T. You should consider postponing your trip until the fog clears. However, if you must drive, then drive slowly and use your **low beam** headlights. The light from the high beams will reflect back and cause glare.

### **Never drive with just your parking or fog lights.**

Increase your following distance and be prepared to stop within the space you can see ahead. Avoid crossing or passing lanes of traffic unless absolutely necessary. Listen for traffic you can not see. Use your

wipers and defroster as necessary for best vision.

If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, pull **completely** off the road. Do not continue driving until you can see better. Turn off your lights and keep your foot off the brake pedal or someone may see your taillights, think you are moving, and drive into your vehicle.

## DRIVING IN DARKNESS

Drive more slowly at night because you can not see as far ahead and you will have less time to stop for a hazard. Make sure you can stop within the distance lighted by your headlights.

Use your low beam headlights at night when it rains. **Do not drive using only your parking lights.**

Use your high beams whenever possible in open country or dark city streets, as long as it is not illegal. Do not blind other drivers with your high beam headlights. Dim your lights when necessary. If another driver does not dim his/her lights:

- Do not look directly into the oncoming headlights.
- Look toward the right edge of your lane.
- Watch the oncoming vehicle out of the corner of your eye.
- Do not try to “get back” at the other driver by keeping your bright lights on. If you do, both of you may be blinded.

When you drive at night, remember:

- Pedestrians and bicyclists are much harder to see at night, so stay alert for them.
- Motorcycles are also harder to see at night because most have only one taillight.
- More highway construction takes place at night. Reduce your speed in highway construction zones.
- When you leave a brightly-lit place, drive slowly until your eyes adjust to the darkness.
- Drive as far to the right as possible, when a vehicle with one light drives toward you. It could be a bicyclist or motorcyclist, but it could also be a vehicle with a missing headlight.

## DRIVING IN RAIN OR SNOW

Many road pavements are the most slippery when it first starts to rain or snow because oil and dust have not yet washed away. Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. Turn on your windshield wipers, headlights, and defroster.

In a heavy rainstorm or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you can not see any farther than that, you can not safely drive faster than 30 mph. You may have to stop from time to time to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.

If you drive in snowy areas, carry the correct number of chains and be sure they will fit your drive wheels. Learn how to put the chains on before you need to use them.

## DRIVING IN HILL COUNTRY

You never know what is on the other side of a steep hill or a sharp curve. When you come to a hill or curve, slow down so you can stop for any hazard. You must be going slowly enough to stop.

Any time your view is blocked by a hill or a curve, you should assume there is another vehicle ahead. Only pass the vehicle if a hill or curve is at least one-third of a mile away, because you need at least that much room to pass safely.

Do not drive on the left side of the road when coming to a curve or the top of a hill, because you can not see far enough ahead to know if it is safe to pass.

## HORN, HEADLIGHTS, AND EMERGENCY SIGNALS

### *Use Your Horn*

- Only when necessary, to avoid collisions.
- To try to get “eye contact” with other drivers. Tap your horn to alert another driver, who might turn in front of you and cause a collision.
- On narrow mountain roads, where you can not see at least 200 feet ahead.

### ***Do Not Use Your Horn***

- If a driver is going slowly, and you want him or her to drive faster. The driver may be ill, lost, intoxicated, or having problems with the vehicle.
- Instead of slowing or stopping **your** vehicle to prevent a collision. It's safer to use the brakes than honk the horn.
- To alert other drivers that they made a mistake. Your honking may cause them to make more mistakes or to become angry and retaliate.
- Because **you** may be angry or upset.
- To honk at pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists unless necessary to avoid a collision. Remember that your horn sounds much louder outside a vehicle.

### *Use Your Headlights*

- When it is cloudy, raining, snowing, or foggy. If weather conditions require you to use your windshield wipers, you must turn on your headlights.
- On frosty mornings, when other drivers' windows may be icy or “fogged.”
- Any time conditions prevent you from seeing other vehicles. Other drivers may have trouble seeing you, too.
- On small country or mountain roads, even on sunny days. This helps other drivers see you and

may help you avoid a head-on crash.

- When necessary to get another driver's attention.

### ***Use Your Emergency Signals***

If you can see a collision ahead, warn the drivers behind you by turning on your emergency flashers or tapping your brake pedal quickly three or four times. You can also use the hand signal when slowing and stopping.

Never stop on the road, unless necessary for safety or to obey a law. If you need to stop, then start braking early as a signal to the cars behind you. If your vehicle breaks down on the road, make sure that other drivers can see it. If you are having vehicle trouble, and need to stop, follow these rules:

- Pull off the road away from all traffic, if possible.
- If you can not get completely off the road, stop where people can see you and your vehicle from behind. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Turn on your emergency flashers if you are not moving. If your vehicle doesn't have flashers, turn signals may be used instead.
- If it is safe, lift the hood to signal an emergency.
- Give other drivers plenty of warning. Place emergency flares or triangles 200 to 300 feet behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers time to change lanes, if

necessary. Be very careful when using flares. They may cause fires, especially when used near flammable liquids.

- If you do not have emergency flares, follow the rules listed above and stay in your vehicle until help arrives. Be careful for your safety and **stay off the road**. Remember, do not try to change a tire if it means you have to stand in a traffic lane.

### ***FOLLOWING DISTANCES***

#### ***Taking Dangers One at a Time***

Suppose there is an oncoming vehicle to your left and a child on a bicycle to your right. Instead of driving between the vehicle and the child, take one danger at a time. First, slow down and let the vehicle pass. Then, move to the left to allow plenty of room to pass the child.

#### ***Splitting the Difference***

Sometimes there will be dangers on both sides of the road at the same time. For example, there will be parked cars to the right and oncoming cars to the left. In this case, the best thing to do is "split the difference." Steer a middle course between the oncoming cars and the parked cars.

If one danger is greater than the other, give the most room to the most dangerous. Suppose there are oncoming cars to the left of you and a child on a bike to the right. The child is most likely to make a sudden move. Therefore, slow down, and

if safe, use as much of your lane to the left as possible until you pass the child.

### **Problem Drivers**

Increase your following distance and allow a bigger space cushion for drivers who may be potentially dangerous. Persons who present dangers are:

- Drivers who can not see you because their view is blocked by buildings, trees, or other cars.
- Drivers backing out of driveways or parking spaces with the vehicle's windows covered by snow or ice.
- Drivers who pass you when there is a curve or oncoming vehicle(s) ahead.
- Drivers about to be forced into your lane to avoid a vehicle, a pedestrian, a bicyclist, an obstruction, or because of fewer lanes ahead.
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or hats pulled down over their eyes.
- Distracted people, such as:
  - delivery persons.
  - construction workers.
  - children, who often run into the street without looking.
  - drivers talking on cell phones or to their passengers.
  - drivers taking care of children, eating, or looking at maps while driving.

- Confused people, such as:
  - tourists, often at complicated intersections.
  - drivers who are looking for a house number or who slow down for no apparent reason.

### **MERGING IN/OUT OF TRAFFIC**

Whenever you enter traffic, signal and be sure you have enough room to enter safely. You have to share space with traffic already on the road, and you must know how much space you need to merge with traffic, to cross or enter traffic, and to exit out of traffic.

#### **Space to Merge**

Enter the freeway at or near the speed of traffic. (Remember that the maximum speed allowed is 65 mph on most freeways.) **Do not stop before merging into freeway traffic** unless absolutely necessary. Freeway traffic has the right-of-way.

Any time you merge with other traffic, you need a gap of at least four seconds, which gives both you and the other vehicle only a two-second following distance. When it is safe, go back to following the “three-second rule.” (See page 47.)

- Do not try to squeeze into a gap that is too small. Leave yourself a big enough space cushion.
- Watch for vehicles around you. Use your mirrors and turn signals. Turn your head to look quickly over your shoulder before changing lanes. Leave three seconds of

space between you and the vehicle ahead. Make sure you can stop safely if necessary.

- If you need to cross several freeway lanes, cross them one at a time. If you wait until all lanes are clear, you may cause traffic delays or a collision.

### ***Space to Cross or Enter***

Whenever you cross or enter city or highway traffic from a full stop, you will need a large enough gap (from vehicles approaching in either direction) to get up to the speed of other vehicles. You need a gap that is about:

- Half a block on city streets.
- A full block on the highway.

If you are crossing lanes or turning, make sure there are no vehicles or people blocking the path ahead or to the sides. You do not want to be caught in an intersection with traffic coming at you.

Even if you have the green light, do not start across the intersection, if there are vehicles blocking your way.

When turning left, do not start the turn just because an approaching vehicle has its right turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn just beyond you, or the signal may have been left on from an earlier turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles.

Their signal lights often do not turn off automatically. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn before you continue.

### ***Space to Exit***

When you plan to exit the freeway, give yourself plenty of time. You should know the name or number of the freeway exit you want as well as the one that comes before it. To exit safely:

- Signal, look over your shoulder, and change lanes one at a time, until you are in the proper lane to exit the freeway.
- Signal your intention to exit for approximately five seconds before reaching the exit.
- Be sure you are at the proper speed for leaving the traffic lane—not too fast (so you remain in control) and not too slow (so the flow of traffic can still move freely).

### **PASSING OTHER TRAFFIC**

#### ***Space and Speed to Pass***

Always signal before passing. Do not pull out to pass unless you know you have enough space to pull back into your lane.

Avoid passing other vehicles, including motorcycles and bicycles, on two-lane roads. It is dangerous. Every time you pass, you increase your chances of having a collision. Be patient when passing a bicyclist. Slow down and pass only when it is safe. Do not squeeze the bicyclist off the road.

