

Controlling Traffic Flow

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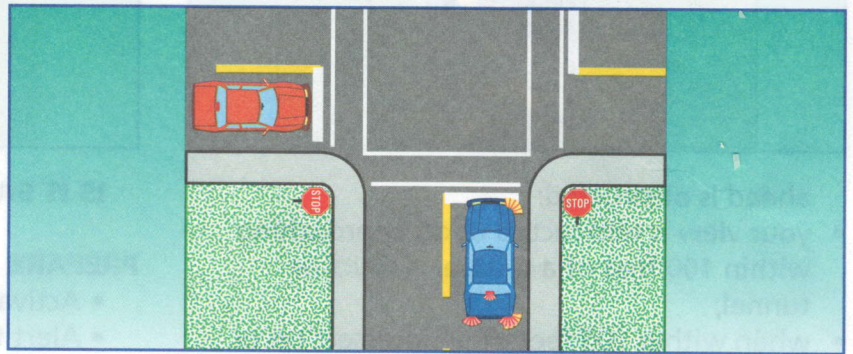
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A good driver always communicates with other road users. A surprise move often results in conflicts and collisions. Moreover, all drivers expect other road users to abide by the rules. When they do not, crashes occur. To reduce risk, you must learn to expect the unexpected.

In this chapter, you will examine the rules that apply to a wide variety of maneuvers, from interacting with others when you are passing, are being passed, or are performing a turning maneuver to the rules governing stopping, standing, and parking.

You must obey maximum and minimum speed limits; however, good drivers know when to adjust their speed to road and weather conditions, as well as to the traffic density. This is especially important in winter driving.



AFTER COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER, THE STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO LIST THE LAWS RELATING TO AND TO DESCRIBE :

- the processes for passing and being passed.
- right and left turn procedures.
- procedures for stopping, standing, and parking
- speed limits and related stopping procedures in all conditions.

4-A

Passing and Being Passed

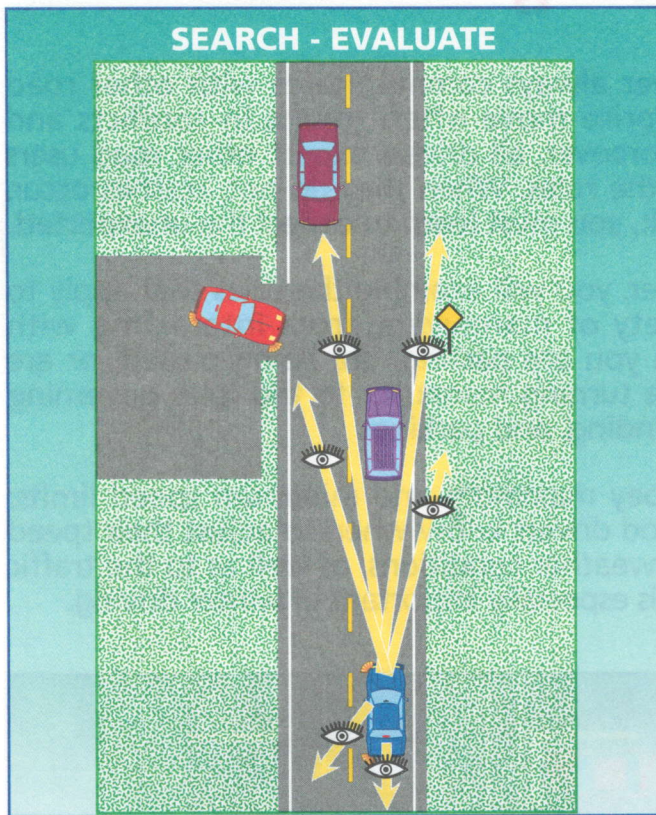
Passing is one of the most dangerous driving maneuvers. It is not always safe to pass. Before passing, you must decide whether it makes sense under the existing road, traffic, and weather conditions. You should be patient and wait until the time is right. Collisions that result from improper passing can be deadly. (See Chapter 16 for more details.)

You should never drive on the left half of the roadway (pass) when:

- you must cross a solid yellow line;
- a "no-passing" sign is posted or the triangular "no-passing zone" sign is posted on the left;
- approaching a hill or curve where your view



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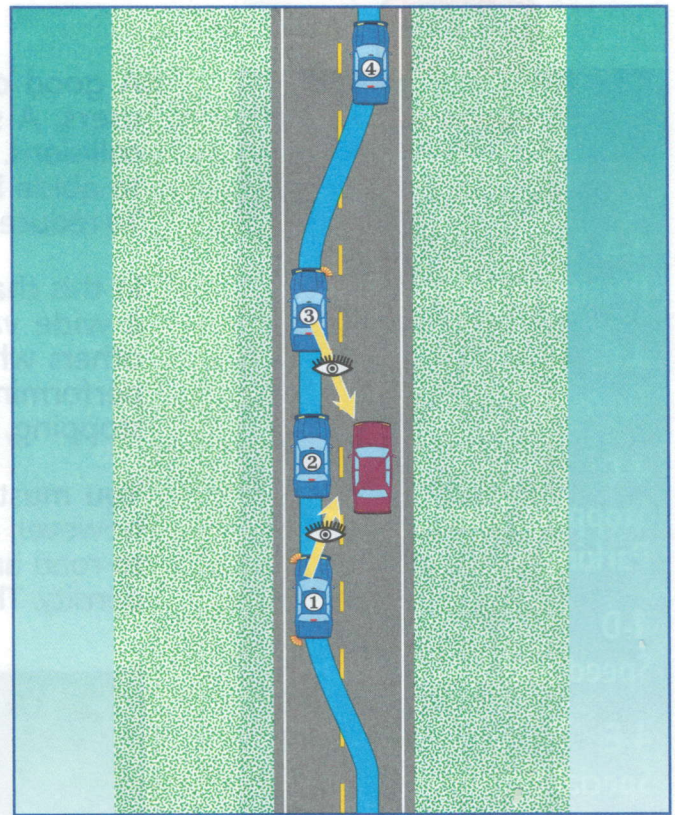
- ahead is obstructed;
- your view is obstructed upon approaching within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct or tunnel;
- when within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing;
- when there are two or more lanes of traffic in each direction;
- oncoming traffic is too close; and
- you cannot see ahead clearly.

