

Right-of-Way Concepts

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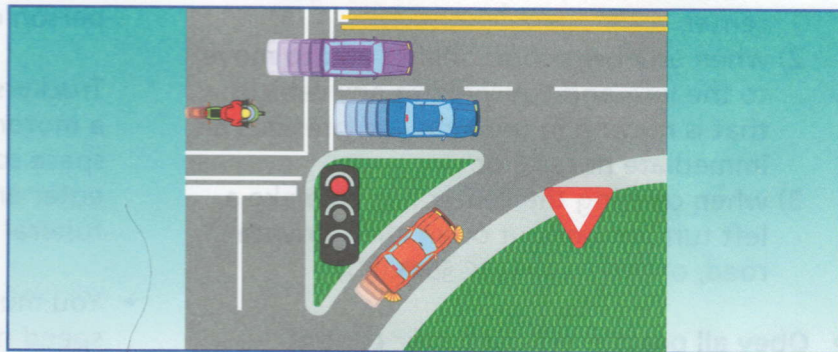
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The adoption, promulgation, and enforcement of new laws is an important step towards road safety. These laws, whether federal, state, or municipal, govern the operation of the Highway Transportation System or HTS. They establish norms for all motorized vehicles and their manufacturers. Rules for road sharing and safety, from professional drivers to pedestrians, are specified in these laws.

The intersection is a high risk location because two or more road users often wish to occupy it simultaneously. There are right-of-way rules to control these situations. Are you certain other road users know the rules? Will they obey them? Should you yield?

Law enforcement is the responsibility of the police agencies who patrol the HTS. Judges and the court systems will apply the penalties.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO KNOW AND APPLY RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES AND PRINCIPLES AT:

- intersections.
- merge situations.
- a variety of special situations.
- railroad crossings.

2-A

Right-of-Way

Traffic laws are important because they promote the orderly operation of the HTS. They govern the behavior of all road users and assist in predicting what others will do. They include basic driving rules, rules of right-of-way, and speed laws.

BASIC DRIVING RULES:

- Always drive on the right half of the roadway, unless:
 - 1) you are passing another vehicle,
 - 2) an obstruction obliges you to move to the left, and you yield to any vehicle that is moving in the lane and presents an



immediate hazard,

- 3) you are driving on a multi-lane roadway, or
- 4) you are driving on a one-way roadway (TRC §545.051).

- When **driving slower than the normal speed** of other vehicles, you must drive in the right-hand lane, or as close as possible to the right curb or edge of the road, unless:

- 1) you are passing another vehicle, or
- 2) you are preparing to turn left at an intersection or into a private road or driveway (TRC §545.051).

- When driving on a two-way road with two or more lanes in each direction, you must not drive to the left of the center line, except:

- 1) when a traffic control device designates the use of a specified lane to the left of center,
- 2) when an obstruction obliges you to move to the left, and you yield to any vehicle that is moving in the lane and presents an immediate hazard, or
- 3) when crossing the center line to make a left turn into or out of an alley, private road, or driveway (TRC §545.051).

- **Obey all posted, official traffic control devices and signals**, unless:

- 1) otherwise directed by a traffic or police officer, or
- 2) operating an authorized emergency vehicle (TRC §544.007).

- **When traffic lights are defective**, all drivers must stop (four-way stop), unless otherwise directed by a traffic or police officer.

- **Comply with a lawful order or direction of:**

- 1) a traffic or police officer, or
- 2) a school crossing guard who is performing crossing guard duties in a school crosswalk (TRC §542.501).

- Pass other vehicles on the left only when the way is clear. On multilane one-ways, passing or overtaking on the right is permitted.

- **Always communicate your intention** to turn, change lanes, or start from a parked position

by using your turn, hand or other electrical signals. You must signal continuously for not less than 100 feet of movement before a left or right turn. You must not use a turn signal when your vehicle is parked or disabled, nor as a courtesy or "do not pass" signal to other motorists (TRC §545.104).

- Make sure that maneuvers can be **performed safely before executing them** (TRC §545.402, §545.415).

- When following another vehicle, you must **maintain a reasonable, prudent, and assured clear distance**, taking into account vehicle speed, the road, weather and traffic conditions. You must be able to stop without colliding with the preceding vehicle or veering into another vehicle, object, or person on or near the roadway.

Truckers, drivers towing trailers, or drivers in a motorcade or caravan must leave sufficient space so that passing road users may safely enter and occupy the space (exception for a funeral procession) (TRC §545.062).

- You must **drive at a careful and prudent speed** not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the traffic, surface, and width of the highway and any other condition then existing. You must not drive at a speed greater than that which will permit a stop within the assured clear distance ahead.

