

Chapter 4: Traffic Laws



Did you know that. . . ?

- In 1904, the speed limit in Saginaw was 8 mph for cars and 10 mph for bicycles.
- In 1922, the Detroit Police Department began keeping traffic crash statistics.
- In 1945, the first chemical test to identify suspected drunken drivers was administered by the Detroit Police Department.

Distracted driving



The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that there are at least 3,400 deaths annually from distracted-driving crashes in which drivers lost focus on the safe control of their vehicles due to manual, visual or cognitive distractions.

While this statistic is significant, it may understate the size of the problem since identifying the distraction and its role in a crash can be difficult.

Most drivers understand the responsibility of getting behind the wheel and avoiding risky behaviors. Distracted drivers who drive "in a careless or negligent manner likely to endanger any person or property" or "in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property" are subject to prosecution under Michigan law.

Using a hand-held phone while driving is illegal in Michigan and this includes reading, texting, or making or answering a call. Exceptions are in place for reporting crashes, crimes or other emergencies. Drivers face a fine of \$100 for a first offense and \$250 for subsequent violations.

Anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off your driving can be a big problem. Studies show that your brain cannot give full attention to more than one activity at a time. Even seemingly simple tasks such as tuning a radio can be risky, especially in bad weather or heavy traffic. In the estimated quarter of a second it takes the brain to shift attention between two tasks, a car moving at 65 mph covers 24 feet.

Here are some ways you can minimize in-vehicle distractions.

Before driving:

- Designate a front-seat passenger to serve as a co-pilot to help with maps or navigation systems. If you are driving alone, plot out destination routes in advance.
- Be familiar with equipment in the vehicle. Practice performing basic functions such as adjusting the temperature or radio settings without taking your eyes off the road.

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- Preprogram your radio stations for easy access and preselect a play-list on your portable device.
- Ensure all children are comfortable and properly buckled up. Teach them the importance of good behavior and remaining buckled up while in a vehicle. Don't underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to them in the car.
- Complete any personal grooming before you start driving or after you reach your destination.

While driving:

- Make driving your priority. A momentary distraction can lead to a crash. Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Avoid using mobile phones, texting devices, and navigation and other electronic systems.
- If you must use a mobile phone, make your call while your vehicle is safely parked. Avoid calling others who are driving.
- Do not take notes, read or look up phone numbers.
- Avoid involved, stressful or confrontational conversations.
- If you must eat, choose easy-to-handle items and make sure drinks are secured in cup holders.
- Take a break if you find yourself "lost in thought" or tired.

Cell phone use prohibited for all drivers - including teens

Michigan's general cell phone law (MCL 257.602b) prohibits *all drivers* from using a cell phone while driving. This means **you cannot hold or use a mobile electronic device**, such as a cell phone or tablet, **while operating a motor vehicle** on a public road, street, highway, or other public venue.

Under this state law, you cannot do the following. This includes but is not limited to:

- Sending or receiving a *telephone call*.

- Sending, receiving, or reading a *text message*.
- Viewing, recording, or transmitting a *video*.
- Accessing, reading, or posting to a *social networking site*.

Emergency exceptions: Drivers (**including all teens**) are allowed to use a mobile device while driving to **text 9-1-1 or call a law enforcement agency, health-care provider, fire department, or other emergency service to report:**

- A medical emergency, traffic crash, serious road hazard, fire, or a situation involving hazardous materials.
- Someone driving in a reckless or unsafe manner, or who appears to be driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- A crime being committed.

Non-emergency exceptions: Kelsey's Law (MCL 257.602c) prohibits **teens with a GDL 1 or GDL 2 from making or receiving non-emergency phone calls**. Under the general cell phone law, teens with a GDL 3 and all other drivers are allowed to use a mobile device within the following parameters:

- A global positioning system (GPS) or navigation feature *as long as information is not entered by hand*.
- A device in a voice-operated or hands-free mode *as long as you do not continue to use your hands to operate it after completing either of the following functions:*
 - Pressing, tapping, or swiping a single button to activate or deactivate a function of the device or to select a name or phone number.
 - Accessing the permanently installed user interfaces of the device that are integrated into the motor vehicle's electronic systems.
- A device, such as a 'dash cam,' used specifically to continuously record or broadcast video inside or outside of the motor vehicle.
- A device that is placed in a mount and used in a manner already exempted.

What Every Driver Must Know

Buckle up, it's the law!

Click It or Ticket: Under Michigan's seat belt and child-safety restraint laws, a law enforcement officer may stop a vehicle if the driver and occupants are not properly buckled up.

Michigan law requires:

- All front seat passengers to be buckled up (including the driver).
- All passengers younger than age 16 to be buckled up, in all seating positions
- All children younger than age 8 or under 4 feet, 9 inches tall to be in an approved child-safety seat or booster seat in all seating positions.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that seat belts save more than 13,000 lives each year and that buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

- Be responsible – make sure all passengers are properly buckled up.
- Even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags, they are not a substitute for wearing a seat belt.
- Everyone in the vehicle will be safer when seat belts are worn correctly – shoulder belt across the middle of the chest away from the neck, with the lap belt worn low across the hips below the stomach.
- Drivers exempt from using a seat belt because of a medical condition must carry a doctor's statement.

Protecting children and teens

Since the Michigan Child Passenger Protection Law was enacted, use of child restraints and safety belts has increased, while deaths and injuries have decreased.

However, too many people still use child-restraint devices improperly. Make certain both the child-safety restraint and your child are properly buckled up before you drive.

