

# California Drivers Handbook

2006



**Arnold Schwarzenegger**, Governor  
State of California  
**Sunne Wright McPeak**, Secretary  
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency



# *WORD ON THE STREET...*

## **RACING KILLS!**

The choices you make today determine your tomorrow. Don't put yourself, your friends, and your future at risk... don't participate in illegal street racing events.

### **Penalties/Consequences**

#### *of Street Racing:*

- ◆ Vehicle impound for up to 30 days (at your expense)
- ◆ Loss of driving privileges (90 days or up to 6 months)
- ◆ County jail (minimum 24 hours, with a maximum of 90 days)

**Don't risk your life, your freedom  
and your future...**

***DON'T STREET RACE.***

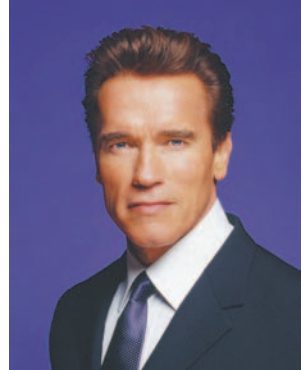
# Governor's Message

## *California Driver Handbook*

My Fellow Californians:


This year, we have made great strides in streamlining the Department of Motor Vehicles and making it more responsive to your needs.

Californians can now use the Internet to renew drivers' licenses and vehicle registrations. DMV's automated telephone system allows you to process your registration or schedule an appointment, and wait times in local field offices and telephone busy signals have been reduced. More exciting changes are planned for the months ahead.



Please continue to drive responsibly and wear your lap and shoulder belts, make sure your passengers do the same, and don't take drugs or drink alcohol before you drive. It is critical that each of us drive sensibly and defensively. This booklet will get you started—the rest is up to you. Thanks for helping to make California an even *better* and *safer* place to raise our families.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

# 24/7

...Call

**1-800-921-1117**

and use the Voice Recognition System to:

- *Make an appointment (except driving tests)*
- *Renew your vehicle registration*

...or

**1-800-777-0133** to:

- *Make an appointment for a driving test (between 8-5 M-F 9-5 W)*

...or use the Automated System to:

- *Get forms, brochures, and handbooks*
- *Listen to general information*
- *Get field office locations, hours, and driving directions*



# SAVE LIVES!

Simply by signing up at [www.donateLIFeCalifornia.org](http://www.donateLIFeCalifornia.org), you can save up to eight lives as an organ donor and improve another 50 lives as a tissue donor.

In the past, a pink “donor dot” on your California drivers license demonstrated your wish to donate life. But it didn’t record your decision on a list that could ensure your wish was fulfilled. That’s all changed. Now you can go online and sign up to be organ and



tissue donor. Your personal information will be kept secure and confidential. It will be accessible only to authorized organ and tissue recovery personnel.

After you sign up you’ll be able to send an e-mail to family and friends sharing your decision to give life. It’s that easy. It takes only minutes to sign up – minutes that could mean years of life for someone else.

Sign up to be an organ and tissue donor at

[www.donateLIFeCalifornia.org](http://www.donateLIFeCalifornia.org)

[www.doneVIDACalifornia.org](http://www.doneVIDACalifornia.org)

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## Where To Write

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

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Sacramento, CA 94232-3820



## VEHICLE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

This is a brief summary of California's vehicle registration requirements. Visit the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) web site for detailed information.

### CALIFORNIA VEHICLES

When you purchase a new or used vehicle from a licensed California dealer, the dealer collects use tax and fees to register and title the vehicle.

The dealer submits the fees and documents to DMV and gives you temporary operating authority. Usually within six to eight weeks after your purchase date, you will receive a registration card, license plates, stickers, and a Certificate of Title, if appropriate.

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

- A properly endorsed and completed Certificate of Title or Application for Duplicate Title (REG 227).
- Smog certification provided by the seller, if required.
- Use tax payment, if required.
- Odometer Mileage Disclosure statement, if applicable.
- Appropriate DMV fees.

When you **sell or transfer** a vehicle, report it to DMV within **5 days** on the Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability form (REG 138). Complete the entire

form including the name and address of the purchaser and the date you sold or transferred the vehicle. Mail it to the address shown on the form.

### 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. (See page 1)

Nonresident military personnel and their spouses may operate their vehicles in California with valid home state license plates or until the plates issued from their last 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 DMV 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 (1976 and newer motor vehicles only).
- Weight certificate for commercial vehicles only.
- Appropriate DMV fees and use tax, if applicable.
- Completed Odometer Mileage Disclosure statement, if applicable.

## DMV INFORMATION

DMV field offices are open 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Wednesday. Some offices are open the third Saturday of every month. A few offices offer only driver license or vehicle registration service. Call one of the toll-free numbers below or go online to find the locations and service options of an office near you.

- Call 1-800-777-0133 between 8 AM and 5 PM to:
  - Get driver license and vehicle registration information, forms, and publications.
  - Find office locations and hours.
  - Make a driving test appointment.
  - Speak to a DMV representative.
- Call 1-800-921-1117, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to:
  - Access DMV's voice recognition system.
  - Renew your vehicle registration using a credit card and the Renewal Identification Number provided on your billing notice.
  - Make a non-driving test appointment.

Go online at: [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) for:

- Field offices—locations, hours, directions, phone numbers
- Ordering personalized plates
- Driver license and identification card information
- Vehicle/vessel registration information
- Downloadable forms
- Publications—handbooks, brochures, sample tests
- Senior driver information
- Teen driver information
- Links to other state and federal agencies

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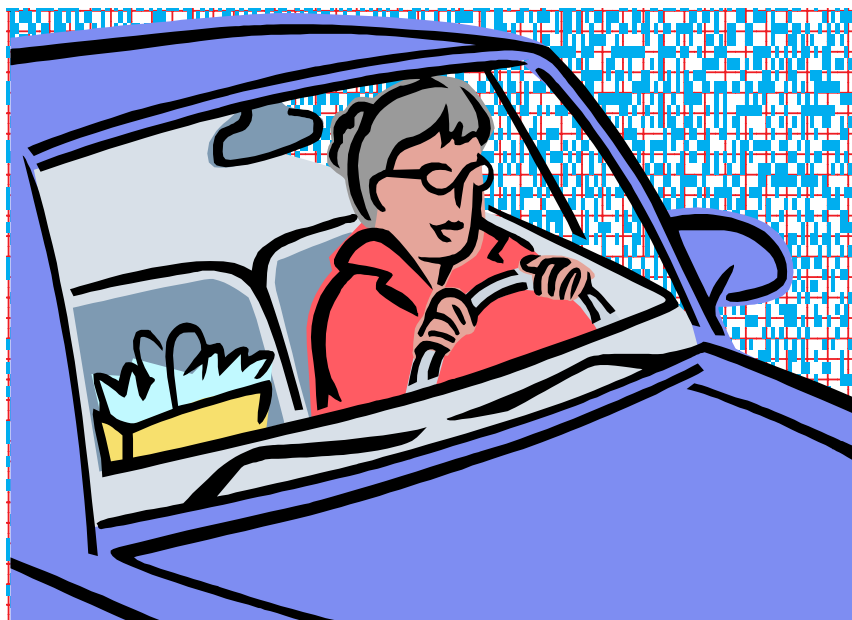
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# Senior DRIVER

California Department of Motor Vehicles



Visit our [Senior Webpages](#) for information specifically developed for senior drivers. Maintain your driving independence for as long as you can!

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### DISCLAIMER

Fees mentioned in this handbook are subject to legislative change.

This handbook is only a summary of the laws and regulations. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), law enforcement, and courts follow the full and exact language of the *California Vehicle Code*. You may buy a copy of the *Vehicle Code* at any DMV office or go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

### WHO MUST HAVE A LICENSE?

#### *California Residents*

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

- Members of the Armed Forces or United States (U.S.) Government civilian employees who only drive vehicles owned or controlled by the U.S. on federal government business.
- Persons who drive farming vehicles not normally used on public highways.
- Persons who drive legally registered off-highway vehicles or snowmobiles straight across a highway (other than a freeway).

#### *California Military Personnel*

If you are out of state on active military service in the U.S. Armed Forces and have a valid California driver license, your license will be valid for the full time you are absent from the state and for 30 days from your discharge date, if honorably discharged outside of California. Carry both your driver license and discharge papers during those 30 days.

Call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for a card (DL 236) which extends your license. Military dependents do not qualify for this extension.

#### *Nonresident Military Personnel*

If you are 18 years of age or older, see the rules for “New Residents” and “Adults Visiting California.” Licensees eligible for military extensions should carry documentation from their home state to verify their status to local law enforcement.

#### *New Residents*

When you make your home here or take a job and you want to drive in California, you must apply for a California driver license within 10 days.

Residency is established by: voting in California elections; paying resident tuition at a California college or university; filing for a home owner’s property tax exemption; obtaining a license; or 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 driver license as long as their home state license remains valid.

## **Minors Visiting California**

Visitors between 16 and 18 years old may drive with their home state license or instruction permit for only 10 days after arriving in California. After the 10 days, they must have either a:

- California driver license, or
- Nonresident Minor's Certificate which is issued by DMV to a minor who has given proof of financial responsibility.

# **THE CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE**

## **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, and the private sector as well.

It is critical that these documents be completely authenticated and accurate. The California Legislature has declared the DL/ID card as the primary identification documents in this state. California law requires that all customers 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 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. (See page ix.)

If you have no outstanding actions on your record, you will receive a license after you pay the fee, correctly answer questions about the law and safety rules, show that your physical and 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 and/or present a statement from your physician regarding your condition.

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.

## **DUPLICATE LICENSES**

To replace a lost or damaged driver license, you must go to a DMV office and pay the \$20 fee for a duplicate. You must also present photo identification. If

DMV cannot confirm your identity, you will **not** be issued a temporary license. If you are a minor, your parents must sign the DMV application form (DL 44).

Once a duplicate license has been issued, the previous license is not valid. Destroy it if you find it later.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

When you move, give DMV your new address within 10 days. Each driver must complete and sign a Notice of Change of Address (DMV 14) form. This form also allows you to change the address for your vehicle registration. Mail the completed and signed DMV 14 to the address shown on the form. You can call 1-800-777-0133 and ask to have a DMV 14 mailed to you or go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

Type or write your new address on a small piece of paper. Sign and date the paper and carry it with your DL/ID card. Or you can call 1-800-777-0133 and request a Change of Address Certificate card (DL 43) to complete and carry with your DL/ID card. There is no charge to change your address.

**Reminder:** The post office does not forward DMV correspondence.

## NAME CHANGES

If you change your name, you must take your old DL/ID card to

a DMV office with acceptable verification of your “true full name.” (See page 6.) No additional examination will be given, but the \$20 fee will be charged. A new picture and thumb print will be taken. Your old photo DL/ID card will be invalidated and returned to you.

## LICENSE RENEWALS

If you are renewing a California DL, you must be at least 18 years old.

DMV issues a regular DL for a five-year term. The license expires on your birthday in the year shown on the license. It is against the law to drive after your license expires.

DMV sends a renewal notice to your address of record about two months before your license expires. Follow the instructions on the renewal notice. If you do not receive a renewal notice, call to make an appointment. (See page ix.)

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

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

Qualified drivers may be eligible to renew by mail or online at DMV’s website. (See page 14.)

Refer to the *Commercial Driver Handbook*, the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers*

*Handbook*, or the *California Motorcycle Handbook* for additional license information.

## LICENSE CLASSES

Tell DMV the type of license you need. The ten license classes are defined as follows:

**NOTE:** Class M1 or M2 is added to *any other class license* after passing law and skill tests.

### Commercial Class A

*You may drive* any legal combination of vehicles, including vehicles under Classes B and C.

*You may tow:*

- any single vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of more than 10,000 lbs.
- any trailer bus, with endorsement.
- more than one vehicle, with endorsement.
- any vehicle under Classes B (an additional endorsement may be required) or C.

### Restricted Class A Fire Fighter

*You may drive* only Class A and Class B defined combination fire fighting vehicles and all vehicles listed under Class C.

*You may tow* a single vehicle with a GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs.

### Noncommercial Class A

*You may drive* any vehicle listed under Class C.

*You may tow* a travel trailer weighing over 10,000 lbs. GVWR **or** a 5th-wheel travel trailer weighing over 15,000 lbs. GVWR when the trailer is not used for hire (pay or other compensation). Refer to the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers* booklet.

### Commercial Class B

*You may drive:*

- any single vehicle with a GVWR of more than 26,000 lbs.
- a 3-axle vehicle weighing over 6,000 lbs.
- any bus (except a trailer bus), with endorsement.
- any farm labor vehicle, with endorsement.
- all vehicles listed under Class C.

*You may tow* a single vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less.

**NOTE:** Employees of school districts, private schools, community colleges, and California state universities who operate vans manufactured to carry 15 passengers, including the driver, must have a commercial driver license with a passenger transport endorsement.

## **Restricted Class B Fire Fighter**

*You may drive* only a Class B defined single fire fighting vehicle and all the vehicles listed under Class C.

*You may tow* a single vehicle with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs. or less.

## **Noncommercial Class B**

*You may drive:*

- any vehicle listed under Class C.
- a housecar over 40 feet but not over 45 feet, with endorsement.

*You may tow* any vehicle listed under Class C. Refer to the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers* booklet.