When passing is permitted by law, your line of sight, your speed, and the situation ahead are items to be taken into consideration. When the vehicle ahead is driving at least 10 mph slower than both your speed and the speed limit, and the maneuver can be performed safely, you might come to the decision that you should pass.

PASSING ON THE LEFT SAFELY

EVALUATE

- Is passing permitted?
- Check the situation all around your vehicle.
- Check your mirrors and left blind spot (someone may be passing you).



IS IT SAFE TO PASS?

PREPARE

- Activate the left turn signal.
- Alert the driver ahead (honk - **Texas law** - or flash the high beams).
- Accelerate - get a running start.
- Recheck the situation ahead of and behind your vehicle.

EXECUTE

- Target and steer into the passing lane (change lanes to the left).
- Firmly maintain speed while moving by the vehicle.
- Make sure you can see **both front tires of the vehicle you have just passed** in your rearview mirror.
- Activate the right turn signal.
- Check the right blind spot.
- Target and steer into the right lane (lane change right).
- Cancel the turn signal.
- Maintain speed until you have a safe space cushion behind your vehicle, then ease off the accelerator (return to normal cruising speed).



PASSING ON THE RIGHT SAFELY

In Texas, and many other states, you may pass on the right. You may pass on the right only under conditions permitting such movement without conflict and in complete safety.

You may pass:

- When the road is clear of parked vehicles or other hazards and is wide enough for two or more lanes in each direction.
- When you are on a one-way road.
- Using the paved shoulder of the roadway, when the vehicle you are passing is slowing or stopped on the main traveled portion of the roadway, disabled on the roadway, or preparing to make a left turn.



Turns

Turning a corner appears to be a simple operation. However, much confusion in traffic and many collisions are caused by drivers who do not turn correctly.

In general, there are seven steps to performing a good turn. They are:

- Make up your mind before you get to the turning point. Never make a "last minute" turn. It is too dangerous.
- Look behind and to both sides to see where other vehicles may be before you change lanes.
- Move into the proper lane as soon as possible. The faster the traffic is moving, the sooner you should move into the proper lane. If you cannot get into the lane at least one-half block prior to the turn, you should not turn, but continue straight ahead.
- Give the proper turn signal at least 100 feet prior to the turning movement. If you use a hand signal (not as visible at night), hold it until you are close enough to the intersection for others to know what you

Never pass on the right by driving off of the paved portion of the highway or shoulder.

BEING PASSED

When a vehicle passes you, you should:

- Refrain from increasing speed.
- Stay in your lane.
- Move to the right as far as you can when the lanes are not marked.
- Make it as safe as you can for the other driver to pass you.

intend to do (communication). Do not hold the signal while making the turn; you need both hands on the wheel.

- Slow down to a reasonable turning speed (5 to 10 mph). Do not use the brake or clutch while actually turning.
- Make the turn correctly. This will be easy if you are in the proper lane and proceeding slowly enough at the time you begin to turn.
- Finish the turn in the proper lane. Watch for pavement markings or signs permitting turns from, or into, two or more traffic lanes, or giving other special turning or lane information.

RIGHT TURNS

In order to perform a right turn, your vehicle should be in the right lane in lane position 1 (lane center-position) at least 200' prior to the intersection (lane change if not in the correct lane). You should input steering control at the standard front reference point.



EVALUATE

- Is a right turn permitted?
- Search the intersection.
- Check the rear-view mirrors.
- Check your right blind spot (for cyclists, motorcycles, etc.).