Michigan's child passenger safety law mandates that:

- Children are to be properly buckled up in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall. Children must ride in a safety seat until they reach the age requirement or the height requirement, whichever comes first. It is suggested that parents or guardians consider the height requirement rather than the age requirement as a seat belt may not fit a smaller child correctly. Children must be properly secured in the child-restraint system in accordance with the child-restraint and vehicle manufacturer's instructions and federal safety standards.
- Removing a child from a car seat to nurse while the vehicle is moving is prohibited.
- Children younger than age 4 must be positioned in a rear seat if the vehicle is equipped with a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under age 4, the child may be positioned in the child-restraint system in the front seat.
- A child in a rear-facing child-restraint system may only be placed in the front seat if the front passenger air bag is deactivated.
- Anyone under 18 years old is prohibited from riding in the open bed of a pickup truck traveling more than 15 mph. The law allows exceptions for vehicles used by farmers, construction workers, the military, participants in parades and authorized emergency and rescue personnel.

Never hold a child on your lap or buckle a child with another passenger into one seat belt. Always insist children buckle their seat belts before starting the engine.

Assistance with child-safety seat installation is available at many community agencies, such as local public health departments. To find a child passenger safety technician near you visit cert.safekids.org and select Find a Tech.

Avoid buying secondhand seats as they may not meet federal safety standards, may not work properly, may have missing parts or instructions and there is no way of knowing whether the safety

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seat has been involved in a crash. Any safety seat involved in a crash should always be replaced. Furthermore, if there is a recall, you may not receive notification.

Children left unattended in vehicles

Under Michigan law, it is illegal to leave children younger than 6 years old unattended in a vehicle if the amount of time or circumstances in which they are left poses an unreasonable risk of harm or injury. Parents or guardians who leave their children in a vehicle under the supervision of someone age 13 or older who is not legally incapacitated are not in violation of the law.

It is **never** safe to leave children or pets alone in a vehicle. Teach children that vehicles are not play areas, keep your vehicle locked when not in use, and make sure children do not have access to keys.

Air bags

Air bags are designed to provide vehicle occupants with extra protection in a crash. Depending on the make and model, today's vehicles may have air bags in a variety of locations, including the steering wheel, dashboard, roof columns and door panels. Sensors within the vehicle determine when an air bag will deploy based on the type and severity of the crash. For the best protection, always wear a seat belt, even in vehicles equipped with air bags. Seat belts remain the best protection in rollover, side impact and rear-end crashes.

- The front passenger air bag must be deactivated if a child in a rear-facing child-restraint system is placed in the front seat.
- Parents or guardians are encouraged to seat all children ages 12 and younger in the rear seat of the vehicle to avoid potential injury from an air bag in the event of a crash.
- It is recommended that drivers sit with at least 10 inches of space between the center of their breastbone and the center of the steering wheel.
- If you are pregnant, it is recommended that you

wear your seat belt with the lap portion of the belt correctly positioned over the hips (not the stomach) and the shoulder portion across the chest. Sit as far back as possible from the air bag.

Speed limits

Michigan's Basic Speed Law means you must drive at a "careful and prudent" speed in all driving conditions. Drive at a speed that always allows you to stop within the clear distance ahead. This speed is never faster than the posted speed limit. Depending on conditions, it may be slower than the posted speed limit.

Anticipate trouble ahead. Be ready to stop safely.



Watch for and obey regulatory speed signs. The following summarizes some of the standard speed limits defined under the Michigan Vehicle Code.

- 15 mph – In mobile home parks and some municipal parks.
- 25 mph – In platted subdivisions (showing boundaries, streets, easements and other features of surveyed lots) and condominium complexes. Watch for signs when driving through business districts, county, state and federal parks, on roads adjacent to parks and playgrounds, and in school and hospital zones as posted speed limits vary.
- 45 mph – In a work zone if posted. If a work zone is not posted for 45 mph, then the speed limit is the normal speed limit for that area.
- 55 mph – Unless otherwise posted, on all streets that are not designated freeways and on all highways.
- 70 mph maximum/55 mph minimum – On all freeways unless posted otherwise. School buses and trucks are restricted to 65 mph. On freeways with speed limits less than 70 mph, school buses and trucks are restricted to 55 mph.

Construction zones

Warning signs in construction, maintenance or other designated work areas are diamond-shaped with black lettering on an orange or yellow background.

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A combination of signs, signals, lighting devices, markings, barricades, routing and hand-signaling devices may be used around road construction, utility work, and maintenance and surveying operations.

Construction and maintenance signs may mean part of a lane, an entire lane or the whole road is blocked. These signs are also used when work is being done adjacent to the roadway, on shoulders or in ditches.

Construction zones can be in place for a short period of time, or last one or more construction seasons. Drivers are made aware of such zones by signs posted in advance.

Watch for warning sign messages and obey them as directed. Drive defensively to avoid problems. Be patient and everyone will travel through the construction zone safely. Look carefully for construction workers or moving equipment.

Construction workers also have the authority to direct traffic in work zones and their directions should be followed even if they conflict with an existing traffic control device.

When going through a designated work area, pay attention to the posted speed limits. For most construction, maintenance or surveying activities, the speed limit is 45 mph unless posted differently. Work zones may limit speeds to 45 mph when workers are present, yet allow traffic to return to the normally posted speed when workers are absent. This allows traffic to move at full speed when safe to do so while requiring motorists to watch for workers and slow down when construction is active in a work zone.

Fines are doubled for all moving violations in work zones. In addition, motorists caught speeding in construction zones face increased points on their driving records.

