IOWA DRIVER'S MANUAL

2015-2016

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Study the way that works for you.

IA Driver Test App

Randomly generates questions from the actual driver's license knowledge test

Available on the App Store | Get it on Google play | Available on kindle fire

iPad only at this time

There is no charge for any Iowa DOT app. Be wary of any driver's license or other DOT-related app that charges a fee.

IA Driver Test Desktop Version

Functions the same as the app, but designed for your computer or laptop

iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense/iadrivertest_start.html

IA Driver's License Manual PDF

Electronic version of the Iowa Driver's License Manual

iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense/dlmanual.htm

Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa

Important message to drivers

Iowa lies at the crossroads of America. With Interstates 35 and 80 intersecting through the heart of Iowa, state and county roads crisscrossing our countryside, and a vast network of city streets, it will take diligence from each and every driver to ensure the safety of all drivers and passengers on Iowa's roadways.

This driver's manual contains important information for all of Iowa's drivers. We will need all Iowa drivers to maintain concentration on the road and avoid all in-vehicle distractions to protect each other from roadway accidents.

Obeying the law is the first step to maintaining safety. Respecting the speed limit and obeying traffic signals and other signs is critically important. A new commitment to safe driving and instructions on how to navigate in hazardous conditions will guarantee that your driving experience in Iowa will be enjoyable and pleasant.

This manual will provide you the information needed for a general understanding of the principles of safe and lawful operation of a motor vehicle. However, it is NOT intended to serve as a precise statement of Iowa statutes concerning the operation of a motor vehicle and should not be considered as such.

For further information, check the Code of Iowa, Chapters 321 through 321J, and the Iowa Department of Transportation rules contained in the Iowa Administrative Code.

New Residents

If you just moved into Iowa, you will be considered an Iowa resident for the purposes of driver's licensing and vehicle registration if any one of the following apply:

1. You have registered to vote in this state;
2. You have enrolled your children in public school;
3. You have accepted a permanent job in the state; or
4. You have resided continuously in Iowa for 30 days.

If you have a valid out-of-state license, follow these steps to receive your Iowa license.

1. Go to a driver's license station.
2. Provide necessary documentation (see pages 5 and 6).
3. Take required tests and turn in your out-of-state license to DOT. If your out-of-state license is valid, you may not have to take a knowledge or road test.
4. Meet Iowa title, registration and use tax requirements on your vehicle. Consult your local county treasurer's office.

Be sure to read this manual carefully. Not only will it provide the information to pass the driver examination, but it will also broaden your knowledge of safe driving practices.

Driver's License
Permanent Examining and Records Stations

For specific hours of operation, call the driver's license station or the Motor vehicle Information Center at 515-244-8725.

Ames 515-296-2393	**3708 Lincoln Way** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Ankeny 515-244-1052	**6310 SE Convenience Blvd.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Burlington 319-754-8767	**Fairway Shopping Center, 2700 Mount Pleasant St.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Carroll 712-792-5269	**510 Carroll St., Suite 1** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Cedar Rapids 319-377-6461	**3726 Queens Court SW Suite 201** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Clinton 563-243-7144	**316 S. Second St.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Council Bluffs 712-323-1219	**Mall of the Bluffs, 1751 Madison Ave., Suite 330** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Davenport 563-386-1050	**Village Shopping Center, 902 W. Kimberly Road Suite 6D** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Des Moines 515-244-1052	**2339 Euclid Avenue (renewal only)** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Dubuque 563-583-9844	**2460 Gateway Drive** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Fort Dodge 515-573-5141	**2313 First Avenue S.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Iowa City 319-338-5294	**Eastdale Plaza, 1700 S. First Ave.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Marshalltown 641-752-5668	**Marshalltown Plaza Mall, 2500 S. Center St.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Mason City 641-423-8391	**Southport Shopping Center, 1622 S. Federal Ave.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Muscatine 563-263-5414	**1903 Park Ave.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Ottumwa 641-682-4855	**2849 North Court Road** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Sioux City 712-255-5539	**3005 Hamilton Blvd.** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Spencer 712-262-6278	**Gateway North Shopping Center, East 18th and Grand Avenue** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
Waterloo 319-235-0902	**103 Crossroads Center** **Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

County Driver's License Stations

Contact the county treasurer's office or visit the county's Web site for information on licensing services in these counties. Also, visit Web site www.iowadot.gov/mvd/locations.html

Adair	Clarke	Hamilton	Louisa	Pocahontas	Wright
Adams	Clayton	Hancock	Lucas	Poweshiek	
Allamakee	Crawford	Hardin	Lyon	Ringgold	
Appanoose	Dallas	Harrison	Madison	Sac	
Audubon	Davis	Henry	Mahaska	Shelby	
Benton	Decatur	Howard	Marion	Sioux	
Boone	Delaware	Humboldt	Mills	Tama	
Bremer	Dickinson	Ida	Mitchell	Taylor	
Buchanan	Emmet	Iowa	Monona	Union	
Buena Vista	Fayette	Jackson	Monroe	Van Buren	
Butler	Floyd	Jasper	Montgomery	Warren	
Calhoun	Franklin	Jefferson	O'Brien	Washington	
Cass	Fremont	Jones	Osceola	Wayne	
Cedar	Greene	Keokuk	Page	Winnebago	
Cherokee	Grundy	Kossuth	Palo Alto	Winneshiek	
Chickasaw	Guthrie	Lee	Plymouth	Worth	

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1. The Driver's License

Who Needs a License?