- In ideal conditions, the **prima facie** (legal non-posted) **speed limits are:**

- 1) 30 mph in an urban residential district,
- 2) 15 mph in an alley,
- 3) 20 mph in school zones, unless otherwise posted (sign),
- 3) 75 mph on numbered highways and interstates,
- 4) 60 mph in daytime and 55 mph at night on roadways outside an urban area (not numbered), and
- 5) a school bus outside an urban area:
 - 50 mph on an interstate (60 mph with a DOT inspection sticker),
 - 50 mph on other roads (TRC §545.352).



- You may not back your vehicle unless the movement can be made safely without interference with other traffic. It is illegal to back on the shoulder or roadway of a limited or controlled access highway (TRC §545.415).
- You may drive on an improved shoulder to the right of a roadway, if that operation is necessary and may be done safely, but only:
 - 1) to stop, stand, or park,
 - 2) to accelerate to enter the flow of traffic,
 - 3) to decelerate before making a turn,
 - 4) to pass another vehicle that is slowing or stopped, disabled, or preparing to make a left turn,
 - 5) to allow another vehicle to pass,
 - 6) as permitted or required by an official traffic control device, or
 - 7) to avoid a collision,
 - 8) exception for emergency vehicles, police patrol, and bicycles (TRC §545.058).
- You may drive on an improved shoulder to the left of a divided or limited-access or controlled-access highway, if that operation may be done safely, but only:
 - 1) to slow or stop when your vehicle is disabled, and traffic or other circumstances prohibit the safe movement to the right shoulder,
 - 2) as permitted or required by an official traffic control device, or
 - 3) to avoid a collision,
 - 4) exception for emergency vehicles, police patrol, and bicycles (TRC §545.058).
- You may not leave your vehicle unattended without:
 - 1) stopping the engine,
 - 2) locking the ignition,
 - 3) removing the key from the ignition,
 - 4) setting the parking brake effectively, and
 - 5) if standing on a grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the roadway (TRC §545.404).

RIGHT-OF-WAY

Right-of-way is the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway, and is determined by a set of rules and guidelines as listed for merges,

intersections, and special conditions. *The prime directive requires a road user to yield the right-of-way to avoid a collision.*

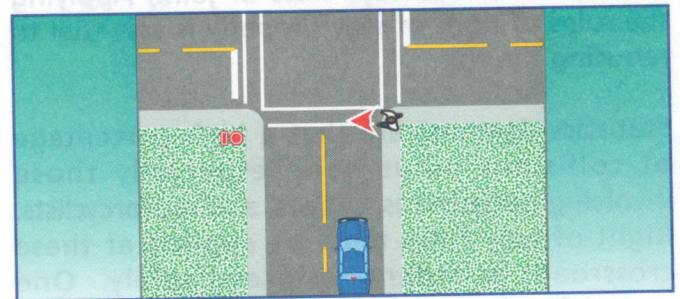
In Texas, right-of-way is defined as "the right of one vehicle or pedestrian to proceed in a lawful manner in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian that is approaching from a direction, at a speed, and within a proximity that would cause a collision, unless one grants precedence to the other" (TRC §545.401(8)).

The rules apply when more than one road user wants to occupy the same space; however, **the law never specifies who has the right-of-way, rather, it specifies who must yield.**

If for example, road user A is required by law to give the right-of-way to B in a given situation, and does not do so, A may be cited and fined. Road user B does not "have" the right-of-way until it is given, and should act accordingly, even though B may be upset by this flagrant breach of the law and act of discourtesy.

In Texas, failure to yield is the number two listed cause of crashes.

PEDESTRIANS



- You must yield to pedestrians on a marked or unmarked crossing if:
 - 1) no traffic control signal is in place or in operation,
 - 2) the pedestrian is:
 - on the half of the roadway in which you are traveling,
 - approaching so closely as to be in immediate danger.

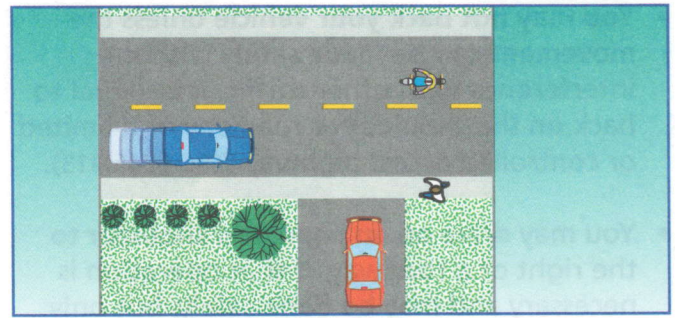
Drivers approaching from the rear of a vehicle that is stopped to yield to pedestrians may not pass (must stop) (TRC §552.003).



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PRIVATE PROPERTY OR ROAD

- You must not drive upon or through private property in order to avoid compliance with a posted, official traffic control device.
- When entering or crossing a road, street, or highway from an alley, building, private road, driveway, or private property, you must stop prior to the sidewalk (or edge of the road), and yield to all vehicles and pedestrians who constitute an immediate hazard (TRC §545.155).