Under the law, you will be assessed:

- Three points for speeding 10 mph or less over the posted limit.
- Four points for speeding more than 10 mph but not more than 15 mph over the limit.

- Five points for speeding more than 15 mph over the limit.

If you cause the injury or death to any person in a work zone, you may face fines of up to \$7,500, and imprisonment of up to 15 years.

Merging in a construction zone

One topic that raises a lot of questions for Michigan drivers is merging in a construction zone. When two or more traffic lanes merge into one in a construction zone, there will be white-and-orange barrels and signs marking the merging lane. Drivers should follow the directions on the signs, instructing them when and how to merge.

Different construction projects may use different merging strategies, depending on the type of project and the amount of traffic. Traffic patterns in the work zone may change as the construction progresses. Pay attention not only to the barrels, signals and lane markings but to any construction workers using signs or hand signals to direct the flow of traffic.

Maintenance vehicles

Michigan law allows state and local road agencies to equip their maintenance vehicles with flashing or oscillating green lights in addition to the traditional amber lights. The green lights will only be activated when road work is taking place. Private contractors are not allowed to display green lights on their vehicles.



Motorists should know that when they see flashing green lights on a local or state maintenance vehicle to slow down and drive with caution.

Green was chosen because the human eye is most sensitive to the green wavelength. This means green lights appear brighter and can be seen from farther away than other colored lights. This makes them ideal for enhanced visibility in inclement conditions such as in snow storms and clouds of road dust.

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Emergency vehicles

Yield the right of way to emergency vehicles approaching from any direction with their red and blue lights flashing, rotating or oscillating, and to stopped emergency vehicles with their red, blue or amber lights flashing, rotating or oscillating.

An authorized emergency vehicle includes:

- Ambulances, fire department and police vehicles, privately owned vehicles of volunteer or paid fire fighters if authorized by the chief of an organized fire department, privately owned vehicles of volunteer or paid members of a life-support agency.
- A vehicle owned and operated by a federally recognized, nonprofit, charitable organization that is used exclusively for assistance during an emergency.
- Road service vehicles, such as tow trucks or state-owned courtesy service vehicles, with a flashing, rotating or oscillating red or amber light, that are clearly marked and readily recognizable as a vehicle used to assist disabled vehicles.

When you see a stopped emergency vehicle:

- The law requires you to slow down to 10 mph below the posted speed limit and move over a lane if traffic and conditions allow. If you can't move over, proceed with caution, keeping as much space as possible between you and the stopped emergency vehicle.

Failure to obey the law carries the following penalties:

- Involving authorized emergency vehicles: A civil infraction, subject to two points and a \$400 fine.
- Involving other authorized vehicles, such as solid waste haulers, utility service vehicles and road maintenance vehicles: A misdemeanor.

- You may be charged with a felony if you fail to yield or move over for a stopped emergency vehicle and injure or kill emergency personnel.

When an approaching emergency vehicle has its red and blue lights on and its siren sounding:

- Pull over to the edge of the roadway or highway, clear of intersections and stop.
- Remain there until the emergency vehicle has passed. Stay alert – more than one emergency vehicle may be responding to the call.
- Keep a foot on the brake so the brake lights let emergency vehicle drivers know you have stopped.
- Stay at least 500 feet behind any moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights and sounding a siren.
- Never pass a moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights unless directed to do so by the emergency vehicle driver or a law enforcement officer.

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In 1925, the speed limit for school buses on highways was set at 25 mph. In certain situations, traffic was required to halt or slow to 15 mph when a bus was stopped to load or unload students.
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School buses

Use extra care around buses and in school zones. Children may dart into the street or out from around parked vehicles. Stop at least 20 feet from a school bus with its red overhead lights flashing; it is picking up or dropping off passengers. It is not necessary to stop for a school bus stopped on the other side of a highway divided by a barrier such as a concrete or grass median, island or other structures that separate the flow of traffic. See Figure 4.1.

Fines for failing to stop for a school bus are double what would normally be assessed for a moving violation. Increased fines and imprisonment may result for violations resulting in injury or death.

What Every Driver Must Know

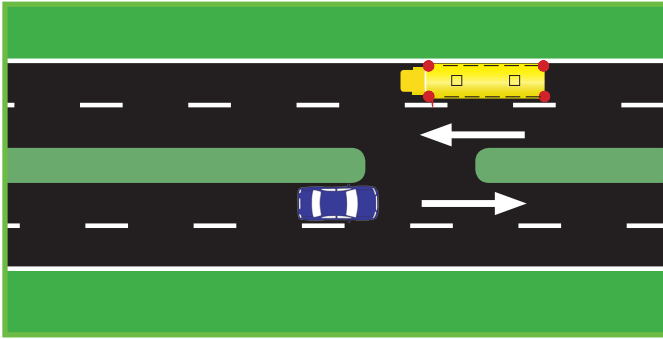
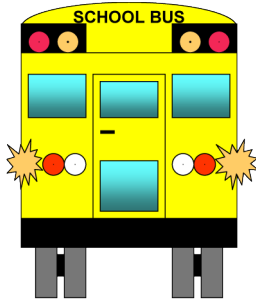


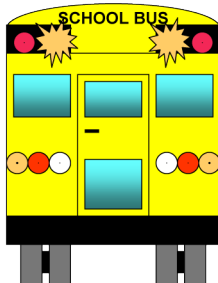
Figure 4.1. Because these roads are divided by a barrier, the blue car does not need to stop even though the school bus has its red overhead lights flashing. Vehicles on the same side of the road as the school bus are required to stop.