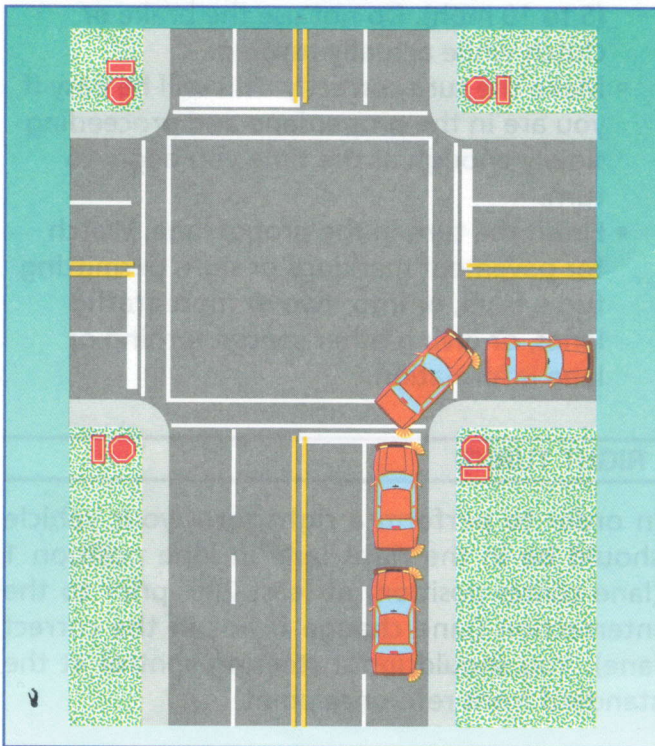
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IS THIS MANEUVER SAFE?**PREPARE**

- Activate the right turn signal.
- Tap the brake, check the rear-view mirror, and then reduce speed (Standard- shift to 2nd gear).
- Re-search the intersection.
- Recheck mirrors and blind spot.
- Move to the right in your lane (lane position, visual reference).

EXECUTE

- Check that the front wheels reach the curve of the curb (front visual reference point).
- Look through the turn (target intended path of travel).
- Release the brake.
- Steer quickly using hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering (following the intended path of travel).
- Target ahead in the right lane (or other lane, in some instances - see Chapter 16).



- Accelerate gently.
- Straighten the steering wheel.
- Accelerate to normal speed.
- Check the rear-view mirror.
- Verify the turn signal is off.

When performing a right turn from a stop, begin turning the steering wheel (visual reference point) as you advance slowly into the intersection to check traffic. When the way is clear, accelerate gently while using the hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering technique (see Chapter 10).

LEFT TURNS

To perform a left turn, you must be in the furthest left lane that you may use. Often, a designated left turn lane may be available (if delineated by lines; be careful not to enter the lane too soon). Occasionally, more than one lane may be permitted to turn left (see Chapter 16). On a two-way road, you must occupy the lane nearest the yellow center line; on a one-way road, use the lane closest to the left side of the road. This may necessitate one or more lane changes prior to the turn.

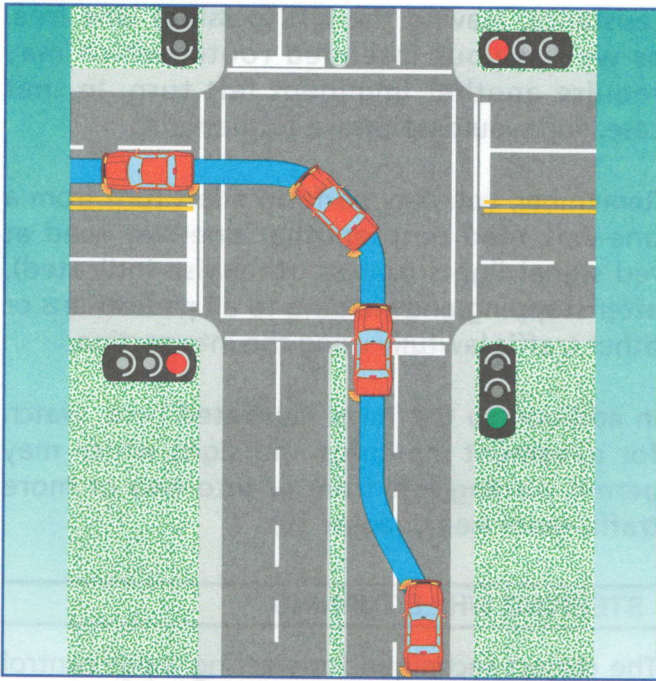
FROM A TWO-WAY TO ANOTHER TWO-WAY**EVALUATE**

- Is a left turn permitted (signs, signals, and pavement markings)?
- Search the intersection.
- Check the rear-view mirrors.
- Check your left blind spot.

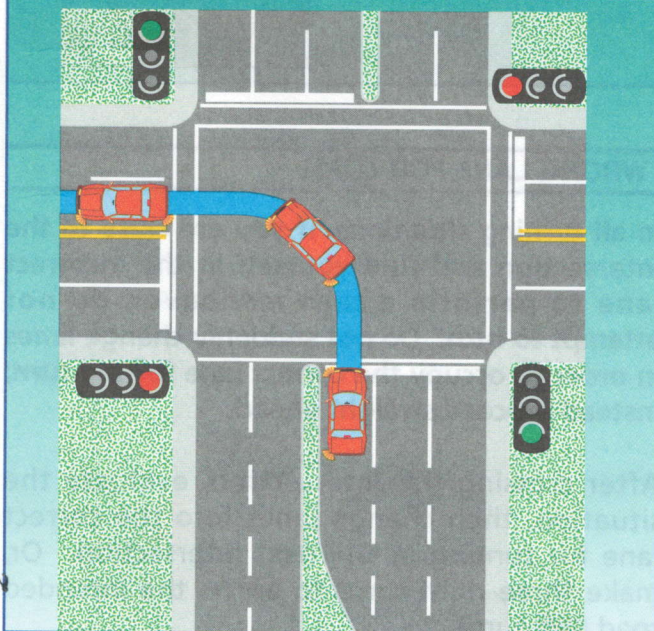
IS THIS MANEUVER SAFE?**PREPARE**

- Activate the left turn signal.
- Tap the brake then reduce speed smoothly (Standard- downshift to second gear).
- Advance until your vehicle nears the center of the intersection (front reference point).
- Re-search the intersection and the oncoming traffic.
- **Stop with the front tires straight if pedestrians or oncoming traffic impede the turn** (Standard- shift to first gear).
- Check mirrors and blind spot.



