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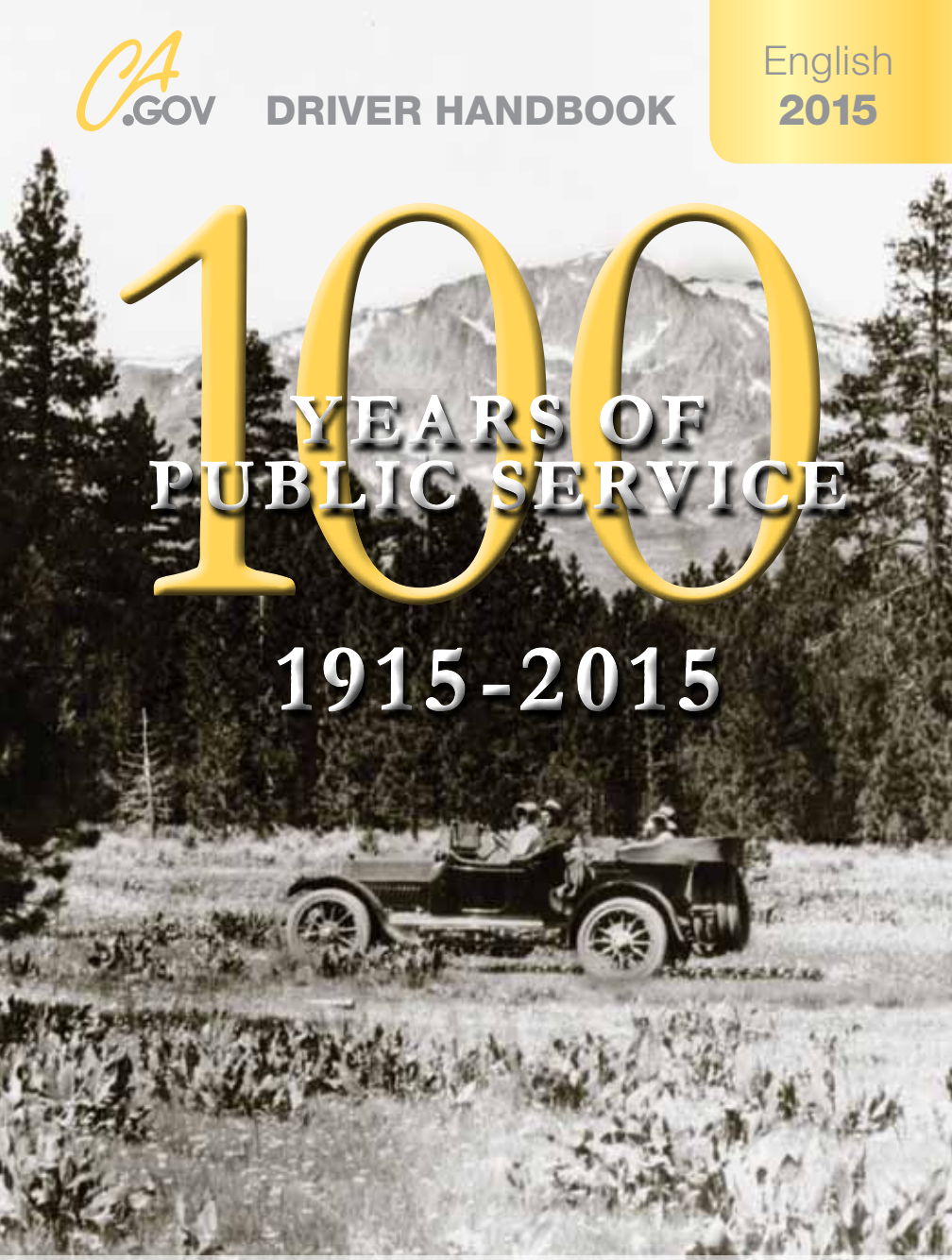
DRIVER HANDBOOK

English
2015



Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
State of California
Brian P. Kelly, Secretary
California State Transportation Agency
Jean Shiomoto, Director
California Department of Motor Vehicles

Cover photo: Cadillac touring car as seen from eastern side of Lake Tahoe with Mt.Tallac in background.

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Dear Fellow Californian:

Thank you for taking the time to study the 2015 California Driver Handbook. This handbook will help you on your journey to becoming a licensed driver who understands and follows the rules of the road in California.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the California DMV, which was created in 1915 under legislation drafted by California State Senator Ernest Stratton Birdsall. California registered 191,000 vehicles that year, quite large for that era but miniscule compared to 32 million currently registered vehicles in California today.

As the DMV moves into its second century of serving the motoring public, customer service and public safety remain its top priorities. The written driver license exam is now offered in an automated, touch screen version that reduces test time and wait time at DMV offices. DMV has also opened new field offices and extended office hours to serve more new drivers than ever before.

California is safer when all motorists pass written and driving tests and obtain proof of insurance and a driver license. Your decision to study this handbook and commit to safe driving is making California a better place for everyone.

Sincerely,

Brian P. Kelly
Secretary
California State Transportation Agency

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NEW 2015 LAWS

Effective January 1, 2015

The Definition of Motorized Bicycles or Moped

The definition for motorized bicycles or mopeds has increased the maximum gross brake horsepower from less than two to less than four gross brake horsepower. The full definition of this vehicle's description can be found on the California Vehicle Code (CVC) §406.

Effective November 11, 2015

Driver Licenses Veteran Designation

The designation "VETERAN" will be available to be printed on a driver license or identification (DL/ID) card to indicate a person has served in the United States Armed Forces. Veterans will provide verification of service from their local County Veterans Service Office. The designation can be printed on an original, renewal, or duplicate DL/ID card for $5.00 in addition to the cost of the DL/ID card.

Where to Write

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

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

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

DMV INFORMATION

Most DMV offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday. Some field offices have extended hours (open earlier), and a few offer only driver license or vehicle registration services. To find out if your local field office has extended hours, or to find a field office location and service options, go online or call the toll-free number.

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

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

- Field office locations, hours, directions, and phone numbers.
- Make appointments to visit a field office or take a driving test (except for commercial driving tests).
- Order personalized plates.
- Driver license and identification card information.
- Vehicle/vessel registration information.
- Downloadable forms.
- Publications—handbooks, brochures, and sample tests.
- Senior driver information.
- Teen driver information.
- Links to other state and federal agencies.
- Renew your driver license or vehicle registration.

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

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

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

- Renew your driver license or vehicle registration with the Renewal Identification Number (RIN) provided on your billing notice. You can pay with a credit card or e-check.
- Make a field office appointment.

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

Advertising sponsorship helps defray the printing costs of this publication. The products and services provided by the advertising sponsors are not promoted or endorsed by DMV, but the significant contribution by the advertising sponsors is most appreciated.

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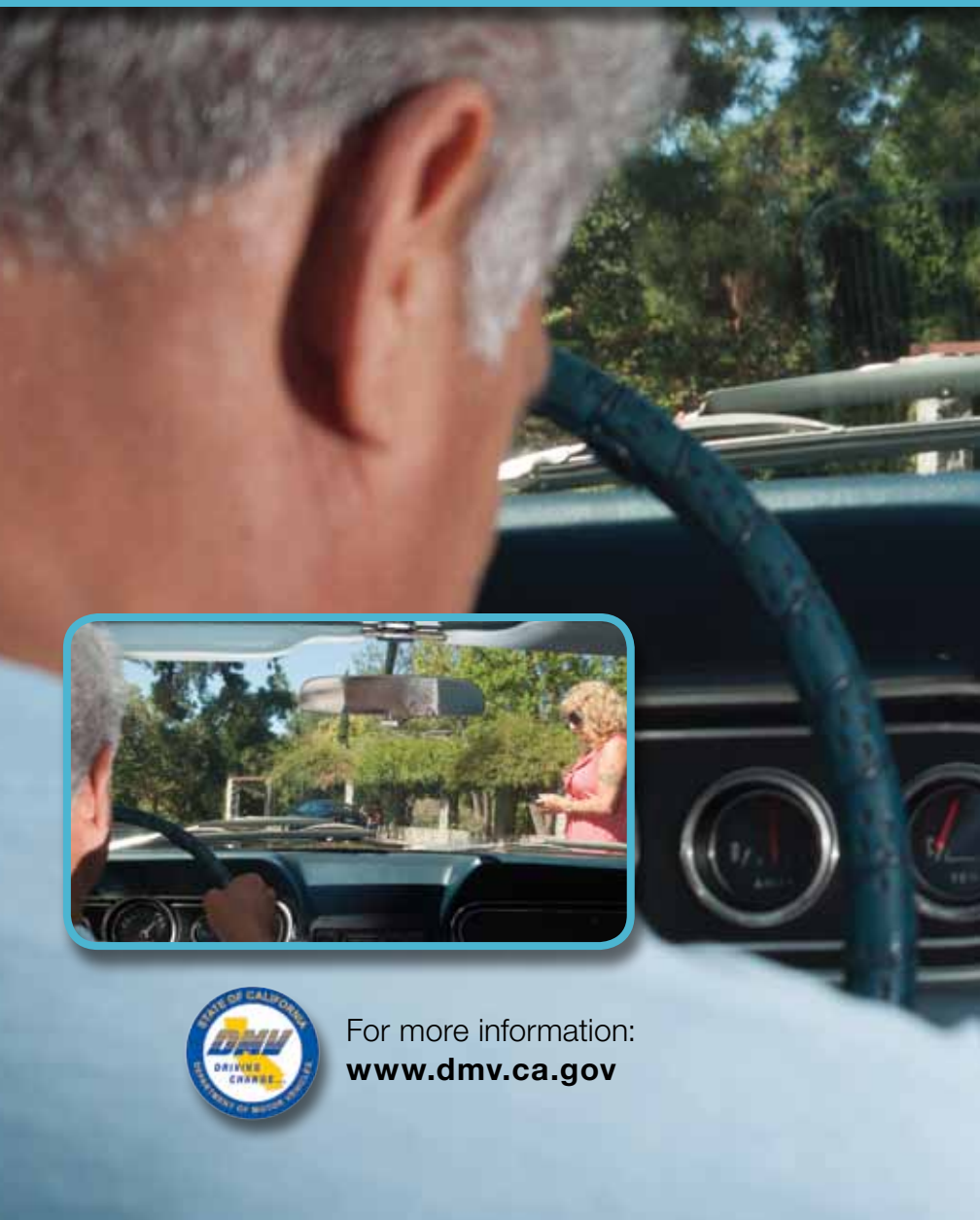
FORMULAS FOR ACCIDENTS:

DISTRACTED DRIVERS & DISTRACTED PEDESTRIANS



For more information:
www.dmv.ca.gov

GENERAL INFORMATION

Disclaimer

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

Accurate Identification

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

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

Basic Information

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

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

If you do not have outstanding actions on your record, you will receive a driver license after you pay the application fee, pass all applicable knowledge examinations, show that your physical and/or mental condition is satisfactory, and demonstrate your ability to drive safely. If you have a medical condition or a disability, DMV may require you to take a driving test. You may also have to provide a statement from your physician regarding your current health condition.

THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE

Who Must Have a Driver License?

California Residents

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: Your driver license is not valid if it is suspended, cancelled or revoked.

Nonresident Military Personnel Stationed in California

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

New California Residents

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

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

Adults Visiting California

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

Minors Visiting California

Visitors between 16 – 18 years old may drive with their home state driver license for only 10 days after arriving in California. After 10 days, they must have a:

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

OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE

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

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

If you present a legal presence document, your DL/ID card may expire on the same date as your legal presence document. If the name on your document is different from the name on your DL/ID card application, you must also bring an acceptable true full name document. Your fingerprint, signature, and picture will also be taken (refer to the "Application Requirements for a Basic Class C Driver License" section on page 4). For any other DL/ID card transaction, you must present photo identification.

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

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

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

Application Requirements for a Basic Class C Driver License

To apply for a Class C driver license, you must:

- Submit a completed and signed Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form. Signing this form means you agree to submit to a chemical test to determine the alcohol or drug content of your blood when requested by a peace officer. If you refuse to sign this statement, the DMV will not issue a permit or driver license.
- Present an acceptable document(s) establishing your identity, residency (if applicable), and birthdate.
- Provide your true full name.
- Provide your SSN, if eligible, which will be electronically verified with the Social Security Administration.
- Pay a nonrefundable application fee. The fee is good for 12 months and allows you to take the appropriate law test(s) three times. If you fail the law test and/or driving test three times, your application will be void and a new application and fee are required. This fee pays for both the instruction permit and driver license, if you qualify for both documents within the 12-month period. If the application expires, you must resubmit documents, repay the application fee, and retake the required tests.
- Pass a vision test. You must be able to pass a vision test, with or without corrective lenses, with visual acuity better than 20/200 in at least one eye without the use of a bioptic telescopic lens or similar bioptic device to meet the minimum vision acuity standard (CVC §12805(b)).
- Have your picture taken.
- Give a fingerprint scan.
- Sign your name.