School bus signals

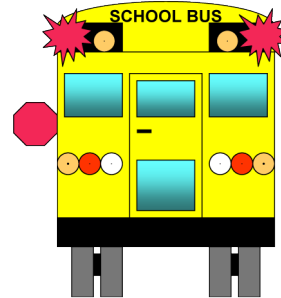
When the YELLOW hazard lights are flashing, proceed with caution.



When the YELLOW overhead lights are flashing, be prepared to stop.



When the RED overhead lights are flashing, stop at least 20 feet from the school bus. Remain stopped until the flashing red lights are turned off or the bus resumes its travels.



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The National Conference to Develop Minimum Standards made a recommendation in 1939 to paint school buses "national school bus yellow." In 1951, Michigan passed the School Bus Color Law, requiring that all new buses be painted National School Bus Chrome Yellow for greater uniformity and visibility.
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Right of way

Many different traffic situations require you to yield the right of way to other vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

Right of way when turning

You must yield to other vehicles when:

- Making a right turn, including at a red light.
- Making a left turn, whether you are turning left out of your driveway or from an alley, or completing a left turn on a green light in an intersection.
- Making a left turn on a red light (See Figures 4.2 and 4.3)

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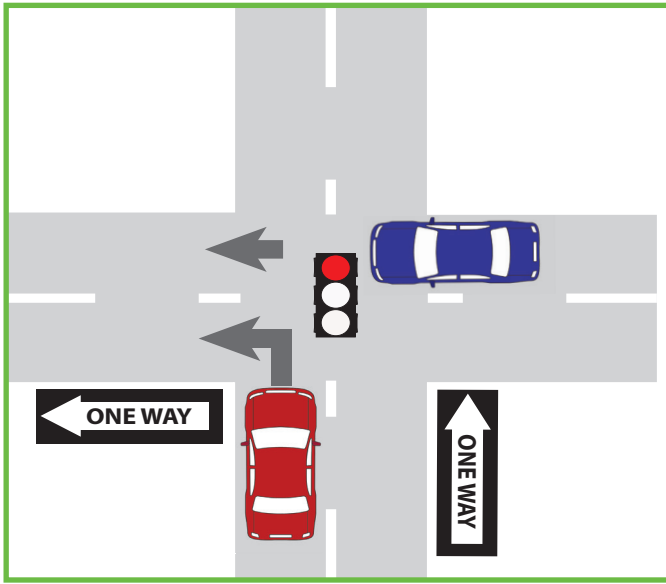


Figure 4.2. When making a left turn on red from a one-way street onto another one-way street, you must first come to a complete stop and check for traffic approaching from the right before turning.

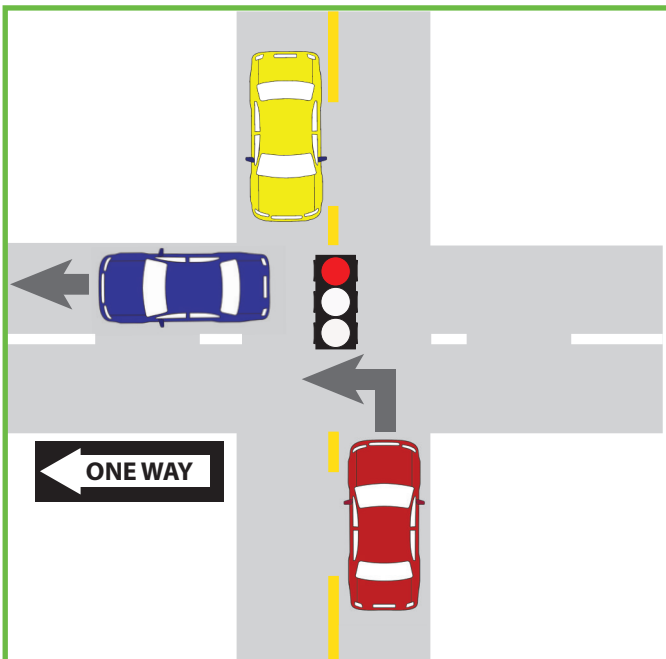


Figure 4.3. When turning left from a two-way street onto a one-way street at a red light, you must come to a full stop, scan for vehicles approaching from the right, and yield the right of way to any vehicles opposite you that are turning right at the intersection.

Right of way at intersections

You must yield to other vehicles when:

- You are approaching or stopped at an intersection and the light has just turned green. If vehicles are still in the intersection when the light changes, you must yield to them before proceeding.
- You are making a left turn at an intersection. When the light is green, you may turn once all oncoming traffic has cleared. If you are still in the intersection when the light turns red, complete your turn as quickly and safely as possible.
- The intersection has a stop sign or a flashing red signal. You must come to a complete stop and check for traffic before proceeding. If there are no traffic control devices, stop at the stop line or crosswalk. If there is no stop line or crosswalk, stop at a point that allows you to see all approaching traffic without having to pull into the intersection.
- You reach a four-way stop intersection with a stop sign at each corner of the intersection. The driver who arrived at the intersection and stopped first has the right of way through the intersection. If two or more vehicles reached the intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left should yield to the vehicle on its right.
- You reach an intersection with a malfunctioning traffic signal. Come to a complete stop and yield to vehicles already at the intersection. Yield to the vehicle on your right if you both reach the intersection at the same time.
- You reach an intersection with a flashing yellow arrow. Yield to traffic before completing your turn.
- At a T-intersection without any signals or signs, yield the right of way to vehicles on the through road.