**EXECUTE**

- Target the center of the intended lane (path of travel).
- Release the brake pedal.
- Steer quickly using hand-to-hand or hand-over-hand steering (following the intended path of travel).
- Accelerate smoothly.
- Aim ahead into the left lane (target your intended path of travel).
- Straighten the steering wheel.

TURNING LEFT FROM A LEFT TURN LANE

- Accelerate to normal speed.
- Check the rear-view mirror.
- Verify the turn signal is off.

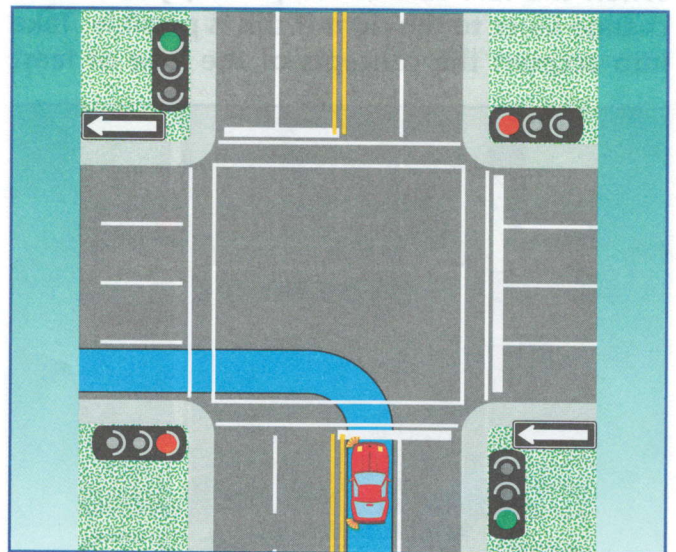
As soon as possible after straightening in the left lane, perform a lane change to the right (if a lane is available) to move out of the passing lane. The left lane should be kept clear whenever possible, and you are also required by law to drive as much to the right as possible.

Special attention must be focused on space areas, gaps in traffic, sightlines, etc. prior to the left turn maneuver, as you will be crossing oncoming traffic from ahead, as well as cross traffic from the left and from the right.

At many intersections, special turn signal lights (three left arrows) may control traffic to provide a protected left turn. This does not relieve the driver of the obligation to exercise due care and to yield to any other road users within the intersection or so close thereto as to constitute an immediate hazard.

FROM A TWO-WAY TO A ONE-WAY

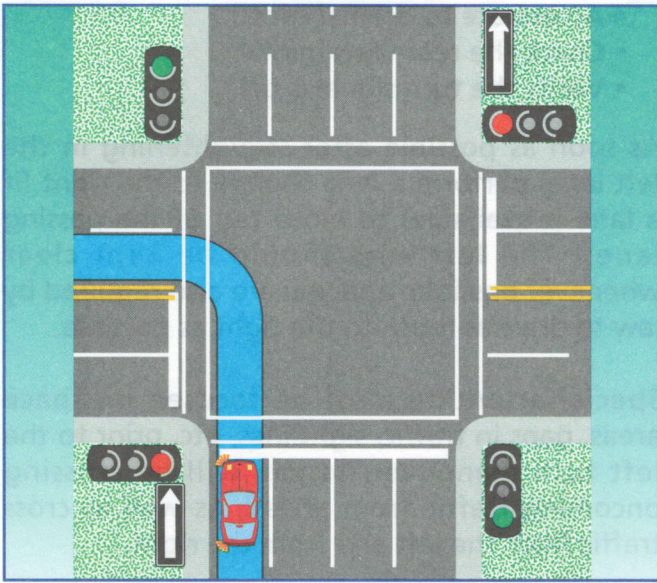
The intended lane is the one beside the left curb. Stop, or begin the turn, when the front of your vehicle reaches the crosswalk. The remaining procedures are the same as the two-way to a two-way turn.

**FROM A ONE-WAY TO A TWO-WAY**

To perform a left turn, you must occupy the farthest left lane that you are legally permitted



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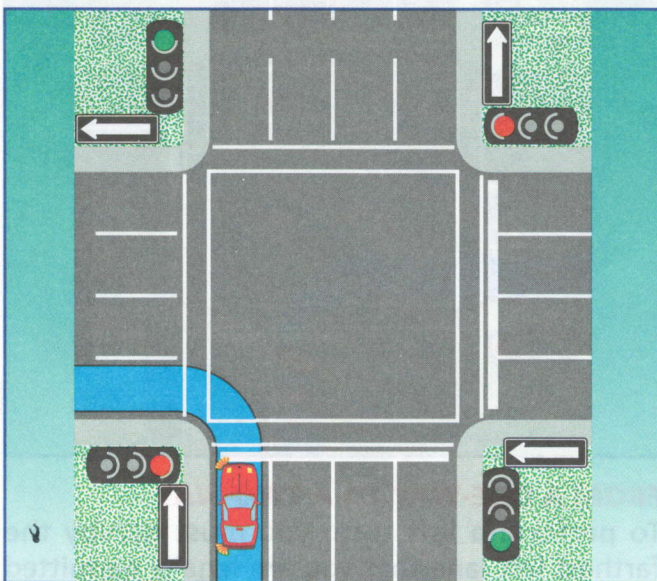
to occupy. On a one-way road, this lane is the lane closest to the left curb. Change lanes into the lane closest to the left curb at least 200 feet (one-half block) prior to the turn. Reduce speed and signal your intention to turn from a distance of 100 feet prior to the turn.