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle or motorcycle or moped on public streets and roads in Iowa is required to have a license. You are considered an Iowa resident for purposes of driver licensing if you have:

- registered to vote in this state;
- enrolled your children in public school;
- accepted a permanent job in the state; or
- lived in Iowa continuously for 30 days.

You do not need an Iowa driver's license if you:

- are driving a military motor vehicle while on duty with the U.S. Armed Forces;
- are driving farm equipment between the home farm and any nearby (not more than two miles) farmland or farm operation; or
- are a student or visitor and have a current license from your home state or country.

If you have any questions, contact the Motor Vehicle Information Center by calling 515-244-8725 (toll-free).

You may obtain a driver's license if you:

- are at least 16 years of age; (see Iowa's graduated licensing system, page 6)
- are able to submit proof of name and age;
- have successfully completed an approved driver education course if you are under age 18;
- have parent's/guardian's consent if under age 18;
- pass required driver's license tests;
- turn in any other driver's license or identification card you have;
- have not had your license suspended, revoked, denied, canceled, disqualified or barred;
- have not been found incapable of safely operating a motor vehicle due to a mental or physical disability; and
- have no unpaid fines for moving traffic violations.

Vision

Vision is so important that Iowa requires that you pass a vision screening before you get a driver's license or permit, or when you renew your license. This screening is to make sure you have at least 20/40 vision in at least one eye, with or without corrective lenses.

Other important aspects of vision are:

- **Side vision** - You need to see "out the corner of your eye." This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you cannot focus on things to the side, you also must use your side mirrors and glance to the side if necessary.
- **Judging distances and speeds** - Even if you can see clearly, you still may not be able to judge distances or speeds very well. In fact, you are not alone, many people have problems judging distances and speeds. It takes a lot of practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important to know how far you are from other vehicles, and to be able to judge safe gaps when merging, and when passing on two-lane roads.
- **Night vision** - Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing at night. All people have more trouble seeing at night than in the daytime, but some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, do not drive more than is necessary; and when you do, be very careful.

Because it is so important to safe driving that you see well, you should have your eyes checked every year or two by an eye specialist. You may never know you have poor vision unless your eyes are tested.

If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, remember to:

- Always wear them when you drive, even if you are only going a short distance. If your driver's license says you must wear corrective lenses and you don't, you could get a ticket if you are stopped by a law enforcement officer.
- Try to keep an extra pair of glasses in your vehicle. Then if your regular glasses get broken or lost, you can drive safely. This also can be helpful if you do not wear glasses all the time and you forget to take them with you when driving.
- Don't wear dark glasses or tinted contact lenses at night, even if it is to help with glare. The problem is that they shut out too much light, light you need to see clearly.

Vision Screening

You may decide to go directly to your doctor and have your doctor check your vision if you are applying for a noncommercial license. The information can be on a form furnished by the department or it can be a letter from your doctor if the doctor has measured your vision within 30 days of when you apply for a license.

Hearing

Hearing can be helpful to safe driving. Do not drive with headphones or earphones that cover or go in both ears. They make it too hard to hear emergency horns or sirens. The sound of horns, sirens or screeching tires can warn you of danger. Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice it. Drivers who know they are deaf or have hearing problems can adjust and be safe drivers. They learn to rely more on their vision and stay alert. Studies have shown that the driving records of hearing impaired drivers are just as good as those drivers with good hearing. A hearing impairment may be indicated on your driver's license; ask the examiner at the driver's license station for details.

Vision Standards

Acuity	
20/40	No restrictions unless you wear glasses or contacts.
Less than 20/40 but at least 20/70	No driving when headlights are required.
Less than 20/70	Not eligible for licensing.*
Field of Vision	
140° or better	No restrictions.
Less than 140° but at least 110° in both eyes	Left and right outside rearview mirrors will be required.
Less than 140° but at least 100° in one eye	Left and right outside rearview mirrors will be required.
Less than 100°	Not eligible for licensing.*

**Not eligible for licensing means suspension of your driving privileges as specified in Section 321.210(1c) of the Iowa Code, or denial of driving privileges as required by Iowa Code Section 321.177(7).*

Knowledge Test

The operator knowledge test shows how well you understand road signs, traffic laws, and safe-driving practices. Everything you must know to pass the knowledge test is in this guide. Testing is administered by automated testing equipment using a touch screen. (Audio assist is available.)

Driving Test

The driving test shows how well you can control your vehicle. Unless you can already legally drive in Iowa, you will need to have a licensed driver bring you and your test vehicle to the test site. That driver should wait for you in case you do not pass the test. He or she will not be able to be in the vehicle when you are taking the driving test.

Before you start on the driving test, the examiner will inspect your vehicle's safety equipment. Safety equipment includes, but is not limited to, seat belts, lights, turn signals, horn, brake lights, tires and windshield wipers. If the safety equipment does not work, you will not be able to take the test unless the equipment is not needed; for example, if it is a sunny day and your vehicle's windshield wipers do not work, you can use your vehicle for the test. Your vehicle should also have a current registration sticker on the license plate. Iowa registration laws require both a front and back plate on most vehicles. You should have the registration receipt in the vehicle since the examiner may ask to see it. Evidence of liability insurance is also required.

During the test, the examiner will sit in the front seat with you. The examiner will give you directions and score your driving ability. After the test, the examiner will explain the results. If you did not pass the test, the examiner will explain when and how you may take the test again.