## **Basic Class C**

*You may drive:*

- any 2-axle vehicle with a GVWR of 26,000 lbs. or less.
- any 3-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or less gross.
- any housecar 40 feet or less.
- a vanpool vehicle, designed to carry more than 10 but less than 15 persons including the driver. The driver must have a valid medical on file and carry a valid medical card. The driver must also have a signed certification stating he/she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk

driving, or hit-and-run in the last five years. (VC §12804.9[j])

*A farmer or employee of a farmer may drive:*

- any combination of vehicles with a Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) of 26,000 lbs. or less if used exclusively in agricultural operations **and** it is not for hire or compensation.

*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 at least 4,000 lbs., 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.

## **NOTE:**

- Class C licensees may **not** tow more than one vehicle.
- No passenger vehicle regardless of weight, may tow more than one vehicle.
- No motor vehicle under 4,000 lbs. unladen may tow any vehicle weighing 6,000 lbs. or more gross. (VC §21715)



## **Commercial Class C**

*You may drive* any Class C vehicle carrying hazardous materials or wastes (Health & Safety Code §§25115 and 25117) which requires placards with a hazardous materials endorsement.

*You may tow* the same vehicles listed in Class C.

## **Motorcycle Class M1**

*You may operate* any 2-wheel motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized scooter.

## **Motorcycle Class M2**

You may operate any motorized bicycle, moped, any bicycle with an attached motor, or a motorized scooter.

## **Ambulance Driver Certificate**

If you wish to drive an ambulance used commercially in emergency service (VC §2512), apply at any DMV office. You may purchase an *Ambulance Driver Handbook* for \$5.

## **Verification of Training Document**

If you wish to drive a transit bus, you must have a Class A or B license with a passenger transport endorsement.

## **OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE**

When you apply for an original DL/ID card, you must present an acceptable birth date/legal presence document and provide your social security number. Depending on the birth date/legal presence document you present, your first California DL/ID card may expire on the same date as that document. If the name on your birth date/legal presence document is different from the name on your DL/ID card application, you must also bring an acceptable true full name document. (See next page.) Your thumb print\* and picture will also be taken. For any other DL/ID card transaction, you must present photo identification.

## **ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTS**

An acceptable birth date/legal presence or true full name document is issued by a county or state. This document is a certified copy of the original (the original is always retained by the county or state) and contains an impressed seal or an original stamped impression. The certified copy will be returned to you. If you make a *copy* of the certified copy, DMV will not accept it for birth date/legal presence or true full name verification.

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\* *The term thumb print means a thumb print or fingerprint, if you have no thumbs.*

Some acceptable **birth date/legal presence documents** are: U.S. Birth Certificate, Proof of Indian Blood Degree, U.S. Passport, U.S. Armed Forces ID Cards, Certificate of Naturalization, Permanent Resident Card, or a foreign passport or Mexican Border Crossing Card with a valid I-94.

Your social security number will be verified with the Social Security Administration.

**True full name verification documents** are:

- Adoption documents—containing your legal name as a result of the adoption.
- Name change documents—containing your legal name both before and after the name change.
- Marriage Certificate.
- Dissolution of marriage document—containing your legal name as a result of the court action.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL DRIVERS**

To apply for a driver license, you must:

- Submit a completed DMV application form (DL 44). Signing this form means you agree to submit to a chemical test to determine the alcohol or drug content of your blood when required by a peace officer. If you refuse to sign this statement,

DMV will not issue a permit or license.

- Present an acceptable birth date/legal presence document.
- Provide your true full name.
- Provide your Social Security Number. It will be verified with the Social Security Administration.
- Pay the \$26 application fee when you apply for any new or change of class permit or license. It will not be returned. The fee is good for 12 months and allows you to take the appropriate law test(s) three times, if needed, during that period. The fee pays for both the instruction permit and driver license, if you qualify for both within the 12-month period. If the application expires, you must resubmit documents, repay the application fee, and retake the required tests.
- Pass an eye exam. Any person with a best corrected vision of 20/200 or worse in the better eye cannot be issued a driver license or use a bioptic telescopic or similar lens to qualify for a driver license.
- Have your picture taken.
- Give a thumb print.

## **MINORS' PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

A minor is a person under 18 years of age. Minors must have their application for a driver

license or any change of license class signed by their parents or legal guardians.

**NOTE:** Minors may not work as a driver for pay until they are 18 years old and licensed in California and they may not drive a school bus containing pupils.

To get a permit, you must:

- Be at least 15½, but under 18 years of age.
- Complete the application requirements.
- Have your parents' or guardians' signatures on the DL 44.
- Pass a traffic laws and road signs test. If you fail the test, you must wait one week before taking it again. This will give you time to study.
- **If you are between 15½ and 17½**, provide proof that you have met one of the following requirements:
  - completed driver education (DE) and driver training (DT). (DL 387, DL 388, DL 388A, OL 237, or OL 238)
  - completed DE and are taking DT. (DL 387, DL 392, OL 237, or OL 392)
  - enrolled *and participating* in an approved integrated DE/DT program. (DL 400)

**The provisional permit is not valid until you start your behind-the-wheel driver**

**training with an instructor or reach age 17½.**

If you only have a provisional permit and you plan to drive outside of California, contact the driver licensing office in that state or country before you drive.

**NOTE:** If you are at least 17½, you may obtain a *permit* without completing DE or DT. However, to get a license before you are 18 years old, you must provide proof of DE/DT completion.

## MINORS' PERMIT RESTRICTIONS

You must practice with a parent, guardian, spouse, or an adult 25 years of age or older, who has a valid California driver license. The person must be close enough to take control of the vehicle at any time. A provisional permit does not let you drive alone—even to a DMV office to take a driving test.

If you have an M1 or M2 permit, you cannot carry passengers, you must ride during daylight hours only, and you cannot ride on the freeway.

## MINORS' LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

You must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Prove that you have finished both DE and DT. (DL 387, DL 388, DL 388A, OL 237, or OL 238)

- Have had a California instruction permit for at least six months.
- Provide a parent’s signature on your instruction permit stating you have completed the 50 hours of supervised driving practice (10 hours must be night driving) outlined in the *Parent-Teen Training Guide*. 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 first driving test, you must pay a \$5 retest fee for a second or third attempt and wait two weeks before you are tested again.

Once you have your provisional license, you may drive alone as long as you do not have accidents or traffic violations. (See page 70.)

When you become 18 years old, the “provisional” part of your license ends. You may keep the photo license you have or pay \$20 for a duplicate license without the word “provisional.”

During the first 12 months after you are licensed, you cannot drive between 11 PM and 5:00 AM **and** you cannot transport passengers under age 20 unless you are accompanied by your parent or guardian, a licensed driver 25 years of age or older, or a licensed or certified driving instructor.

## EXCEPTIONS—MINORS’ LICENSE RESTRICTIONS

The law allows the following exceptions when reasonable transportation is not available and it is necessary for you to drive. A note is required to explain the necessity and the date when the driving necessity will end.

- Medical necessity. The note must be signed by your physician.
- School or school-authorized activity. The note must be signed by your school principal, dean, or his/her designee.
- Employment necessity. The note must be signed by your employer and verify employment.
- Immediate need of family member. The note must be signed by your parent or legal guardian.
- Emancipated minor. No documentation is needed. However, you must have already declared yourself emancipated and provided DMV with Proof of Financial Responsibility (SR 1P) in lieu of your guarantors’ signatures.

## ADULTS’ PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

If you are 18 years old, meet the application requirements, and pass the tests, you may be issued a California driver license. There is no upper age limit.

If you want to obtain professional driver education and driver training, refer to page 77.

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. The person must be with you in the vehicle, close enough to take control of it at any time. An instruction permit does not permit to you drive alone—not even to a DMV office to take the driving test.

If you have an M1 or M2 permit, you cannot carry passengers, you must ride during daylight hours only, and you cannot ride on the freeway.

To get a permit, you must:

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

## **ADULTS' LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

If you have never been licensed, you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Complete all the steps required for a permit.
- Bring your instruction permit with you.
- Pass a behind-the-wheel driving test. If you fail the first driving test, you must pay a \$5 retest

fee for a second or third attempt and wait until the next day or the next available appointment before you are tested again.

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

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Complete all the steps required for a permit. (A temporary license will not be issued if your visual acuity is worse than 20/70 in both eyes together.)
- Surrender your valid out-of-county driver license. Out-of-state licenses will be invalidated and returned.

**NOTE:** Driving tests for holders of out-of-state or U.S. territory licenses are normally waived. However, the department may require a driving test for *any* type of application. Driving tests *are required* for out-of-country license holders.

## **THE EXAMINATION PROCESS**

### **WHERE TO TAKE THE TESTS**

You may take the written, vision, and driving tests at any DMV office which provides driver license services. Written and vision tests are required when you apply for an original or upgrade to a different class of license. Written tests may be required for a license renewal.

Driving tests are usually waived for the class of license you currently have. However, the department may require a driving test for *any* type of application. Appointments are available for all DMV services. **An appointment is usually required to take any driving test.**

## DMV WANTS YOU TO PASS

DMV wants you to pass your test. There are law exams in many different languages. However, you must have the ability to read traffic signs in English. If the language you read is not available, you may take the exam with the help of an interpreter. Audio exams and an English exam in large print are also available. If you have difficulty with an exam, tell the DMV employee. You can be more successful by following these suggestions:

- Read this handbook. Take a few days to review the information.
  - Ask a family member or a friend to test your knowledge.
  - Read the test questions carefully. Don't read anything extra into the question. There is only one correct answer.
  - All test questions are based on this handbook. If you miss a question, the DMV employee can tell you where to find the correct answer.
- Review the sample test questions on pages 85 and 86. Sample questions are also available online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

## DMV'S EXAMINATIONS

Your driver license examinations include:

- A vision test. If you need glasses or corrective contact lenses to pass this test, you must wear them. Your license will show that you must wear "corrective lenses" while driving. If you do not pass the vision test, you will be referred to your vision specialist. A driving test may be required.
- A test of traffic laws, road signs, and driving safety rules (written or audio) to find out if you know how to legally drive your vehicle.
- A driving test, if required. This test is usually given by appointment only. For the driving test, bring:
  - your old license or instruction permit, if you have one.
  - a licensed driver.
  - proof that the vehicle is properly insured.
  - a vehicle that is safe to drive and displays a front and rear license plate. The vehicle's brake lights, horn, parking brake, and electric signals must work properly and the vehicle cannot have bald

tires. The driver's side window must roll down. The windshield must allow a full unobstructed field of vision and there must be 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. You must show that your car is properly insured. If you use a rental car for the driving test, the driver's name must show on the contract as the insured. You must also wear your seat belt.

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

## THE DRIVING TEST

The driving test is your chance to show that you can drive safely. Only you and the examiner (or other DMV personnel) can be in the vehicle. No animal may be in the vehicle. The examiner will give you directions and will not trick you or ask you to do anything illegal. The driving test is only given after all the application requirements have been met.

You will be asked to show the arm signals. (See page 32.) However, during the test, you

must use the vehicle's turn signal lights.

*During the driving test, the examiner will note:*

- How you start your vehicle. When leaving the curb, do you use your mirrors and turn your head and look back for passing cars? Do you signal, and wait until it is safe before entering traffic?
- How you drive in hazardous weather conditions. Do you turn on your headlights when using your windshield wipers **and** when it is snowing, raining, or foggy or when you can't see clearly 1000 feet ahead of you?
- How you control your vehicle. Do you use the gas pedal, brake, steering wheel (hands on opposite sides), and other controls correctly?
- How you drive in traffic. Do you use the proper lane? Do you signal, turn your head and look back before pulling away from the curb or when you change lanes? Do you signal the proper distance before turning? Do you follow other vehicles at a safe distance?
- How you obey the traffic signals and posted signs (such as speed limit signs).
- How you drive through blind or crowded intersections. Do you scan carefully for signs, signals, pedestrians, and other vehicles? Do you yield and take the right of way correctly?

- How you steer your vehicle. Do you turn from the proper lane into the proper lane? Is your turn too wide or too sharp?
- How you stop. Do you stop smoothly and at the limit line or at the corner? Can you stop quickly and safely in an emergency? In a vehicle with a manual transmission, do you keep the vehicle in gear when slowing to a stop?
- How you back up. Do you look over your right shoulder while backing? Can you back in a straight line? Do you have complete control of the vehicle?
- How you change your speed based on the posted speed limit and the amount of nearby traffic, the people crossing the street, and the distance you can see ahead.
- Do you follow the basic speed law and never drive faster than is safe for road conditions?
- How you respect the rights of others. Are you courteous to other drivers and pedestrians? Do you yield or accept your right of way appropriately?
- Whether you pay full attention to the job of driving.

At the end of the driving test, the examiner will discuss the results with you and give you a copy of your score sheet. If you pass the driving test, you will be issued a 60-day interim license.

## MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING INFORMATION

### LICENSE REFUSAL

DMV takes the strongest action possible against anyone who alters or otherwise attempts to falsify a driver license. DMV may also refuse to issue you a license if you:

- Have a history of alcohol or drug abuse.
  - Have used the license illegally or lied on your application or cheated on any license examination.
  - Do not understand traffic laws or signs.
  - Do not have the skill to drive or have a health problem that makes your driving unsafe.
  - Have an outstanding court action.
  - Impersonate an applicant or allow someone else to impersonate you to fraudulently qualify for a license.
  - Submit a fraudulent birth date/legal presence document or social security document.
  - Refuse to sign the certification on the application form (DL 44) or give a thumb print.
- Also see Actions That Result In Loss Of License on page 61.