Adults' Permit Requirements

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

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

If you want to obtain professional driver education and driver training, refer to the "Driving Schools" and "Mature Driver Program" sections on pages 18 and 19.

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

To get a motorcycle permit you must:

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

Adults' Driver License Requirements

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

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

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

- Complete all the steps required for a driving permit.
- Bring your valid out-of-state driver license to the DMV. Your out-of-state driver license will be invalidated and returned to you unless you are applying for a commercial driver license.

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

DRIVER LICENSE CLASSES

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

Class C driver license -

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

NOTE: A driver of a vanpool may operate with a Class C license but shall possess evidence of a medical examination required for a Class B license when operating vanpool vehicles. The driver must keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement signed under penalty of perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk driving, or hit-and-run in the last five years (CVC §12804.9(j)).

- *You may tow a:*
  - Single vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less, including a tow dolly, if used.
- *With a vehicle weighing 4,000 lbs. or more unladen, you may tow a:*

- Trailer coach or 5th-wheel travel trailer under 10,000 lbs. GVWR when towing is not for compensation.
- 5th-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 lbs. but under 15,000 lbs. GVWR, when towing is not for compensation, **and** with endorsement.

- *A farmer or employee of a farmer may drive:*
  - Any combination of vehicles with a GVWR of 26,000 lbs. or less, if used exclusively in agricultural operations **and** it is not for hire or compensation.

NOTE:

- Class C licensees may not tow more than one vehicle.
- A passenger vehicle, regardless of weight, may not tow more than one vehicle.
- A motor vehicle under 4,000 lbs. unladen weight may not tow any vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or more gross. (CVC §21715(b))

Other classes of driver licenses/ endorsements are:

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

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

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

THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

Where to Take the Tests

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

To save time, make an appointment online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours.

NOTE: The DMV will not administer knowledge or audio exams after 4:30 p.m. to ensure you have sufficient time for testing.

Slow down and pass safely.

SHARE THE ROAD

CALIFORNIA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION PROJECT

CHP

CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

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

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

DMV IS CONNECTING
with Californians...

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

Cheating

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

DMV Examinations

Your driver license examinations include:

- A vision test. (Bring your eyeglasses or contact lenses to the exam.)
- A test of traffic laws and road signs.
- A behind-the-wheel driving test, if required. You must have an appointment to take the behind-the-wheel driving test. For the driving test, bring:
  - Your old driver license or instruction permit, if you have one.
  - A licensed driver age 18 years or older with a valid driver license.
  - Proof that the vehicle is properly insured.
  - A vehicle that is safe to drive, and has valid registration. The vehicle's brake lights, horn, parking brake, and electric signals must work properly. The vehicle cannot have bald tires, which would have less than 1/32 inch tread depth in any two adjacent grooves. The driver's side window must roll down. The windshield must allow a full unobstructed field of vision for you and the examiner. There must be at least two rear view mirrors (one on the left outside of the vehicle).

    You will be asked to locate the controls for the vehicle's headlights, windshield wipers, defroster, and emergency flashers. You must demonstrate how to use the parking brake. If you use a rental vehicle the agreement must indicate the vehicle can be used for the driving test, the driver's name must show on the contract as the insured driver. You must also wear your seat belt.

NOTE: The behind-the-wheel driving test will be rescheduled if the vehicle does not meet the above requirements or if you refuse to use your seat belt during the driving test.

For more information, refer to the *DMV's Driving Test* (FFDL 22) *Fast Facts* brochure, DMV videos, and sample tests available online at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

SPECIAL SECTION - MINORS

Minors' Permit Requirements

A minor is a person under 18 years of age. Minors must have their applications (for a driver license or any change of driver license class) signed by their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If both parents/guardians have joint custody, both must sign.

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

To get a permit you must:

- Be at least 15½ years of age, but under 18 years of age.
- Complete the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form.
- Have your parent(s) or guardian(s) sign the DL 44 form.
- Pass the traffic laws and road signs test. If you fail the test, you must wait one week before retaking the test.
- If you are 15½–17½ years of age, you will need to provide proof that you:
  - Completed driver education (Certificate of Completion of Driver Education) **OR**
  - Are enrolled and participating in an approved integrated driver education/driver training program (Certificate of Enrollment in an Integrated [Classroom] Driver Education and Driver Training Program).

    For more information, refer to the *Provisional Licensing* (FFDL 19) *Fast Facts* brochure at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

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

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

NOTE: **If you are at least 17½ years of age**, you may obtain a permit without completing driver education or driver training. However, you cannot get a driver license before you are 18 years old.

Minors' Permit Restrictions

Your permit is not valid until you begin driver training; your instructor will sign the permit to validate it. You must practice with a licensed California driver: parent, guardian, driving instructor, spouse, or an adult 25 years of age or older. The person must sit close enough to you to take control of the vehicle at any time. A provisional permit does not allow you to drive alone – not even to a DMV office to take a driving test.

Minors' Driver License Requirements

You must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Prove that you have finished both driver education and driver training.

- Have had a California instruction permit or an instruction permit from another state for at least six months (refer to the Out-of-State Minors section on page 12).
- Provide parent(s) or guardian(s) signature(s) on your instruction permit stating that you have completed 50 hours of supervised driving practice (10 hours must be night driving) as outlined in the *California Parent-Teen Training Guide* (DL 603). Visit the Teen website at **www.dmv.ca.gov/teenweb/** or call 1-800-777-0133 to request this booklet.
- Pass the behind-the-wheel driving test. You have three chances to pass the driving test while your permit is valid. If you fail the behind-the-wheel driving test, you must pay a retest fee for a second or subsequent test and wait two weeks before you are retested.

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

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

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

Exceptions - Minors' Driver License Restrictions

The law allows the following exceptions when reasonable transportation is not available and it is necessary for you to drive. A signed note explaining the necessity to drive and the date when this driving necessity will end must be kept in your possession for the following exceptions (emancipated minors are excluded from this requirement):

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

EXCEPTION: These requirements do not apply to an emancipated

minor. You must have declared yourself emancipated and provided the DMV with proof of financial responsibility (SR 1P) in lieu of your parent(s) or guarantor(s) signature(s).

Out-Of-State Minors

All out-of-state minor applicants must comply with the application requirements outlined in the "Application Requirements for a Basic Class C Driver License" section on page 4 and **must** have parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) signature on the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form.

Out-Of-State Minor's Permit

Out-of-state minor's permit applicants **must** meet the requirements listed in the "Minor's Permit Requirements" section on page 10. In addition, if your driver education and driver training courses were taken in a state other than California, DMV may accept a To Secondary Schools Other Than California Schools (DL 33) form completed by the out-of-state secondary school. You may obtain a DL 33 form at your local DMV office or by calling the DMV at 1-800-777-0133. Send the DL 33 form to your out-of-state secondary school and ask them to complete and return to you.

Out-Of-State Minor's Driver License

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

NOTE: Out-of-state minor applicants are subject to provisional restrictions per California law.

Traffic Violations

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

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

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

Teenage Traffic Deaths

Drivers 15–19 years old have the highest traffic conviction, collision, and injury rates of any age group. Traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for teenagers. If you are under 18 years old, your risk of a fatal collision is about 2½ times that of the "average" driver. Your risk of an injury collision is three times higher than the average driver's risk.

Actions Against the Provisional Driver License

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

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

Keeping Your Provisional Driver License

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

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

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

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

Habitual Truant— Persons 13 – 18 Years of Age

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

Minors and Cell Phones

- It is against the law for a minor to use a cell phone while driving. If your cell phone rings, do not answer the call or respond to the text message.
- Convictions for violations of this law are subject to fines.

EXCEPTIONS: You may use a cell phone to contact law enforcement, a health care provider, the fire department, or another emergency entity in an emergency situation.

MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING INFORMATION

To Replace a Lost/Stolen or Damaged Driver License

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

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

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

Name Changes

When you legally change your name because of marriage or other reasons, be sure to change your name with the Social Security Administration (SSA) before coming into the DMV.

Bring your driver license to the DMV in person, along with your marriage certificate or other acceptable verification of your "true full name" (refer to the "Acceptable Documents" section on pages 3 and 4). You must complete the Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL 44) form and pay the applicable fee. The DMV will electronically verify your name, birth date, and social security number (SSN) with the SSA.

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

Driver License Renewals

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

Qualified drivers may be eligible to renew their driver license online at the DMV's website at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or by mail.

The DMV **may** issue a driver license

for five years. The driver license expires on your birthday in the year shown on the driver license, unless otherwise indicated. It is against the law to drive with an expired driver license.

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

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

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

Renewal by Mail, Internet, or Telephone

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

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

NOTE: If you renew by telephone, you must have the Renewal Identification Number (RIN) available when you call. This can be found on your renewal notice.

Driver License Extension

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

Driver License in Your Possession

You must always have your driver license with you when you drive. Show it to any peace officer who asks to see it. If you are in a collision, you must show it to the other driver(s) involved (refer to the "Involved in a Collision" section on page 77).

Address Changes

When you move, you must give the DMV your new address within 10 days. There is no fee to change your address. You may notify the DMV of your address change for your driver license, identification card, and vehicle(s) online at **www.dmv.ca.gov**. You may also download a

Change of Address (DMV 14) form and mail it to the address on the form, or call the DMV at 1-800-777-0133 and request a DMV 14 form be mailed to you.

A new driver license or identification card is not issued when you change your address.

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

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

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

Vision

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

Medical Information Card

Call 1-800-777-0133 to obtain a Medical Information Card (DL 390) to list your blood type, allergies, name of physician, and other medical information. It can be carried with your DL/ID card.

Organ and Tissue Donation

You may sign up to donate your organs and tissue for transplantation after your death. When you apply for or renew your driver license or ID card, check the "YES! Add my name to the donor registry," box on the renewal form to place your name on the *Donate Life California Organ Tissue Donor Registry*. If you need additional information, check the "I do not wish to register at this time," box and call *Donate Life California* where *Donate Life California* representatives can answer any questions you may have about organ and tissue donation. You may also use the renewal form to financially contribute to the registry by checking the "$2 voluntary contribution to support and promote organ and tissue donation," box.

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

For more information about the donor registry, adding restrictions to your gift, and the donation process, visit the *Donate Life California* website at

donateLIFEcalifornia.org, or call 1-866-797-2366. You may consent to the organ and tissue donation on their website; however, a new driver license or identification card with a pink dot will not be issued until you check "YES! Add my name to the donor registry." box on a driver license or identification application form and DMV processes the new transaction (replacement, renewal, change of name, etc.).

Veteran Benefit Information

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

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

Unlicensed Drivers

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

No person of any age may drive on a highway or in a public parking facility unless he or she has a valid driver license or permit. The law also states that you must not employ, permit, or authorize any person to drive your vehicle on a public street or highway, unless he or she is licensed to drive that class of vehicle.

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

Diplomatic Driver Licenses

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

Identification (ID) Cards

The DMV issues ID cards to eligible persons of any age. To obtain an original ID card, you must present a birth date/legal presence verification document and provide your social security number (refer to the "Obtaining a Driver License" section on page 3). The ID card is valid until the sixth birthday after the issue date. The

fee for an ID card may be reduced, if you meet certain income requirements for specific public assistance programs refer to the *Requirements for a California Identification Card* (FFDL 6) *Fast Facts* brochure for additional information.

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

If you are age 62 or older, you may obtain a **free** senior citizen ID card that is good for 10 years.

Free ID Cards for Physical and Mental (P&M) Conditions

Drivers with physical or mental (P&M) conditions may need to be reexamined from time to time by a physician **or** be retested more often than every five years by a DMV examiner to obtain a limited-term driver license.

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

Identification (ID) Card Renewal by Mail or Internet

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

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

Driving Schools

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

The DMV licenses professional schools and instructors in California that meet rigid qualifying standards. Schools must carry liability insurance, hold a bond, and maintain complete records for the DMV inspection. Vehicles are subject to annual inspection. Instructors must pass a written examination every three years or show proof of continuing education in the traffic safety field. If you use the services of a professional driving school, ask to see the instructor's identification card. Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or refer to the *Selecting a Driving School* (FFDL 33) *Fast Facts* brochure for additional information.

Mature Driver Program

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

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

Pedestrian Responsibilities

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

Be aware that hybrid and electric vehicles are virtually silent when running on electric power and you may not hear them approaching an intersection.

Yield the right-of-way to vehicles when you cross a street between intersections and in areas with no pedestrian crosswalks or signals.

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

Do not suddenly leave a curb or other safe place, and walk or run into the path of a vehicle close enough to be a danger to you. This is true even though you are in a crosswalk. The law states that drivers must always yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian, but if the driver cannot stop in time to avoid hitting you, the law will not prevent you from being hit.

