

- What a freeway is and which road users can and cannot use them
- Safe practices to follow when entering, driving along or exiting a freeway
- What provincial freeway HOV lanes are and who can use them

Dealing with particular situations

Aggressive driving and road rage

Aggressive-driving behaviours, such as tailgating, speeding, failing to yield the right-of-way and cutting in front of someone too closely, may cause other drivers to become frustrated and angry and lead to a road-rage conflict between drivers. An angry driver may attempt dangerous retaliatory action. Avoid becoming angry on the road by following these tips:

- Know the warning signs of stress and combat them by getting fresh air, breathing deeply and slowly, and listening to relaxing music.
- Make a conscious decision not to take your problems with you when driving.
- If you are on a long trip, take a break from driving every few hours.
- Don't compete with another driver, or retaliate for what you believe to be inconsiderate behaviour.
- If someone else's driving annoys you, don't try to "educate" the person. Leave traffic enforcement to the police.
- Don't take other drivers' mistakes or behaviours personally.
- Avoid honking your horn at other drivers, unless absolutely necessary. A light tap on the horn is usually sufficient.

Remember that if you drive responsibly and courteously, you are less likely to spark a road rage situation.

- Plan your route in advance. Some of the most erratic and inconsiderate driving occurs when a driver is lost.
- Drive in a courteous and considerate manner.
- Yield the right-of-way when it is courteous to do so.
- Be polite and let other drivers in front of you when they are signalling that they would like to do so.

- If you make a mistake while driving, indicate that you are sorry. An apology can greatly reduce the risk of conflict.
- Don't return aggression. Avoid eye contact and do not gesture back. Keep away from erratic drivers.

If you are in a situation in which you feel threatened by another driver, do the following:

- Stay in your vehicle and lock the doors.
- If you have a cell phone, call police.
- Use your horn and signals to attract attention.
- If you believe you are being followed, do not drive home. Drive to a police station or a busy public place.

Street racing

Street racing is one of the most serious and reckless forms of aggressive driving. It shows a callous disregard for other drivers and road users, and it puts everyone on the road at serious risk of injury or death. Street racers run the risk of being charged under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Drowsy driving

Drowsiness has been identified as a causal factor in a growing number of collisions resulting in injury and fatality. Tired drivers can be as impaired as drunk drivers. They have a slower reaction time and are less alert.

Studies have shown that collisions involving drowsiness tend to occur during late night/early morning hours (between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.) or late afternoon (between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.). Studies also indicate that shift workers, people with undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorders, and commercial-vehicle operators, are at greater risk for such collisions.

Always avoid driving when you are feeling drowsy. Scientific research confirms that you can fall asleep without actually being aware of it. Here are eight important warning signs that your drowsiness is serious enough to place you at risk:

- You have difficulty keeping your eyes open.

- Your head keeps tilting forward despite your efforts to keep your eyes on the road.
- Your mind keeps wandering and you can't seem to concentrate.
- You yawn frequently.
- You can't remember details about the last few kilometres you have travelled.
- You are missing traffic lights and signals.
- Your vehicle drifts into the next lane and you have to jerk it back into your lane.
- You have drifted off the road and narrowly avoided a crash.

If you have one of these symptoms, you may be in danger of falling asleep. Pull off the road and park your vehicle in a safe, secure place. Use well-lit rest stops or truck stops on busy roads. Lock your doors, roll up your windows and take a nap.

Stimulants are never a substitute for sleep. Drinks containing caffeine can help you feel more alert but, if you are sleep deprived, the effects wear off quickly. The same is true of turning up the volume of your radio or CD player and opening the window. You cannot trick your body into staying awake; you need to sleep. Remember, the only safe driver is a well-rested, alert driver.

Workers on the road

Be extra careful when driving through construction zones and areas where people are working on or near the road.

When approaching a construction zone, proceed with caution and obey all warning signs, people and/or devices that are directing traffic through the area. Often, lower speed limits are posted to increase worker safety and reflect increased road hazards, such as construction vehicles in the area, uneven or gravel surfaces, narrowed lanes and so on. In the construction zone, drive carefully and adjust your driving to suit the conditions, do not change lanes, be ready for sudden stops and watch for workers and related construction vehicles and equipment on the road.