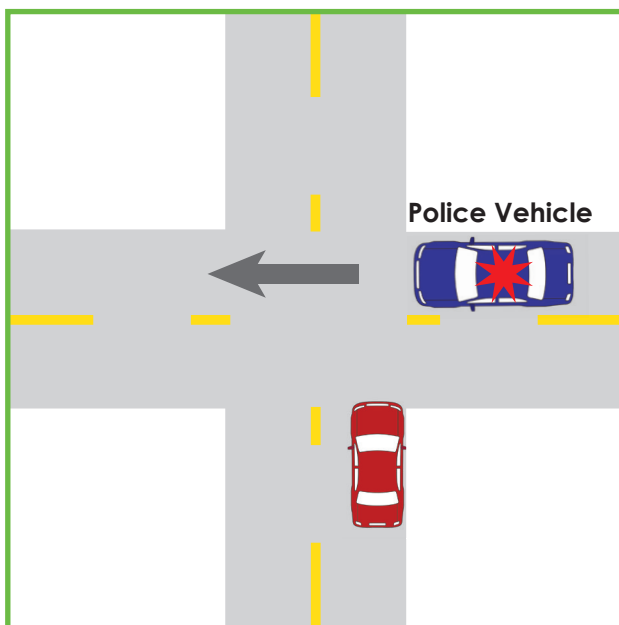
Be prepared to yield

- When approaching a YIELD sign. Slow down, check for traffic and be prepared to stop.
- Whenever you see workers in highway construction or maintenance areas. You also must proceed with caution and be ready to yield whenever

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you are approaching or passing a stopped waste collection, utility service or road maintenance vehicle with its lights flashing.

- When an emergency vehicle is approaching with its red or blue lights flashing, rotating or oscillating and its siren or other audible device sounding, immediately drive to a position parallel to and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway, clear of an intersection, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed or an officer signals that it is clear to proceed.



- To through traffic when approaching a MERGE sign. Adjust your speed as necessary to merge safely.

Right of way and pedestrians

As a driver, you must yield:

- To a pedestrian in a marked crosswalk, at an intersection or midblock.
- To a pedestrian in the crosswalk, even if your traffic light is green.
- To children near or in a school zone crosswalk when school is in session. Be especially cautious as children may unexpectedly dart out into the street.
- To pedestrians with disabilities, including physical, hearing and visual disabilities.
- When turning at any intersection. This includes all turns, whether or not there are lights or traffic control devices present.
- When stopping at an intersection with a stop sign or a flashing red light.
- At an intersection with a flashing yellow light.
- To a pedestrian in an unmarked crosswalk on the driver's side of the roadway when no traffic control devices are present.
- To a pedestrian who enters a crosswalk before the signal has changed.
- To a pedestrian crossing the street from an alley, driveway, building or private road.

Right of way and funerals

- Funeral processions have the right of way over all other vehicles, except for fire trucks, ambulances and police vehicles.
- Vehicles in the funeral procession must display the fluorescent orange flag with the appropriate religious symbol (for example, a cross, a star of David or the crescent and star).
- It is a civil infraction to cut through a funeral procession.
- Drivers should be appropriately respectful of funeral processions but they are not required to pull over should they see a funeral procession on the road.

Passing on the left

- Use caution when passing another vehicle or bicyclist.
- On a two-lane highway, you should have a clear, unobstructed view of the left lane, and any traffic

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in that lane should be far enough away to provide you with the distance and time needed to pass safely.

- Once you have started passing a vehicle, do not cut back into the right-hand lane until you can see the entire vehicle you are passing in your rearview mirror.
- You must return to your lane before you get within 200 feet of any oncoming vehicles.
- Remember to allow extra room for passing when pulling a trailer.
- Do not pass more than one vehicle at a time or follow too closely when another vehicle is passing slower traffic.
- When preparing to pass another vehicle by using the center lane of a three-lane road, always use extreme caution. Approaching vehicles may also be preparing to pass. If you and an approaching vehicle move into the center lane at the same time, a serious crash could occur. Using this lane for passing or merging is prohibited if the center lane is marked for left turns only.

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If you are being passed by another vehicle, do not increase your speed or race the driver who is passing you. Allow the other driver to complete the passing maneuver safely.
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Passing on the right

Passing a vehicle on the right is allowed but don't drive on the shoulder or off the road to do so. Passing on the right should only be done in certain circumstances.

- When there is enough room on a two-lane road and the vehicle you want to pass is turning left.
- On a one-way street with more than one lane.
- On a roadway with two or more lanes in each direction.

- At an intersection or point in the road specifically widened for the purposes of passing.

When passing is prohibited

Don't pass when:

- A solid yellow line is on your side of the center of the road.
- "Do Not Pass" or "No Passing Zone" signs are posted.
- You are approaching a hill or curve that prevents you from seeing oncoming traffic clearly.
- You are within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing.
- Your view is blocked within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct or tunnel.
- Oncoming traffic is close enough that trying to pass would place you and other vehicles in danger of crashing.
- You can't see clearly ahead.
- The center lane of a three-lane road is marked for left turns only.
- A vehicle has stopped at a crosswalk or intersection to allow a pedestrian to cross.
- In a construction zone.
- A school zone or posted school zone is in an unincorporated area.
- A school bus has stopped to load or unload passengers.



Lane usage

Like most of the world, U.S. motorists drive on the right side of the road. But there's more to it than simply staying to the right.

