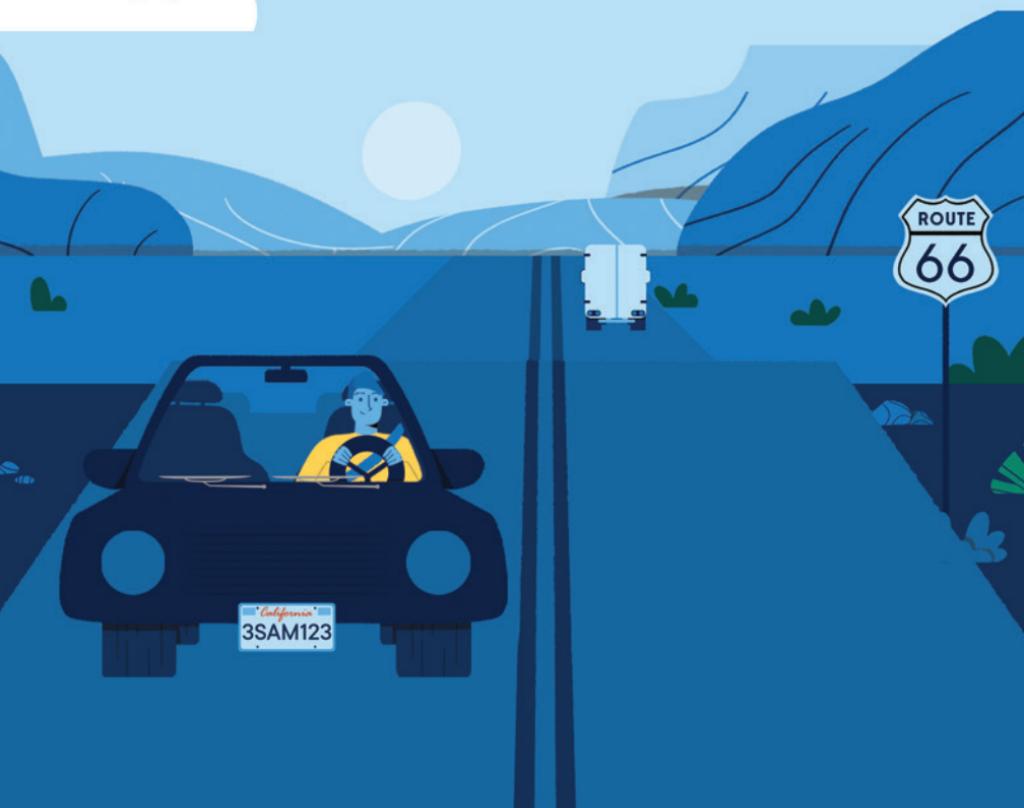




English  
2021

# CALIFORNIA

## DRIVER'S HANDBOOK



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

**Gavin Newsom, Governor**  
State of California

**David S. Kim, Secretary**  
California State Transportation Agency

**Steve Gordon, Director**  
California Department of Motor Vehicles

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Dear fellow Californian,

Every year, the Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency pens an introduction to the latest edition of the *California Driver's Handbook*. While the words change, the primary message stays the same: This handbook can help you and everyone you share the road with reach their destination safely.



That message rings as true today as ever. But it's about the only thing that hasn't changed since I wrote the introduction to last year's edition. In 2020, we began to grapple with unprecedented disruption to our lives caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the countless impacts were changes to where and how we work, receive medical care, or attend school. Our dependence on driving has shifted.

Additionally, how we interact with the California Department of Motor Vehicles has also changed. DMV vastly expanded its online services to include many transactions that previously required an office visit. From transferring a vehicle title to renewing a commercial driver's license or requesting a duplicate driver's license, you can now take care of nearly all DMV tasks on your laptop or smartphone. I encourage you to visit [dmv.ca.gov/online](http://dmv.ca.gov/online) to learn more.

Another notable change is that this handbook has been refreshed to eliminate technical jargon and make it easier to read and understand. I hope you find this updated version informative, helpful, and practical.

Please stay safe while you're behind the wheel – and remember to share the road and keep a close eye on pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooter riders.

Wishing you safety and good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David S. Kim".

**David S. Kim**

Secretary  
California State Transportation Agency

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5. Perform (read aloud) the handbook in public.

If you have questions about whether you can make copies of any part of this handbook, address them to:

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

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# Get Prepared at **REALID.dmv.ca.gov**



## Apply for a REAL ID

Bring the following to your office visit:

### ① Identity/birth document

(Ex: Original or certified birth certificate, US passport)

### ② California Residency—2 different documents

(Ex: Utility or cell phone bill, bank statement, lease agreement)

### ③ Social Security number

(Exceptions may apply)

*A name change document(s) is required if the name on your identity document is different than your current legal name.*



### PLAN AHEAD!



- Complete the online driver's license/identification card application
- Upload your documents
- Print or take a photo of your confirmation code (Code serves as your reservation.)
- Bring confirmation and documents with you to your office visit

*(Bring applicable fees.)*



# **SECTION 1. *Introduction to the California Driver's Handbook***

Before you can get a driver's license in California, you need to pass a knowledge test. This test shows that you understand driving laws and feel comfortable behind the wheel. It covers everything from driving basics to the rules of the road and safe driving habits.

We created this driver's handbook to help you prepare for your test. The test questions are all taken from this handbook.

The handbook also has resources like details about California DMV, making changes to your driver's license, and more.

## **NEW LAW**

**Effective July 1, 2021**

**AB 47 (Daly, Chaptered by Secretary of State - Ch 603, Stats. 2019)**

This law requires DMV to assess a negligent operator point on a driver's record for a second conviction within 36 months of talking, texting, or using a handheld wireless communications device (cell phone) while driving.

## **DISCLAIMER**

This handbook is a summary of the laws and regulations in the *Vehicle Code* (VC). DMV, law enforcement, and the courts follow the full, exact language of the VC. You can read the VC at [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov).

This handbook contains information about a basic Class C driver's license. If you want to learn about other driver's license classes, read the:

- *California Commercial Driver Handbook*
- *California Motorcycle Handbook*
- *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers Handbook*
- *Ambulance Driver's Handbook*
- *California Parent-Teen Training Guide*



## Save a Trip to DMV and Try One of These Options

### Online Services

- Vehicle Registration Renewal
- Driver's License Renewal
- Duplicate Driver's License
- Replacement Sticker or Registration Card
- Title Transfers
- Duplicate Title
- Report of Traffic Accident
- Commercial Driver's License Renewal

### DMV NOW Kiosk

- Vehicle Registration Renewal
- Driver's/Vehicle History Records
- Replacement Sticker or Registration Card
- Duplicate Driver's License



[DMV.ca.gov](http://DMV.ca.gov)

## **SECTION 2. About California DMV**

DMV's mission is to proudly serve the public by licensing drivers, registering vehicles, securing identities, and regulating the motor vehicle industry in pursuit of public safety.

### **DMV SERVICES**

#### **Online Services**

- Visit [dmv.ca.gov/online](http://dmv.ca.gov/online) to find our online services.

#### **Phone Services**

Call 1-800-777-0133 for the following services.

#### **During normal business hours:**

- Get driver's license and vehicle registration information, forms, and publications.
- Make a driving test appointment.
- Talk to a DMV representative or request a call back.

#### **For automated 24/7 service:**

- Renew your vehicle registration.
  - Use the renewal identification number (RIN) on your billing notice, if you have one. Pay with a credit card or e-check.
- Make a field office appointment.
  - Have your driver's license or identification (ID) card number, vehicle license plate number, and/or vehicle identification number (VIN) available.

#### **Kiosk Services**

- Visit [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov) and search "kiosks" to find kiosk locations.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

To find the office hours and service options of your nearest DMV, visit **dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133. Some field offices may have extended hours or limited services.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech impairments may call 1-800-368-4327 (toll free) for assistance.

## **CONTACT US**

Send comments or suggestions for this driver handbook to:

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

## **SECTION 3. *The California Driver's License***

A California driver's license gives you permission to drive on public roads. You must:

- Have your driver's license with you when you drive.
- Show your driver's license to any law enforcement officer who asks to see it.
- Show your driver's license to the other driver(s) if you are in a collision.
- Have a valid driver's license. It is a misdemeanor to drive with an expired driver's license. You may get a ticket, have your vehicle impounded, and be required to appear in court.

### **WHO MUST HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE?**

#### **California Residents**

California residents who drive on public roads or use public parking facilities must have a driver's license.

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

Visit [dmv.ca.gov/veterans](http://dmv.ca.gov/veterans) for active duty military personnel licenses.

#### **New California Residents**

When you become a California resident and wish to drive in the state, you must apply for a California driver's license within 10 days. There are a variety of ways to establish California residency, including:

- Registering to vote in California elections.
- Getting a job.
- Paying resident tuition at a California college or university.
- Filing for a homeowner's property tax exemption.
- Receiving any other privilege or benefit not given to nonresidents.

#### **Adults Visiting California**

Visitors over 18 years old may drive in California with a valid driver's license from their home state or country.

## PENALTIES FOR UNLICENSED DRIVERS

Driving without a license could result in a fine and jail sentence.

It is illegal for anyone with a suspended or revoked driving privilege to drive your car. If an unlicensed person is caught driving your vehicle, it may be impounded for 30 days.

Anyone hired to drive interstate commercial vehicles must be at least 21 years old. You also must be at least 21 years old to transport hazardous materials or waste.

## TYPES OF DRIVER'S LICENSES

Anyone operating a vehicle must have a license to drive that vehicle type. Most people need a Class C driver's license. To operate commercial vehicles, motorcycles, and other types of vehicles, you must have a different class of license.

### Class C Driver's Licenses

#### **With a Class C driver's license, you may drive a:**

- Two-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,000 lbs. or less.
- Three-axle vehicle weighing 6000 lbs. or less (gross).
- House car (vehicle designed for human habitation) that is 40 feet or less.
- Three-wheel motorcycle with two wheels located in the front or back.
- Vanpool vehicle designed to carry between 10 and no more than 15 people (including the driver).

#### **With a Class C driver's license, you may tow:**

- A single vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less (including a tow dolly).
- With a vehicle weighing 4000 lbs. or more unladen, a:
  - Trailer coach or fifth-wheel travel trailer under 10,000 lbs. GVWR when towing is not for compensation.
  - Fifth-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 weighing 26,000 lbs. GVWR or less (if used only in agricultural operations and not for hire or compensation).

## **Notes about Class C driver's licenses:**

- Drivers with a Class C license may not tow more than one vehicle.
- A passenger vehicle (regardless of weight) may not tow more than one vehicle.
- A motor vehicle weighing under 4000 lbs. (unladen) may not tow any vehicle weighing 6000 lbs. or more gross.

## **Other Driver's License Classes and Endorsements**

Visit [dmv.ca.gov/certificates-and-endorsements](http://dmv.ca.gov/certificates-and-endorsements) to learn about other driver's license classes and endorsements.

## **REAL ID Driver's Licenses**

The federal government passed the REAL ID Act of 2005 in response to the events of 9/11. Beginning October 1, 2021, your driver's license or identification (ID) card must be REAL ID compliant if you use it to:

- Board an airplane for domestic flights.
- Enter military bases.
- Enter most federal facilities.

Visit [dmv.ca.gov/real-id](http://dmv.ca.gov/real-id) to learn more about applying for a REAL ID.

## **DRIVER'S LICENSE DESIGNATIONS**

### **Organ and Tissue Donation**

When you apply for or renew your driver's license or ID, you may sign up to donate your organs and tissue after your death. Your driver's license or ID will display a pink DONOR dot showing your participation in the donor program.

If you are at least 18 years old, your authorization does not require the consent of your legal guardian.

Visit [donateLIFEcalifornia.org](http://donateLIFEcalifornia.org) for more information.

## Veteran

When renewing or applying for a driver's license or ID card, veterans may request to have the word "VETERAN" added to their card for an extra \$5 fee.

Visit [dmv.ca.gov/veterans](http://dmv.ca.gov/veterans) to learn more about the requirements and benefits of a Veteran designation.

## ID CARDS

ID cards are only used for identification purposes. They do not permit you to drive in California. ID cards are issued to eligible persons of any age.

To get an ID card, you must provide your:

- Identity document.
- Residency document(s).
- Social security number.

Visit [dmv.ca.gov/id-cards](http://dmv.ca.gov/id-cards) to apply for an ID card and learn about reduced-fee, no-fee, or senior ID cards.

## **SECTION 4. Getting an Instruction Permit and Driver's License When You Are Under 18 Years Old**

If you are under 18 years old, you are a minor. You can apply for a minor's (provisional) instruction permit and a provisional driver's license with the approval of your parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

### **MINOR'S INSTRUCTION PERMITS**

Here is an overview of what you need to get your instruction permit:

- Be at least 15½ years old.
- Complete a driver education program.
- Complete the Driver's License & ID Card Application (DL 44/eDL 44) at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov).
- Have your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) sign the application. If both parents/guardians have joint custody, both must sign.
- Pass a knowledge test.

See the Instruction Permits page at [dmv.ca.gov/instruction-permits](http://dmv.ca.gov/instruction-permits) for a complete list of application steps and requirements.

### **Restrictions**

Your instruction permit is not valid until you start behind-the-wheel driver training with an instructor who signs the permit.

**Your instruction permit does not allow you to drive alone at any time**, not even to a DMV office to take a driving test. You must practice driving with a California-licensed driver, such as:

- Your parent or guardian.
- A driving instructor.
- Your spouse.
- An adult who is at least 25 years old.

This person must sit close enough to take control of the vehicle if needed.

Read the *California Parent-Teen Training Guide* (DL 603) for more driving practice information.

**NOTE:** Minors cannot drive for pay or operate commercial vehicles.

## MINOR'S DRIVER'S LICENSES

After you have your minor's instruction permit for at least 6 months, you can apply for a minor's driver's license.

Here is an overview of what you need to get your driver's license:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Prove that you completed **both** driver education and driver training.
- Practice driving for at least 50 hours. 10 hours must be at night.
- Pass your knowledge test(s).
- Pass a behind-the-wheel driving test.

See the Driver's Licenses page at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) for the complete list of application steps and requirements.

## Minor's Restrictions and Exceptions

When you have a minor's driver's license, there are restrictions:

- You cannot drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. during the first 12 months you have your license.
- You cannot drive with passengers under 20 years old, unless a parent/guardian or other California-licensed driver (25 years old or older) rides with you.

There are exceptions to these restrictions if:

- You have a medical need and cannot reasonably find another way to travel.
  - You must carry a note signed by your physician. The note must have your diagnosis and a date when you are expected to recover.
- You are driving for schooling or school activity.
  - You must carry a note signed by your school principal, dean, or designee.
- You must drive for work reasons.
  - You must carry a note signed by your employer. The note must confirm your employment.
- You must drive an immediate family member.
  - You must carry a note signed by your parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The note must state the reason you need to drive, the family member, and a date when the need will end.

## Emancipated Minors

Minor's restrictions and exceptions may not apply to emancipated minors. An emancipated minor is no longer under the care and control of parents or guardians. They must provide court documents proving their emancipation and a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22/SR 1P) instead of parent or guardian signatures. Emancipated minors must still complete driver education and driver training programs.

## Keeping Your Driver's License

DMV monitors your driving record. If you get into collisions or commit traffic violations within the first 12 months, DMV may restrict or suspend your driving privilege. You cannot drive if your driving privilege is suspended or revoked.