Other right-of-way concepts will be discussed in the rest of this chapter, under specific headings.

SAFETY TIPS



Right-of-way principles are based on giving the privilege of passage to others. Drivers must realize that the right-of-way cannot be taken, as it is not a right to proceed. Failure to yield is the number two listed cause of crashes in Texas!



Intersections

Intersections are the most dangerous areas of the HTS, because large numbers of a wide variety of road users meet there regularly. (Intersections are defined as any location where two or more roadways cross or join.) Applying the rules of right-of-way properly is essential to reducing the risk.

Statistics demonstrate that a high percentage of collisions occur here, especially those involving pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. Right-of-way rules must be applied at these crossroads in order to proceed safely. One reason for the large number of collisions is the failure of drivers to apply the SIPDE System on approaching the intersection and when interacting with other road users at the crossroad.

APPROACH TO THE INTERSECTION

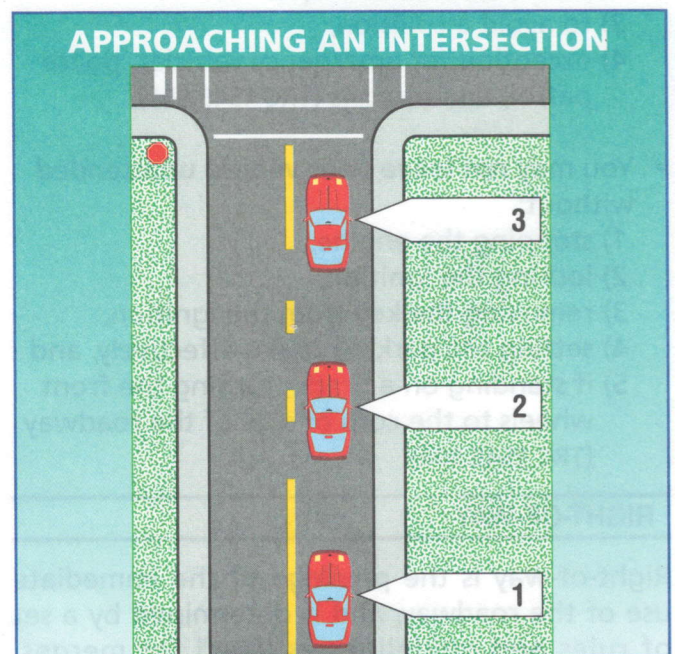
The first step (vehicle 1 - diagram) is to search and identify the intersection, and whether or not official traffic controls are posted.

CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

Controlled intersections have signs or signals

posted to control the flow of traffic and help determine right-of-way. Most commonly - STOP signs, occasionally - YIELD signs and very frequently- signal lights may be used depending on the volume of traffic. Identification is easy!

NEARING THE INTERSECTION



Search the intersection (**vehicle 2** and below) to identify other road users, lines of sight, and whether the areas to the left and right are open and clear. Be prepared to yield to anyone who has already entered the intersection or who is so close as to constitute a hazard.

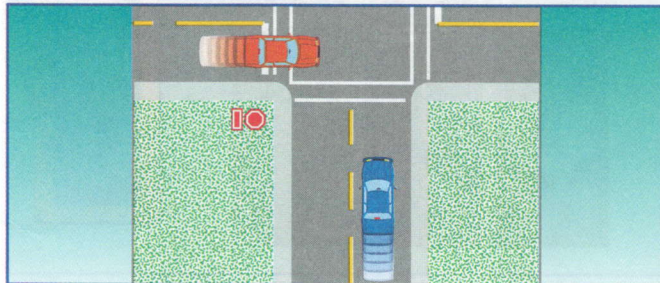
Adjust speed, maintain lane position and remain parallel to the curb.

AT THE INTERSECTION

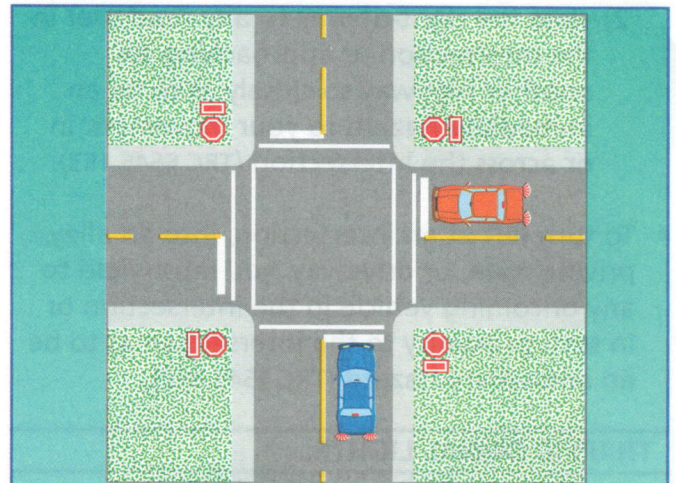
Search (**vehicle 3**) left, center, right and then left again, repeat as needed. Check for changing frontal areas, other road users, or any other factor that may present a risk. If your line of sight is clear, return to the accelerator and proceed through the open space area crossing the intersection.