Proof of Age and Identity

To establish identity and date of birth, a person must submit at least one of the following documents. The department may require additional documentation if the department believes that the documentation submitted is questionable or if the department has reason to believe that the person is not who the person claims to be:

1. A valid, unexpired U.S. passport or U. S. passport card.
2. Certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state of the United States. ("State" includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.) It must be a certified copy and have the stamp or raised seal of the issuing authority. A hospital-issued certificate is not acceptable. A certified birth certificate issued by Puerto Rico must be certified as being issued on or after July 1, 2010.
3. A Consular Report of Birth Abroad issued by the U.S. Department of State (Form FS-240, DS-1350 or FS-545.
4. Certificate of Naturalization (Form N-550, N-570 or N-578).
5. Certificate of Citizenship (Form N-560, N-561 or N-645).
6. Unexpired Permanent Resident Card (form I-551).
7. Unexpired Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766).
8. Record of Arrival and Departure (I-94) with attached photo and stamped "Temporary Proof of Lawful Permanent Resident."
9. Record of Arrival and Departure (I-94) stamped "Refugee," Parolee" or "Asylee."
10. Unexpired foreign passport accompanied by the approved I-94 documenting most recent admittance into the United States.
11. Valid foreign passport stamped "Processed for I-551."
12. Permit to Reenter the United States (I-327).
13. Refugee Travel Document (I-571).

Visit www.iowadot.gov/mvd/realid/success.html to build a personal checklist of the documents you will need to satisfy Iowa's identification requirements.

Social Security Number

You must present the Social Security Administration's account number card; or if a Social Security account number card is not available, you may present any of the following documents bearing the Social Security account number:

1. A W-2 form.
2. A Social Security Administration 1099 form.
3. A non-Social Security Administration 1099 form.
4. A pay stub or statement with name and Social Security account number on it.

A person who establishes identity by presenting an unexpired foreign passport with a U.S. visa affixed and accompanied by the approved I-94 form documenting the most recent admittance into the United States must document the person's Social Security account number, or demonstrate nonwork authorized status.

If you need to correct or update information at the Social Security Administration, do so several days before you apply for a driver's license or ID card. For information on how to do this, visit www.ssa.gov. Your SSN will not be listed on your driver's license or ID. The Iowa DOT will assign you a unique driver's license or ID number.

Certification of Iowa Residency and Residential Address

To establish Iowa residency and residential address, you must present two documents that show your current name and Iowa residential address. The address must be a physical address where you reside and not a post office box. Printouts of services paid or transacted electronically are acceptable. Acceptable items are:

- Iowa voter registration card.
- Valid Iowa vehicle registration certificate.
- Valid insurance card or certificate of coverage (life, health, auto, homeowner's or renter's).
- Second valid insurance card or certificate of coverage (different than first).
- Utility hookup or bill (water, gas, electric, or garbage removal).
- Second utility hookup or bill (different than the first).
- Telephone hookup, service agreement or bill (landline or mobile).
- Statement from a financial institution (bank, credit union or other financial institution).
- Second statement from a financial institution (different from the first).
- Personal check or deposit slip issued by a financial institution (you may mark this "VOID."
- Credit, debit or charge card statement.
- Iowa residential mortgage, lease or rental agreement (lease and rental agreements must include the landlord's name and contact information).
- Application for homestead tax credit for Iowa residential property.
- Application for military tax credit for Iowa residential property.
- Valid real estate tax statement or receipt for Iowa residential property.
- Pay stub or statement from your employer.
- Your current school enrollment papers for an Iowa public or private school.
- Current school enrollment papers for a dependent child in an Iowa public or private school.
- A federal, State of Iowa or local government document (such as a receipt, license, permit, assessment, professional or trade license, or other document).
- Second federal, State of Iowa or local government document (different than the first).
- An envelope, box, postcard or magazine that includes a postmark or stamped date.
- Iowa driver's license or ID card that has not been expired for more than one year.

If you are under 18 and not married, your parent, guardian or custodian will document your Iowa residency and residential address by signing a Parent's Written Consent form. The form is available at any driver's license issuance site or download it at https://forms.iowadot.gov/FormsMgt/External/430018.pdf.

- Parent's Written Consent form.

(If you are under 18 and married, also bring a certified copy of your marriage certificate. Your marriage certificate lets you apply for the driver's license or ID without a Parent's Written Consent form.)

Types of Driver's Licenses

Graduated Driver's License

Iowa has a graduated driver's license (GDL) system for drivers under the age of 18. GDL includes three steps that allow for increased driving privilege as the driver accumulates more skill and demonstrates responsible driving practices. The three steps are: the instruction permit; intermediate license; and the full license. Driver education is part of the GDL system, as well as a remedial driver improvement program if traffic violations occur or if the driver contributes to or is the cause of a crash or accident.

Instruction Permit

- Available at age 14
- Must be held for a minimum of 12 months
- Requires written approval of parent/guardian
- Requires vision screening and knowledge test
- All driving must be supervised. May drive only with parent/guardian, family member over 21, driver education teacher, or driver over 25 with written permission of parent/guardian
- Number of passengers limited to the number of seat belts in the vehicle
- Must complete approved driver education course
- Must log 20 hours of supervised driving; minimum of two hours must be between sunset and sunrise
- Must drive accident- and violation-free for six consecutive months immediately prior to applying for an intermediate license

Driver Education

- Available at age 14
- Must have instruction permit
- Thirty hours of classroom to include four hours substance abuse education, minimum of 20 minutes on railroad crossing safety, information on organ donation, and information on bicycle and motor cycle awareness
- Six hours laboratory; minimum three hours must be behind the wheel
- No parental waiver of any behind-the-wheel drive time