Follow the same procedures as for a two-way to a two-way left turn.

FROM A ONE-WAY TO ANOTHER ONE-WAY

Follow the procedures for a right turn replacing the word "left" for the word "right".

When the left turn is completed, you should change lanes to the right if this is possible. Take into account the concepts of the lane of least



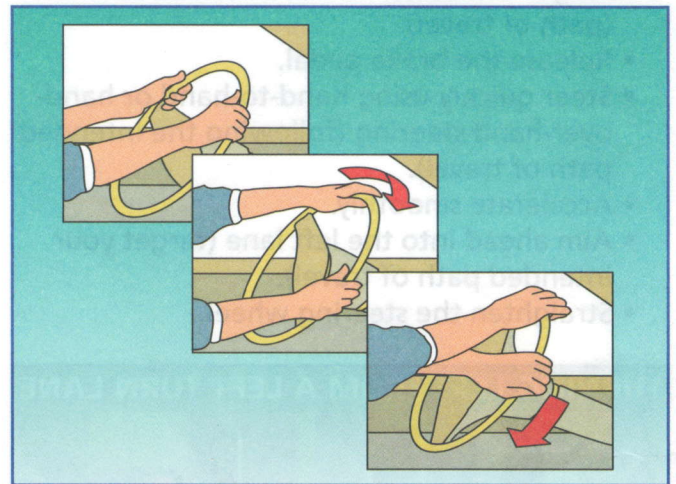
resistance, leaving the left (passing) lane free, as well as your intended route, which may require another imminent left turn. In that case, you would not move to the right.

Remember, you may perform a left turn from a one-way road onto another one-way road at red signal lights (unless otherwise indicated), after stopping and yielding to all pedestrians or other traffic lawfully using the intersection.

In addition to the turns illustrated here, watch for pavement markings and signs which may permit turning left from or into two or more traffic lanes (see Chapter 16).

STEERING WHILE TURNING

The correct technique for steering input control while turning is either the hand-to-hand or the hand-over-hand steering method (see Chapter 10).



WRONG LANE FOR TURN

In all turning situations, if you are close to the intersection and find yourself in the incorrect lane to perform a turn maneuver, do not attempt to turn. Do not suddenly change lanes in order to occupy the correct lane for the turn; instead proceed straight ahead.

After crossing the intersection, evaluate the situation, then change lanes into the correct lane for turning at the next intersection. Or, make three right turns to access the intended road (left turn).





Stopping, Standing, and Parking

You must realize and accept the heavy responsibility that rests on the shoulders of every driver. Operating a vehicle improperly, without due respect for its lethal capabilities, is unacceptable. You must develop defensive driving skills and attitudes that will permit you to drive collision-free.

Not all crashes occur while vehicles are being driven; an improperly parked vehicle may become a runaway and cause a collision. You must act responsibly at all times, including when you park your vehicle and while your vehicle is parked, even though you are not in your vehicle.

PARKING RESPONSIBILITY

You must decide where to park in compliance with parking control signs, curb markings, fire hydrants, etc. When parking parallel to the curb, your vehicle must be within 12 inches of the nearest curb.

PROHIBITED PARKING

A vehicle shall not be parked, except if necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic, in compliance with the law, or the directions of a police officer or traffic control device, in any of the following places:

- a) on a sidewalk;
- b) in front of a public or private driveway;
- c) within an intersection;
- d) within 15 feet of a fire hydrant;
- e) on a crosswalk;
- f) within 20 feet of a crosswalk, or if no crosswalk, within 15 feet of the property lines at an intersection;
- g) within 30 feet of the approach to a flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic control signal;
- h) between a safety zone and the curb or within 30 feet of the end of the safety zone;
- i) within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing;
- j) within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to a fire station and on the opposite side of the

- k) alongside or opposite a street excavation or obstruction if the stopping, standing, or parking would obstruct traffic;
- l) on the roadway side of a vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street (double parking);
- m) upon a bridge or other elevated highway structure, or within a tunnel;
- n) at a place where an official sign prohibits stopping or parking;
- o) within 500 feet of a collision at which a police officer is in attendance (outside of a city or village);
- p) in front of a theater;
- q) in a place or manner that blocks an emergency exit of a building;
- r) in a place or manner that blocks a fire escape from a building;
- s) in a parking space reserved for use by the disabled, or adjacent striped space;
- t) within 300 feet of a fire at which fire apparatus is in attendance; exception for volunteer fire fighters and vehicles legally parked previous to the fire;
- u) in violation of an official sign restricting the period of time for or manner of parking;
- v) in a space controlled or regulated by a meter when the time has expired;
- w) on a street or highway in such a manner as to obstruct the delivery of mail to a rural mailbox; and
- x) in a place or manner which blocks the use of an alley.