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

Always obey traffic signals. Whether the intersection has pedestrian signals or traffic lights, you must obey the pedestrian rules (refer to pages 30 and 31). At an intersection where traffic is not controlled by signals, drivers are required to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians within any crosswalk, **marked or unmarked**.

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

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

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

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

If there are no sidewalks, walk facing oncoming traffic (see graphic on page 20). Do not walk or jog on any freeway where signs tell you that pedestrians are not allowed. Do not walk or jog in a bike lane unless there is no sidewalk.

At night, make yourself more visible by:

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

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

Seat Belts

Seat belts, both the lap belt and shoulder harness, must be in good working order. You may not operate your vehicle on public roads and on private property, such as public parking lots, unless you and all of your passengers eight years of age or older, or children who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or taller are wearing seat belts; and children younger than eight years old or who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall are seated in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system. You and all passengers must wear a seat belt or, **you** and/or your passenger(s) may be cited. If the passenger is under 16 years of age, you may be cited if he or she is not wearing his or her seat belt.

Always use your seat belts (including the shoulder harness) even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. You can have shoulder harnesses or seat belts installed in older vehicles. Even if you wear only a lap belt when driving, your chances of living through a collision are twice as high as someone who does not wear a lap belt. If you wear a lap and shoulder belt, your chances are three to four times higher to live through a collision.

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

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

Mistaken Beliefs About Seat Belts

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

MYTH: "Seat belts can trap you inside a vehicle." Research shows it actually takes less than a second to take off a seat belt. This myth often describes a vehicle that caught fire

or sank in deep water. A seat belt may keep you from being "knocked out." Therefore, your chances to escape are better if you are conscious.

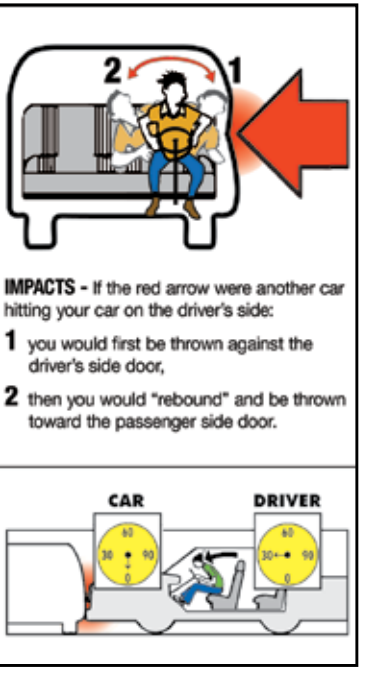
MYTH: "Seat belts are good on long trips, but I don't need them if I'm driving around town." Research shows more than half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Do not take chances with your life or the lives of your passengers. Buckle up every time you drive regardless of travel distance.

MYTH: "Some people are thrown from a vehicle in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch." Research shows your chances of surviving a collision are five times better if, upon impact, you are not thrown from the vehicle. A seat belt can keep you from being thrown into the path of another vehicle.

MYTH: "I'm only going to the store. My little brother or sister doesn't need to be secured in a safety seat." Research shows car collisions are the number one preventable cause of death for children. The law requires that children under eight years of age who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or taller to be properly secured with an appropriate safety belt , or be buckled into a federally-approved child passenger restraint system if under eight years of age and less than 4 feet 9 inches tall.

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

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



Child Restraint System and Safety Seats

Any child who is under eight (8) years old must be secured in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system and ride in the back seat of a vehicle.

EXCEPTION: A child who is under eight (8) years old **and** who is at least 4 foot 9 inches tall may instead use a properly secured seatbelt.

A child who is under eight (8) years old may ride in the front seat of a vehicle in the following instances:

- There is no rear seat or the rear seats are either side-facing jump seats or rear-facing seats.
- The child passenger restraint system cannot be properly installed in the rear seat.
- All rear seats are already occupied by children under the age of seven (7) years.
- A medical reason requires the child to ride in the front seat.

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

- Is less than one (1) year of age.
- Weighs less than 20 lbs.
- Is riding in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.

Children eight (8) years of age and older, but under 16 years old must be properly secured with an appropriate seat belt.

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

Riding Safely with Air Bags

Most people can take steps to eliminate or reduce air bag risk without turning off air bags. The biggest risk is being too close to the air bag. An air bag needs about 10 inches of space to inflate. Ride at least 10 inches (measured from the center of the steering wheel to your breastbone) from the air bag cover, if you can do this while maintaining full control of the vehicle. If you cannot safely sit 10 inches away from the air bag, contact your vehicle dealer or manufacturer for advice about additional ways of moving back from your air bag.

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

Side-Impact Air Bags

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

usually not in the path of a side air bag when it inflates.

Unattended Children in Motor Vehicles

It is **never** a good idea to leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

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

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

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

Hot Weather Risks

As stated in the "Unattended Children in Motor Vehicles" section above, it is against the law to leave unattended minor children in a vehicle (CVC §5620). Additionally, and equally important, it is dangerous and deadly to leave children and/or animals in a hot vehicle. After sitting in the sun, even if a window is slightly opened, the temperature can rise rapidly inside a parked vehicle. The temperature inside a vehicle can rise approximately 40-50 degrees higher than the outside temperature.

Dehydration, heat stroke, and death can result from overexposure to the heat. Remember if it's too hot for you, it's too hot for children and pets.

TRAFFIC CONTROLS

Traffic Signal Lights

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

Red Arrow–A red arrow means "STOP." Remain stopped until the green signal or green arrow appears. Do not turn against a red arrow.

Flashing Red–A flashing red signal light means "STOP." After stopping, you may proceed when it is safe. Observe the right-of-way rules.

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

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

Flashing Yellow–A flashing yellow signal light warns you to "PROCEED WITH CAUTION." You do not need to stop for a flashing yellow light, but you

must slow down and be especially alert before entering the intersection.

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

Solid Green–Give the right-of-way to any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian in the intersection. A green light means "GO." If you are turning left, make the turn only if you have enough space to complete the turn before creating a hazard for any oncoming vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian. Do not enter the intersection if you cannot get completely across before the light turns red. If you block the intersection, you can be cited.

Green Arrow–A green arrow means "GO." You must turn in the direction the arrow is pointing after you yield to any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian still in the intersection. The green arrow allows you to make a "protected" turn. Oncoming vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians are stopped by a red light as long as the green arrow is lighted.

Traffic Signal Blackout–The traffic signal light is not working. Proceed cautiously as if the intersection is controlled by "STOP" signs in all directions.

Pedestrian Signal Lights

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

"**Walk**" or "**Walking Person**" signal light means it is legal to cross the street.

"**Don't Walk**" or "**Raised Hand**" signal light means you may not start crossing the street.

Flashing "Don't Walk" or **Flashing "Raised Hand"** signal light means do not start crossing the street because the traffic signal is about to change. If the signal light starts flashing after you have already started to cross, finish crossing the street as quickly as possible.

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

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

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

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

Safe driving practices:
www.dmv.ca.gov

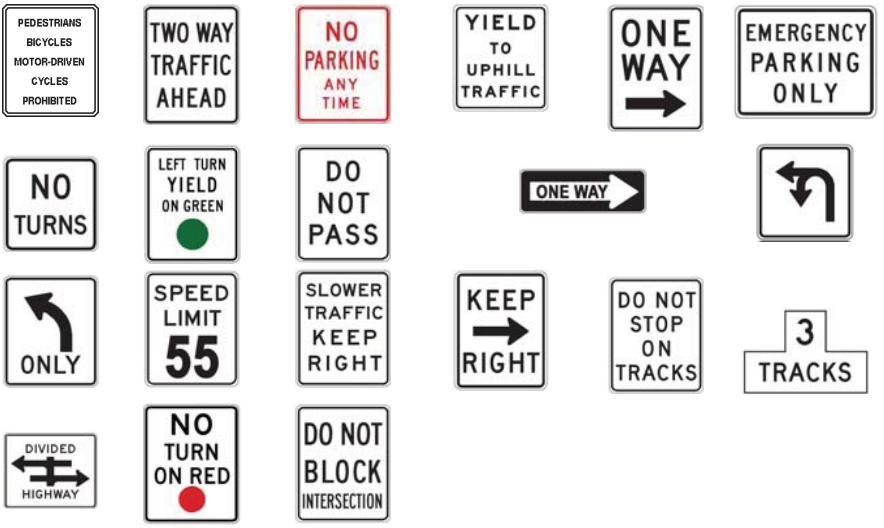
Red and White Regulatory Signs

No U-turn

No Left Turn

No Right Turn

White Regulatory Signs



Highway Construction and Maintenance Signs

Guide Signs

Hazardous Loads Placards

Slow Moving Vehicle

Warning Signs

Slippery When Wet

Merging Traffic

Divided Highway

Sharp Turn

Two Way Traffic

Lane Ends

End Divided Highway

Traffic Signal Ahead

Pedestrian Crossing

Added Lane

Crossroad

Stop Ahead

Yield Ahead

Curve

"T" Intersection

Directional Arrow

Reverse Turn

Winding Road

DMV Answerman says,

“OH, BEHAVE!”

If you intentionally obscure a license plate’s readability you’ll pay a fine!

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DMV
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DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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Traffic Signs

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

An *eight-sided red* **STOP** *sign* indicates that you must make a full "STOP" whenever you see this sign. Stop at the white limit line (a wide white line painted on the street) or before entering the crosswalk. If a limit line or crosswalk is not painted on the street, stop before entering the intersection. Check traffic in all directions before proceeding.

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

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

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

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

X-shaped signs with a white background that state **RAILROAD CROSSING** indicate that you must look, listen, slow down, and prepare to stop, if necessary. Let any trains pass before you proceed.

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

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

A *white rectangular sign* indicates that you must obey important rules.

Some *warning signs* have a fluorescent yellow-green background. These signs warn of conditions related to pedestrians, bicyclists, schools, playgrounds, school buses, and school passenger loading zones. Obey all warning signs regardless of their shape (refer to pages 26 and 27 for examples).

LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD

Right-of-Way Rules

General Information

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

Respecting the right-of-way of others is not limited to situations such as yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks, or watching carefully to ensure the right-of-way of bicyclists and motorcyclists. Motorists must **respect** the right-of-way of others by not violating traffic laws, such as failing to stop at a stop sign or traffic light, speeding, making unsafe lane changes, or illegal turns. Statistics show that right-of-way violations cause a high percentage of injury collisions in California.

Pedestrians

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

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

Pedestrians may be at risk walking near hybrid and electric vehicles because these vehicles are virtually silent while operating. Use extra caution when driving near pedestrians.

- **Respect** the right-of-way of pedestrians. Always stop for any pedestrian crossing at corners or other crosswalks, even if the crosswalk is in the middle of the block, at corners with or without traffic lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted lines.
- Do not pass a vehicle that has stopped at a crosswalk. A pedestrian you cannot see may be crossing the street. Stop, then proceed when all pedestrians have crossed the street.
- Do not drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it to enter or exit a driveway or alley. When crossing, yield to all pedestrians.
- Do not stop in a crosswalk. You will place pedestrians in danger.
- Remember, if a pedestrian makes eye contact with you, he or she is ready to cross the street. Yield to the pedestrian.
- Allow older pedestrians, disabled pedestrians, and pedestrians with young children sufficient time to cross the street.

IMPORTANT: Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to become aware of your vehicle's presence; so, it is important that you

stop your vehicle within 5 feet of the crosswalk. Drivers of hybrid or electric vehicles must remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may cause a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue:

- When a blind person pulls in his or her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means for you to go (additional information regarding blind pedestrians can be found on pages 65 and 66).

Crosswalks

A crosswalk is the part of the roadway set aside for pedestrian traffic. Most intersections have a pedestrian crosswalk whether or not lines are painted on the street. Most crosswalks are located at corners, but they can also be located in the middle of the block. Before turning a corner, watch for people about to cross the street. **Pedestrians have the right-of-way in marked or unmarked crosswalks**.

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

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

Intersections

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

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

- At intersections without "STOP" or "YIELD" signs, slow down and be ready to stop. Yield to traffic and pedestrians already in the intersection or just entering the intersection. Also, yield to the vehicle or bicycle that arrives first, **or** to the vehicle or bicycle on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as you.
- At "T" intersections without "STOP" or "YIELD" signs, yield to traffic and pedestrians on the through road. They have the right-of-way.
- When you turn left, give the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching that are close enough to be dangerous. Also, look for motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

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

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

- When you turn right, be sure to check for pedestrians crossing the street and bicyclists coming up behind you on the right.
- On divided highways or highways with several lanes, watch for vehicles coming in any lane you cross. Turn either left or right only when it is safe.
- When there are "STOP" signs at all corners, stop first then follow the rules listed above.
- If you have parked off the road or are leaving a parking lot, etc., yield to traffic before reentering the road.