Intermediate License

- Available at age 16
- Must meet all conditions of instruction permit
- Written approval of parent/guardian
- Must be held for a minimum of 12 months
- May drive without supervision from 5 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.; driving is permitted between 12:30 a.m. and 5 a.m. only with a parent/guardian, family member over 21, or designated adult over 25; with a waiver, may drive to and from work or school-related extracurricular activities
- Must log 10 hours of supervised driving; minimum of two hours must be between sunset and sunrise
- For the first six months, passengers are limited to only one unrelated minor passenger unless this restriction is waived by the parent/guardian at the time the intermediate license is issued. Unrelated minor passenger means a passenger who is under 18 years of age and who is not a sibling or stepsibling of the driver, or a child who resides in the same household as the driver.
- Passengers limited to the number of seat belts in the vehicle
- Must drive accident- and violation-free for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to applying for a full license
- Intermediate license will have the words “intermediate license”

Remedial Driver Improvement

- Applies to all drivers under age 18
- Driver will be referred if involved in one moving violation or involvement in an accident to which the driver contributed
- DOT may impose additional driving restrictions or impose a suspension
- Instruction permit holders must be accident- and violation-free for six consecutive months immediately preceding upgrade to Intermediate license.
- Intermediate license holders must be accident- and violation-free for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to applying for a full license.
- Must begin six-month or 12-month accident- and violation-free driving period again to qualify for next licensing level

Full License

- Available at age 17
- Must meet all conditions of intermediate license
- Written approval of parent/guardian
- Full driving privileges with no restrictions
- For drivers under age 18 or age 21, the license shall have the words “under eighteen” or “under 21”

Class C - Operator (Noncommercial)

This is the license most Iowans have. With this license, you may drive cars, pickups and trucks whose gross vehicle weight is 16,000 pounds or less. To get an operator’s license, you will have to take the vision screening. You will also have to take the knowledge test if you have an invalid or expired (over one year) out-of-state license, or if you have not had a driver’s license before. If you have a valid out-of-state license that allows you to drive by yourself, the driving test may be waived.

The DOT may also issue this license or a Class M (Motorcycle) license to you if you are 16 or 17 years old, and, if before you became an Iowa resident, you had a valid driver’s license for at least one year as a resident of another state. To be eligible you must:

- live with a parent or guardian;
- have no moving violations on your driving record;
- pass the vision screening; and
- pass the required written and driving tests.

If you meet all of these requirements, you do not have to take a driver education course to get your license. The license may be restricted as an intermediate license under Iowa’s Graduated Driver Licensing law.

Your license will be issued with a randomly assigned expiration date. Expiration dates will be limited according to age as shown in the chart below..

Certain medical conditions and disabilities may restrict license issuance to only a two-year period, regardless of your age.

Licenses cost $4 per year. The license expires on your birthday, but remains valid for another 60 days. For more information, see the summary chart of license expiration dates on page 12.

Class D - Chauffeur (Noncommercial)

This license covers operation of light straight trucks and small passenger-for-hire vehicles. This also includes persons exempted from commercial licensing, such as a farmer who is driving a farm truck-tractor semitrailer combination, a paid or volunteer firefighter who is driving vehicles in excess of 16,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, and a taxi driver.

The Class D license has one of three endorsements allowing a driver to operate:

- **Endorsement 1**: tractor-trailer combinations if a CDL farm exemption applies.
- **Endorsement 2**: single-unit vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 16,001 pounds or more up through a 26,000-pound gross vehicle weight rating.
- **Endorsement 3**: passenger vehicles which carry less than 16 passengers, such as taxis.

To get a chauffeur’s license you must be at least 18 years old. You must pass the vision screening and must have passed the general knowledge test. You will also be required to turn in any out-of-state licenses you have.

Under the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, it is a violation of federal law for the driver of a commercial motor vehicle to have more than one license. A Class D license is not valid for operating commercial motor vehicles. If you need a commercial license, you will need to study the commercial driver's manual available at your local driver's license station.

You will be required to take the driving test in the largest class of vehicle you want to drive. This also allows you to operate smaller class vehicles.

If you currently have an out-of-state license valid for the same driving privilege you require in Iowa, the knowledge and driving tests may be waived.

Your chauffeur's license will be issued will be issued with a randomly assigned expiration date. Expiration dates will be limited according to age as shown in the chart below.

Certain medical conditions and disabilities may restrict license issuance to only a two-year period, regardless of your age.

Licenses cost $8 per year. The license expires on your birthday, but remains valid for another 60 days. For more information, see the summary chart of license expiration dates on page 11.

Class M - Motorcycle

Motorcycle riders must have a license valid for motorcycle before being able to ride by themselves. If riding with a qualified operator, a motorcycle instruction permit is necessary. (See motorcycle instruction permit.) To get motorcycle added to your current license, you must pass a written test and a motorcycle skills test.

If you wish to have a Class M license without another license class, you will be required to pass written tests for both a Class C noncommercial license and motorcycles. The driving test will be a motorcycle skill test and an on-the-road test with the motorcycle. If an on-the-road test is required with the motorcycle, the examiner will ride in or on another vehicle and give you directions by prearranged signals.

If you are under age 18, in addition to driver education, you must have passed an approved motorcycle rider education course. (The skills test may be waived.) A motorcycle instruction permit may be necessary for the course if street riding is part of the motorcycle rider education course.

Adding the motorcycle class to an existing class costs $2 for each year the license is valid.

There is a separate manual for motorcycles; motorcycle study manuals are available at any driver's license station.