### LIMITED TERM LICENSES

Drivers with physical or medical conditions may need to be



reexamined from time to time by a physician **or** be retested more often than every five years (limited term license status) by a DMV examiner. See the Health & Safety Section for more information.

## 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**. Limited term drivers are not eligible for this extension. Mail your request to DMV, P.O. Box 942890, Sacramento, CA 94290-0001. Include your name, driver license number, birth date, California residence address, and your out-of-state address.

## LICENSE IN YOUR POSSESSION

You must always have your driver license with you when you drive. Show it to any police officer who asks to see it. If you are in an accident, you must show it to the other driver(s) involved. (See page 61.)

## 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 the person is caught driving, *your* vehicle may be impounded for 30 days. (VC §14602.6)

No person of any age may drive on a highway or in a public parking facility unless the person has a valid driver license or permit. The

law also states that you must not employ, permit, or authorize any unlicensed person to drive your vehicle on a public street or highway unless the person is licensed to drive that class of vehicle.

## RENEWAL BY MAIL OR INTERNET

If you have not already received two consecutive five-year extensions, you may be eligible to renew by mail, without taking a law test, if:

- Your current license expires before age 70.
- You do not have a probationary license. (VC §14250)
- You have not violated a written promise to appear in court within the last two years.
- You are not suspended for driving with an illegal blood alcohol content (BAC) level, or for refusing, or for 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.

**NOTE:** You may renew by Internet if your renewal-by-mail notice includes a Renewal Identification Number (RIN).

## MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD

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

## ORGAN DONATION

You may choose to donate your body, body parts, or a pacemaker for medical transplantation, research, or both after your death.

Starting July 1, 2006, you may register as an organ donor with Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Registry by checking a box on your driver license or identification card application. When you check “yes,” you are giving your consent to be an organ and tissue donor upon your death. This information will be sent to Donate Life to be included in the organ and tissue registry. If you are under 18, your parents will make the final decision regarding donation at the appropriate time. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to Donate Life when you pay your application fee.

For information about the donor program, go online at: [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or contact the Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Donor Registry at: [www.donatelifecalifornia.org](http://www.donatelifecalifornia.org). You may also contact the following organizations for organ/tissue donations or to make a monetary donation:

- California Transplant Donor Network: 1-888-570-9400
- Golden State Donor Services: 916-567-1600
- Lifesharing: 619-521-1983
- OneLegacy: 1-800-786-4077

## LAWS AND RULES OF THE ROAD

### RIGHT OF WAY RULES

#### *General Information*

Right-of-way rules help people drive safely. These rules go along with courtesy and common sense. Bicyclists, moped riders, and pedestrians must follow these rules, too.

Never insist on taking the right of way. If another driver does not yield to you when he or she should, forget it. Let the other driver go first. You will help prevent accidents and make driving more pleasant.

However, if another driver expects you to take your legal turn, take it. If you don't, you may delay traffic or cause an accident.

#### *Pedestrians*

Pedestrian safety is a serious issue. One in six traffic fatalities is a pedestrian. Drive cautiously when pedestrians are near because they may cross your path.

A pedestrian is a person on foot or who uses a conveyance such as roller skates, skateboards, etc., other than a bicycle. A pedestrian can also be a person with a disability on a tricycle or quadricycle or in a self-propelled wheelchair.

- Always stop for any pedestrian crossing at corners or other crosswalks. Do not pass a car from behind that has stopped at a crosswalk. A pedestrian you can't see may be crossing.
- Do not drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it at a driveway or alley. When crossing, yield to any pedestrian.
- 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.
- Pedestrians have the right of way at corners with or without traffic lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted white lines.
- Allow older pedestrians more time to cross the street. They are more likely to die as a result of a crash than younger pedestrians.

Information regarding pedestrians who are blind is on page 55.

### **Crosswalks**

A crosswalk is that part of the pavement where the sidewalk lines would extend across the street and it is set aside for pedestrian traffic. Every intersection has a pedestrian crosswalk whether or not there are painted lines on the street. Most crosswalks are at corners

but they can also be 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 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**

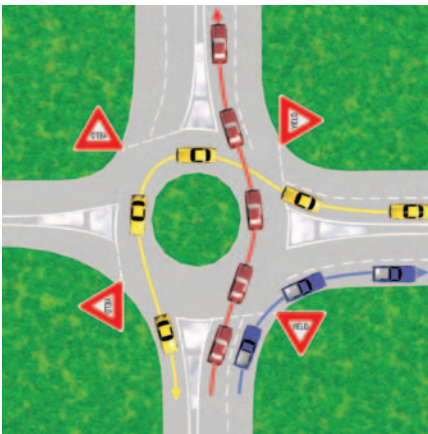
An intersection is any place where one line of traffic meets another. Intersections include cross streets, side streets, alleys, freeway entrances, and any other location where vehicles traveling on different highways or roads join each other.

- At intersections without STOP or YIELD signs, slow down and be ready to stop. Yield to vehicles already in the intersection or just entering it. Also, yield to the car which arrives first **or** to the car on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as you do.
- At “T” intersections without STOP or YIELD signs, yield to vehicles on the through road. They have the right of way.

- When there are STOP signs at all corners, stop first, then follow the above rules.
- When you turn left, give the right of way to all vehicles approaching you that are close enough to be dangerous. Also, look for motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. On divided highways, or highways with several lanes, watch for vehicles coming in any lane you must cross. Turn left only when it is safe.

**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.

- Yield to traffic before entering the road again if you have parked off the road or are leaving a parking lot, etc.



Multiple and single lane roundabout

## 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 vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

When you approach a roundabout:

- Slow down as you approach the intersection.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the roadway.
- Watch for signs and 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.

For roundabouts with multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination. For example, to:

- Turn right at the intersection, choose the right-hand lane and exit in the right-hand lane. (Blue car)
- Go straight through the intersection, choose either lane,

and exit in the lane you entered. (Red car)

- Turn left, choose the left lane, and exit. (Yellow car)

### **On Mountain Roads**

When two vehicles meet on a steep road where neither 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.

### **TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS**

**Solid Red.** A red signal light means “STOP.” You can make a right turn against a red light after you stop and yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles that are 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 can’t stop safely, enter 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 be careful. You do not need to stop for a flashing yellow light but you must slow down and be especially alert before entering the intersection.



**Solid Green.** A green light means “GO” but first give the right of way to any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian in the intersection. If you are turning left, make the turn only if you have enough space to complete the turn before any oncoming vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian becomes a hazard. 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. This means oncoming vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians are stopped by a red light as long as the green arrow is lighted.

**Traffic Signal Blackout.** If a traffic signal light is not working, proceed as if the intersection is controlled by a stop sign in all directions.

## PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL LIGHTS

Pedestrian signals show words or pictures as follows:

- “Walk” or “Walking Person” lights mean it is legal to cross the street.
- “Don’t Walk” or “Raised Hand” lights mean you may not start across the street.
- Flashing “Don’t Walk” or “Raised Hand” lights mean do not start across the street. The traffic signal is about to change. If the flashing starts after you have already started to cross, finish crossing the street as quickly as possible.

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



## TRAFFIC SIGNS

The shape of a sign gives you a clue about the information contained on the sign. Here are the common shapes used.

*Eight-sided red STOP*

*signs* mean you must make a full stop whenever you see a STOP sign. Stop before entering a crosswalk or at a white “limit line” which is a wide white line painted on the street. If a crosswalk or limit line is not painted on the street, stop at the corner.



*Three-sided red YIELD*

*signs* mean you must slow down and be ready to stop, if necessary, to let any vehicle, bicyclist, or pedestrian pass before you proceed.



*Square red and white regulatory*

*signs* mean 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 means NO. The picture inside the circle shows what you cannot do. The sign may be shown with or without words.



*Circular signs* mean you are approaching a railroad crossing.



*Five-sided signs* mean you are near a school.



*Four-sided diamond-shaped signs* warn you of specific road conditions and dangers ahead. Many warning signs are diamond-shaped. Obey all warning signs regardless of their shape.

*White rectangular signs* mean you must obey important rules.

See pages 81 and 83 for additional examples.

## **SPEED LIMITS**

California has a “Basic Speed Law.” This law means 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.” You may never legally drive faster than the posted speed limit, even if you think it is safe to do so.

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.
- 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.

Driving faster than the posted speed limit, or than is safe for current conditions, on any road is dangerous and illegal. High speed increases your stopping distance. The faster you go, the less time you have to avoid a hazard or accident. The force of a 60 mph crash isn’t just twice as great as a 30 mph crash, it’s four times as great!

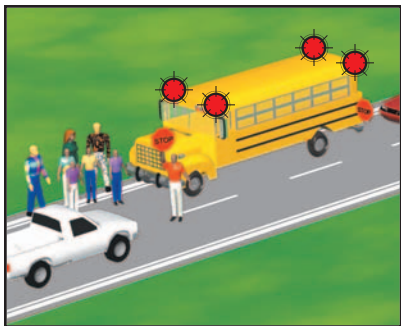
## REDUCED SPEEDS

### *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 “No. 1” (fast) lane. (See page 24.) Always move to the right when another driver is close behind you and wishes to drive faster.

### *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.



All vehicles must stop

### *Around children*

Within 500 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 ground has no fence and children are outside, never drive faster than 25 mph. Always drive more carefully near schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential areas because children may suddenly dart into the street.

Near schools, look for:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians.
- School safety patrols or school crossing guards and 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 and 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 to remain stopped as long as the red lights are flashing (VC §22454). If you fail to stop, you may be fined up to \$1000 and your driving privilege could be suspended for one year. If the school bus is on the other side of a divided or



multilane (two or more lanes in each direction) highway, 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**

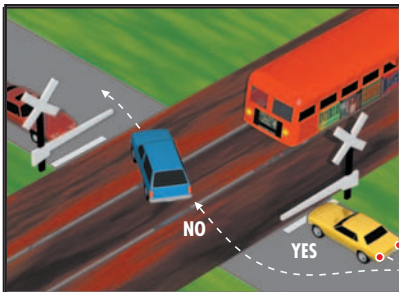
The speed limit in any alley is 15 mph.

### **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 flagman.

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, 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 crossing 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 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 around or under lowered crossing gates, even if you do not see a train. Wait for the gates to rise. If the gates are not working correctly, call the railroad emergency number posted near the crossing or notify the local police or California Highway Patrol.

### **Near light rail vehicle crossings**

The same rules apply to light rail vehicle crossings as to train crossings. Do not proceed across the tracks until you can see clearly in both directions and are sure that no other light rail vehicle or train is coming. Do not go around or under any closed gate. **NOTE:** Light rail vehicles are very quiet and move more quickly than freight 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 police 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.

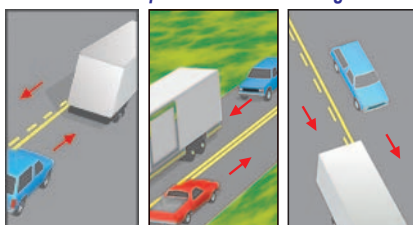
### **Business or residence districts**

The speed limit is 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.

### **Near Animals**

If you see animals or livestock, slow down and obey the person in charge of the animals. If you see a stray animal in your path, slow down or stop, if safe to do so.

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.

## **TRAFFIC LANES**

### **LINE COLORS**

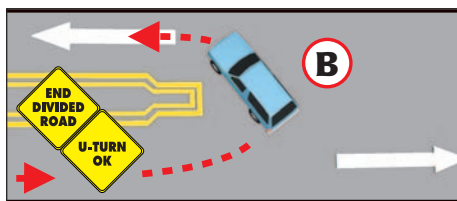
**Solid yellow lines** mark the center of a road used for two-way traffic.

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

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

- Turning left at an intersection.
- Turning into or out of a private road or driveway.
- In a carpool lane that has a designated entrance on the left.
- Instructed to drive on the other side of the road because your side is closed or blocked.

**Two sets of solid double yellow lines** spaced two or more feet apart are considered a barrier. Do not drive on or over this barrier or make a left turn or a U-turn



across it **except** at designated openings. (See “B” above.)

**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.

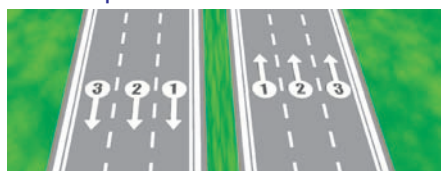
## CHOOSING A LANE

Traffic lanes are often referred to by number. The left or “fast” lane is called the “No. 1 Lane.” The lanes to the right of the No. 1 lane are called the No. 2 lane, then the No. 3 lane. etc.

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.

Example of numbered traffic lanes



Don’t 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 second changes may cause accidents. If you missed a turn, continue to the next intersection and work your way back to where you want to go.

## CHANGING LANES

Changing lanes includes:

- Moving from one lane to another.
- Entering the freeway from an onramp.
- 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.
- Look for vehicles or motorcyclists in your blind spot.
- Be sure there is enough room for your vehicle in the next lane.

## BICYCLE LANES

A bicycle lane is shown by a solid white line along either side of the street, four or more feet from the curb. The white line will usually be broken near the corner and the words “BIKE LANE” will be

Painted in the lane. When you are making a right turn and are within 200 feet of the corner or other driveway entrance, you must enter the bike lane for the turn. Do not drive in the bike lane at any other time.