INTERSECTIONS:

- You must obey all traffic control devices and signals unless otherwise directed by a police or traffic officer.
- You must yield to avoid a collision or to any other vehicles approaching on a road without traffic controls (TRC §545.151).
- Drivers approaching an intersection must yield to any road users within the intersection (TRC §545.151).



- Vehicles approaching at the same time must yield to the vehicle on the right (this also applies at a 4-way stop) (TRC §545.151); Exceptions:
 - 1) vehicles at a terminating road such as at a T-intersection, must stop and yield;
 - 2) drivers on a single lane or two-lane road intersecting with a divided roadway must yield; and
 - 3) drivers on an unpaved road at an intersection with a paved road must yield.



AT A FOUR-WAY STOP INTERSECTION

1. The vehicle that arrives at the intersection first, should go first.
2. The vehicle that enters the intersection first, should go first.
3. If two or more vehicles stop simultaneously, the vehicle on the left should yield to the vehicle on the right.

**AFTER STOPPING,
ROLL SLOWLY FORWARD.**

**OTHER ROAD USERS
CANNOT READ YOUR MIND.**

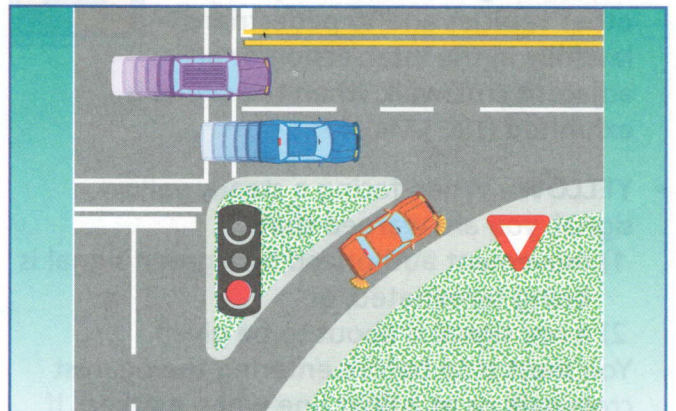
**ANNOUNCE YOUR INTENT TO PROCEED
WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN.**

PROCEED IF THE WAY IS CLEAR.

• YIELD SIGN

Approaching an intersection on a road controlled by a yield sign, you must:

- 1) slow to a speed that is reasonable under the existing conditions, and



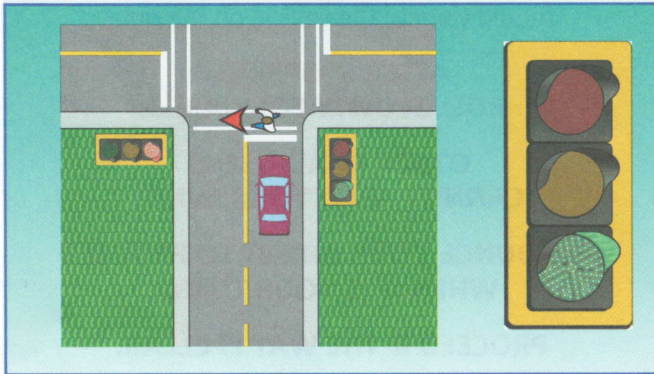
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2) yield the right-of-way to any road user in the intersection or approaching on another highway so closely as to be an immediate hazard to your movement in or across the intersection (TRC §545.153).

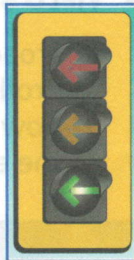
- To turn left at an intersection, into an alley, private road, or driveway, you must yield to any oncoming vehicle in the intersection or in such proximity to the intersection as to be an immediate hazard (TRC §545.152).

TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS:

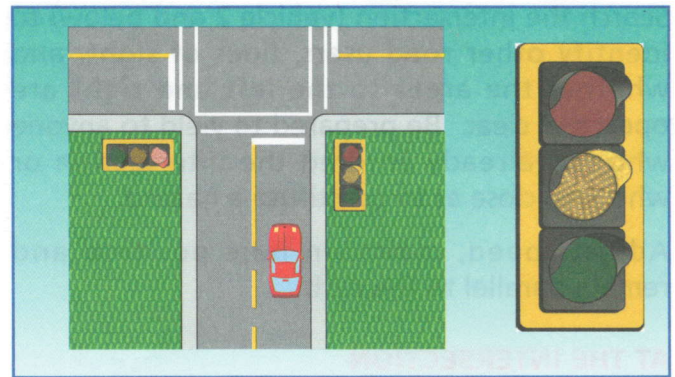
- GREEN** - When facing a circular green signal, you may proceed straight, or turn right or left, unless a sign prohibits the turn, and as long as it is safe to enter. You must yield to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully in the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk when the signal is exhibited.