DMV may take action against your license if you:

- **Get a traffic ticket and fail to appear in court:** DMV may suspend your driving privilege until you appear in court.
- **Have 1 “at fault” collision or traffic violation conviction:** An “at fault” collision means you were found responsible.
- **Have 2 “at fault” collisions, 2 traffic violation convictions, or 1 of each:** You cannot drive for 30 days unless a licensed adult at least 25 years old rides with you.
- **Have 3 “at fault” collisions, 3 traffic violation convictions, or a combination:** Your driving privilege will be suspended for 6 months. You will be on probation for 1 year.
  - If you have more “at fault” collisions or traffic violation convictions while on probation, your license will be suspended again.
  - Traffic violations resolved in juvenile court are reported to DMV.
- **Are between 13-21 years old and are convicted of using alcohol and/or a controlled substance:** The court will order DMV to suspend your driving privilege for 1 year or delay your eligibility to apply for a driver's license.

When you turn 18 years old, you can get a regular (non-provisional) driver's license.

**NOTE:** Turning 18 years old does not “erase” or end existing restrictions, suspensions, or probation sentences.

## **MINORS AND CELL PHONES**

It is against the law for a minor to use a cell phone or electronic wireless communications device while driving. Do not answer calls or send/respond to text messages while driving.

**EXCEPTION:** In an emergency, you may use a cell phone to contact law enforcement, a health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service.

## **Instruction Permits for Minors from Out of State**

Minors from out of state must meet the requirements listed under “Minor’s Instruction Permits.” See the *California Parent-Teen Training Guide* (DL 603) at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov) for more information about minor’s instruction permits and driver’s licenses.

## **DRIVING SCHOOLS**

Driver education and driver training is offered at state-licensed driving schools and some high schools. DMV standards for driving schools and instructors:

- They must be licensed by DMV, as well as insured and bonded.
- They must maintain complete records for DMV inspection.
- Driving school vehicles must be inspected every year.
- Instructors must pass a written exam every 3 years or show proof of keeping their education up to date.
- Instructors must carry an instructor’s ID card. Ask to see it.

See the Driver Training Schools page at

[dmv.ca.gov/driver-training-schools](http://dmv.ca.gov/driver-training-schools) for more information about selecting a driving school.

## **SECTION 5. Getting a Driver's License**

A California driver's license gives you legal permission to drive a motor vehicle.

### **WHAT YOU NEED**

To apply for a driver's license, you must provide:

- **Proof of identity:** Proving who you are.
- **Two proofs of residency:** Proving you live in California. (One proof for federal non-compliant driver's licenses.)
- **True full name document:** Proving your current name, if the name on your identity document and application do not match.
- **Social security number. Exceptions may apply.**

The U.S. government accepts driver's licenses and ID cards as valid proof of identity.

REAL ID requirements may be changing. Visit [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) to learn more about current acceptable documents and eligibility.

### **APPLYING FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE**

You can apply for a basic Class C driver's license at most DMV field offices. Here is an overview of what you need to do to get your driver's license:

- Complete and sign a Driver's License & ID Card Application (DL 44/eDL 44) at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov).
- Provide your documents.
- Pay a non-refundable application fee.
- Pass your knowledge test(s).
- Pass a vision test.
- Pass a behind-the-wheel driving test.

See the Driver's License section at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) for the complete list of application steps and requirements.



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Check our website at  
**mylowcostauto.com** for

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- Documents needed to get started
- Current rates
- Payment plan options

AB60 driver's license recipients may be eligible for  
this program regardless of immigration status

1-866-602-8861

**MyLowCostAuto.com**

## **SECTION 6.** *The Testing Process*

Before you can get your driver's license, you must pass three tests: vision, knowledge, and behind-the-wheel. You may also need to pass more than one test to renew your license or upgrade to a different driver's license class.

We use these tests to help make sure that all California drivers are safe on the roads. Visit [dmv.ca.gov/knowledge-and-drive-test-preparation](http://dmv.ca.gov/knowledge-and-drive-test-preparation) to get more help preparing for your tests.

### **DMV DRIVER'S LICENSE TESTS**

Here is an overview of the driver's license tests:

#### **1. Vision Test**

DMV tests all applicants to make sure they can see well enough to drive. You will need to demonstrate that your vision meets the requirements to drive by reading an eye chart during your office visit. For more information, visit [dmv.ca.gov/vision-standards](http://dmv.ca.gov/vision-standards).

#### **2. Knowledge Test**

You need to understand traffic laws and safety to get your driver's license. When you apply for an original driver's license, you must pass a knowledge test.

#### **3. Behind-the-Wheel Driving Test**

You will be tested on your driving ability to show that you can safely handle a vehicle.

Make an appointment online at [dmv.ca.gov/make-an-appointment](http://dmv.ca.gov/make-an-appointment) or call 1-800-777-0133 to take your driving test. On the day of your test, bring:

- Your instruction permit or driver's license (if you have one). You may need to take a behind-the-wheel test even if you have a driver's license if you have a vision or medical condition that requires further evaluation.
- Another California-licensed driver who is at least 18 years old (25 years old for minors), unless you are already licensed to drive.
- A vehicle to use for your behind-the-wheel driving test.

## Behind-the-Wheel Test Vehicle

The vehicle you use for your behind-the-wheel test needs to be safe to drive, have valid registration, and be properly insured. You must bring proof of insurance.

The vehicle must have:

- Working driver's side window, brake lights, horn, parking brake, and turn signals.
- Safe tires. The tires must have at least 1/32-inch of uniformed tread depth.
- Windshield that allows a full, clear, unblocked view for you and the person giving the test.
- At least two rearview mirrors. One of them must be on the left side of your vehicle.
- Working driver's side and front passenger seat belts.

You need to show that you know how to work the vehicle's headlights, windshield wipers, defroster, emergency flashers, and parking brake.

Reschedule your test if your vehicle does not meet these requirements.

**NOTE:** If you use a rental vehicle, your name must be listed on the rental contract. The contract must not exclude behind-the-wheel (driving) tests.

## Other Things to Know for Your Behind-the-Wheel Test

For your safety, no pets or passengers other than authorized DMV employees can be in the vehicle during your test.

The purpose of the driving test is to determine your skill in operating a motor vehicle in most road situations and evaluate your abilities, not the vehicle's technology. Therefore, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) technologies, such as automated parallel parking and adaptive cruise control, are not permitted during the driving test. Vehicle safety technology, such as backup cameras and blind spot monitors, may be used on the driving test, but they are not a replacement for an actual visual check of your mirrors and blind spots and cannot solely be used on a driving test.

## **WHERE TO TAKE THE TESTS**

You can take your tests at most DMV offices that provide driver's license services.

To save time, make an appointment online at

**[dmv.ca.gov/make-an-appointment](http://dmv.ca.gov/make-an-appointment)** or call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours.

## **CHEATING**

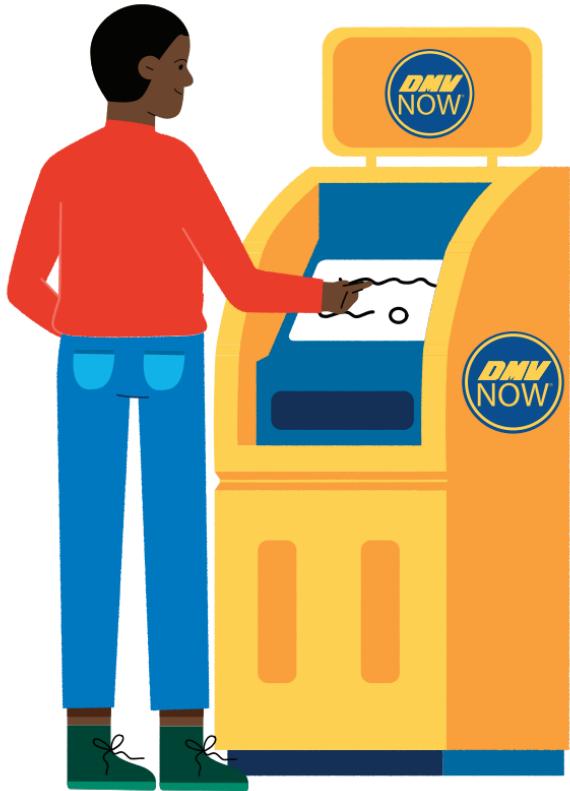
You are not allowed to use any testing aids during knowledge tests, such as:

- California Driver's Handbook.
- Cheat sheets.
- Electronic communication devices, such as cell phones, etc.

DMV will fail you if you use any aid during the knowledge test. An action may be taken against your driving privilege and/or the driving privilege of anyone who helps you.

## **REGISTER TO VOTE**

For information on registering to vote, visit **[dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov)**.



## Use DMV NOW Kiosks for Registration Renewal & More

- Vehicle Registration Renewal
- Driver's/Vehicle History Records
- Replacement Sticker or Registration Card
- Duplicate Driver's License
- Vehicle Registration Suspension  
Reinstatement Fee Payment

Visit [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov) for more information

## **SECTION 7. *Changing, Replacing, and Renewing Your Driver's License***

### **CHANGING YOUR INFORMATION**

#### **Change Your Name**

If you legally change your name, update your driver's license. Here is an overview of the steps:

1. Change your name with the Social Security Administration (SSA).
2. Complete a new Driver's License & ID Card Application (DL 44/eDL 44) at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov).
3. Bring your name change documents to a DMV office.

See Driver's License or ID Card Updates at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) for more information and a list of documents you will need.

#### **Change Your Gender Identity**

See Driver's License or ID Card Updates at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) for more information about changing your gender identity.

#### **Change Your Address**

If you move, you must notify DMV of your new address within 10 days. Submit a change of address online at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov), by mail, or at a DMV office. It is your responsibility to ensure DMV has your correct mailing address on record.

Change your address with the U.S. Postal Service to ensure DMV correspondence is forwarded to your current mailing address.

You do not automatically get a new driver's license when you change your address. You may request a replacement driver's license for a fee.

See Driver's License or ID Card Updates at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) for more information.

## **REPLACE A LOST, STOLEN, OR DAMAGED DRIVER'S LICENSE**

If you need to replace a lost, stolen, or damaged driver's license, you must:

- Fill out a Driver's License & ID Card Application (DL 44/eDL 44) at **dmv.ca.gov**. You can fill out the form online before coming into a DMV office.
- Visit **dmv.ca.gov/dlservices** or a DMV office.
- Pay a nonrefundable replacement fee.

Before DMV can give you a temporary driver's license, you may need to provide additional proof of your identity.

If you are a minor, your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign the DL 44/eDL 44.

Once you receive your replacement card, your old card is no longer valid. If you find the old card, make sure you destroy it.

## **RENEW YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE**

It is against the law to drive with an expired driver's license.

Visit the Driver's License or ID Card Renewal page at **dmv.ca.gov/dlservices** for renewal options and instructions.

## **Extend Your Driver's License**

If you are away from California for a long period of time and cannot renew online, you may request a free one-year extension of your driver's license. You must do this before your driver's license expires. The request should include your name, driver's license number, birth date, California residence address, and out-of-state address. Mail your request to:

DMV  
PO Box 942890  
Sacramento, CA 94290-0001

**NOTE:** Limited-term drivers are not eligible for this extension.

## **SECTION 8.** *An Introduction to Driving*

### **ARE YOU READY TO DRIVE?**

**Vision** — Make sure your vision is good enough for you to drive.

**Hearing** — It is against the law to wear a headset or earplugs in both ears while driving. Drivers who are deaf or hard of hearing can adjust their driving habits.

**Fatigue and Drowsiness** — Fatigue and drowsiness can affect your vision and increase reaction time to hazards. Avoid driving if you are fatigued or drowsy.

**Medications** — Prescription and over-the-counter medications can make you an unsafe driver. Some medicines can make you sleepy.

**Health** — Doctors are required to report patients, who are at least 14 years old, to DMV if they are diagnosed as having:

- Lapses of consciousness.
- Alzheimer's disease.
- Related disorders.

Your doctor may also report other medical conditions if they believe they may affect your ability to drive safely.

## MAINTAINING YOUR VEHICLE

- Clean your windows and mirrors.
- Adjust your seat and mirrors.
- Check your tires-Refer to your Vehicle Owner's Manual.

## Controlling the Vehicle

### Hand-to-Hand Steering

This is also known as “push/pull” steering. When you use this method, your hands do not cross over the face of the steering wheel. As a result, there is less chance of injury to your face, arms, or hands if your airbag deploys. To use this method:

- Start with your hands at 9 and 3 o'clock, or lower at 8 and 4 o'clock.
- Keep your hands in these positions while driving, even when making turns.

### Hand-Over-Hand Steering

Use this steering method when you turn at low speeds, park, or need to recover from a skid. To use this method:

- Start with your hands at 9 and 3 o'clock, or lower at 8 and 4 o'clock.
- Push the steering wheel up with one hand.
- Let go of the steering wheel with your other hand. Reach across the arm still holding the wheel, grip the wheel, and pull up.

### One-Hand Steering

There are only two situations that may require steering with one hand:

- When you are turning while backing up. Place your hand at the 12 o'clock position on the steering wheel. This is necessary because you may need to turn in your seat to see where you are going behind you.
- When you are operating vehicle controls that require you to remove a hand from the steering wheel.

One-handed steering is only recommended in limited situations. To control your vehicle, it is critical to keep both hands on the wheel whenever possible.

## SIGNALS, HORNS, AND HEADLIGHTS

Your signals, horn, and headlights are important for communicating with other drivers and seeing the road.

### Signaling

Always signal when you turn, change lanes, slow down, or stop.

Signaling lets other drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians know what your plans are.

You can signal using hand-and-arm positions or your vehicle's signal lights. If bright sunlight makes your signal lights hard to see, also use the hand-and-arm signals shown in the image.



Motorcyclists often use hand signals to make themselves more visible. Bicyclists may signal a turn with their arm held straight out, pointing in the direction they plan to turn.

You should signal:

- At least 100 feet before you turn.
- Before every lane change. Also check your mirrors, look over your shoulder, and check your blind spot.
- At least 5 seconds before you change lanes on a freeway.
- Before pulling next to the curb or away from the curb.
- Even when you do not see other vehicles around you. Make using your turn signal a habit. It can help to avoid collisions even in situations when you think you are safe.
- If you plan to turn after crossing an intersection. If you signal too early, other drivers might think you plan to turn at the intersection. As a result, they might pull out in front of you. Start signaling when you are almost through the intersection.

Remember to turn off your signal when you no longer need it.

## Using Your Horn

You can use your vehicle's horn to let other drivers know you are there or to warn others of a hazard. It is important to know when to use your horn, and when not to. It is safer to slow down or stop instead of honking your horn.

Use your horn to:

- Avoid collisions (when necessary).
- Alert another driver of a hazard.
- Alert oncoming traffic on narrow mountain roads where you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead of your vehicle.

Do not use your horn to:

- Urge a slow-moving driver or bicyclist to go faster or get out of your way. The driver or bicyclist may not be able to safely go faster.
- Alert other drivers that they made a mistake. Your honking may cause them to make more mistakes and retaliate.
- Express anger.
- Honk at pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists (unless necessary to avoid a collision). Remember that your horn sounds much louder outside the vehicle.

## Using Your Headlights

Your vehicle's headlights help you see what is in front of you. They also make it easier for other drivers to see your vehicle.

Use your headlights:

- When it is too dark to see. Use your headlights if you cannot clearly recognize a person or vehicle from 1000 feet away.
- Beginning 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise.
- In adverse weather. If you need to use your windshield wipers due to rain or snow, you must turn on your low-beam headlights.
- When conditions (such as clouds, dust, smoke, or fog) prevent you from seeing other vehicles.
- On small country or mountain roads and tunnels (even on sunny days).
- When a regulatory (white) road sign states that headlights must be on.
- To help other drivers see your vehicle, especially when the sun is low on the horizon.

## Using Your Emergency Flashers

If you can see a collision or hazard ahead, warn drivers behind you using one (or all) of these methods:

- Turn on your emergency flashers.
- Lightly tap your brake pedal three or four times.
- Use a hand signal when slowing and stopping.