You may park in a bike lane unless a “No Parking” sign is posted.

Pedestrians are not allowed in bike lanes when sidewalks are available. Drivers of motorized bicycles should use bike lanes carefully to avoid accidents with bicyclists.

## 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-travelled portion of the road or on the shoulder to pass. The edge of the main-travelled portion of the road has 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. *Never pass on the left if the driver is signaling a left turn.*

Right



Wrong

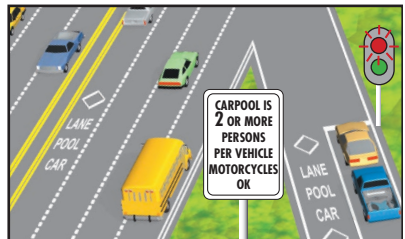


When passing a bicyclist, pass on the left. If you are in a narrow traffic lane, wait until the traffic clears in the opposite lane before passing a bicyclist. **Do not** squeeze past the bicyclist.

## CARPOOL LANES AND ONRAMPS

A carpool lane is a special freeway lane only for buses and/or carpools. You may use a carpool lane or onramp if your vehicle carries the minimum number of people required for the carpool lane **or** you drive a low-emission vehicle displaying a special DMV-issued decal. Motorcycle riders may use designated carpool lanes, unless otherwise posted.

Signs at the onramp or along the freeway tell you the minimum

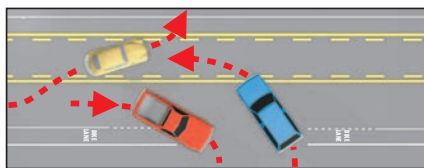


number of people required for the carpool and the hours the carpool requirement applies. The pavement in this lane is marked with a diamond symbol (◊) and the words “Carpool Lane.” These lanes are also known as high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Do not cross over double parallel solid lines to enter or exit any carpool lane except at designated entry or exit places.

Vehicles towing trailers are typically not allowed to use carpool lanes because they must drive more slowly and are usually restricted to the right-hand lane.

### CENTER LEFT TURN LANES

A center left turn lane is 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 when you turn left (VC §21460.5[c]) or start a permitted U-turn. 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 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 to start their left turn.

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

You may drive across a center left turn lane.

### 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.

## URNS

**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.

**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.

**Left turn against a red light on a one-way street only.** Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the limit line or corner. 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.

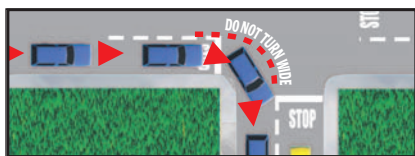
**Right turns.** To make a right turn, drive close to the right edge of the road. If there is a bike lane, drive into the bike lane no more than 200 feet before the turn. Watch for bicyclists or motorcyclists who may get between your vehicle and the curb. Begin signaling about 100 feet before the turn. 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. Complete your turn in the right lane.

**Right turn against a red light.** Signal and stop for a red traffic light at the limit line or at the corner. If there is no sign to prohibit the turn, you may turn right. Yield to pedestrians, bicyclists or other vehicles moving on their green light.

Example of a left turn



Example of a right turn



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

## EXAMPLES OF RIGHT AND LEFT TURNS

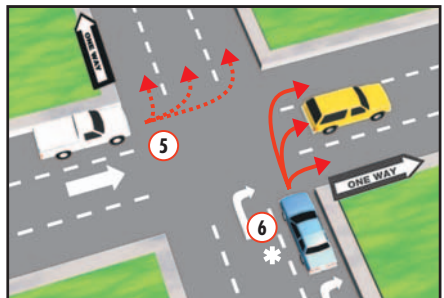
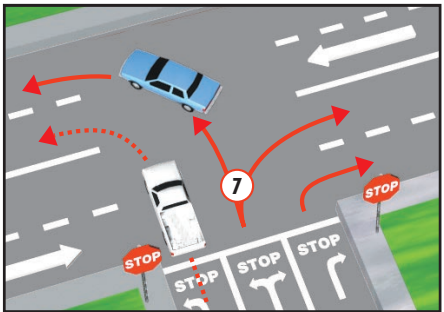
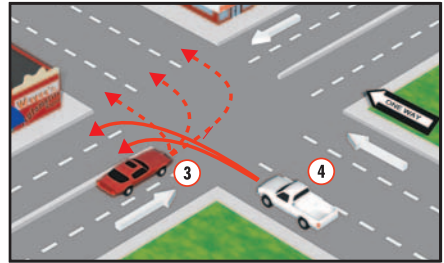
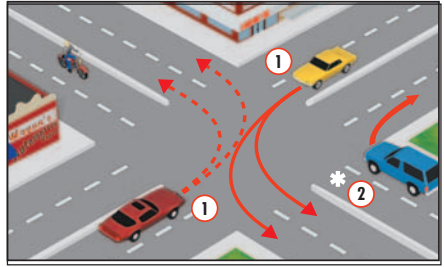
The numbers on the cars refer to the numbered sentences on these pages. Always use your turn signals.

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 in either lane of the cross street (shown by arrows), if safe. Use the center left turn lane if there is one. 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 bicyclists between your vehicle and the curb. Sometimes, signs or pavement markings will let you turn right from another lane (shown by \*).

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 is 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 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 (shown by \*).

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 and bicyclists inside your turn.

## LEGAL U-TURNS

A U-turn is turning 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 U-turn:

- Across a double yellow line when it is safe and legal.
- In a residential district:
  - if no vehicle approaching you is closer than 200 feet.

- whenever a traffic sign 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:

- On a divided highway by crossing a dividing section, curb, strip of land, or two sets of double lines.
- Where you cannot clearly see 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 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 or where openings are provided for turns.



# PARKING

## PARKING ON A HILL

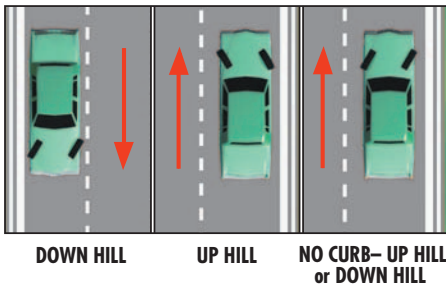
When you park:

- On a sloping driveway, turn the wheels so the car 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 back of the front wheel should gently touch the curb. Set the parking brake.
- Headed either uphill or downhill and there is no curb, turn the wheels so the car will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

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

## PARKING AT COLORED CURBS

Painted colored curbs have the following special parking rules:



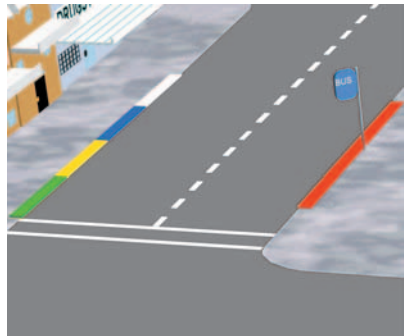
**White:** Stop only long enough to pick up or drop off passengers or mail.

**Green:** Park for a limited time. Look for a sign next to the green zone or for the time painted on the curb.

**Yellow:** Stop no longer than the time posted to load or unload passengers or freight. Drivers of noncommercial 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 who displays a placard or disabled person or disabled veteran license plates. Disabled people with a placard or special plates may park in special areas for unlimited periods of time, regardless of time restrictions. No one else may park there. Qualified persons may apply at any DMV office for a parking placard or special plates.



An identification card will be issued to holders of disabled person or disabled veteran license plates.

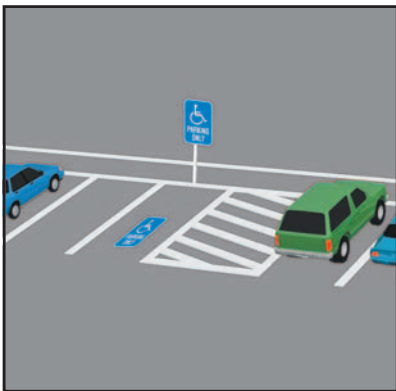
**NOTE:** Placard abuse results in loss of special parking privileges. It is also a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of up to \$1000, imprisonment in county jail for up to six months, or both.

## ILLEGAL PARKING

Never park or leave your vehicle:

- Where a “No Parking” sign is posted.
- On a marked or unmarked crosswalk, on a sidewalk, or in front of a driveway.
- Within three feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons **or** in front of or on a curb which 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

Example of crosshatched pattern



person parking space if it is painted in a crosshatched pattern. (VC §22507.8)

- 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 an 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. (VC §22651[f])

**NOTE:** If you must stop on a highway, park completely off the pavement and stay in your vehicle with the doors locked until help arrives. Leave enough space for other vehicles to pass freely.

Your car should be visible 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 car until you have stopped the engine and set the parking brake.
- Do not open the driver's side doors unless it is safe and you do not interfere with traffic. Look for passing bicyclists and motorcyclists. Do not leave the door open any longer than necessary.

## SIGNALING

Always signal to other drivers when you plan to turn left, right, slow down, or stop. Signals may be given by hand-and-arm positions or by using the vehicles signal lights. If bright sunlight makes the signal lights hard to see, use hand-and-arm signals also.

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.

Always signal:

- Your left or right turn during the last 100 feet before reaching

the turning point. Caution— Even though you signal, do not automatically assume that the space you wish to occupy is clear.

- Before every lane change. Also, look over your shoulder and check your blind spot before changing lanes.
- At least five seconds before you change lanes at freeway speeds.
- To let other drivers know your plans.
- Before pulling next to or away from the curb.
- When you change directions.
- Even when you don't see other vehicles around. A vehicle you don't see might hit you.

If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, start signaling when



**LEFT  
TURN**

**RIGHT  
TURN**



**SLOW  
OR  
STOP**

you are in the intersection. If you signal too early, the other driver may think you plan to turn into the intersection and he/she may pull out in front of you.

Remember to cancel your signal after turning if it doesn't turn off by itself.

## ADDITIONAL DRIVING RULES

### THINGS YOU MUST NOT DO:

- **Do not** drive a vehicle so loaded, either with property or people, that you cannot control it, see ahead, or to the sides of your vehicle.
- **Do not** carry anything in or on a passenger vehicle which extends beyond the fenders on the left side or more than six inches beyond the fenders on the right side. A load extending more than four 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 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.
- **Do not** dump or abandon animals on a highway. This crime punishable by a fine of up to \$1000, six months in jail, or both.
- **Do not** tow anyone who is riding a bicycle, in a wagon, on roller skates, on a sled, on skis, or on a toy vehicle.
- **Do not** litter the roadside. The fine is \$1000 and you may be forced to pick up what you threw away. Littering convictions show on your driving record.
- **Do not** wear a headset over, or earplugs in, both your ears.
- **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 or global mapping displays.
- **Do not** honk your horn unless it is a safety warning.
- **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 and 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 rear window, lower corner.
  - A five-inch square on the driver's side, lower corner.
  - Side windows behind the driver.
- **Do not** drive any motor vehicle into a designated wilderness area. (VC §38301.5)
- **Do not** drive with tinted safety glass. If you have sun-sensitive skin, you may use removable sun screens during daylight travel if 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. (VC §2817) The funeral procession is led by a traffic officer and all vehicles taking part in the procession have windshield markers to identify them.
- **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 they do not meet federal safety standards.

### THINGS YOU MUST DO:

- **You must** drive as far to the right as reasonably possible on narrow mountain roads, and 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, or low-visibility (1000 feet or less) require the use of windshield wipers.

# SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES

## 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 it.

### *Know What Is Ahead*

To avoid last minute moves, look down the road 10 to 15 seconds ahead of your vehicle so you can see hazards early. Constantly staring at the road just in front of your car is dangerous. As you scan ahead, be alert for vehicles around you. Use your mirrors. Allow enough space between you and the vehicle ahead to give

Where is the green vehicle headed?



yourself an “out.” Mistakes cause accidents.

In the city, 10 to 15 seconds is about one block. On the highway, 10 to 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 and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them.
- Signs warning of problems ahead.
- Signs giving you directions.

Turn your head before changing lanes, because your mirrors have blind spots. These blind spots can hide a motorcyclist or a bicyclist. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street or a car door opening.

**Watch for hazards.** Look beyond the car ahead of you. Don't develop a “fixed stare.” Keep scanning. Check your rear view mirrors every two to five seconds



The shaded areas are your blind spots.

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 onramps and interchanges. Be prepared for rapid changes in road conditions and traffic flow. Know which lanes are clear so you can use them if you need to.

**Don't be a tailgater!** Many drivers don't see as far ahead as they should because they follow too closely (tailgate), and the vehicle ahead blocks their view.

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

Most rear end accidents 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." This takes about 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. Then, if you need to, you can slow down gradually and avoid

braking suddenly—and being hit from behind by the tailgater!

- Driving on slippery roads.
- Following motorcyclists on wet or icy roads, on metal surfaces (i.e., bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and on gravel. Motorcyclists can fall more often on these surfaces.
- The driver behind you wants to pass. Allow room in front of your car so the driver will have space to move into.
- 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 on 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 car 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 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 cars coming from the left are closer to you.
  - look to the right.
  - take one more look to the left in case there is someone you didn't see the first time.
- Don't 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:

- Don't stay in another driver's blind spot. The other driver may not see your car and could change lanes and hit you.
- Avoid driving alongside other vehicles on multilane streets. Another driver may crowd your lane or change lanes without looking and crash into you. Drive either ahead of or in back of the other vehicle.
- If possible, make room for vehicles entering freeways even though you have the right-of-way.