Temporarily stopping to comply with signs, signals, etc. is not considered parking or standing.

Outside of a business or residential district (rural area), never park or leave your vehicle standing on the paved part of any roadway when you can park off the roadway. If you cannot park off the road, you should:

- Leave plenty of room for others to pass.
- Make sure that your vehicle is visible for at



least 200 feet in both directions.

- Use your parking lights or low beam headlights at night.

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If you are the registered owner of the vehicle (your name appears on the registration), you will be held responsible for parking violations. If the owner did not commit the infraction, he/she will surely want the person who was in charge of the vehicle at the time to repay them.

It is also common sense to secure articles, that are in your vehicle, in the trunk, or at least out of sight, in order not to encourage thieves to break in. Park in a lighted area, and be aware of your surroundings and who is around the vehicle in parking lots. Consider buying a vehicle alarm.

Your vehicle should always be locked when parked to avoid theft and to make it child-proof. Too many joy-rides and eventual collisions result from careless drivers who forgot to lock their vehicles. In Texas, you must apply the parking brake, shift into Park, stop the engine, turn the ignition switch to lock, remove the key, and when standing on a grade, turn the front wheels to the curb or side of the roadway whenever you leave your motor vehicle unattended.

When parking, after you stop your vehicle, it would be a good habit to apply the parking brake immediately, then ease up on the brake pedal to make sure the vehicle does not move. This tells you that the parking brake is engaged and operating before you shift into Park and turn off the ignition switch. In this way, your vehicle is secure and less likely to roll (most roads have a slight slope for water drainage) and become a runaway.

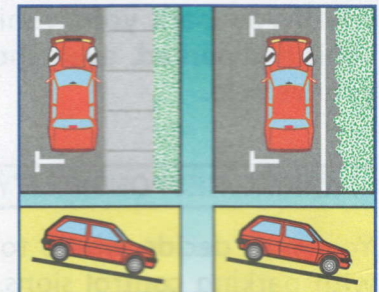
You should also check over your shoulder for any oncoming traffic before exiting.

PARKING ON A HILL

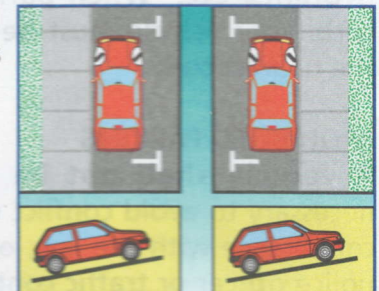
When you park on a hill or a sloping driveway, there is one extra precaution to observe. You must turn the front tires in such a manner as to cause the vehicle to roll out of traffic or against the curb should the vehicle start to move on its own. The parking brake and the shifter lock mechanism have been known to break or slip.

You will be held responsible for any damages that your vehicle may cause if it does move and becomes a runaway. A mechanical malfunction will not be acceptable as an excuse in a court of law!

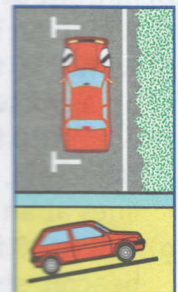
When parking downhill, whether or not there is a curb, the tires should be turned toward the near side of the road.



When parking uphill with a curb, the tires should be turned away from the near side of the road. Ideally, you should allow the vehicle to roll lightly against the curb before applying the parking brake.



When parking uphill without a curb, the tires should be turned toward the near side of the road. The vehicle will roll backwards off the roadway if it should move downhill.

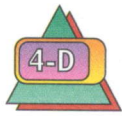


SAFETY TIPS



When leaving a parking space, exercise due care when backing. Children often play between parked cars. Look back before and while backing. Ideally, park so you can drive forward out of the parking space and avoid these potential risks.





Speed and Speed Limits

Generally, you should drive at the same speed as the flow of traffic. However, you must obey the maximum and minimum speed limits (except in adverse driving conditions, when the minimum limit no longer applies). You should always be aware of how fast you are traveling and the posted speed limit.

To be a good driver, you must do more than merely obey the speed limit. You must maintain a safe following distance (see Chapter 11) from the vehicle ahead. The faster you go, the greater the distance you should keep from the vehicle ahead. The absolute minimum would be to apply the "Two Second Rule" in ideal driving conditions.

When the driving environment changes, you must know when to reduce your speed. Many drivers find out too late what a little rain can do. Roads become slippery when wet (rain, snow, and sleet, see Chapters 20 & 21), making it harder to control your vehicle on reduced traction conditions. The only wise thing to do is to reduce speed in proportion to the reduced traction. Make sure you have complete control of the situation at all times. You must be able to stop your vehicle in complete safety, regardless of the road conditions.

The volume of traffic around your vehicle is another driving environment condition that requires you to adapt. When the road is crowded, reduce your speed and increase your

following distance. This will give you an extra margin of safety if anything unexpected should occur.

Visibility conditions (see Chapter 20) are another factor that good drivers adapt to by slowing down. You should always be able to stop within the distance that you can see ahead clearly. In darkness or bad weather, do not overdrive your range of vision ahead.

Good drivers always adjust their speed according to their own physical condition (see Chapter 13) and the condition of their vehicle. If you are tired or not feeling well, don't drive. Never force yourself to drive.