Motorcycle Instruction Permit - Restriction 1

For operating a motorcycle with a motorcycle permit, the person instructing you must have a license valid for motorcycles. The accompanying person must stay within sight and hearing distance and be on or in a different motor vehicle. Only one learner may be supervised by any one licensed driver.

To add the motorcycle instruction permit to an existing class, the cost is $2 for each year the license is valid.

A motorcycle instruction permit will be issued for one four-year term with no renewal permitted.

Operator Instruction Permit - Class C Restriction 2

This gives you the chance to learn how to drive with the help of an experienced driver. To get an instruction permit you must be at least 14 years old and pass the vision screening and knowledge test. You must present a parental consent form available at any Iowa driver's license station, prove your age and identity (page 5), and your social security number (page 6).

If you are 14 through 17 years old and have a valid permit, you can drive with the following people:

- a driver education instructor;
- a prospective driver education instructor;
- a licensed parent or guardian;
- a member of your immediate family who is licensed and at least 21 years old; or
- another licensed adult who is at least 25 years old and has your parent's/guardian's written permission to accompany you while you drive.

If you are at least 18 years old and have a valid permit, you can drive with:

- a driver education instructor
- a prospective driver education instructor
- a licensed member of your immediate family who is at least 21 years old
- another licensed adult who is at least 25 years old

An instruction permit is issued for four years, expiring on your birthday, with a 60-day grace period after your birthday. The cost is $6.

Chauffeur's Instruction Permit - Restriction 4

This allows you to learn to drive a vehicle for which you need a Class D license, but not commercial motor vehicles that require a CDL. When driving, you must have someone who has a Class D or commercial license valid for that type of vehicle in the seat next to you. This restriction is added to your existing license.

To get your chauffeur's permit, you must be at least 18 years old and pass the vision screening and general knowledge test.

Moped License - Restriction 5

If you are 18 or older and already have valid Iowa license, you are already valid to operate a moped and do not need to apply for a moped license. At age 18 or older you only need to apply for a moped license if you want to operate a moped and don't have a valid Iowa license. If you are under 18, you must apply for a moped license even if you already have a valid Iowa license or instruction permit.

You have to be at least 14 years old to obtain a moped license. If you are at least 14 but under 16, you must pass an approved moped education course and present your certificate of completion from the course when you apply for the moped license.

If you are at least 16, you do not have to complete a moped education course to obtain a moped license, but for your safety we encourage you to do so.

All applicants for a moped license that don't already have an Iowa license must pass a vision screen and the knowledge test, and present proof of age, identity, and social security number.

All applicants that are under 18 must also present a parental consent form.

Minor's Restricted License - Restriction 6

A "minor restricted license" (valid only for travel to and from work, or to transport dependents to and from temporary care facilities **if necessary to hold a job**) may be issued to a person age 16-18 who has completed an Iowa-approved driver education course **and** to whom any of the following apply:

- is not in attendance at school;
- has not completed the requirements for graduation in an accredited school; or
- has not obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

The minor's restricted license is not valid for driving during work or as an instruction permit.

To get a minor's restricted license, your school district superintendent or principal **and** your employer must complete a form available from any driver's license station. If you quit or lose your job for any reason, your employer is required to notify the DOT and your license will be canceled.

You must also pass the vision screening and driving test. You may not have to take the knowledge test if you have a permit that is valid or has not been expired for more than 60 days.

Minor School License - Restriction 7

This license allows you to drive at any time with adult supervision. It also allows you to drive without adult supervision between the hours of 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. for the following:

- Drive from your home to your school(s) of enrollment or school sponsored activities using the most direct and accessible route. Activities must be at the school(s) you are enrolled in.
- Drive to a school that is not your school of enrollment to participate in extracurricular activities. Activities must be in a contiguous (bordering) school district and must be held at a site, facility, or school designated for the activity under a sharing agreement between schools or conducted at a site or facility that the school district you are enrolled in has designated to accommodate extracurricular activities.
- Drive to and from your home to the closest school bus stop.
- Stop for fuel while on route or at the closest filling station off route.

To get a school license you must have successfully completed an Iowa-approved driver education course (unless you show a hardship exists) and live 1 mile or more from school. One of your parents must sign a consent form, and your school superintendent or chairperson of the school board must furnish a statement of need on a form provided by the DOT. This form is available from any Iowa driver's license issuance site.

You must pass a vision screening, but the driving test may be waived. You will also need to take the knowledge test unless your instruction permit is still valid.

The license will be issued for a maximum of two years and expires on your birthday. You do not need an instruction permit when you have a school license because the school license will be valid as an instruction permit when not driving to and from school.

You must hold an instruction permit for six months and be conviction and accident-free during that period before the school license is issued.

When operating without supervision on the minor school license, you must limit the number of unrelated minor passengers in the vehicle to one. Unrelated minor passenger means a passenger who is under 18 years of age and who is not a sibling, stepsibling, or a child who resides in your household.

Commercial Learner's Permit

A commercial learner's permit (CLP) allows you to gain behind-the-wheel training in a commercial vehicle. You must be accompanied by a person who has a CDL valid for the same type of commercial vehicle. The permit identifies the class and type of commercial vehicle you may operate when accompanied. To get this permit you must pass the vision screening and all required knowledge tests. Study materials are found in the commercial driver's manual, which can be obtained at any driver's license location. If you do not have a license when you apply for the CLP, you will be required to obtain at least the noncommercial Class C license (operator's license).

The CLP is valid for 180 days and may be renewed one time without having to retake the knowledge test(s). To obtain a full CDL you will be required to pass the appropriate skills tests. The cost of the CLP is $12.

