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English  
2016

# California

## DRIVER HANDBOOK



This handbook is available at  
[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

**Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor**  
State of California

**Brian P. Kelly, Secretary**  
California State Transportation Agency

**Jean Shiomoto, Director**  
California Department of Motor Vehicles

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Dear Fellow Californian,

In May 2015 the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) celebrated 100 years of public service. Pretty amazing!

Since its inception the DMV has undergone numerous changes and grown in ways no one could have imagined. The department has kept pace with population growth, technology, security, innovation, and road safety, and it continues to transition to new ways of doing business striving for one goal: improving customer service.

The *California Driver Handbook* is an excellent example of how the department has adapted to present-day needs and expectations.

To accommodate customer preferences, the DMV now offers the handbook in hardcopy and via technology. There is even a free DMV “app” that downloads the handbook and other DMV information onto personal electronic devices -- including interesting and fun ways to learn the rules of the road using sample quizzes, videos and other interactive tutorials.

We must not forget that the issuance of a driver license is a privilege that comes with responsibility. For that reason, making time to study in advance of taking the driver license test is *extremely* important. We know that about half of first-time test takers fail the exam.

Whether driving to work, taking children to school, or traveling on one of the state’s scenic roads and highways, we want you to be safe. So please take advantage of the many ways DMV can help you know the rules of the road.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian P. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Kelly" being the most prominent parts.

BRIAN P. KELLY  
Secretary  
California State Transportation Agency

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>NEW 2016 LAWS.....</b>	<b>VII</b>	<i>Habitual Truant—</i>	
Where to Write.....	viii	<i>Persons 13–18 Years Old.....</i>	11
<b>DMV INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>IX</b>	<i>Minors and Cell Phones .....</i>	12
Field Office Hours of Operation.....	ix	<b>MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING</b>	
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Disclaimer.....	1	To Replace a Lost/Stolen or	
Accurate Identification.....	1	Damaged Driver License.....	12
Basic Information .....	1	Name Changes.....	12
<b>THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE .....</b>	<b>2</b>	Driver License Renewals.....	12
Who Must Have a Driver License?.....	2	Renewal by Mail or Internet .....	13
<i>California Residents .....</i>	<i>2</i>	Driver License Extension .....	13
<i>California Resident Military</i>		Driver License in Your Possession ...	13
<i>Personnel (U.S. Armed Forces).....</i>	<i>2</i>	Address Changes .....	13
<i>Nonresident Military Personnel</i>		Vision .....	14
<i>Stationed in California .....</i>	<i>2</i>	Medical Information Card .....	14
<i>New California Residents .....</i>	<i>2</i>	Organ and Tissue Donation .....	14
<i>Adults Visiting California.....</i>	<i>2</i>	Veteran Designation and Benefit	
<b>OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE .....</b>	<b>3</b>	Information .....	14
Application Requirements for a Basic		<i>How Can I Get The Veterans</i>	
Class C Driver License.....	3	<i>Designation?.....</i>	15
Adults' Permit Requirements .....	4	Register To Vote .....	15
Adults' Driver License Requirements ..	4	Unlicensed Drivers.....	15
<b>DRIVER LICENSE CLASSES .....</b>	<b>6</b>	Diplomatic Driver Licenses.....	15
<b>THE EXAMINATION PROCESS.....</b>	<b>7</b>	Identification (ID) Cards .....	16
Where to Take the Tests.....	7	Free ID Cards for Physical and	
Cheating.....	7	Mental (P&M) Conditions .....	16
DMV Examinations .....	7	Identification (ID) Card Renewal by	
<b>SPECIAL SECTION - MINORS .....</b>	<b>8</b>	Mail or Internet.....	16
<i>Minors' Permit Requirements .....</i>	<i>8</i>	Driving Schools.....	16
<i>Minors' Permit Restrictions.....</i>	<i>9</i>	Mature Driver Program.....	17
<i>Minors' Driver License Requirements..</i>	<i>9</i>	Pedestrian Responsibilities .....	17
<i>Exceptions - Minors' Driver License</i>		New Technology .....	18
<i>Restrictions.....</i>	<i>9</i>	<b>OCCUPANT PROTECTION.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Out-Of-State Minors .....</i>	<i>10</i>	Seat Belts .....	18
<i>Out-Of-State Minors' Permit.....</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Mistaken Beliefs About Seat</i>	
<i>Out-Of-State Minors' Driver</i>		<i>Belts .....</i>	19
<i>License .....</i>	<i>10</i>	Child Restraint System and Safety	
<i>Traffic Violations .....</i>	<i>10</i>	Seats.....	20
<i>Teenage Traffic Deaths .....</i>	<i>11</i>	Riding Safely with Air Bags .....	20
<i>Actions Against the Provisional Driver</i>		<i>Side-Impact Air Bags .....</i>	21
<i>License.....</i>	<i>11</i>	Unattended Children in Motor	
<i>Keeping Your Provisional Driver</i>		Vehicles.....	21
<i>License .....</i>	<i>11</i>	Distracted Driving .....	21
		Hot Weather Risks .....	22



<b>TRAFFIC CONTROLS.....</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Traffic Signal Lights .....	22	Signaling .....	49
Pedestrian Signal Lights .....	23	Steering.....	49
Traffic Signs.....	23	Horn, Headlights, and Emergency Signals .....	50
<b>LAWS AND RULES</b>		<i>Use Your Horn</i> .....	50
<b>OF THE ROAD .....</b>	<b>26</b>	<i>Do Not Use Your Horn</i> .....	50
Right-of-Way Rules.....	26	<i>Use Your Headlights</i> .....	50
General Information .....	26	<i>Use Your Emergency Signals</i> .....	51
Pedestrians.....	27	Text Messaging and Cell Phones .....	51
Crosswalks .....	28	<b>VEHICLE POSITIONING .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Intersections .....	28	Following Distances.....	52
Roundabouts .....	29	<i>Taking Dangers One at a Time</i> .....	52
On Mountain Roads .....	29	<i>Splitting the Difference</i> .....	52
Speed Limits.....	30	<i>Persons Who Present Dangers</i> <i>to Drivers</i> .....	52
Maximum Speed Limit.....	30	Merging In/Out of Traffic.....	52
Reduced Speeds .....	30	<i>Space to Merge</i> .....	53
<b>VISUAL SEARCH .....</b>	<b>33</b>	<i>Space to Cross or Enter</i> .....	53
Scanning .....	33	<i>Space to Exit</i> .....	53
<i>Know What Is Ahead</i> .....	33	Passing Other Traffic .....	54
<i>Know What Is at Your Side</i> .....	34	<i>Space and Speed to Pass</i> .....	54
<i>Know What Is Behind You</i> .....	35	<i>Space to Return</i> .....	54
How Well Can You Stop? .....	36	<b>SHARING THE ROAD .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>LANE CONTROL.....</b>	<b>36</b>	Large Trucks (Big Rigs) and Recreational Vehicles (RVs) .....	55
Line Colors .....	36	<i>Braking</i> .....	55
Choosing a Lane.....	37	<i>Trucker's Blind Spots—the "No</i> <i>Zone"</i> .....	55
Changing Lanes.....	37	<i>Turning</i> .....	55
Passing Lanes .....	38	<i>Maneuverability</i> .....	55
Carpool/High-Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) Lanes .....	38	Buses, Streetcars, and Trolleys .....	56
Center Left Turn Lanes .....	38	Light-Rail Vehicles .....	57
Turnout Areas and Lanes .....	39	Emergency Vehicles .....	57
End-of-Lane Markings .....	39	Slow-Moving Vehicles .....	58
Shared Roadway Bicycle Markings (Sharrows) .....	39	Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV) .....	58
Bicycle Lanes .....	39	Animal-Drawn Vehicles .....	58
<b>TURNS .....</b>	<b>40</b>	Motorcycles .....	58
Examples of Right and Left Turns.....	41	Bicycles .....	59
Legal U-Turns .....	42	<i>Bicycles in Travel Lanes</i> .....	61
Illegal U-Turns.....	43	Pedestrians Who Are Blind .....	61
<b>PARKING.....</b>	<b>43</b>	Road Workers and Work Zones (Cone Zones) .....	62
Parking on a Hill.....	43	Double Fine Zones.....	63
Parallel Parking.....	43	Move Over and Slow Down .....	63
Parking at Colored Curbs .....	44		
Illegal Parking .....	48		
Special Parking Rules.....	48		

Vehicles with Hazardous Loads.....	63	Medications .....	78
Important Driving Tips.....	63	Health and Emotions.....	78
Dealing with Traffic Congestion.....	63	Conditions Physicians Must Report... 78	
Dealing with Aggressive Drivers and Road Rage.....	64	<b>ALCOHOL AND DRUGS .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>SPECIAL DRIVING SITUATIONS.....</b>	<b>64</b>	Alcohol/Drugs and Driving Is	
Keep Your Car Visible .....	64	Dangerous.....	78
What is the Road Condition.....	64	Carrying Alcohol in a Vehicle .....	79
Curves.....	64	<i>Drivers Under 21 (Possession of</i>	
Driving in Heavy Traffic .....	65	<i>Alcohol)</i> .....	79
Traffic Speeds .....	65	Drivers of All Ages .....	83
Driving Hazards .....	65	Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	
<i>Water on the Road</i> .....	65	Limits.....	83
<i>Slippery Roads</i> .....	65	Admin Per Se .....	83
<i>High Winds</i> .....	66	<i>Under 21—Zero Tolerance for</i>	
<i>Driving in the Fog</i> .....	66	<i>Alcohol Use.</i> .....	84
<i>Driving with Sun Glare</i> .....	66	Court DUI Convictions .....	84
<i>Driving in Darkness</i> .....	67	Drivers 21 and Older—DUI Programs	
<i>Driving in Rain or Snow</i> .....	67	and Restricted Driver Licenses.....	85
Flooded Roadways .....	70	Designated Driver Program.....	85
<i>Driving in Hill Country or Curves</i> ... 70		<b>ADDITIONAL DRIVING LAWS/RULES... 86</b>	
<i>Traffic Breaks</i> .....	70	Things You Must Not Do:.....	86
Clean Windows and Mirrors .....	71	Things You Must Do:.....	87
Adjust Seat and Mirrors.....	71	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Tire Safety .....	71	Financial Responsibility.....	88
Other Dangers .....	72	Insurance Requirements .....	88
What a Driver Should Do During an		Collisions on Your Record .....	89
Enforcement Stop .....	72	<i>Collisions, Insurance, and Minors</i> .....	89
<b>HANDLING EMERGENCIES.....</b>	<b>73</b>	Getting a Ticket.....	89
Mechanical Tips.....	73	Evading a Peace Officer .....	89
<i>Skids on Slippery Surfaces</i> .....	73	Points on the Driver Record .....	90
Driving Off of the Pavement .....	73	Traffic Violator School Convictions ...	90
<i>Acceleration Skids</i> .....	73	Suspension or Revocation by the	
<i>Locked Wheel Skids</i> .....	73	DMV .....	90
<i>Accelerator Malfunction</i> .....	74	Suspension by Judge.....	91
<i>Steering Wheel Locking Device</i> ....	74	Record Confidentiality.....	91
Collisions Are Not Accidents .....	74	Vandalism/Graffiti—All Ages .....	91
<i>Causes of Collisions</i> .....	74	Speed Contests/Reckless Driving ...	91
<i>Involved in a Collision</i> .....	74	<i>Possessing Firearms</i> .....	91
<i>Reporting a Collision</i> .....	75	Vehicle Registration Requirements... 92	
Safety Tips .....	75	<i>California Vehicles</i> .....	92
<b>DRIVER READINESS .....</b>	<b>76</b>	<i>Out-of-State Vehicles</i> .....	92
Safety for the Aging Driver .....	76	Vehicle Theft Prevention Tips.....	93
Good Vision for All Drivers .....	77	<b>DRIVER LICENSE FAST FACTS</b>	
Hearing.....	77	<b>AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS .....</b>	<b>94</b>
Alertness .....	77	Available Online.....	94
		Knowledge Test Sample #1 .....	99
		Knowledge Test Sample #2.....	101



Every hour a pedestrian is killed or injured in California.

Slow down

Look out for others

Don't drive distracted



CALIFORNIA OFFICE of TRAFFIC SAFETY and CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC HEALTH



CALIFORNIA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST  
ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION PROJECT



Funding for this program was provided  
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of Traffic Safety, through the National  
Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



# NEW 2016 LAWS

## EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016

### *Bicycle Reflector*

Bicycles operated during darkness upon a highway or a sidewalk must be equipped with a red reflector or a solid or flashing red light with a built-in reflector on the rear (*California Vehicle Code* [CVC] §21201).

### *Slow Moving Vehicles*

Vehicles proceeding at a speed less than the flow of traffic and moving on a two-lane highway where passing is unsafe, must turn off the roadway at the nearest place designated as a turnout or wherever sufficient area for a safe turnout exists if a line of 5 or more vehicles forms behind them (CVC §21656).

### *Driver License for Exonerated Persons*

DMV must issue a no fee driver license (DL) to a person exonerated of a conviction and released from state prison within the previous six months (CVC §14903).

### *Electric Bicycle Classes*

Three classes of electric bicycles have been created. All operators of a Class 3 (maximum speed of 28 miles per hour [mph]) electric bicycle must be 16 years old or older and are required to wear a bicycle helmet. There is no financial responsibility, DL, registration, or license plate requirement for these electric bicycles (CVC §§312.5, 12804.9, 21113, & 24016).

### *Expanded Pedicab Definition*

The definition of a pedicab has expanded to include provisions that allow for consumption of alcoholic beverages by passengers until January 1, 2020. Additional operational and safety equipment is required for this new type of pedicab (CVC §§467.5, 21215, 21215.5, & 23229).

## EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2016

### *California Residency Requirement*

All original DL or identification (ID) card applicants must submit satisfactory proof of California residency. DMV is prohibited from issuing an original DL/ID card to a person who does not submit satisfactory proof of California residency (CVC §12801.5).

## EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2017

### *Increased Accident Reportability Threshold*

The minimum damage threshold for collision reportability has increased from \$750 to \$1,000. A driver of a motor vehicle involved in a collision with property damages greater than \$1,000 must submit a Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) to DMV. DMV is authorized to impose sanctions following an uninsured reportable collision (CVC §§1656.2, 1808, 1808.1, 12517.1, 13369, 13558, 16000, 16000.1, 16020.1, 16020.2, 16075, 16251, 16430, & 16434).

### *Child Safety Seat Requirements*

In addition to the existing child passenger restraint system laws, any child who is under 2 years old must be secured in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system unless the child is 40 pounds or more, or 3'3" or taller (CVC §27360).

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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

FIELD OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION	
Monday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

Some field offices may have extended hours and a few offer only DL or vehicle registration services. To find out if your local field office has extended hours, or to find a field office location and service options, go online or call the toll-free number listed below.

Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** for (to):

- Field office locations, hours, directions, and phone numbers.
- Make appointments to visit a field office or take a driving test (except for commercial driving tests).
- Order personalized plates.
- DL/ID 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 DL or vehicle registration.

Call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours to:

- Obtain/request DL and vehicle registration information, forms, and publications.
- Find office locations and hours.
- Make a driving test appointment.
- Speak to a DMV representative or request a call back.

Call 1-800-777-0133 for automated service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to:

- Renew your vehicle registration with the renewal identification number (RIN) provided on your billing notice. You can pay with a credit card or e-check.
- Make a field office appointment.

Make sure to have your DL or ID card number, vehicle license plate number, and/or vehicle identification number (VIN) available.