SPEED LIMITS

All drivers are required to obey posted maximum and minimum speed limits, which are designed to provide for the orderly flow of traffic under ideal driving conditions. When any of these conditions change, you must adapt your speed to reduce risk and avoid collisions.

BASIC SPEED LIMITS (unless otherwise posted)

In miles per hour	DAY	NIGHT
Urban District	30	30
Alley, Beaches & adjacent County Roads	15	15
Numbered Highways & Farm/Ranch to Market Roads		
- all vehicles (except school buses)	75	75
- school buses (commercial inspection)	50	50
Non-numbered Highways		
- all vehicles (except school buses)	60	55
- school buses (commercial inspection)	50	50

Statistics



The economic cost of speeding-related crashes is estimated to be \$58.4 billion dollars each year in the United States. **In 2013, 35 percent of male drivers 15 to 20 years old and 21 to 24 years old involved in fatal crashes were speeding.** NHTSA - DOT HS 812 162

SAFETY TIPS



The Texas Department of Public Safety has identified **speeding as the number one cause of crashes in Texas.** SLOW DOWN AND SURVIVE! Respect the posted speed limits and adapt your speed to the driving conditions.





Special Situations

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Never drive when you become sleepy. It is much more dangerous to drive at night than during the day. You cannot see as well after sundown. When taking a trip, do your driving in the daylight; it's safer.

HEADLIGHTS

When driving at night (see Chapter 20), reduce your speed. Make sure you can stop within the distance illuminated by your headlights.

Use the low beams when you are:

- Within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle.
- Following closely (within 300 feet) behind another vehicle.
- Driving on lighted roads.
- Driving in fog, heavy rain, sleet, snow, or dust.

If you must park on an unlit highway at night, leave your parking lights or low beam headlights activated. Turn signals flashing on only one side of the vehicle should never be used on parked or disabled vehicles to communicate their presence. Activate the hazard lights (emergency flashers).

You must use the headlights from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, or at any other time when persons or vehicles cannot be seen clearly for at least 1,000 feet.

Avoid looking into the oncoming headlights. You should shift your eyes to the right side of your traffic lane, allowing you to use your peripheral vision to see oncoming traffic.



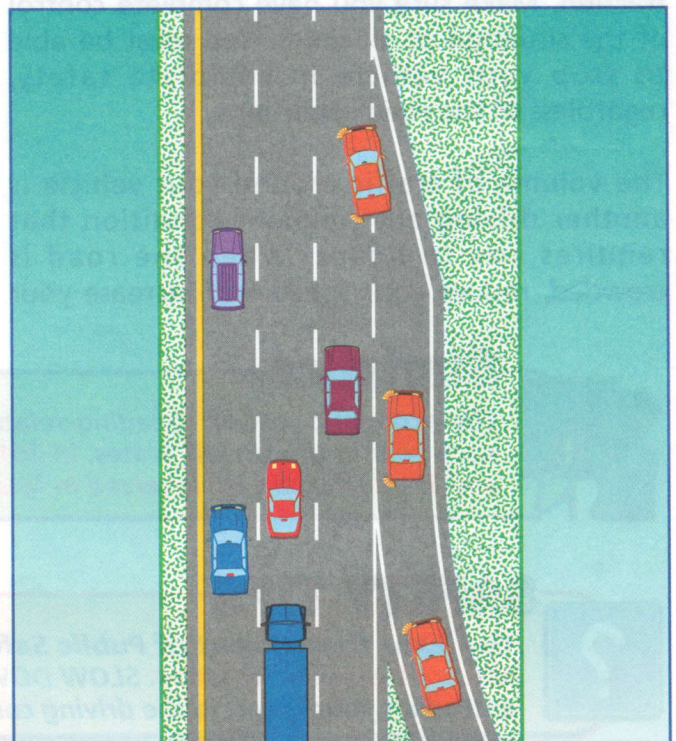
FREEWAY DRIVING

Within the last few years, many thousands of miles of super highways have been built. Depending on where you are, they are known as freeways, toll roads, throughways, turnpikes, and expressways. These roads have been designed for maximum safety, but you must know how to use them properly (see Chapter 17). In Texas, a freeway is defined as "A divided arterial highway with full control of access and with no crossings at grade."

Before you use a freeway, plan your trip in advance so that you know your entrance, direction, and exit. Make sure you and your vehicle are in good condition. If you cannot or do not wish to drive at or above the posted minimum speed limit, do not use the freeway.

ENTERING THE FREEWAY

You must yield the right-of-way to vehicles already on the freeway. Enter the acceleration lane, keep to the right in this lane, activate the left turn signal, and when the way is clear,



increase your speed so you can merge with the flow of traffic on the freeway.

DRIVING THE FREEWAY

On the freeway, you should look twice before altering your speed or changing lanes, and always signal.

If you wish to drive at the minimum speed limit or below the normal flow of traffic, you should use the right-hand lane. When traveling at the speed of traffic (or faster), you should use the middle or left-hand lane. While driving, search ahead for signs instructing you as to which lane you must use to head for your destination. When you approach your intended exit, change to the exit lane as soon as possible.