At highway speeds of 50 to 55 mph, you need a 10 to 12 second gap in oncoming traffic to pass safely. At 55 mph, you will travel over 800

feet in 10 to 12 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1,600 feet (or about one-third of a mile) to pass safely. It is harder to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles one-third of a mile away or more.

You must judge whether or not you have enough room to pass whenever you approach:

- An oncoming vehicle.
- A hill or a curve.
- An intersection.
- A road obstruction.

Vehicles appear to move slower than they really are moving. A vehicle that is far enough away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can see it moving closer to you, it is probably too close for you to start to pass.

### ***Space to Return***

Before you return to your driving lane, be sure you are not dangerously close to the vehicle you have just passed. One way to do this is to look for the vehicle in your inside rear view mirror. When you can see both headlights in your rear view mirror, you have enough room to return to your driving lane. Do not count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once, or that other drivers will make room for you.

## **SHARING THE ROAD WITH OTHER VEHICLES**

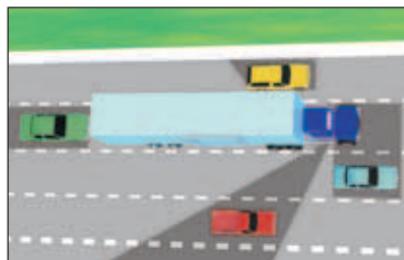
### **LARGE TRUCKS (BIG RIGS) AND RVs**

To reduce the chance of having a collision with a large truck or RV, you must be familiar with a big rig's physical capabilities and how it maneuvers.

#### ***Braking***

Large trucks take longer to stop than vehicles traveling at the same speed. The average passenger vehicle traveling at 55 mph can stop within 400 feet. However, a large truck traveling at the same speed can take almost 800 feet to stop. Do not move in front of a large truck and suddenly slow down or stop. The trucker will not be able to stop quickly enough to avoid crashing into you.

#### ***Trucker's Blind Spots—the “No Zone”***



**Shaded areas are the driver's blind spots.**

Passenger vehicle drivers incorrectly assume that a trucker can see the road better because he or she is higher off the road. While truckers do have a better forward view and bigger mirrors, they still have large blind spots, and your vehicle can get

lost in those blind spots. You block the trucker's ability to take evasive action to avoid a dangerous situation if you stay in those blind spots. Generally speaking, if you can not see the truck driver in his or her side mirror, he or she can not see you. These blind spots are often called the "NO ZONE."

### ***Turning***

When any vehicle makes a turn, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the greater the difference. This is why big rig drivers must often swing wide to complete a right turn. When you follow a big rig, look at its turn signals before you start to pass. If the truck appears to be turning left, check the turn signals again; the driver may actually be turning right but first swinging wide.

### ***Maneuverability***

Trucks are designed to transport products and they are not as maneuverable as passenger vehicles. Large trucks have longer stopping and starting distances. They take more space for turns and they weigh more. On multilane highways and freeways, large trucks usually stay in the center portion of the lane to help the flow of traffic. This also increases the trucker's options if he or she must change lanes to avoid a hazard.

Avoid these mistakes when driving around large trucks:

- **Cutting off a truck in traffic or on the highway to reach an exit or turn.** Cutting into the open space in front of a truck is dangerous. Trying to beat a truck through a single-lane construction zone, for example, removes the truck driver's cushion of safety and places you in danger. Slow down and take your turn entering the construction zone. Do not speed up to pass a truck so you can exit the roadway. Take a moment to slow down and exit behind a truck—it will only take you a few extra seconds.

- **Lingering alongside a truck when passing.** Always pass a large truck on the left side, and after you pass the truck, move ahead of it. Do not linger, otherwise you make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the trucker to take evasive action if an obstacle appears in the road ahead.

- **Following too closely or tailgating.** When you follow so closely behind a truck that you can not see the truck driver's side view mirrors, the trucker can not see you and has no way of knowing you are there. Tailgating a truck, or any vehicle, is dangerous because you take away your own cushion of safety if the vehicle in front of you stops quickly.

- **Underestimating the size and speed of an approaching tractor-trailer.** A large tractor-trailer often *appears* to be traveling at a

slower speed because of its large size. Many collisions involving a passenger vehicle and a large truck occur at intersections when the passenger vehicle driver did not realize how close the truck was or how fast it was traveling.

## BUSES, STREETCARS, AND TROLLEYS

Do not drive through a safety zone, which is a space set aside for pedestrians and marked by raised buttons or markers on a roadway.

When people are boarding or leaving a streetcar or trolley where there is no safety zone, stop behind the vehicle's nearest door or vehicle platform and wait until the people have reached a safe place.

When a bus, streetcar, or trolley is stopped at a safety zone or at an intersection where traffic is controlled by a police officer or traffic signal, you may pass at no more than 10 mph.

Do not overtake and pass any light rail vehicle or streetcar on the left side, whether it is moving or standing.

### EXCEPTIONS:

- When you are on a one-way street.
- When the tracks are so close to the right side that you can not pass on the right.
- When a traffic officer directs you to pass on the left.

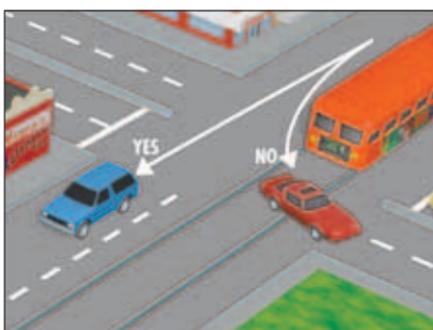
## LIGHT-RAIL VEHICLES

Light-rail vehicles have the same rights and responsibilities on public roadways as other vehicles. Although everyone must follow the same traffic laws, light-rail vehicles require exceptional handling ability because of their size.

Safely share the road with light-rail vehicles by:

- Being aware of where light-rail vehicles operate. Buildings, trees, etc., cause blind spots for the trolley operator.
- *Never* turning in front of an approaching light-rail vehicle.

### Do not turn in front of light rail vehicles



- Maintaining a safe distance from the light-rail vehicle if it shares a street with vehicular traffic.

### Safety Zones are marked by dotted white lines



- Looking for approaching light-rail vehicles before you turn across the tracks. Complete your turn only if a signal indicates you may proceed.

**NOTE:** Light-rail vehicles can interrupt traffic signals, so do not proceed until the signal light indicates you may proceed.

## EMERGENCY VEHICLES

You must yield the right-of-way to any police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren and red lights. Drive to the right edge of the road and stop until the emergency vehicle(s) have passed. However, **never stop in an intersection**. If you are in an intersection when you see an emergency vehicle, continue through the intersection and then drive to the right as soon as you can and stop. Emergency vehicles often use the wrong side of the street to continue on their way. They sometimes use a loud speaker to talk to drivers blocking their path.

### Yield to emergency vehicles.



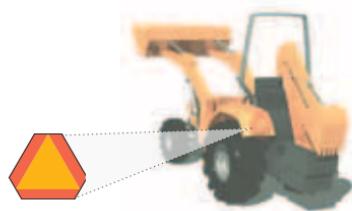
You must obey any traffic direction, order, or signal by a traffic or police officer or a fire fighter even if it conflicts with existing signs, signals, or laws.

It is against the law to follow within 300 feet behind any fire engine, police vehicle, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle with a siren or flashing lights (CVC §21706).

If you drive for sight-seeing purposes to the scene of a fire, collision, or other disaster you may be arrested. Casual observers interfere with the essential services of police, firefighter, ambulance crews, or other rescue or emergency personnel.

## SLOW MOVING VEHICLES

Some vehicles are not designed to keep up with the speed of traffic. Farm tractors, animal-drawn carts, and road maintenance vehicles usually travel 25 mph or less. Slow-moving vehicles have an orange/red triangle on the back. It looks like the sign in the picture. Look for these vehicles and adjust your speed before you reach them.



A Slow Moving Vehicle

Also, be aware that large trucks and small, underpowered cars lose speed on long or steep hills and take longer to get up to speed when entering traffic.

Certain other types of slow-moving motorized vehicles (such as wheelchairs, scooters, and golf carts) may legally operate on public roads. Adjust your speed accordingly to accommodate them.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTRIC VEHICLES (NEV) AND LOW-SPEED VEHICLES (LSV)**

You may have seen lanes marked as **NEV USE ONLY** on roadways in some California towns, especially those near retirement communities and golf courses. NEVs and LSVs are restricted from roadways where the speed limit is greater than 35 mph (CVC §§385.5 and 21260). The NEV and LSV vehicles reach a maximum speed of 25 mph.

Owners of registered NEVs and LSVs must comply with financial responsibility laws and a driver license is needed to operate the vehicle.

## **ANIMAL-DRAWN VEHICLES**

Horse-drawn vehicles and riders of horses or other animals are entitled to share the road with you. It is a traffic offense to scare horses or stampede livestock. Slow down or stop, if necessary, or when requested to do so by the riders or herders.

## **MOTORCYCLES**

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as automobile drivers. While everyone must follow the same traffic laws, motorcyclists face unusual dangers because

motorcycles require exceptional handling ability and are harder to see. Therefore, many motorcycles keep their headlight on even during daylight hours.

From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline is much smaller than a passenger vehicle's and most drivers are expecting to see larger vehicles on the road and are not looking for motorcycles.

Motorcyclists can do many things to make it easier for others to recognize them and increase their chances of being seen.

- Wear a bright colored jacket, vest and a helmet.
- Wear reflective material on their helmet and clothes.
- Use turn signals anytime they plan to change lanes or turn.
- Flashing their brake light before they slow down to help others notice them.