What Every Driver Must Know

You must drive in the right-hand lane except when:

- Passing a vehicle in front of you.
- Stopped vehicles, a crash or other obstacles make it necessary for you to cross the center line. You must yield to any oncoming traffic before leaving your lane.
- The road is divided into three or more marked traffic lanes.
- On a one-way street with two or more lanes of traffic.
- Directed to move into the left lane by traffic control signs and signals on a multiple lane highway with traffic traveling in both directions.
- Crossing the center line to make a left turn into or from an alley, private road or driveway.
- Approaching a stopped emergency vehicle. Make sure it is safe to pass before pulling out around the emergency vehicle.
- Road construction is near or blocking the right lane or right shoulder.

When driving on an interstate highway or full-access controlled freeway, you must drive in the right-hand lane. **Exceptions for driving in the left lane are made for the following situations:**

- Traffic conditions or congestion make it impossible to drive in the right lane.
- Weather conditions make it necessary to drive in the left lane.
- There is an obstacle or hazard in the right lane.
- You must change lanes to yield to emergency or construction vehicles.
- There is no traffic immediately behind or in front of you in the left lane.

Remember that . . .

- Slow vehicles must use the right lane except when

passing or making a left turn.

- Weaving from lane to lane to speed through traffic is illegal.
- Only emergency vehicles and law enforcement using their lights and sirens are allowed to drive against the flow of traffic.
- It is illegal to drive across median strips and through barriers.
- If a road's cut-through is paved and there are no signs prohibiting its use, you may make a left turn using the cut-through.
- You must enter or leave controlled-access roads only at designated and posted entrances and exits.

Turning

Always use your turn signal when turning.

Before turn signals became standard equipment on every automobile, drivers used hand signals to indicate a turn or a stop. Today these hand signals are used primarily by motorcyclists, scooter and moped riders, and bicyclists. See Figure 4.4.



Figure 4.4. Hand signals for a left turn, right turn and stop.

Right turns

- Turn from the correct lane and use your signal.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians, emergency vehicles or other traffic at the intersection.
- Make sure traffic is clear on your left before turning.

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- Follow the general curve of the curb as you make your right turn. Do not stray into other lanes.
- Be aware that trucks and buses need more space to make a right turn.
- When multiple right-turn lanes are present, complete your turn by entering the lane that corresponds to your turn lane. See Figure 4.5.

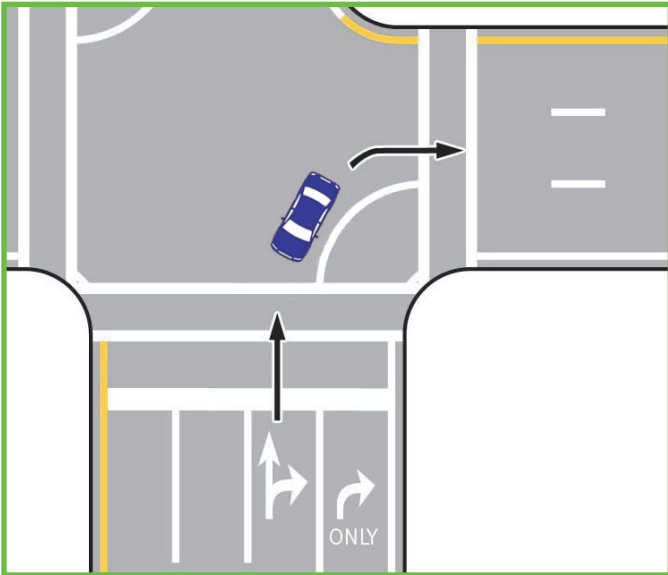


Figure 4.5. After checking for pedestrians and bicyclists, the blue car may complete its right turn. It should remain in the lane corresponding to its turn lane. If it moves into another lane while turning, it could cut off traffic in that lane and cause a crash.

Left turns

- Turn from the correct lane and use your signal.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency vehicles or other traffic at the intersection.
- Keep your front wheels pointed straight ahead until you start your turn.
- When multiple left-turn lanes are present, complete your turn by entering the lane that corresponds to your turn lane.

- Check for **all** approaching traffic. See figures 4.6 and 4.7.

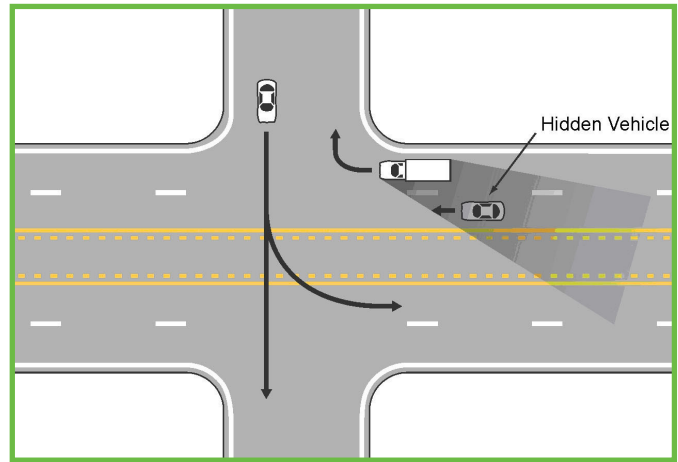


Figure 4.6.

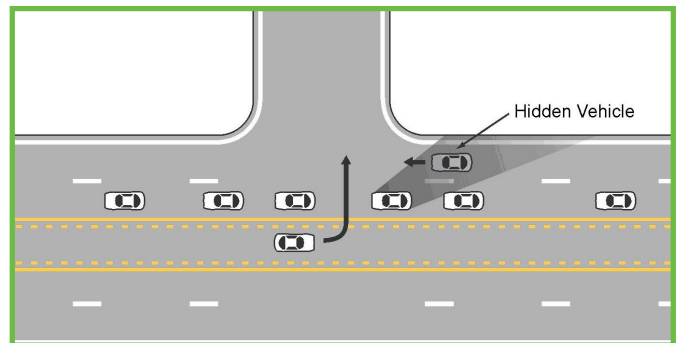


Figure 4.7.