Persons with speech or hearing impairments can call, toll free, 1-800-368-4327 for assistance with DMV services. Only typed messages from another TTY are received and responded to at this number.

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# DMV IS CONNECTING with Californians...



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## DISCLAIMER

This handbook provides a summary of the laws and regulations outlined in the *California Vehicle Code* (CVC). The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), law enforcement, and the courts follow the full and exact language of the CVC. The CVC and DMV fees are available online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). You may also buy a copy of the CVC at any DMV field office. The fees listed in the *California Driver Handbook* are subject to change.

This handbook is primarily for a basic Class C driver license (DL). For detailed information on other DL types and endorsements refer to the *California Commercial Driver Handbook*, *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers Handbook*, *Ambulance Drivers Handbook*, *California Parent-Teen Training Guide*, and *California Motorcycle Handbook*.

## ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION

The reliability, integrity, and confidentiality of the California DL/ID card is of prime concern to all levels of government, the private sector and general public.

It is critical that these documents be completely authenticated and accurate. California law requires that all applicants who apply for an original California DL/ID card submit proof of legal presence in the United States (U.S.) or an identity and California residency document. Your true full name as shown on your legal presence or identity document will appear on your DL/ID card.

**EXCEPTION:** Effective July 1, 2016, all original DL/ID applicants will be required to submit satisfactory proof of California residency.

## BASIC INFORMATION

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

It is a misdemeanor to drive in California without a valid DL. 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 DL after you pay the application fee, pass all applicable knowledge tests, 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. You may also have to provide a statement from your physician regarding your current health condition.

# THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE

## WHO MUST HAVE A DRIVER LICENSE?

### *California Residents*

California residents who drive on public highways or use parking facilities that are open to the public must have a California DL, unless they are:

- An officer or employee of the U.S. government operating a vehicle owned or controlled by the U.S. government on federal business, except when operating a commercial motor vehicle.
- Driving or operating implements of husbandry not operated or moved over a highway.
- Driving or operating an off-highway vehicle across a highway.

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

If you are out of state on active military duty and have a valid California DL, you and your spouse's California DL will be valid for the full time you are absent from California and for 30 days following your discharge date, if you are honorably discharged outside of California. Carry both your DL and discharge or separation documents, 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 DL.

**NOTE:** Your DL is not valid if it is suspended, cancelled, or revoked.

### *Nonresident Military Personnel Stationed in California*

If you are 18 years old or older, refer to the "California Residents" and "Adults Visiting California" sections on this page for additional information. Licensees eligible for military extensions should carry documentation from their home state to verify their status to law enforcement.

### *New California Residents*

When you become a California resident and you want to drive in California, you must apply for a California DL within 10 days. Residency is established in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Being registered to vote in California elections.
- Paying resident tuition at a California college or university.
- Filing for a home owner's property tax exemption.
- Receiving any other privilege or benefit not ordinarily extended to nonresidents.

### *Adults Visiting California*

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



## OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE

When you apply for an original California DL card, you must present acceptable document(s) establishing your identity, residency (if applicable), birthdate, and provide your social security number (SSN), if eligible. The document(s) provided:

- Must be a certified copy, or an original document.
- May contain an impressed seal or original stamped impression.
- Must not be a photocopy.
- Must **not** present self-laminated cards or documents.

If you present a legal presence document, your DL/ID card may expire on the same date as your legal presence document. If the name on your document is different from the name on your DL/ID card application, you must also bring an acceptable true full name document. Your fingerprint, signature, and photograph will also be taken (refer to the “Application Requirements for a Basic Class C Driver License” section on page 3). For any other DL/ID card transaction, you must present photo identification.

Examples of acceptable documents include: U.S. Birth Certificate, U.S. Passport, U.S. Armed Forces ID Cards, Certificate of Naturalization, Permanent Resident Card, or a foreign passport with a valid I-94. The I-94 expiration date must be more than 2 months from the DL/ID card application date.

Examples of true full name verification documents include: adoption documents containing your legal name as a result of the adoption, name change documents containing your legal name both before and after, a marriage certificate, a certificate or registration document verifying the formation of a domestic partnership, or a dissolution of marriage document containing your legal name as a result of the court order.

A complete list of accepted documents is available at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or in the *Documents Required to Apply for a Driver License* (FFDL 5A) *Fast Facts* brochure.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A BASIC CLASS C DRIVER LICENSE

To apply for a Class C DL, you must:

- Submit a completed and signed Driver License 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 requested by a peace officer. If you refuse to sign this statement, DMV will not issue a permit or DL.
- Present an acceptable document(s) establishing your identity, residency (if applicable), and birthdate.
- Provide your true full name.
- Provide your SSN, if eligible, which will be electronically verified with the Social Security Administration (SSA).

- Pay a nonrefundable application fee. The fee is good for 12 months and allows you to take the appropriate knowledge test(s) 3 times. If you fail the knowledge test and/or driving test 3 times, your application will be void and a new application and fee are required. This fee pays for both the instruction permit and DL, 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 (CVC §12805(b)).
- Have your photograph taken.
- Give a fingerprint scan.
- 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 old or older and have a valid California DL. This person must be seated close enough to you that he or she is able to take control of the vehicle at any time. An instruction permit does not

permit you to drive alone—not even to a DMV field office to take the driving test.

If you want to obtain professional driver education and driver training, refer to the “Driving Schools” section on page 16 and “Mature Driver Program” section on page 17.

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

To get a motorcycle permit, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Complete the application requirements.
- Pass a knowledge test.

## ADULTS' DRIVER 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 driving permit and when you are ready, make an appointment to take the behind-the-wheel driving test. When you report for the driving test, bring your instruction permit with you.
- 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 DL, you must:

- Complete all the steps required for an instruction permit.



## Veteran Driver License and Identification Card Available

If you are a Veteran, then you can proudly display **VETERAN** on your driver license or identification card.  
It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

- 1.** Find your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty Form (DD 214). If you need assistance obtaining your military records, contact your County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO).
- 2.** Take your DD 214 and government identification to your CVSO to obtain your Veteran Status Verification Form (VSD-001).
- 3.** Make an appointment with DMV to bring your VSD-001, complete your application, and pay any application fees plus a \$5 fee for your Veteran designation. You must complete all application and testing requirements.

To find a CVSO near you,  
visit [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov) or call 1-800-952-5626.

To schedule an appointment at a DMV,  
visit [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133.



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

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

## DRIVER LICENSE CLASSES

### Class C driver license -

- *You may drive a:*
  - 2-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,000 pounds (lbs.) or less.
  - 3-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or less gross.
  - Housecar 40 feet or less.
  - 3-wheel motorcycle with 2 wheels located in the front or back.
  - Vanpool vehicle designed to carry more than 10 persons, but no more than 15 persons including the driver.

**NOTE:** A driver of a vanpool may operate with a Class C license but shall possess evidence of a medical examination required for a Class B license when operating vanpool vehicles. The driver must keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement signed under penalty of perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk driving, or

hit-and-run in the last 5 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.
  - 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 1 vehicle.
- A passenger vehicle, regardless of weight, may not tow more than 1 vehicle.
- A motor vehicle under 4,000 lbs. unladen weight may not tow any vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or more gross (CVC §21715(b)).

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

- Noncommercial Class A
- Noncommercial Class B
- Commercial Class A
- Commercial Class B
- Commercial Class C

- Motorcycle Class M1
- Motorcycle Class M2
- Commercial endorsements:
  - Doubles/Triples
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Passenger Transportation
  - Tank Vehicle
- Ambulance Driver Certificate
- School Bus Endorsement
- Tow Truck Driver Certificate
- Verification of Transit Training Certificate
- Firefighter Endorsement

**NOTE:** Commercially licensed firefighters must submit a Medical Examination Report (DL 51) every 2 years. Noncommercially licensed firefighters can submit a self-certifying Health Questionnaire (DL 546).

## THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

### WHERE TO TAKE THE TESTS

You may take the knowledge, vision, and behind-the-wheel driving tests at most DMV field offices that provide DL services.

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

**NOTE:** DMV will not administer knowledge or audio exams after 4:30 p.m. to ensure you have sufficient time for testing. Knowledge and vision tests are required when you apply for an original DL or upgrade to a different class of DL.

## CHEATING

The use of testing aids is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: the *California Driver Handbook*, cheat sheets, and/or electronic communication devices such as a cell phone, hand-held computer, etc. If any testing aid is used during the knowledge test, the knowledge test will be marked as a “failure.” An action may also be taken by DMV against your driving privilege or the driving privilege of anyone else who assists you in the examination process.

## DMV EXAMINATIONS

Your DL examinations include:

- A vision test (bring your eyeglasses or contact lenses to the exam).
- A knowledge test.
- A behind-the-wheel driving test, if required. You must have an appointment to take the behind-the-wheel driving test. For the driving test, bring:
  - Your old DL or instruction permit, if you have one.
  - A licensed driver age 18 years old or older with a valid DL.
  - Proof that the vehicle is properly insured.

**IMPORTANT:** If you use a rental vehicle, the driving test applicant must be listed on the rental contract. The contract must not exclude driving tests.

- A vehicle that is safe to drive, and has valid registration. The vehicle’s brake lights, horn, parking brake, and turn signals must work properly. The



vehicle cannot have bald tires, which would have less than  $\frac{1}{32}$  inch tread depth in any 2 adjacent grooves. The driver's side window must roll down. The windshield must allow a full unobstructed field of vision for you and the examiner. There must be at least 2 rear view mirrors (one must be on the left outside of the vehicle).

- You will be asked to locate the controls for the vehicle's headlights, windshield wipers, defroster, and emergency flashers. You must demonstrate how to use the parking brake.

**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.

Technology, such as back up cameras and self-parking, **cannot** be used on a driving test.

For more information, refer to *DMV's Driving Test* (FFDL 22) *Fast Facts* brochure, DMV videos, and sample tests 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 old. Minors must have their applications (for a DL or any change of DL class) signed by their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If both parents/guardians have joint custody, both must sign.

**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 years old, but under 18 years old.
- Complete the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form.
- Have your parent(s) or guardian(s) sign the DL 44 form.
- Pass the knowledge test. If you fail the test, you must wait 7 days (1 week), not including the day the test was failed before retaking the test.
- If you are 15½–17½ years old, you will need to provide proof that you:
  - Completed driver education (Certificate of Completion of Driver Education) **OR**
  - Are enrolled and participating in an approved integrated driver education/driver training program (Certificate of Enrollment in an Integrated [Classroom] Driver Education and Driver Training Program). For more information, refer to the *Provisional Licensing* (FFDL 19) *Fast Facts* brochure at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

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

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

**NOTE:** If you are at least 17½ years old, you may obtain a permit without completing driver education or driver



training. However, you cannot get a DL before you are 18 years old.

## MINORS' PERMIT RESTRICTIONS

Your permit is not valid until you begin driver training; your instructor will sign the permit to validate it. You must practice with a licensed California driver: parent, guardian, driving instructor, spouse, or an adult 25 years old 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 at anytime, not even to a DMV field office to take a driving test.

## MINORS' DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

You must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Prove that you have finished both driver education and driver training.
- Have had a California instruction permit or an instruction permit from another state for at least 6 months (refer to the Out-of-State Minors section on page 10).
- Provide parent(s) or guardian(s) signature(s) on your instruction permit certifying that you have completed 50 hours of supervised driving practice (10 hours must be night driving) as outlined in the *California Parent-Teen Training Guide* (DL 603). Visit the teen website at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133 to request this booklet.
- Pass the behind-the-wheel driving test. You have 3 chances to pass the driving 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 14 days (2 weeks), not including the day the test was failed before you are retested.

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

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

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

## EXCEPTIONS - MINORS' DRIVER 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 explaining the necessity to drive and the date when this driving necessity will end must be kept in your possession for the following exceptions (emancipated minors are excluded from this requirement):

- 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 the 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 the employer verifying employment.
- The necessity to drive an immediate family member. A note signed by your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is required, stating the reason and probable end date of the necessity to drive the immediate family member.

**EXCEPTION:** These requirements do not apply to an emancipated minor. You must have declared yourself emancipated and provided DMV with proof of financial responsibility (SR 1P) in lieu of your parent(s) or guarantor(s) signature(s).

## OUT-OF-STATE MINORS

All out-of-state minor applicants must comply with the application requirements outlined in the “Application Requirements for a Basic Class C Driver License” section on page 3 and **must** have parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) signature on the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form.

### *Out-Of-State Minors’ Permit*

Out-of-state minors’ permit applicants **must** meet the requirements listed in the “Minors” Permit Requirements” section on page 9. In addition, if your driver education and driver training courses were taken in a state other than California, DMV may accept a To Secondary Schools

Other Than California Schools (DL 33) form completed by the out-of-state secondary school. You may obtain a DL 33 form at your local DMV field office or by calling DMV at 1-800-777-0133. Send the DL 33 form to your out-of-state secondary school and ask them to complete and return it to you.

### *Out-Of-State Minors’ Driver License*

You will be asked to present your out-of-state DL and pass a knowledge test as part of the application process. The behind-the-wheel driving test for holders of out-of-state DLs are normally waived. However, DMV may require a behind-the-wheel driving test for any type of DL application.

**NOTE:** Out-of-state minor applicants are subject to all provisional restrictions per California law for the first year of the DL or until he/she turns 18 years old.

## TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

Nearly 50% of the drivers between 15–19 years old are convicted of a traffic violation in their first year of driving.

The most common violation is for speeding, which often results in the 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 age 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 2½ times that of the “average” driver. Your risk of an injury collision is 3 times higher than the average driver’s risk.

## ACTIONS AGAINST THE PROVISIONAL DRIVER LICENSE

Teenagers as a group average twice as many collisions as adult drivers, while driving only half as many miles. The teenage collision rate per mile is 4 times greater than the adult driver collision rate per mile.

Traffic deaths of new drivers are deadly combinations of their inexperience driving, lack of familiarity with the vehicle, and their need to push themselves and the vehicle to the limit.

## Keeping Your Provisional Driver License

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

- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to appear in court, DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you appear in court.
- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to pay the fine, DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you pay the fine.
- If you have 1 “at fault” collision or conviction within 12 months, 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 cannot drive for 30 days, unless accompanied by your licensed parent or other licensed adult who is at least 25 years old.
- If you have a third “at fault” collision or conviction (or any combination) within 12 months, you will be suspended for 6 months and placed on probation for 1 year.
- If you have additional “at fault” collisions or point count convictions while on probation, you will be suspended again. (Traffic law violations resolved in juvenile court are also reported to DMV.)
- If you are convicted of using alcohol or a controlled substance and you are between 13–21 years old, the court orders DMV to suspend your DL for 1 year. If you do not have a DL, the court orders DMV to delay your eligibility to apply for a DL. You may also be required to complete a DUI program.

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

Other, *stronger* actions may 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 13–18 Years Old

The court will suspend, restrict, delay, or revoke your driving privilege for 1 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 or respond to the text message.
- Convictions for violations of this law are subject to fines.

**EXCEPTIONS:** You may 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 DRIVER LICENSE

If your DL is lost, stolen, or damaged, you must go to a DMV field office, complete the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form, and pay a fee for the replacement. You should also present a photo ID. If DMV cannot confirm your identity, you will not be issued a temporary DL.

If you are a minor, your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign the DL 44 form. If both parents/guardians have joint custody, both must sign.

Once a replacement DL is issued, the previous DL is no longer valid. Destroy the old DL if you find it later.

## NAME CHANGES

When you legally change your name because of marriage or other reasons, be sure to change your name with SSA before coming into DMV.