Other types of workers and vehicles may also be present on the road and pose a hazard, such as roadside assistance and disabled vehicles, surveyors, road maintenance or utility workers. Always slow down and pass with caution to prevent a collision. If safe to do so, move over a lane to increase the space between your vehicle and the hazard.

Traffic-control workers direct vehicle traffic in work zones and prevent conflicts between construction activity and traffic. Whether you are driving during the day or at night, watch for traffic-control people and follow their instructions.

Treat people working on roads with respect, and be patient if traffic is delayed. Sometimes traffic in one direction must wait while vehicles from the other direction pass through a detour. If your lane is blocked and no one is directing traffic, yield to the driver coming from the opposite direction. When the way is clear, move slowly and carefully around the obstacle.

Recent changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* have resulted in doubled fines for speeding in a construction zone when workers are present. It is also an offence to disobey STOP or SLOW signs displayed by a traffic-control person or firefighter.

Animals on the road

Crashes involving animals (mainly moose and deer) are a growing problem. Motor vehicle/wild animal collisions increased from 8,964 in 1999 to 12,791 collisions in 2008. This represents an increase of 43 per cent over a 10-year period. Many of these collisions go unreported.

You may encounter domestic, farm or wild animals on the road anywhere in Ontario. Scan the road ahead from shoulder to shoulder. If you see an animal on or near the road, slow down and pass carefully as they may suddenly bolt onto the road. Many areas of the province have animal crossing signs which warn drivers of the danger of large animals (such as moose, deer or cattle) crossing the road. Be cautious when you see these signs, especially during dusk-to-dawn hours when wild animals are most active.

To reduce your chances of hitting an animal:

- Reduce speed in darkness, rain and fog. These conditions can reduce your ability to see an animal on or near the road.
- Travel at a safe speed and stay alert. Driver inattention and speed are common factors in animal-vehicle crashes.
- Watch for shining eyes at the roadside. If you do see shining eyes, slow down and be ready to stop.
- Keep your windshield clean and headlights properly adjusted.

- Use high beams whenever possible and safe to do so, and scan both sides of the road ahead.

If you see an animal:

- Slow down and sound your horn.
- Be alert for other animals that may be with the one you've seen.
- Don't try to drive around the animal. Animal movements are unpredictable.
- If you wish to watch an animal, find a safe place to pull completely off the road and park first. Do not park on the shoulder of the road, as other drivers may be distracted by the animal and hit your vehicle.
- Stay in your vehicle; getting out increases your chance of being hit by another vehicle.
- If you hit a deer or moose, report it to the local police service or the Ministry of Natural Resources. Do not try to move an injured animal.

Distracted driving

Driving is a job that requires your full attention every time you get behind the wheel, even if your vehicle has driver-assistance features. Any secondary activity will detract from your ability to drive properly and safely. You must reduce distractions and focus on your driving.

Ontario's distracted driving laws apply to the use of hand-held communication/entertainment devices and certain display screens.

While you are driving, including when you are stopped in traffic or at a red light, **it is illegal to:**

- use a phone or other hand-held wireless communication device to text or dial, except to call 911 in an emergency
- use a hand-held electronic entertainment device, such as a tablet or portable gaming console
- view display screens unrelated to driving, such as watching a video
- program a GPS device, except by voice commands

You are allowed to use hands-free wireless communications devices with an earpiece, lapel button or Bluetooth. You can view GPS display screens as long as they are built into your vehicle's dashboard or securely mounted.

Other actions such as eating, drinking, grooming, smoking, reading and reaching for objects are not part of Ontario's distracted driving law. However, you can still be charged with careless or dangerous driving.

Learn more about distracted driving (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/distracted-driving>) .

Careless driving

You could face charges for careless driving (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h08#BK215>) if you endanger other people because of any kind of distraction. This includes distraction caused by both hand-held (e.g., phone) or hands-free (e.g., Bluetooth) devices.