- At freeway exits, don't drive alongside other cars. A driver may decide to exit suddenly or swerve back on.
- Keep a space between yourself and parked cars. Someone may step out from between them. A car door may open or a car may pull out suddenly.
- Be careful when riding near bicyclists. Always leave plenty of room between your vehicle and any bicyclist.

### ***Know What Is Behind You***

It is very important to check behind you before:

- Changing lanes. Be sure you are not getting in the way of vehicles in the lane you want to enter.
- Slowing down quickly. 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.
- Driving down a long or steep hill. On long, steep downgrades, watch for large vehicles. They can gather speed very quickly.
- Backing up. Backing up is always dangerous because it is hard to see behind your vehicle. When you back up or back out of a parking space:
  - check behind the car before you get in.





Having keys is ***NOT*** enough

Be Prepared.

Drive Safe.

Drive Smart.



DMV Teen Website

Find the answers

- turn and look over your right shoulder while backing. As a safety measure, also look over your left shoulder before you begin backing.
- do not depend only on your mirrors or only looking out a side window.
- back slowly to avoid accidents.

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 brake lightly a few times to warn the tailgater you are slowing down.

“Lose” the tailgater as soon as you can by changing lanes or slowing down enough to encourage the tailgater to go around you. If this does not work, pull off the road when it is safe and let the tailgater pass.

### **Clean Windows And Mirrors**

Keep your windshield and side windows clean inside and out. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty window make it hard to see out. Clear 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 can't 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 better.

### **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 car to a complete stop.
- At 35 mph, it takes about 210 feet to react and bring the car to a complete stop.

Adjust your driving speed to the weather and road conditions (basic speed law). (See page 20.) Turn on your lights during the day if it is hard to see or you can't see at least 1000 feet ahead.

### **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 slowly and use your **low beam** headlights. The light from high beams 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, pull **completely** off the road. Do not continue driving until you can see better. Turn off your lights or someone may see your taillights and drive into you.

## **DRIVING IN DARKNESS**

Drive more slowly at night because you cannot see as far ahead and you 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. **Don't drive with only your parking lights on.**

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

- Don't look directly into oncoming headlights.
- Look toward the right edge of your lane.

- Watch the oncoming car 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:

- Motorcycles are harder to see at night because most have only one taillight.
- More highway construction takes 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 towards 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 been washed away. Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. Turn on your windshield wipers, headlights, and defroster.

In a heavy rainstorm or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you can't see any farther than that, 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**

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 be going slowly enough to stop.

Any time your view is blocked by a hill or a curve, you should assume there is another vehicle ahead. Only pass 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 top of a hill because you can't see far enough ahead to know if it is safe to pass.

## **HORN, HEADLIGHTS, AND EMERGENCY SIGNALS**

### ***Use Your Horn***

- When necessary to avoid accidents. Don't honk at other times.
- To try to get "eye contact" with other drivers. Tap your horn to alert another driver who might turn in front of you.

- On narrow mountain roads, where you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead.

### ***Don't Use Your Horn***

- If a driver is going slowly, and you want him or her to drive faster. The driver may be ill, lost, or having problems with the vehicle.
- If slowing or stopping **your** car will prevent an accident. It's safer to use the brakes than honk the horn.
- To show other drivers that they made a mistake. Your honking may cause them to make more mistakes.
- Because **you** are angry or upset.

### ***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 headlights.
- On frosty mornings when other drivers' windows may be icy or "fogged."
- Any time you have trouble seeing other cars. Other drivers will be having 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 crash.
- When necessary to get another driver's attention.

## **Use Your Emergency Signals**

If you can see an accident 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 car breaks down on the road, make sure that other drivers can see it. If you are having car 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 car from behind. Don't stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Turn on your emergency flashers if you are not moving. If your car doesn't have 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 to 300 feet behind the car. 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 don't 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, don't even try to change a tire if it means you have to stand in a traffic lane.

## **FOLLOWING DISTANCES**

### ***Taking Dangers One At A Time***

Suppose there is an oncoming car to your left and a child on a bicycle to your right. Instead of driving between the car and the child, take one danger at a time. First, slow down and let the car pass. Then, move to the left to allow plenty of room before you 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 worst danger. Suppose there are oncoming cars to the left of you and a child on a bike to the right. The child is most likely to make a sudden move. Therefore, give him or her the most room by moving closer to the oncoming cars.

## **Problem Drivers**

Allow a 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 with windows covered by snow or ice
- Drivers who pass you when there is a curve or oncoming car ahead.
- Drivers about to be forced into your lane by a vehicle, a pedestrian, a bicyclist, an obstruction, or 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.
  - children, who often run into the street without looking.
  - drivers talking on cellular telephones or to their passengers.
  - drivers taking care of children, 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 AND OUT OF TRAFFIC**

Whenever you enter traffic, signal and be sure you have enough room to enter safely. You have to share space with traffic already on the road and you must know how much space you need to merge with traffic, to cross or enter traffic, and to 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 with freeway traffic** unless absolutely necessary. Freeway traffic has the right of way.

Any time you merge, you need a gap of at least four seconds. However, this gives both you and the other vehicle only a two-second following distance.

- Don't 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 to the side before changing lanes. Leave three seconds of space between you and the vehicle ahead. Make sure you can stop safely if you must.

- If you need to cross several freeway lanes, cross them one at a time. If you wait until all lanes are clear, you may cause traffic delays or an accident.

### **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 cars 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 cars or people blocking the path ahead or to the sides. You don't want to be caught in an intersection with traffic coming at you.

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

Don't start a turn just because an approaching vehicle has its turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn just beyond you. The signal may have been left on from an earlier turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles. Their signal lights don't always turn off by themselves. 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 freeway exit you want as well as the one that comes before it. To exit safely:

- Change lanes one at a time until you are in the proper lane to exit the freeway.
- Signal your intention to exit—approximately five seconds.
- Be sure you are at the proper speed for leaving the traffic lane—not too fast (so you won't lose control) and not too slow (so the flow of traffic can still move freely).

## **PASSING OTHER TRAFFIC**

### **Space To Pass**

Always signal before passing. Don't pull out to pass unless you know you have enough space to return.

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 an accident. Be patient when passing a bicyclist. Slow down and pass only when it is safe. Do not squeeze the bicyclist off the road.

At highway speeds of 50 to 55 mph, you need a 10 to 12 second gap in oncoming traffic to pass safely. At 55 mph, you will travel over 800 feet in 10 to 12 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1600 feet (or about one-third of a mile) to pass safely. It is hard to judge the



speed of oncoming vehicles one-third of a mile away.

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

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

Vehicles don't seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A vehicle that is far enough away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can really 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 aren't dangerously close to the car you have just passed. One way to do this is to look for the car 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. Don't count on having enough time to pass several cars at once. Also, don't count on other drivers making room for you.

## **SEAT BELTS**

Seat belts, both the lap belt and shoulder harness, must be in good working order. You may not operate your vehicle unless you

and all your passengers 16 years of age or over, or who weigh 60 lbs. or more, are wearing seat belts. If seat belts are not worn, *you* may be given a traffic ticket. Also, the driver will be given the ticket if a passenger, younger than 16, is not wearing his/her seat belt.

Always use your seat belts (including the shoulder harness) if your vehicle is equipped with them **and** even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. If you wear only a lap belt when driving, your chances of living through an accident are twice as good as someone who doesn't wear a lap belt. If you wear a lap and shoulder belt, your chances are three to four times better.

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

**WARNING:** Using seat belts reduces the chance of being thrown from your vehicle in case of an accident. If you don't install and use a shoulder harness with the seat (lap) belt, serious or fatal injuries may happen in some crashes. 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

Safety belts can reduce injuries and deaths. Many studies and actual crash tests have proven this. Have you heard these stories?

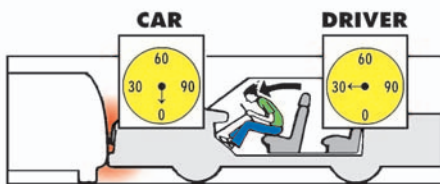
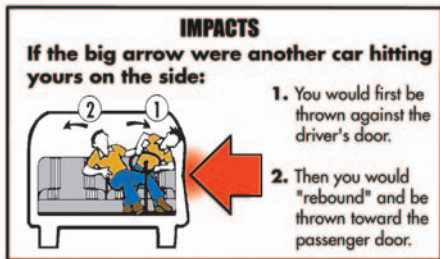
- “Seat belts can trap you inside a car.” It actually takes less than a second to take off a seat belt. This scare tactic often describes a car that caught fire or sank in deep water. A seat belt may keep you from being “knocked out.” Your chance to escape is better if you are conscious.
- “Seat belts are good on long trips, but I don’t need them if I’m driving around town.” Half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Don’t take chances with your life or the lives of your passengers. Buckle up every time you drive.
- “Some people are thrown clear in a crash and walk away with

hardly a scratch.” Your chances of surviving an accident are five times as good if you stay inside the car. A seat belt can keep you from being thrown into the path of another car.

- “I’m only going to the store. My little brother or sister doesn’t need a child’s car seat, anyway. It’s too much hassle.” Car accidents are the No. 1 preventable cause of death for children. Buckle them up in an approved safety seat. It’s worth it, and the law requires that you do.

The pictures illustrate what can happen in an accident. Your car stops, but you keep on going at the same speed you were traveling until you hit the dashboard or windshield. At 30 mph this is like hitting the ground from the top of a three-story building.

If you were struck from the side, the impact could push you back and forth across the seat. Belts and straps keep you in a better position to control the car.



## CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEM AND SAFETY SEATS

Any child under the age of six weighing less than 60 pounds must be secured in a federally approved child passenger restraint system and ride in the back seat of a vehicle.

A child under the age of six weighing less than 60 pounds may

ride in the front seat of a vehicle when:

- 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 installed properly in the rear seat.
- All rear seats are already occupied by children under the age of 12 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 under one year of age.
- Weighs less than 20 pounds.
- Is riding in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.

Children ages six and older but less than 16 and children under age six but who weigh more than 60 pounds, must be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system or safety belt which meets federal safety standards.

## **RIDING SAFELY WITH AIR BAGS**

Most people can take steps to eliminate or reduce 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 there are differences in the design and performance of side air bags, 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 an age- and weight-appropriate, *and correctly installed child restraint system*, 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 illegal to leave a child six years of age or younger unattended in a motor vehicle when:

- There are conditions that present a significant risk to the child's health or safety. Example: Leaving a child in a closed car on a very hot day.
- The vehicle's engine is running, the keys are in the ignition, or both. Children can start or move the car causing injuries and/or deaths to themselves or others.

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

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

# SHARING THE ROAD WITH OTHER VEHICLES

## LARGE TRUCKS AND RVs

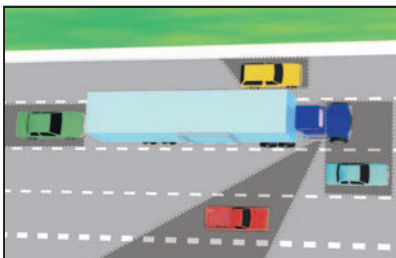
To reduce the chance of having an accident with a large truck or RV, you must be familiar with a big rig's physical capabilities and how they maneuver.

### *Braking*

Large trucks take longer to stop than a car traveling at the same speed. The average passenger vehicle traveling at 55 mph can stop in about 400 feet. However, a large truck traveling at the same speed can take almost 800 feet to stop. Don't 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.

### *Turning*

When any vehicle makes a turn, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the greater the difference. This is why big rig drivers must often swing wide to complete a right turn. When you



Shaded areas are the driver's blind spots.

follow a big rig, look at its turn signals before you start to pass. If you think the truck is turning left—wait a second and check the turn signals again. The driver may actually be turning right.

### *Trucker's Blind Spots—The "No Zone"*

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 serious blind spots and your vehicle can get lost in those blind spots. You block the trucker's ability to take evasive action to avoid a dangerous situation if you stay in those blind spots. Generally speaking, if you can't see the truck driver in his or her side mirror, he or she can't see you. These blind spots are often called the "NO ZONE."

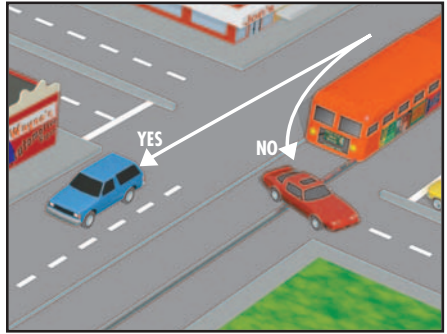
### *Maneuverability*

Trucks are designed to transport products and they 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. On multilane highways and freeways, large trucks usually stay in the center portion of the lane to help the flow of traffic. This also increases the trucker's options in case he or she must change lanes to avoid a hazard.

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 in danger. Slow down and take your turn entering the construction zone. Don't 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.
- **Don't linger alongside a truck when passing.** Always pass a large truck on the left side and after you pass the truck, move ahead of it. Don't linger, because if you do you make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the trucker to take evasive action if an obstacle appears in the road ahead.