Bring your DL to DMV in person, along with your marriage certificate or other acceptable verification of your “true full name” (refer to the “Obtaining a Driver License” section on page 3). You must complete the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form and pay the applicable fee. DMV will electronically verify your name, birth date, and SSN with SSA.

A new photograph, fingerprint, and signature will be taken. Your old DL/ID card will be invalidated and may be returned to you.

## DRIVER LICENSE RENEWALS

DMV sends a renewal notice to your address of record about 2 months before your DL expires. Follow the instructions on the renewal notice. If you do not receive a renewal notice, go online or call to make an appointment to renew your DL (refer to page ix).

Qualified drivers may be eligible to renew their DL online at DMV’s website at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or by mail.

DMV **may** issue a DL for 5 years. The DL expires on your birthday in the year shown on the DL, unless otherwise indicated. It is against the law to drive with an expired DL.

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

If DMV cannot confirm your identity, you will not be issued a temporary DL.

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

## RENEWAL BY MAIL OR INTERNET

If you have not received 2 consecutive 5-year DL extensions, you **may** be eligible to renew by mail or internet without taking a knowledge test, if:

- Your current DL expires before age 70.
- You do not have a probationary DL (CVC §14250).
- You have not violated a written promise to appear in court or to pay a fine within the last 2 years.
- You are not suspended for driving with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level, or refusing or failing to complete a chemical or preliminary alcohol screening test within the last 2 years.
- You do not have a total violation point count greater than 1 point.

## DRIVER LICENSE EXTENSION

If you are away from California (up to 1 year), you may request a free 1 year extension **before your DL expires**. Mail your request to DMV, PO Box 942890, Sacramento, CA 94290-0001. Include your name, DL number, birth date, California residence address, and out-of-state address. Limited-term drivers are not eligible for this extension.

## DRIVER LICENSE IN YOUR POSSESSION

You must always have your DL with you when you drive. You must show it to any peace officer who asks to see it. If you are in a collision, you must show it to the other driver(s) involved (refer to the “Involved in a Collision” section on page 74).

## ADDRESS CHANGES

When you move, you must give 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 DL/ID card, and vehicle(s) online at **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 a DMV 14 be mailed to you.

A new DL or ID card is not issued when you change your address.

You may 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 DL or ID card.

If you change your address at a field office, a DMV representative will give you a Change of Address Card (DL 43) to complete and carry with your DL/ID card.

**REMINDER:** The U.S. Postal Service forwards some DMV correspondence; however, it is your responsibility to ensure DMV has your correct mailing address on record.



## VISION

DMV screens all drivers to measure vision with or without corrective lenses. If you do not meet DMV's vision standard (20/40), you will be required to visit a vision specialist. The DMV representative will give you a Report of Vision Examination (DL 62) form to have completed by the vision specialist. If your vision is not worse than 20/70, DMV may issue you a 30-day temporary DL to allow you time to have your vision checked.

All drivers applying for a DL must have a visual acuity better than 20/200 (best corrected) in at least one eye before a DL can be issued. You are prohibited from using a bi-optic telescope or similar lens to meet the 20/200 visual acuity standard in the better eye.

## MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD

Call 1-800-777-0133 to obtain a Medical Information Card (DL 390) to list your blood type, allergies, physician name, and other medical information. It can be carried 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 DL or ID card, check the "Yes, add my name to the donor registry" box on the renewal form to place your name on the *Donate Life California Organ Tissue Donor Registry*. If you need additional information, check the "I do not wish

to register at this time" box and call *Donate Life California* where representatives can answer any questions you may have about organ and tissue donation. You may also use the renewal form to financially contribute to the registry by checking the "\$2 voluntary contribution to support and promote organ and tissue donation" box.

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

You may consent to the organ and tissue donation on the *Donate Life California* website; however, a new DL or ID card with a pink dot will not be issued until you check "Yes, add my name to the donor registry" box on the DL or ID application and DMV processes the new transaction (replacement, renewal, change of name, etc.). It is your responsibility to contact *Donate Life California* if you wish to change or update your donor status or information. For more information about the donor registry, adding restrictions to your gift, and the donation process, visit the *Donate Life California* website at [donateLIFCalifornia.org](http://donateLIFCalifornia.org), or call 1-866-797-2366.

## VETERAN DESIGNATION AND BENEFIT INFORMATION

Have you ever served in the U.S. Military? For an additional \$5 fee, DMV offers those who proudly served our country the option to mark the face of their DL/ID card with the



word “VETERAN” to indicate they served in the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition, DMV will refer veterans to the California Department of Veteran Affairs to determine eligibility for benefits acquired while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

### ***How Can I Get The Veterans Designation?***

- Visit a County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) to obtain a signed, certified *Veteran Status Verification Form* (VSD-001).
- For more information, visit the DMV website at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or refer to the *Are You a Veteran?* (FFDL 43) *Fast Facts* brochure.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) CalVet Connect program would like you to receive information regarding benefits, such as employment, housing, education, and health care services for which you may be entitled. Check the “If you have served, would you like to receive benefits information for which you may be eligible?” box on the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form. DMV will transmit your name and mailing address to CalVet for them to forward you benefits information.

To locate a CalVet office near you, refer to your local government listing in your telephone book, or visit the CalVet website at **www.calvet.ca.gov** or the DMV website at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

## **REGISTER TO VOTE**

You may register to vote or update your voter registration with DMV when applying for an original DL/ID, renewing your DL/ID, or changing your address by mail or internet. For more information, visit the DMV website at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

## **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 an unlicensed person is caught driving *your* vehicle, it 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 he or she has a valid DL 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 he or she 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 DL issued by the U.S. Department of State are exempt from California driver licensing requirements.

## IDENTIFICATION (ID) CARDS

DMV issues ID cards to eligible persons of any age. To obtain an original ID card, you must present a birth date/legal presence verification document and provide your SSN (refer to the “Obtaining a Driver License” section on page 3). The ID card is valid until the 6th birthday after the issue date. The fee for an ID card may be reduced, if you meet certain requirements for specific public assistance programs. Refer to the *Requirements for a California Identification Card* (FFDL 6) *Fast Facts* brochure for additional information.

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

If you are age 62 or older, you may obtain a **free** senior citizen ID card that is valid 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 5 years by a DMV examiner to obtain a limited-term DL.

Drivers who are no longer able to drive safely because of a P&M condition may be eligible to exchange their valid DL for a no-fee ID card, if certain guidelines are met. Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133 for additional information.

## IDENTIFICATION (ID) CARD RENEWAL BY MAIL OR INTERNET

Customers who are eligible to renew their ID cards by mail or internet will receive a notice approximately 60 days before the expiration of their current ID card. Reduced-fee ID cards cannot be renewed by mail or internet.

There is a fee for regular ID cards (customers under 62 years old); there is no charge for senior citizen ID cards (customers 62 years old or older), if applying for a senior citizen ID card.

## DRIVING SCHOOLS

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

DMV licenses professional schools and instructors in California that meet rigid qualifying standards. Schools must carry liability insurance, hold a bond, and maintain complete records for DMV inspection. Vehicles are subject to annual inspection. Instructors must pass a written examination every 3 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 ID card. Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or refer to the *Selecting a Driving School* (FFDL 33) *Fast Facts* brochure for additional information.

## MATURE DRIVER PROGRAM

The Mature Driver Program is an 8-hour course for drivers 55 and older. This course covers a variety of topics of special interest to the mature driver and is available from DMV approved course providers. Visit the DMV website for more information.

Your insurance company may offer discounts for those who complete the class and receive a completion certificate. The certificate is valid for 3 years and can be renewed by completing a 4-hour course.

## PEDESTRIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Pedestrians (including joggers) should be aware of traffic conditions. Watch out for drivers before assuming you have the right-of-way when crossing a street.

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 and in areas with no pedestrian crosswalks or signals.

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

Do not suddenly leave a curb or other safe place, and walk or run into the 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 cannot stop in time to avoid hitting you, you still run the risk of being hit.

Avoid distractions as a pedestrian. Do not use your mobile phone or electronic device while moving. To avoid becoming a hazard to vehicles and other pedestrians, you should be aware of your surroundings at all times.

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

When a traffic signal light 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 traffic signal light changes.

If the traffic signal light 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 graphic on page 18). Do not walk or jog on any freeway where signs tell you that pedestrians are not allowed. Do not walk or jog in a bike lane unless there is no sidewalk.



At night, make yourself more visible by:

- Wearing white, light, or reflective material clothing.
- Carrying a flashlight.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY

Your vehicle may be equipped with various new technologies. Your vehicle may also have technology that allows you to have cell phone conversations or play music from an electronic device. With the increase of such technologies, it is important to remain aware of the road and avoid driving distractions. Here are some tips to reduce technological distractions:

- Do not input navigation instructions while driving.
- Do not adjust music or other electronic devices while driving.
- For navigation devices, use the audio navigation function when possible.

**NOTE:** Technology, such as back up cameras and self-parking, **cannot** be used on a driving test. The purpose of a driving test is to ensure your ability to drive.

# OCCUPANT PROTECTION

## SEAT BELTS

Seat belts, both the lap belt and shoulder harness, will increase your chance of survival in most types of collisions. The seat belts must be in good working order. You may not operate your vehicle on public roads and on private property, such as public parking lots, unless you and all of your passengers 8 years old or older, or children who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or taller are wearing seat belts. Children 8 years old or younger, or who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall must be seated in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system.

You and all passengers must wear a seat belt or, **you** and/or your passenger(s) may be cited. If the passenger is under 16 years old, you may be cited if he or she is not wearing his or 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 as high as someone who does not wear a lap belt. If you wear a lap and shoulder belt, your chances are 3 to 4 times higher to live through a collision. If your vehicle is equipped with a separate lap and shoulder belt, you are required to use both the lap and shoulder belts.

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 risk of being thrown from your vehicle in 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 collisions. 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***

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 unconscious.” Being aware and conscious will greatly increase your chances of survival in such situations.

“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 5 times better if, upon impact, you are not

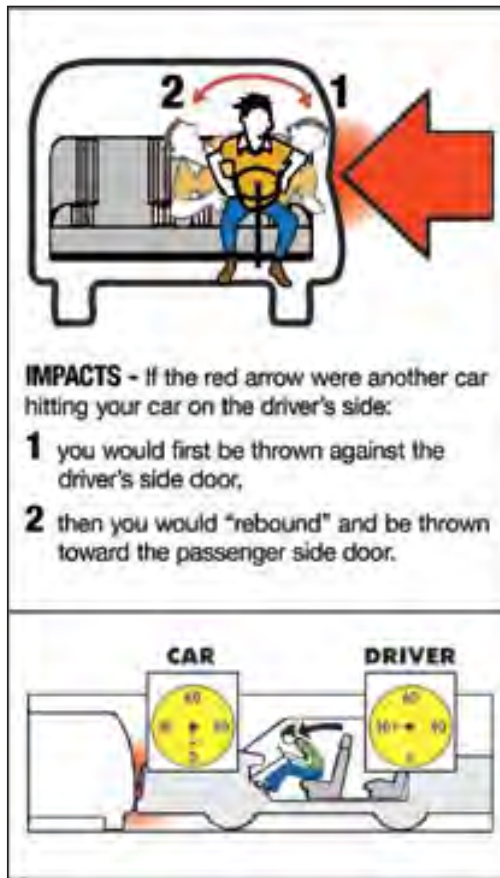
thrown from the vehicle. A seat belt can keep you from being thrown into the path of another vehicle.

“I’m only going to the store. My young child doesn’t need to be secured in a safety seat.” Vehicle collisions are the number one preventable cause of death for children. The law requires that children under 8 years old who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or taller to be properly secured with an appropriate safety belt, or be buckled into a federally-approved child passenger restraint system if under 8 years old and less than 4 feet 9 inches tall.

The following graphic illustrates what can happen in a collision. If you are struck from the side, the impact could push you back and forth across the seat. Seat belts and shoulder harnesses keep you in a better position to control the vehicle and may minimize serious injuries.

When you collide, your vehicle stops, but you keep going at the same speed you were traveling, until you hit the dashboard or windshield. At 30 mph this motion is equivalent to hitting the ground from the top of a three-story building.





## CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEM AND SAFETY SEATS

Your child must be secured by either a federally-approved child passenger restraint system or a safety belt depending on his/her height and age.

- Children under 8 years old must be properly secured in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system.
- Children under 8 years old **may** ride in the front seat of a vehicle in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system under the following instances:
  - There is no rear seat.
  - The rear seats are side-facing jump seats.
  - The rear seats are rear-facing seats.

- The child passenger restraint system cannot be installed properly in the rear seat.
- All rear seats are already occupied by children 7 years old or younger.
- Medical reasons require the child to not ride in the back seat.
- A child **may not** ride in the front seat of an airbag equipped vehicle if he/she:
  - Is in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.
  - Is less than 1 year old.
  - Weighs less than 20 lbs.
- Children who are 8 years old or older OR who have reached at least 4' 9" in height may use a properly secured safety belt meeting federal standards.

**NOTE:** Child passenger restraint system installation may be checked by contacting local law enforcement agencies and fire departments. As your child grows, check to see if the child passenger restraint system is the right size for your child.

## RIDING SAFELY WITH AIR BAGS

Air bags are a safety feature that help keep you safer than a seat belt alone. 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 cannot 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 side air bags are different in design and performance, you should consider the benefits and risks associated with the use of side air bags if you transport children. Children who are leaning against a side air bag when it inflates are at risk of serious injury. Children who are traveling in a *correctly installed child passenger 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 **never** a good idea to leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

It is illegal to leave a child 6 years old or younger unattended in a motor vehicle.

The court may fine a violator and require him or her to attend a community education program. Also, 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 passes away.

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

### **DISTRACTED DRIVING**

Anything that prevents you from operating your vehicle safely is a distraction. The following are the 3 types of driver distractions:

- Visual-Eyes off the road.
- Cognitive-Mind off the road.
- Manual-Hands off the steering wheel.

Approximately 80% of collisions and 65% of near-collisions involve some form of a driver distraction. According to the “100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study” (2006) released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), concluded that drivers looked away from the roadway at least once in the 3-second window prior to the collision.

Some actions that cause distracted driving and lead to vehicle collisions are:

- Using a handheld device (i.e. cell phone, music device).
- Reaching for an object inside the vehicle.
- Looking at an object or event outside of the vehicle.
- Reading.
- Eating.
- Applying cosmetics (makeup).

When you are driving, the condition of the roadway you are on and the behavior of other drivers can change abruptly, leaving you little or no time to react.

Drive safely. Remember to always keep your mind on driving, eyes on the road, and hands on the wheel.

More information regarding collisions and distractions can be found in the *Driver Distraction* (FFDL 28) *Fast Facts* brochure.

## HOT WEATHER RISKS

As stated in the “Unattended Children in Motor Vehicles” section, it is against the law to leave unattended minor children in a vehicle (CVC §15620). Additionally, and equally important, it is dangerous and illegal to leave children and/or animals in a hot vehicle. After sitting in the sun, even if a window is slightly opened, the temperature can rise rapidly inside a parked vehicle. The temperature inside a vehicle can rise approximately 40–50 degrees higher than the outside temperature.

Dehydration, heat stroke, and death can result from overexposure to the heat. *California Penal Code* §597.7 prohibits leaving or confining an animal in any unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal due to heat. Remember if it’s too hot for you, it’s too hot for children and pets.

## TRAFFIC CONTROLS

### TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS

**Solid Red**—A red traffic signal light means “STOP.” You can make a right turn against a red traffic signal light after you stop. 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 traffic signal light means “STOP.” After stopping, you may proceed when it is safe. Observe the right-of-way rules.