Follow these rules to **respect** the right-of-way and safely share the road with motorcyclists:

- When you change lanes or enter a major thoroughfare, make a visual check for motorcycles. Also use your mirrors. Motorcycles are small, and they can easily disappear into a vehicle's blind spots.
- Allow a four-second following distance. You will need this space to avoid hitting the motorcyclist if he or she brakes suddenly or falls. Motorcycles generally can stop faster than passenger vehicles.

- Allow the motorcycle a full lane width. Although it is not illegal to share lanes with motorcycles, it is unsafe.
- Never try to pass a motorcycle in the same lane you are sharing with the motorcycle.
- When you make a turn, check for motorcyclists and gauge their speed before turning.
- Look carefully for motorcyclists before opening doors next to moving traffic or before turning right.
- Motorcycles may travel faster than traffic during congested road conditions and can legally travel in the unused space between two lines of moving or stationary vehicles, which is commonly called “lane splitting.”
- Remember that road conditions which are minor annoyances to you pose major hazards to motorcyclists. Potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement can cause motorcyclists to change speed or direction suddenly. If you are aware of the effect of these conditions and drive with care and attention, you can help reduce motorcycle injuries and fatalities. For more information regarding motorcycle safety, contact the California Motorcyclist Safety Program at 1-877-RIDE-411 or [www.ca-msp.org](http://www.ca-msp.org)

## BICYCLES

Bicyclists on public streets have the same rights and responsibilities as automobile and motorcycle drivers. **Respect** the right-of-way of bicyclists because they are entitled to share the road with other drivers.



Here are some critical points for drivers and bicyclists to remember:

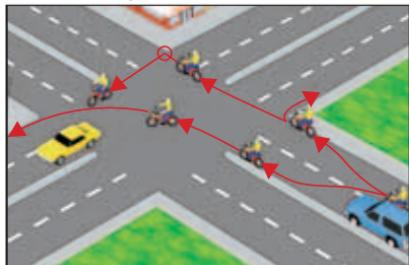
**Motor vehicle drivers must:**

- Pass a bicyclist as they would a slow moving-vehicle. Pass with caution, and only when safe.
- Look carefully for bicyclists before opening doors next to moving traffic or before turning.
- Safely merge toward the curb or into the bike lane.
- **Not** overtake a bicyclist just before making a turn. Merge first, then turn.
- Be careful when approaching or passing a bicyclist on a freeway.

**Bicyclists:**

- Must obey all traffic signals and stop signs.
- Are lawfully permitted to ride on certain sections of freeways, in some rural areas where there is no alternate route.

### Turns for bicyclists



### Intersections with special lanes



- Must ride in the same direction as other traffic, not against it.
- Shall ride as near to the right curb or edge of the roadway as practical—not on the sidewalk.
- May legally move left to turn left, to pass a parked or moving vehicle, bicycle, animal, make a turn or avoid debris and other hazards.
- May choose to ride near the left curb or edge of a one-way street.
- Should ride single file on a busy or narrow street.
- Must make left and right turns in the same way that drivers do, using the same turn lanes. If the bicyclist is traveling straight ahead, he or she should use a through traffic lane rather than ride next to the curb and block traffic making right turns.

- Must signal all their intentions to motorists and bicyclists near them.

- Must wear a helmet if under the age of 18.
- Should carry identification.
- Shall not operate a bicycle on a roadway during darkness unless the bicycle is equipped with:

- A brake which will enable the operator to make one braked wheel skid on dry level, clean pavement.
- A front lamp emitting a white light visible from a distance of 300 feet.
- A rear red reflector visible from a distance of 500 feet.
- A white or yellow reflector on each pedal visible from a distance of 200 feet.

## PEDESTRIANS WHO ARE BLIND

Pedestrians using guide dogs or white canes with or without a red tip must be given the right-of-way *at all times*. These pedestrians are partially or totally blind.

When these pedestrians are in your vicinity be especially careful when turning corners or backing up particularly if you are driving a quiet hybrid vehicle.

Here are some suggestions for helping pedestrians who are blind:

- **Do not stop your vehicle more than five feet from the crosswalk unless there is an advance stop bar (line).** A blind pedestrian

uses the sound of your engine as a guide, so drive up to the crosswalk to allow the person to hear you. **IMPORTANT:** Drivers of electric and hybrid vehicles must be extra alert to blind pedestrians, as they may be unaware of your presence due to the nearly silent nature of these vehicles.

- **Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.**
- **Do not stop in the middle of a crosswalk.** This forces the blind pedestrian to go around your vehicle and into traffic outside of the crosswalk.
- **Do not give the blind pedestrian verbal directions.** A blind pedestrian listens to all traffic sounds before deciding to cross the street.
- **Do not wait too long for the blind pedestrian to cross the street.** When a blind person pulls in his/her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means for you to go.
- **Do not turn right without looking first.** Look for any pedestrians, especially a blind pedestrian or traffic before starting your turn. Blind pedestrians who have a green light are not expecting a driver to make a right turn in front of them. Turning may result in the blind pedestrian becoming disoriented and vulnerable to being hit by another right turning vehicle when attempting to cross the street.

- **Do not honk your horn at a blind person.** The blind person has no idea who you are honking at and may be startled by the noise.

- **Do not block any sidewalk.**

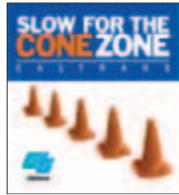
## ROAD WORKERS AND WORK ZONES (“CONE ZONES”)

Pay more attention where road work is being performed. Signs and message boards warn you of workers, slow moving equipment, and closed lanes ahead. Cones and/or drums will guide you through the work zone. Merge as soon as it is safe to do so and without crossing the cones or drums. Reduce your speed and be prepared to slow down or stop for highway equipment. In work zones where lanes are narrow or where the shoulder is closed, watch for bicycles and “share the road” when they are present.

The most common cause of deaths and injuries in work zones is rear-end collisions. In fact, most of the people killed in work zones are drivers and passengers. **For your own safety and the safety of your passengers** remember to slow down, allow extra following room between vehicles, merge early, expect sudden slowing or stopping, watch for drivers changing lanes at the last minute, and minimize distraction. Avoid using your hands-free cell phone while in the “Cone Zone.” Fines



for traffic violations in the “**Cone Zone**” can be up to \$1,000. Anyone convicted of assaulting a highway worker faces fines of up to \$2,000 and imprisonment for up to one year.



Keep your eyes on the road and other vehicles around you. Do not stop to watch the road work. Obey special signs or instructions from workers. Driving carefully through work zones improves safety for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and road workers.

Remember to “**Slow for the Cone Zone.**”

## DOUBLE FINE ZONES

Due to increased collision-related injuries and fatalities certain roads are designated as “Safety Enhanced-Double Fine Zones.” Fines for violations are doubled in these zones and also in highway construction or maintenance zones when workers are present. (CVC §42010)

## MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN

Drivers are required to move over and slow down when approaching a roadside emergency along a state highway or freeway. The law is designed to reduce the deaths of police officers, tow truck drivers, paramedics, and other emergency personnel who are aiding stranded or injured motorists. Use caution if lane changes are required.

## VEHICLES WITH HAZARDOUS LOADS

### Hazardous Loads Placards



A diamond-shaped sign on a truck means that the load on the truck is potentially dangerous (gas, explosives, etc.) California Highway Patrol (CHP) or fire department officers know what to do if the load is accidentally spilled. Vehicles which display these signs are required to stop before crossing railroad tracks.

## IMPORTANT DRIVING TIPS

### DEALING WITH TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Small changes in your driving habits can help relieve chronic traffic congestion, according to the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS).

Avoid the following driving behaviors:

- Rubbernecking—slowing down to look at collisions or virtually anything else out of the ordinary.
- Tailgating—following too closely.
- Unnecessary lane changes—weaving in and out of freeway lanes.
- Inattention—eating, grooming, talking on a cell phone or text messaging, and reading the newspaper, etc.

## ARE YOU AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER?

### DO YOU (Check the appropriate box):

Y N

- Overtake other vehicles only on the left.
- Avoid blocking passing lanes.
- Yield to faster traffic by moving to the right.
- Keep to the right as much as possible.
- Maintain appropriate following distance.
- Provide appropriate distance when cutting in after passing vehicles.
- Use headlights in cloudy, rainy, low light conditions.
- Yield to pedestrians.
- Come to a complete stop at stop signs, etc.
- Stop for red traffic lights.
- Approach intersections and pedestrians at slow speeds.
- Follow right-of-way rules at four-way stops.
- Drive below the posted speed limit when conditions warrant.
- Drive at slower speeds in construction zones.
- Maintain speeds appropriate for conditions.
- Use vehicle turn signals for turns and lane changes.
- Make eye contact and signal intention where needed.
- Acknowledge intention of others.

Y N

- Use your horn sparingly.
- Avoid unnecessary use of high beam headlights.
- Yield and move to the right for emergency vehicles.
- Refrain from flashing headlights.
- Make slow, deliberate U-turns.
- Maintain proper speeds around roadway crashes.
- Avoid returning inappropriate gestures.
- Avoid challenging other drivers.
- Try to get out of the way of aggressive drivers.
- Focus on driving and avoid distracting activities.

### DO YOU AVOID:

- Driving when drowsy.
- Blocking the right-turn lane.
- Taking more than one parking space.
- Parking in a space designated for the disabled.
- Letting your door hit the vehicle parked next to you.
- Using the cell phone while driving.
- Stopping in the road to talk.
- Inflicting loud music on neighboring cars.

### Score Yourself:

Count the number of "No" Answers

(1-3) SAFE DRIVER

(4-7) GOOD DRIVER

(8-11) SEMI-AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

(12+) AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

- Poorly-maintained vehicles—vehicles malfunctioning or stalling on freeways or running out of fuel.

## DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS AND ROAD RAGE

Aggressive driving and road rage happens when crowded roads, rushing, and impatience cause one driver to react angrily to another driver. Some suggestions for avoiding aggressive driving and road rage situations are:

- Allow plenty of time to reach your destination.
- Do not cut off other drivers.
- Do not drive slowly in the left (fast) lane.
- Do not tailgate.
- Do not make gestures to other drivers.
- Use your horn for emergencies only.

Prevent a potentially violent incident by:

- Avoiding eye contact with an angry driver.
- Giving an angry driver plenty of space.
- Take the questionnaire on the previous page to determine the type of driver that you are.

## TEXT MESSAGING AND CELL PHONES

Regardless of age, it is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless communication device to write, send, or read text messages, instant messages, and e-mail(s).

**NOTE:** With certain exceptions, adults may **not** use a cell phone while driving unless hands-free equipment is used. Minors may not use a cell phone except in certain emergencies. (See page 12.)

Cell phones can be a lifesaver in emergency situations. Use your cell phone in the following safe and responsible ways while driving:

- Use hands-free devices.
- If your cell phone rings, do not answer it.
- Let the call go to voicemail if you have this feature.
- Do not use the cell phone during hazardous conditions.
- Do not engage in distracting conversations.
- Pay attention to the road.
- Use your cell phone to call for help in an emergency.

## COLLISION AVOIDANCE *Keep Your Car Visible*

The driver's blind spots are shown on page 46. You can not see vehicles in these blind spots, if you only look in your mirrors. Turn your head to see if a vehicle is in one of these

blind spots. Do not linger in another driver's blind spot. As quickly as you can, drop back or pass the vehicle.

### **What is the Road Like**

The faster your speed, the less control you have of your vehicle. Rather than driving at the legal posted speed limit, consider what else may affect the safe operation of your vehicle. For example, should you drive 35 mph (the posted speed limit) on a curve down an icy mountain road? Many inexperienced drivers do not adjust their driving speed for road conditions. That is one reason why inexperienced drivers have more "out-of-control" collisions than experienced drivers.

### **Curves**

On curves, there is a strong outward pull on your vehicle, especially when the road is slippery. Rain, mud, snow, ice and gravel make the road slippery. If a speed limit is not posted before a curve, you must judge how sharp the curve is and change your speed. Slow down *before* you enter the curve. Braking on a curve may cause you to skid.

### **Driving in Heavy Traffic**

Drive slower in heavy traffic, so you can stop within the distance you have.

As a general rule, drive more slowly:

- In shopping centers, parking lots, and downtown areas.
- On roads with heavy traffic.
- When you see the brake lights of several vehicles ahead of you.

- Over narrow bridges and through tunnels.
- Through toll plazas.
- Near schools, playgrounds, and in residential areas.

### **Traffic Speeds**

Collisions are more likely to happen when one driver goes faster or slower than the other cars on the road.

If you drive faster than other traffic, you increase your chances of being involved in a collision. Studies have shown that speeding does not save more than a few minutes in an hour of driving time.

Driving slower than other vehicles or stopping suddenly can be just as dangerous as speeding, if not more dangerous because you may cause a rear end collision or cause other drivers to swerve to avoid hitting you. If you notice that vehicles are passing you, move into the right lane and let them pass.

## **DRIVING HAZARDS**

### **Water on the Road**

Slow down when there is a lot of water on the road. In a heavy rain at speeds of 50 mph or more, your tires can lose all contact with the road and then your vehicle will be riding on water or "hydroplaning." A slight change of direction or a gust of wind could throw your vehicle into a skid. If your vehicle starts to hydroplane, slow down gradually—do not apply the brakes.

## ***Slippery Roads***

Slow down at the first sign of rain. This is when many roads are the most slippery, because oil and dust have not washed away. A slippery road will not give your tires the grip they need. Drive more slowly than you would on a dry road. Adjust your speed as follows:

- Wet road—go five to ten miles slower.
- Packed snow—reduce your speed by half.
- Ice—slow to a crawl.

Some road surfaces are more slippery than others when wet and usually have warning signs. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- On cold, wet days, shade from trees or buildings can hide spots of ice. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Bridges and overpasses tend to freeze before the rest of the road does. They can hide spots of ice.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, the pavement can be very slippery for the first several minutes. Heat causes oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. The oil makes the road slippery until it is washed off.

## ***Skids on Slippery Surfaces***

A road that is normally safe can become dangerous when it is slippery. Ice and packed snow on the road can cause your vehicle to skid, especially

if you are driving too fast or going downhill. If you start to skid:

- Ease off the gas pedal,
- Stop braking, and
- Turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid.

If you can not control your vehicle on a slippery surface, try to find something to stop you. Try to get a wheel on dry pavement or on the shoulder of the road. You may have to edge slowly into a snow bank or some bushes to stop.

To prevent skidding on slippery surfaces:

- Drive more slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead.
- Slow down, as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Avoid quick stops. “Pump” the brakes to slow or stop. (Do not pump antilock brakes.)
- Shift to low gear before going down a steep hill.
- Avoid especially slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, or deep puddles.

If the brakes get wet, dry them by **lightly** pressing the gas pedal and brake pedal at the same time so that the vehicle drives against the pressure of the brakes. Do this only until the brakes dry.

## **MECHANICAL TIPS**

### ***Acceleration Skids***

An acceleration skid usually happens when the drive wheels lose traction on the road surface. To maintain control of a skidding vehicle, do not apply the brakes. Ease off the gas pedal and straighten the front wheels as the vehicle begins to straighten out.

### ***Locked Wheel Skids***

This type of skid is usually caused by braking too hard at a high rate of speed and locking the wheels. The vehicle will skid no matter which way the steering wheel is turned. Take your foot off the brake to unlock the wheels. Then straighten the front wheels as the vehicle begins to straighten out. Slow the vehicle gradually until you are at a safe speed to continue driving.

### ***Steering Wheel Locking Device***

Never turn your vehicle's ignition to the "lock" position while it is still in motion or the steering will lock and you will lose control of your vehicle.

## **COLLISIONS ARE NOT ACCIDENTS**

An "accident" implies an unforeseen event that occurs without anyone's fault or negligence. Most often in traffic, that is not the case.

If you see a vehicle's hazard lights ahead, slow down. There may be a collision or other road emergency ahead. Stop and give assistance if asked by anyone, or pass very carefully.

Avoid driving near collisions, if you can. Those injured will be helped faster if other vehicles aren't blocking the road. If you must drive near a collision, do not stop or slow down just to look. You may cause another crash. Drive by carefully, watching for people in the road.

### ***Causes of Collisions***

The most common causes of collisions are:

- Unsafe speed.
- Driving on the wrong side of the road.
- Improper turns.
- Violating the right-of-way rules.
- Violating stop signals and signs.
- Driver distractions.

### ***Involved in a Collision***

If you are involved in a collision:

- You must stop. Someone could be injured and need your help. If you do not stop, you may be convicted of "hit and run" and could be severely punished.
- Call 9-1-1, if anyone is hurt.
- Move your vehicle out of the traffic lane if no one is injured or killed.
- Show your driver license, registration card, evidence of financial responsibility, and current address to the other driver or persons involved, or to any police officer.
- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to the

police or CHP within 24 hours of the collision if someone is killed or injured.

- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to DMV within 10 days.
- If you hit a parked vehicle or other property, leave a note with your name, phone number, and address in or securely attached to the vehicle or property you hit. Report the collision to the city police or, in unincorporated areas, to the CHP.
- If your parked car rolls away and hits another vehicle, try to find the owner and report the incident to authorities as mentioned above.
- If you kill or injure an animal, call the nearest humane society, the police, or CHP. Do not try to move an injured animal or leave an injured animal to die.

### ***Reporting a Collision***

When you have a collision, report it to the DMV within 10 days if:

- More than \$750 in damage was done to the property of any person.
- Anyone was injured (no matter how slightly) or killed.

*Each driver (or the driver's insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a report to DMV using the Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) form.*

Go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for the Report of Traffic Accident (SR 1)

form. The CHP or police **will not** make this report for you.

You must make this report whether or not you caused the collision, even if the collision occurred on private property.

Your driving privilege will be suspended:

- If you do not make this report.
- For up to four years, if you did not have proper insurance coverage. During the last three years of the suspension, your license can be returned to you if you provide a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22) and maintain it during the three-year period.

## **ADDITIONAL DRIVING LAWS/RULES**

### **THINGS YOU MUST NOT Do:**

- **Do not** smoke when a minor is in the vehicle at any time. You can be fined up to \$100.
- **Do not** dump or abandon animals on a highway. This crime is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, six months in jail, or both.
- **Do not** operate a cell phone without the use of a hands-free device. (Minors, see page 12.)
- **Do not** drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device to write, send, or read text-based communications.
- **Do not** wear a headset over, or earplugs in, **both** your ears.