Never stop on the road unless it is necessary to stay safe or obey a law. If you need to stop, start braking early as a signal to the vehicles behind you. If you need to stop because of vehicle trouble:

- Give other drivers plenty of warning that you are pulling over.
- Turn on your emergency flashers if you are not moving. If your vehicle does not have emergency flashers, use your turn signals.
- If possible, pull off the road away from all traffic.
- 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. Other drivers may not see your vehicle in time to avoid a collision.
- If it is safe to do so, lift the hood to signal an emergency.
- Place emergency flares or triangles 200–300 feet behind your vehicle (if you have them). This gives drivers time to change lanes if they need to. Be very careful when using flares. They may cause fires, especially when used near flammable liquids.
- Call for emergency roadside assistance, follow the above guidelines, and stay in your vehicle until help arrives.



HOLD A HAND  
WALK DON'T RUN



## SECTION 9. Navigating the Roads

### TRAFFIC LANES

A traffic lane is a section of road for a single line of traffic. There are several different types of lanes.

#### Lane Markings

Lane markings on road surfaces help drivers know which part of the road to use and understand traffic rules. Line colors and patterns mean different things.

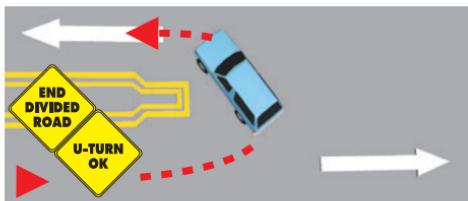
#### Single Solid Yellow Line

A single solid yellow line marks the center of a road with two-way traffic. Do not cross over this line into oncoming traffic. Do not pass a vehicle in front of you if there is only one lane of traffic going your direction and a solid yellow line on your side of the road.

#### Double Solid Yellow Lines

Do not pass over double solid yellow lines. Never drive to the left of these lines unless you are:

- In a 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.
- Turning left across a single set of double yellow lines to enter or exit a driveway or private road or make a U-turn.



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

## **Broken Yellow Line**

A broken yellow line indicates you may pass if the broken line is next to your driving lane. Only pass when it is safe.

## **Single Solid White Line**

A single solid white line marks traffic lanes going in the same direction. This includes one-way streets.

## **Double Solid White Lines**

Double solid white lines indicate a lane barrier between a regular use and a preferential use lane (such as a carpool lane). You may also see double solid white lines in or near freeway on and off ramps. Never change lanes over double solid white lines. Wait until you see a single broken white line.

## **Broken White Line**

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

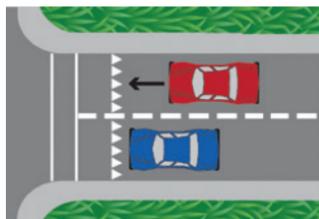
## **End of Lane Markings**

Ending freeway and street lanes are usually marked with large broken lines. If you are driving in a lane marked with 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.



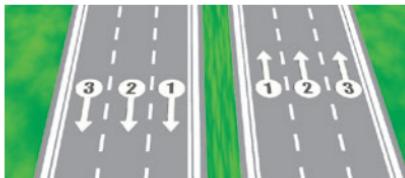
## **Yield Lines**

A yield line is a solid white line of triangles that shows approaching vehicles where to yield or stop. The triangles point towards approaching vehicles. A yield line is also known as “shark’s teeth.”



## 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.

Here are some tips for choosing a lane:

- Use the left lane to pass or turn left.
- Use the right lane to enter or exit traffic.

## Changing Lanes

You might change lanes when:

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

Before you change lanes:

- Signal.
- Look in all your mirrors.
- Check traffic behind and beside you.
- Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move to make sure the lane is clear.
- Check your blind spot for other vehicles, motorcyclists, and bicyclists.
- Be sure there is enough room (space) for your vehicle in the next lane.

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

## Types of Lanes

### Passing Lanes

On a multilane road, the passing lane is the lane closest to the center divider and is used to pass other vehicles. It is also known as the fast lane because it is used by faster moving traffic.

You will learn more about passing later in this section.

### Carpool/High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

An HOV lane is a special lane reserved for carpools, buses, motorcycles, or low-emission vehicles with decals. To use an HOV lane, one of these things must apply:

- You have a certain number of people in your vehicle. There will be signs at the on-ramp or along the road to tell you the minimum number of people. The signs also list the days and hours when the carpool/HOV rules apply.
- You are driving a low emission or zero emission vehicle. You must display a special DMV-issued decal.
- You are riding a motorcycle (unless otherwise posted).

The road surface in HOV lanes is marked with a diamond symbol and the words “Carpool Lane.” Do not cross over double solid lines to enter or exit an 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. It is marked on both sides by two painted lines. The inner line is broken and the outer line is solid. Use the center left turn lane to prepare for and make a left turn or U-turn. It is not a regular traffic lane or a passing lane. You may only drive for 200 feet in the center left turn lane.

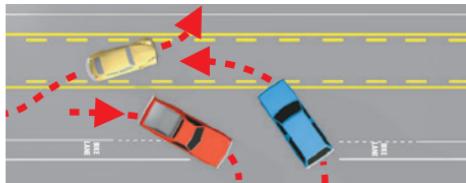
To turn left from this lane:

- Look for other vehicles coming toward you in the center left turn lane.
- Signal.
- Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot.



- Merge completely into the center left turn lane so you do not block traffic.
- Turn when it is safe.

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



## **Turnout Areas or Lanes**

Some two-lane roads have special turnout areas or lanes. They are usually marked. Merge into these areas or lanes to allow cars behind you to pass.

You must use a turnout area or lane to let other vehicles pass when you are driving slowly on a two-lane road where passing is unsafe, and there are 5 or more vehicles following you.



## **Bicycle Lanes**

Bicycle lanes are for bicyclists only and run alongside vehicle traffic. They are typically marked by a single solid white line and signs. They are sometimes painted bright green to make them easier to see. The solid line will change to dashed near an intersection.

There are multiple types of bike lanes and markings:

- **Bike lane:** Established along streets adjacent to vehicle traffic. Typically defined by a single solid white line that turns into a dashed line near an intersection.
- **Buffered bike lane:** Uses chevrons or diagonal markings to provide greater separation from traffic and on-street parking.
- **Bike route:** Uses bike route signs and/or shared road markings to designate a preferred route for bicyclists on streets shared with vehicle traffic.
- **Bicycle boulevard:** Prioritizes bicycle travel on streets shared with vehicle traffic.

- **Separated bikeway:** For the exclusive use of bicyclists. Physically separated from vehicle traffic. Also known as a cycle track or protected bike lane. The separation may include flexible posts, grade separation, inflexible barriers, or on-street parking.
- **Shared roadway bicycle markings (sharrows):** Alert traffic that bicyclists can occupy the lane. When used appropriately, sharrows help bicyclists maintain a safe lane position.

It is illegal to drive in a bicycle lane unless you are:

- Parking (where permitted).
- Entering or leaving the road.
- Turning (within 200 feet of the intersection).



Example of a sharrow.

**NOTE:** Check your blind spot(s) before entering a bike lane.

If you drive a motorized bicycle, use caution to avoid other bicyclists. Travel at a reasonable speed and do not endanger the safety of other bicyclists.

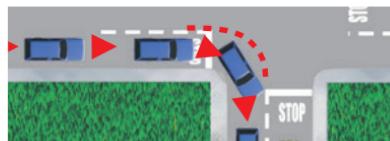
## TURNING

Turning safely and smoothly is one of the most important driving skills you need to learn.

### Turning Right

To make a right turn:

- Drive close to the right edge of the road.
- You can drive in a bike lane but wait to enter until you are 200 feet from the turn. Check for bicyclists in your blind spot(s).
- Watch for pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists between your vehicle and the curb.
- Begin signaling about 100 feet before the turn.
- Look over your right shoulder and reduce your speed.



Example of a right turn.

- Stop behind the limit line (white lines on the road that show you where to stop). If there is no limit line, stop before you enter the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before you enter the intersection.
- Look both ways and turn when it is safe. Do not turn wide into another lane.
- Complete your turn in the right lane.

Keep reading for more information about turning right in specific situations.

### **Right Turn Against a Red Light**

You may turn right at a red light unless there is a “No turn on red” sign. Follow the same steps as a normal right turn.

### **Right Turn Against a Red Arrow**

You may not turn right if you are stopped at a red arrow light. Wait until the light changes to green before making your turn.

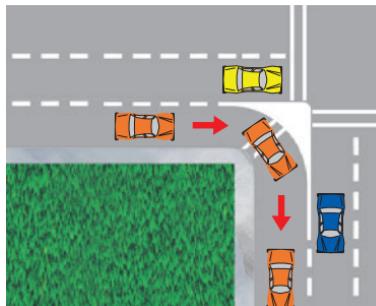
### **Right Turn at a Public Transit Bus Lane**

It is illegal to drive, stop, park, or leave a vehicle in an area designated for public transit buses. Signs will be posted to indicate the lanes are for “bus only” use. However, you may cross a bus lane to make a right turn.

### **Right Turn onto a Road with a Dedicated Lane**

A dedicated right turn lane does not merge into another lane and allows you to make a “free right turn” without stopping first. You may make your turn even if there is a red light for vehicles going straight through the intersection. If there is a traffic light or sign on the right curb of the right turn lane, you must obey that light or sign. Always yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk when turning.

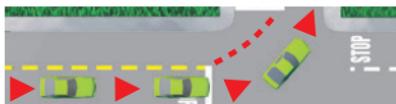
If free right turns are not allowed, there will be a sign saying so.



## Turning Left

To make a left turn:

- Drive close to the center divider or into the left turn lane.
- Start signaling 100 feet before the turn.
- Look over your left shoulder and reduce your speed.
- Stop behind the limit line. If there is no limit line, stop before you enter the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before you enter the intersection.
- Look left, right, and then left again.
- Make the turn when safe.



Example of a left turn.

When you turn left, do not turn the steering wheel too soon and enter the lane of oncoming vehicles. This is known as “cutting the corner.” Keep your wheels pointed straight ahead until it is safe to start your turn. If your wheels are pointed to the left and a vehicle hits you from behind, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic.

### Left Turn Against a Red Light

You may only turn left against a red light when you are turning from a one-way street onto a (left-moving) one-way street. Check to make sure there is no sign prohibiting the turn.

Yield to other vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists who have a green light. Look both ways and turn when it is safe.

## **U-turns**

A U-turn is when you turn your vehicle around to go back in the direction you came. To make a U-turn, signal and use the far-left lane or center left turn lane.

You may make a legal U-turn:

- Across a double yellow line.
- In a residential district:
  - If no vehicles are approaching you within 200 feet.
  - Whenever a traffic sign, light, or traffic light protects you from approaching vehicles.
- At an intersection on a green traffic 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.

Never make a U-turn:

- Where a “No U-turn” sign is posted.
- 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.
- When you cannot see clearly for 200 feet in each direction because of a curve, hill, rain, fog, or other reason.
- When other vehicles may hit you.
- On a one-way street.
- In front of a fire station. **Never use a fire station driveway to turn around.**
- In business districts, including areas with churches, apartments, and public buildings (except schools). In these areas, turn only at an intersection (unless a sign forbids it), or where openings are provided for turns.

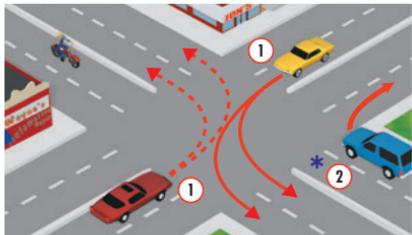
## Examples of Turns

Get familiar with different kinds of turns. The numbers on the cars in the images refer to the number of the example.

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

**street.** Start the turn in the left lane closest to the middle of the street. Use the center left turn lane if one is available. End the turn in the left lane closest to the middle of the street going in your vehicle's direction of travel.

In some situations, there may be signs or arrows to indicate that you can turn left from either lane.

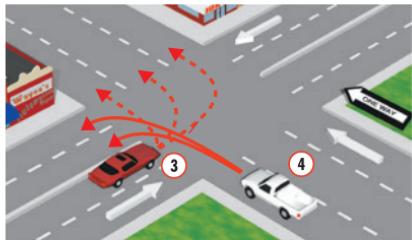


### 2. Right turn.

Begin and end the turn in the lane closest to the right edge of the road. Do not swing wide into another lane of traffic. Watch for pedestrians, motorcycles, and bicycles between your vehicle and the curb. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane. This is shown by the asterisk (\*) in the image.

### 3. Left turn from a two-way street onto a one-way street.

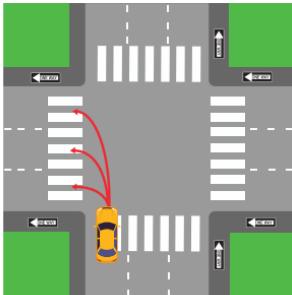
Start the turn from the lane closest to the middle of the street. If there are three or more lanes in your direction of travel you may end your turn in any lane that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.



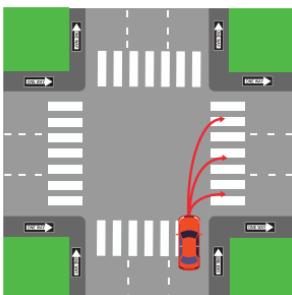
### 4. Left turn from a one-way street onto a two-way street.

Start the turn from the far-left lane. End the turn in the left lane closest to the middle of the street going in your vehicle's direction of travel.

- 5. Left turn from a one-way street onto a one-way street.** Start the turn from the far-left lane. Watch for pedestrians, motorcycles, and bicycles between your vehicle and the curb. Bicyclists can legally use the left turn lane for their left turns. If there are three or more lanes in your direction of travel you may end your turn in any lane that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.



- 6. Right turn from a one-way street onto 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.



- 7. Turn at a “T” intersection from a one-way street onto a two-way street.** Traffic going straight through the intersection has the right-of-way. You may turn either right or left from the center lane. Watch for vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians.



## MERGING AND EXITING

### Merging

Highway traffic has the right-of-way. For more information, see “Right-of-Way Rules: Who Goes First” in “Section 10: Laws and Rules of the Road.”

When you enter a highway, you will need to:

- Enter at or near the speed of traffic.
- Merge into highway traffic when safe to do so. Do not stop unless absolutely necessary.
- Merge into a space large enough for your vehicle to safely join the lane. Do not try to merge into a gap that is too small.
- Use your mirrors and turn signals.
- Watch for vehicles around you. Turn your head to quickly look over your shoulder before changing lanes or merging into traffic.
- Leave three seconds of space (three-second rule) between you and the vehicle ahead of you. Make sure you can stop safely if you need to. For more information, see “Tailgating” in “Section 11: Safe Driving.”

If you need to cross several lanes, cross them one at a time, and check your blind spots for vehicles each time.

### Exiting

To exit a highway safely:

- Know your exit and be aware of when it is approaching.
- If you plan to change lanes, signal and look over your shoulder to check your blind spot.
- Change lanes one at a time until you are in the proper lane to exit.
- When exiting, signal your intention for about five seconds.
- Make sure you are at a safe speed to exit.

## Crossing or Entering Traffic

When crossing or entering traffic from a full stop, signal and leave a large enough space to get up to the speed of other vehicles. It is important to know how much space you need for merging, crossing, entering, and exiting traffic. You need a space 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 your sides. You do not want to be caught in an intersection with traffic coming at you. Even if you have a green light, do not start going across the intersection if there are vehicles blocking your way.

When turning left, do not assume that an oncoming vehicle with its right turn signal on is turning before it reaches you. The driver may plan to turn just beyond you, or the signal may be on unintentionally. This is particularly true of motorcycles. Their signal lights often do not turn off automatically. Wait to see where the other driver starts to turn before you continue.

## PASSING

You must judge whether you have enough space to pass whenever you approach:

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

Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that could cause other vehicles to move into your lane. Only pass when it is safe.

Do not pass:

- If you are approaching a hill or curve and cannot see if other traffic is approaching.
- Within 100 feet of or in an intersection, bridge, tunnel, railroad crossing, or other hazardous area.
- At crossroads and driveways.