When facing a green arrow signal, displayed alone or with another signal, you may cautiously enter the intersection to move in the direction permitted by the arrow or other signal. You must yield to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully in the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk when the signal is exhibited (TRC §544.007).

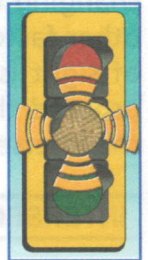


- YELLOW** - When facing a steady yellow signal, you are warned that:
 - 1) movement authorized by a green signal is being terminated, or
 - 2) a red signal is about to be given.
 You must stop before entering the nearest crosswalk or at a limit line when marked. If

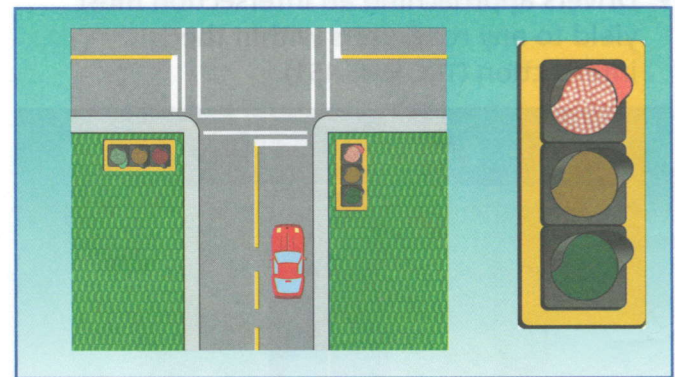


the stop cannot be made in safety (point of no return), then proceed cautiously through the intersection (TRC §544.007).

When facing a flashing yellow signal, you may proceed through an intersection or past the signal only with caution (TRC §544.008).



- RED** - When facing only a steady red signal, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line, or if no stop line, before entering the crosswalk or the near side of the intersection. If not turning, remain standing until an indication to proceed is shown.



If you intend to turn, after stopping, standing until the intersection may be entered safely, and yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians in an adjacent crosswalk and other traffic in the intersection, you may:

- 1) turn right, or
- 2) turn left, if the intersecting roads are both one-way streets, and a left turn is permissible (TRC §544.007).

When facing a flashing red signal, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line. In absence



of a stop line, you must stop before entering the nearest crosswalk. In the absence of a crosswalk, you must stop at the place nearest the intersecting roadway where you have a view of approaching traffic on the cross street. The right to proceed is subject to the rules at a stop sign (TRC §544.008).



- When traffic lights are inoperative, all drivers approaching from any direction must stop, and apply the same right-of-way rules as at a four-way stop intersection.

UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

An uncontrolled intersection does not have any traffic control devices present. (They are usually found in light traffic areas - residential.) As such, drivers may not notice the intersection, or they may assume that the cross traffic has some control device.

To avoid errors, search ahead and look for breaks in the normal environment - hedges, fences, lights, parked vehicles, etc. Check for traffic controls; if not present, reduce speed and check the cross traffic before proceeding.



Once the intersection is identified, check traffic to the rear (rear-view mirror), then adjust speed (cover the brake) and adjust lane position to minimize risk. Be prepared to stop your vehicle.

- When approaching an intersection that is not controlled by any traffic control devices, you:
 - 1) must stop, yield, and grant the immediate use of the intersection to any vehicle that has entered from the right, or is approaching from the right in a proximity that is a hazard, and
 - 2) may, after stopping, proceed when the intersection can be entered safely without interference or collision with traffic using a different street or roadway (TRC §545.151).



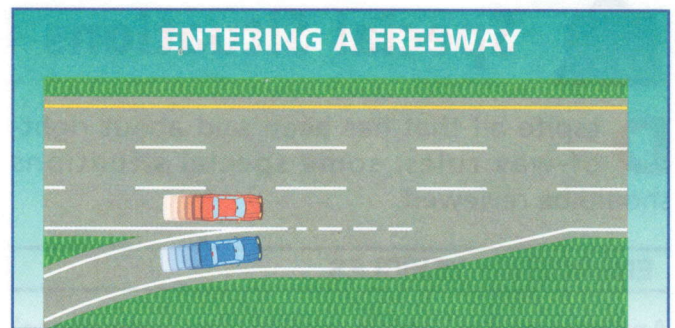
Merge Situations

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has studied a category of collisions that they call Lane Change/Merge (LCM) crashes. They estimate there are 630,000 LCM crashes with 225 fatalities annually nationwide.

About 60% of the drivers involved in the collisions did not see the other vehicle; about 30% of the drivers involved misjudged the position or speed of the other vehicle before they collided (see Chapter 7).