**Solid Yellow**—A yellow traffic signal light means “CAUTION.” The red traffic signal light is about to appear. When you see the yellow traffic signal light, stop if you can do so safely. If you cannot stop safely, cross the intersection cautiously.



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



**Flashing Yellow**—A flashing yellow traffic signal light warns you to “PROCEED WITH CAUTION.” Slow down and be alert before entering the intersection. Yield to any pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles in the intersection. You do not need to stop for a flashing yellow traffic signal light.



**Flashing Yellow Arrow**—This traffic signal light 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 traffic signal 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 cannot get completely across before the traffic signal 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. Oncoming vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians are stopped by a red traffic signal light as long as the green arrow is lighted.



**Traffic Signal Light Not Working (Blackout)**—The traffic signal light is not working and/or no lights are showing on the signal. Proceed cautiously as if the intersection is controlled by “STOP” signs in all directions.

## PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL LIGHTS

Pedestrian traffic signal lights show words or pictures similar to the following examples:

“Walk” or “Walking Person” traffic signal light means it is legal to cross the street.



“Don’t Walk” or “Raised Hand” traffic signal light means you may not start crossing the street.



**Flashing “Don’t Walk” or Flashing “Raised Hand”** traffic signal light means do not start crossing the street because the traffic signal light is about to change. If a pedestrian begins crossing the street after the traffic signal light starts flashing, wait until the pedestrian(s) has crossed the street before proceeding.

**Countdown traffic signal lights** indicate how many seconds remain for crossing. These traffic signal lights allow pedestrians the flexibility to speed up if the crossing phase is about to expire.

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

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

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

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

An 8-sided red **STOP** sign indicates that you must make a full “STOP” whenever you see this sign.



Stop at the white limit line (a wide white line painted on the street) or before entering the crosswalk. If a

## Red and White Regulatory Signs



No U-turn

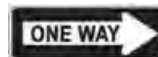
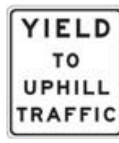


No Left Turn



No Right Turn

## White Regulatory Signs



## Highway Construction and Maintenance Signs



## Guide Signs



## 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



Directional  
Arrow



Curve



“T”  
Intersection



Winding  
Road

**For more information:**  
**[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)**



limit line or crosswalk is not painted on the street, stop before entering the intersection. Check traffic in all directions before proceeding.

A *3-sided red YIELD sign* indicates that 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* indicates that 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.



A sign that has a *red circle with a red line through it* always indicates "NO." The picture inside the circle shows what you cannot do. The sign may be shown with or without words.



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



An *x-shaped sign* with a white background that states **RAILROAD CROSSING** indicates that you must look, listen, slow down, and prepare to stop, if necessary. Let any trains pass before you proceed.



A *5-sided sign* indicates that you are near a school. Stop if children are in the crosswalk.



A *4-sided diamond-shaped sign* warns you of specific road conditions and dangers ahead. Many warning signs are diamond-shaped.

A *white rectangular sign* indicates that 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 or color (refer to 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. Yield your right-of-way when it helps to prevent collisions.

**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 using a tricycle, quadricycle, or wheelchair for transportation.

In California, pedestrian deaths occur in approximately 22% of all traffic fatalities. Drive cautiously when pedestrians are near because they may suddenly cross your path.

Pedestrians may be at risk walking near hybrid and electric vehicles because these vehicles are virtually silent while operating. 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, at corners with or without traffic signal lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted lines.

- Do not pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk. A pedestrian you cannot see may be crossing the street. Stop and proceed when all pedestrians have crossed the street.
- Do not drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it to enter or exit a driveway or alley. When crossing, yield to all pedestrians.
- 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 pedestrians with young children sufficient time to cross the street.
- Obey signs pertaining to pedestrians. Examples include:



**IMPORTANT:** Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to become aware of your vehicle's presence. It is important that you stop your vehicle within 5 feet of the crosswalk. Drivers of hybrid or electric vehicles must remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may cause a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue:

- When a blind person pulls in his or 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 page 61).

## Crosswalks

A crosswalk is the part of the roadway set aside for pedestrian traffic. Most intersections have a pedestrian crosswalk whether or not lines are painted on the street. Most crosswalks are located at corners, but they can also be located in the middle of the block. Before turning a corner, watch for pedestrians about to cross the street. **Pedestrians have the right-of-way in marked or unmarked crosswalks.** Although pedestrians have the right-of-way, they also must abide by the rules of the road. A pedestrian should not suddenly leave a curb, or other place of safety, and cross into the path of a vehicle as this creates an immediate hazard. Furthermore, a pedestrian must not stop unnecessarily or delay traffic while in a crosswalk.

If you approach a crosswalk while driving, you are required to exercise caution and reduce your speed to safeguard the safety of the pedestrian. You may need to stop to ensure the safety of the pedestrian, as outlined in CVC §21950.

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 roadway. 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 traffic and pedestrians already in the intersection or just entering the intersection. Also, yield to the vehicle or bicycle that arrives first, **or** to the vehicle or bicycle on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as you.
- At “T” intersections without “STOP” or “YIELD” signs, yield to traffic and pedestrians 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.

**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.

- When you turn right, be sure to check for pedestrians who want to cross the street and bicyclists riding next to you.
- 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 and then follow the rules listed above.
- If you have parked on the side of the road or are leaving a parking lot, etc., yield to traffic before re-entering the road.

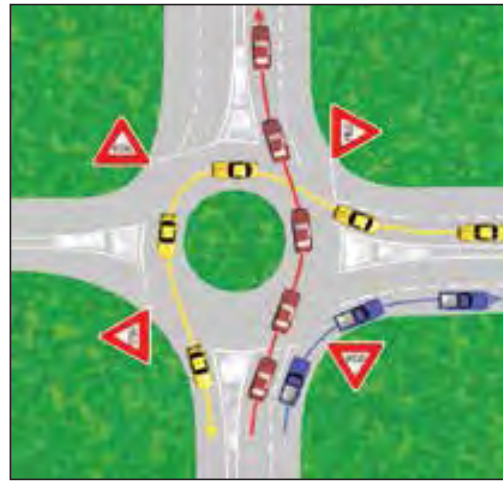
### **Roundabouts**

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 all traffic including pedestrians.

When you approach a roundabout:

- 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 (heading to the right) when there is a big enough gap in traffic to merge safely.
- 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.



**Multiple and single lane roundabout**

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

### **On Mountain Roads**

When 2 vehicles meet on a steep road where neither vehicle 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 up the hill.



## **SPEED LIMITS**

California has a “Basic Speed Law.” This law means that 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 may be cited for driving “too fast for conditions.”

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 a two-lane undivided highway 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.

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 4 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 cited. If you choose to drive slower than other traffic, do not drive in the “Number One Lane” (fast lane) (refer to the “Choosing a Lane” section on page 37). When another driver is close behind you and wishes to drive faster, you should move to the right.

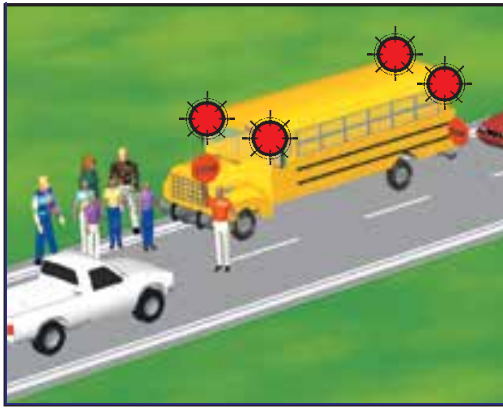
### **Towing Vehicles, Buses, or Large Trucks**

When you tow a vehicle or trailer, or drive a bus or 3 or more axle truck, you must drive in the right most 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 slowly and carefully near schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential areas because children may suddenly run 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. Be sure to 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 1 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 cannot 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, move slowly forward until you can see.

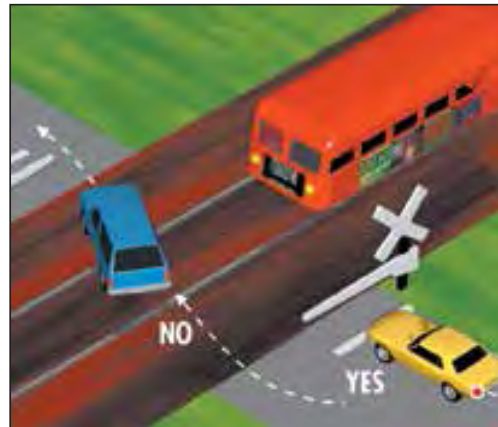
### **Alleys**

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 cannot 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, wait until you can completely cross the tracks before proceeding. Make sure your vehicle clears the tracks before you stop.
- Never stop on the railroad tracks. Remember that a train cannot 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 traffic signal lights mean **STOP!** Stop at least 15 feet, but no 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 warning lights indicate you must stop and wait. Do not proceed over the railroad tracks 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 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 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 peace officer or traffic signal light. 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 a sign with a picture of an animal (see example), be alert for possible animals in or near the roadway. If you see animals or livestock near the roadway, slow down and proceed with caution. Be sure to follow directions from the person in charge of the animals. If you see a stray animal in your path, slow down or stop if it's safe. Do not swerve as you may lose control of your vehicle and cause an accident. Be aware of sudden movements from the animals as they are unpredictable and may run into the roadway.



### Where is the green vehicle headed?

Use your mirrors. Know what is behind you, so you can prepare for what is ahead. Allow enough space between you and the vehicle ahead to give yourself time to react.

**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, motorcycles, bicyclists, 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 over your shoulder to check for blind spots. Blind spots can hide a motorcyclist, a vehicle, or a bicyclist. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street or a vehicle door opening.

## VISUAL SEARCH

### 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 reaction time by keeping enough space on all sides of your vehicle. This space will give you room to brake or maneuver if necessary.

### Know What Is Ahead

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

**Watch for hazards**—Look beyond the vehicle ahead of you. Do not develop a “fixed stare.” Keep scanning. Check your rear view mirrors every 2–5 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 follow too closely (tailgate) and are not able to see as far ahead as they should because 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 recognize and avoid a hazard.

If a vehicle merges in front of you too closely, take your foot off of the accelerator. This gives space between you and the vehicle ahead, without having to slam on your brakes or swerve into another lane.

Most rear end collisions are caused by tailgating. To avoid tailgating, use the “3 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 approximately 3 seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.

You should allow for 4 or more seconds or when:

- A tailgater is behind you. Allow extra room ahead and do not brake suddenly. Slow down gradually or merge into another lane to prevent a collision with the tailgater!
- Driving on slippery roads.
- Following motorcyclists on wet or icy roads, metal surfaces (e.g., bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and gravel. Motorcyclists can fall easily 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 in front of you.
- 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.
- Merging onto a freeway.

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

Any time you come to a place where people may cross or enter your path **or** a 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 of your vehicle at intersections, crosswalks, and railroad crossings.

At intersections:

- Look both ways even if other traffic has a red traffic signal 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 signal lights. Some drivers do not obey traffic signal lights. 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 vehicles. A driver may decide to exit suddenly or swerve back onto the freeway.
- Keep a space between your vehicle and parked vehicles. 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 motorcyclists 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 look 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, 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. Change lanes and allow the tailgater to pass you, or slow down to allow enough space 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.

## HOW WELL CAN YOU STOP?

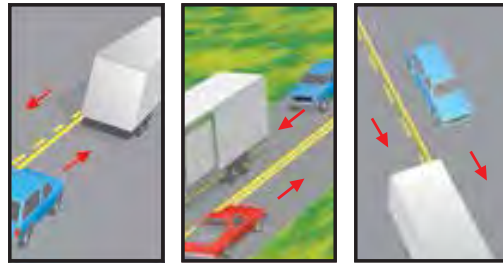
If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to stop. Assuming you have good tires, good brakes, and dry pavement:

- 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 (refer to the “Basic Speed Law” in the “Speed Limits” section on page 30). Turn on your lights during the day, if it is hard to see or you cannot see at least 1,000 feet ahead of you.

## LANE CONTROL

### Examples of lane markings



- (1) **Solid yellow line:** No passing if the 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.

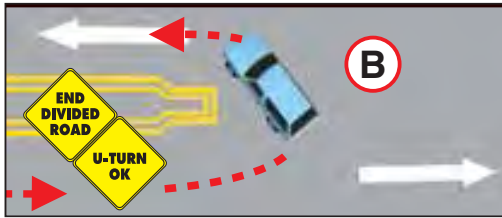
**Broken yellow lines** indicate that you may pass if the broken line is next to your driving lane.

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

- In a carpool lane/High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) 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 of the road is closed or blocked.

You may turn left across a single set of double yellow lines to enter or exit a driveway, make a U-turn, or into or out of a private road.

**Two sets of solid double yellow lines spaced 2 feet or more apart** are considered a barrier. Do not drive on or over this barrier, 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.

**Double white lines** are two solid white lines that indicate a lane barrier between a regular use and a preferential use lane, such as a car-pool/HOV. Never change lanes while in these lanes; wait until a single broken white line appears. You may also see these parallel lines in or near freeway on and off ramps.

## 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 minute changes may cause collisions. If you miss a turn, continue until you can safely and legally turn around.

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

## 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.

## CARPOOL/HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLES (HOV) LANES

An HOV lane is a special lane used only for carpools, buses, motorcycles, or decaled low-emission vehicles. You may use a carpool/HOV lane or on-ramp if your vehicle carries the posted minimum number of people required for the carpool lane, or you drive a low-emission vehicle displaying a special DMV-issued decal. If you operate a low emission and/or hybrid vehicle, you may be exempt from all toll charges on high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Motorcycle riders may use designated carpool/HOV 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/HOV lane(s). These signs also list the days of the week and the hours when the carpool/HOV requirement applies. The pavement in this lane is marked with a diamond symbol and the words "Carpool Lane." These lanes are also known as HOV lanes. Do not cross over double parallel solid lines to enter or exit any carpool/HOV lane except at designated entry or exit places.



## CENTER LEFT TURN LANES

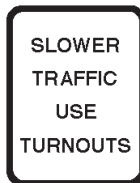
A center left turn lane is located in the middle of a two-way street and is marked on both sides by two painted lines. The inner line is broken and the outer line is solid. If a street has a center left turn lane, you must use it to prepare for or make a left turn, or to prepare for or make a permitted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

## TURNOUT AREAS AND LANES

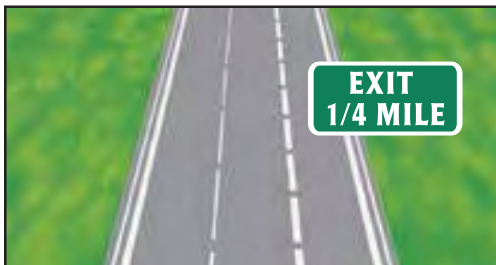
Special “turnout” areas are sometimes marked on two-lane roads. Drive into these areas to allow cars behind you to pass.



Some two-lane roads have passing lanes. If you are driving slowly on a two-lane highway or road where passing is unsafe, and 5 or more vehicles are following you **must** drive into the turnout areas or lanes to let the vehicles pass.

## 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.



## SHARED ROADWAY BICYCLE MARKINGS (SHARROWS)

Sharrows are used to indicate lanes that bicyclists are lawfully allowed to occupy.



Sharrows assist bicyclists with positioning on a shared roadway. They also alert motorists of the location a bicyclist may occupy within the traveled roadway.

## BICYCLE LANES

A bicycle lane is a **designated traffic lane** for bicyclists, marked by a solid white line, typically breaking into a dotted line ending before it reaches the corner. Different from a simple white line showing the edge of the road, a bicycle lane follows specific width requirements and is clearly marked as a bike lane.