Do not turn in front of light rail vehicles



- **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 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. Where will you go when the vehicle in front of you stops quickly?
- **Never underestimate 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 passenger vehicle vs. large truck accidents take place at intersections because the passenger vehicle driver did not realize how close the truck was or how quickly it was traveling.

Safety Zones are marked by dotted white lines



## BUSES, STREETCARS, AND TROLLEYS

Do not drive through a safety zone, which 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 police officer or traffic signal, you may pass, as long as it is safe to do so, and 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, because of their size,

require exceptional handling ability.

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.
- Maintaining a safe distance from the light rail vehicle if it shares a street with vehicular traffic.
- Looking for approaching light rail vehicles before you turn across the tracks. Complete your turn only if a signal (if installed) indicates you may proceed.

**NOTE:** Light rail vehicles can interrupt traffic signals, so do not proceed until the signal light indicates you may.

## EMERGENCY VEHICLES

You must yield the right of way to any police car, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren and red lights. Drive as close to the right edge of the road as possible and stop until

Yield to emergency vehicles.



the emergency vehicle(s) has 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 you can 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.

You must obey any traffic direction, order, or signal by a traffic or police officer or a fire fighter even if it conflicts with existing signs, signals, or laws.

It is against the law to follow within 300 feet of any emergency vehicle which is answering an emergency call.

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

## **SLOW MOVING VEHICLES**

Some vehicles are not designed to keep up with the speed of traffic. Look for these vehicles and adjust your speed before you reach them.

Farm tractors, animal-drawn carts, and road maintenance vehicles usually travel 25 mph or less. Slow-moving vehicles have



an orange triangle on the back. It looks like the sign in the picture.

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

Certain other types of slow-moving motorized vehicles (such as wheelchairs, scooters and golf carts) may legally operate on public roads. Adjust your speed accordingly.

## **ANIMAL-DRAWN VEHICLES**

Horse-drawn vehicles and riders of horses or other animals are entitled to share the road with you. 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 unusual dangers because motorcycles are hard to see



(many motorcycles keep their headlight on, even during daylight hours) and they require exceptional handling ability.

Here is how you can share the road safely with motorcyclists:

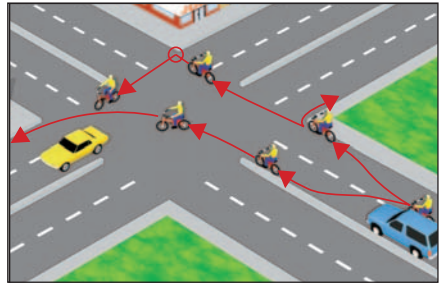
- When you change lanes or enter a major thoroughfare, make a visual check for motorcycles. Also use your mirrors. Motorcycles are small and they can easily disappear into a vehicle's blind spots.
- Allow a four-second following distance. You will need this space to avoid hitting the motorcyclist if he or she falls.
- Allow the motorcycle a full lane width. Although it is not *illegal* to share lanes with motorcycles, it is *unsafe*.
- When you make a turn, check for motorcyclists and know their speed before turning.
- 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.

## BICYCLES

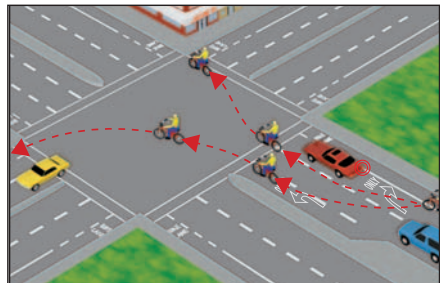
Bicyclists on public streets have the same rights and responsibilities as automobile drivers. Bicyclists are part of the normal traffic flow and are entitled to share the road with other drivers. Here are some critical points for drivers and cyclists to remember:

- Bicyclists:
  - must ride in the same direction as other traffic, not against it.
  - must ride in a straight line as near to the right curb or edge of the roadway as practical—not on the sidewalk.
  - must make left and right turns in the same way that drivers do, using the same turn lanes.

Turns for bicyclists



Intersections with special lanes



- may legally move left to turn left, to pass a parked or moving vehicle, another bicycle, an animal, or to make a turn, avoid debris, or other hazards.
- may choose to ride near the left curb or edge of one-way street.
- may use a left turn lane. 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.
- are lawfully permitted to ride on certain sections of freeways, **when signs are posted**. Be careful when approaching or passing a bicyclist on a freeway.
- Drivers must:
  - look carefully for bicyclists before opening doors next to moving traffic or before turning right.
  - safely merge toward the curb or into the bike lane.
  - **not** overtake a bicyclist just before making a right turn. Merge first, then turn.

## 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, so be

especially careful when turning corners or backing up.

Here are some suggestions for helping pedestrians who are blind:

- **Don't stop your car more than five feet from the crosswalk.** The blind pedestrian uses the sound of your engine as a guide, so drive up to the crosswalk to allow the person to hear you.
- **Don't give the blind pedestrian verbal directions.** The blind pedestrian listens to all traffic sounds before deciding to cross the street.
- **Don't wait too long for the blind pedestrian to cross the street.** If the person takes a step back and pulls in his or her cane, that's a definite sign that you should go.
- **Don't turn right on red without looking first.** Look for any pedestrian or other traffic first before starting your turn.
- **Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.**
- **Don't stop in the middle of a crosswalk.** This forces the blind pedestrian to go around your car and into traffic outside of the crosswalk.



- **Don't block any sidewalk.**
- **Don't honk at a blind person.** The blind person has no idea who you are honking at and may be scared by the noise.

## ROAD WORKERS

Highway workers warn you of their presence by using orange signs and wearing reflective vests. It's up to you to ensure both your own and the workers' safety by driving slowly through construction zones. Remember to "Slow for the Cone Zone." **The highway worker's life is in your hands.**



Vehicles used to maintain the highways are painted white with an orange stripe. Be prepared to slow down or stop for construction equipment. When you are in a construction zone, workers will be nearby.

One or more lanes may be closed when road work is going on. Orange signs and changeable message boards warn you that people and slow moving equipment are ahead. Signs will tell you which lanes are closed and a line of orange cones or drums will direct you to the open lanes. Do not cross the line of cones or drums.

Don't stop or slow down to watch road work. Keep going at the posted speed limit for the construction zone. Obey any special signs or instructions from flaggers in construction zones.

**NOTE:** Fines are doubled in highway construction or maintenance zones when workers are present. (VC §42010)

## VEHICLES WITH HAZARDOUS LOADS

Diamond shaped signs mean that the load on the truck is potentially dangerous (gas, explosives, etc.). (See page 81.) 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.



# AVOID HIGHWAY GRIDLOCK

## 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 these driving behaviors:

- Rubbernecking—slowing down to look at accidents 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 in the rearview mirror, talking on a cellular telephone, and reading the newspaper, etc.
- Poorly maintained vehicles— vehicles malfunctioning or stalling on freeways or running out of fuel.

## DEALING WITH ROAD RAGE

Road rage happens when one driver reacts angrily to another driver. Some suggestions for avoiding road rage situations are:

- Don't cut off other drivers.
- Don't drive slowly in the left (fast) lane.
- Don't tailgate.
- Don't 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.

## DEALING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Cellular telephones can be a lifesaver in an emergency. In non-emergency situations, they can be a great tool **if** used properly. Use your cellular telephone in the following safe and responsible ways:

- Drive to the side of the road to use your cellular telephone.
- Take advantage of your cellular telephone's features.
- Use hands-free devices.
- Have your phone within easy reach.
- Don't use the telephone during hazardous conditions.
- Pay attention to the road.
- Be sensible about dialing.
- Don't engage in distracting conversations.
- Use your phone to call for help.

## ACCIDENT AVOIDANCE

### Keep Your Car Visible

The driver's blind spots are shown on page 35. You cannot see vehicles in these blind spots if you only look in your mirrors. Turn

your head to see if a car is in one of these blind spots. Drive through another driver's blind spot as quickly as you can or drop back.

### **What Is The Road Like**

The faster your speed, the less control you have of your car. Rather than driving at the legal posted speed limit, consider what else may affect the safe operation of your car. 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 each road's conditions. That is one reason why inexperienced drivers have more "out-of-control" accidents than experienced drivers.

### **Curves**

On curves, there is a strong outward pull on your vehicle especially when the road is slippery. Rain, mud, snow, or gravel make the road slippery. If a speed limit is not posted before a curve, you must judge how sharp the curve is and change your speed. Slow down *before* you enter the curve. Braking on a curve may cause you to skid.

### **Water On The Road**

Slow down when there is a lot of water on the road. In a heavy rain at about 50 mph, 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—don't apply the brakes.

### **Slippery Roads**

Slow down at the first sign of rain. This is when many roads are the most slippery because oil and dust have not been 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 to ten miles 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. 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.
- 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 it is washed off.

## **Driving In Heavy Traffic**

Drive slower in heavy traffic so you can stop in the distance you have.

As a general rule, drive more slowly:

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

## **Traffic Speeds**

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

If you drive faster than other traffic, you will have to keep passing other cars. Each time you pass another car, there is more risk of an accident. True, it may not be a big risk, but if you are passing one car after another, the risks begin to add up. Studies have shown that speeding does not save more than a few minutes in an hour's driving.

Driving slower than other cars or stopping all of a sudden can be just as bad as speeding. It tends to make cars bunch up behind you and it could cause a rear-end

crash. If many cars are passing you, move into the right lane and let them pass.

## **HANDLING EMERGENCIES**

### **Skids On Slippery Surfaces**

A road that is normally safe can become dangerous when it's slippery. Ice and packed snow on the road can cause your car 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 can't control your car on a slippery surface, try to find something to stop you. 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 some bushes to stop.

To prevent skidding on slippery surfaces:

- Drive more slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead.
- 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 car drives against the pressure of the brakes. Do this 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 the vehicle, do not apply the brakes. Ease off the gas pedal and straighten the front wheels as the vehicle begins to straighten 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.

### **Steering Wheel Locking Device**

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

### **Causes Of Accidents**

The most common causes of accidents are:

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

### **ACCIDENTS**

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

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

It is against the law to follow closely behind any fire engine, police car, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle with a siren or flashing lights.

Never drive to the scene of an accident, fire, or other disaster to look. You may be arrested for doing this. You may also block the way for police, fire fighters, and ambulances.

Obey any order from a police officer or fire fighter even if you need to ignore normal traffic laws or signs.

### ***Involved In An Accident***

If you are involved in an accident:

- You must stop. Someone could be injured and need your help. If you don't 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 or persons involved, or to any 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 accident if someone is killed or injured.
- You (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must make a written report to DMV within 10 days, if required. (See page 62.)
- Leave a note with your name and address in the car or securely attached to it if you hit a parked vehicle or other property. Report the accident to the city police or, in unincorporated areas, to the CHP.

- Find the owner and report to authorities as mentioned above, if your parked vehicle rolls away and hits another vehicle.
- Call the nearest humane society or call the police or CHP, if you kill or injure an animal. Do not try to move an injured animal or leave an injured animal to die.

## **ACTIONS THAT RESULT IN LOSS OF LICENSE**

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

California's 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 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 carry written evidence of financial responsibility whenever you drive and you must show it to a peace officer after a citation stop or accident. You may have to pay a fine or have your vehicle impounded if you don't.



## INSURANCE

### *Insurance Requirements*

The law states you must be financially responsible for your actions whenever you drive and for all motor vehicles you own. Most drivers choose to have a liability insurance policy as proof of financial responsibility. If you have an accident not covered by your insurance or you have no insurance, your driver license will be suspended. If the driver is not identified, the owner of the motor vehicle involved will have his or her driver license suspended.

The minimum amount your insurance\* must cover per accident 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 make sure 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 many out-of-state insurance companies are not authorized to do business in California. Before you drive here, ask your insurance company if you are covered in

case of an accident. If you have an accident in California, all three of the following conditions must be met to avoid suspension of your driving privilege:

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

### *Reporting The Accident*

When you have an accident, report it to 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 make a report to DMV* using the Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California form (SR 1). The CHP or police will not make this report for you. Call 1-800-777-0133 and ask for the SR 1 or go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).

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\* Low cost automobile policies are available in Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and San Francisco counties. Please contact your insurance agent.

You must make this report:

- Whether or not you caused the accident and
- Even if the accident occurred on private property.

Your driving privilege will be suspended:

- If you don't make this report.
- For four years, if you did not have proper insurance coverage. During the last three years of the suspension, your license can be returned if you provide a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22) and maintain it during this period.

### **Accidents On Your Record**

Every accident reported to DMV by:

- Law enforcement shows on your driving record unless the reporting officer says another person was at fault.
- You, or another party in the accident, shows on your record if any one person has over \$750 in damage or if anyone is injured or dies.

It does not matter who caused the accident, DMV must keep this record.

### **Accidents, Insurance, and Minors**

If you are under 18 years of age, your parents sign your license application and assume financial responsibility for your driving

unless they ask DMV to cancel your license. When you reach age 18, your parents' liability automatically ends.

If you are involved in an accident you may be liable for civil damages and you may also be fined.

## **DRINKING WHILE DRIVING**

### ***Drinking And Driving Is Dangerous***

You lose your judgment when you drink alcohol or use drugs. It is often the first thing about you that changes. Loss of judgment, or good sense, affects how you react to sounds, what you see, and the speed of other vehicles around you. It takes about an hour for the body to get rid of each "drink." If a person has had more than one drink an hour, one hour of "sobering up" time should be allowed for each extra drink. *Better still, someone who has not been drinking should drive.* (See page 77.)