ENTERING/EXITING A LIMITED-ACCESS HIGHWAY

Merging with the flow of traffic on an expressway, or exiting from the freeway, can be



a hazardous situation (see Chapter 17). Ideally, you should try to avoid conflicts by thinking ahead, and adjusting speed or position (plan your arrival). Should a conflict arise, the basic rule to follow is to yield to the driver on the fast moving roadway.



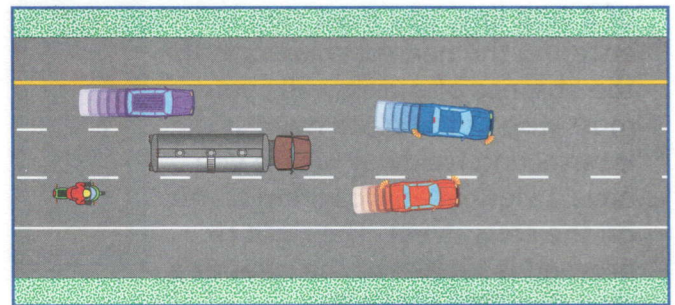
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- When driving on an access or feeder (frontage) road, you must yield:
 - to any vehicle entering or about to enter the access or feeder road from the highway (exiting the expressway), or
 - to any vehicle leaving or about to leave the access or feeder road to enter the highway (or expressway) (TRC §545.154).

DRIVING ON MULTI-LANE ROADWAYS

The procedures for changing lanes safely are explained in detail in Chapter 12. With respect to right-of-way, the vehicle changing lanes must always yield to any vehicle already in the lane.

On a roadway divided into three or more lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, the conflict situation of two vehicles, from opposite sides of the lane, attempting to change into the same lane occurs quite frequently (see diagram above right). The rule of thumb is for the vehicle entering the lane of traffic from the right to yield to the vehicle entering the same



lane of traffic from the left. (The vehicle entering the lane from the faster-moving lane should be given the right-of-way.)

TRAFFIC CIRCLE

When you approach a traffic circle, you must yield to the traffic already engaged in the circle, whether continuing around or exiting the traffic circle. Once driving in the traffic circle, drivers traveling on the outside of the circle must yield to drivers traveling closer to the interior of the circle (in traffic circles with two or more lanes of traffic).

SAFETY TIPS



You must know the right-of-way rules; however, do not expect all road users to obey them. Expect the unexpected. Add the concepts of cooperation and courtesy to the basic rules. Think ahead and try to avoid situations that could cause conflicts. You'll diminish the risk and drive more safely.



Special Situations

Despite all that has been said about right-of-way rules, some special situations should be reviewed.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Any emergency vehicle (police, fire, ambulance) that has its siren operating and/or its lights flashing, must be given the right-of-way.

These vehicles are responding to an emergency; **it may be a matter of life and death. Cooperate!** These drivers have a difficult job as it is! **It is the law!**

- On the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle using audible and visual signals, or if a police vehicle using only audible signal, you must, unless otherwise directed by a police officer:
 - yield the right-of-way,
 - immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection, and
 - stop and remain standing until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed (TRC §545.156).



2

Statistics



An average of 26 school-age children die in school transportation-related crashes each year - 7 occupants of school transports and 19 pedestrians. Half of the school-age pedestrians killed in school transportation-related crashes were between 5 and 7 years old (from 1991 to 2001). (NHTSA - DOT HS 809 478)

SCHOOL BUSES

Following a school bus, if the overhead yellow lights are flashing and the bus is still moving, you must prepare to stop. (The bus is preparing to stop - communication of intentions.)

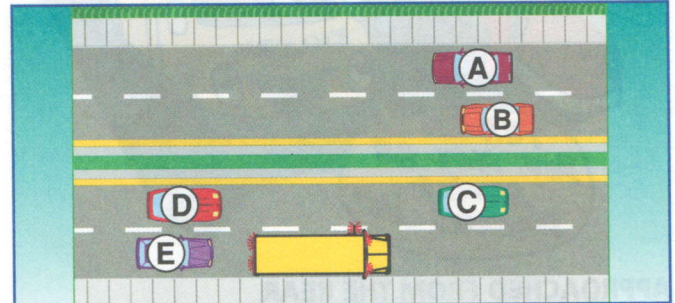
Approaching a railroad crossing behind a school bus, also be prepared to stop (the bus must stop at all railroad crossings).



When overtaking or meeting a school bus that is stopped with overhead red signal lights flashing, you are required to stop not less than 20 feet from the stopped bus, and remain standing until the bus resumes motion, the visual signals are no longer actuated, or the driver signals you to proceed.



You need not stop when meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway (divided by a median). As illustrated above right, vehicles A and B would not be required to



stop. A stop is not required when meeting or passing a school bus upon a controlled-access highway where the school bus is stopped in a loading zone and pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

PEDESTRIANS

Don't turn your vehicle into a deadly weapon. You should always be on the lookout for people on foot, whether or not they have the right-of-way.