- Treat a bicycle lane the same as other traffic lanes.
- Do not turn into the lane if there is a bicyclist in the bike lane.
- Do not obstruct bicycle traffic by reducing the width required for safe bicycle passage, typically 3 to 4 feet.

When you are making a right turn within 200 feet of the corner or other driveway entrance, you must enter the bicycle lane only after ensuring there is no bicycle traffic, and then 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.

Drivers of motorized bicycles should use bicycle lanes carefully to avoid collisions with bicyclists.

## URNS

**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.

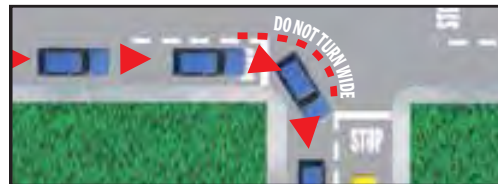
A left turn against a red light can only be made from a one-way street onto a one-way street. Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the marked limit

line. If there is no limit line, stop before entering the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection. 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.

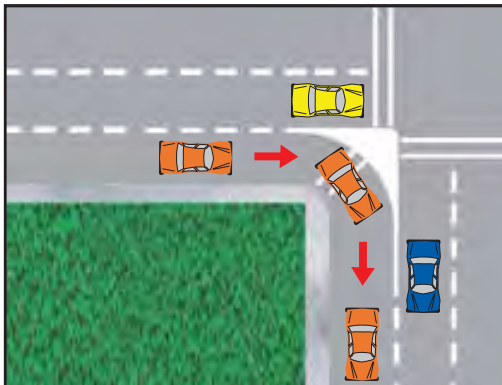
### Example of a right turn





**Right turn against a red traffic signal light**—Signal and stop for a red traffic signal light at the marked limit line. If there is no limit line, stop before entering the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection. You may turn right if there is no sign to prohibit the turn. Yield to pedestrians, motorcyclists, bicyclists, or other vehicles moving on their green traffic signal light.

**Right turn onto a road with a dedicated lane**—You may make a right turn without stopping if the road you are turning onto has a non-merging lane dedicated to right turning vehicles, and there is no sign to prohibit a free right turn. You may proceed without stopping, even if there is a red traffic signal light located within the island for vehicles proceeding straight through the intersection. If there is a traffic signal light or sign on the right curb of the right turn lane, you must follow the directions of that traffic signal light or sign. You must always yield to pedestrians within a crosswalk.

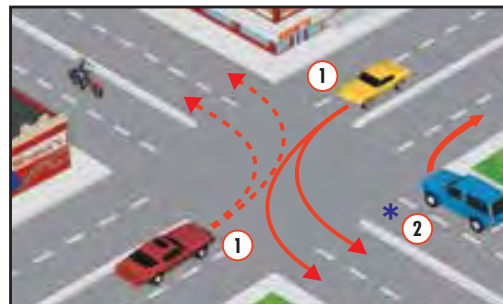


**No turn against a red arrow**—You may not turn right or left against a red arrow.

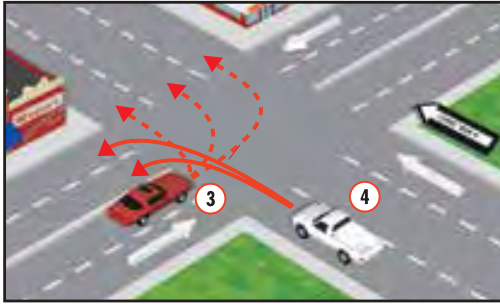
## EXAMPLES OF RIGHT AND LEFT TURNS

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

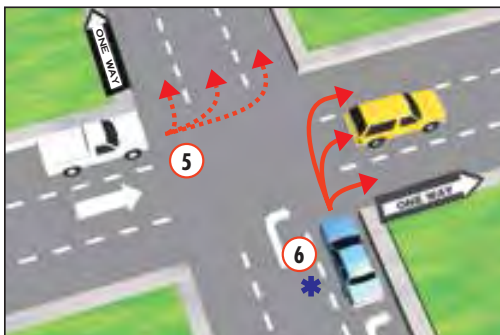
1. *Left turn from a two-way street.* Start the turn in the left lane closest to the middle of the street. Complete the turn, if safe, in either lane of the cross street (shown by the arrows). Use the center left turn lane if one is available. A left turn may be made from the other lane, if permitted 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 graphic.
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.

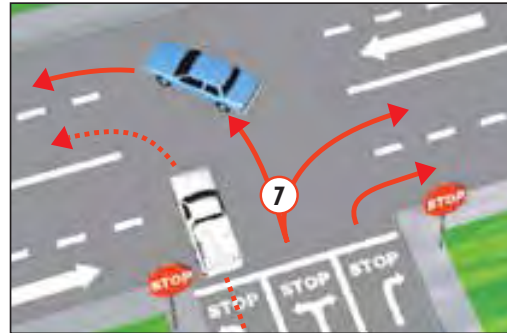


4. *Left turn from a one-way street into a two-way street.* Start the turn from the far left lane. Turn into either of the lanes that are safely open, as shown by the arrows.
5. *Left turn from a one-way street into a one-way street.* Start the turn from the far left lane. Watch for pedestrians, motorcyclists, 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 graphic.

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 traffic signal light protects you from approaching vehicles.
- At an intersection on a green traffic signal 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 cannot 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 your vehicle around.
- In business districts. Areas with churches, apartments, multi-family housing units, and public buildings (except schools) are also considered to be business districts. Turn only at an intersection, unless a sign prohibits it, 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.

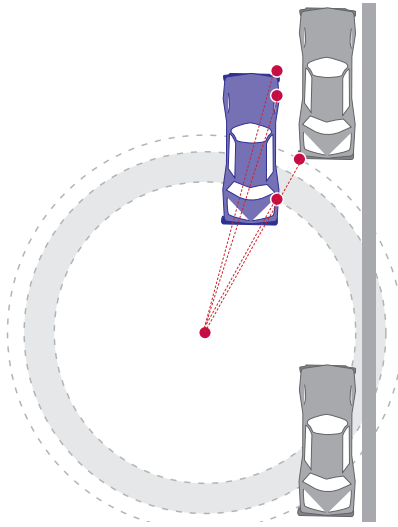
### PARALLEL PARKING

Parallel parking is a driving technique which allows you to park parallel to the road in line with other parked vehicles. The steps below explain how to parallel park safely.

1. **Find a space.** Look for a space at least 3 feet longer than your vehicle. When you find a space, **signal** that you intend to park.
2. **Pull your vehicle alongside the space or vehicle in front of where you intend to park.** Leave approximately 2 feet between the vehicle or space next to you and stop once your bumper is aligned to the space. Check your rear view mirror and look over your shoulder for approaching vehicles. Keep your foot on the brake and put the vehicle in reverse. Maintain the signal.

### Step 1

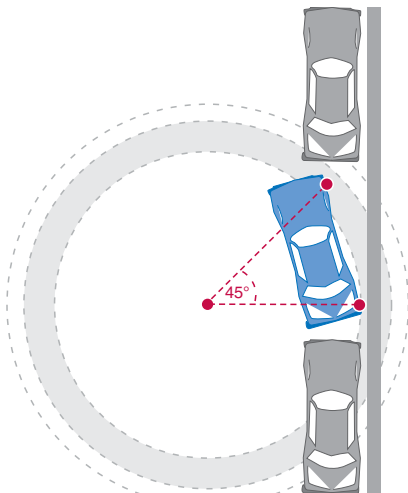
Bring your car to a stop alongside the car at the front of the space.



3. **Lift your foot off the brake.** Before backing up, check your mirrors and look over your shoulder for any hazards. Begin to back up, at approximately a 45 degree angle.

### Step 2

Reverse into the space with an S motion.

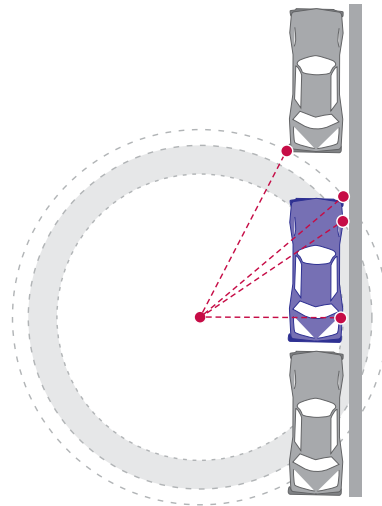


4. **Straighten out.** Begin turning the steering wheel away from the curb when your rear wheel is within 18 inches from the

curb. You may need to pull forward and backward to straighten out. Your vehicle should now be parallel and no further than 18 inches from the curb.

### Step 3

Once the car is parallel with the curb, pull forward to center your car within the space.



5. **Check for hazards.** Check your mirrors and look over your shoulder for any hazards before opening your vehicle door.

## 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 posted sign next to the green zone for time limits, or locate 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 or driver of a disabled person who displays a placard or 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. A **crosshatched (diagonal lines) area** adjacent to a designated disabled parking space is a **no parking** area. Visit the DMV website at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call 1-800-777-0133 to obtain a form for a parking placard or special plates. Qualified persons may apply by mail or at a DMV field office. A document will be issued to holders of disabled person or disabled veteran license plates.



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



**NOTE:** Placard abuse results in the loss of special parking privileges. It is also a misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment in county jail for up to 6 months, or both.

Examples of disabled placard/plate abuse:

- Using a placard/plate after it has been reported lost or stolen without reporting that the placard/plate was found.
- Loaning your placard/plate to friends or family members (disabled or not).
- Interchanging placards with friends or family members.
- Using a placard/plate when the person it was issued to is not in the vehicle with you (disabled child or family member, disabled employer, etc.).
- Using a deceased person's placard/plate.

**NOTE:** You must return the placard/plate of the deceased disabled person to a DMV field office or mail to:

DMV  
PO Box 942869 MS D238  
Sacramento, CA 94269-0001



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## ILLEGAL PARKING

Never park or leave your vehicle:

- Where a “No Parking” sign is posted.
- On a marked or unmarked crosswalk, sidewalk, partially blocking a sidewalk, or in front of a driveway.
- Within 3 feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons or in front of or on a curb that provides wheelchair access to a sidewalk.
- In a disabled person parking space, **unless** you are disabled and display a placard or disabled license plates.
- In the space next to a disabled person parking space, if it is painted in a crosshatched (diagonal) pattern (CVC §22507.8(c)(2)).
- 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 7½ 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.
  - When a peace officer or device requires a stop.
  - Where a stop is specifically permitted. A vehicle (even if disabled) that is stopped, parked, or left standing on a freeway for more than 4 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 freely pass by your vehicle. Your vehicle should be visible for at least 200 feet in each direction.

## SPECIAL PARKING RULES

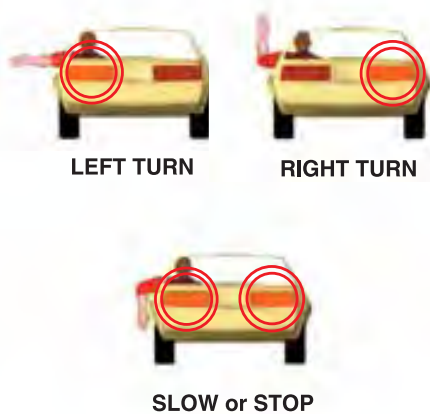
- When you park alongside a curb on a level street, the front and back wheels must be parallel and within 18 inches of the curb. Park parallel to the street if there is no curb.
- Never leave your vehicle while the engine is still running; stop the engine and set the parking brake.
- When you are ready to exit your vehicle, look carefully for passing vehicles, bicyclists, and motorcyclists. Do not open the driver’s side door unless it is safe and you do not interfere with traffic. Do not leave the door open longer than necessary.

# SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES

## SIGNALING

Always signal when turning left or right, changing lanes, slowing down, or stopping; it lets other drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians know your intentions.

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, also use hand-and-arm signals.



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.

Signal:

- During the last 100 feet before reaching the turning point (left or right turn).

**CAUTION!**—Even though you signal, do not assume that the space you want to occupy is clear.

- Before every lane change. Check your mirrors, look over your shoulder, and check your blind spot before changing lanes.

- At least 5 seconds before you change lanes on a freeway.
- Before pulling next to the curb or away from the curb.
- When you change directions.
- Even when you do not see other vehicles. A vehicle you do not see may suddenly appear and 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 or she may pull out in front of you.

Remember to cancel your signal after turning.

## STEERING

**Steering Control**—Modern vehicles require very little effort 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 around 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, your hands should be placed on the lower half of the steering wheel, with your knuckles on the outside of the wheel, and your thumbs stretched along the rim of the steering wheel.

**Pull-Push Steering**—Use pull-push steering for most turning maneuvers. 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.
- When operating vehicle controls for information, safety, or comfort.

## **HORN, HEADLIGHTS, AND EMERGENCY SIGNALS**

### ***Use Your Horn***

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

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

- If a driver or bicyclist is moving slowly, and you want him or her to drive faster or get out of your way. The driver or bicyclist may not be able to safely go faster due to illness, being lost, intoxication, or mechanical problems with the vehicle.

- 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.

**NOTE:** Honking your horn may startle other drivers. It is safer to slow down or stop instead of honking your horn.

### ***Use Your Headlights***

- When it is cloudy, raining, snowing, or foggy. If weather conditions require you to use your windshield wipers, you are required to turn on your low-beam headlights—it’s the law.
- On frosty mornings, when other drivers’ windows may be icy or “fogged.”
- Any time conditions (clouds, rain, snow, dust, smoke, fog, etc.) 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 collision.
- 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 3 or 4 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, 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 experience vehicle trouble and need to stop, follow these rules:

- Pull off the road away from all traffic, if possible.
- If you cannot 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 emergency 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 200–300 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.

## TEXT MESSAGING AND CELL PHONES

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 emails *unless* you are 18 years old or older and using an electronic wireless communications device designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation to dictate, send, or listen to text-based communications when operating a vehicle.

Although hands-free devices are permitted (except for minors), drivers should minimize distractions to focus on safe driving practices.

- Call for help in emergencies only.
- If your cell phone rings, do not answer it. Let the call go to voice-mail, if you have this feature.
- If you must make a call, pull safely off the road and stop before making the call.
- Keep telephone conversations short or, if possible, have a passenger make the call.

**Do not** use your cell phone:

- During hazardous conditions.
- To engage in distracting conversations.

**NOTE:** Minors **may not** use a cell phone except in certain emergencies (refer to the “Minors and Cell Phones” section on page 12 for additional information).

# VEHICLE POSITIONING

## 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 situation. Suppose there are oncoming cars on your left side and a child on a bike on your right side. The child is more 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.

### *Persons Who Present Dangers to Drivers*

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

- Drivers backing out of driveways or parking spaces.
- 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, pedestrian, bicyclist, 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.
  - Distracted pedestrians, such as those on the phone or texting.
  - Children, who often run into the street without looking.
  - Drivers talking on cell phones or speaking 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 safely enter the lane. You have to share space with traffic already on the road, and you must know how much space you need to merge with traffic, cross or enter traffic, and 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 it is absolutely necessary. Freeway traffic has the right-of-way.

Any time you merge with other traffic, you need a gap of at least 4 seconds, which gives both you and the other vehicle only a 2 second following distance. When it is safe, go back to following the “3-second rule” (refer to the “Do not be a tailgater!” section on page 34).

- 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 or merging in traffic. Leave 3 seconds of space between you and the vehicle ahead of you. 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 of the 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 of your vehicle. You do not want to be caught in an intersection with traffic coming at you.