You could even be charged with dangerous driving (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-43.html#h-121308>) – a criminal offence that carries heavier penalties, including long jail terms.

Tips to avoid distracted driving

Use any of these tips to avoid distracted driving and its penalties:

- turn off your phone or switch it to silent mode before you get in the car
 - put it in the glove compartment (lock it, if you have to) or in a bag on the back seat
- before you leave the house, record an outgoing message that tells callers you're driving and you'll get back to them when you're off the road
 - some apps can block incoming calls and texts, or send automatic replies to people trying to call or text you
- ask a passenger to take a call or respond to a text for you
 - if you must respond, or have to make a call or send a text, carefully pull over to a safe area
- silence notifications that tempt you to check your phone

How dangerous is distracted driving?

About 100 people are killed and 16,000 are injured by distracted drivers every year in Ontario. About one in four of those deaths are vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Research shows that young people 16-25 are more likely to drive distracted than any age group and are the most likely to be killed or injured in a distracted driving collision.

- Texting or browsing on your phone takes your eyes off the road and increases your risk of crashing by 10 times. In fact, a recent study found that drivers who were texting or changing music on their phones traveled 28 metres further (nearly half a hockey rink) before responding to a hazard than drivers who were paying attention. It can be a matter of life and death for a child who runs out on the street unexpectedly, or a family crossing at a crosswalk. For every 10-year increase in the driver's age, drivers were 44% less likely to text, 38% less likely to use a handheld phone, and 28% less likely to use a hands-free phone.

Emergency vehicles

Emergency vehicles – police, fire, ambulance and special public-utility vehicles – are easily identified through their use of flashing red or blue lights, a siren or bell, or alternating flashes of white light from their headlamp high beams. Also, be aware that police, fire and ambulance services use many different types of vehicles, such as bicycles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, buses and trucks.

Reacting to an approaching emergency vehicle

When an emergency vehicle is approaching your vehicle from any direction with its flashing red or red and blue lights, or siren or bell sounding, you are required to bring your vehicle to an immediate stop.

When bringing your vehicle to a stop, you are required to bring your vehicle as near as is practical to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway. When on a one-way road or divided highway having more than two lanes of traffic, move to the closest curb or edge of the roadway. Your vehicle should be parallel to the roadway and clear of any intersections, including highway on/off ramps. Do not move onto or stop on the shoulder of the roadway, as emergency vehicles may be travelling along it.

Use extreme caution when stopping your vehicle because other drivers may not yet be aware of or are already reacting to the approaching emergency vehicle. Look to the front, both sides and toward the rear of your vehicle, signal your intention to pull over well in advance and begin to adjust your vehicle's speed to merge with any traffic to the side you are pulling to. Once you have moved your vehicle to the side, brake gradually as required and bring your vehicle to a safe stop. Avoid any sudden changes in direction or excessive braking and be aware of any vehicles approaching fast to the rear of your vehicle.

If you are in an intersection and preparing to make a turn when an emergency vehicle is approaching, you should abandon the turn and clear the intersection by proceeding straight when safe to do so, then pull to the right and stop. This will clear the intersection and minimize the possibility of a collision with the emergency vehicle should it be passing you on the side you intended to turn towards.

When the emergency vehicle has passed, check to make sure the way is clear and signal before merging back into traffic. Remain vigilant for additional emergency vehicles, and remember it is illegal to follow within 150 metres of a fire vehicle responding to an alarm.

Note: Some firefighters and volunteer medical responders may display a flashing green light when using their own vehicles to respond to a fire or medical emergency. Please yield the right-of-way to help them respond to an emergency call quickly and safely.

Police or other enforcement officers may require you to pull over and bring your vehicle to an immediate stop. Typically, the officer may signal this requirement by driving their vehicle with its emergency lights flashing and/or siren on behind your vehicle or by using hand gestures from the side of the road. When stopping your vehicle, follow the previous procedures, except that you should bring your vehicle to a stop outside of traffic lanes and onto the shoulder of the roadway where possible, or turn and stop on a side street with less traffic if in the immediate vicinity. If the officer gives direction as to where to stop, follow the officer's directions.