Figures 4.6 and 4.7. Would you spot the hidden vehicle if you were the driver? Always look carefully for vehicles that may be concealed behind or alongside of other vehicles. Take special care to watch for motorcyclists, scooter riders and bicyclists as their smaller sizes can make it easy to miss them in traffic.

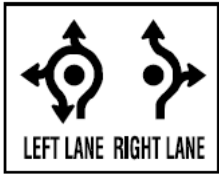
Changing lanes

- **Left lane:** Look for traffic behind you and on your left with a head check, turn on your left-turn signal and carefully move into the left lane.
- **Right lane:** Look for traffic behind you and on your right, turn on your right-turn signal and carefully move into the right lane.

What Every Driver Must Know

Roundabouts

A roundabout is a circular intersection where entering traffic yields to vehicles traveling counterclockwise around a central island. Vehicles entering from each leg of the intersection must yield to traffic approaching from the left. This includes any bicyclists or pedestrians who are present. Vehicles exit the roundabout by making a right turn onto the desired road.



Approaching a roundabout:

- Look for roadside signs and pavement markings to direct you into the correct lane before entering.
- Slow down and stay to the right of the roundabout's center island.
- As you approach the yield line, look to your left.
- When an appropriate gap in traffic appears, enter the roundabout and merge with the flow of the other vehicles.
- Never make a left turn to enter a roundabout; this will place you in front of oncoming traffic.

Traveling in a roundabout:

- Always stay to the right of the center island.
- Vehicles in the roundabout have the right of way.
- Do not stop unless it is the only way to safely avoid a collision or other danger.
- If an emergency vehicle is heard or seen approaching, do not stop. Leave the roundabout at the nearest exit, pull over to the right and stop, allowing the emergency vehicle to pass.
- Avoid changing lanes. Move into the lane you need before entering the roundabout.
- Give special consideration to trucks, trailers and other large vehicles. Avoid passing or driving next to large vehicles, as they may need more than one lane to navigate through the roundabout.

- Refrain from passing other vehicles, bicycles and mopeds.
- When entering or exiting a roundabout, watch for pedestrians crossing the street.

Exiting a roundabout:

- Maintain a slow speed. If you miss your exit, drive around the roundabout to your exit again.
- Indicate your exit by using your turn signal.
- Do not accelerate until you are past the pedestrian crossing at the exit.

Railroad crossings

Traffic control systems for railroad crossings include all signs, signals, markings and illuminated devices that permit safe and efficient movement of both rail and roadway traffic.

When approaching any railroad crossing, slow down and look both ways. Trains can take a mile or more to stop, and an approaching train is closer and moving faster than it appears. It could be fatal to ignore a signal or try to cross in front of a train.

Whether you are on foot, on a bicycle or in a vehicle, cross railroad tracks only at designated crossings. Never walk down or stop on the tracks; it is illegal and dangerous.

Railroad crossing advance warning sign

This sign warns of a railroad crossing ahead. If a train is coming, all vehicles must stop no more than 50 feet or less than 15 feet from the tracks. Trains overhang the tracks by at least three feet on each side and may have cargo that extends even farther.



When you see devices that warn of railroad crossings and possible oncoming trains:

- Slow down and be ready to stop.

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- If there is a stop sign at the crossing, you must stop whether or not a train is in sight.
- Be aware that, unless clearly marked otherwise, school buses, vehicles carrying passengers for hire, gasoline trucks and other vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop and make sure no train is coming, even if there is no stop sign or railroad crossing signal.

Passive railroad crossing control systems

Railroad crossings with passive control systems do not have flashing lights or gates to warn of approaching trains. Instead, they use advance warning signs, pavement markings and crossbuck signs with yield or stop signs located just before or at the railroad tracks to alert drivers to look for trains.



Slow down or stop as necessary and yield to any rail traffic. Do not cross without checking the track in both directions for a train. Make sure all tracks are clear before proceeding and never race a train in an attempt to cross ahead of it.

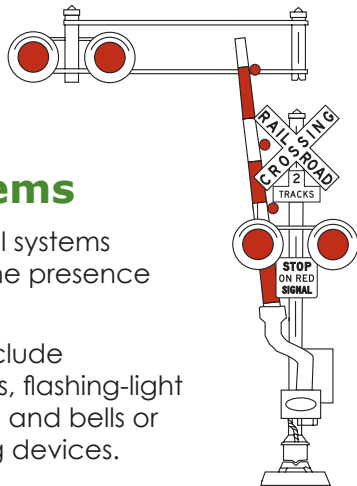
Active railroad crossing control systems

Active railroad control systems inform road users of the presence of a train.

These systems may include combinations of gates, flashing-light signals, message signs and bells or other audible warning devices.

No matter what active control system you encounter:

- Stop when the bells are ringing, the lights are flashing, or the gate is down or in motion.



- Do not drive through, around or under any activated railroad crossing system.
- Once the train has passed, do not proceed until the gates are raised, signals stop flashing, bells stop ringing and you are sure that all tracks are clear.

Trains and vehicles DO NOT MIX: Grade crossing safety tips

- Never stop on railroad tracks.
- Always expect a train at any crossing.
- Always look both ways down the tracks.
- Avoid changing gears while crossing railroad tracks.
- When there is snow on the road, proceed over tracks with enough speed to prevent you from becoming stuck at the railroad crossing.
- When approaching a crossing where nearby traffic signals may have caused vehicles to back up near the crossing, never cross the tracks unless there is enough space for your vehicle to completely clear the far side of the tracks by at least 6 feet.