Even if you have the green traffic signal 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 5 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. However, when you pass a bicyclist, be patient. Slow down and pass him/her only when it is safe, allowing for a minimum of 3 feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist where possible. Do not pass a bicyclist unless it is safe to do so and do not squeeze the bicyclist off the road.

At highway speeds of 50–55 mph, you need a 10–12 second gap in oncoming traffic to pass safely. At 55 mph, you will travel over 800 feet in 10–12 seconds; so will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1,600 feet (about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile) to pass safely. It is harder to see and judge the speed of oncoming vehicles that are traveling  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile or more away from you.

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.

#### **Do not pass:**

- If you are approaching a hill or curve and you cannot see if there is another vehicle approaching.
- Within 100 feet of an intersection.

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

## LARGE TRUCKS (BIG RIGS) AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLES (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 truck driver 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. If you stay

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

### *Turning*

When a vehicle makes a turn, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the greater the difference in the turning path. 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 not as maneuverable as passenger vehicles. Large trucks have longer stopping and starting distances. They take more space for turns and they weigh more. When no signs are posted, these vehicles must be driven in the right hand traffic lane or as close as possible to the right edge of the roadway. On a divided highway with 4 or more traffic lanes in one direction, these vehicles may also be driven in the lane just to the left of the right hand lane.

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 and others 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 cannot see the truck driver's side view mirrors, the trucker cannot 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. This 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 peace officer or traffic signal light, 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 cannot pass on the right.
- When a traffic officer directs you to pass on the left.

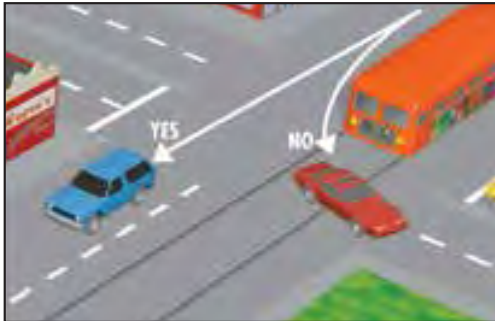
## LIGHT-RAIL VEHICLES

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 traffic signal light indicates you may proceed.

**NOTE:** Light-rail vehicles can interrupt traffic signal lights. Do not proceed until the traffic 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 it is safe 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 given by a traffic or peace officer, or a firefighter 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 of the vehicles. It looks like the sign in the picture below. Look for these vehicles and adjust your speed before you reach them.



**A Slow-Moving Vehicle**

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

Other types of slow-moving motorized vehicles, such as wheelchairs, scooters, neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) 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 or signs posted for **NEV USE ONLY** or **NEV ROUTE** on roadways in some California towns, especially those near retirement communities and golf courses. When you see these signs or markings, watch out for slow-moving vehicles in the roadway. NEVs and LSVs are restricted from roadways where the speed limit is greater than 35 mph (CVC §§385.5 and 21260). 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 DL is required to operate the vehicle.

## **ANIMAL-DRAWN VEHICLES**

Horse-drawn vehicles and riders of horses or other animals are entitled to share the road with motor vehicles. 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 additional 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, whether 2 or 3 wheels, is much smaller than a passenger vehicle's outline. Most drivers expect 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 while increasing their chances of being seen.

- Wear a bright-colored jacket, vest, and helmet.
- Wear reflective material on helmets and clothes.
- Use turn signals when planning to change lanes or turn.
- Flash their brake lights before slowing down to help others notice the motorcycle.

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 can easily disappear into a vehicle's blind spots.
- Allow a 4 second following distance. You will need this space to avoid hitting the motorcyclist, if he or she brakes suddenly or falls off the motorcycle. 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.
- 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 motorcyclist injuries and fatalities. For more information regarding motorcycle safety, contact the California Motorcyclist Safety Program at 1-877-RIDE-411 or [www.californiamotorcyclist.com](http://www.californiamotorcyclist.com).

## BICYCLES

Bicyclists are entitled to share the road with motor vehicles. Many people choose to travel by bicycle because it can alleviate traffic and reduce air pollution. Bicyclists are also required to obey traffic laws just like motorists. Bicyclist responsibilities include:



- Obeying all traffic signs and traffic signal lights.
- Riding in the same direction as traffic.
- Signaling when changing lanes or turning.
- Yielding to pedestrians.



- Wearing a helmet (if under 18 years old).
- Allowing faster traffic to pass when safe.
- Wearing the appropriate, reflective attire when it is dark.
- Staying visible (e.g. never weave between parked vehicles).
- Riding single file when riding with a group of bicyclists.
- Riding as near to the right curb or edge of the roadway as possible—not on the sidewalk.
- Making left and right turns in the same way 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.
- Carrying ID.

Bicyclists shall not operate a bicycle on a roadway unless the bicycle is equipped with a brake which will enable the operator to make a one-wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

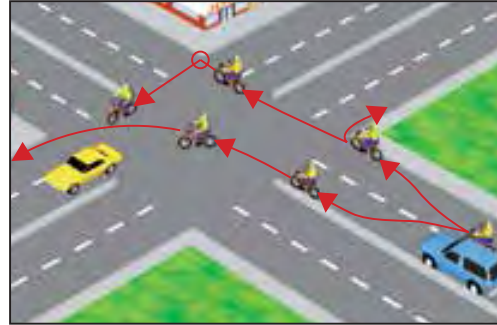
During darkness, bicyclists should avoid wearing dark clothing and **must** have the following equipment:

- A front lamp emitting a white light visible from a distance of 300 feet.
- A rear red reflector or a solid or flashing red light with a built in reflector that is visible from a distance of 500 feet.
- A white or yellow reflector on each pedal or on the bicyclist's shoes or ankles visible from a distance of 200 feet.

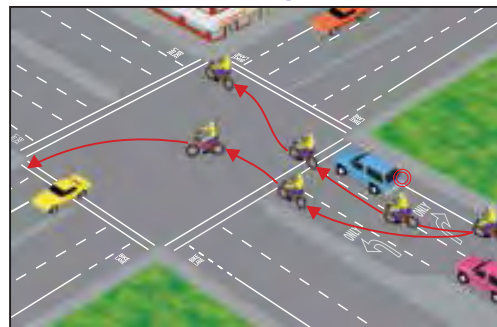
Bicyclists have the right to operate on the road and may:

- Lawfully be permitted to ride on certain sections of roadway in rural areas where there is no alternate route.

#### Turns for bicyclists



#### Intersections with special lanes

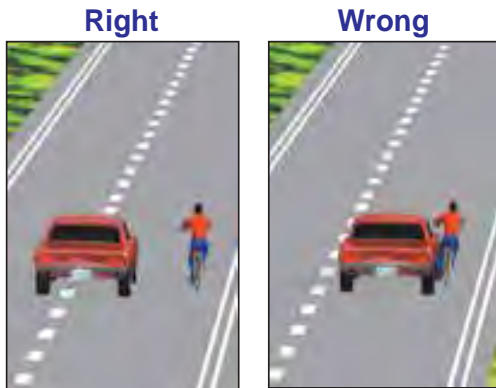


- Move left to pass a parked or moving vehicle, bicycle, animal, or avoid debris or other hazards.
- Choose to ride near the left curb or edge of a one-way street.



## Bicycles in Travel Lanes

When passing a bicyclist in the travel lane, you should allow at least 3 feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist, unless doing so would cause a hazard. In these cases, slow down and pass the bicyclist when it is safe to do so.



Bicyclists may occupy the center of the lane when conditions such as a narrow lane or road hazard make it unsafe to ride in a position that may provide room for a vehicle to pass. With any slow-moving vehicle or bicycle, drivers should follow at a safe distance. When it is safe, the bicyclists should move to a position that allows vehicles to pass. Remember, bicyclists are entitled to share the road with other drivers.

Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as vehicle and motorcycle drivers.

Respect the right-of-way of bicyclists because they are entitled to share the road with other drivers. Bicycles may be travelling faster than you think. Do not turn in front of a bicyclist unless there is enough time to safely make the turn. Here are some critical points for



drivers and bicyclists to remember. Motor vehicle drivers must:

- Always look carefully for bicyclists before opening doors next to moving traffic or before turning.
- Allow bicyclists enough room to avoid colliding with vehicle doors that are opened into traffic.
- Merge toward the curb or into the bike lane only when it is safe.
- Not try to pass a bicyclist just before making a turn. Merge safely where it is allowed, then turn.
- Not drive in a bike lane unless initiating a turn at an intersection or driveway, and not more than 200 feet in advance.
- Make a visual check for bicyclists when changing lanes or entering traffic. Bicycles are small and may be hidden in a vehicle's blind spot.
- Be careful when approaching or passing a bicyclist on a two-lane highway or freeway.

## 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:

- **At a stop light or sign, do not stop your vehicle more than 5 feet from the crosswalk, unless**

**there is an advance stop bar (line).** Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to become 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 must remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may cause a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue: When a blind person pulls in his or her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means they are not ready to cross the street and for you to go.

- **Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.** Wait for the pedestrian to cross the street.
- **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 turn right without looking first.** Look for any pedestrians, especially blind pedestrians 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 close attention when road work is being performed. Signs and message boards warn you of workers, slow-moving equipment, and closed lanes ahead. Cones, drums, or other barriers will guide you through the work zone. Reduce your speed and be prepared to slow down or stop for highway equipment. Merge as soon as it is safe to do so and without crossing the cones or drums. In work zones where lanes are narrow or where the shoulder is closed, watch for bicycles and “share the road” when they are present. Watch for work zone speed limit and reduced speed limit warning signs.



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 pass the work zone carefully, 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 avoid distractions while driving in a work zone. Distractions include using your hands-free cell phone, reading/sending text messages, and/or

operating your GPS and entertainment systems. Fines for traffic violations in a work zone can be \$1,000 or more. 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 or slow down to watch the road work. Obey special signs or instructions from workers (flaggers).



Driving carefully through work zones improves safety for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and road workers.

## 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 a lane, if safe to do so, or slow down when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle or tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, or a Department of Transportation (CalTrans) vehicle displaying emergency flashing or amber warning lights while it is stopped on the side of a state highway or freeway. The law is designed to reduce the

deaths of peace officers, tow truck drivers, paramedics, CalTrans employees, and other emergency personnel who are aiding stranded or injured motorists or involved in road work. Use caution if lane changes are required.

## VEHICLES WITH HAZARDOUS LOADS

### *Hazardous Load 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

Safe driving requires personal responsibility to use sound judgment, reflexes, experience, and common sense—every time you are behind the wheel of a vehicle. Another important element of safe driving is courtesy. Be courteous at all times!!!

## 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, text messaging, reading the newspaper, etc.
- **Operating a poorly-maintained or malfunctioning vehicle 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. To avoid aggressive driving and road rage situations:

- 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 page 69 to determine the type of driver you are.

## SPECIAL DRIVING SITUATIONS

### KEEP YOUR CAR VISIBLE

The driver's blind spots are shown in the graphic on page 33. If you look only in your mirrors, you cannot see vehicles in these blind spots. 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 CONDITION

The faster your speed, the less control you have of your vehicle. Rather than driving at the legal posted speed limit, adjust your driving speed for road conditions or whatever affects 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 the road condition that causes them to have more "out-of-control" collisions than experienced drivers.

### CURVES

On curves, there is a strong outward pull on your vehicle, which is especially dangerous 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 adjust your speed accordingly. Slow down **before** you enter the curve; you do not know

what may be ahead (stalled vehicle, collision, etc.). Braking on a curve may cause you to skid.

## DRIVING IN HEAVY TRAFFIC

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

As a general rule, drive more slowly:

- In 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 vehicles on the road.

If you drive faster than other traffic, you increase your chances of being involved in a collision. Speeding does not save much 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 your vehicle. If you are in the fast lane and you notice vehicles moving to the right lane to pass you, or a line of vehicles is forming behind you, the best thing to do is move into the right lane, when it is safe, and let the vehicle(s) 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, especially after a dry spell. 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 5 to 10 mph 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 posted. 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 the rain washes the oil off the surface of the road.

### ***High Winds***

High winds can be a hazard while driving, especially to larger vehicles, trucks, campers, and vehicles with trailers. Some precautions for driving in high winds include:

- **Reduce your speed.** Slowing down gives you better control over the vehicle and will give you more time to react in the event your vehicle gets hit by a strong gust of wind.
- **Maintain a firm hand position on the steering wheel.** Strong wind gusts are unpredictable, and if you are not holding the wheel properly, gusts can be strong enough to cause the steering wheel to be jerked out of your hands.
- **Be alert.** Look well ahead and watch for any debris on the road. High winds can cause debris to litter the highway or can even throw debris directly into your path. By looking ahead you give yourself more time to react to road hazards.
- **Do not use cruise control.** You can maintain maximum control of the gas pedal when unpredictable gusts of wind occur.
- **Be proactive.** Wait for the storm to blow over. It may be safer to pull over and take a break.

### ***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 slow, turn on your windshield wipers, and use your **low-beam** headlights. The light from the high-beam headlights 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 cannot see. Use your wipers and defroster as necessary for best vision.

If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, consider pulling off the roadway, activating your emergency signal lights, and waiting until the weather improves before continuing.

### ***Driving with Sun Glare***

Glare from the sun can be very dangerous while driving. The following tips may help you manage sun glare:

- Keep the inside and outside of your windshield clean.
- Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working order and your wiper fluid level is full.
- Wear polarized sunglasses.
- Maintain enough space between your vehicle and the vehicles around you.

- Your car visor should also be free of anything that would restrict use and be in good working order.
- Be extra cautious of pedestrians. You may have difficulty seeing them.
- Try to avoid driving around sunrise and sunset.

### ***Driving in Darkness***

Drive more slowly at night because you cannot 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-beam headlights 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 or 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; stay alert for them.

- Motorcycles are also harder to see at night because most have only one taillight.
- Highway construction can take 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, low-beam headlights, and defroster.

In a heavy rainstorm or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead of your vehicle. When you cannot see any farther than 100 feet, you cannot 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.



Keep your  
**EYES** moving  
and **SCAN** your  
surroundings  
to **AVOID**  
**HAZARDS!**



Safe driving practices:  
[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)

## ARE YOU AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER?

(Check the appropriate box)

DO YOU:	Y	N	DO YOU:	Y	N
Overtake other vehicles only on the left.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use your horn sparingly .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid blocking passing lanes...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid unnecessary use of high beam headlights.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yield to faster traffic by moving to the right .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yield and move to the right for emergency vehicles .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep to the right as much as possible .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refrain from flashing headlights .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain appropriate following distance .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make slow, deliberate U-turns .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide appropriate distance when cutting in after passing vehicles .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain proper speeds around roadway crashes .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use headlights in cloudy, rainy, low light conditions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid returning inappropriate gestures.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yield to pedestrians .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid challenging other drivers.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Come to a complete stop at stop signs, etc .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Try to get out of the way of aggressive drivers .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop for red traffic lights .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on driving and avoid distracting activities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approach intersections and pedestrians at slow speeds ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>DO YOU AVOID:</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
Follow right-of-way rules at four-way stops.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Driving when drowsy.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive below the posted speed limit when conditions warrant...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blocking the right-turn lane ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive at slower speeds in construction zones.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking more than one parking space.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain speeds appropriate for conditions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parking in a space designated for the disabled.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use vehicle turn signals for turns and lane changes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letting your door hit the vehicle parked next to you ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make eye contact and signal intention where needed.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using the cell phone while driving.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acknowledge intention of others .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stopping in the road to talk ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Inflicting loud music on neighboring cars.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Score Yourself:

COUNT THE NUMBERS OF "NO" ANSWERS

(1-3) SAFE DRIVER  
(4-7) GOOD DRIVER

(8-11) SEMI-AGGRESSIVE DRIVER  
(12+) AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

## FLOODED ROADWAYS

Excessive water on a roadway may cause flooding. This can happen gradually or suddenly. Flooding is dangerous and can be life threatening. It is important to understand the risks of water on the roadway. Some of the dangers of a flooded roadway include:

- The vehicle being swept off the road.
- Floating debris and unseen hazards.
- The roadway collapsing.
- Vehicle malfunction (e.g. stalled engine or break failure).
- Electrocution if accompanied by fallen power lines.