- **Do not** drive a vehicle so loaded, either with property or people, that you can not control it, see ahead, or to the sides of your vehicle.
- **Do not** carry anything in or on a passenger vehicle which extends beyond the fenders on the left side or more than six inches beyond the fenders on the right side. Cargo extending more than four feet from the back of the vehicle must display a 12-inch red or fluorescent orange square flag or two red lights at night.
- **Do not** allow anyone to ride on any part of your vehicle not intended for passengers.
- **Do not** allow anyone to ride in the trunk of your vehicle. Convictions will result in penalties for both the driver and the person(s) riding in the trunk.
- **Do not** allow a person to ride in the back of a pickup or other truck unless the vehicle is equipped with seats and the person uses both the seat and a safety belt.
- **Do not** transport animals in the back of a pickup or other truck unless the animal is properly secured.
- **Do not** tow anyone who is riding a bicycle, in a wagon, on roller skates, on a sled, on skis, or on a toy vehicle.
- **Do not** litter the roadside. The fine is \$1,000, and you may be forced to pick up what you threw away. Littering convictions show on your driving record.
- **Do not** wear eyeglasses with temples wide enough to keep you from seeing clearly to the sides.
- **Do not** drive a vehicle equipped with a video monitor if the monitor is visible to the driver and displays anything other than vehicle information or global mapping displays.
- **Do not** honk your horn unless it is a safety warning to avoid a collision.
- **Do not** throw any cigarette, cigar, or other flaming or glowing substance from your vehicle.
- **Do not** shoot firearms on a highway or at traffic signs.
- **Do not** block your view by putting signs or other objects on the front windshield or the back and side windows. Do not hang objects on the mirror. Windshield/window stickers, etc., are permitted in these locations only:
  - a seven-inch square on either the passenger's side windshield, lower corner; or the lower corner of the rear window.
  - a five-inch square on the lower corner of the driver's side.
  - side windows behind the driver.
- **Do not** drive any motor vehicle into a designated wilderness area. (CVC §38301.5)

- **Do not** drive with illegally tinted safety glass. If you have sun-sensitive skin you may use removable sun screens during daylight travel if you have a letter from your physician.
- **Do not** block or hinder a funeral procession. Vehicles taking part in a funeral procession have the right-of-way, and if you interfere, obstruct, or interrupt the funeral procession you are subject to a citation (CVC §2817). A funeral procession is led by a traffic officer, and all vehicles taking part in the procession have windshield markers to identify them and have their headlights on.
- **Do not** ride, or allow a child to ride, a “pocket bike” on a public street or highway. These vehicles are not manufactured or designed for highway use, and they do not meet federal safety standards.

### THINGS YOU MUST Do:

- **You must** drive as far to the right as reasonably possible on narrow mountain roads, and if you can not see at least 200 feet ahead honk your horn.
- **You must** use your headlights 30 minutes after sunset and leave them on until 30 minutes before sunrise.
- **You must** dim your lights to low beams within 500 feet of a vehicle coming toward you or within 300 feet of a vehicle you are following.

- **You must** turn on your headlights if snow, rain, fog, or low-visibility (1,000 feet or less) require the use of windshield wipers.
- **You must** move your vehicle out of the traffic lane (unless it is disabled) when it is safe to do so, if you are involved in a collision. Law enforcement may tow or impound your vehicle if it is left in an unsafe area and causes safety concerns.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SAFETY FOR THE AGING DRIVER

The department has published a handbook specifically for senior drivers. Please go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) to view or download a copy of the *Senior Guide for Safe Driving* or call 1-800-777-0133 to request a copy be mailed to you or contact the *Senior Driver Ombudsman Program* in your area.

### GOOD VISION FOR ALL DRIVERS

You need good vision to drive safely. If you can not see clearly, you can not judge distances or spot trouble, and you will not be able to make the best judgements. You also need to see peripherally or “out of the corner of your eye” to spot cars coming up beside you, while your eyes are on the road ahead.

You may see clearly and still not be able to judge distances. You need good distance judgment so you know how far you are from other cars.

Continue  
driving  
as long as  
you can safely  
do so.

Visit **dmv.ca.gov** for the  
Senior Guide for Safe Driving



Many people who may see clearly in the daytime have trouble at night. Some see poorly in dim light. Others may have trouble with the glare of headlights.

Have your eyes checked every year or two. You may never know about poor peripheral vision or poor distance judgment unless you have your eyes checked.

## HEARING

Hearing is more important to driving than many people realize. The sound of horns, a siren, or screeching tires can warn you of danger. Sometimes you can hear a vehicle, but can not see it especially if it is in your blind spots.

Even people with good hearing can not hear well if the radio or CD player is blaring. While driving do not wear a headset or earplugs in both ears. Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice them. Have your hearing checked periodically. Drivers who know they are deaf or hearing-impaired can adjust. They can learn to rely more on their seeing habits.

## ALERTNESS

When you are tired, you are less alert. The body naturally wants to sleep at night. Most drivers are less alert at night especially after midnight. You may not see hazards as soon or react as quickly as when you are rested and alert, so your chances of having a crash may be greater. If you

are sleepy, the only safe cure is to get off the road and get some sleep.

To keep from getting tired on a long trip:

- Get a normal night's sleep before you start.
- Do not take any drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Do not drive long hours, and try not to drive late at night.
- Take regular rest stops even if you are not tired.
- Keep shifting your eyes from one part of the road to another. Look at objects near and far, left and right.
- Try chewing gum or singing along with the radio/CD.
- Roll your window down to get some fresh air.

If you are tired all the time and fall asleep often during the day, ask your physician to check for a sleep disorder.

## MEDICATIONS

Remember that all medications, prescription or over-the-counter, are potentially dangerous. Over-the-counter medicines that you take for colds and allergies can make you drowsy and affect your driving ability. If you must take medication before driving, find out the effects of the medication from your physician or pharmacist. **It is your responsibility to know the effects of the medications you take.**

Before you decide to drive, do **not**:

- Mix medications, unless directed by your physician.
- Take medications prescribed for someone else.
- Mix alcohol with your medications. This applies to both prescribed and over-the-counter medications.

## HEALTH AND EMOTIONS

Your personality affects the way you drive. Do not let your emotions interfere with safe driving. Use all of your good judgment, common sense, and courtesy when you drive and follow all the recommended safe driving rules.

Discuss health concerns such as poor vision, heart problems, diabetes, or epilepsy with your physician and follow his or her advice. Tell the DMV if you have a condition that might affect your ability to drive safely.

## CONDITIONS PHYSICIANS MUST REPORT

Physicians and surgeons are required to report patients at least 14 years of age and older who are diagnosed as having lapses of consciousness, Alzheimer's Disease, or related disorders. (*Health & Safety Code §103900*)

Although not required by law, your physician may report any other medical condition he/she believes may affect your ability to drive safely.

## SAFETY TIPS

According to the CHP, if your vehicle becomes disabled on the freeway:

- Safely pull to the right shoulder. Ideally, park the vehicle next to a call box, if possible. (There is a call box every quarter mile to two miles.)
- If you must exit the vehicle, exit on the right side of your vehicle.
- Once you arrange for assistance, return to your vehicle, get back in on the right side and put on the seatbelts.
- Stay inside your vehicle with the seatbelts on until help arrives.

In certain circumstances, exit your vehicle, such as when there is not enough shoulder space or if there is a guard rail or an area to safely stay away from the freeway lanes, and away from your vehicle. Use your emergency blinking lights at your discretion according to weather conditions. The lights may be helpful, but they could also attract drunk drivers.

The California Highway Patrol's Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) provides free emergency roadside services during commute periods. If you get stuck on the freeway because your automobile stops running, FSP will:

- Offer you a gallon of gas if you run out.

- “Jump start” your vehicle if the battery is dead.
- Refill your radiator and tape hoses.
- Change a flat tire.

The FSP program:

- Can not tow your vehicle to a private repair service or residence.
- Does not recommend tow service companies or repair and body shops.
- Does not tow motorcycles.
- Does not assist vehicles which have been involved in a collision unless directed by the CHP.
- Does report any collision to the CHP.

If FSP can not get your vehicle going, it will be towed free of charge to a location approved by the CHP. FSP will also contact additional assistance for you. The CHP will notify an auto club or towing service.

The FSP serves the following areas:

- Valley Division—the Sacramento metro and Tracy areas
- Golden Gate Division—the San Francisco bay area
- Central Division—the Fresno area
- Southern Division—the Los Angeles basin
- Inland Division—the Riverside area
- Border Division—the San Diego and Orange County areas
- Coastal Division—the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas

Call 1-800-TELLCHP (835-5247) to find out if the FSP operates where you are and how to contact the FSP.

## **RECORD CONFIDENTIALITY**

Most information in your driver license file is available to the public. Your residence address may only be viewed by authorized agencies. Your mailing address, if different from your residence, is less restricted.

Records on the physical or mental condition of a driver remain confidential.

You may obtain a copy of your driving record at any DMV office for a fee with valid identification.

## **VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION TIPS**

If you follow the suggestions below, you can minimize your chances of becoming the victim of vehicle theft. In the United States, a vehicle is stolen an average of every 21 minutes. Vehicle theft results in costs to the victim and it increases insurance premiums. Also, vehicle thieves often use the stolen vehicles to commit other crimes.

Vehicle thefts occur more often where large groups of cars are parked at any time of day for extended periods of time, such as shopping centers, colleges, sporting events, movie complexes, and large apartment complexes.

Here are some tips you can use to avoid being the victim of vehicle theft:

- **Never leave:**
  - Your vehicle running and unattended even to dash into a store.
  - The keys in the ignition. Do not leave keys inside a locked garage or in hide-a-key box.
  - Valuables such as purses, laptops, etc., in plain view even if your vehicle is locked. Place them out of sight.
  - Personal identification documents such as the ownership title or credit cards in the vehicle.
- **Always:**
  - Roll up your windows and lock your vehicle even if it is parked in front of your house.
  - Park in high-traffic, well-lit areas whenever possible.
  - Report a stolen vehicle immediately to the police.
- **Suggestions:**
  - Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes.
  - Think about purchasing a vehicle theft tracking/security system, especially if you own one of the frequently-stolen model vehicles.
  - When you must leave your key with a valet, attendant, or mechanic, only leave the ignition key.
  - Copy your license plate and vehicle information on a card, and keep that information with you and not in the car. The police will need this information, if your vehicle is stolen.

## TRAFFIC BREAKS

Traffic breaks are used by law enforcement to:

- Slow or stop traffic to remove hazards from the roadway.
- Conduct emergency operations.
- Prevent traffic collisions in heavy fog or unusually heavy traffic.