If you are stuck on the tracks

Once railroad crossing lights and gates are activated, or you hear the horn of an approaching train, you have about 20 seconds before the train arrives. If you remember these few tips, you may prevent a tragedy at a railroad crossing.

- If the crossing gates **are activated**, or a train is clearly approaching, **IMMEDIATELY** get everyone out of the vehicle and as far away from the tracks as possible. Call 911.
- If crossing lights or gates are NOT ACTIVATED, or there is no train in sight, get everyone out of the vehicle and as far away from the tracks as possible. Call the railroad's emergency number listed on the blue Emergency Notification Sign posted near the crossing. Report the problem and provide the crossing identification number shown

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on the Emergency Notification Sign (six digits and one letter). Railroad officials may be able to slow, stop or divert an approaching train. Then call 911.

What is an Emergency Notification System sign?



An Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign, posted at or near a highway-rail grade crossing, lists a telephone number along with the crossing's US DOT number and is used to notify the railroad of

an emergency or a warning device malfunction.

Parking

You know that familiar movie scene in which an expensive sports car is parked on a grassy hill sloping down toward a pond and the car suddenly rolls into the water! What's that about? A bad parking job, that's what!

Whenever you park:

- Always turn off the engine.
- Set the parking brake. Do not rely on the transmission to hold your vehicle in place.
- Take the keys and lock your vehicle.



When exiting your vehicle after parking:

- Watch for bicycles, motorcycles, mopeds or other vehicles that might be passing.
- Check the mirrors for traffic that may not see you before opening the door. Use your right hand to open the door, so you will automatically look over your left shoulder for oncoming cyclists and pedestrians.
- When returning to your vehicle, face oncoming traffic as you approach the driver's side.

Parking on a hill

- Turn wheels toward the curb when parking downhill.
- Turn the wheels away from the curb when parking uphill.
- If there is no curb, turn the wheels so that the vehicle will not roll into traffic.
- Always use the parking brake. The transmission is not designed to be used as a brake.

Parallel parking

Even though there are vehicles that will automatically parallel park themselves, knowing how to perform this tricky parking maneuver is still a good skill to master.

- Select a parking space on the passenger side of your vehicle.
- Signal when approaching the space and check your mirrors for traffic behind you.
- Pull along side of the vehicle that is parked directly ahead of your parking space. There should be 2-5 feet between your vehicle and the parked vehicle.
- Brake, shift into reverse and check for traffic approaching from behind.
- Release the brake and slowly back up, repeatedly checking your mirrors for traffic. Look over your right shoulder to help in positioning your vehicle.
- As you start to back up, turn the steering wheel to the right to start angling the rear of your vehicle into the parking space.
- Once the rear of the vehicle is mostly in the space, start turning in the other direction to straighten out. Making this "S" turn should place your vehicle directly into the parking space.
- Adjust the vehicle's position as needed to center it in the space. Do not park more than 6-12 inches from the curb.
- Check for traffic before opening your door.

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Disability parking

Disability parking spaces are reserved for people with disabilities. Disabilities are not always apparent, so even if people are not using a cane or wheelchair, that does not mean they are abusing the privilege of disability parking.

Free parking is provided only to vehicles displaying a disability placard with a yellow free-parking sticker. The requirements for obtaining a free-parking sticker are more narrowly defined than for a disability license plate or placard.

To park in a disability parking space:

- You or your passenger must have a qualifying disability. This is defined as blindness or any condition that significantly limits a person's ability to walk or that requires a wheelchair, walker, crutch or other assistive device. The disability may be temporary or permanent.
- You must have a disability license plate or parking placard.

Never park in a disability parking space if none of the vehicle's occupants are disabled or if the person with the disability is not accompanying you into the store.

Van-accessible disability parking

Van-accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces. This provides room for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp, allowing the person with a disability to easily exit and enter the vehicle.



For this reason, it is extremely important **not to park on the blue-striped area** of the van-accessible parking space. Doing so may prevent the person with a disability from getting in or out of the vehicle. It is also important to not block the ramp or curb cuts used by people with disabilities.

Parking violations

Communities may pass parking ordinances for local streets that are stricter than state law. Signs will be posted at the city limits.

The owner of a vehicle parked illegally is responsible for any parking tickets. If the vehicle is being leased, the person leasing it is responsible. The following is a partial list of "no parking laws."

Never park:

- Where "no stopping," "no standing," "no parking" or "no parking at any time" signs are posted.
- Within 500 feet of a fire or a crash.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- Within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street or, when marked, within 75 feet of the driveway on the other side of the street.
- Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing.
- In front of any driveway, alley, theater, emergency exit or fire escape.
- Next to a road where you block the view of drivers turning at an intersection.
- More than 12 inches from the curb. This means the curb should never be more than a foot from your parked vehicle.
- Against the flow of traffic.
- Within 30 feet of a stop sign, traffic light or flashing beacon, including a warning sign.
- In a lane of a highway outside city or village limits if there is a highway shoulder.
- On or under a bridge (unless otherwise posted), on an overpass or in a tunnel.



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- On a sidewalk, or in front of a public or private driveway.
- Within an intersection, crosswalk or designated bike lane.
- Within 20 feet of a marked crosswalk or 15 feet of an intersection if there is no crosswalk.
- On the street-side of a legally parked vehicle (double parking).
- So that you obstruct delivery of mail to a rural mailbox.
- At a transit stop.

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Notes