It is best to find an alternate route if you encounter a flooded roadway. It may not be possible to determine the depth of the flood by looking; it may be deep and too dangerous to cross. If you have no other option but to drive through a flooded roadway, be sure to drive slowly. Once you have safely navigated through the water, slowly and carefully check your brakes to ensure that they function correctly.

## Driving in Hill Country or Curves

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 drive slowly enough to stop.

Any time your view is blocked by a hill or a curve, you should assume there is another vehicle ahead of you. Only pass the vehicle if a hill

or curve is at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  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 cannot see far enough ahead to know if it is safe to pass.

## 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.



## CLEAN WINDOWS AND MIRRORS

Keep your windshield and side windows clean inside and outside. 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 cannot 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 well.

## TIRE SAFETY

Tires are an important part of driving safety. Be sure that your tires have adequate tread and air pressure prior to driving your car. Some vehicles will alert you when your tire pressure or tread is low. Even with such assistance, it is important to know how to check the tire pressure and tread on your vehicle manually. Here are a few simple tips to help you maintain your tires:

- You can use a penny to check the tread on your tire.
  - Hold the penny so you can see Abraham Lincoln's head. You should hold the coin between your fingers so his head is facing you and is completely visible.



**If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, it's time for new tires.**

- Place the coin, with the head pointing down, into the deepest groove of your tire tread.
  - If his head is completely visible, your tires need to be replaced.
- Use a tire pressure gauge.
  - Inside your vehicle manual, or within the inside edge of the car door, you should see a pounds per square inch (PSI) indicator. PSI is the measurement of air pressure in your tires.
  - When your tires are cold, use the gauge to find the PSI reading for your tires.
  - Adjust your tire pressure accordingly to match the manufacturer recommended PSI for your vehicle.

## OTHER DANGERS

All gas-powered vehicles produce carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a deadly, odorless, gas which is released out of the exhaust pipe of the vehicle. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include: weariness, yawning, dizziness, nausea, headache, and/or ringing in the ears. You can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by having the exhaust system checked regularly. Also, leave the window partially open when starting the engine, while driving the vehicle or when running the engine while parked. **Never** run the engine with your garage door closed.

## 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 or her presence. An officer may become alarmed if you fail to recognize him or 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 or 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/HOV lane.** Stop in a well lit area 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 the steering wheel, on top of your 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 the use of a firearm, 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.

## HANDLING EMERGENCIES

### MECHANICAL TIPS

#### *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 cannot control your vehicle on a slippery surface, try to find something to stop the skid. 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 bushes to stop the vehicle.

To prevent skidding on slippery surfaces:

- Drive slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead of you.
- 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. Perform this light pressing only until the brakes dry.

### DRIVING OFF OF THE PAVEMENT

If your wheels drift off the pavement onto the shoulder, grip the steering wheel firmly, ease your foot off the accelerator (gas) pedal, and brake gently. After checking for traffic behind you, gently steer back onto the pavement. Do not pull or turn your steering wheel suddenly to correct your steering. This may cause you to drive into oncoming traffic.

#### *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 itself 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, if your vehicle is not equipped with anti-lock brakes and you enter a locked wheel skid, step on the brake gradually until you are at a safe speed to continue driving. However, if you press the brake pedal and it sinks to the floor, quickly pump the brake pedal to build pressure. As you're pumping the breaks, down shift your vehicle into a lower gear or neutral to slow down. Then try using your emergency or parking brake to stop. Slow the vehicle gradually until you are at a safe speed to continue driving.

### ***Accelerator Malfunction***

If your accelerator becomes stuck you should:

1. Shift to neutral.
2. Apply the brakes.
3. Keep your eyes on the road.
4. Look for an alternate route away from traffic or look for a way out.
5. Warn other drivers by honking and turning on your emergency lights.
6. Try to drive the car safely off the road.
7. Stop and turn off the ignition.  
**WARNING:** Turning the ignition off while the vehicle is moving may lock the steering wheel; you will not have control of the steering.

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

Never turn your vehicle's ignition to the "lock" position while it is still in motion; 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:

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

### ***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 DL, vehicle registration card, evidence of financial responsibility, and current address to the other driver, persons involved, and peace officer.
- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to the police or California Highway Patrol (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, 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 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 file a report with DMV* using the Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) form. Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for the SR 1 form. The CHP or police **will not** make this report for you.

You or your representative 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 4 years, if you did not have proper insurance coverage. During the last 3 years of the suspension, your DL can be returned to you if you provide a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22) and maintain it during the 3-year period.

### **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 located every quarter mile to 2 miles.)
- If you must exit the vehicle, exit on the right side of your vehicle, away from traffic.
- Once you arrange for assistance, return to your vehicle, get back into the vehicle from the right side (away from traffic), and put on your seat belt.
- Stay inside your vehicle with the seat belt on until help arrives.



In certain circumstances (when there is not enough shoulder space or if there is a guardrail or an area to safely stay away from the freeway lanes), exit your vehicle and stay 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 CHP Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) provides free emergency roadside services during commute periods. If you get stuck on the freeway because your vehicle 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:

- Cannot 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 cannot start your vehicle, 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.

## DRIVER READINESS

### SAFETY FOR THE AGING DRIVER

DMV has published a handbook specifically for senior drivers. 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* (DL 625), call 1-800-777-0133 to request a copy be mailed, go to the local DMV field office, or contact the *Senior Driver Ombudsman Program* in your area:

Los Angeles and Central Coast Counties  
(310) 615-3552

Sacramento and Northern California Counties  
(916) 657-6464

Orange and San Diego Counties  
(714) 705-1588

San Francisco, Oakland, and Bay Areas  
(510) 563-8998

## **GOOD VISION FOR ALL DRIVERS**

You need good vision to drive safely (see the Vision section on page 14). If you cannot see clearly, you cannot judge distances or spot trouble, and you will not be able to make the best judgments. You also need to see peripherally or “out of the corner of your eye” to spot vehicles 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 vehicles. Many people who may see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing clearly at night. Some people 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 by a healthcare professional.

## **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 cannot see it, especially if it is in your blind spots.

Even people with good hearing cannot hear well if the radio or CD player is blaring. Do not wear a headset or earplugs in both ears while driving; it is against the law.

Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice them. Have your hearing checked periodically. Drivers that are deaf or hearing-impaired can adjust their driver safety habits by relying more on their seeing sense and therefore, compensate for the loss of hearing.

## **ALERTNESS**

When you are tired, you are less alert. Although most drivers are less alert at night; daytime tiredness can be just as dangerous. You may not be able to see hazards or react as quickly as when you are rested and alert; so, your chances of having a crash may be greater.

Symptoms of fatigue may include:

- Difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open.
- Having trouble keeping your head up.
- Not remembering driving the last few miles.
- Drifting between lanes, tailgating, or missing traffic signs.
- Delayed reaction times or jerky and sudden motions.

To keep from becoming tired on a long trip:

- Get a normal night’s sleep before you start on your trip.
- Do not take any drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Do not drive long hours; 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.
- Alternate drivers.

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 and can impair your driving. 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 (prescribed or over-the-counter).

## 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. 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. Notify 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 old and older who are diagnosed as having lapses of consciousness, Alzheimer's disease, or related disorders (*California Health & Safety Code* [CHSC] §103900).

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

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

### ALCOHOL/DRUGS AND DRIVING IS DANGEROUS

Alcohol and/or drugs impair 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 ride a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Much of what has been said about alcohol also applies to drugs. California's drunk driving law is also a drugged driving law. It refers to "DUI 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 DL suspensions and revocations.

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 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 the 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 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 kept 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.

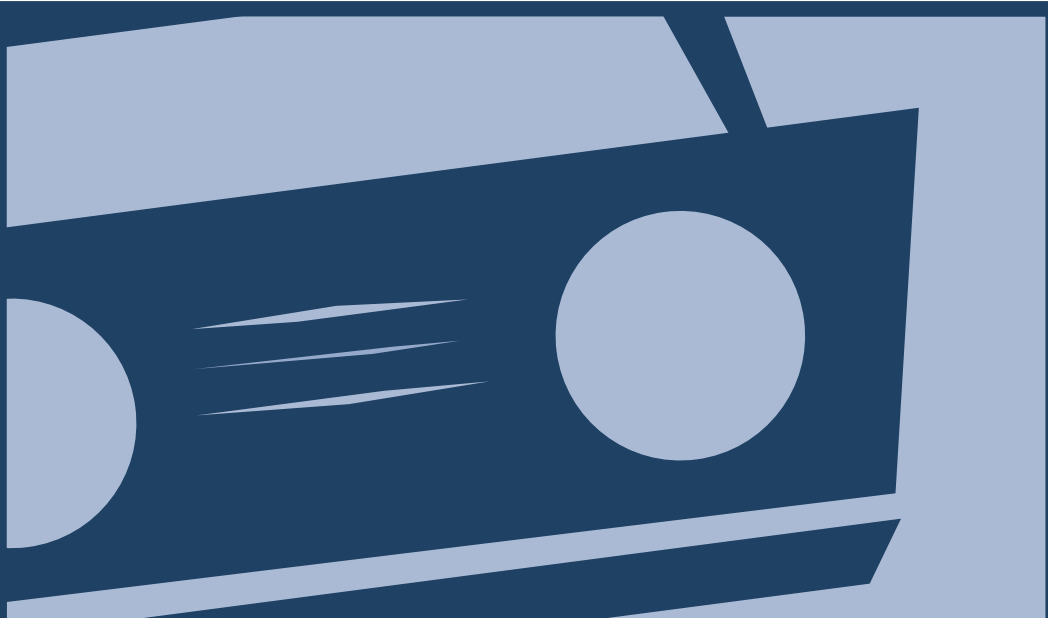
In a bus, taxi, camper, or motor home, this law does not apply to non-driving passengers.

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

If you are under 21 years old:

- 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 is full, sealed, and unopened.
- If you are caught with an alcoholic beverage in your vehicle, the vehicle may be impounded for up to 30 days. The court may fine you up to \$1,000, and either suspend your driving privilege for 1 year **or** require DMV to delay the issuance of your first DL for up to 1 year, if you are not already licensed.
- Your driving privilege will be revoked for 1 year, if you are convicted of either driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01% or higher or Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol and/or drugs. On the first offense you will be required to complete the educational portion of a licensed DUI program. A subsequent offense may require a longer DUI program and you will not have a restricted DL 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.



**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**





## Get a DUI – Lose Your License!

It is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08% or more (.04% for commercial vehicle drivers and .01% if under 21). Other factors, such as fatigue, medications or food may affect your ability to legally operate a vehicle. The table below gives an estimate of blood alcohol levels based on the number of drinks consumed, gender, and body weight. **REMEMBER:** Even one drink is likely to affect your ability to drive safely!

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC) Table for Male (M) / Female (F)										
Number of Drinks		Body Weight in Pounds								Driving Condition
		100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	
0	M	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	Only Safe Driving Limit
	F	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
1	M	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02	Driving Skills Impaired
	F	.07	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	
2	M	.12	.10	.09	.07	.07	.06	.05	.05	
	F	.13	.11	.09	.08	.07	.07	.06	.06	
3	M	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09	.08	.07	
	F	.20	.17	.14	.12	.11	.10	.09	.08	
4	M	.24	.20	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	.10	Legally Intoxicated
	F	.26	.22	.19	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	
5	M	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.12	
	F	.33	.28	.24	.21	.18	.17	.15	.14	
Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking. 1 drink = 1.5 oz. 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. 5% beer, or 5 oz. 12% wine. Fewer than 5 persons out of 100 will exceed these values.										

# Slow down and pass safely.



CALIFORNIA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST  
ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION PROJECT



Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

**"Three Feet for Safety Act"** establishes three feet as the standard minimum space required when passing a bicyclist.



## DRIVERS OF ALL AGES

It is illegal to drive after consuming excessive amounts of 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 that impairs your ability to drive.

## 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 a DUI probation.
- BAC of 0.04% or higher, in any vehicle requiring a CDL—with or without a CDL issued to the driver.

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

When notified of a DUI conviction by the court, DMV will take an **additional** action to suspend or revoke your driving privilege.

Similar provisions (*California Harbors and Navigation Code*) apply when you operate any vessel, aquaplane, jet skis, 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 DUI of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of both.

If arrested, the officer may take your DL, issue you a temporary DL for 30 days, and give you an order of suspension. You may request a DMV administrative hearing within 10 days. The arresting officer may require you to submit to either a breath or blood test. You do not have a right to consult with a lawyer before selecting or completing a test.

If your BAC is 0.08% or higher, the peace 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 preliminary alcohol screening (PAS) and/or 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 the required blood and/or urine test(s), your driving privilege may be suspended because of your refusal. Even if you change your mind later, your driving privilege may be suspended for both reasons, although both actions will run concurrently.

### ***Under 21—Zero Tolerance for Alcohol Use.***

If you are under 21 years old, you must submit to a hand-held breath test, preliminary alcohol screening (PAS), or one of the other chemical tests. If your BAC measures 0.01% or higher on the PAS, you may be suspended for 1 year.

If your PAS shows a BAC of 0.05%, the officer may require you to submit to either a breath or blood test.

If a subsequent test reveals a BAC of 0.05% or higher, the officer will issue you an order of suspension and arrest you for DUI (CVC §23140).

## **COURT DUI CONVICTIONS**

If you are convicted of DUI of either alcohol and/or drugs or both, and you have an excessive BAC level, you may be sentenced to serve up to 6 months in jail and pay a fine between \$390–\$1,000 (plus about 3 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 your driving privilege will be suspended for 6 months and you will be required to complete a DUI program, file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22), and pay all fees before your DL 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 9 month or longer program. If your BAC is 0.20% or higher and the court refers you to an enhanced DUI treatment program, your DL will be suspended for 10 months. You could also be required to install an ignition interlock device (IID) on your vehicle. An IID prevents you from starting your vehicle if you have any alcohol on your breath. If anyone is injured as a result of your DUI, the suspension period is 1 year.

Effective July 1, 2010, through July 1, 2017, all first time and repeat DUI offenders convicted in Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento or Tulare Counties are required to install and maintain, for a specific period of time, an IID on all vehicles they own and operate and pay a \$45 administrative service fee to reinstate their driving privileges (CVC §23700).

In cases involving serious injury or death, you may face civil lawsuits. All DUI convictions will remain on DMV's records for 10 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 a DUI even without a BAC measurement.

## **DRIVERS 21 AND OLDER— DUI PROGRAMS AND RESTRICTED DRIVER LICENSES**

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

Generally, if you are over 21 years old, enroll in a DUI program, file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22), and pay the restriction and reissue fees, DMV will issue you a restricted DL, unless you hold a CDL. First DUI convictions are allowed a license that restricts you to drive to/from work, during the course of employment, and to/from a DUI program. However, if you are considered a “traffic safety” or “public safety” risk, the court may order DMV to not grant you a restricted DL. Other actions against you may also prohibit the issuance of a restricted DL.

**NOTE:** Commercial drivers are disqualified for 1 year and cannot obtain a restricted CDL without downgrading to a noncommercial license (see *California Commercial Driver Handbook* [DL 650] for more information).