It is important to know that a CLP may not be used to operate a vehicle transporting hazardous materials in any amount requiring placarding.

Beginning July 8, 2015, all first-time CDL applicants must obtain a CLP, and any existing CDL holder that would like to upgrade, add an endorsement, or remove a restriction on their existing CDL must obtain a CLP if the upgrade or change requires a skills test. If a CLP is required, you cannot take the skills test for the full CDL until you have had a CLP for at least 14 days.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

Class A For a combination vehicle with a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds where the gross vehicle weight rating of the towed unit is 10,001 or more pounds.

Class B For a single-unit vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds. A unit can be towed with this class of license if the gross vehicle weight rating of the towed unit is less than 10,001 pounds.

Class C For a single unit vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, is designed to carry 16 or more persons--including the driver, or is carrying hazardous material that requires placarding.

Commercial licenses cost $8 per year. The removal of an air brake restriction or addition of endorsements will be added to this base fee.

Commercial driver's license study manuals are available at the local driver's license stations. Explanations of special endorsements or restrictions are included in this manual.

Beginning July 8, 2015, a CLP is required before you obtain your first CDL, or before you upgrade, add an endorsement or remove a restriction on your existing CDL. See "Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP)" above."

Restricted Commercial Driver's License

The restricted CDL allows suppliers or applicators of agricultural chemicals, fertilizer, seed or animal feed to drive Class B or Class C commercial vehicles. Class B or C vehicles are generally single vehicles that normally do not pull a trailer or semitrailer. The only hazardous materials a holder of a restricted CDL can carry are liquid fertilizer such as anhydrous ammonia (3,000 gallons or less) and solid fertilizer such as ammonium nitrate (provided it is not mixed with any organic substance).

The restricted CDL is only valid if the distance between the business and the farm being served is 150 miles or less. To obtain the restricted CDL, a person must have a good driving record for two years before applying for the license. A good driving record is defined as:

- holding no more than one license;
- no loss of license (suspension, revocation, etc.) for any reason;
- no convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (no test refusals), leaving the scene of an accident, any felony involving a motor vehicle, driving while privileges are withdrawn, speeding 15 mph or more over the posted speed limit, reckless driving, improper or erratic lane changes, following too closely, driving a CMV without a CDL or proper endorsements, driving a CMV without a CDL in possession; and
- no convictions for accident-connected traffic law violations, and no record of accidents in which the applicant was determined to be at fault.

The initial fee for a restricted CDL is $16 for two years or $8 per year for five to eight years. There is a $10 fee to update the license for a different season than the one for which it was issued. The seasonal periods during which a restricted CDL may be used are March 15 through June 30, and Oct. 4 through Dec. 14.

License Renewal

Your license expires on the expiration date printed on the license; however, the license is valid for driving for an additional 60 days after the expiration date. After 60 days from the expiration date, you may be ticketed for driving with an expired license. (The 60-day grace period does not apply to licenses that are issued to temporary foreign nationals.) A vision screening is required for a license renewal.

If your license has been expired for more than one year and 60 days, you will have to pass the vision screening, and the knowledge and driving tests.

You can apply for your license renewal from 30 days to one year before the expiration on your license.

Online Renewal

You may also renew your driver's license online if you meet these qualifications:

- If you have a valid Iowa driver's license.
- You are at least 18 years old, but younger than 70 years old.
- Your license has not been expired for more than a year.
- It is less than 180 days to the renewal date on your current license.
- You are a U.S. citizen.
- You do not have any medical or vision conditions that would impact your ability to drive.
- You do not need to change your name printed on your license.
- If your current driver's license was not renewed online.

To renew your license online visit: myMVD at: **https://mymvd.iowadot.gov**. MyMVD is the Iowa DOT's online driver's license and record services website and the only place you can renew online.

Additional License Information

Change of Address

If your address changes, you must report the address change to the DOT within 30 days. Any driver's license station can make an address change on your license for $10. Your license will always show your residence address, but your mailing address will also be requested.

Name Changes

Individuals wishing to change their name must pay a $10 fee and provide acceptable proof for any name changes. Acceptable items are:

1. Court-ordered name change containing full name, date of birth and court seal.
2. Divorce decree.
3. Marriage certificate.

Driver Education

To get your license before you are 18 years old, you must pass an Iowa approved driver education course. Take your certificate of completion to the driver license issuance site.

If you have successfully completed an out-of-state driver education course, you should take your certificate or transcript to the driver education instructor at your school. The instructor will verify that the course meets Iowa's standards and may issue an Iowa Completion Certificate.

See page 7 for information on licensing for persons under age 18 who have had a license in another state.

Duplicates, Replacements, and Validations

If your license or permit is lost or destroyed, you may get a duplicate from any driver's license issuance site. You must prove your age and identity (see page 5) and pay a $10 fee.

License Number

The DOT will assign a number to be used as your driver's license number. However, you must give your Social Security number on your driver's license application.

License and Permit Possession

You should have your license or permit with you at all times while driving. If you are arrested for not having your noncommercial driver's license with you, you will not be penalized if you can produce your license or permit in court and show that it was valid at the time. You are required to have your commercial driver's license in your immediate possession when operating a commercial motor vehicle.

Military Service

If your Iowa license expires while you are on active duty with the Armed Forces, it can be extended until six months after you leave active duty. A five-year extension may apply to your spouse and children if they are living with you outside of Iowa. You may obtain military service extensions by writing the Office of Driver Services, P.O. Box 9204, Des Moines, IA 50306-9204. You can also request the department restore your license to its records by showing you are in the military and were at the time the license expired.