### **Drugs And Driving**

Much of what has been said about alcohol also applies to drugs. California's drunk driving law is also a drug 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 require you to take a blood or urine test. Drivers who refuse these tests are subject to

longer license suspensions and revocations. Anyone convicted of possessing, selling, or manufacturing illegal drugs is subject to a six-month suspension.

The use of any drug (and 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 you should drive after taking any medication. 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 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 in the trunk or in a place where passengers don't sit. Keeping an opened alcoholic drink in the glove compartment is specifically against the law.

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

Refer to page 77 for the Designated Driver Program.

### **Drivers Under 21 (Possession of Alcohol)**

If you are under 21 years of age:

- You may not have beer, wine or liquor in your vehicle unless accompanied by a parent or other person specified by law. Exception: You may carry alcoholic beverages while working for someone with an off-site liquor sales license.
- You may not have an alcoholic beverage in your possession in your vehicle. If you are caught with an alcoholic beverage in your vehicle, it 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 DMV to delay the issuance of your first 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 .05% or higher or driving while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage. On the first offense you will be required to complete the educational portion of a licensed driving-under-the-influence (DUI) program. A subsequent offense may require a longer DUI program and you will not have a restricted license to attend the DUI program.

### **Drivers of All Ages**

It is illegal to drive after consuming excessive 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.

### **BAC Limits**

It is illegal for any person to operate:

- a motor vehicle with a BAC of .08% or higher.
- a vehicle requiring a commercial driver license with a BAC of .04% or higher.

- a motor vehicle with a BAC of .01% or higher, if the person is under age 21.
- a motor vehicle with any measurable BAC, if the person is under age 18.

A court may suspend the driving privilege of a person under 21, delay issuance of a license to a person who does not have a license, or require DMV to revoke a person's driving privilege for DUI violations.

DMV can take an administrative action against your driving privilege after you are arrested **and** 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 payment of a fine, jail time, suspension or revocation of your driving privilege, and completion of a DUI program.

Similar provisions apply when you operate any vessel, aquaplane, water skis, or similar devices. (Harbors and Navigation Code) 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 take a test of your breath or blood or, under certain circumstances, your urine if you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a combination of both.

***Under 21 – Zero Tolerance for Alcohol Use.*** If you are under 21 you must submit to a preliminary alcohol screening (PAS) or one of the other chemical tests if you have been detained and a peace officer has reason to believe you were drinking alcohol. If your BAC measures .01% or a higher on the PAS, the officer may take your license, issue you a temporary license for 30 days, give you an order of suspension for one year, and then determine whether to release you, turn you over to juvenile authorities, or to contact your parents. You may request a DMV administrative hearing within 10 days.

If your PAS showed a BAC of .05%, the officer may require you to submit to either a breath or blood test. Some PAS devices provide a record which may be submitted in court as evidence. Other PAS devices do not provide a record, so the officer may ask for a breath or blood test after the PAS. You do not have a right to consult with a lawyer before selecting or completing a test.

If a subsequent test reveals a

BAC of .05% or higher, the officer will arrest you for DUI and detain you until you can be turned over to your parents or juvenile authorities. (VC §23140)

If the officer reasonably believes you are under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs and you have already submitted to a PAS and/or a 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 any of the tests, your driving privilege may be suspended for the refusal. Even if you change your mind later and agree to a test, your driving privilege may be suspended for both reasons, although both actions will run concurrently.

## COURT DUI CONVICTIONS

If you are convicted of driving with excessive BAC or while under the influence of either alcohol or drugs or both (DUI), you may be sentenced to serve up to six months in jail and to pay a fine between \$390 and \$1000 (plus about three times the fine in *penalty assessments*) the first time you are convicted. Your vehicle may be impounded and subject to storage fees.

On the first conviction the court will suspend your driving privilege for six months and require you to complete a DUI program before you can be reinstated. The length of the program may vary. If your BAC was .15% or higher and you already had a record of violations for other reasons **or** you refused to submit to a chemical test, the court may order you to complete a nine-month or longer program. 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 was injured as a result of your driving, the suspension period is one year.

In cases involving serious injury or death, you may be punished under California's Three Strikes Law. You also could face a civil lawsuit. All DUI convictions will remain on DMV's records for ten years and the courts and 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 driving under the influence even without a BAC measurement.

### ***Drivers 21 and Older—DUI Programs and Restricted Licenses***

Completion of a DUI program is required for all DUI convictions.

Generally, if you are over 21 and enroll in a DUI program, file a California Insurance Proof Certificate (SR 22), pay the restriction and reissue fees, DMV will issue you a restricted driver license which allows you to drive to/from work and during the course of employment (unless you hold a commercial driver license) and to/from a DUI program. However, if you would be considered a "traffic safety" or "public safety risk" if permitted to drive, the court may order DMV not to grant you a restricted driver license. Other actions against you may also prohibit the issuance of a restricted license.

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 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.

## THE COST OF A DRINK

*If you drink and drive, these are the approximate costs you could pay for a DUI:*

Vehicle towing -----	\$150
Storage-----	\$50 per day
Booking, fingerprinting, and photo fee-----	\$156
Driver license reinstatement fee -----	\$125
Car insurance increase ----- (3-year mandatory insurance requirement)	\$1000 per year
1st offense DUI fine-----	\$1588
Assessment for the court system-----	\$816
Community service fee -----	\$150
DUI victims fund -----	\$100
Alcohol abuse education fund -----	\$50
DUI classes-----	\$550
DUI Victims' Impact sessions -----	\$20
Time payment charge-----	\$35
Public transportation for one year-----	\$500 to \$800
<b>Minimum total fees, fines, and assessments -----</b>	<b>\$8240*</b>

\* If you use an attorney, the initial consultation could range from \$750 to \$1,000

**THERE IS NO SAFE WAY TO DRIVE WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE.  
EVEN ONE DRINK CAN MAKE YOU AN UNSAFE DRIVER.**



## ALCOHOL IMPAIRMENT CHART

### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS IS ILLEGAL\*

*There is no safe way to drive while under the influence. Even one drink can make you an unsafe driver.*

Drinking alcohol affects your **Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)**, change if you are drinking ale, malt liquors, fortified wines, port, brandy, It is illegal to drive with a **BAC** that is .08% or more (.04% or more if different proof liquor, or if you are drinking on an empty stomach, are you drive commercial vehicles; .01% or more if under 21). However, tired, sick, upset, or have taken medicines or drugs.

a **BAC** below .08% does not mean that it is safe or legal to drive. The charts below show the **BAC** zones for various numbers of drinks and time periods. **Remember:** "One drink" is a 1 1/2-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor (even if mixed with non-alcoholic drinks), a 5-ounce glass of 12% wine, or a 12-ounce glass of 5% beer. These "one drink" equivalents

total number of drinks you have had and compare that to the time shown. If your **BAC** level is in the grey zone, your chances of having an accident are 5 times higher than if you had no drinks, and 25 times higher if your **BAC** level falls in the black zone.

BAC Zones: 90 to 109 lbs.		110 to 129 lbs.		130 to 149 lbs.		150 to 169 lbs.		170 to 189 lbs.		190 to 209 lbs.		210 lbs. & Up																				
TIME FROM 1st DRINK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 hr																																
2 hrs																																
3 hrs																																
4 hrs																																

**Technical note:** These charts are not legal evidence of actual BAC. Although it is possible for anyone to exceed the designated limits, the charts have been constructed so that fewer than 5 persons in 100 will exceed these limits when drinking the stated amounts on an empty stomach. Actual values can vary by body type, sex, health status, and other factors.

**Legend:**  (.01%–.04%) **Possible DUI—Definitely unlawful if under 21 years old**  (.05%–.07%) **Likely DUI—Definitely unlawful if under 21 years old**  (.08% Up) **Definitely DUI**

\* VC §§23152, 23153, 23136, 23140 DUI=Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs. DL 606MO (REV. 10/2004)



- file an SR 22.
- pay the reissue and restriction fees.

## **ACTIONS AGAINST AN ADULT'S LICENSE**

If you are stopped by a police 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) bail. Paying bail is the same as a guilty plea.

If you ignore the traffic ticket and don't 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 DMV and this will also show on your driver record. Even one FTA or FTP can cause the department to suspend your license. Ending the suspension will cost you a 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.

## **POINTS ON THE DRIVER RECORD**

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

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

4 points in 12 months

6 points in 24 months

8 points in 36 months

Some examples of one point violations:

- A traffic conviction.
- An at-fault accident.

Some examples of two point violations:

- Reckless driving or hit-and-run driving
- Driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Driving while suspended or revoked

If you get too many "points," you will lose your driver license. A violation received in a commercial vehicle carries one and one-half times the point count normally assessed.

## **ACTIONS AGAINST THE PROVISIONAL LICENSE**

Teenagers as a group average twice as many accidents as adult drivers, while driving only half as many miles. This makes the teenage accident rate per mile four times as great as that of adult drivers.

Studies show that the traffic deaths of new drivers is a deadly

combination of their inexperience, their lack of familiarity with their car, and their need to push themselves and their vehicle to the limit.

### **Traffic Violations Increase Accidents**

Nearly half of the drivers between ages 15 and 19 are convicted of a traffic violation in their first year of driving.

Speeding (which often results in loss of vehicle control) is the most common moving violation for teenage drivers. About 50% of all their traffic convictions are speed violations.

When you violate traffic laws, you increase your chances of having an accident.

### **Teenage Traffic Deaths**

Drivers 15 to 19 years old have very high traffic *accident*, *injury*, and *conviction* rates. Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers. If you are under 18 years old, your risk of a fatal accident is about 2½ times that of the “average” driver. Your risk of an injury accident is three times higher than the average driver.

### **Keeping Your Provisional License**

DMV will be watching your driving record and will take actions based upon any accidents or violations as follows:

- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to appear in court, DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you appear in court.
- If you get a traffic ticket and fail to pay the fine, DMV will suspend your driving privilege until you pay the fine.
- If you have one “at fault” accident or conviction within 12 months, DMV will send you a warning letter.
- If you have a second “at fault” accident or conviction (or combination of both) within 12 months, you cannot drive for 30 days unless accompanied by your parent or other licensed adult who is at least 25 years of age.
- If you have a third “at fault” accident or conviction (or any combination) within 12 months, you will be suspended for six months and be placed on probation for one year.
- If you have additional “at fault” accidents or point count convictions while you are on probation, you will be suspended again. (Traffic law violations resolved in Juvenile Court are also reported to DMV.)
- If you are convicted of using alcohol or a controlled substance and you are between the ages of 13 and 21, the court tells DMV to suspend you for

one year. If you don't have a driver license yet, the court tells DMV to make you wait a year longer before you can apply for a license. You can also be required to go to a DUI program.

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

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

### **Vandalism—All Ages**

Vandalism is defacing property with paint or any other liquid or by scraping or writing on any surface. The court will suspend, restrict, or delay for one year the driving privilege of a minor age 13 years or older.

Adult drivers will also have their licenses suspended for one year if convicted of similar acts of vandalism.

### **Speed Contests**

If you drive a vehicle and engage in a speed contest which causes bodily injury to someone other than yourself, you are subject to a minimum of 30 days to a maximum of six months in jail.

### **Evading a Peace Officer**

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

If a person is convicted of causing serious bodily injury during the course of a police pursuit (VC §2800.3[a]), he/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 of not less than \$2,000 nor more than \$10,000
- both that fine and imprisonment

If a person is convicted of killing anyone during the course of a police pursuit (VC §2800.3[b]), he/she is subject to imprisonment in a state prison for four, six, or ten years.

### **Habitual Truant—Persons Age 13 To 18**

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.

### **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.

## TRAFFIC VIOLATOR SCHOOL DISMISSALS

When a driver is cited for a traffic violation, the judge *may* offer the driver the opportunity to attend a Traffic Violator School. Drivers may participate once in any 18-month period to have a citation dismissed from their driving record this way.

## SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION BY DMV

If you get too many negligent driver points, DMV will place you on probation for one year (which includes a six-month suspension) **or** revoke your driving privilege. (See page 70.) 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 license and you must show proof of financial responsibility.

DMV will revoke your license if you are convicted of hit-and-run driving or reckless driving which results in injury.

## SUSPENSION BY JUDGE

A judge may suspend a person's license if convicted of the following:

- Breaking speed laws or reckless driving.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Hit-and-run driving.
- Engaging in lewd conduct and prostitution in a vehicle within 1000 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 point count, many serious offenses in which a vehicle is used are punishable by heavy penalties such as fines and/or imprisonment.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## SAFETY FOR THE AGING DRIVER

Generally, older drivers, especially over the age of 70, have more crashes per mile than any other group except teenagers and young adults. Also, it is more difficult for older drivers to recover from injuries suffered in a crash. If you are concerned about an aging driver, see “Referring An Unsafe Driver.”

### *Health Problems Affecting Aging Drivers*

Health problems in older adults cause slower reaction time, reduced vision and hearing, impaired body movement, and slower decision making. Health conditions such as glaucoma, arthritis, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, etc., should be considered when making decisions about driving. In cases where a person’s driving must be restricted, DMV may issue a conditional license rather than revoking the person’s driving privilege.