Second and subsequent DUI convictions result in increased penalties, including a 2 year suspension or a revocation of up to 4 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 DL 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. This program encourages one individual to abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages during 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 old and must possess a valid DL.
- Must be part of a group of 2 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.



## ADDITIONAL DRIVING LAWS/RULES

### THINGS YOU MUST NOT DO:

- **Do not** smoke at any time when a minor is in the vehicle. 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, 6 months in jail, or both.
- **Do not** operate a cell phone without the use of a hands-free device (minors, refer to the “Minors and Cell Phones” section on page 12 for additional information).
- **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 or earplugs in **both** ears while driving.
- **Do not** drive a vehicle so loaded, either with property or people, that you cannot control it, or see ahead or to the sides of your vehicle.
  - It is illegal to drive any vehicle with an unsafe, unsecured load that is a safety hazard (CVC 24002(a)). Unsecured loads (ladders, buckets, and loose items in the back of pickup trucks) can cause danger for other motorists, especially motorcycles, when they fall onto the road.
- **Do not** carry anything in or on a passenger vehicle which extends beyond the fenders on the left side or more than 6 inches beyond the fenders on the right side. Cargo extending more than 4 feet from the back rear bumper of the vehicle must display a 12-inch red or fluorescent orange square flag or 2 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; this prevents the animal from falling, jumping, or being thrown from the vehicle.
- **Do not** leave a child or an animal unattended in a hot vehicle (refer to the “Unattended Children in Motor Vehicles” section on page 21 and the “Hot Weather Risks” section on page 22).
- **Do not** tow anyone who is riding a bicycle, in a wagon, on roller skates, roller blades, skis, sled, toy vehicle, skateboard, etc.
- **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, global mapping displays, external media player (MP3), or satellite radio information.

- **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 back side windows. Do not hang objects on the mirror. Windshield/window stickers, etc., are permitted in these locations only:
  - A 7 inch square on either the passenger's side windshield lower corner or the lower corner of the rear window.
  - A 5 inch square on the lower corner of the driver's side window.
  - The side windows behind the driver.
  - A 5 inch square located in the center uppermost portion of your windshield for an electronic toll payment device.
- **Do not** drive any motor vehicle into a designated wilderness area (CVC §38301.3).
- **Do not** drive with illegally tinted safety glass. If you have sun-sensitive skin, you may use removable sun screens during daylight travel, provided 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. 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 do not meet federal safety standards.
- **Do not** operate a vehicle that has a visual or electronic product or device that obscures the reading or recognition of the license plate.
- **Do not** alter a license plate in any manner.

## THINGS YOU MUST DO:

- **You must** drive as far to the right as reasonably possible on narrow mountain roads. If you cannot 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, dust, or low visibility (1,000 feet or less) requires the use of windshield wipers.

- If you are involved in a collision, **you must** move your vehicle out of the traffic lane (unless it is disabled) when it is safe to do so. Law enforcement may tow or impound your vehicle if it is left in an unsafe area and causes safety concerns.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The California 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 4 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 possess evidence of financial responsibility whenever you drive, and show it to a peace officer after a traffic stop or collision when asked to do so. You may have to pay a fine or have your vehicle impounded if you do not comply with this law.

### INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The law states that you must be financially responsible for your actions whenever you drive and for all the 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 DL will be suspended. If the driver is not identified, the owner of the motor vehicle involved in a collision will have his or her DL 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 3 of the following conditions must be met to avoid the suspension of your driving privilege:

1. Your liability policy must provide bodily injury and property damage coverage which equals or exceeds the required limits stated in this section.
2. Your insurance company must file a power of attorney allowing DMV to act as its agent for legal service in California.

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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.

3. You must insure the vehicle before you come to California. You cannot renew the out-of-state policy once the vehicle is registered in California.

## COLLISIONS ON YOUR RECORD

DMV retains information on 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 old, your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign your DL 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 DL cancelled at any time while you are a minor.

## GETTING A TICKET

If you are stopped by a peace 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 DMV and it will also show on your driver record. Even 1 FTA or FTP can cause DMV to suspend your DL. To end the suspension will cost you a DL reissue fee of \$55.

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

## EVADING A PEACE OFFICER

Any person, while operating a motor vehicle, who willfully flees or attempts to evade a peace officer performing his or her duties is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than 1 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 or she is subject to:

- Imprisonment in a state prison for 3, 5, or 7 years **or** in a county jail for not more than 1 year.
- A fine that is not less than \$2,000 or more than \$10,000.
- Both a fine and imprisonment.

When a person is convicted of manslaughter resulting from evading police during a pursuit, he or she is subject to imprisonment in a state prison for a minimum of 4 to 10 years (CVC §2800.3(b)).

## POINTS ON THE DRIVER RECORD

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 1 of the following “point count” totals:

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

Some examples of 1 point violations:

- Traffic convictions
- At-fault collisions

Some examples of 2 point violations:

- Reckless driving or hit-and-run driving
- DUI of alcohol/drugs
- Driving while DL is suspended or revoked

If you get 4 points in 12 months, you will lose your DL. A violation received in a commercial vehicle carries 1½ times the point count

normally assessed. For detailed point count information, refer to the *California Commercial Driver Handbook* (DL 650).

## TRAFFIC VIOLATOR SCHOOL CONVICTIONS

When a driver is cited for a 1 point traffic violation, the judge may offer the driver the opportunity to attend a traffic violator school. Drivers who do not have a CDL may participate once in any 18-month period to have a citation masked from their driving record. Completion of the course is reported electronically to the court by the school. Paper completion certificates are no longer used for reporting purposes; however, the student will receive a completion receipt from the school.

**NOTE:** When a commercial driver is cited in a noncommercial vehicle, the driver *may* be eligible to attend traffic school. Refer to DMV’s website for further information at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

## SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION BY THE DMV

If you get too many negligent driver points, DMV will place you on probation for 1 year (which includes a 6 month suspension) or revoke your driving privilege (refer to the topics included in the “Administrative” section on pages 88–93). 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 DL and must show proof of financial responsibility.



DMV will revoke your DL if you are convicted of a hit-and-run or reckless driving that resulted in injury.

## **SUSPENSION BY JUDGE**

A judge may suspend a person's DL, if the driver is convicted of one of the following:

- Breaking speed laws or reckless driving.
- DUI 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 carry heavy penalties such as fines and/or imprisonment. If you use your vehicle as a weapon, your DL may be permanently revoked.

## **RECORD CONFIDENTIALITY**

Most information in your DL record 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 field office for a fee with valid ID.

## **VANDALISM/GRAFFITI—ALL AGES**

California law allows the courts to suspend the DL for up to 2 years of a person convicted of engaging in vandalism, including graffiti. If you are convicted and do not have a DL, the courts can delay the issuance of your DL for up to 3 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–\$1,000.
- Both, a fine and imprisonment (CVC §23104(a)).

## **POSSESSING FIREARMS**

The court will:

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

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The following is a brief summary of California's vehicle registration requirements. Visit the DMV's website to obtain 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 fees to register and title the vehicle. The use tax is forwarded to the Board of Equalization.

The transfer and registration fees and documents are submitted to DMV which gives you temporary operating authority. Usually within 6 to 8 weeks after the purchase date, you will receive a registration card, license plates, stickers, and a Certificate of Title, as appropriate.

If the dealer participates in the Business Partner Automation (BPA) program, the dealer or their registration service will process DMV documents and issue the registration card, license plates, and stickers to the customer.

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

- A properly endorsed and completed California Certificate of Title or Application for Duplicate or Paperless Title (REG 227) form.
- Smog certification, if required.
- Use tax payment, if required.

- Odometer Mileage Disclosure Statement, if applicable.
- Appropriate vehicle registration fees.

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

### 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 (refer to page 2 for information regarding additional residency criteria).

**NOTE:** If you are a California resident and acquire a **new vehicle, truck, or motorcycle** (this includes certain diesel-powered vehicles) from another state, **ensure** that it meets California smog laws; otherwise, it might not qualify to be registered here. DMV **cannot** accept an application to register the vehicle in California when the vehicle does not qualify for registration (CHSC §§43150–43156).

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) form.
- Verification of the vehicle completed by 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, if required.
- Weight certificate for commercial vehicles only.
- Appropriate vehicle registration fees and use tax, if applicable.
- Completed Odometer Mileage Disclosure Statement, if applicable.

If the vehicle is purchased from a dealer enrolled in the BPA program, the documentation may be submitted by the dealer to DMV.

## VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

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 becoming the victim of vehicle theft. If you follow the suggestions, you can minimize your chances of becoming the victim of vehicle theft.

- **Never leave:**
  - Your vehicle running and unattended, even to dash into a store.
  - The keys in the ignition.
  - Keys inside a locked garage or a 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 ID documents, such as the vehicle 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-lighted areas whenever possible.
  - Immediately report a stolen vehicle 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.

# DRIVER LICENSE FAST FACTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

## AVAILABLE ONLINE

- FFDL 3 *Driver License Secondary Review Referral Process*
- FFDL 5 *Requirements for a California Driver License*
- FFDL 5A *Documents Required to Apply for a Driver License*
- FFDL 6 *Requirements for a California Identification Card*
- FFDL 7 *How to Prepare and Apply for a California Driver License*
- FFDL 8 *Social Security Number*
- FFDL 8A *Social Security Number Supplemental Requirements*
- FFDL 10 *Potentially Unsafe Driver*
- FFDL 14 *Vision Standards*
- FFDL 15 *Retention of Driver Record Information*
- FFDL 16 *Vehicle Collisions!*
- FFDL 19 *Provisional Licensing*
- FFDL 22 *DMV's Driving Test*
- FFDL 24 *Identity Theft*
- FFDL 25 *Identity Fraud*
- FFDL 26 *Driver Safety Administrative Hearings Process*
- FFDL 27 *DMV's Reexamination Process*
- FFDL 28 *Driver Distractions*
- FFDL 29 *Federal Hazardous Materials Requirements*
- FFDL 31 *Ignition Interlock Devices*
- FFDL 32 *Limited Term for Legal Presence*
- FFDL 33 *Selecting a Driving School for Driver Education and Driver Training*
- FFDL 34 *Fast Facts on Organ & Tissue Donation*
- FFDL 35 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension or Revocation: Drivers Age 21 and Older*
- FFDL 36 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension: Drivers Under Age 21*
- FFDL 37 *Sharing the Road*
- FFDL 40 *Diabetes and Driving*
- FFDL 41 *Helping Drivers Maintain Their Driving Independence*
- FFDL 42 *Firefighter Endorsement Training Requirements*
- FFDL 43 *Are You a Veteran?*
- FFDL 44 *Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Pilot Program*
- FFDMV 17 *How Your DMV Information Is Shared or Used*
- *Senior Guide for Safe Driving (DL 625)*
- *California Parent-Teen Training Guide (DL 603)*
- *Preparing for Your Supplemental Driving Performance Evaluation (DL 956)*
- *Driving Test Criteria (DL 955)*

# Three Feet for Safety Act

A driver who wants to pass a bicyclist must do so at a distance no less than **three feet**, unless unable to do so due to traffic or roadway conditions.

In these cases, the driver must **slow** to a reasonable and safe speed, and pass only when doing so does not create a hazard.

**BE AWARE: THIS ACT BECAME LAW SEPT. 2014**



[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)

Learn about bicycle safety  
& other areas of interest





# FORMULAS FOR ACCIDENTS:

## DISTRACTED DRIVERS & DISTRACTED PEDESTRIANS



For more information:  
**[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)**

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It is not only trucks that have

# BLIND SPOTS

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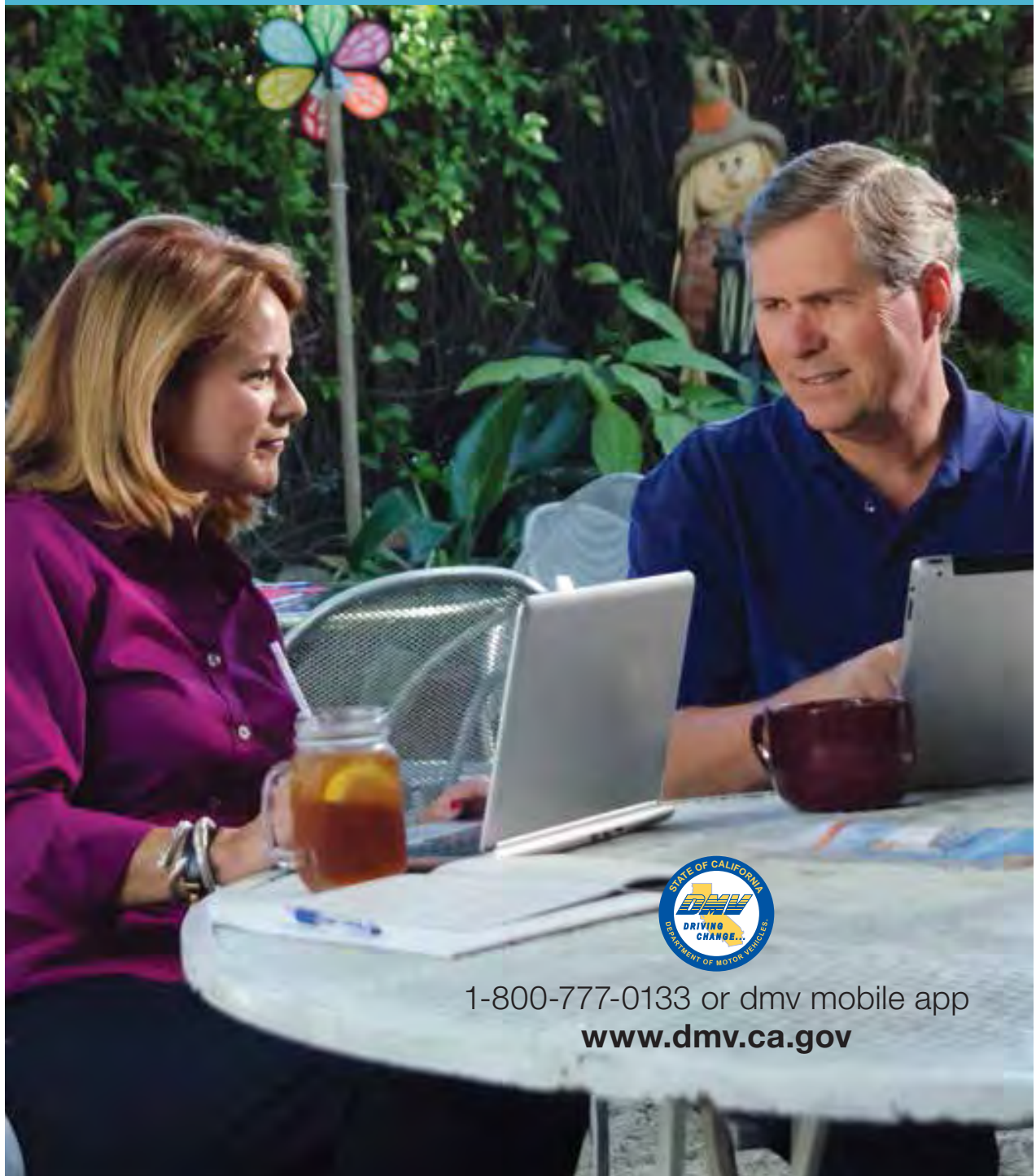
All vehicles have them. Where  
are your vehicles' blind spots?

**[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)**

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1-800-777-0133 or dmv mobile app  
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## KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE #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 marked 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

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## KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE #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. Cannot see the vehicle directly to your right.
  - b. See the vehicle's headlights in your rear view 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 chemical 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.

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

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

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