Once you have chosen your lane on the freeway, stay in the middle of your lane. Do not weave in and out of traffic. Maintain a constant speed, keeping pace with the flow of traffic. Keep a minimum 3 to 4 second following distance from the vehicle ahead. In bad weather, increase the interval to at least 5 seconds. Search the vehicles ahead. Reduce speed as soon as you see brake lights illuminate ahead. Be ready if a vehicle ahead should stop suddenly.

Cooperate with other drivers. Adjust your speed to assist others to enter the freeway safely when you approach an entrance.



Be prepared to move to another lane (toward the right) to allow faster traffic to pass. Use the left-hand lane for passing only, not for cruising with the flow of traffic.

LEAVING THE FREEWAY

You should know which exit you wish to use. Move into the proper lane well in advance of the exit. The greater the traffic, the earlier you should move into the proper lane. Exit signs are usually placed at least 1,000 yards ahead of the exit turn-off.

Maintain your speed until you reach the deceleration lane, and enter the speed change lane as soon as possible. Reduce speed quickly, check for suggested speed signs, and check your speedometer. Continue slowing while you exit, so that by the time you are off the freeway, you are traveling within the slower speed limit. Check the speedometer frequently until you become accustomed to the slower speed.

HIGHWAY HYPNOSIS

A condition of drowsiness can be brought about by reduced activity and steady sounds of wind, engine, and tire hum. This is known as highway hypnosis. To counteract this danger, stop and rest regularly, every two hours or 100 miles. Do not drive more than eight hours per day. Force your eyes to search near and far, left and right, and in the rearview mirror. Read the road signs. Keep your mind active.

EXTRA FREEWAY TIPS

Keep a window open slightly so that there is always fresh air in your vehicle to help keep you alert and awake. On sunny days, wear a good pair of sunglasses. (Never wear sunglasses at night.) Stay out of other driver's blind spots; traveling where a driver cannot see you can be dangerous. This applies especially around large vehicles that have larger (and extra) blind spots.

SAFETY TIPS



Apply a driving strategy to the freeway environment to help reduce risk. Remember to increase your following distance (to 4 seconds or more) due to the higher speed. Your level of experience with this environment will play an important role in your ability to adapt. Stay alert. Search far ahead to reduce risk!





Winter Driving Concerns

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Most drivers realize that winter conditions create special problems and additional hazards for vehicles, but many of them don't know what to do about it. There are a few simple precautions which you should follow.

TIRES AND CHAINS

Equip your vehicle with snow tires and chains. Chains are by far the most effective in deep snow and ice situations, and they should be used where ice and snow remain on the roadway.

One word of caution - neither chains nor snow tires will permit you to drive on slick pavement at normal speeds due to inability to stop and steer effectively, so don't let yourself get a false sense of security. Drivers may find themselves going faster than they realize when turning or stopping is required.

MAINTAIN A SAFE INTERVAL

You must increase the distance from the vehicle ahead (following interval) in bad weather conditions. Many needless rear-end collisions occur in winter conditions because drivers forget to leave a following interval in keeping with the conditions of the pavement (traction). Snow tires will slide on ice or packed snow.

To keep safe, you must keep your distance, regardless of the natural tendency to drive closer together in snow and fog conditions. A minimum six second interval is highly recommended.

REDUCE SPEED

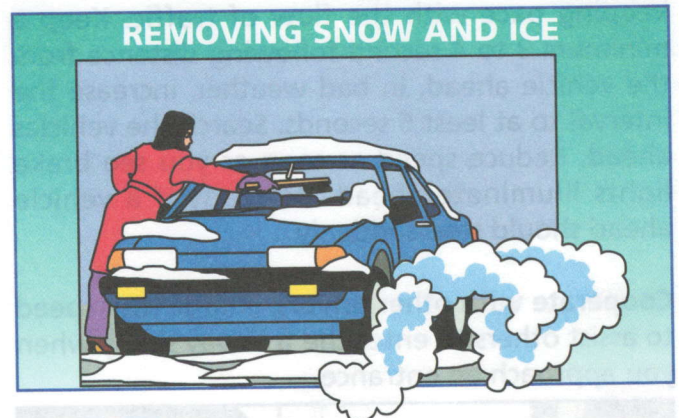
There is no recommended speed for snow and ice conditions. You must be extremely cautious until you are able to determine how much traction you can expect from your tires. Every

city block and every mile of roadway may be different, depending upon sun, shade, and the road surface.

You must travel at a speed that allows you to stop or steer without losing traction. **Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS)** and **Traction Control Systems (TCS)** technology will help, but will not allow you to drive at a higher speed because the vehicle is so equipped.

KEEP WINDOWS CLEAR

Remove snow and ice before you drive to allow for the best possible line of sight and visibility around your vehicle, even if you are just going to the corner store. Make sure the wipers and defroster are working properly and use them.



WATCH FOR DANGER SPOTS

There may be ice on bridges or elevated highways when the rest of the pavement is clear. Snow melts more slowly in shady areas. Ice often forms in the braking zone near intersections. Take precautions when approaching any of these areas.

Curves, stops and turns are also critical. Get the feel of the roadway; test your brakes gently to determine how much traction is available. Start out slowly. Slow down earlier than usual.

SAFETY TIPS



The Texas Department of Public Safety has identified speeding - both driving above the posted speed limit, **as well as driving too fast for conditions** - as the **number one cause of crashes in Texas**. **SLOW DOWN AND SURVIVE!** Adapt to the driving conditions.