Roundabouts

A roundabout is an intersection where traffic travels around a central island in a counter-clockwise direction. Vehicles entering or exiting the roundabout must yield to all traffic including pedestrians.

When you approach a roundabout:

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

Multiple and single lane roundabout

For roundabouts with multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination as shown in the graphic. For example, to:

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

On Mountain Roads

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

Speed Limits

California has a "Basic Speed Law." This law means that you may never drive faster than is safe for current conditions. For example, if you are driving 45 mph in a 55 mph speed zone during a dense fog, you could be cited for driving "too fast for conditions."

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

- The number and speed of other vehicles on the road.
- Whether the road surface is smooth, rough, graveled, wet, dry, wide, or narrow.
- Bicyclists or pedestrians walking on the road's edge or crossing the street.
- Whether it is raining, foggy, snowing, windy, or dusty.

Maximum Speed Limit

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

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

High speed increases your stopping distance. The faster you go, the less time you have to avoid a hazard or collision. The force of a 60 mph crash is not just twice as great as a 30 mph crash; it's four times as great!

Reduced Speeds

Heavy Traffic or Bad Weather

You must drive slower when there is heavy traffic or bad weather. However, if you block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic by driving too slowly, you may be given a ticket. If you choose to drive slower than other traffic, do not drive in the "Number 1 lane" (the fast lane) (refer to the "Choosing a Lane" section on page 40). When traveling below the speed limit and another driver is close behind you and wishes to drive faster, always move to the right.

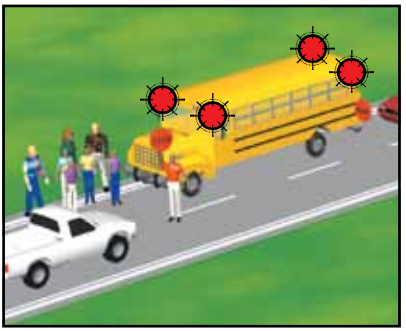
Towing Vehicles, Buses, or Large Trucks

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

Around Children

When driving within 500 to 1,000 feet of a school while children are outside or crossing the street, the speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted. Also, if the school grounds have no fence and children are outside, never drive faster than 25 mph. Some school zones may

have speed limits as low as 15 mph. Always drive more carefully near schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential areas because children may suddenly dart into the street. Also, many children have not yet developed the ability to judge speeds and distances well enough to cross streets safely when cars are moving fast.



All vehicles must stop

Near schools, look for:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians.
- School safety patrols or school crossing guards. Be sure to obey their directions. For the crossing guard's safety, allow him or her to safely get to the side of the road before driving ahead.
- Stopped school buses and children crossing the street. Some school buses flash yellow lights when preparing to stop to let children off the bus. The yellow flashing lights warn you to slow down and prepare to stop. When the bus flashes red lights (located at the top front and back of the bus), you must stop from either direction until the children are safely across the street and the lights stop flashing. The law requires you remain stopped as long as the red lights are flashing (CVC §22454). If you fail to stop, you may be fined up to $1,000 and your driving privilege could be suspended for one year. If the school bus is on the other side of a divided or multilane highway (two or more lanes in each direction), you do not need to stop.

Blind Intersections

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

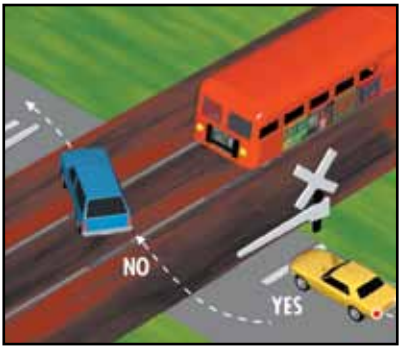
Alleys

The speed limit in any alley is 15 mph.

Near Railroad Tracks

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

At railroad or train crossings:



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

Light-Rail Transit Vehicle Crossings

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

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

Near Streetcars, Trolleys, or Buses

The passing speed limit, when safe to pass, is no more than 10 mph. This speed limit applies at a safety zone or an intersection where a streetcar, trolley, or bus is stopped and traffic is controlled by a peace officer or traffic signal. A safety zone is marked by raised buttons or

markers on the road and is set aside for pedestrians. You will most often see safety zones in areas where street cars or trolleys and vehicles share the roadway.

Business or Residential Districts

The speed limit is 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.

Near Animals

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

VISUAL SEARCH

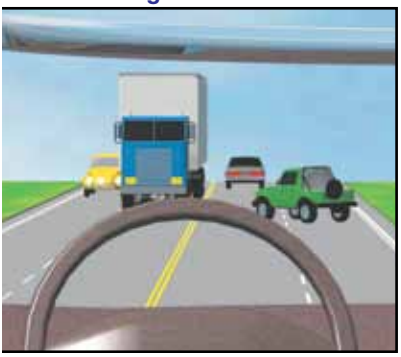
Scanning

Scanning your surroundings (keeping your eyes moving) includes keeping a safe distance around your vehicle. When another driver makes a mistake, you need time to react. Give yourself this time by keeping a "space cushion" on all sides of your vehicle. This space cushion will give you room to brake or maneuver if you need the space.

Know What Is Ahead

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

Where is the green vehicle headed?



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

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

- Cars, motorcycles, bicyclists, and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them.
- Signs warning of problems ahead.
- Signs giving you directions.

The shaded areas are your blind spots.

Before changing lanes, look into your rear view mirror for nearby vehicles and also over your shoulder to check for blind spots. Blind spots

can hide a motorcyclist, a vehicle or a bicyclist. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street or a vehicle door opening.

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

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

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

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

Most rear end collisions are caused by tailgating. To avoid tailgating, use the "three-second rule": when the vehicle ahead of you passes a certain point such as a sign, count "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three." Counting these numbers takes approximately three seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.

You should allow a four-second or more cushion when:

- Being crowded by a tailgater. Allow extra room ahead, do not brake suddenly. Slow down gradually or merge into another lane to prevent being hit from behind by the tailgater!
- Driving on slippery roads.
- Following motorcyclists on wet or icy roads, on metal surfaces (e.g., bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and on gravel. Motorcyclists can fall more easily on these surfaces.
- The driver behind you wants to pass. Allow room in front of your vehicle so the driver will have space to move in front of you.
- Towing a trailer or carrying a heavy load. The extra weight makes it harder to stop.
- Following large vehicles that block your view ahead. The extra space allows you to see around the vehicle.
- You see a bus, school bus, or a placarded vehicle at railroad crossings. These vehicles must stop at railroad crossings; so, slow down early and allow plenty of room.
- Merging onto a freeway.

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

Know What Is at Your Side

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

At intersections:

- Look both ways even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign.
  - Look to the left first, since vehicles coming from the left are closer to you than vehicles coming from the right.
  - Look to the right.
  - Take one more look to the left in case there is a vehicle or a pedestrian you did not see the first time.
- Do not rely on traffic signals. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals; so, before you enter an intersection, look left, right, and ahead for approaching traffic.

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

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

Know What Is Behind You

It is very important to check behind you before you:

- Change lanes. Look over your shoulder to make sure you are not getting in the way of vehicles in the lane you want to enter.
- Reduce your speed. Take a quick glance in your mirrors. Also check your mirrors when you are preparing to turn into a side road or driveway and when you are stopping to pull into a parking space.
- Drive down a long or steep hill. Watch for large vehicles because they can gather speed very quickly.
- Back up. Backing up is always dangerous because it is hard to see behind your vehicle. When you are backing out of a parking space:

– Check in front and behind the vehicle before you get in.
– Know where your kids are. Make sure they are away from your vehicle and in full view before moving your vehicle.
– If other children are nearby, make sure you can see them before backing up.
– Do not depend only on your mirrors or only looking out a side window.
– Turn and look over your right and left shoulders before you begin backing. As a safety measure, also look over your right and left shoulders again while backing.
– Back slowly to avoid collisions.

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

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

How Well Can You Stop?

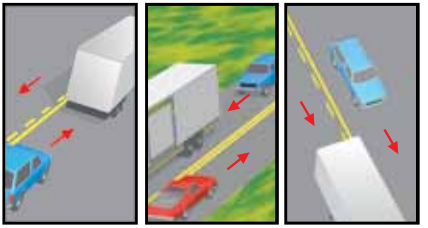
If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to stop. Assuming you have good tires, good brakes, and dry pavement:

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

Adjust your driving speed to the weather and road conditions (refer to the "Basic Speed Law" in the "Speed Limits" section on page 33). Turn on your lights during the day, if it is hard to see or you cannot see at least 1,000 feet ahead of you.

LANE CONTROL

Examples of lane markings



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

Line Colors

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

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

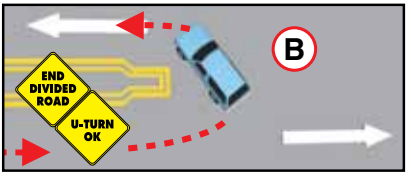
Two solid yellow lines indicate no passing. Never drive to the left of these lines unless you are:

- In a carpool lane/High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane that has a designated entrance on the left.

- Instructed by construction or other signs to drive on the other side of the road because your side of the road is closed or blocked.

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

Two sets of solid double yellow lines spaced 2 feet or more apart are considered a barrier. Do not drive on or over this barrier or make a left turn or a U-turn across it except at designated openings (see diagram).



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

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

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

Choosing a Lane

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

Example of numbered traffic lanes

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

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

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

Changing Lanes

Changing lanes includes:

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

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

- Check traffic behind and beside you.

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

Passing Lanes

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

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

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

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

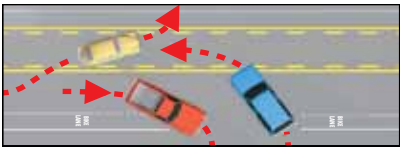
Carpool/High-Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) Lanes

An HOV lane is a special lane used only for carpools, buses, motorcycles, or decaled low-emission vehicles. You may use a carpool/HOV lane or on-ramp if your vehicle carries the posted minimum number of people required for the carpool lane, or you drive a low-emission vehicle displaying a special DMV-issued decal. If you operate a low emission and/or hybrid vehicle, you may be exempt from all toll charges on high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Motorcycle riders may use designated carpool/HOV lanes, unless otherwise posted.

Signs at the on-ramp or along the freeway tell you the minimum number of people per vehicle required for the carpool/HOV lane(s). These signs also list the days of the week and the hours when the carpool/HOV requirement applies. The pavement in this lane is marked with a diamond symbol ◇ and the words "Carpool Lane." These lanes are also known as high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Do not cross over double parallel solid lines to enter or exit any carpool/HOV lane except at designated entry or exit places.

Center Left Turn Lanes

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



or to prepare for or make a permitted U-turn (CVC §21460.5 (c)). You may only drive for 200 feet in the center left turn lane. This lane is not a regular traffic lane or a passing lane. To turn left from this lane, signal, look over your shoulder, and drive completely inside the center left turn lane. Do not stop with the back of your vehicle blocking traffic. Make sure the lane is clear in both directions and then turn only when it is safe. Look for vehicles coming toward you in the same lane, preparing to start their left turn.

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

Turnout Areas and Lanes

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

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

End-of-Lane Markings

Freeway lanes, as well as some city street lanes, which are ending will usually be marked by large broken lines painted on the pavement. If you

are driving in a lane marked with these broken lines, be prepared to exit the freeway or for the lane to end. Look for a sign that tells you to exit or merge, etc.

Shared Roadway Bicycle Markings (Sharrows)

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

Sharrows are used to assist bicyclists with positioning on a shared roadway. They also alert motorists

of the location a bicyclist may occupy within the traveled roadway.

Bicycle Lanes

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

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

When you are making a right turn and are within 200 feet of the corner or other driveway entrance, you must enter the bicycle lane only after ensuring there is no bicycle traffic, and then make the turn. Do not drive in the bicycle lane at any other time.

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

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

TURNS

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

Example of a left turn

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

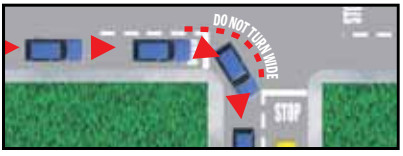
A left turn against a red light can only be made from a one-way street onto a one-way street. Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the marked limit line. If there is no limit line, stop before entering the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection. You may turn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

Right turns–To make a right turn, drive close to the right edge of the

road. If there is a bike lane, drive into the bike lane no more than 200 feet before the turn. Watch for bicyclists or motorcyclists who may get between your vehicle and the curb.