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable and least trained of road users. Many do not drive, nor do they understand the characteristics of motorized vehicles. They may not know or obey the traffic rules and signals.

Children are unpredictable. They are smaller and more difficult to see. Their poor judgment and comprehension of the consequences may lead them to run into the roadway. Watch for them near playgrounds, schools, at the side of the road, or in many areas where they may use the street as their playground.

The elderly and the physically or visually impaired decide more slowly and take more time to cross the roadway. Avoid honking the

SAFETY TIPS



Reduce speed and search carefully when school children and school buses are visible in your environment. Stop whenever the school bus signals are flashing. Wait until the bus moves, then check carefully before proceeding.



Statistics



In 2014, **486 pedestrians were killed** and 4,426 were injured in traffic crashes in Texas. On average, a pedestrian is killed every 18 hours, and injured every 2 hours. (TXDOT) Older pedestrians (ages 70+) accounted for 18 percent of fatalities; nearly one-fifth of all traffic fatalities under age 16 were pedestrians. Alcohol involvement in nearly one-half of fatalities- either the driver or the pedestrian. (NHTSA - DOT HS 811 002)



horn or revving the engine; these noises are distracting and cover important audible cues used by the blind.

Also avoid blocking designated crosswalks. This is an inconvenience, makes crossing a street especially difficult for the blind, and violates the rule of always yielding to pedestrians. Be patient! Give them the extra time required.

Adults, who should know better, often jaywalk or dart into the roadway without looking (especially in bad weather, when jogging, or when hurrying). Be aware and watch for them.

Always yield to pedestrians, even when they make right-of-way errors in crossing the roadway. Cooperate and stop your vehicle when other drivers stop to yield to pedestrians crossing. Reduce your speed and increase your space from the curb in areas where they are present.

Communicate; tap your horn from a distance to attract their attention. Make sure they see you (make eye-to-eye contact). At intersections, always check for pedestrians before entering a turn or proceeding straight.



PEDESTRIANS

- You must yield to pedestrians on a marked or unmarked crossing if:
 - 1) no traffic control signal is in place or in operation,
 - 2) the pedestrian is:
 - on the half of the roadway in which you are traveling,
 - approaching so closely as to be in immediate danger. (TRC §552.003).
- Drivers approaching from the rear of a vehicle that is stopped to yield to pedestrians may not pass (must stop) (TRC §552.003).
- Pedestrians must obey traffic signs or signals, exercise due care, and not obstruct traffic; this does not remove the obligation for drivers to exercise due care for their safety.
- On roads without sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic.
- Drivers must yield to all pedestrians before driving over or on a sidewalk (TRC §545.155).

SAFETY TIPS



Search carefully for pedestrians and always yield the right-of-way to them. They are very vulnerable in any conflict or crash.



- Skiers crossing at a slow pace or riders (horseback) at a crossing marked by signs are considered pedestrians.

WHITE CANE LAW:

Drivers failing to yield to the visually impaired (white cane or guide dog) or physically handicapped, or fail to exercise all reasonable and prudent precaution to avoid injury, are guilty of a misdemeanor.



Railroad Crossings

Railroad crossings require drivers to exercise extra caution. In Texas, there are more miles of track, and more car and train collisions than in any other state in the nation.

Trains travel on railroad tracks which are private property. Trains need a very long distance to stop once the engineer applies the brakes. They interact with the HTS at railroad grade crossings where the train has the right-of-way. A train can cross at any time. Combine these four concepts. You will realize that safety at railroad crossings is your responsibility.

Texas law requires:

- When approaching a railroad crossing, you must stop not closer than 15 feet or farther



than 50 feet from the nearest rail if:

- 1) a clearly visible railroad signal warns of the approach of a train,
- 2) a crossing gate is lowered, or a flagger warns of the approach/passage of a train,
- 3) a railroad engine, approaching within 1,500 feet of the crossing, emits an audible signal, and the engine is an immediate hazard because of its speed or

Statistics



A total of **287 crashes** involving trains were reported in Texas during 2014. Of those crashes, 16 involved fatalities with **20 persons killed**, there were also **79 serious injuries** and 103 lesser injuries in other crashes. (2014 Operation Lifesaver)

SAFETY TIPS



Never drive around lowered gates – it's illegal and deadly. Never race a train to the crossing – even if you tie, you lose. Do not get trapped on the tracks. Only proceed if you are sure you can cross completely without stopping (the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides). At a multiple track crossing, check the other track, in both directions.

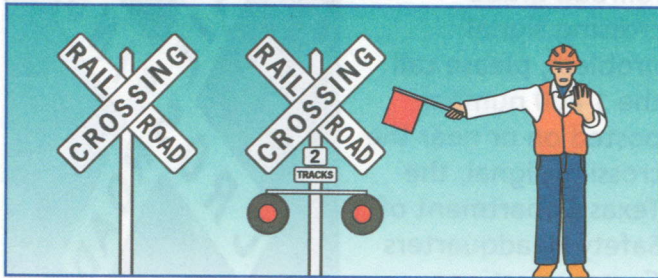


proximity to the crossing,

- 4) an approaching train is plainly visible, and is in hazardous proximity to the crossing, or
- 5) you are required to stop by:
 - a) other law,
 - b) an official traffic-control device, or
 - c) a traffic-control signal.

