



# Defensive Driving Course

Speed Control Traction Control & Impact Speed Right of Way Signs & Distance Passing S = Survival Collisions Proper Distances Special Situations Trains etc.

## System

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**Railroad Crossings**—approximately 400 people are killed each year in vehicle-train collisions in the USA. Collisions at train crossings are eleven times more likely to result in a fatality than any other type of collision.

- **Never drive around crossing barriers.**
- **Never race a train.**
- **If a vehicle stalls on tracks, get out of the vehicle.**
- **Scan for trains before proceeding across tracks.**
- **Remember it takes a train a long time to stop.**
- **The mass of the train is much larger than the mass of a vehicle; as a result, cars never win in train collisions.**



## Pets, Wildlife, and Livestock

**Animals**—can represent serious hazards to drivers. The first reaction of a driver is usually to brake hard and swerve to miss the animal. It is important for drivers to realize that each situation is different and the driver's reactions can lead to fatal consequences. Many people have been killed trying to avoid hitting an animal on the road. As bad as it may sound, running over the animal is at times the best thing to do.

**Note: drivers operating high-center of gravity vehicle such as SUVs are at greater risk of rolling over making sudden maneuvers to avoid collisions with animals.**

- Scan for possible hazards. Animals are unpredictable and may dart out in front of vehicle at any time.
- Look for posted signs that indicate wildlife or cattle crossings.
- It is better to run over or collide with an animal than it is to swerve out-of-control and roll the vehicle.

## Other Travelers

**Slow-moving vehicles**—are vehicles that are not able to travel at highway speeds. These types of vehicles may be road equipment, farm equipment, or wide loads. Slow-moving vehicles are often found on rural roads. Slow-moving vehicle should display an orange equilateral triangle indicating that the vehicle maximum speed is 25 mph.

The **SPIDER** method is particularly applicable to these types of situations. Drivers should:

- **Emphasize** that motorcycles and bicycles must follow the same traffic laws as other motor vehicles.
- **Explain** why it is a good idea for motorcycles to be operated with the headlights on as this makes it more visible to other drivers.
- **Note: Helmets**—while operating a motorcycle a person under 21 must by law wear a helmet. Passengers must also wear helmets while riding a motorcycle. If the operator is over 21 and has completed an approved motorcycle safety course and can demonstrate financial responsibility in the form of an insurance policy with at least \$10,000 of value, he or she is not required to wear a helmet.  
**Transportation Code 661.003**

**Emphasize** that when walking at night pedestrians should wear light colored clothes and walk facing into the traffic.

**Transportation Code 552**

- slow down
- not become impatient;

- pass only when it is safe and legal to do so.

**Motorcycles**—are highly vulnerable vehicles as they:

- are **smaller** and **harder** to spot in traffic;
- make **fast** and **unpredictable** moves in traffic;
- require **more scanning** by drivers.

**Bicycles**—like motorcycles, are highly vulnerable, they are slow moving, and often operated by children. Nevertheless bicycles:

- follow same rules as automobiles;
- other vehicles should be given plenty of room.

**Pedestrians**—also share the same space as traffic and since sooner or later, we all become pedestrians, we need to be thoughtful and careful when encountering pedestrians.

- **Yield the Right-of-Way to Pedestrians**—always be on the lookout for people on foot whether or not they have the right-of-way. Drivers must yield to pedestrians in the following situations:
- **Uncontrolled intersections**—are intersection where there are no traffic signals or traffic signs. If a pedestrian enters a cross walk, drivers should yield the right-of-way.
- **Controlled intersections**—are intersections where there is a “walk” signal or a signal light. At these intersections the driver must yield the right-of-way to the pedestrian. If the light changes after the pedestrian has already entered the crosswalk, drivers should continue to give the pedestrian the right-of-way.
- **Pedestrians must yield right-of-way**—when crossing a road:
  - there is no marked cross-walk on the road or intersection;
  - where a pedestrian tunnel or overhead pedestrian crossing has been provided;
  - between adjacent intersections where traffic control signals are in operation (a pedestrian may cross only in the marked crosswalks at the intersections); and
  - a pedestrian may not cross an intersection diagonally unless there is a traffic control device that authorizes such a crossing.