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

Example of a right turn



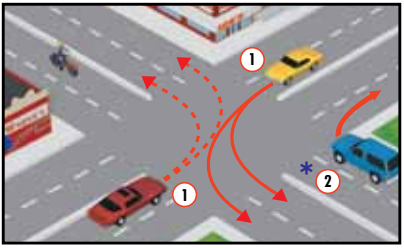
Right turn against a red light–Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the marked limit line. If there is no limit line, stop before entering the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection. You may turn right if there is no sign to prohibit the turn. Yield to pedestrians,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

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

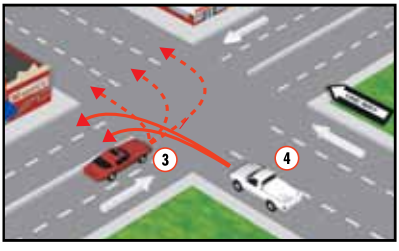
Examples of Right and Left Turns

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

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



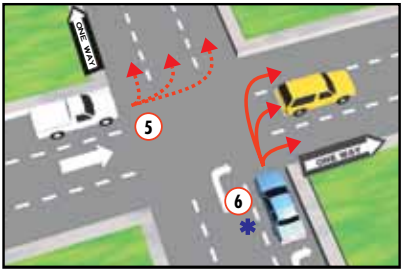
2. *Right turn*. Begin **and** end the turn in the lane nearest the right-hand curb. Do not swing wide into another lane of traffic. Watch for pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists between your vehicle and the curb. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane as shown by the graphic ②.
3. *Left turn from a two-way street into a one-way street.* Start the turn from the lane closest to the middle of the street. Turn into any lane that is safely open, as shown by the arrows.



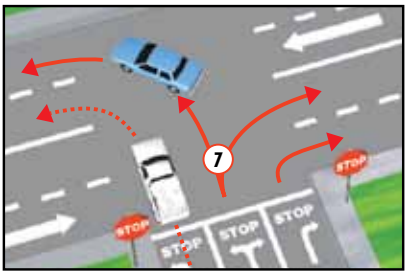
4. *Left turn from a one-way street*

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

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



6. *Right turn from a one-way street into a one-way street*. Start the turn in the far right lane. If safe, you may end the turn in any lane. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane, as shown by the graphic ⑥.
7. *Turn at a "T" intersection from a one-way street into a two-way street*. Through traffic has the right-of-way. You may turn either right or left from the center lane. Watch for vehicles, motorcyclists, and bicyclists inside your turn.



Legal U-Turns

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

- Across a double yellow line when it is safe and legal.
- In a residential district:
  - If there are no vehicles approaching you within 200 feet.
  - Whenever a traffic sign, light, or signal protects you from approaching vehicles.
- At an intersection on a green light or green arrow, unless a "No U-turn" sign is posted.
- On a divided highway, only if an opening is provided in the center divider.

Illegal U-Turns

Never make a U-turn:

- At or on a railroad crossing.
- On a divided highway by crossing a dividing section, curb, strip of land, or two sets of double yellow lines.
- Where you cannot see clearly 200 feet in each direction because of a curve, hill, rain, fog, or other reason.

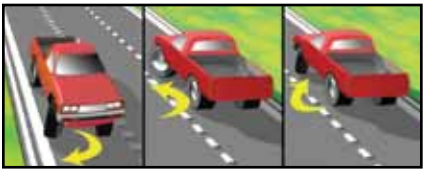
- Where a “No U-Turn” sign is posted.
- When other vehicles may hit you.
- On a one-way street.
- In front of a fire station. Never use a fire station driveway to turn your vehicle around.
- In business districts. Areas with churches, apartments, multiple dwelling houses, clubs, and public buildings (except schools) are also considered to be business districts. Turn only at an intersection, unless a sign prohibits it, or where openings are provided for turns.

PARKING

Parking on a Hill

When you park:

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



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

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

Parallel Parking

How to parallel park safely:

1. **Find a space**. Look for a space at least 3 feet longer than your vehicle to safely park in the space without striking another vehicle or object. When you find a space, **signal** your intention to park.
2. **Pull your vehicle alongside** the vehicle in front of your space, if any, 2 feet away from it and bumpers aligned. Check your rear view mirror and look over your shoulder for approaching vehicles. You can brake gently so approaching vehicles behind you will see the brake lights and stop to allow you to park. Keep your foot on the brake and put the vehicle in reverse. Maintain the turn signal.
3. **Lift your foot off the brake**. Check your mirrors and look over your shoulder to make sure the street is clear of traffic before you begin to back up. Look over your shoulder at the space to make sure it is clear of any objects, pedestrians, animals, etc. Begin to back up while turning

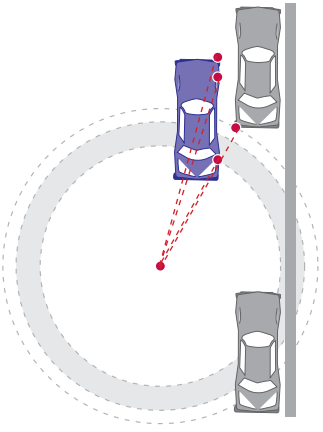
the wheel hard toward the curb; you want the angle to be sharp but not too sharp.

4. **Once the back of your seat** is aligned with the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of the empty space, begin turning the steering wheel away from the curb.
5. **Straighten out**. Your vehicle should now be about 6 inches from and parallel the curb. You might have to adjust your vehicle forward or backward before you put your vehicle in park and turn off the engine. Check your mirrors and look over your left shoulder for oncoming traffic or bicyclists before you exit.

How to Park

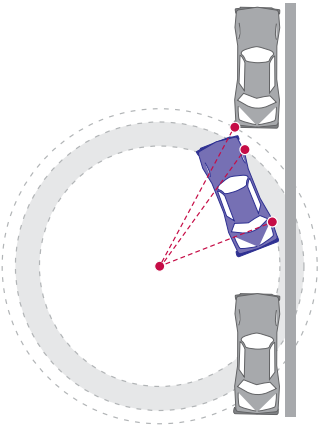
Step 1

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



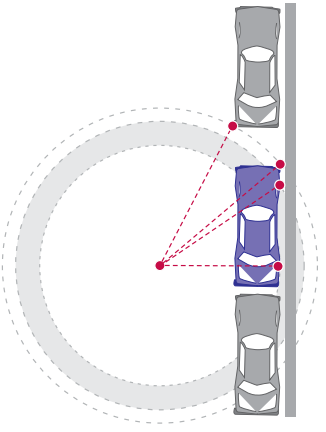
Step 2

Reverse into the space with an S motion.



Step 3

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



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ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, ANY DEVICE

DMV's convenient, time-saving online and mobile services.

1-800-777-0133 or dmv mobile app

www.dmv.ca.gov

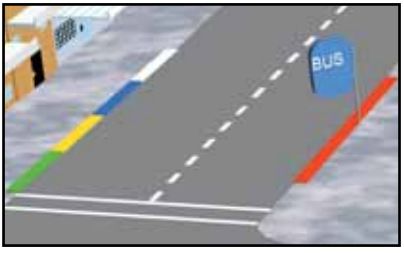
Parking at Colored Curbs

Painted colored curbs have the following special parking rules:

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

Green–Park for a limited time. Look for a posted sign next to the green zone for time limits, or locate the time limit painted on the curb.

Yellow–Stop no longer than the time posted to load or unload passengers or freight. Drivers of non-commercial vehicles are usually required to stay with the vehicle.



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

Blue–Parking is permitted only for a disabled person or a driver of a disabled person who displays a placard or a special license plate for disabled persons or disabled veterans. Disabled people with a placard or special plates may park in special areas for unlimited periods of time, regardless of time restrictions. No one other than a disabled person or a driver of a disabled person may park there. A **crosshatched (diagonal lines) area** adjacent to a designated disabled parking space is a **no parking** area. Qualified persons may apply at any DMV office or visit the DMV website at **www.dmv.ca.gov** to obtain a form for a parking placard or special plates. An identification card will be issued to holders of disabled person or disabled veteran license plates.

Example of crosshatched (diagonal lines) area

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

Examples of placard abuse:

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

NOTE: Disabled plates and/or a placard must be surrendered or returned to the nearest DMV within 60 days of the death of the disabled person. The plates and/or placard can also be mailed to the following address:

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

Illegal Parking

Never park or leave your vehicle:

- Where a "No Parking" sign is posted.
- On a marked or unmarked crosswalk, sidewalk, partially blocking a sidewalk, or in front of a driveway.
- Within 3 feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons or in front of or on a curb that provides wheelchair access to a sidewalk.
- In a disabled person parking space, **unless** you are disabled and display a placard or special plates.
- In the space next to a disabled person parking space, if it is painted in a crosshatched (diagonal) pattern (CVC §22507.8(c)(2)).
- In a space designated for parking or fueling zero-emission vehicles which display an identifying decal.
- In a tunnel or on a bridge, except where permitted by signs.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or a fire station driveway.
- On or within 7½ feet of a railroad track.
- Between a safety zone and the curb.
- "Double parked." (Parking in the street when all legal parking places at the curb are taken.)
- On the wrong side of the street.
- At a red curb.
- On a freeway, except:
  - In an emergency, or
  - When a peace officer or device requires a stop, or
  - Where a stop is specifically permitted. A vehicle (even if disabled) that is stopped, parked, or left standing on a freeway for more than four hours may be removed (CVC §22651(f)).

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

Special Parking Rules

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

side door unless it is safe to do so and you do not interfere with traffic. Do not leave the door open any longer than necessary.

SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES

Signaling

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

Signals may be given by hand-and-arm positions or by using the vehicle's signal lights. If bright sunlight makes the signal lights hard to see, also use hand-and-arm signals.

LEFT TURN

RIGHT TURN

SLOW or STOP

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

Signal:

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

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

- Before every lane change. Check your mirrors, look over your shoulder, and check your blind spot before changing lanes.
- At least five seconds before you change lanes on a freeway.
- Before pulling next to the curb or away from the curb.
- When you change directions.
- Even when you do not see other vehicles. A vehicle you do not see may suddenly appear and hit you.

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

Remember to cancel your signal after turning.

Steering

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

To reduce forearm and hand injuries, your hands should be placed on the lower half of the steering wheel, with your knuckles on the outside of the wheel, and your

thumbs stretched along the rim of the steering wheel.

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

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

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

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

One-Hand Steering–Use one-hand steering for:

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

Horn, Headlights, and Emergency Signals

Use Your Horn

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

Do Not Use Your Horn

- If a driver or bicyclist is going slowly, and you want him or her to drive faster or get out of your way. The driver or bicyclist may not be able to safely go faster, due to illness, being lost, intoxication, or having mechanical problems with the vehicle.
- To alert other drivers that they made a mistake. Your honking may cause them to make more mistakes or to become angry and retaliate.
- Because **you** may be angry or upset.
- To honk at pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists unless necessary to avoid a collision. Remember that your horn sounds much louder outside a vehicle.

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

Use Your Headlights

- When it is cloudy, raining, snowing, or foggy. If weather conditions require you to use your windshield wipers, you must turn on your low-beam headlights — it's the law.
- On frosty mornings, when other drivers' windows may be icy or "fogged."
- Any time conditions (clouds, rain, snow, dust, smoke, fog, etc.)

prevent you from seeing other vehicles. Other drivers may have trouble seeing you, too.

- On small country or mountain roads, even on sunny days. This helps other drivers see you and may help you avoid a head-on collision.
- When necessary to get another driver's attention.

Use Your Emergency Signals

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

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

- Pull off the road away from all traffic, if possible.
- If you cannot get completely off the road, stop where people can see you and your vehicle from behind. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Turn on your emergency flashers if you are not moving. If your vehicle doesn't have emergency flashers, turn signals may be used instead.
- If it is safe, lift the hood to signal an emergency.
- Give other drivers plenty of warning. Place emergency flares or triangles 200–300 feet behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers time to change lanes, if necessary. Be very careful when using flares. They may cause fires, especially when used near flammable liquids.
- If you do not have emergency flares, follow the rules listed above and stay in your vehicle until help arrives. Be careful for your safety and **stay off the road**. **REMEMBER**: Do not try to change a tire if it means you have to stand in a traffic lane.

Text Messaging and Cell Phones

It is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless communication device to write, send, or read text messages, instant messages, and e-mails *unless* you are 18 years of age or older and using an electronic wireless communications device designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation to dictate, send, or listen to text-based communications when operating a vehicle.

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

- Call for help in emergencies only.
- If your cell phone rings, do not answer it. Let the call go to voicemail, if you have this feature.
- If you must make a call, pull safely

off the road and stop before making the call.
- Keep telephone conversations short or if possible, have a passenger make the call.

Do not use your cell phone:
- During hazardous conditions.
- To engage in distracting conversations.

NOTE: Minors **may not** use a cell phone except in certain emergencies (refer to the "Minors and Cell Phones" section on page 14 for additional information).

VEHICLE POSITIONING

Following Distances

Taking Dangers One at a Time

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

Splitting the Difference

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

If one danger is greater than the other, give the most room to the most dangerous situation. Suppose there are oncoming cars on your left side and a child on a bike on your right side. The child is more likely to make a sudden move. Therefore, slow down, and if safe, use as much of your lane to the left as possible until you pass the child.