During a traffic break, the officer turns on the rear emergency lights, slows the vehicle, and drives across the lanes of traffic in a serpentine manner. To assist the officer in conducting a traffic break:

- Activate your emergency flashers to warn other drivers there is a hazard ahead.
- Slowly begin to decrease your speed. Do not slow abruptly unless it is necessary to avoid a collision. Slow to the same speed as the officer while keeping a safe distance from the patrol vehicle ahead of you.
- Do **not** attempt to drive past the patrol vehicle. Do not accelerate until the patrol vehicle has turned off its emergency lights and traffic conditions ahead allow the return to normal speeds.

## **WHAT A DRIVER SHOULD DO DURING AN ENFORCEMENT STOP**

**Acknowledge the officer's presence by turning on your right turn signal.** Activating your signal lets the officer know that you recognize his/her presence. An officer may become alarmed if you fail to recognize him/her and might perceive that you have a reason to avoid yielding or that you might be impaired.

**Move your vehicle to the right shoulder of the road.** The officer will guide you, using his/her patrol vehicle. Do not move onto the center median. Do not stop in the center median of a freeway or on the opposite side of a two lane roadway. This places both the driver and the officer in danger of being hit by oncoming traffic.

**On a freeway, move completely onto the right shoulder, even if you're in the carpool lane.** Stop in well lit areas when possible. Pull your vehicle as far off the roadway as possible. When it is dark, look for locations that have more light such as areas with street or freeway lights, near restaurants or service stations.

**End your cell phone conversation and turn off your radio.** The officer needs your full attention to communicate with you to complete the enforcement stop in the least amount of time needed.

**Remain inside your vehicle unless otherwise directed by the officer.**

Never step out of your vehicle, unless an officer directs you to do so. During an enforcement stop, the officer's priorities are your safety, the safety of your passengers, and the officer's own personal safety. In most situations, the safest place for you and your passengers is inside your vehicle. Exiting your vehicle without first being directed by an officer can increase the risk of being struck by a passing vehicle and/or increase the officer's level of feeling threatened.

**Place your hands in clear view, including all passengers' hands such as on steering wheel, on top of lap, etc.** During an enforcement stop, an officer's inability to see the hands of the driver and all occupants in the vehicle increases the officer's level of feeling threatened. Most violent criminal acts against a law enforcement officer occur through the use of a person's hands such as use of a firearm, use of a sharp object, etc. If your windows are tinted, it is recommended that you roll down your windows after you have stopped your vehicle on the right shoulder of the roadway and before the officer makes contact with you.

# ACTIONS THAT RESULT IN LOSS OF LICENSE

## FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The California's Compulsory Financial Responsibility Law requires every driver and every owner of a motor vehicle to maintain financial responsibility (liability coverage) at all times. There are four forms of financial responsibility:

- A motor vehicle liability insurance policy.
- A deposit of \$35,000 with DMV.
- A surety bond for \$35,000 obtained from a company licensed to do business in California.
- A DMV issued self-insurance certificate.

You must carry written evidence of financial responsibility whenever you drive, and show it to a police officer after a traffic stop or collision when asked. You may have to pay a fine or have your vehicle impounded if you do not comply with this law.

## INSURANCE

### *Insurance Requirements*

The law states you must be financially responsible for your actions whenever you drive and for all motor vehicles you own. Most drivers choose to have a liability insurance policy as proof of financial responsibility. If you have a collision not covered by your insurance, or you do not have insurance, your driver license will be suspended. If

the driver is not identified, the owner of the motor vehicle involved in a collision will have his or her driver license suspended.

The minimum amount your insurance\* must cover per collision is:

- \$15,000 for a single death or injury.
- \$30,000 for death or injury to more than one person.
- \$5,000 for property damage.

Call 1-800-927-HELP, before you purchase insurance to confirm that your agent/broker and insurer are licensed by the California Department of Insurance.

If you are visiting California or have just moved here, be aware that not all out-of-state insurance companies are authorized to do business in California. Before you drive here, ask your insurance company if you are covered in case of a collision. If you have a collision in California, all three of the following conditions must be met to avoid suspension of your driving privilege:

1. Your liability policy must provide bodily injury and property damage coverage which equals or exceeds the limits stated.

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\* Low cost automobile policies are available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus counties. Please contact your insurance agent.

2. Your insurance company must file a power of attorney allowing the DMV to act as its agent for legal service in California.
3. You must have insured the vehicle before you came to California. You can not renew the out-of-state policy once the vehicle is registered in California.

### ***Collisions on Your Record***

Every collision reported to DMV by:

- Law enforcement, unless the reporting officer states another person was at fault.
- You, or another party involved in the collision, if any one person has over \$750 in damage or if anyone is injured or dies.

It does not matter who caused the collision, DMV must keep this record.

### ***Collisions, Insurance, and Minors***

If you are under 18 years of age, your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign your license application and assume financial responsibility for your driving. When you reach age 18, your parent(s) or guardian(s) liability automatically ends.

If you are involved in a collision your parent(s) or guardian(s) may be liable for civil damages and you may also be fined.

**EXCEPTION:** Your parent(s) or guardian(s) can have your license cancelled at any time while you are a minor.

## **ALCOHOL/DRUGS WHILE DRIVING**

### ***Alcohol/Drugs and Driving Is Dangerous***

Alcohol and/or drugs impairs your judgment. Impaired judgment or good sense, affects how you react to sounds and what you see. It is also dangerous to walk in traffic or bicycle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It takes about an hour for the body to get rid of each “drink.” If a person has had more than one drink an hour, one hour of “sobering up” time should be allowed for each extra drink before driving. *Better still, someone who has not been drinking should drive.* (See page 85.)

Much of what has been said about alcohol also applies to drugs. California’s drunk driving law is also a drug driving law. It refers to “driving under the influence of alcohol **and/or** drugs.” If an officer suspects that you are under the influence of drugs, the officer can legally require you to take a blood or urine test. Drivers who refuse these tests are subject to longer license suspensions and revocations. Anyone convicted of possessing, selling, or manufacturing illegal drugs is subject to a six-month driver license suspension.

The use of any drug (the law does not distinguish between prescription, over-the-counter, or illegal drugs) which impairs your ability to drive safely is illegal. Check with your physician or pharmacist and read



**If you see a drunk driver  
on the road, call 911.**

Provide law enforcement with the:

- » exact location
- » vehicle make & model
- » license plate

**One call could save a life.**

**Report Drunk Drivers**  
**CALL 911**



*IF YOU DRINK AND DRIVE, THE COST OF A DUI ARE  
BEST CAN TOTAL \$8,240\**

\*If you use an attorney, the cost is even greater.

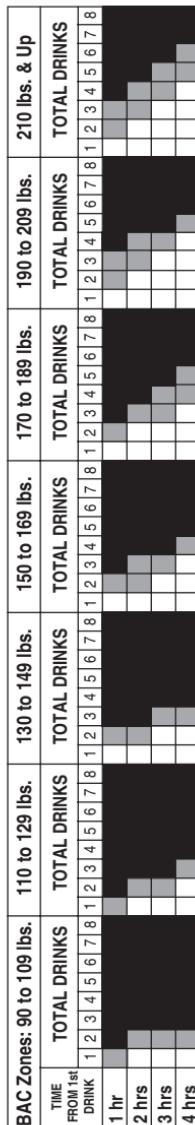
## ALCOHOL IMPAIRMENT CHART



*There is no safe way to drive while under the influence. Even one drink can make you an unsafe driver.*

Drinking alcohol affects your **Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)**. It is illegal to drive with a **BAC** that is .08% or more if you drive commercial vehicles; .01% or more if under 21). However, a **BAC** below .08% does not mean that it is safe or legal to drive. The charts below show the **BAC** zones for various numbers of drinks and time periods. **Remember:** "One drink" is a 1 1/2-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor (even if mixed with non-alcoholic drinks), a 5-ounce glass of 12% wine, or a 12-ounce glass of 5% beer. These "one drink" equivalents change if you are drinking ale, malt liquors, fortified wines, port, brandy, different proof liquor, or if you are drinking on an empty stomach, are tired, sick, upset, or have taken medicines or drugs.

**How to use these charts:** Find your weight chart. Then, look for the total number of drinks you have had and compare that to the time shown. If your **BAC** level is in the grey zone, your chances of having an accident are 5 times higher than if you had no drinks, and 25 times higher if your **BAC** level falls in the black zone.



**[Technical note:** These charts are not legal evidence of actual BAC. Although it is possible for anyone to exceed the designated limits, the charts have been constructed so that fewer than 5 legends in 100 will exceed 0.04% Possible DUI—Definitely unlawful if under 21 years old      (05%–07% Likely DUI—Definitely unlawful if under 21 years old      (0.08% Up) Definitely DUI

the warning label if you are not sure that taking the medication will affect your driving. Here are some facts:

- Most drugs taken for colds, hay fever, allergy, or to calm nerves or muscles can make a person drowsy.
- Medicines taken together, or used with alcohol can be dangerous. Many drugs have unexpected side effects when taken with alcohol.
- Pep pills, “uppers,” and diet pills can make a driver more alert for a short time. Later, however, they can cause a person to be nervous, dizzy, and not able to concentrate. They can also affect vision.

Any drug that “may cause drowsiness or dizziness” is one you should not take before driving. Make sure you read the label and know the effects of any drug you use.

### ***Carrying Alcohol in a Vehicle***

The law is very strict about carrying alcohol or drugs in a vehicle whether the vehicle is on or off the highway. You must not drink any amount of alcohol in any vehicle.