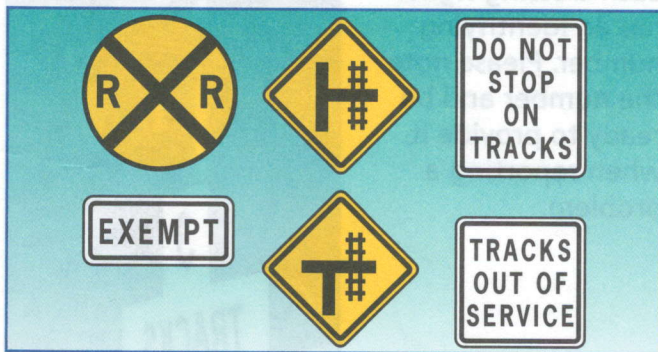
You must remain stopped until it is safe to proceed (TRC §545.251).

- When approaching a crossing with a posted crossbuck (no other signals, gates, etc.), you must yield the right-of-way to a train in hazardous proximity to the crossing, and proceed at a speed that is reasonable for the existing conditions. If required for safety, you must stop at a clearly marked stop line (if no line, 15 feet to 50 feet from the nearest rail) (TRC §545.251).



ADVANCE WARNING

Don't take signs for granted. Reduce speed, search the controls at the crossing as well as the lines of sight. Turn off the radio, lower a



window and listen for trains. Reduce speed further when a line of sight is closed in either direction.

CROSSING CONTROLS

In Texas, 65 to 70% of crossings only have a crossbuck posted. The rest have flashing signals, bells, crossing gates and on occasion, a stop sign or flagman, depending on the circumstances at the particular crossing. The small tab under the crossbuck indicates the number of sets of rails. Trains emit an audible signal 1,500 feet before reaching a crossing.

CROSSING SAFETY

Never pass as you near a crossing. Stop at least 15 feet from the nearest rail if a train is approaching. (Prepare to stop behind a school bus, bus or vehicle transporting hazardous cargo, as they must stop at all times.) After a train passes, check for any additional trains before crossing. Make sure you can clear the tracks before starting to cross; never stop on the tracks. (Standard transmission - avoid shifting gears on the tracks.)

Trains cannot stop in time! You must protect yourself and your passengers at this high-risk intersection!

Additional safe driving procedures at railroad crossings are:

- If a railroad crossing is marked only with a crossbuck - **reduce speed, look both ways, and listen** for the audible train whistle. If a train is approaching - **STOP**; if not, proceed only upon exercising due care.
- If red lights are flashing at the level crossing - **STOP**. If a train approaches, remain stopped until the train passes by and the lights stop flashing.

SAFETY TIPS



Do not be fooled by the optical illusion – the train you see approaching is closer and faster moving than you think! Never race a train to the crossing - even if you tie, you lose. Do not get trapped on the tracks - only cross if you can cross completely. The train is 3 feet wider than the tracks on both sides. Never drive around lowered gates - it's illegal and deadly!



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SAFETY TIPS



Railroad crossings require special precautions! Trains cannot stop in time! You must protect yourself and your passengers at this high-risk intersection! Always slow down and check both ways! If there is more than one set of tracks, check carefully before proceeding.

- If railroad crossing arms have been lowered - **STOP**. You must wait until the train has passed and the gates are raised.



- **Never stop on the tracks.** If your car stalls on the tracks and you cannot restart it (if no train is approaching), get out and try to push it off the tracks. If you cannot push it off the tracks, get help.

If a train is approaching, get out quickly and get clear of the tracks. Run in the direction from which the train is approaching to avoid flying debris (staying clear of the tracks).

- **Be sure all tracks are clear** before you proceed across. There may be two or more sets of tracks. One train could be blocking the view of another train (closed sightline) approaching from either direction.
- Remember, trains do not and cannot stop at crossings - **they must be given the right-of-way**. Even if the locomotive engineer sees you, a freight train moving at 55 miles per hour can take more than a mile to stop once the emergency brakes are applied (about 18 football fields!).

- Audible signals or whistles may be difficult to hear as you approach a crossing. You should **open your window, turn off your radio, and listen carefully.**
- You should **ALWAYS EXPECT A TRAIN!** Freight trains do not follow set schedules.

GRADE SIGNAL PROBLEM

If you encounter a railroad grade crossing signal problem, please call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal, the Texas Department of Safety Headquarters Communications Center in Austin, your local police department, or county sheriffs' office. Each crossing signal has an identifying number. Please note the number and be ready to provide it when reporting a problem.