Persons Who Present Dangers to Drivers

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

- Drivers who cannot see you because their view is blocked by buildings, trees, or other cars.
- Drivers backing out of driveways or parking spaces.
- Drivers who pass you when there is a curve or oncoming vehicle(s) ahead.
- Drivers about to be forced into your lane to avoid a vehicle, a pedestrian, a bicyclist, an obstruction, or because of fewer lanes ahead.
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or hats pulled down over their eyes.
- Distracted people, such as:
  - Delivery persons.
  - Construction workers.
  - Distracted pedestrians, such as those on the phone or texting.
  - Children, who often run into the street without looking.
  - Drivers talking on cell phones or speaking to their passengers.
  - Drivers taking care of children,

eating, or looking at maps while driving.

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

Merging In/Out of Traffic

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

Space to Merge

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

Any time you merge with other traffic, you need a gap of at least four seconds, which gives both, you and the other vehicle, only a two-second following distance. When it is safe, go back to following the "three-second rule" (refer to the "Do not be a tailgater!" section on page 37).

- Do not try to squeeze into a gap that is too small. Leave yourself a big enough space cushion.
- Watch for vehicles around you. Use your mirrors and turn signals. Turn your head to look quickly over your shoulder before changing lanes or merging in traffic. Leave three seconds of space between you and the vehicle ahead of you. Make sure you can stop safely, if necessary.
- If you need to cross several freeway lanes, cross them one at a time. If you wait until all of the lanes are clear, you may cause traffic delays or a collision.

Space to Cross or Enter

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

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

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

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

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

driver actually starts to turn before you continue.

Space to Exit

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

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

Passing Other Traffic

Space and Speed to Pass

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

Avoid passing other vehicles, including motorcycles and bicycles, on two-lane roads; it is dangerous. Every time you pass, you increase your chances of having a collision. However, when you pass a bicyclist, be patient. Slow down and pass him/her only when it is safe, allowing for a minimum of three (3) feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist where possible. Do not pass a bicyclist unless it is safe to do so and do not squeeze the bicyclist off the road.

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

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

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

Do not pass:

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

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

Space to Return

Before you return to your driving lane, be sure you are not dangerously close to the vehicle you have just passed. One way to do this is to look for the vehicle in your inside rear view mirror. When you can see both headlights in your rear view mirror, you have enough room to

return to your driving lane. Do not count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once or that other drivers will make room for you.

SHARING THE ROAD

Large Trucks (Big Rigs) and RVs

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

Braking

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

Trucker's Blind Spots—the "No Zone"

Shaded areas are the driver's blind spots.

Passenger vehicle drivers incorrectly assume that a trucker can see the road better because he or she is higher off the road. While truckers do have a better forward view and bigger mirrors, they still have large blind spots and your vehicle can get lost in those blind spots. If you stay in those blind spots, you block the trucker's ability to take evasive action to avoid a dangerous situation. Generally speaking, if you cannot see the truck driver in his or her side mirror, he or she cannot see you. These blind spots are often called the "NO ZONE."

Turning

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

Maneuverability

Trucks are not as maneuverable as passenger vehicles. Large trucks have longer stopping and starting distances. They take more space for turns and they weigh more. When no signs are posted, these vehicles must be driven in the right hand traffic lane or as close as possible to the right edge of the roadway. On a divided highway with four (4) or more traffic lanes in one direction,

these vehicles may also be driven in the lane just to the left of the right hand lane.

Avoid these mistakes when driving around large trucks:

- **Cutting off a truck in traffic or on the highway to reach an exit or turn**. Cutting into the open space in front of a truck is dangerous. Trying to beat a truck through a single-lane construction zone, for example, removes the truck driver's cushion of safety and places you and others in danger. Slow down and take your turn entering the construction zone. Do not speed up to pass a truck, so you can exit the roadway. Take a moment to slow down and exit behind a truck—it will only take you a few extra seconds.
- **Lingering alongside a truck when passing**. Always pass a large truck on the left side, and after you pass the truck, move ahead of it. Do not linger. Otherwise, you make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the trucker to take evasive action if an obstacle appears in the road ahead.
- **Following too closely or tailgating**. When you follow so closely behind a truck that you cannot see the truck driver's side view mirrors, the trucker cannot see you and has no way of knowing you are there. Tailgating a truck, or any vehicle, is dangerous because you take away your own cushion of safety if the vehicle in front of you stops quickly.
- **Underestimating the size and speed of an approaching tractor-trailer**. A large tractor-trailer often *appears* to be traveling at a slower speed because of its large size. Many collisions involving a passenger vehicle and a large truck occur at intersections, when the passenger vehicle driver did not realize how close the truck was or how fast it was traveling.

Buses, Streetcars, and Trolleys

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

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

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

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

EXCEPTIONS:

- When you are on a one-way street.
- When the tracks are so close to the right side that you cannot pass on the right.

- When a traffic officer directs you to pass on the left.

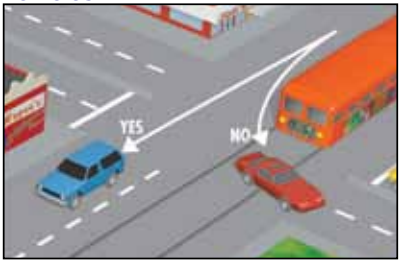
Light-Rail Vehicles

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

Safely share the road with light-rail vehicles by:

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

Do not turn in front of light-rail vehicles.



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

Safety Zones are marked by dotted white lines.

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

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

Emergency Vehicles

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

Yield to emergency vehicles.

You must obey any traffic direction, order, or signal given by a traffic or peace officer, or a firefighter even if it conflicts with existing signs, signals, or laws.

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

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

Slow-Moving Vehicles

Some vehicles are not designed to keep up with the speed of traffic.

Farm tractors, animal-drawn carts, and road maintenance vehicles usually travel 25 mph or less. Slow-moving vehicles have an orange/red triangle on the back of the vehicles. It looks like the sign in the picture below. Look for these vehicles and adjust your speed before you reach them.

A Slow-Moving Vehicle

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

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

Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Low-Speed Vehicles (LSV)

You may have seen lanes marked or signs posted for **NEV USE ONLY** or **NEV ROUTE** on roadways in some California towns, especially those near retirement communities and golf courses. When you see these signs or markings, watch out for slow-moving vehicles in the roadway. NEVs and LSVs are restricted from roadways where the speed limit is greater than 35 mph (CVC §§385.5 and 21260). The NEV and LSV vehicles reach a maximum speed of 25 mph.

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

Animal-Drawn Vehicles

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

Motorcycles

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as automobile drivers. While everyone must

follow the same traffic laws, motorcyclists face additional dangers because motorcycles require exceptional handling ability and are harder to see. Therefore, many motorcycles keep their headlight on even during daylight hours.

From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline, whether 2 or 3 wheels, is much smaller than a passenger vehicle's outline. Most drivers expect to see larger vehicles on the road and are not looking for motorcycles.

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

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

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

- When you change lanes or enter a major thoroughfare, make a visual check for motorcycles. Also use your mirrors. Motorcycles are small and can easily disappear into a vehicle's blind spots.
- Allow a four-second following distance. You will need this space to avoid hitting the motorcyclist, if he or she brakes suddenly or falls off the motorcycle. Motorcycles generally can stop faster than passenger vehicles.
- Allow the motorcycle a full lane width. Although it is not illegal to share lanes with motorcycles, it is unsafe.
- Never try to pass a motorcycle in the same lane you are sharing with the motorcycle.
- When you make a turn, check for motorcyclists and gauge their speed before turning.
- Look carefully for motorcyclists before opening doors next to moving traffic or before turning right.
- Remember that road conditions, which are minor annoyances to you, pose major hazards to motorcyclists. Potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement can cause motorcyclists to change speed or direction suddenly. If you are aware of the effect of these conditions and drive with care and attention, you can help reduce motorcyclist injuries and fatalities. For more information regarding motorcycle safety, contact the California Motorcyclist Safety Program at 1-877-RIDE-411 or **www.ca-msp.org**.

Bicycles

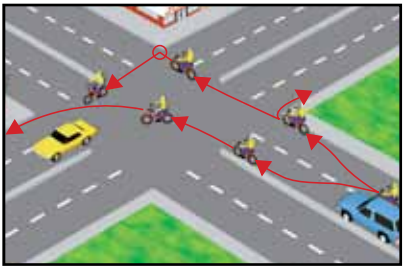
Bicyclists:

- Are entitled to share the road with motor vehicles.
- Have the same rights

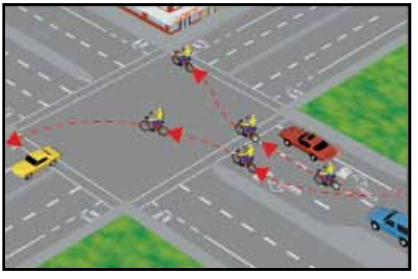
and responsibilities as motor vehicle and motorcycle drivers.

- Must obey all traffic signals and stop signs.
- Are lawfully permitted to ride on certain sections of roadway in rural areas where there is no alternate route.
- Must ride in the same direction as other traffic, not against it.

Turns for bicyclists



Intersections with special lanes



- Shall ride as near to the right curb or edge of the roadway as practical–not on the sidewalk.
- May move left to pass a parked or moving vehicle, bicycle, animal, or avoid debris or other hazards.
- May choose to ride near the left curb or edge of a one-way street.
- Should ride single file on a busy or narrow street.
- Must make left and right turns in the same way drivers do, using the same turn lanes. If the bicyclist is traveling straight ahead, he or she should use a through traffic lane rather than ride next to the curb and block traffic making right turns.
- Must signal all their intentions to motorists and bicyclists near them.
- Must wear a helmet if under the age of 18.
- Should carry identification.
- Shall not operate a bicycle on a roadway unless the bicycle is equipped with:
  - A brake which will enable the operator to make one braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

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

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

Bicycles in Travel Lanes

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

Right

Wrong

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

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

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

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

Pedestrians Who Are Blind

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

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

Here are some suggestions for helping pedestrians who are blind:

- **At a stop light or sign, do not stop your vehicle more than 5 feet from the crosswalk, unless there is an advance stop bar (line)**. Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to become aware of your vehicle's presence; so, it is important that you stop your vehicle within 5

feet of the crosswalk. Drivers of hybrid or electric vehicles must remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may cause a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue: When a blind person pulls in his or her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means they are not ready to cross the street and for you to go.

- **Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.** Wait for the pedestrian to cross the street.
- **Do not stop in the middle of a crosswalk**. This forces the blind pedestrian to go around your vehicle and into traffic outside of the crosswalk.
- **Do not give the blind pedestrian verbal directions**. A blind pedestrian listens to all traffic sounds before deciding to cross the street.
- **Do not turn right without looking first**. Look for any pedestrians, especially blind pedestrians or traffic, before starting your turn. Blind pedestrians who have a green light are not expecting a driver to make a right turn in front of them. Turning may result in the blind pedestrian becoming disoriented and vulnerable to being hit by another right turning vehicle when attempting to cross the street.
- **Do not honk your horn at a blind person**. The blind person has no idea who you are honking at and may be startled by the noise.
- **Do not block any sidewalk**.

Road Workers and Work Zones (Cone Zones)

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

The most common cause of deaths and injuries in work zones is rear-end collisions. In fact, most of the people killed in work zones are drivers and passengers. **For your own safety and the safety of your passengers** remember to pass the work zone carefully, slow down, allow extra following room between vehicles, merge early, expect sudden slowing or stopping, watch for drivers changing lanes at the last minute, and avoid distractions while driving in a work zone. Distractions include using your hands-free cell phone,

reading/sending text messages, and/or operating your GPS and entertainment systems. Fines for traffic violations in a work zone can be up to $1,000 or more. Anyone convicted of assaulting a highway worker faces fines of up to $2,000 and imprisonment for up to one year.

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

Double Fine Zones

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

Move Over and Slow Down

Drivers are required to move over a lane, if safe to do so, or slow down when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle or tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, or a Department of Transportation (CalTrans) vehicle displaying emergency flashing or amber warning lights while it is stopped on the side of a state highway or freeway. The law is designed to reduce the deaths of peace officers, tow truck drivers, paramedics, Caltrans employees, and other emergency personnel who are aiding stranded or injured motorists or involved in road work. Use caution if lane changes are required.

Vehicles with Hazardous Loads

Hazardous Loads Placards

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

Important Driving Tips

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

Dealing with Traffic Congestion

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

Avoid the following driving behaviors:

- **Rubbernecking**–slowing down to look at collisions or virtually

anything else out of the ordinary.