A container of liquor, beer, or wine carried inside the vehicle must be full, sealed, and unopened. Otherwise, it must be in the trunk of the vehicle or in a place where passengers do not sit. Keeping an opened alcoholic drink in the glove compartment is specifically against the law.

In a bus, taxi, camper, or motor home, the law does not apply to non-driving passengers.

Refer to page 85 for the Designated Driver Program.

### ***Drivers Under 21 (Possession of Alcohol)***

If you are under 21 years of age:

- You may not carry liquor, beer, or wine inside a vehicle unless you are accompanied by a parent or other person as specified by law, and the container must be full, sealed, and unopened.
- If you are caught with an alcoholic beverage in your vehicle, it may be impounded for up to 30 days. The court may fine you up to \$1,000 and either suspend your driving privilege for one year **or** require the DMV to delay the issuance of your first license for up to one year, if you are not already licensed.
- Your driving privilege will be revoked for one year, if you are convicted of either driving with a BAC of 0.01% or higher or driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. On the first offense you will be required to complete the educational portion of a licensed driving-under-the-influence (DUI) program. A subsequent offense may require a longer DUI program and you will not have a restricted license to attend the DUI program.

**EXCEPTION:** You may carry alcoholic beverages in closed containers while working for someone with an off-site liquor sales license.

### **Drivers of All Ages**

It is illegal to drive after consuming excessive alcohol in any form (including medications such as cough syrup), or taking any drug (including prescription medications), or using any combination of alcohol or drugs.

### **Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limits**

It is illegal for any person to operate a vehicle with a:

- BAC of 0.08% or higher, if the person is age 21 or older.
- **BAC of 0.01% or higher, if the person is under age 21.**
- BAC of 0.01% or higher at any age if the person is on DUI probation.
- BAC of 0.04% or higher, in any vehicle requiring a commercial driver license (with or without a CDL issued to the driver).

The DMV can take an administrative action against your driving privilege after you are detained or arrested **and** the court may take a separate action (suspend, revoke or delay the license) for the same offense. DMV's action is related only to your driving privilege. The court's action may involve payment of a fine, jail time, suspension, or revocation of your driving privilege and completion of a DUI program.

Similar provisions (*Harbors and Navigation Code*) apply when you operate any vessel, aquaplane, water skis, or similar devices. These convictions are placed on your driving record and will be used by the court to determine "prior convictions" for motor vehicle DUI sentencing. These convictions are also used when determining the length of a suspension or revocation action or the reinstatement requirements because of a violation you committed while driving a motor vehicle.

### **ADMIN PER SE**

When you drive in California, you consent to have your breath, blood or, under certain circumstances, urine tested if you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of both.

**Under 21—Zero Tolerance for Alcohol Use.** If you are under 21, you must submit to a hand-held breath test, Preliminary Alcohol Screening (PAS), or one of the other chemical tests if you have been detained and a police officer has reason to believe you were drinking alcohol. If your BAC measures 0.01% or higher on the PAS, the officer may take your license and issue you a temporary license for only 30 days, give you an order of suspension for one year, and then determine whether to release you, turn you over to juvenile authorities, or contact your parent(s) or guardian(s). You may request a DMV administrative hearing within 10 days.

If your PAS shows a BAC of 0.05%, the officer may require you to submit to either a breath or blood test. Some PAS devices provide a record which may be submitted to the court as evidence. Other PAS devices do not provide a record, so the officer may ask for a breath or blood test after the PAS. You do not have a right to consult with a lawyer before selecting or completing a test.

If a subsequent test reveals a BAC of 0.05% or higher, the officer will issue you an order of suspension, arrest you for DUI (CVC §23140), and detain you until you can be turned over to your parent(s) or guardian(s) or juvenile authorities. If your BAC is 0.08% or higher, the police officer may arrest you. (CVC §§23152 or 23153)

If the officer reasonably believes you are under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs and you have already submitted to a PAS and/or a breath test, you may still be required to submit to a blood or urine test because the breath test does not detect the presence of drugs.

If you refuse to submit to any of the tests, your driving privilege may be suspended for the refusal. Even if you change your mind later and agree to a test and if your BAC measures 0.01% or higher on the PAS, your driving privilege may be suspended for both reasons, although both actions will run concurrently.

## COURT DUI CONVICTIONS

If you are convicted of driving with excessive BAC, or while under the influence of either alcohol or drugs or both (DUI), you may be sentenced to serve up to six months in jail and pay a fine between \$390 and \$1,000 (plus about three times the fine in *penalty assessments*) the first time you are convicted. Your vehicle may be impounded and is subject to storage fees.

On the first conviction the court will suspend your driving privilege for six months and require you to complete a DUI program before you can be reinstated. The length of the program may vary. If your BAC is 0.15% or higher, and you already have a record of violations for other reasons, or you refuse to submit to a chemical test, the court may order you to complete a nine-month or longer program. If your BAC is 0.20% or higher, and the court refers you to an enhanced DUI treatment program, your license will be suspended for 10 months. You could also be required to install an ignition interlock device (IID) on your vehicle. A court may also order you to install an IID if your BAC is 0.15% or higher, or you have 2 or more prior moving violations, or you refuse a chemical test at the time of your arrest. An IID prevents you from starting your vehicle if you have any alcohol on your breath. If anyone was injured as a result of your driving under the influence, the suspension period is one year.

In cases involving serious injury or death, you may be punished under California's Three Strikes Law. You also could face a civil lawsuit. All DUI convictions will remain on DMV's records for ten years. The courts and/or DMV may impose more stringent penalties for subsequent violations during that period. A BAC below legal limits does not mean that you are safe to drive. Almost all drivers show impairment by alcohol at levels lower than the legal limit. The impairment you exhibit at the time you are stopped may be enough to convict you of driving under the influence even without a BAC measurement.

### ***Drivers 21 and Older—DUI Programs and Restricted Licenses***

Completion of a DUI program is required for all DUI convictions.

Generally, if you are over 21 and enroll in a DUI program, file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22), and pay the restriction and reissue fees, the DMV will issue you a restricted driver license, which allows you to drive to/from work and during the course of employment (unless you hold a commercial driver license) and to/from a DUI program. However, if you are considered a "traffic safety" or "public safety" risk, if permitted to drive, the court may order the DMV to not grant you a restricted driver license. Other actions against you may also prohibit the issuance of a restricted license.

Second and subsequent DUI convictions result in increased penalties, including a two-year suspension or a revocation of up to four years. After you complete a prescribed period of your suspension/revocation and either enroll in, or complete a portion of, a DUI program, you may obtain a restricted license to drive anywhere necessary, if you:

- Install an IID on your vehicle.
- Agree not to drive any vehicle without an IID.
- Agree to complete the prescribed DUI program.
- File an SR 22.
- Pay the reissue and restriction fees.

### **DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM**

The Designated Driver Program is an anti-DUI effort that works. The program encourages one individual to abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages for an outing, so he or she can be responsible for transporting other person(s) safely.

To participate as a designated driver, an individual:

- Should be at least 21 years of age and must possess a valid driver license.
- Must be part of a group of two or more persons and verbally identify himself or herself as the designated driver to the server.
- Must abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages for the duration of the outing.

- Must not be an otherwise impaired driver.
- Must understand that management reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time.

## GETTING A TICKET

If you are stopped by a police officer and cited for a traffic law violation, you sign a promise to appear in traffic court. When you go to court, you may plead guilty or not guilty, or you may forfeit (pay) the citation fine. Paying the fine is the same as a guilty plea.

If you ignore the traffic ticket and do not keep your promise to appear in court, the failure to appear (FTA) goes on your driver record. If you fail to pay a fine (FTP), the court will notify the DMV, and this will also show on your driver record. Even one FTA or FTP can cause the department to suspend your license. Ending the suspension will cost you a reissue fee of \$55.

Each time you are convicted of a moving traffic law violation, the court notifies the DMV, and the conviction is placed on your driver license record. Convictions reported by other states are also added to your driver record.

## EVADING A POLICE OFFICER

Any person who willfully flees or attempts to evade a police officer performing his/her duties is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county

jail for not more than one year. (CVC §2800.1)

If a person is convicted of causing serious bodily injury during the course of a police pursuit (CVC §2800.3[a]), he/she is subject to:

- Imprisonment in a state prison for three, five, or seven years **or** in a county jail for not more than one year.
- A fine of not less than \$2,000 nor more than \$10,000.
- Both a fine and imprisonment.

If a person is convicted of killing anyone during the course of a police pursuit (CVC §2800.3[b]), he/she is subject to imprisonment in a state prison for four, six, or ten years.

## POINTS ON THE DRIVER RECORD

The DMV keeps a public record of all your traffic convictions and collisions. Each occurrence stays on your record for 36 months, or longer, depending on the type of conviction.

The Negligent Operator Treatment System (NOTS) is based on negligent operator points and consists of a computer generated series of warning letters and progressive sanctions against the driving privilege.

You may be considered a negligent operator when your driving record shows one of the following “point count” totals.

- 4 points in 12 months
- 6 points in 24 months
- 8 points in 36 months

Some examples of one point violations:

- A traffic conviction.
- An at-fault collision.

Some examples of two point violations:

- Reckless driving or hit-and-run driving
- Driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Driving while driver license is suspended or revoked

If you get 4 points in 12 months you will lose your driver license. A violation received in a commercial vehicle carries one and one-half times the point count normally assessed. For detailed point count information refer to the *California Commercial Driver Handbook*.

## **VANDALISM/GRAFFITI— ALL AGES**

California law allows the courts to suspend the driver license for up to two years of a person convicted of engaging in vandalism, including graffiti. If you are convicted and do not have a driver license, the courts can delay the issuance of your driver license for up to three years from the date you are legally eligible to drive.