## How to Pass

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

- An open highway clearly has two or more lanes going your direction.
- The driver ahead of you is turning left and you do not have to drive off the road to pass. Never pass on the left if the driver is signaling a left turn.
- You are on a one-way street.

Never drive off the paved or main-traveled part of the road to pass. The edge of the main-traveled part of the road may have a painted white line. Do not pass on the shoulder. Do not try to pass unless you know you have enough space to return to your lane.

When you are going to pass on an open highway:

- Signal that you plan on passing.
- Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot.
- Drive into the passing lane.
- Speed up to pass the vehicle.
- Return to your original lane.

## Being Passed

If a vehicle is passing you or signals that they plan on passing, allow the vehicle to pass. Maintain your lane position. Do not try to go faster to avoid being passed.

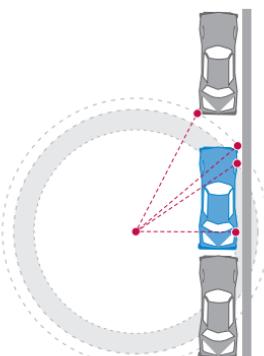
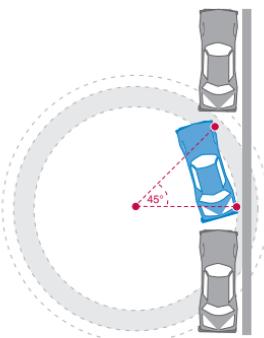
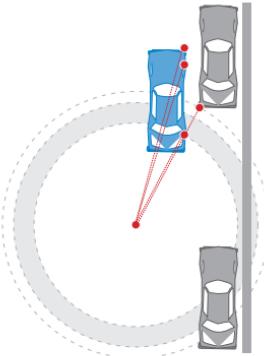
# PARKING

## Parallel Parking

Parallel parking is when you park parallel to the road, in line with other parked vehicles.

Here are the steps to parallel parking:

- 1. Find a space.** Look for a space at least three feet longer than your vehicle. When you find a space, turn on your signal to show that you plan on parking.
- 2. Pull up alongside the vehicle in front of the space you are parking in.** Leave about two feet between your vehicle and the vehicle next to you. Stop once your rear bumper is aligned with the front of your parking space. Keep your signal on.
- 3. Check your rearview mirror.** Look over your shoulder for approaching vehicles. Keep your foot on the brake and put the vehicle in reverse.
- 4. Begin backing up.** Turn your wheel to back into the space at about a 45 degree angle.
- 5. Straighten out.** Begin turning the steering wheel away from the curb when your rear wheel is within 18 inches of the curb. You may need to pull forward and backward to straighten out. Your vehicle should now be parallel and within 18 inches of the curb.
- 6. Center your vehicle in the parking space.** Turn off your vehicle and set the parking brake. Before you exit your vehicle, look carefully for passing vehicles, bicycles, and motorcycles. Exit when safe.

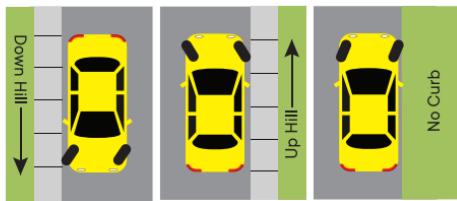


## Parking on a Hill

When you park on a hill, remember that your vehicle could roll if your brakes fail.

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.



**Downhill:** turn the wheels toward the curb.

**UpHill:** turn the wheels away from the curb.

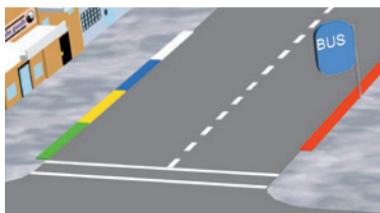
**No Curb:** turn the wheels toward the shoulder of the road.

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

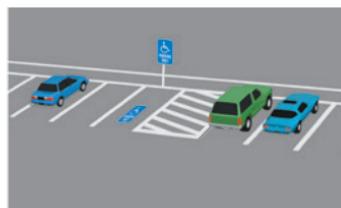
## Parking at Colored Curbs

Painted colored curbs have special parking rules.

- **White:** Stop only long enough to pick up or drop off passengers.
- **Green:** Park for a limited time. The time limit may be posted on signs or painted on the curb.
- **Yellow:** Load and unload passengers and freight. Do not stop longer than the time posted. If you drive a noncommercial vehicle, you are usually required to stay with your vehicle.
- **Red:** No stopping, standing, or parking. Buses may stop at a red zone marked for buses.



- **Blue:** Parking for a disabled person or someone driving a disabled person.
  - To park here, you must display a placard or license plate for disabled persons or disabled veterans. Misuse of a disabled person parking placard or license plate will result in losing special parking privileges. It is punishable by a fine of up to \$1000, imprisonment in county jail for up to 6 months, or both.
  - Disabled people with a placard or license plates may park in a parking zone with a time limit for any amount of time, regardless of posted time limits.
  - To learn more about disabled parking placards and license plates, visit [dmv.ca.gov/disabled-person-parking](http://dmv.ca.gov/disabled-person-parking) or call 1-800-777-0133.



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

## Illegal Parking

Never park or leave your vehicle:

- Where a “No Parking” sign is posted.
- On a marked or unmarked crosswalk.
- On a sidewalk, partially blocking a sidewalk, or in front of a driveway.
- Within 3 feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons.
- In front of or on a curb that provides wheelchair access to a sidewalk.
- In a disabled person parking space, unless displaying a disabled person placard or license plates.
- In the crosshatched (diagonal lines) area next to a designated disabled parking space.
- In a space designated for parking or fueling zero-emission vehicles, unless you are driving a zero-emission vehicle.
- In a tunnel or on a bridge, except where permitted by signs.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or fire station driveway.
- Between a safety zone and curb.
- “Double parked” (parking in the street because all parking spaces by the curb are taken).

- On the wrong side of the street or on a freeway, except:
  - In an emergency.
  - When a law enforcement officer or device requires a stop.
  - Where a stop is specifically permitted.

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 safely pass your vehicle. Your vehicle should be visible for at least 200 feet in each direction. A vehicle that is stopped, parked, or left standing on a freeway for more than 4 hours may be removed.

## Electric Vehicles

Local authorities can reserve parking spaces on a public street for electric vehicle charging.



G66-21B (CA)

## GREEN DRIVING

Driving green is maximizing your fuel efficiency to help lower emissions.

Here are a few things you can do to drive green:

- Driving habits: Speed up and slow down smoothly. Drive at a steady average speed.
- Maintenance: Keep your vehicle in good shape. Regularly inflate your tires, get oil changes, and check filters.
- Weight: Get rid of extra weight in your vehicle. Clear out the trunk. Remove luggage racks from the roof.

You might also consider a zero-emission vehicle powered by electricity or hydrogen. This will help lower emissions even more.

- Plug-in electric cars: Charge overnight at home or at public or workplace charging stations.
- Hydrogen fuel cell electric cars: Refuel at public hydrogen stations.

These types of vehicles do not produce tailpipe emissions or need oil changes. They have excellent fuel economy and need minimal maintenance.

For more information, visit [FuelEconomy.gov](http://FuelEconomy.gov).

Green driving is promoted by the Office of Transportation and Air Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT STOPS

### During a Law Enforcement Stop

**Turn on your right turn signal to acknowledge that you see the officer.**

**Move completely onto the right shoulder, even if in the carpool/HOV lane.** Stop in a well-lit area when possible.

**End your cell phone conversation and turn off your radio.**

**Remain inside your vehicle unless directed to get out by the officer.**

**Roll the windows down after stopping your vehicle and before the officer makes contact with you.**

**Place your hands and all passengers' hands in clear view before the officer makes contact with you.** This may be on the steering wheel, dashboard, or your lap.

### Your Rights During the Enforcement Stop

**If an officer asks your permission to do something, you have a right to say no.** However, if you say no and the officer says they are going to do it anyway, you do not have a right to interfere with their actions. For example, an officer may request to search part or all of your vehicle. You have a right to decline that request, but the officer may have the legal authority to search your vehicle anyway under certain circumstances. If you do not want the officer to search your vehicle, you should clearly say that you do not give your permission, but you do not have a right to resist or obstruct the officer if they search your vehicle anyway.

**The driver of a stopped vehicle must produce a driver's license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration when stopped by law enforcement.** If a driver does not produce these documents, officers may conduct a limited search for them. An officer may also request the names or identification of passengers. Passengers can decline that request, but under some circumstances the passengers may be required to identify themselves anyway. If passengers do not want to produce their identification, they should clearly say so. Passengers should not interfere with the officer's duties in conducting the traffic stop, and if an officer demands identification, passengers should not interfere with the officer's actions. During a traffic stop, an officer can legally require the driver and all passengers to exit or stay inside the vehicle. If you are told to exit the vehicle or stay inside, you must do so.

**In California, only federal law enforcement officers can ask you about your immigration status.** California law prohibits state and local officers from asking drivers or passengers about their immigration status. If a California law enforcement officer asks you about your immigration status, you can decline to answer.

**In general, the First Amendment protects the right of drivers and passengers to record interactions with law enforcement in public spaces.** If you are recording, you should immediately make that clear. You do not have a right to interfere with the officer's lawful duties during the enforcement stop, and you should not reach into concealed areas to retrieve your recording device without the officer's permission. If your recording is not interfering with the officer's ability to lawfully do their job, an officer cannot confiscate your recording device, delete the recording, or destroy the device just because you are using it to record. In general, you also have the right to deny a request to "unlock" a cellular phone or provide a password to it, though under some circumstances — such as if you are on parole — you may have to give permission in response to such requests. Finally, no government employee can retaliate against you just because you recorded something in public.

**Even if you believe your rights were violated, you should not engage in physical resistance or violence against the officer.** If an officer does something that you believe violates your rights, you can voice your objection, but you should not physically resist. Everyone has the right to be safe during a traffic stop. Your safety and the officer's safety could be jeopardized if the situation escalates with physical resistance or violence.

All members of the public have a right to file a complaint against any law enforcement agency, and it is against the law for any government employee to retaliate against you for doing so. You can file a complaint with the law enforcement agency that employs the officer. You have a right to be free from discrimination based on your actual or perceived race, sex, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, medical condition, or citizenship status. You also have other rights guaranteed by the United States and California Constitutions, as well as California and federal laws. When you file a complaint, the agency that employs the officer must investigate the complaint. Links to contact information for California law enforcement agencies can be found at: [post.ca.gov/le-agencies](http://post.ca.gov/le-agencies).

## **SECTION 10.** *Laws and Rules of the Road*

### **TRAFFIC CONTROL**

#### **Traffic Signals**

##### **Solid Red Light**

A red traffic signal light means “STOP.” You can turn right at a red light, if you:

- Do not see a “NO TURN ON RED” sign posted. Stop at the light before you turn.
- Yield (wait) for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nearby vehicles that have the right-of-way (permission to go before you). (See “Right of Way Rules: Who Goes First?”) Only turn when safe.



##### **Red Arrow**

A red arrow means “STOP.” Remain stopped until a green traffic signal light or green arrow appears. Do not turn at a red arrow.



##### **Flashing Red Light**

A flashing red signal light means “STOP.” After stopping, you may go when it is safe. If there are other vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists nearby, make sure you know who has the right-of-way (permission to go first). (See “Right of Way Rules: Who Goes First?”)



##### **Solid Yellow Light**

A yellow traffic signal light means “CAUTION.” The light is about to turn red. When you see a yellow traffic signal light, stop (if you can do so safely). If you cannot stop safely, cautiously cross the intersection.



##### **Yellow Arrow**

A yellow arrow means the “protected” turning time is ending. The signal will change soon. If you cannot stop safely or you are already in the intersection, cautiously complete your turn. Pay attention to the next signal. It could be a:

- Green traffic signal light.
- Red traffic signal light.
- Red arrow.



## **Flashing Yellow**

A flashing yellow traffic signal light is a warning to “PROCEED WITH CAUTION.” Slow down. Be alert before you enter the intersection. Yield (wait) for any pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles in the intersection. You do not need to stop for a flashing yellow light.



## **Flashing Yellow Arrow**

You can turn, but your turn is not protected from other traffic. Yield (wait) for oncoming traffic and pedestrians to clear the intersection, and then proceed with caution.



## **Solid Green Light**

A green traffic signal light means “GO.” You should still stop for any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian in the intersection. If you are turning left, only turn if you have enough space to complete the turn without creating a danger to any oncoming vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian. Do not enter the intersection if you cannot get completely across before the traffic signal light turns red. You may get a ticket if you block the intersection.



## **Green Arrow**

A green arrow means “GO.” You must turn in the direction the arrow is pointing. The green arrow allows you to make a protected turn. Oncoming vehicles are stopped by a red traffic signal light. Yield (wait) for any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian still in the intersection.



## **Traffic Signal Light Not Working (Blackout)**

Stop as if the intersection is controlled by “STOP” signs in all directions. Then proceed cautiously.

## Pedestrian Signals

### “Walk” or “Walking Person”

It is legal to cross the street.



### “Don’t Walk” or “Raised Hand”

You may not cross the street.



### Flashing “Don’t Walk” or Flashing “Raised Hand”

Do not start crossing the street. The traffic signal light is about to change. Drivers must yield to pedestrians, even if the “Don’t Walk” light is flashing.

## Numbers

The numbers count down how many seconds are left for crossing the street so pedestrians can speed up if they need to.

## Pedestrian Phases (also called Pedestrian Scrambles)

These are crisscross and diagonal crosswalks that allow pedestrians to cross the intersection in any direction at the same time. During the scramble phase, all vehicles at the intersection are stopped.



## Sounds

Sounds such as beeping, chirping, or verbal messages help blind or visually impaired pedestrians cross the street.

## Pedestrian Push Button

This is used to activate the “Walk” signal.

## No Pedestrian Signals

If there are no pedestrian signals, obey the vehicle traffic signals.

## Signs

### Red STOP Sign

Make a full stop before entering the crosswalk or at the limit line. A limit line is a wide white line painted on the street. If there is no limit line or crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection. Check traffic in all directions before proceeding.



### Red YIELD Sign

Slow down and be ready to stop (if necessary) to let any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian pass before you proceed.



## *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



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, visit  
[dot.ca.gov](http://dot.ca.gov).

## NOTES

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## **Red and White Regulatory Sign**

Follow the sign's instruction. For example, DO NOT ENTER means do not enter the road or ramp where the sign is posted (usually on a freeway off-ramp).



## **WRONG WAY Sign**

You are going against traffic. This may be posted with a DO NOT ENTER sign. If you see one or both signs, drive to the side of the road and stop. When it is safe, back out or turn around. If you are driving at night, you will know you are going the wrong way if the road reflectors shine red in your headlights.



## **Red Circle with a Red Line Through It**

Always indicates "NO." The picture inside the circle shows what you cannot do and may be shown with words.



## **Yellow and Black Circular Sign or X-shaped Sign**

You are approaching a railroad crossing. Look, listen, slow down, and prepare to stop. Let any trains pass before you proceed.



Many railroad crossings also have a blue and white sign to tell you what to do if there is an emergency on or near the tracks, or if your vehicle has stalled on the tracks.



## **5-sided Sign**

You are near a school. Drive slowly and stop for children in the crosswalk.



## **Diamond-shaped Sign**

These signs warn you of specific road conditions and dangers ahead. Many warning signs are diamond shaped.

## **White Rectangular Sign**

These signs communicate many important rules you must obey.

## **Warning Signs**

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. Visit [dot.ca.gov](http://dot.ca.gov) for more information.

## RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES: WHO GOES FIRST?

Right-of-way rules help you understand who goes first in situations where vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists meet on the road. The person who can go first has the “right-of-way.” Other vehicles and bicyclists must wait for the person who has the right-of-way. Never assume that other drivers will give you the right-of-way. Give up your right-of-way when it will help prevent collisions.