### *Tips For Safer Driving*

Be aware of the changes in your driving ability and that of your aging family members or friends. Here are some things you can do:

- Don’t drive at night, at dusk, or in bad weather conditions.
- Use a seat cushion or talk to your vehicle dealer about extensions for brake and

accelerator pedals or other vehicle modifications.

- Make sure your windshield and headlights are clean to help reduce glare.
- Make sure your eyeglasses have an up-to-date prescription.
- Talk to your physician for recommendations to help you drive safely.
- Take a Mature Driver Program training class. (See page 78.) For a list of approved programs, go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).
- Attend a driver assessment or rehabilitation program.
- Never drink alcohol and drive because your body can be more sensitive to the effects of alcohol, especially when combined with medications.
- Consider using alternative means of transportation. Call your local Area Agency on Aging for a list of transportation providers in your area.

## REFERRING AN UNSAFE DRIVER

If you are concerned that a family member, friend, or other person can no longer drive safely, write to the address below. You may also use the Request for Driver Reexamination (DS 699) located on DMV’s website. Provide the person’s name, birth date, driver license number and current address, and explain what you observed that led you to believe

the person is an unsafe driver. The letter must be signed. Mail your letter to:

DMV  
Driver Safety Actions Unit  
M/S J234  
P.O. Box 942890  
Sacramento, CA 94290-0001

DMV will contact the person for a reexamination. A driving test will be given to the person when the:

- Physician reports the person has lapses of consciousness.
- Traffic officer requests a DMV review and the officer believes the driver is incapable of operating a vehicle safely.
- Family member makes a good-faith report to DMV stating the driver cannot safely operate a vehicle.

## VISION

You need good vision to drive safely. If you cannot see clearly, you cannot judge distances or spot trouble, so you won't be able to do something about it. 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 at night. Some 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.

## 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 car but you cannot see it, especially if it is in your blind spots.

Even people with good hearing cannot hear well if the radio, CD, or tape deck is blaring. While driving, do not wear a headset or earplugs in both ears.

Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice them. Drivers who know they are deaf or hearing-impaired can adjust. They can learn to rely more on their seeing habits.

## ALERTNESS

When you are tired, you are less alert. The body naturally wants to sleep at night and most drivers are less alert at night, especially after midnight. You may not see hazards as soon or react as quickly, so your chances of having a crash are greater. If you are sleepy, the only safe cure is to get off the road and get some sleep.

To keep from getting tired on a long trip:

- Get at least a normal night's sleep before you start.
- Don't take any drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Don't drive long hours and 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.
- Roll your window down and get some fresh air.

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 and over-the-counter, are potentially dangerous. 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. This applies to both prescribed and over-the-counter medications.

## **HEALTH AND EMOTIONS**

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

Discuss poor vision, heart problems, diabetes, or epilepsy with your physician and follow his or her advice. Tell 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, dementia (mental disorders) conditions, or related disorders. (Health & Safety Code §103900)

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

## MISCELLANEOUS

### DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM

The Designated Driver Program is an anti-DUI effort that works. The program encourages one individual to abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages for an outing so that he or she can be responsible for transporting the other members of the group 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 anytime.

### DIPLOMATIC DRIVER LICENSES

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

### DRIVING SCHOOLS

When learning to drive, you should seek qualified instruction either in bona fide public or private high schools or in state licensed professional driving schools.

Professional schools and instructors in California are licensed by the DMV after meeting rigid qualifying standards. Schools must carry liability insurance, be bonded, and maintain complete records for DMV inspection. Vehicles are subject to annual inspection. Instructors must pass a qualifying 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.

### FREE ID CARDS FOR P&M CONDITIONS

Drivers who are no longer able to drive safely because of a physical or mental (P&M) condition may exchange their valid driver license for an ID card for no fee, if certain guidelines are met. Call 1-800-777-0133 for additional information.



## IDENTIFICATION (ID) CARD

DMV issues ID cards to 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. (See page 6.) For a replacement or renewal ID card, bring a photo ID. The fee for a REGULAR ID card is \$21. The card is good until the sixth birthday after it is issued.

If you are age 62 or over, you may obtain a **free** Senior Citizen ID card good for 10 years.

See page 3 to change your address.

## MATURE DRIVER PROGRAM

The Mature Driver Program is an eight-hour course available from some insurance companies for drivers aged 55 and older. The course covers a variety of topics of special interest to the mature driver.

Your insurance company may offer discounts for those who complete the class and receive a completion certificate.

## PEDESTRIAN RESPONSIBILITIES\*

Yield the right-of-way to vehicles when you:

- Cross or walk where intersections or crosswalks are not marked.

- “Jaywalk” across a street between intersections, where no pedestrian crosswalks are provided.

**Remember:** Making eye contact with the driver does not mean that the driver will see you or 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 take care for the safety of any pedestrian—but if the driver can’t stop in time to avoid hitting you, the law won’t help you.

Always obey traffic signals. Whether the intersection has pedestrian signals or the usual traffic lights, you must obey the pedestrian rules. (See page 19.) At an intersection where traffic is not controlled by signals, drivers are required to yield the right of way to you within any crosswalk, marked or unmarked.

When a signal first changes to green or “WALK” for you, look



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\*Joggers must obey pedestrian rules.

left, right, and then left again, and yield the right of way to any vehicle in the intersection before the signal changed.

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 is no sidewalk, walk facing the oncoming traffic (see the picture). Don’t walk or jog on any freeway where signs tell you that pedestrians are not allowed.

At night, make yourself more visible by wearing white clothing and retroreflective materials, or carrying a flashlight.

## RECORD CONFIDENTIALITY

Most information in your driver license file 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, however, remain confidential.

You may obtain a copy of your

driving record at any DMV office for a fee and by providing valid identification.

## VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

If you follow the suggestions below, you can minimize your chances of becoming the victim of vehicle theft. In the United States, a vehicle is stolen an average of every 21 minutes. Vehicle theft costs the victim time and money and it costs society by increasing insurance premiums. Also, vehicle thieves often use the stolen vehicles to commit other crimes.

Vehicle thefts seem to occur more often where large groups of cars are parked for extended periods of time, such as shopping centers, colleges, sporting events, movie complexes, and large apartment complexes. Vehicle thefts can occur anytime—at random, on different days of the week and various times of the day.

Here are some tips you can use to avoid being the victim of vehicle theft:

- **Never leave:**
  - your vehicle running and unattended, even to dash into a store.
  - the keys in the ignition or in the vehicle. Don’t leave them inside a locked garage or in hide-a-key boxes.

- valuables 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's parked in front of your house.
  - park in high-traffic, well-lighted areas, whenever possible.
  - report a stolen vehicle immediately to the police.
- **Suggestions:**
  - Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes.
  - Investigate the purchase of 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. The police will need this information, if your vehicle is stolen.

## 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



## 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

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
**DMV**  
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

online at  
[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)

**Teen  
Driver**

Key [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)  
for service 24/7:

- Visit our teen web site
- Take a sample driver license test
- Access forms, brochures, and handbooks
- Find answers to your questions
- Make appointments

Call 1-800-921-1117  
for DMV's Automated  
Voice Recognition  
service

- Make an appointment

Call 1-800-777-0133  
for service 24/7:

- Listen to general information
- Make an appointment
- Request forms, brochures, and handbooks

**Remember...**

**Speed Kills**

# For **FREE** help with **INSURANCE** questions or problems...

call the insurance experts at the

California Department of Insurance.

Whether you have general questions

about auto, home or life insurance,

need to verify the license of

and agent/broker or check the

status of an insurance company,

the experts are working for you.

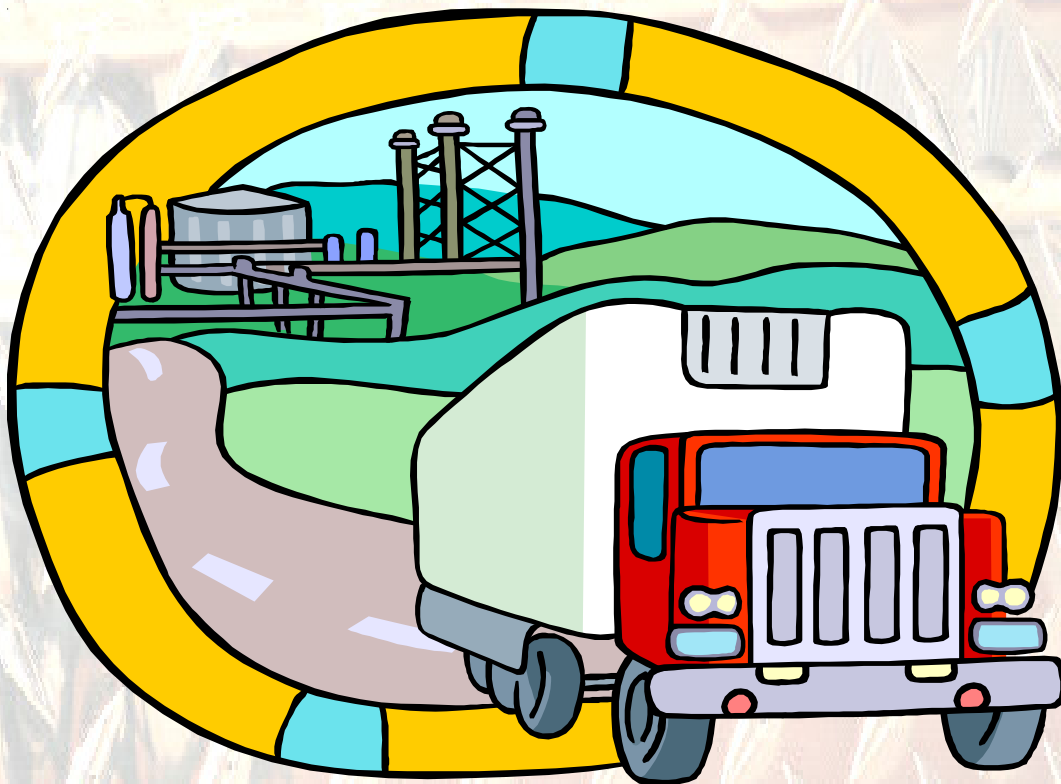


# 800-927-HELP

[www.insurance.ca.gov](http://www.insurance.ca.gov)

Do you have the special skills and professional attitude to safely operate large trucks and buses?

California's licensing and testing requirements for drivers of commercial vehicles equals or exceeds federal standards. Only professional drivers receive and keep a Commercial Driver License (CDL).



Visit the Commercial Driver License Information Pages and see if you have what it takes to drive the big trucks. Click on Commercial Licenses at [www.DMV.ca.gov](http://www.DMV.ca.gov)



## SAMPLE TEST 1

1. Increase the space in front of your car when you:
  - Drive slower than the posted speed limit
  - Follow another passenger vehicle
  - Are being tailgated
2. Your turn lane is controlled by a green arrow. Which of the following statements is true?
  - All vehicles and pedestrians in the intersection must yield to you
  - Oncoming vehicles are stopped by red lights
  - You may make your turn without checking traffic
3. The extra space in front of a large truck is needed for:
  - Other drivers when merging onto a freeway
  - The truck driver to stop the vehicle
  - Other drivers when they want to slow down
4. Roads are slippery after it first starts to rain. When the road is slippery you should:
  - Avoid making fast turns and fast stops
  - Test your tires' traction while going uphill
  - Decrease the distance you look ahead of your vehicle
5. Accidents can happen more often when:
  - All vehicles are traveling about the same speed
  - One lane of traffic is traveling faster than the other lanes
  - One vehicle is traveling faster or slower than the flow of traffic

**Go online at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) for more sample tests.**

1. Are being tailgated.
2. Oncoming vehicles are stopped by red lights.
3. The truck driver to stop the vehicle.
4. Avoid making fast turns and fast stops.
5. One vehicle is traveling faster or slower than the flow of traffic.

**ANSWERS**

## SAMPLE TEST 2

1. When you drive through a construction zone, you should:
  - Slow down to watch the workers
  - Decrease your following distance
  - Pass the construction zone carefully and not “rubberneck”
2. To make a right turn at the corner, you:
  - May not enter the bicycle lane
  - Should only merge into the bicycle lane if you stop before turning
  - Must merge into the bicycle lane before turning
3. If a traffic signal light is not working, you must:
  - Stop, then proceed when safe
  - Stop before entering the intersection and let all other traffic go first
  - Slow down or stop, only if necessary
4. A pedestrian is crossing your lane but there is no crosswalk. You should:
  - Make sure the pedestrian sees you and continue driving
  - Carefully drive around the pedestrian
  - Stop and let the pedestrian cross the street
5. Always use your seat belt:
  - Unless the vehicle was built before 1978
  - Unless you are in a limousine
  - When the vehicle is equipped with seat belts

1. Pass the construction zone carefully and not “rubberneck.”
2. Must merge into the bicycle lane before turning.
3. Stop, then proceed when safe.
4. Stop and let the pedestrian cross the street.
5. When the vehicle is equipped with seat belts.

**ANSWERS**

A blurred image of a motorcycle on a road, serving as a background for the text.

***BASIC***

## ***RIDERCOURSE***

The California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP) is California's official motorcycle safety and training program administered by the California Highway Patrol.

CMSP offers the **Basic *RiderCourse*** for beginning motorcyclists and an **Experienced *RiderCourse Suite*** for riders who are interested in improving their skills.

Call 1-(877) RIDE-411 for the  
*Ridercourse* nearest you.