- **Tailgating**–following too closely.
- **Unnecessary lane changes**–weaving in and out of freeway lanes.
- **Inattention**–eating, grooming, talking on a cell phone, text messaging, reading the newspaper, etc.
- **Operating a poorly-maintained or malfunctioning vehicle or running out of fuel.**

Dealing with Aggressive Drivers and Road Rage

Aggressive driving and road rage happens when crowded roads, rushing, and impatience cause one driver to react angrily to another driver. To avoid aggressive driving and road rage situations:

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

Prevent a potentially violent incident by:

- Avoiding eye contact with an angry driver.
- Giving an angry driver plenty of space.

Take the questionnaire on page 71 to determine the type of driver you are.

SPECIAL DRIVING SITUATIONS

Keep Your Car Visible

The driver's blind spots are shown in the graphic on page 36. If you look only in your mirrors, you cannot see vehicles in these blind spots. Turn your head to see if a vehicle is in one of these blind spots. Do not linger in another driver's blind spot. As quickly as you can, drop back or pass the vehicle.

What Is the Road Condition

The faster your speed, the less control you have of your vehicle. Rather than driving at the legal posted speed limit, adjust your driving speed for road conditions or whatever affects the safe operation of your vehicle. For example, should you drive 35 mph (the posted speed limit) on a curve down an icy mountain road? Many inexperienced drivers do not adjust their driving speed for the road condition that causes them to have more "out-of-control" collisions than experienced drivers.

Curves

On curves, there is a strong outward pull on your vehicle, which is especially dangerous when the road is slippery. Rain, mud, snow, ice, and gravel make the road slippery. If a speed limit is not posted before a curve, you must judge how sharp the curve is and adjust your speed accordingly. Slow down **before** you enter the curve; you do not know

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

Driving in Heavy Traffic

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

As a general rule, drive more slowly:

- In parking lots and downtown areas.
- On roads with heavy traffic.
- When you see the brake lights of several vehicles ahead of you.
- Over narrow bridges and through tunnels.
- Through toll plazas.
- Near schools, playgrounds, and in residential areas.

Traffic Speeds

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

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

Driving slower than other vehicles or stopping suddenly can be just as dangerous as speeding, if not more dangerous, because you may cause a rear end collision or cause other drivers to swerve to avoid hitting your vehicle. If you are in the fast lane and you notice vehicles moving to the right lane to pass you, or a line of vehicles is forming behind you, the best thing to do is move into the right lane, when it is safe, and let the vehicle(s) pass.

Driving Hazards

Water on the Road

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

Slippery Roads

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

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

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

- On cold, wet days, shade from trees or buildings can hide spots of ice. These areas freeze first and dry out last.

It is not only trucks that have

BLIND SPOTS

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

www.dmv.ca.gov
1-800-777-0133

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DMV
DRIVING CHANGE...
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

ARE YOU AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER?

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

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

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

DO YOU AVOID:

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

Score Yourself:
Count the number of "No" Answers

(1-3) SAFE DRIVER
(4-7) GOOD DRIVER
(8-11) SEMI-AGGRESSIVE DRIVER
(12+) AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

- Bridges and overpasses tend to freeze before the rest of the road does. They can hide spots of ice.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, the pavement can be very slippery for the first several minutes. Heat causes oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. The oil makes the road slippery until the rain washes the oil off the surface of the road.

High Winds

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

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

Driving in the Fog

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

Never drive with just your parking or fog lights.

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

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

Driving in Darkness

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

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

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

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

When you drive at night, remember:

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

Driving in Rain or Snow

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

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

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

Driving in Hill Country or Curves

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

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

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

Traffic Breaks

Traffic breaks are used by law enforcement to:

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

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

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

Clean Windows and Mirrors

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

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

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

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

Adjust your rear and side mirrors before you start driving. If your vehicle has a day/night mirror, learn how to use it. The night setting reduces the headlight glare from the cars behind you and helps you see well.

What a Driver Should Do During an Enforcement Stop

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

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

On a freeway, move completely onto the right shoulder, even if you're in the carpool/HOV lane.

Stop in a well lit area when possible. Pull your vehicle as far off the roadway as possible. When it is dark, look for locations that have more light, such as areas with street or freeway lights, near restaurants, or service stations.

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

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

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

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

Mechanical Tips

Skids on Slippery Surfaces

A road that is normally safe can become dangerous when it is slippery. Ice and packed snow on the road can cause your vehicle to skid, especially if you are driving too fast or going downhill. If you start to skid:

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

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

To prevent skidding on slippery surfaces:

- Drive slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead of you.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Avoid quick stops. "Pump" the brakes to slow or stop. (Do not pump antilock brakes.)

- Shift to low gear before going down a steep hill.
- Avoid especially slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, or deep puddles.

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

Acceleration Skids

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

Locked Wheel Skids

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

Accelerator Malfunction

If your accelerator becomes stuck you should:

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

Steering Wheel Locking Device

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

Collisions Are Not Accidents

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

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

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

Causes of Collisions

The most common causes of collisions are:

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

Involved in a Collision

If you are involved in a collision:

- You must stop. Someone could be injured and need your help. If you do not stop, you may be convicted of "hit and run" and could be severely punished.
- Call 9-1-1, if anyone is hurt.
- Move your vehicle out of the traffic lane if no one is injured or killed.
- Show your driver license, registration card, evidence of financial responsibility, and current address to the other driver, persons involved, or peace officer.
- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to the police or CHP within 24 hours of the collision if someone is killed or injured.
- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to the DMV within 10 days.
- If you hit a parked vehicle or other property, leave a note with your name, phone number, and address in or securely attached to the vehicle or property you hit. Report the collision to the city police or, in unincorporated areas, to the CHP.
- If your parked car rolls away and hits another vehicle, try to find the owner and report the incident to authorities as mentioned above.
- If you kill or injure an animal, call the nearest humane society, the police, or CHP. Do not try to move an injured animal or leave an injured animal to die.

Reporting a Collision

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

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

Each driver (or the driver's insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) *must file a report with the DMV* using the Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) form. Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for the SR 1 form. The CHP or police **will not** make this report for you.

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

Your driving privilege will be suspended:

- If you do not make this report.
- For up to four years, if you did not have proper insurance coverage. During the last three years of the

suspension, your driver license can be returned to you if you provide a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22) and maintain it during the three-year period.

Safety Tips

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

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

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

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

- Offer you a gallon of gas if you run out.
- "Jump start" your vehicle if the battery is dead.
- Refill your radiator and tape hoses.
- Change a flat tire.

The FSP program:

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

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

The FSP serves the following areas:

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

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

DRIVER READINESS

Safety for the Aging Driver

DMV has published a handbook specifically for senior drivers. Please go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** to view or download a copy of the *Senior Guide for Safe Driving* (DL 625), call 1-800-777-0133 to request a copy to be mailed, go to the local DMV field office, or contact the *Senior Driver Ombudsman Program* in your area:

Los Angeles and Central Coast Counties
(310) 615-3415

Sacramento and Northern California Counties
(916) 657-6464

Orange and San Diego Counties
(714) 705-1588

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

Good Vision for All Drivers

You need good vision to drive safely (see Vision section, page 16). If you cannot see clearly, you cannot judge distances or spot trouble, and you will not be able to make the best judgments. You also need to see peripherally or "out of the corner of your eye" to spot cars coming up beside you while your eyes are on the road ahead.

You may see clearly and still not be able to judge distances. You need good distance judgment so you know how far you are from other cars. Many people who may see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing clearly at night. Some people see poorly in dim light. Others may have trouble with the glare of headlights.

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

Hearing

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

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

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

Alertness

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

Symptoms of fatigue may include:

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

To keep from becoming tired on a long trip:

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

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

Medications

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

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

- Mix medications, unless directed by your physician.
- Take medications prescribed for someone else.
- Mix alcohol with your medications (prescribed or over-the-counter).

Health and Emotions

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

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

Conditions Physicians Must Report

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

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

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Alcohol/Drugs and Driving Is Dangerous

Alcohol and/or drugs impair your judgment. Impaired judgment or good sense affects how you react to sounds and what you see. It is also dangerous to walk in traffic or ride a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Much of what has been said about alcohol also applies to drugs. California's drunk driving law is also a drugged driving law. It refers to "driving under the influence of alcohol **and/or** drugs." If an officer suspects that you are under the influence of drugs, the officer can legally require you to take a blood or urine test. Drivers who refuse these tests are subject to longer driver license suspensions and revocations.

The use of any drug (the law does not distinguish between prescription, over-the-counter, or illegal drugs) which impairs your ability to drive safely is illegal. Check with your physician or pharmacist and read the warning label if you are not sure that taking the medication will affect your driving. Here are some facts:

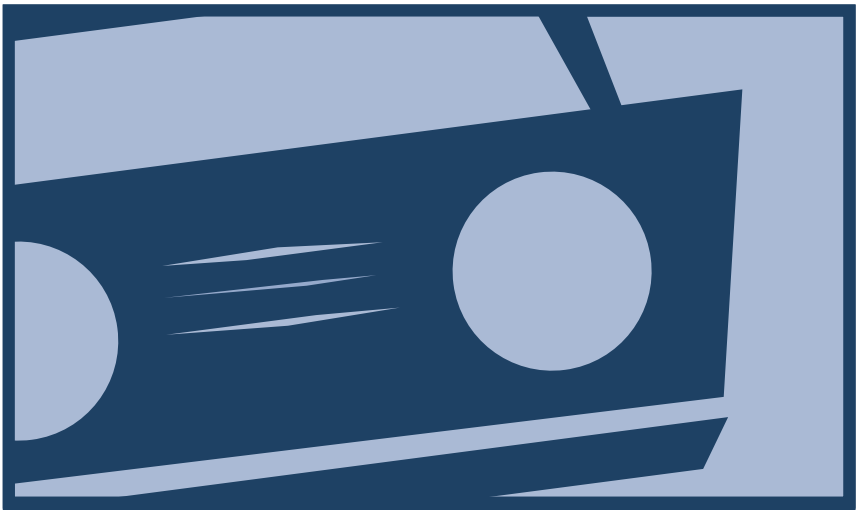
- Most drugs taken for colds, hay fever, allergy, or to calm nerves or muscles can make a person drowsy.
- Medicines taken together or used with alcohol can be dangerous. Many drugs have unexpected side effects when taken with alcohol.
- Pep pills, "uppers," and diet pills can make a driver more alert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

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

Carrying Alcohol in a Vehicle

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

A container of liquor, beer, or wine carried inside the vehicle must be full, sealed, and unopened. Otherwise, it must be kept in the trunk of the vehicle or in a place where



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

Provide law enforcement with the:

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

One call could save a life.

Report Drunk Drivers
CALL 911

CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

Get a DUI – Lose Your License!

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

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC)
Table for Male (M) / Female (F)

Number of Drinks		Body Weight in Pounds								Driving Condition
		100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	
0	M	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	Only Safe Driving Limit
	F	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
1	M	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02	Driving Skills Impaired
	F	.07	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	
2	M	.12	.10	.09	.07	.07	.06	.05	.05	
	F	.13	.11	.09	.08	.07	.07	.06	.06	
3	M	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09	.08	.07	
	F	.20	.17	.14	.12	.11	.10	.09	.08	Legally Intoxicated
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 .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.
1 drink = 1.5 oz. 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. 5% beer, or 5 oz. 12% wine.

Fewer than 5 persons out of 100 will exceed these values.

DRIVE LIKE OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT.

Every hour a pedestrian is killed or injured in California.

Slow down

Look out for others

Don't drive distracted

IT'S UP TO ALL of US

CALIFORNIA OFFICE of TRAFFIC SAFETY and CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC HEALTH

SHARE THE ROAD

CALIFORNIA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION PROJECT

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

passengers do not sit. Keeping an opened alcoholic drink in the glove compartment is specifically against the law.

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

Drivers Under 21 (Possession of Alcohol)

If you are under 21 years of age:

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

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

Drivers of All Ages

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

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limits

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

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

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

and completion of a DUI program.

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

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

Admin Per Se

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

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

If your BAC is 0.08% or higher, the peace officer may arrest you (CVC §§23152 or 23153). If the officer reasonably believes you are under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs, and you have already submitted to a Preliminary Alcohol Screening (PAS) and/or breath test, you may still be required to submit to a blood or urine test because the breath test does not detect the presence of drugs.

If you refuse to submit to the required blood and/or urine test(s), your driving privilege may be suspended because of your refusal. Even if you change your mind later, your driving privilege may be suspended for both reasons, although both actions will run concurrently.

Under 21—Zero Tolerance for Alcohol Use.

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

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

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

Court DUI Convictions

If you are convicted of DUI of either alcohol and/or drugs or both, and you have an excessive BAC level, you may be sentenced to serve up to six months in jail and pay a

fine between $390—$1,000 (plus about three times the fine in penalty assessments) the first time you are convicted. Your vehicle may be impounded and is subject to storage fees.