### Intersections

An intersection is any place where one road meets another road. Slow down and be ready to stop at intersections. Here are some right-of-way rules at intersections:

- **Without “STOP” or “YIELD” signs:** Vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians that get to the intersection first have the right-of-way. If a vehicle or bicycle gets to the intersection at the same time as you, give right-of-way to the vehicle or bicycle on your right.
- **“T” intersections without “STOP” or “YIELD” signs:** Vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians on the through road (continuing to go straight) have the right-of-way.
- **“STOP” signs at all corners:** Stop first. Then follow the right-of-way rules.
- **Turning left:** Give the right-of-way to any approaching vehicle that is close enough to be dangerous. Check for motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- **Turning right:** Check for pedestrians crossing the street, and motorcycles and bicycles riding next to you.
- **Green traffic signal light:** Pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- **Divided highways or highways with several lanes:** Watch for vehicles coming in any lane you will cross or enter.
- **Entering traffic:** Yield to traffic before entering.

## Roundabouts

In a roundabout, traffic travels in one direction around a central island. Roundabouts do not have bicycle lanes.

How to use a roundabout:

1. Slow down as you approach.
2. Yield to all traffic, including bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the road.
3. Watch for signs and lane markings that guide you.
4. Enter heading to the right when there is a big enough gap in traffic to merge safely.
5. Travel in a counter-clockwise direction. Do not stop or pass.
6. Signal when you change lanes or exit.
7. If you miss your exit, continue around until you return to your exit.

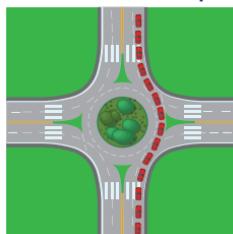
If the roundabout has multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination. This is shown in the image below. To:

- Turn right at the intersection (yellow car): Choose the right-hand lane and exit in the right-hand lane.
- Go straight through the intersection (red car): Choose either lane. Exit in the lane you entered.
- Enter and continue driving in the direction that you choose (blue car).

**Roundabout Examples**



Right Turn



Straight



Left Turn

## Pedestrians

These are all considered pedestrians:

- A person on foot.
- A person traveling on something other than a vehicle or bicycle. This includes roller skates, a skateboard, etc.
- A person with a disability using a tricycle, quadricycle, or wheelchair for transportation.

Although pedestrians have the right-of-way, they also must follow the rules of the road.

When there is a pedestrian crossing a roadway with or without a crosswalk, you must use caution, slow your speed, or stop to allow the pedestrian to safely finish crossing.

Other things to keep in mind:

- Do not pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk. You may not be able to see a pedestrian crossing 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. This may put pedestrians in danger.
- If a pedestrian makes eye contact with you, they are ready to cross the street. Yield to the pedestrian.
- Obey all signs relating to pedestrians.
- Allow these pedestrians more time to cross the street:
  - Seniors.
  - People with disabilities.
  - People with young children.

## Crosswalks

A crosswalk is the part of the road set aside for pedestrians. They are often marked with white lines. School crossings may have yellow crosswalk lines. Not all crosswalks are marked.

Pedestrians have the right-of-way in marked or unmarked crosswalks. If there is a stop line before the crosswalk, obey the stop line first.

Some crosswalks have flashing lights. Whether or not the lights are flashing, look for pedestrians and be prepared to stop.

## **Pedestrians who are Blind**

Pedestrians using guide dogs or white canes (with or without a red tip) have the right-of-way at all times. These pedestrians are partially or totally blind. Be careful when you are turning or backing up. This is particularly important if you are driving a hybrid vehicle, because blind pedestrians rely on sound to know there is a vehicle nearby.

- Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.
- Do not stop in the middle of a crosswalk. This could force a blind pedestrian to walk into traffic outside of the crosswalk.
- Do not give a blind pedestrian verbal directions. They may be listening to traffic sounds.
- Do not turn right without looking for pedestrians first.
- Do not honk your horn at a blind person. The blind person may not know who you are honking at.
- Do not block any sidewalk.
- When a blind person pulls in their cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means you may go.

## **Mountain Roads**

If two vehicles meet on a steep, narrow road and neither vehicle can pass, the vehicle facing uphill has the right-of-way. The vehicle facing downhill has more control when backing up the hill. The vehicle facing downhill should back up until the vehicle going uphill can pass.

## SHARING THE ROAD

Drivers need to share the road with other vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, road workers, and more.

### Large Vehicles

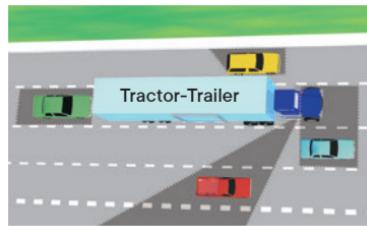
Understand large vehicles and how they move to reduce your chances of colliding with one. Examples of large vehicles:

- Tractor trailers (see graphic below for example)
- Buses
- Trolleys and street cars
- Recreational vehicles (RV)
- Light-rail vehicles

### Blind Spots (the “No Zone”)

Drivers often assume that a large vehicle driver can see the road better because they are higher off the road. This is **not** true.

Large vehicle and truck drivers do have a better view in front of them and bigger mirrors. But they also have large blind spots, also called “No Zones.” In these areas, your vehicle can disappear from a large vehicle or truck driver’s view. If you cannot see the large vehicle or truck driver in their side mirror, they cannot see you.



The shaded areas in this image are the truck driver's blind spots.

### Braking

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

## **Turning**

When a vehicle turns, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the greater the difference in the length of the turning path. This is why large vehicle and truck drivers must often swing wide to complete a right turn. When you follow a large vehicle, look at its turn signals before you start to pass. It may look like it is turning left but may actually be swinging wide left in order to turn right.

## **Maneuvering**

Large vehicles and trucks are not as easy to maneuver as passenger vehicles. Unless signs are posted, trucks must be in the right traffic lane or as close as possible to the right edge of the road. On a divided highway with four or more traffic lanes in one direction, they may also be driven in the lane just to the left of the far-right lane.

When driving around large vehicles and trucks, do not:

- Change lanes directly in front of them to reach an exit or turn. Driving into a tight space in front of a large vehicle or truck is dangerous.
- Drive next to them longer than you need to when passing. Always pass a large vehicle on the left side. After you pass the large vehicle or truck, move ahead of it. Driving alongside a large vehicle makes it hard for the driver to avoid dangers in the road.
- Follow too closely. This is called tailgating and is dangerous. Give a truck more space than you would give a smaller vehicle. If you cannot see the truck's side mirrors, the truck driver cannot see you. When you tailgate, you decrease your own safety distance.
- Underestimate the size and speed of an approaching large vehicle or tractor-trailer. A large vehicle or tractor-trailer often appears to be moving slower because of its size.

Many collisions involving passenger vehicles and large vehicles happen at intersections. In many cases, the passenger vehicle driver did not realize how close the large vehicle or truck was or how fast it was traveling.

## Buses, Streetcars, Trolleys

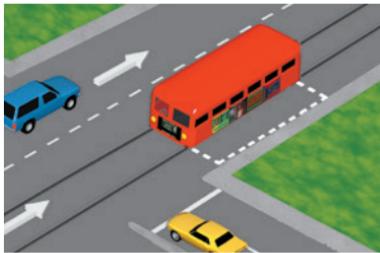
Buses, streetcars, and trolleys will often have safety zones. Safety zones are spaces set aside for pedestrians. They are marked by raised buttons or markers on a road. Do not drive through a safety zone.

When people are boarding or exiting a bus, streetcar, or trolley without a safety zone, stop behind the vehicle's nearest door or platform. Wait for the passengers to reach a safe place and then proceed.

When a bus, streetcar, or trolley is stopped at a safety zone or intersection where traffic is controlled by a law enforcement officer or traffic 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, unless:

- You are on a one-way street.
- The tracks are so close to the right side that you cannot pass on the right.
- A traffic officer directs you to pass on the left.



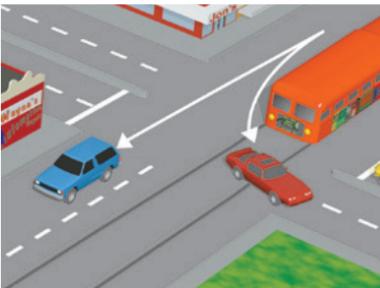
Safety Zones are marked by dotted white lines.

## Light Rail Vehicles

On public roads, light rail vehicles have the same rights and responsibilities as other vehicles.

To safely share the road with light rail vehicles:

- Be aware of where they operate. Buildings, trees, etc. can cause blind spots for the operator.
- Never turn in front of an approaching light rail vehicle.
- Maintain a safe distance from the light rail vehicle if it shares the road with other traffic.



Do not turn in front of light rail vehicles.

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

Light rail vehicles can interrupt traffic lights. Do not go until the traffic light indicates you may proceed.

## Motorcycles

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as car and truck drivers. They also face added dangers. Motorcycles require exceptional handling ability and are harder to see.

Motorcyclists can increase their chances of being seen by:

- Keeping their headlight on at all times, even during the day.
- Wearing a bright-colored jacket, vest, and helmet.
- Adding reflective material to helmets and clothes.
- Using turn signals.
- Flashing their brake lights before slowing down to help others notice them.
- Avoiding the blind spots of other vehicles.
- Not lingering between vehicles when lane splitting.

To safely share the road with motorcyclists:

- Check for motorcycles and use your mirrors when you change lanes or enter a major road. Motorcycles are smaller in size and harder to see so they easily disappear in a vehicle's blind spots.
- Allow a four-second following distance. This space will help you avoid hitting a motorcyclist if they brake suddenly or fall.
- Whenever possible, give a motorcycle the full lane. It is legal to share lanes with motorcycles, but it is not safe.
- Never try to pass a motorcycle in the same lane as you.
- When possible, move to one side of your lane to give motorcyclists more room to pass.
- Check for motorcyclists before you open your door next to traffic.
- Before you turn, check for motorcyclists and gauge their speed.

Road conditions can cause motorcyclists to suddenly change speed or direction. These include:

- Potholes
- Gravel
- Wet or slippery surfaces
- Pavement seams
- Railroad crossings
- Grooved pavement

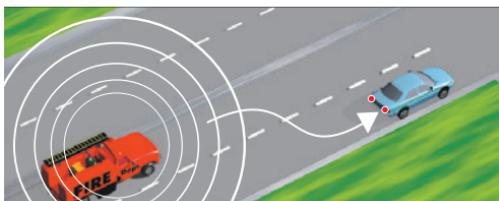
You can help reduce motorcyclist injuries and fatalities by staying aware of these conditions.

For more information about motorcycle safety, visit the California Motorcyclist Safety Program at [chp.ca.gov](http://chp.ca.gov) or 1-877-RIDE-411.

## Emergency Vehicles

Give the right-of-way to any law enforcement 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.



**Yield to emergency vehicles.**

This does not apply if you are in an intersection. Never stop in an intersection. If you are in an intersection when you see an emergency vehicle, continue through the intersection. Drive to the right as soon as it is safe and stop.

Emergency vehicles often use the wrong side of the street. They sometimes use a loudspeaker to talk to drivers blocking their path.

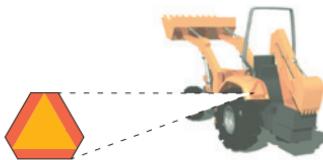
Obey any direction, order, or signal given by a traffic officer, law enforcement officer, or firefighter. Follow their orders even if they conflict with existing signs, signals, or laws.

It is against the law to follow within 300 feet of any fire engine, law enforcement vehicle, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle when their siren or flashing lights are on.

You can be arrested if you drive to the scene of a fire, collision, or other disaster. When you do this, you are getting in the way of firefighters, ambulance crews, or other rescue and emergency personnel.

## Slow-moving Vehicles

Large trucks, bicycles, and some cars can lose speed on long or steep hills. They can also take longer to get up to speed when entering traffic. 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 their back. When you see these vehicles, adjust your speed before you reach them.



An example of a slow-moving vehicle.

There are other types of slow-moving motorized vehicles that may operate on public roads. These include:

- Wheelchairs
- Scooters
- Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs)
- Golf carts

Adjust your speed to share the road with these vehicles. There are times when one of these vehicles may be moving slower than the speed of traffic on a two-lane highway where it is unsafe to pass. If a line of five or more vehicles forms behind the slow-moving vehicle, it must turn off the road at the nearest safe place. This could be an area designated as a turnout or an area where there is enough space for a safe turnout.

## Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Low-speed Vehicles (LSV)

Watch out for slow-moving vehicles in the road when you see these signs or markings:

- NEV USE ONLY
- NEV ROUTE

NEVs and LSVs reach a maximum speed of 25 mph. They are restricted from roads where the speed limit is greater than 35 mph.

Owners of registered NEVs and LSVs must comply with financial responsibility laws and have a valid driver's license.

## Animal-drawn Vehicles

People in horse-drawn vehicles and people riding horses or other animals are allowed to share the road with motor vehicles. It is a traffic offense to scare horses or stampede livestock. Slow down or stop if necessary.

## Bicycles

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

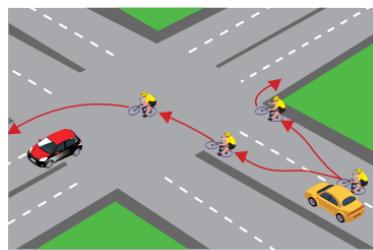
Bicyclists may:

- Legally ride on certain sections of freeways where there is no alternate route and bicycling is not forbidden by a sign.
- Move left to avoid hazards. These may include parked or moving vehicles, bicycles, animals, or trash.
- Choose to ride near the left curb or edge of a one-way street.

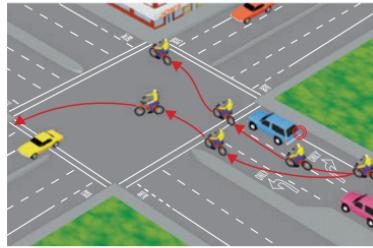
## Bicyclist Responsibilities

Bicyclists must:

- Obey all traffic signs and signal lights.
- Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Signal when changing lanes or turning.
- Yield to pedestrians.
- Wear a helmet (if under 18 years old).
- Allow faster traffic to pass when safe.
- Stay visible (for example, never weave between parked vehicles).
- Ride as near to the right curb or edge of the roadway as possible.
- Not ride on the sidewalk (unless allowed by the city).
- Make left and right turns in the same way drivers do, using the same turn lanes. If you are traveling straight on a bicycle, use a through traffic lane or, whenever possible, use a bike lane.
- Have a brake on their bicycle. The brake must enable the bicyclist to make a one-wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.



Examples of turns for bicyclists.



Intersections with special lanes for bicyclists.

## **Bicycling at Night**

When it is dark out, bicyclists should avoid wearing dark clothing. They must have the following equipment:

- A front lamp with a white light visible from 300 feet.
- A rear red reflector, a solid red light, or a flashing red light. This must have a built-in reflector that is visible from 500 feet.
- A white or yellow reflector on each pedal, the bicyclist's shoes, or their ankles. These must be visible from 200 feet.
- A white or yellow reflector on the front wheel, a white or red reflector on the rear wheel, or reflectorized tires.

## **Bicycling in Travel Lanes**

Bicyclists traveling slower than the flow of traffic must ride as close as possible to the right curb or edge of the road, **unless**:

- Passing a vehicle or another bicycle in the same direction.
- Preparing to make a left turn at an intersection, into a private road, or at a driveway.
- Avoiding a hazard or road condition (for example, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards).
- A lane is too narrow for a bicycle and a vehicle to safely travel side-by-side in the lane.
- Approaching a right turn.
- The road is a one-way road with two or more lanes. In this case, a bicyclist may ride near the left curb or edge of the road.