Organ Donor/Medical Alert

Anyone 18 years of age or older may become an organ donor. A person under 18 years of age may become a donor with parental consent.

When you apply or reapply for any type of license, the clerk will ask you if you would like to become an organ donor. This information will print on the front of your license to the right of your address. You can obtain a uniform donor card at the driver's license station. For further information, consult your physician.

A medical alert designation may be placed on the front of your license to indicate a medical condition that may need special attention.

Medical Advance Directive

There is a growing concern about how medical care decisions will be made when people are unable to make decisions for themselves. An increasing number of people are stating their health care choices in writing while they are still able to make these decisions. These legal documents are called advance directives, more commonly known as a living will and durable power of attorney for health care. These are documents stating your health care choices or naming someone to make the choices for you if you become unable to do so. When you apply or reapply for any type of license, the clerk will ask you if you would like to have medical advance directives indicated on the face of your license. Ask your physician for more information on advance directives.

Veteran designation

Honorably discharged veterans may request the "Veteran" designation be placed on their driver's license or nonoperator identification card. The veteran must present a copy of their DD 214 or applicable discharge document to the county or state Veterans Affairs Office to have their eligibility certified. That office and the veteran will complete an Iowa DOT application form. Note: Veterans may request the "veteran" designation anytime they seek a new card, not just at the time of renewal. The cost for a duplicate driver's license or ID card is $10.

Voter Registration

If you are not registered to vote, you may apply to register electronically when you apply for your license. Voter registration application cards are also available. The forms can be filled out and mailed by the applicant, or DOT employees will mail the cards to the proper office after they have been completed. You may also update your voter registration.

Driver's Privacy Protection Act

Certain personal information about you will not be released except to authorized recipients under the provisions of the federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act and state statutes. Personal information includes your photograph, Social Security number, driver's license number, name, address, telephone number, and medical or disability information.

Special Restrictions

For safety reasons it is sometimes necessary to limit driving privileges. You may be limited to certain types of vehicles, special mechanical controls, or certain other operating restrictions. Your license is good only under those conditions and can be suspended if you violate the restrictions.

Selective Service Registration

If you are a male age 18 through 25, your application for a driver's license or nonoperator identification card will serve as consent to be registered with the United States Selective Service System. If you refuse to give consent, your license or ID can still be issued. However, DOT will provide consent or refusal information to Selective Service.

Summary Chart of License Expiration Dates

On Jan. 1, 2014, Iowa began transitioning from a standard five-year license term to an eight-year license term. From now until Dec. 31, 2018, Iowa driver's licenses will be issued with a randomly assigned expiration date between five and eight years. Expiration dates will be limited according to age as shown in the chart below.

- Iowa nonoperator's ID cards will be issued with an expiration date of eight years.
- Licenses issued to persons under the age of 18 or persons who are temporary foreign nationals are not eligible for licenses with an expiration date between five and eight years. These individuals will be issued driver's licenses with shorter renewal periods set by Iowa law.

Age	Expiration date
Younger than 17 years and 11 months	Two years
Older than 17 years and 11 months through 66 years	Five to eight years (selected randomly)
67 years	Five to seven years (selected randomly)
68 years	Five to six years (selected randomly)
69 years	Five years
70 years	Four years
71 years	Three years
72 years	Two years
73 years	Two years
74 years and older	Two years

Summary Chart of License Types

Persons younger than 17 years and 11 months and age 72 yeras or older will be issued two-year licenses. Unless otherwise indicated, **all others will be issued randomly with an expiration between five and eight years. For more information, see chart on page 11.**

License class		Minimum age	Expiration date	Tests required	Cost
A	Commercial	18	Two years/ Five to eight years	See CDL Manual	$8 per year*
B	Commercial	18	Two years/ Five to eight years	See CDL Manual	$8 per year*
C	Commercial	18	Two years/ Five to eight years	See CDL Manual	$8 per year*
C	Noncommercial - operator	16	Two years/ Five to eight years	Knowledge, vision, driving	$4 per year
D	Noncommercial - chauffeur	18	Two years/ Five to eight years	See CDL Manual	$8 per year
L	Motorcycle license - added to existing license	16	Two years/ Five to eight years	Knowledge, vision, driving See Iowa Motorcycle Operator Manual	$2 per year
Restriction 1 (motorcycle instruction permit) Must be added to an existing license		14	Same as current license	Knowledge, vision	$2 per year
C	Restriction 1 (motorcycle permit only - new issuance)	14	Four years	Knowledge, vision	$14
C	Restriction 2 (instruction permit)	14	Four years	Knowledge, vision	$6
Commercial Learner's Permit Must be added to an existing license		18	Six months	Knowledge, vision	$12
C	Restriction 4 (chauffeur's instruction permit)	18	Four years	Knowledge, vision	$12
C	Restriction 5 (motorized bicycle license - moped)	14	Two years	Knowledge, vision	$8
C	Restriction 6 (minor's restricted license)	16	Two years	Knowledge, vision, driving	$8
C	Restriction 7 (minor's school license)	14	Two years	Knowledge, vision, driving	$8
Upgrade from operator license to chauffer or commercial license		18	Prorate duplicate license	Knowledge, vision, driving	$4 per year
The following endorsements are used exclusively in conjunction with a commercial driver's license.					
Double/Triple trailers					$5
Passenger					$10
Tank vehicles					$5
Hazardous materials*					$5*
School bus					$10
Remove air brake restriction					$10
*The hazardous material endorsement fee must be paid each time a CDL with this endorsement is renewed. The hazardous material knowledge examination is also required at each renewal.					