## **SPEED CONTESTS/RECKLESS DRIVING**

A person convicted of driving recklessly or engaging in a speed contest which causes bodily injury to another person is subject to:

- Imprisonment in a county jail or state prison for a minimum of 30 days to 6 months,
- A fine ranging from \$220 to \$1,000, or
- Both a fine and imprisonment. (CVC §§23105 and 23109.1)

## **POSSESSING FIREARMS**

The court will:

- Suspend or revoke the driving privilege of any minor convicted of possessing a concealable weapon or live ammunition, or
- Impose driver license sanctions for minors convicted of misdemeanors involving firearms.

## **TRAFFIC VIOLATOR SCHOOL DISMISSEALS**

When a driver is cited for a one point traffic violation, the judge may offer the driver the opportunity to attend a Traffic Violator School. Drivers who do not have a commercial license may participate once in any 18-month period to have a citation dismissed from their driving record.

**NOTE:** If you have a commercial license and attend traffic school, the citation will still appear on your driving record, regardless of the type of vehicle you were driving when cited.

## **SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION BY DMV**

If you get too many negligent driver points, the DMV will place you on probation for one year (which includes a six-month suspension)

**or** revoke your driving privilege. (See page 86.) Your suspension or revocation order informs you of your right to a hearing.

At the end of the suspension or revocation period, you may apply for a new license, and you must show proof of financial responsibility.

The DMV will revoke your license if you are convicted of a hit-and-run or reckless driving, which results in injury.

## **SUSPENSION BY JUDGE**

A judge may suspend a person's license if convicted of one of the following:

- Breaking speed laws or reckless driving.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Hit-and-run.
- Engaging in lewd conduct and prostitution in a vehicle within 1,000 feet of a residence.
- Assaulting a driver, passenger, bicyclist, or pedestrian when the offense occurs on a highway (road rage).
- Failure to stop as required at a railway grade crossing.
- Felony or misdemeanor offense of recklessly fleeing a law enforcement officer.

Regardless of the point count, many serious offenses in which a vehicle is used are punishable by heavy penalties such as fines and/or imprisonment. If you use your vehicle as a weapon your driver license may be permanently revoked.

# VEHICLE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The following is a brief summary of California's vehicle registration requirements. Visit the DMV website for detailed information at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

## CALIFORNIA VEHICLES

When you purchase a new or used vehicle from a licensed California dealer, the dealer collects use tax and fees to register and title the vehicle.

The dealer submits the fees and documents to the DMV and gives you temporary operating authority. Usually within six to eight weeks after your purchase date, you will receive a registration card, license plates, stickers, and a Certificate of Title, if appropriate.

If you **obtain or purchase** a vehicle from a private party, you must transfer the ownership within **10 days**. Submit the following to the DMV:

- A properly endorsed and completed Certificate of Title or Application for Duplicate Title (REG 227).
- Smog certification provided by the seller if required.
- Use tax payment if required.
- Odometer Mileage Disclosure Statement if applicable.
- Appropriate DMV fees.

When you **sell or transfer** a vehicle, report it to the DMV **within 5 days**. You can complete the Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability form (REG 138) online, download and mail the completed form, or call DMV at 1-800-777-0133 to request a form be mailed to you.

## **OUT-OF-STATE VEHICLES**

Vehicles registered in another state or foreign country must be registered in California within 20 days after you become a resident or get a job. (See page 2.)

Nonresident military personnel and their spouses may operate their vehicles in California with their valid home state license plates or until the plates issued from the state of their last assigned duty station expire. They may renew the registration in their home state before it expires or register the vehicle in California.

The items needed to register any out-of-state vehicle are:

- Completed and signed Application for Title or Registration (REG 343).
- Verification of the vehicle completed by the DMV, law enforcement agent, or an auto club employee.
- Out-of-state title and/or last issued out-of-state registration card, if the title is not submitted.
- Smog certification (1976 and newer motor vehicles only).
- Weight certificate for commercial vehicles only.
- Appropriate DMV fees and use tax if applicable.
- Completed Odometer Mileage Disclosure statement if applicable.

## **RELATED FAST FACTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS (AVAILABLE ONLINE):**

- FFDL 05 *Birth Date and Legal Presence Requirements*
- FFDL 08 *Social Security Number Requirements for a Driver License or Identification Card*
- FFDL 08A *Supplemental Social Security Information for Applications with VISA E1/E2 and L1/L2 (and others)*
- FFDL 10 *Potentially Unsafe Driver*
- FFDL 14 *Vision Requirements For Driving Class C Vehicles*
- FFDL 15 *Retention of Driver Record Information*
- FFDL 16 *Collisions, What To Do*
- FFDL 19 *Provisional Licensing Changes*
- FFDL 22 *How to Prepare for Your Driving Test*
- FFDL 24 *Identity Theft*
- FFDL 25 *Identity Fraud*
- FFDL 26 *A Guide to the Driver Safety Administrative Hearing Process*
- FFDL 27 *DMV's Reexamination Process*
- FFDL 28 *Driver Distractions*
- FFDL 29 *Federal Hazardous Materials Requirements - USA Patriot Act of 2001*
- FFDL 31 *Ignition Interlock Devices*
- FFDL 32 *Limited Term for Legal Presence - Driver License and Identification Card Applications*
- FFDL 33 *Selecting a Driving School*
- FFDL 34 *Organ and Tissue Donation*
- FFDL 35 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension: Drivers age 21 and Older*
- FFDL 36 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension: Drivers Under Age 21 With a 0.01% BAC*
- FFDL 37 *Safety Tips for Bicyclists and Motorists*
- FFDL 40 *Diabetes and Driving*
- *Senior Guide for Safe Driving (DL 625)*
- *Parent-Teen Training Guide (DL 603)*
- *Driving Test Criteria (DL 955)*

# Don't Be A Statistic

**Focus**, with your  
**eyes** on the road,  
**mind** on the road,  
**hands** on the  
steering wheel.



Visit **dmv.ca.gov** for  
Driver Distractions  
Fast Facts

## **SAMPLE TEST #1**

1. When you drive through a construction zone, you should:
  - a. Slow down to watch the workers.
  - b. Decrease your following distance.
  - c. Pass the construction zone carefully and not “rubberneck”.
2. To make a right turn at the corner, you:
  - a. May not enter the bicycle lane.
  - b. Should only merge into the bicycle lane if you stop before turning.
  - c. Must merge into the bicycle lane before turning.
3. If a traffic signal light is not working, you must:
  - a. Stop, then proceed when safe.
  - b. Stop before entering the intersection and let all other traffic go first.
  - c. Slow down or stop, only if necessary.
4. A pedestrian is crossing your lane but there is no crosswalk. You should:
  - a. Make sure the pedestrian sees you, but continue driving.
  - b. Carefully drive around the pedestrian.
  - c. Stop and let the pedestrian cross the street.
5. Always use your seat belt:
  - a. Unless the vehicle was built before 1978.
  - b. Unless you are in a limousine.
  - c. When the vehicle is equipped with seat belts.
6. The extra space in front of a large truck is needed for:
  - a. Other drivers when merging onto a freeway.
  - b. The truck driver to stop the vehicle.
  - c. Other drivers when they want to slow down.
7. Roads are slippery after it first starts to rain. When the road is slippery you should:
  - a. Avoid making fast turns and fast stops.
  - b. Test your tires’ traction while going uphill.
  - c. Decrease the distance you look ahead of your vehicle.
8. Collisions can happen more often when:
  - a. All vehicles are traveling about the same speed.
  - b. One lane of traffic is traveling faster than the other lanes.
  - c. One vehicle is traveling faster or slower than the flow of traffic.

ANSWERS: 1c, 2c, 3a, 4c, 5c, 6b, 7a, 8c

## SAMPLE TEST #2

1. When you enter traffic from a stop (away from the curb), you:
  - a. Should drive slower than other traffic for 200 feet.
  - b. Need a large enough gap to get up to the speed of traffic.
  - c. Should wait for the first two vehicles to pass, then drive into the lane.
2. When passing another vehicle, it is safe to return to your lane if you:
  - a. Can not see the vehicle directly to your right.
  - b. See the vehicle's headlights in your rearview mirror.
  - c. Have passed the other vehicle's front bumper.
3. Dim your headlights for oncoming vehicles or when you are within 300 feet of a vehicle:
  - a. You are approaching from behind.
  - b. Approaching you from behind.
  - c. You have already passed.
4. If you see orange construction signs and cones on a freeway, you must:
  - a. Slow down because the lane ends ahead.
  - b. Be prepared for workers and equipment ahead.
  - c. Change lanes and maintain your current speed.
5. U-turns in residential districts are legal:
  - a. On a one-way street on a green arrow.
  - b. When there are no vehicles approaching nearby.
  - c. Across two sets of solid double, yellow lines.
6. You consent to take a blood test for the alcohol content of your blood, breath, or urine:
  - a. Only if you have been drinking alcohol.
  - b. Whenever you drive in California.
  - c. Only if you have a collision.
7. On a green arrow, you must:
  - a. Yield to any vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian in the intersection.
  - b. Yield to pedestrians only in the intersection.
  - c. Wait four seconds before proceeding.
8. When driving at night on a dimly lit street, you should:
  - a. Drive slowly enough so you can stop within the area lighted by your headlights.
  - b. Turn on your high beam headlights to better see the vehicles ahead of you.
  - c. Keep the instrument panel lights bright to be more visible to other drivers.

GO ONLINE AT **WWW.DMV.CA.GOV** FOR MORE SAMPLE TESTS

ANSWERS: 1b; 2b; 3a; 4b; 5b; 6b; 7a; 8a

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California Motorcycle Handbook



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