Drivers should follow at a safe distance. When it is safe, the bicyclist should move to a position that allows vehicles to pass.

## **Passing a Bicyclist**

To safely pass a bicyclist that is in the travel lane, a driver may need to change to another lane. In this case, pass safely and quickly, then return to your original lane. Leave space between your vehicle and the bicyclist.



When you cannot change lanes to pass a bicyclist, allow at least three feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist. Slow down if you cannot give three feet of space. This will help you avoid putting the bicyclist in danger.

Drivers must also remember to:

- Give bicyclists enough space so they are not forced into parked vehicles or open vehicle doors.
- Only merge toward the curb or into the bike lane when it is safe.
- Merge safely behind a bicyclist when preparing to make a turn.
- Enter a bike lane no more than 200 feet before starting a turn.
- Check for bicyclists when changing lanes or entering traffic. They may be hidden in a vehicle's blind spot.
- Be careful when approaching or passing a bicyclist on a two-lane road.

## Road Workers and Work Zones

You will see warning signs and message boards when there are workers, slow-moving equipment, and closed lanes ahead.

For your own safety and the safety of your passengers, remember to go through the work zone carefully.

- Slow down.
- Allow extra space between vehicles.
- Merge early.
- Expect sudden slowing or stopping.
- Watch for drivers changing lanes at the last minute.
- Avoid distractions.

Cones, drums, or other barriers will guide you through the work zone. Reduce your speed. Prepare to slow down or stop for highway equipment. Merge as soon as it is safe without crossing the cones or drums. Watch for bicycles if lanes are narrow or the shoulder is closed. Share the road when they are present. Watch for work zone speed limit and reduced speed limit warning signs. Do not stop or slow down to watch the road work. Obey special signs or instructions from workers (flaggers).

## Fines and Double Fine Zones

Fines for traffic violations in a work zone can be \$1000 or more. Anyone convicted of assaulting a highway worker faces fines of up to \$2000 and imprisonment for up to one year.

Certain roads are chosen as “Safety Enhanced-Double Fine Zones.” This is due to increased collision-related injuries and fatalities. Fines are doubled in these zones.

Fines are also doubled in highway construction or maintenance zones when workers are present.

## Move Over and Slow Down

Drivers must move over and slow down for emergency and road work vehicles. These include:

- Stationary emergency vehicles or tow trucks displaying flashing amber warning lights.
- Stopped Department of Transportation (Caltrans) vehicles displaying emergency flashing or amber warning lights.

When approaching one of these vehicles, drivers must move over a lane (if it is safe) or slow down.

## Vehicles with Hazardous Loads

A diamond-shaped sign on a truck means that the truck's load may be dangerous (gas, explosives, etc.).

Vehicles with these signs must stop before crossing railroad tracks.

### Hazardous Load Placards



Examples of hazardous load placards.

## SPEED LIMITS AND REDUCED SPEEDS

California has a "Basic Speed Law." This means that you may never drive faster than is safe for the road conditions.

There are also situations with specific speed limit laws and conditions where you should reduce your speed. Unless otherwise posted, the maximum speed limit is 55 mph on a two-lane undivided highway and for vehicles towing trailers.

## Heavy Traffic or Bad Weather

You must drive slower when there is heavy traffic or bad weather. At the same time, you should not block normal and reasonable traffic flow by driving too slowly. You may be cited if you do. If you choose to drive slower than other traffic, do not drive in the fast lane. Move to the right when another driver is close behind you and wishes to drive faster. Refer to "Choosing a Lane" in "Section 9: Navigating the Roads" for more information.

## Towing

You must drive in the far-right lane or in a lane marked for slower vehicles when you:

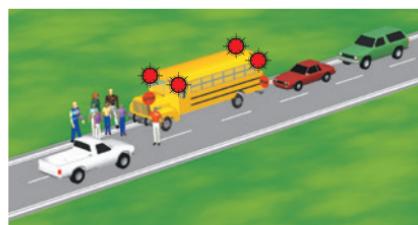
- Tow a vehicle or trailer.
- Drive a bus.
- Drive a truck with three or more axles.

If no lanes are marked and there are four or more lanes in your direction, you may only drive in the two lanes closest to the right edge of the road.

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vehicles may experience sudden strong winds when they are passing you or you are passing them. Slow down and pass safely.

## Around Children

The speed limit is 25 mph when you drive within 500 to 1000 feet of a school while children are outside or crossing the street (unless otherwise posted). Some school zones may have speed limits as low as 15 mph.



All vehicles must stop for school buses.

Near schools, look for:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians.
- School safety patrols or crossing guards. Be sure to obey their directions. For the crossing guard's safety, allow them 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. If you fail to stop, you may be fined up to \$1000 and your driving privilege could be suspended for one year.

- If the school bus is on the other side of a divided or multilane highway (two or more lanes in each direction), you do not need to stop.

## Blind Intersections

An intersection is considered blind if:

- It has no stop signs at any corner.
- You are within 100 feet of the intersection and you cannot see the road for at least 100 feet in both directions.

If your view is blocked, move slowly forward until you can see. The speed limit for a blind intersection is 15 mph.

## Alleys

An alley is any road no wider than 25 feet that is used to access the rear or side entrances of buildings or properties. The speed limit in any alley is 15 mph.

## Near Railroad Tracks

The speed limit is 15 mph when you are within 100 feet of a railroad crossing and 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 flagman.

At railroad or train crossings:

- Look in both directions and listen for trains. Many crossings have multiple tracks. 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 completely crosses the tracks before you stop.
- Never stop on the railroad tracks. 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.
- When the crossing devices are active or a person warns you a train is coming, stop between 15 feet and 50 feet from the nearest track.

- 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 Crossings

The train crossing rules apply. Light rail vehicles are very quiet and accelerate more quickly than trains.

## Buses, Streetcars, Trolleys

The passing speed limit when a bus, streetcar, or trolley is stopped, and it is safe to pass, is no more than 10 mph. Learn more about buses, streetcars, and trolleys in “Sharing the Road” in this section.

## 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, be alert for possible animals on or near the road. If you see animals or livestock near the road, slow down or stop and proceed when it is safe. Be sure to follow directions from the person in charge of the animals. Do not swerve. You may lose control of your vehicle and cause an accident.



## **CRITICAL ROADWAY INFORMATION**

### **You must not:**

- Smoke when a minor is in the vehicle. You can be fined up to \$100.
- Dump or abandon animals on a highway. This crime is punishable by a fine of up to \$1000, 6 months in jail, or both.
- Send or read text messages or emails while you are driving.
- Wear a headset or earplugs in both ears while driving.
- Drive a vehicle so loaded with property or people that you cannot control it, see ahead, or see to the sides of your vehicle.
  - It is illegal to drive any vehicle with an unsecured load that is a safety hazard. Unsecured loads like ladders, buckets, and loose items in the back of pickup trucks can fall onto the road and be dangerous for other motorists, especially motorcyclists.
- Carry anything in or on a passenger vehicle which extends beyond the fenders on the left side or more than six inches beyond the fenders on the right side. Cargo that extends more than four feet from the back-rear bumper of the vehicle must display a 12-inch red or fluorescent orange square flag. At night, this cargo must be marked with two red lights.
- Allow a person to ride in the back of a pickup or other truck unless the vehicle has seats. In this case, the passenger must use both the seat and a safety belt.
- 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.
- 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, external media player, or satellite radio information.
- Throw a cigarette, cigar, or other flaming or glowing substance from your vehicle.

- Put signs or other objects on the front windshield or back side windows that block your view. Do not hang objects on the mirror. Windshield and window stickers, etc. are allowed only in these locations:
  - A 7-inch square on either the lower corner of the passenger's side windshield or the lower corner of the rear window.
  - A 5-inch square on the lower corner of the driver's side window.
  - On 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.
- Interfere with a funeral procession. You can be ticketed if you interrupt a funeral procession. A funeral procession is led by a traffic officer and has the right-of-way. All vehicles taking part in the procession have windshield markers to identify them and have their headlights on.
- Operate a vehicle that has a visual or electronic product or device that makes it hard to read the license plate.
- Alter a license plate in any way.

**You must:**

- Use your headlights beginning 30 minutes after sunset.
- Use your headlights until 30 minutes before sunrise.
- Dim your high-beam headlights to low beams within 500 feet of a vehicle coming toward you or within 300 feet of a vehicle you are following.

## Getting a Tickets

If you are stopped by a law enforcement officer and cited (ticketed) for a traffic violation, you sign the ticket as a promise to appear in traffic court.

If you do not keep your promise to appear in court, the failure to appear (FTA) goes on your driver record and DMV may suspend your driver's license. You must clear all FTAs with the court and pay required fees.

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

For information about failure to pay, visit  
[dmv.ca.gov/payments-and-refunds](http://dmv.ca.gov/payments-and-refunds).

## **Evading Law Enforcement**

It is a misdemeanor to use a motor vehicle to flee or attempt to evade law enforcement performing their duties. This is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for 1 year or less.

A person convicted of causing serious bodily injury during the course of a law enforcement pursuit is subject to:

- Imprisonment in a state prison for up to 7 years, or a county jail for 1 year or less.
- A fine between \$2000 and \$10,000.
- Both a fine and imprisonment.

A person convicted of manslaughter resulting from evading law enforcement during a pursuit is subject to imprisonment in a state prison for a minimum of 4 to 10 years.

## **Speed Contests and Reckless Driving**

A person convicted of reckless driving or engaging in a speed contest that causes injury to another person is subject to imprisonment, a fine, or both a fine and imprisonment.

## **POINTS ON YOUR DRIVER'S RECORD**

Traffic convictions and collisions stay on your record for 36 months (or longer, depending on the type of conviction).

Your license may be suspended when your driver's record shows one of the following point totals:

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

The point count may vary for commercial drivers. Refer to the *California Commercial Driver Handbook (DL 650)*.

## Traffic Violator School Convictions

If you are given a one-point traffic violation, the judge may offer you the choice to attend a traffic violator school to have the citation not reported to your insurance company but remain on your driving record. You can do this once in any 18-month period. The school will report your course completion to the court. You will also get a completion receipt.

If you are a commercial driver and are cited in a noncommercial vehicle, you may also be eligible to attend traffic school. Find more information in the *California Commercial Driver Handbook (DL 650)*.

## Suspension or Revocation

If you get too many negligent driver points, DMV will place you on probation, suspend, and/or revoke your driving privilege. When this happens, you have the right to a hearing. Your suspension or revocation order will have more information about your right to a hearing.

DMV will revoke your driving privilege if you are convicted of a hit-and-run or reckless driving that resulted in injury. Courts have the authority to suspend a person's driving privilege.

At the end of your suspension or revocation, you may apply for a replacement driver's license. You must show proof of financial responsibility (such as SR 22/SR 1P).

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RECORD CONFIDENTIALITY

- Most information in your driving record is available to the public.
- Records containing a physical or mental condition are confidential.
- Certain government agencies can see your residence address.  
There are fewer restrictions for your mailing address.
- You can get a copy of your driving record at any DMV kiosk or office. For more information on other record requests, visit [dmv.ca.gov/record-requests](http://dmv.ca.gov/record-requests).

## SECTION 11. *Safe Driving*

### BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

To drive safely, you need to know what is around you. This helps you make good decisions and react to hazards on the road.

This image shows the areas around your vehicle.

- Green: Ahead of you.
- Blue: Next to you.
- Yellow: Blinds spots.
- Red: Behind you.

Here are some things you can do to help you be more aware of the areas around your vehicle.



### Scan Your Surroundings

Always keep your eyes moving to scan your surroundings. 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.

You should also keep a safe distance around your vehicle. This gives you time to react if another driver makes a mistake. Give yourself enough space on all sides of your vehicle to brake or maneuver if you need to.

Before changing lanes, look in your rearview mirror to check for nearby vehicles. Look over your shoulder to check your blind spots. There is more information about blind spots later in this section.

### Know What is Ahead of You

Scan the road 10–15 seconds ahead of your vehicle so you can see hazards early and avoid last minute moves. Look beyond the vehicle ahead of you. Do not constantly look at the vehicle in front of you. This is known as a “fixed stare” and can be dangerous.

As you scan ahead, be alert for vehicles and hazards around you. This prepares you to react quickly to changes in the road ahead. On the freeway, be ready for rapid changes in road conditions and traffic flow. Watch for signals from other drivers. Expect merging vehicles at on-ramps and interchanges. Know which lanes are clear so you can use them, if you need to.

## **Tailgating (Following Too Closely)**

Tailgating makes it harder for you to see the road ahead because the vehicle in front of you blocks your view. You also will not have enough time to react if the driver in front of you brakes suddenly.

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

Use the “three-second rule” to avoid tailgating. When the vehicle ahead of you passes a certain point, such as a sign, count three seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.

Allow for more space when:

- A tailgater is behind you. Allow extra space ahead and do not brake suddenly. Slow down gradually or merge into another lane to prevent a collision with the tailgater.
- The driver behind you wants to pass. Allow enough distance in front of your vehicle so the driver will have space to merge in front of you.
- Driving on slippery roads.
- Following motorcyclists or bicyclists on wet or icy roads, metal surfaces (bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and gravel. Motorcyclists and bicyclists can fall easily on these surfaces.
- 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 vehicle with a placard at railroad crossings. These vehicles must stop at railroad crossings.
- Merging onto a freeway.

## Know What is At Your Side

Be aware of what is on each side of you. Maintain enough space to maneuver safely and react to other drivers if you need to.

To maintain enough space on each side of your vehicle:

- Do not stay in another driver's blind spot. The other driver may not see your vehicle.
- Avoid driving directly alongside other vehicles on multilane streets. Other drivers might enter your lane or change lanes without looking and crash into you.
- If possible and safe, make space for vehicles entering freeways. Even though you have the right-of-way, this can help prevent collisions.
- At freeway exits, do not drive alongside other vehicles. A driver may decide to exit suddenly or swerve back onto the freeway.
- Keep space between your vehicle and parked vehicles. Someone may step out from between them, open a vehicle door, or pull out suddenly.
- Be careful when driving near motorcyclists or bicyclists. Always leave plenty of space.

Always check each side of your vehicle at intersections, crosswalks, and railroad crossings. Other vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians may be approaching.

At intersections:

- Look both ways, even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign.
  - Look to the left first. 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. There may be a pedestrian, bicyclist, or vehicle you did not see the first time.
- Do not rely on traffic lights. Some drivers do not obey them. Before you enter an intersection, look left, right, and ahead for approaching traffic.

## **Blind Spots**

Every vehicle has blind spots. These are areas around the vehicle that a driver cannot see when looking straight ahead or using the mirrors. For most vehicles, the blinds spots are at the sides, slightly behind the driver.

To check your blind spots, look over your right and left shoulder out of your side windows. Only turn your head when you look. Do not turn your whole body or the steering wheel.

Check your blind spots before you:

- Change lanes.
- Turn at an intersection.
- Merge with traffic.
- Back up.
- Leave a parking space.
- Parallel park.
- Pull out from the curb.
- Open your car door.



The shaded areas are your blind spots.

## **Know What is Behind You**

Knowing what is behind you can help you avoid rear-end collisions. Your rearview mirror and side mirrors are there to help you see vehicles behind you.

Check behind your vehicle before you:

- Change lanes. Make sure you are not getting in the way of vehicles in the lane you want to enter. Check your blind spots.
- Reduce your speed.
- Turn into a side road or driveway.
- Stop 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. Back up slowly to avoid collisions. Do not depend only on your mirrors or only looking out a side window. Before you back up or back out of a parking space:
  - Check in front and behind the vehicle before you get in.
  - If you have kids with you or there are kids nearby, know where they are. Make sure they are away from your vehicle and in full view before moving your vehicle.
  - Check your blind spots. As a safety measure, look over your right and left shoulders again while backing up.