On the first conviction your driving privilege will be suspended for six months and you will be required to complete a DUI program, file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22), and pay all fees before your driver license can be reinstated. The length of the program may vary. If your BAC is 0.15% or higher, and you already have a record of violations for other reasons **or** you refuse to submit to a chemical test, the court may order you to complete a nine-month or longer program. If your BAC is 0.20% or higher and the court refers you to an enhanced DUI treatment program, your driver license will be suspended for 10 months. You could also be required to install an ignition interlock device (IID) on your vehicle. An IID prevents you from starting your vehicle if you have any alcohol on your breath. If anyone is injured as a result of your DUI, the suspension period is one year.

Effective July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2015, all first time and repeat DUI offenders convicted in Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento or Tulare Counties are required to install and maintain, for a specific period of time, an IID on all vehicles they own and operate and pay a $45 administrative service fee to reinstate their driving privileges (CVC §23700).

In cases involving serious injury or death, you may face civil lawsuits. All DUI convictions will remain on DMV's records for 10 years. The courts and/or the DMV may impose more stringent penalties for subsequent violations during that period.

A BAC below legal limits does not mean that you are safe to drive. Almost all drivers show impairment by alcohol at levels lower than the legal limit. The impairment you exhibit at the time you are stopped may be enough to convict you of a DUI even without a BAC measurement.

Drivers 21 and Older—DUI Programs and Restricted Driver Licenses

The completion of a DUI program is required for all DUI convictions.

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

against you may also prohibit the issuance of a restricted driver license.

NOTE: Commercial drivers are disqualified for one year and cannot obtain a restricted driver license without downgrading to a noncommercial license (see *California Commercial Driver Handbook* for more information).

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

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

Designated Driver Program

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

To participate as a designated driver, an individual:

- Should be at least 21 years of age and must possess a valid driver license.
- Must be part of a group of two or more persons and verbally identify himself or herself as the designated driver to the server.
- Must abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages for the duration of the outing.
- Must not be an otherwise impaired driver.
- Must understand that management reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time.

ADDITIONAL DRIVING LAWS/RULES

Things You Must Not Do:

- **Do not** smoke at any time when a minor is in the vehicle. You can be fined up to $100.
- **Do not** dump or abandon animals on a highway. This crime is punishable by a fine of up to $1,000, six months in jail, or both.
- **Do not** operate a cell phone without the use of a hands-free device (minors, refer to the "Minors and Cell Phones" section on page 14 for pertaining information).
- **Do not** drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device to write, send, or read text-based communications.
- **Do not** wear a headset or earplugs in **both** ears while driving.
- **Do not** drive a vehicle so loaded, either with property or people, that you cannot control it, or see ahead or to the sides of your vehicle.

- It is illegal to drive any vehicle with an unsafe, unsecured load that is a safety hazard (CVC 24002(a)). Unsecured loads (ladders, buckets, and loose items in the back of pickup trucks) can cause danger for other motorists, especially motorcycles, when they fall onto the road.
- **Do not** carry anything in or on a passenger vehicle which extends beyond the fenders on the left side or more than 6 inches beyond the fenders on the right side. Cargo extending more than 4 feet from the back of the vehicle must display a 12-inch red or fluorescent orange square flag or two red lights at night.
- **Do not** allow anyone to ride on any part of your vehicle not intended for passengers.
- **Do not** allow anyone to ride in the trunk of your vehicle. Convictions will result in penalties for both the driver and the person(s) riding in the trunk.
- **Do not** allow a person to ride in the back of a pickup or other truck, unless the vehicle is equipped with seats and the person uses both the seat and a safety belt.
- **Do not** transport animals in the back of a pickup or other truck unless the animal is properly secured; this prevents the animal from falling, jumping or being thrown from the vehicle.
- **Do not** leave a child or an animal unattended in a hot vehicle (refer to the "Unattended Children in Motor Vehicles" section on page 23 and the "Hot Weather Risks" section on page 23).
- **Do not** tow anyone who is riding a bicycle, in a wagon, on roller skates, roller blades, skis, sled, toy vehicle, skateboard, etc.
- **Do not** litter the roadside. The fine is $1,000 and you may be forced to pick up what you threw away. Littering convictions show on your driving record.
- **Do not** wear eyeglasses with temples wide enough to keep you from seeing clearly to the sides.
- **Do not** drive a vehicle equipped with a video monitor, if the monitor is visible to the driver and displays anything other than vehicle information, global mapping displays, external media player (MP3), or satellite radio information.
- **Do not** honk your horn unless it is a safety warning to avoid a collision.
- **Do not** throw any cigarette, cigar, or other flaming or glowing substance from your vehicle.
- **Do not** shoot firearms on a highway or at traffic signs.
- **Do not** block your view by putting signs or other objects on the front windshield or the back side windows. Do not hang objects on the mirror. Windshield/window stickers, etc., are permitted in these locations only:
  - A seven-inch square on either the passenger's side windshield

lower corner or the lower corner of the rear window.
  - A five-inch square on the lower corner of the driver's side window.
  - The side windows behind the driver.
  - A five-inch square located in the center uppermost portion of your windshield for an electronic toll payment device.
- **Do not** drive any motor vehicle into a designated wilderness area (CVC §38301.3).
- **Do not** drive with illegally tinted safety glass. If you have sun-sensitive skin, you may use removable sun screens during daylight travel, provided you have a letter from your physician.
- **Do not** block or hinder a funeral procession. Vehicles taking part in a funeral procession have the right-of-way, and if you interfere, obstruct, or interrupt the funeral procession, you are subject to a citation (CVC §2817). A funeral procession is led by a traffic officer. All vehicles taking part in the procession have windshield markers to identify them and have their headlights on.
- **Do not** ride, or allow a child to ride, a "pocket bike" on a public street or highway. These vehicles are not manufactured or designed for highway use, and do not meet federal safety standards.
- **Do not** operate a vehicle that has a visual or electronic product or device that obscures the reading or recognition of the license plate.
- **Do not** alter a license plate in any manner.

Things You Must Do:

- **You must** drive as far to the right as reasonably possible on narrow mountain roads. If you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead, honk your horn.
- **You must** use your headlights 30 minutes after sunset and leave them on until 30 minutes before sunrise.
- **You must** dim your lights to low beams within 500 feet of a vehicle coming toward you or within 300 feet of a vehicle you are following.
- **You must** turn on your headlights if snow, rain, fog, dust, or low visibility (1,000 feet or less) requires the use of windshield wipers.
- If you are involved in a collision, **you must** move your vehicle out of the traffic lane (unless it is disabled) when it is safe to do so. Law enforcement may tow or impound your vehicle if it is left in an unsafe area and causes safety concerns.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Financial Responsibility

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

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

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

Insurance Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

1. Your liability policy must provide bodily injury and property damage coverage which equals or exceeds the required limits stated in this section.
2. Your insurance company must file a power of attorney allowing the DMV to act as its agent for legal service in California.
3. You must insure the vehicle before you come to California. You cannot renew the out-of-state policy, once the vehicle is registered in California.

Collisions on Your Record

The DMV retains information on every collision reported to the DMV by:

- Law enforcement, unless the reporting officer states another person was at fault.

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

- You or another party involved in the collision, if any one person has over $750 in damage, or if anyone is injured or dies.

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

Collisions, Insurance, and Minors

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

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

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

Getting a Ticket

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

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

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

Evading a Peace Officer

Any person, while operating a motor vehicle, who willfully flees or attempts to evade a peace officer performing his or her duties is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year (CVC §2800.1).

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

- Imprisonment in a state prison for three, five, or seven years **or** in a county jail for not more than one year.
- A fine that is not less than $2,000 or more than $10,000.
- Both a fine and imprisonment.

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

Points on the Driver Record

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

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

You may be considered a negligent operator, when your driving record shows one of the following "point count" totals:

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

Some examples of one-point violations:

- Traffic convictions
- At-fault collisions

Some examples of two-point violations:

- Reckless driving or hit-and-run driving
- Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol/drugs
- Driving while driver license is suspended or revoked

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

Traffic Violator School Convictions

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

NOTE: When a commercial driver is cited in a noncommercial vehicle, the driver *may* be eligible to attend traffic school. Please refer to DMV's website for further information at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

Suspension or Revocation by the DMV

If you get too many negligent driver points, the DMV will place you on probation for one year (which includes a six-month suspension) or revoke your driving privilege (refer to the topics included in the "Administrative" section on pages 90-97). Your suspension or revocation order informs you of your right to a hearing.

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

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

Suspension by Judge

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

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

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

Record Confidentiality

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

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

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

Vandalism/Graffiti—All Ages

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

Speed Contests/Reckless Driving

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

- Imprisonment in a county jail or state prison for a minimum of 30 days to 6 months.
- A fine ranging from $220–$1,000, or
- Both, a fine and imprisonment (CVC §23104(a)).

Possessing Firearms

The court will:

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

Vehicle Registration Requirements

The following is a brief summary of California's vehicle registration requirements. Please visit the DMV's website to obtain detailed information at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

California Vehicles

When you purchase a new or used vehicle from a licensed California dealer, the dealer collects use tax fees to register and title the vehicle. The use tax is forwarded to the Board of Equalization.

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

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

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

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

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

Out-of-State Vehicles

Vehicles registered in another state or foreign country must be registered in California within 20 days after you become a resident or get a job (refer to page 2 for information regarding additional residency criteria).

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

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

their home state before it expires or register the vehicle in California.

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

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

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

Vehicle Theft Prevention Tips

In the United States, a vehicle is stolen an average of every 21 minutes. Vehicle theft results in costs to the victim and it increases insurance premiums. Also, vehicle thieves often use the stolen vehicles to commit other crimes.

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

Here are some tips you can use to avoid becoming the victim of vehicle theft. If you follow the suggestions below, you can minimize your chances of becoming the victim of vehicle theft.

- **Never leave**:
  - Your vehicle running and unattended, even to dash into a store.
  - The keys in the ignition.
  - Keys inside a locked garage or a hide-a-key box.
  - Valuables such as purses, laptops, etc., in plain view even if your vehicle is locked. Place them out of sight.
  - Personal identification documents, such as the ownership title or credit cards in the vehicle.
- **Always**:
  - Roll up your windows and lock your vehicle even if it is parked in front of your house.
  - Park in high-traffic, well-lighted areas whenever possible.
  - Immediately report a stolen vehicle to the police.
- **Suggestions**:
  - Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes.
  - Think about purchasing a vehicle theft tracking/security system, especially if you own one of the frequently-stolen model vehicles.
  - When you must leave your key

with a valet, attendant, or mechanic, only leave the ignition key.

– Copy your license plate and vehicle information on a card, and keep that information with you and not in the car. The police will need this information, if your vehicle is stolen.

DRIVER LICENSE FAST FACTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Available Online

- FFDL 03 *Driver License Secondary Review Referral Process*
- FFDL 05 *Requirements for a California Driver License*
- FFDL 05A *Documents Required to Apply for a Driver License*
- FFDL 06 *Requirements for a California Identification Card*
- FFDL 07 *How to Prepare and Apply for a California Driver License*
- FFDL 08 *Social Security Number*
- FFDL 08A *Social Security Number Supplemental Requirements*
- FFDL 10 *Potentially Unsafe Driver*
- FFDL 14 *Vision Standards*
- FFDL 15 *Retention of Driver Record Information*
- FFDL 16 *Vehicle Collisions!*
- FFDL 19 *Provisional Licensing*
- FFDL 22 *DMV's Driving Test*
- FFDL 24 *Identity Theft*
- FFDL 25 *Identity Fraud*
- FFDL 26 *Administrative Hearings*
- FFDL 27 *DMV's Reexamination Process*
- FFDL 28 *Driver Distractions*
- FFDL 29 *Federal Hazardous Materials Requirements*
- FFDL 31 *Ignition Interlock Devices*
- FFDL 32 *Limited Term for Legal Presence*
- FFDL 33 *Selecting a Driving School*
- FFDL 34 *Fast Facts on Organ & Tissue Donation*
- FFDL 35 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension or Revocation: Drivers Age 21 and Older*
- FFDL 36 *Driving Under the Influence - Immediate Driver License Suspension: Drivers Under Age 21*
- FFDL 37 *Sharing the Road*
- FFDL 40 *Diabetes and Driving*
- FFDL 41 *Helping Drivers Maintain Their Driving Independence*
- FFDL 42 *Firefighter Endorsement Training Requirements*
- FFDL 43 *Are You a Veteran?*
- FFDL 44 *Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Pilot Program*
- *Senior Guide for Safe Driving* (DL 625)
- *California Parent-Teen Training Guide* (DL 603)
- *Preparing for Your Supplemental Driving Performance Evaluation* (DL 956)

Available in Print Only

- *Driving Test Criteria* (DL 955)

Three Feet for Safety Act

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

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

PRACTICE NOW!
THIS ACT BECOMES LAW SEPT. 2014

www.dmv.ca.gov

Learn about bicycle safety & other areas of interest

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KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE #1

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

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

NOTES

KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE #2

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

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

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

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