Stay alert

When you see an approaching emergency vehicle with its lights or siren on, prepare to clear the way.

- React quickly but calmly. Don't slam on the brakes or pull over suddenly. Use your signals to alert other drivers you intend to pull over.

- Check your rearview mirrors. Look in front and on both sides of your vehicle. Allow other vehicles to also pull over. Pull to the right and gradually come to a stop.
- Wait for the emergency vehicle to pass and watch for other emergency vehicles that may be responding to the same call. Check to make sure the way is clear and signal before merging back into traffic.
- Don't drive on or block the shoulder on freeways. Emergency vehicles will use the shoulder of the road if all lanes are blocked.

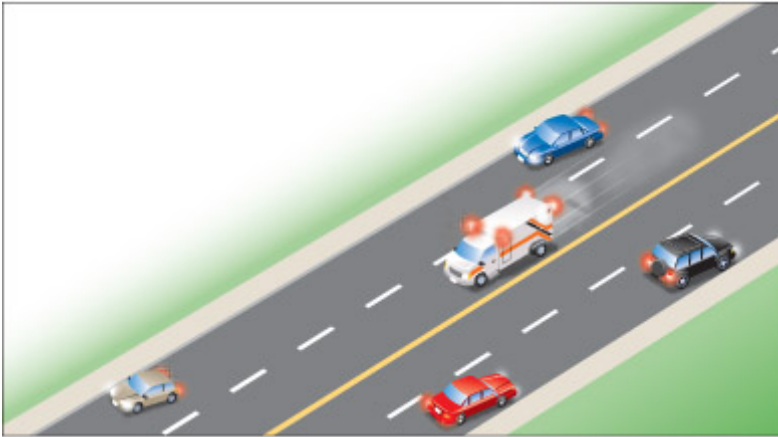


Diagram 2-56

Reacting to a stopped emergency vehicle or tow truck



Diagram 2-57

When approaching any emergency vehicle that is stopped with its red, or red and blue, lights flashing or a tow truck with its amber lights flashing in the same direction of your travel, you are required to reduce the speed of your vehicle and proceed with caution. When reducing your speed, you are required to assess the speed of the surrounding traffic and the condition of the roadway (such as fog, rain, snow). To ensure safety, brake

early and gradually to allow surrounding traffic to better adjust to a reduced speed and to ensure you have full control of your vehicle when braking.

If your vehicle has a manual transmission, it is recommended that you use your brakes, versus shifting down to a lower gear, in order to activate your rear brake lights and indicate to other drivers that you are slowing down.

When the roadway has two or more lanes of traffic in the same direction of your travel, you are required to move into a lane away from the emergency vehicle or tow truck, if safe to do so, in addition to reducing the speed of your vehicle and proceeding with caution. Similar to the procedures noted above, when slowing down and moving over, look in front and on both sides of your vehicle, and check your rearview mirrors, to determine the speed of the traffic around you and condition of the roadway. Proceed to decrease your speed similar to surrounding traffic speed, use your turn signal prior to making the lane change, and double check your rearview mirrors and shoulder check your blind spots to ensure no other vehicles are moving into or approaching that lane too fast. When safe to do so, change lanes well in advance of an emergency vehicle or a stopped tow truck with its flashing amber lights. Once in the lane, brake gradually and continue to reduce the speed of your vehicle when safe to do so. Be aware of any vehicles approaching fast to the rear of your vehicle.

Tips to remember

- Stay alert. Avoid distractions. Keep the noise level down in your vehicle.
- Remain calm, and do not make sudden lane changes or brake excessively.
- Before changing direction or speed, consider road conditions, check surrounding traffic, use your mirrors, look to blind spots, and signal and brake early.
- Keep roadway shoulders, intersections and highway ramps clear for emergency-vehicle use.
- If your vehicle is being pulled over, in this instance, bring it to a safe stop on the shoulder of the roadway, away from traffic, following any directions from the officer.

Failing to respond to an emergency vehicle

Take emergency flashing lights and sirens seriously. Proceed with caution, clear the way and bring your vehicle to a stop, where required. It's the law. If you don't stop, you can be