Check traffic behind you often to know if another vehicle is tailgating you. Be careful if you are being tailgated. Find a way to avoid the tailgater. Change lanes and allow the tailgater to pass you. You can also slow down to allow enough space between you and the car in front of you. If this does not work, pull off the road and let the tailgater pass.

## **UNDERSTAND THE ROAD CONDITIONS**

### **Darkness**

When driving at night, make sure you can stop in the distance lit by your headlights. Use your high-beam headlights when possible. This includes open country or dark city streets. Do not use high-beam headlights in areas where they are illegal. Dim your lights to avoid blinding the driver of an oncoming vehicle with your high-beam headlights. If another vehicle's lights are too bright:

- 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 react to the other driver by keeping your high-beam headlights on. This only makes it harder for both of you to see.

When it is raining at night, use your low-beam headlights. Do not drive using only your parking lights.

When you drive at night, remember:

- Pedestrians and bicyclists are much harder to see at night. Stay alert.
- Motorcycles are also harder to see at night. 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.
- When a vehicle with one light drives toward you, drive as far to the right as possible. It could be a bicyclist, motorcyclist, or vehicle with a missing headlight.

## Sun Glare

To help manage sun glare:

- Keep the inside and outside of your windshield clean.
- Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working order.
- Make sure your wiper fluid is full.
- Wear polarized sunglasses.
- Maintain enough space between your vehicle and the vehicles around you.
- Make sure your car visor works and is free of anything that would restrict use.
- Be aware of pedestrians. You may have difficulty seeing them.
- Try to avoid driving during sunrise and sunset.

## Slippery Roads

Rain and snow can make the roads slippery. Your tires will not have the grip they need. Drive more slowly than you would on a dry road.

Adjust your speed for different conditions:

- **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. These usually have warning signs posted. Here are situations where the road may be more slippery:

- Shade from trees or buildings can hide icy spots on cold, wet days. These areas freeze first and dry out last.

- Bridges and overpasses tend to freeze before the rest of the road. They can hide icy spots.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, the pavement can be very slippery for the first several minutes.

Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. This is especially true if it has been dry, because oil and dust have not washed away.

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 in front of your vehicle. If you cannot see farther than 100 feet, it is not safe to 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 snow chains for your tires. Snow chains give your tires more traction. Carry the correct number of chains. Make sure they fit your wheels.

Slow down when there is a lot of water on the road. If you drive faster than 50 mph in heavy rain, your tires can lose all contact with the road and your vehicle will be riding on water. This is called “hydroplaning.” A slight change of direction, applying the brakes, or a gust of wind could throw your vehicle into a skid. If your vehicle starts to hydroplane, slow down gradually. Do not use the brakes.

## Flooded Roads

Excessive water on a road may cause flooding. This can happen gradually or suddenly. Flooding is dangerous and can be life threatening. It is important to understand the dangers of water on the road, including:

- Being swept off the road.
- Floating debris and unseen hazards.
- The road collapsing.
- Vehicle malfunctions (for example, brake failure).
- Electrocution if there are fallen power lines.

It may not be possible to determine the depth of the flood by looking. If the water is deep, the road may be too dangerous to cross. It is best to find another route. If you have no other option but to drive through a flooded road, drive slowly. After you have made it through the water, check your brakes to make sure they work correctly.

## High Winds

High winds can be a hazard while driving. This is especially true for larger vehicles such as trucks, campers, and vehicles with trailers. When driving in high winds:

- Reduce your speed. This gives you better control over your vehicle. You will have more time to react if your vehicle gets hit by a strong gust of wind.
- Maintain a firm hand position on the steering wheel. Strong wind gusts are unpredictable. If you are not holding the wheel properly and a gust hits, it can jerk the steering wheel out of your hands.
- Be alert. Look ahead and watch for any debris on the road. Give yourself enough time to react to road hazards.
- Do not use cruise control. Maintain maximum control of the accelerator if a gust occurs.
- Be proactive. It may be safer to pull over and wait for the storm to pass.

## Fog or Heavy Smoke

It is best to avoid driving in heavy fog or smoke. Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears. If you must drive in heavy fog or smoke:

- Drive slowly.
- Use your low-beam headlights. High-beam headlights will reflect back and cause glare.
- Never drive using only your parking or fog lights.
- Make sure you can stop within the space you can see ahead.
- Increase your following distance.
- Use your windshield wipers and defroster as necessary.
- Avoid crossing lanes or passing traffic unless absolutely necessary.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see.

If the fog becomes too thick to drive safely, consider pulling off the road. Activate your emergency flashers and wait for conditions to improve.

## Hills and Curves

You never know what is on the other side of a steep hill or a sharp curve. Slow down so you can stop for hazards if you need to. If your view is blocked, assume there is a vehicle on the other side. Only pass a vehicle in front of you if the hill or curve is at least one third of a mile away. You need at least that much room to pass safely.

## Traffic Congestion

Small changes in your driving habits can help reduce traffic congestion. Avoid:

- Tailgating: Following the vehicle in front of you too closely.
- Unnecessary lane changes: Weaving in and out of freeway lanes.
- Distractions: Eating, grooming, talking on a cell phone, texting, reading, etc.
- Driving a poorly maintained or malfunctioning vehicle.
- Running out of fuel or battery charge.

## Traffic Breaks

Law enforcement uses traffic breaks to:

- Slow or stop traffic to remove hazards from the road.
- Respond to emergencies.
- Prevent collisions in heavy fog or unusually heavy traffic.

During a traffic break, the officer turns on their rear emergency lights and slowly weaves across lanes.

To be helpful:

- Turn on your emergency flashers to warn other drivers.
- Slowly decrease your speed to the same speed as the officer. Do not brake suddenly unless necessary to avoid a collision. Keep a safe distance from the patrol vehicle ahead of you.
- Do not try to drive past the patrol vehicle. Do not speed up until the officer turns off their emergency lights and traffic conditions allow you to return to your normal speed.

# PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR PASSENGERS

## Seat Belts

You and your passengers must wear seat belts. You can get a ticket if you do not. If your passenger is under 16 years old, you can also get a ticket if they are not wearing their seat belt.

Wearing the lap belt and shoulder harness of a seat belt will increase your chance of survival in most types of collisions. This image shows what can happen in a collision.

When you are in a collision, your vehicle stops. But you keep moving at the same speed you were traveling. You only stop when you hit the dashboard or windshield. 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. They may also minimize serious injuries.

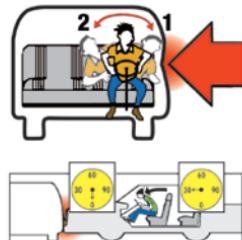
It is important to wear the seat belt correctly:

- Wear the shoulder harness across your shoulder and chest. There should be little, if any, slack. Do not wear the shoulder harness under your arm or behind your back. Wearing the harness the wrong way could cause serious internal injuries in a collision.
- Adjust the lap belt so that it is snug and lies low across your hips. Otherwise you might slide out of the belt in a crash. This could result in injury or death.
- If you are pregnant, wear the lap belt as low as possible under your abdomen. Place the shoulder strap between your breasts and to the side of your abdomen's bulge.

## Child Restraint System and Safety Seats

You must secure children with a federally-approved child passenger restraint system or safety belt. The requirements depend on the child's height and age.

- **Children under 2 years old:** Secure in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system. This applies unless the child weighs 40 pounds or more or is 3 feet 4 inches or taller.



**IMPACTS** - If the red arrow were another car hitting your car on the driver's side:

1. You would first be thrown against the driver's side door.
2. Then you would "rebound" and be thrown toward the passenger side door.

**NOTE:** A child in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system may not ride in the front seat of an airbag-equipped vehicle.

- **Children under 8 years old, or who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall:** Secure in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system in a rear seat.
- In some cases, children under 8 years old may ride in the front seat of a vehicle in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system. They may ride in the front seat if:
  - 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 prevent the child from riding in the back seat.
- **Children who are 8 years old or older, or who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall:** May use a properly secured safety belt that meets federal standards.

Your local law enforcement agency or fire department can check the installation of your child passenger restraint system. As your child grows, check to see if the child passenger restraint system is the right size.

## Air Bags

Air bags are a valuable safety feature on many vehicles. They can help keep you safer than a seat belt alone.

Ride at least 10 inches from the airbag cover, as long as you can maintain full control of your vehicle. Measure from the center of the steering wheel to your breastbone. Contact your vehicle dealer or manufacturer if you cannot safely sit 10 inches away from the air bag. They may have advice about additional ways to move back from your air bag. Passengers should also sit at least 10 inches away from the passenger-side air bag.

**NOTE:** Children seated next to a side air bag may be at risk of serious or fatal injury.

## **Unattended Children and Pets**

It is illegal to leave a child who is 6 years old or younger unattended in a vehicle. A child may be left under the supervision of a person who is at least 12 years old.

It is dangerous and illegal to leave children or animals in a hot vehicle. The temperature inside a parked vehicle can rise rapidly when it is sitting in the sun. This is true even if a window is left slightly open. Too much exposure to heat can lead to dehydration, heat stroke, and death.

## **MANAGE YOUR SPEED**

In California, you may never drive faster than is safe for the current road conditions. This is known as the “Basic Speed Law.”

Make sure you manage your speed and slow down when conditions call for it. Regardless of the posted speed limit, your speed should depend on:

- The number of vehicles on the road.
- The speed of other vehicles on the road.
- The road surface — smooth, rough, graveled, wet, dry, wide, or narrow.
- Bicyclists or pedestrians on or crossing the road.
- Weather — rain, fog, snow, wind, or dust.

See “Speed Limits and Reduced Speeds” in “Section 10: Laws and Rules of the Road” for more information about speed limits.

## **CHOOSE BETWEEN HAZARDS**

Sometimes there will be dangers on both sides of the road at the same time. For example, parked cars to the right and oncoming cars to the left.

If one danger is greater than the other, give more space to the most dangerous situation. Suppose you are on a two-lane road with an oncoming vehicle to the left and a bicyclist ahead to your right. Instead of driving between the vehicle and the bicyclist, take one danger at a time. Slow down and let the oncoming vehicle pass. When the vehicle has passed, move to the left to allow plenty of space (at least three feet) to pass the bicyclist. If there is a steady flow of oncoming vehicles, use as much of the left lane as you safely can to pass the bicyclist.

## **KNOW HOW TO HANDLE EMERGENCIES**

There are many types of emergencies you may encounter when you drive. Knowing how to handle emergencies can help keep you safe.

### **Skids**

If one or more of your tires loses traction with the road and your vehicle starts to slip, this is known as a skid. There are a few different types of skids.

#### **Slippery Surface Skids**

Ice and packed snow on the road can cause your vehicle to skid. This is even more likely if you are driving too fast or going downhill.

To prevent skidding on slippery surfaces:

- Drive slowly.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Avoid quick stops.
- Leave enough space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you.
- Shift to low gear before going down a steep hill.
- Avoid areas like ice patches, wet leaves, oil, or deep puddles.

If you do start to skid:

1. Slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal/accelerator.
2. Do not use the brakes.
3. Turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid.

If you are skidding on a slippery surface and cannot control your vehicle, find a way to stop the skid. Try to get a wheel on dry pavement or on the shoulder of the road.

If your brakes get wet, you can dry them by lightly pressing the gas pedal/accelerator and brake pedals at the same time. This will cause your vehicle to drive against the pressure of the brakes. Only do this until the brakes dry.

## **Locked Wheel Skids**

A locked wheel skid is usually caused by braking too hard when you are going too fast. If this happens, your vehicle will skid no matter which way the steering wheel is turned. To get out of a locked wheel skid:

1. Remove your foot from the brake to unlock the wheels.
2. Straighten the front wheels as the vehicle begins to straighten out.

If your vehicle is **not** equipped with an anti-lock braking system (ABS), step on the brake gradually until you are at a safe speed. If you press the brake pedal and it sinks to the floor, quickly pump the brakes by gently applying and releasing pressure on your brake pedal. As you are pumping the brakes, down shift your vehicle into a lower or neutral gear to slow down. Then try using your emergency or parking brake to stop.

## **Driving Off the Pavement**

Follow these steps if your wheels drift off the pavement:

1. Grip the steering wheel firmly.
2. Remove your foot from the gas pedal/accelerator.
3. Brake gently.
4. Check for traffic behind you.
5. Carefully steer back onto the pavement.

Do not pull or turn your steering wheel with too much force. This may cause you to drive into oncoming traffic.

## **Accelerator Malfunction**

Follow these steps if your gas pedal/accelerator becomes stuck:

1. Shift to neutral.
2. Apply the brakes.
3. Keep your eyes on the road.
4. Look for a way out of traffic.
5. Honk your horn and turn on your emergency flashers to warn other drivers.
6. Try to drive the car safely off the road.
7. Stop and turn off the ignition.

## Collisions

Understand the factors that lead to collisions so you can try to avoid them. Know what to do if you are in a collision.

### Causes of Collisions

The most common causes of collisions are:

- Driver distractions.
- Unsafe speed.
- Improper turns.
- Not following the right-of-way rules.
- Not following stop signals and signs.
- Driving on the wrong side of the road.
- A vehicle traveling faster or slower than the flow of traffic.

If you see a vehicle's emergency flashers ahead, slow down. There may be a collision or other road emergency. Pass carefully.

Avoid driving near collisions, if possible. If anyone is injured, they will get help faster if other vehicles are not blocking the road.

### What to Do if You Are in a Collision

If you are in a collision:

- You must stop. Someone could be injured and need your help. Failing to stop is called a "hit-and-run." The punishment is severe if you are convicted of a hit-and-run.
- Call 9-1-1 right away if anyone is hurt.
- Move your vehicle out of traffic if no one is hurt. Then call 9-1-1.
- Show your driver's license, vehicle registration card, insurance information, and current address to the other driver, law enforcement officer, and anyone else involved in the collision.
- You must make a report to law enforcement within 24 hours of the collision if anyone is injured or killed. Your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative can also file the report.
- Try to find the owner if your vehicle hits or rolls into a parked car or other property. If you cannot find the owner, leave a note with your name, phone number, and address. Securely attach the note to the vehicle or property. Report the collision to law enforcement.
- If you kill or injure an animal, call the nearest humane society or law enforcement. Do not try to move an injured animal. Do not leave an injured animal to die.

## **Reporting a Collision**

If you are in a collision, you must report it to DMV within 10 days if:

- The collision caused more than \$1000 in damage to property.
- Anyone was injured or killed. This applies even if the injuries were minor.

Each driver must file a report with DMV using the Report

of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) form at

[\*\*dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv-virtual-office/accident-reporting/\*\*](http://dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv-virtual-office/accident-reporting/). Your

insurance agent, broker, or legal representative can also file the report.

You (or your representative) must file a report whether or not you caused the collision. This applies even if the collision happened on private property.

Your driving privilege will be suspended if you fail to file a report.

Find the form online at [\*\*dmv.ca.gov/forms\*\*](http://dmv.ca.gov/forms) or call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for the SR 1 form. Law enforcement will not make a report for you.

## **Driving Without Insurance**

Your driving privilege will be suspended for up to four years if you are in a collision and do not have proper insurance coverage. It does not matter who was at fault.

You can get your driver's license back during the last three years of the suspension if you provide a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22/SR 1P) and maintain it during the three-year period.

## If Your Vehicle Becomes Disabled on the Freeway

If your vehicle stops working on the freeway:

- Safely pull over to the right shoulder.
- Exit on the right side so you are away from traffic if you must get out of the vehicle.
- Find assistance.
- Return to your vehicle as soon as you can. Get back into the vehicle from the right side (away from traffic).
- Stay inside your vehicle with your seat belt on until help arrives.
- Use your emergency flashers at your discretion. They can help other vehicles see you at night and in different weather conditions. But they could also attract drunk drivers.

There are certain circumstances where it is safer to get out of your vehicle and stay away. These include situations where there is:

- Not enough space on the shoulder.
- A guardrail.
- An area for you to safely stay away from freeway lanes.

## California Highway Patrol (CHP) Freeway Service Patrol (FSP)

During commute times, the CHP FSP provides free emergency roadside services in certain areas. If you get stuck on the freeway because your vehicle stops running, FSP will:

- Provide 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.
- Report a collision to CHP.

If FSP cannot start your vehicle, they will have it towed (free of charge) to a CHP-approved location. FSP will also contact additional assistance. CHP will notify an auto club or towing service.

FSP will not:

- Tow your vehicle to a private repair service or residence.
- Recommend tow service companies or repair and body shops.
- Tow motorcycles.
- Help vehicles which have been involved in a collision, unless they are directed to by CHP.

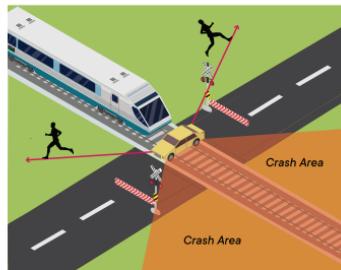
Call 5-1-1 for FSP information and assistance.

## Disabled Vehicles on Railroad Tracks

If your vehicle stalls or stops working while it is blocking any part of a train track, get out of the vehicle and notify law enforcement.

- **If a train is approaching and warning lights are flashing:**

Immediately exit your vehicle. Run in a 45-degree angle away from the tracks, towards the train. Then dial 9-1-1. You may only have 20 seconds to escape before the train gets there.



- **If you do not see a train approaching and the warning lights are not flashing:** Exit your vehicle. Immediately dial the Emergency Notification System (ENS) number located on the railroad crossing posts or metal control box near the tracks. Provide the location, crossing number (if posted), and road or highway that intersects the tracks. Be sure to tell them that a vehicle is on the tracks. After you call ENS, call 9-1-1.

## DO NOT DRIVE DISTRACTED

It is dangerous to drive while you are distracted. Some common distractions are:

- Talking or texting on a cell phone.
- Looking at a GPS.
- Changing music, volume, or other controls.
- Talking to passengers.
- Applying makeup.
- Eating.
- Looking at children or pets.

Avoid these distractions while you drive.

## CELL PHONES AND TEXTING

Cell phones are the main source of distracted driving. Driving while using a handheld cell phone is unsafe and illegal.

Drivers should only use a cell phone when necessary and in a hands-free mode, unless you are a minor.

Here are ways to help you avoid distractions on your cell phone and focus on safe driving:

- Do not answer your cell phone if it rings. Let the call go to voicemail.
- Pull off the road if you must make a call.
- Have a passenger make the call if possible.
- Use the audio navigation function. Do not input navigation instructions.
- Do not change music on your cell phone.
- Only make calls to get help in an emergency.
- Mount your cell phone on the windshield, dashboard, or center console. It cannot block your view of the road.
- Use the single swipe or touch feature on the mounted cell phone.

Do not use your cell phone:

- During hazardous conditions.
- To engage in distracting conversations.
- To text or email while driving unless using a speech to text feature.

## **BE FAMILIAR WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY**

The technology in vehicles is always advancing. We will see more self-driving vehicles and vehicles with advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) on the road. Vehicles with these systems may respond to road situations differently than a human driver would.

## **BE AWARE OF CARBON MONOXIDE**

All gas-powered vehicles produce carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a deadly, odorless gas released from a vehicle's exhaust pipe.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Weariness
- Yawning
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Headache
- Ringing in the ears

Have your exhaust system checked regularly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, leave the window partially open when you start the engine, while driving, and when the engine is running while parked. Never run the engine with your garage door closed.

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## **SECTION 12. Alcohol and Drugs**

California's driving under the influence (DUI) laws apply to both alcohol and drugs. It is illegal to drive while under the influence of alcohol or any drug that affects your ability to drive safely. The law does not see a difference between illegal drugs and medications you get from a doctor or the pharmacy. They can all affect your ability to drive safely and react to what you see and hear.

No matter what age you are, it is illegal to drive after:

- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol in any form. This includes medications like cough syrup.
- Taking any drug that affects your ability to drive. This includes prescriptions or over-the-counter medications.
- Using any combination of alcohol or drugs that decreases your ability to drive safely.

Make sure you read medication labels and know the effects of any drug you use. If a law enforcement officer thinks you are driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they have the right to ask you to take a blood or urine test. If you refuse to take one, DMV will suspend or revoke your driving privilege.

### **USE OR POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL OR CANNABIS PRODUCTS IN A VEHICLE**

The law is very strict about carrying alcohol or cannabis products in your vehicle with you. It is illegal to drink any alcohol or to smoke or eat a cannabis product while you are driving or riding as a passenger in a vehicle. If you are carrying any alcohol or cannabis in your vehicle, the container must be full, sealed, and unopened. If it is open, you must keep the container in the trunk or place where passengers do not sit. (This law does not apply if you are a passenger in a bus, taxi, camper, or motorhome.) It is also illegal to keep an open container of alcohol in your glove box.

## BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) LIMITS

When you consume alcohol, traces of it enter your bloodstream. Your BAC measures how much alcohol is present in your bloodstream.

It is illegal for you to drive if you have a BAC of:

- 0.08% or higher (if you are over 21 years old).
- 0.01% or higher (if you are under 21 years old).
- 0.01% or higher at any age (if you are on DUI probation).
- 0.04% or higher if you drive a vehicle that requires a commercial driver's license (CDL).
- 0.04% or higher if you are driving a passenger for hire.

If you drive with an illegal BAC, a law enforcement officer can charge you with DUI. Even if your BAC is below legal limits, that does not mean that it is safe for you to drive. Almost everyone feels negative effects of alcohol, even at levels lower than the legal limit. Depending on how badly you are impaired, you may be arrested and convicted of a DUI even without a BAC measurement.

The table below shows BAC estimates based on how many drinks are consumed, gender, and body weight. Remember, even one drink can affect your ability to drive safely.

		BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC)								Driving Condition
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	Legally Intoxicated
	F	.20	.17	.14	.12	.11	.10	.09	.08	
4	M	.24	.20	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	.10	
	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 0.01% for each 40 minutes that lapse between drinks.  
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.

**NOTE:** These laws also apply to driving on the water. It is illegal to drink alcohol and/or take drugs when you are operating a boat, jet ski, water skis, aquaplane, or similar vessels. Learn more in the *California Harbors and Navigation Code*.

## DUI ARRESTS

When you drive in California, you consent to a breath, blood, or urine test if a law enforcement officer suspects you of DUI. If you have agreed to take a preliminary alcohol screening (PAS) and/or breath test, you may still be required to take a blood or urine test to detect the presence of drugs. If you refuse to take a breath, blood, and/or urine test, DMV will suspend or revoke your driving privilege.

If you are arrested for DUI:

- California's Administrative Per Se law requires DMV to suspend your driving privilege.
- The law enforcement officer may take your driver's license and give you a temporary driver's license for 30 days.
- You may request a DMV administrative hearing within 10 days from the date of your arrest.

## DUI CONVICTIONS

If you are convicted of a DUI, DMV will suspend or revoke your driving privilege.

- You will be required to complete a DUI program.
- You will have to file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22/SR 1P).
- You must pay any applicable license reissue and/or restriction fees.
- You may be required to install an ignition interlock device (IID) on your vehicle.

Here are some additional penalties if you are convicted of DUI:

- You may be sentenced to up to 6 months in jail.
- You may have to pay a fine between \$390–\$1000.
- Law enforcement may impound your vehicle and you may have to pay a storage fee.
- If you cause serious injury or death while driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you may face civil lawsuits.

All DUI convictions remain on your driver's record for 10 years. If you get any other DUIs during that time, the court and/or DMV may give you a harsher penalty.

## **DRIVERS UNDER 21**

If you are under 21 years old, there are additional laws for possessing and consuming alcohol.

### **Possessing alcohol:**

- You may not carry liquor, beer, or wine inside a vehicle unless an individual who is 21 years old or older is with you. The container must be full, sealed, and unopened. If opened, the alcohol must be kept in the trunk or place where passengers do not sit.  
Exception: If you are working for someone with an off-site liquor sales license, you may carry alcoholic beverages in closed containers.
- If you are caught with alcohol in your vehicle, law enforcement can impound your vehicle for up to 30 days. The court may fine you up to \$1000 and suspend your driver's license for 1 year. If you do not already have a driver's license, the court may ask DMV to delay giving you your first driver's license for up to 1 year.

### **Consuming alcohol:**

- If a law enforcement officer suspects you of consuming alcohol, they can require you to take a hand-held breath test, preliminary alcohol screening test (PAS), or another chemical test.
- If you are convicted of a DUI with a BAC of 0.01% or higher, DMV may revoke your driving privilege for 1 year.
  - On your first offense, you must complete a licensed DUI program.
  - If you have any more offenses, you might have to complete a longer DUI program.
- If your PAS shows a BAC of 0.05% or higher, the officer may require you to take a breath or blood test.
- If a later test shows you have a BAC of 0.05% or higher, you may be arrested for a DUI and your driving privilege may be suspended.

## **SECTION 13. Vehicle Registration Requirements**

You need to register your vehicle in California in order to use it in the state. For more information and a quick guide to registering a vehicle, visit [dmv.ca.gov/vrservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/vrservices).

### **BUYING OR SELLING A VEHICLE**

When you buy a vehicle, you have 10 days to transfer ownership of the vehicle to yourself.

If you sell a vehicle to another person, you must notify DMV within 5 days. You do this with a Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability (NRL), visit [dmv.ca.gov/nrl/](http://dmv.ca.gov/nrl/).

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

If your vehicle is registered in another state or country, you must register it in California. You have 20 days to register your vehicle after you become a resident or get a job in the state. See “Section 3: The California Driver’s License” to learn more about residency.

Make sure the vehicle meets California smog laws. California DMV cannot register a vehicle if it does not qualify.

### **Nonresident Military Personnel**

If you are nonresident military personnel, you may use vehicles with your home state license plates. Your vehicles may also have license plates from the state where you were last stationed. When the license plates expire, you may renew the registration in your home state or register the vehicle in California.



Maintain Mobility  
& Independence

# Have Questions?

Ask Your Senior Driver Ombudsman/Outreach Coordinator!

Call the location nearest you or visit our senior web page at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov).

Sacramento &  
Northern Counties  
(916) 657-6464  
(916) 657-7109

Bay Area Counties  
(510) 563-8998

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

Central & Southern Counties  
(714) 705-1588

Senior Driver Ombudsman/Outreach Program "Your Path to Continued Safe Driving."



## **SECTION 14.** *Financial Responsibility, Insurance Requirements, and Collisions*

You must have your proof of financial responsibility (insurance) with you when you drive. If you get pulled over or get into a collision, you must show it to a law enforcement officer. If you cannot show proof, you may have to pay a fine, law enforcement may take away your vehicle, and DMV may suspend your license.

DMV may suspend your driver's license if:

- You are involved in a collision and do not have insurance.
- A vehicle you own is involved in a collision and DMV is not sure who was driving.
- The collision is not covered by your insurance policy.

### **INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Your insurance must cover at least:

- \$15,000 for a single death or injury.
- \$30,000 for death or injury to more than one person.
- \$5000 for property damage.

Before you buy insurance, make sure that the agent, broker, or insurance provider is licensed by the California Department of Insurance. Call 1-800-927-HELP to verify.

### **Low-cost Insurance**

If you cannot afford liability insurance, you may be eligible for the California Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program. For more information visit **mylowcostauto.com** or call 1-866-602-8861.

## **COLLISIONS ON YOUR RECORD**

If you are involved in a collision resulting in \$1000 in damage, or where anyone is injured or dies, DMV will add it to your driving record. It does not matter who caused the collision. The collision must be reported by you, other drivers involved in the collision, and law enforcement (if a report is taken).

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

Parents or guardians must take on financial responsibility for drivers younger than 18 years old. They must pay for damages and fines if the driver is involved in a collision.

When the driver turns 18 years old, the parents or guardians are no longer responsible. Drivers 18 years old and older take on their own financial responsibility.

## **SECTION 15.** *Seniors and Driving*

Senior drivers often have unique needs and concerns about driving. To address these, we created a Special Interest Driver Guide specifically for senior drivers. The guide provides important safety information for the aging driver (but is not designed to be a study guide for test preparation).

To view or download a copy of the *Senior Guide for Safe Driving* (DL 625), visit **dmv.ca.gov**. You can also get a copy at your local DMV office, or call 1-800-777-0133 to have a copy mailed to you. The Seniors' Special Interest Driver Guide is available on our website at **dmv.ca.gov/seniors**.

For information about driving as a senior, you can 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

### **MATURE DRIVER PROGRAM**

The Mature Driver Program is an eight-hour course for drivers 55 years old and older. It covers a range of topics that are of special interest to mature drivers.

Your insurance company may offer discounts if you complete the Mature Driver Program. Contact your insurance provider with a copy of your completion certificate. Your certificate is valid for three years. You can renew it by completing another four-hour course.

You can take the course through DMV-approved providers. Visit **dmv.ca.gov** for more information, including locations near you.

## **SENIOR ID CARDS**

Applicants who are 62 years old or older are eligible for a no-fee Senior ID card. Drivers of any age who are unable to continue driving safely due to a medical condition may be eligible to exchange their driver's license for a no-fee ID card. The ID card serves as identification only. Details may be found at [dmv.ca.gov/id-cards](http://dmv.ca.gov/id-cards).

## SECTION 16. *Glossary*

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Behind-the-wheel driving test</b>	A driving test where you have control of the vehicle and you are accompanied by a DMV instructor who is evaluating your driving skills.
<b>Blood alcohol concentration (BAC)</b>	Your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in your blood. For example, if your BAC is 0.10%, that means you have 0.10 grams of alcohol in 100 milliliters of blood. It is illegal to drive with a BAC of 0.08% or higher.
<b>Fixed stare</b>	When you stare at the vehicle right in front of you instead of moving your gaze around to stay aware of other vehicles and the environment around you. This is dangerous, as it can lead to collisions.
<b>Housecar</b>	A motor vehicle originally designed for human habitation, permanently altered for human habitation, or with a camper permanently attached.
<b>HOV lane</b>	High-Occupancy Vehicle lane. This is a traffic lane for vehicles carrying a certain number of people. If you are not carrying the minimum number of people, listed on road signs, you should not drive in the HOV lane.
<b>Jump start</b>	If your vehicle has a dead battery, a jump start can help start the vehicle by making a temporary connection to the battery of another vehicle using jumper cables.
<b>Limit line</b>	White lines on the road before an intersection or crosswalk. Limit lines show drivers where to stop.
<b>Pedestrian</b>	A person traveling on foot or on something other than a vehicle or a bicycle, like roller skates or skateboards. A pedestrian can also be a person with a disability using a tricycle, quadricycle, or wheelchair for transportation.
<b>Peripheral vision</b>	What you can see at the sides of your vision when you are looking straight ahead.
<b>Right-of-way</b>	Helps determine who is allowed to go first in situations where vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists meet on the road. The person who can go first has “right of way.” Other vehicles/bicyclists must wait for the person who has right-of-way.

TERM	DEFINITION
Roadway	The strip of land which vehicles drive on.
Scramble phase	A "pedestrian scramble phase" at an intersection gives a walk signal to pedestrians so they can all walk in all directions at the same time, including diagonally.
Three-second rule	A driving rule that helps you estimate how closely you should follow other vehicles. When the vehicle in front of you passes a certain point, such as a sign, count three seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.
Traffic citation	Also known as a ticket, a traffic citation is an official summons issued by law enforcement for violating a traffic law.
Vanpool	A vanpool allows groups of people to share the same ride, similar to a carpool but on a larger scale. A vanpool vehicle typically holds 5 to 15 people.
Yield	To "yield" means to wait for, slow down, and be ready to stop (if necessary) to allow other vehicles or pedestrians who have right-of-way.

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