2. Traffic Signs and Rules of the Road

There are traffic rules that say where, when and how fast you can drive. These rules help to keep traffic moving safely. Rules of the road include traffic controls, lane controls, right-of-way laws, and parking rules.

Traffic signs tell you about traffic rules, hazards, where you are, how to get where you are going, and where services are located. The shape and color of these signs give clues to the type of information they provide.

Traffic controls include traffic signals, traffic signs and pavement markings. Traffic control also can be provided by law enforcement, highway personnel or school crossing guards. You must obey directions from these persons.

Traffic Signs

Standard Colors

Red
Stop, yield or do what is shown on the sign.

Green
Direction. These signs indicate where a place is, or how far a place is from where you are.

Blue
Services for travelers. These signs direct you to places such as rest areas, tourist sites, hospitals, hotels, gas stations, eating places, campgrounds or picnic areas.

Yellow
General warning.

Fluorescent Yellow-Green
Pedestrian, bicycle and school warning signs. The new color for these signs is much easier to see in low light and foggy/rainy weather.

White
These signs include information regarding enforceable laws and ordinances.

Orange
Road work, temporary traffic control, and maintenance warnings. Be sure to watch for workers on the road.

Brown
Recreation and cultural points of interest. These signs point out historical sites, parks or recreational areas.

Standard Shapes

Octagon - Stop
Come to a full stop at an intersection controlled by this sign. Stop at the marked stop line or before entering the crosswalk or before your vehicle enters the intersection. Let other vehicles or pedestrians pass if they are in your path.

Equilateral triangle
Yield the right of way. Slow down and let vehicles crossing your path go by. If necessary, stop before going ahead. If pedestrians are in or about to enter the crosswalk, stop until they have crossed the roadway, then proceed.

Pennant
This sign will be on the left-hand side of the road or highway. It warns you of a no passing zone.

Diamond
Warning. These signs alert you to special road hazards. Words or pictures on the sign will show you why you need to slow down or use extra caution.

Rectangle
Regulatory or guide. Vertical signs indicate what you should or should not do. Horizontal signs give directions or information about services drivers may want.

Pentagon
School crossing. Signs mark school areas and school crossings. The color of this sign may also be yellow.

Crossbuck
Railroad crossing signs are placed at each crossing. A number sign under the crossbucks shows how many sets of train tracks you must cross.

Circle
Railroad crossing ahead. These signs give you early warning of railroad crossings.

Warning Signs

These signs are yellow with black lettering or symbols and most are diamond-shaped. These signs warn you to slow down and be prepared to stop if necessary; a special situation or hazard is ahead. Some common warning signs are shown below.

Intersection/Crossroad
There is another road ahead that crosses the road you are on. Watch carefully for cross traffic in your path.

Merge Left
Two lanes of traffic will soon become one lane of traffic. Right-lane traffic must yield when merging.

Gradual Right Curve
Road ahead curves gradually to the right. Be prepared for the change in direction.

Signal Ahead
These signs are used on roads with higher speeds. Be ready for an intersection and a stop light.

Farm Machinery
Farm equipment may be crossing the road. Be ready to slow down for slow-moving equipment.

Slippery When Wet
Road ahead becomes slippery in wet weather. Slow down under these conditions.

Merging Traffic
If you are on the main road and see this sign, be prepared for other vehicles blending into your lane.

Pedestrian Crossing
Watch out for people who might walk or run in front of your vehicle.

Chevron Sign
Used in addition to the curve signs when there is a need to draw added attention to a change in the road's direction.

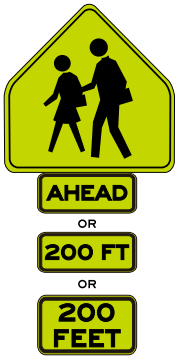
Two-Way Traffic
Keep to the right because you are leaving a one-way road and entering a two-way road.

Deer Crossing
There may be deer trying to cross the roadway in the area. Slow down and watch carefully.

Ramp Speed
The recommended speed on an exit ramp.

Divided Highway Begins
You are getting close to the place where two-way traffic will be divided by a center strip.

Hill
This sign is a warning to all vehicles that the road ahead goes down a hill. You should check your brakes before going down the hill.



Advance School Crossing
You are nearing a school area with a crossing. Watch for children and the marked school crossing. The color of this sign may be yellow.

Divided Highway Ends
Two-way traffic will no longer be divided by a center strip. Watch out for oncoming vehicles.

T-Intersection Ahead
The road you are on does not go straight ahead. Prepare to turn right or left.

Horse-drawn Vehicle
Be alert for slow-moving, horse-drawn vehicles on the roadway. Reduce your speed and pass slowly.

School Bus Stop Ahead
Watch for children. Be prepared to stop. You are nearing an area where a stopped school bus will pick up or discharge passengers.

School Crossing
Watch for children. Reduce speed. Obey crossing guard signals Look out for children playing. The color of this sign may also be yellow.

Regulation Signs

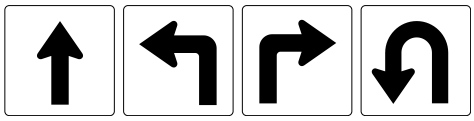
These signs give you information about rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking and other special situations.

Some regulation signs have a red circle with a red slash over a symbol. These indicate you cannot do something; for example, no left turn, no right turn, or no U-turn.

Speed Limit Signs

These signs indicate the maximum or minimum safe speed that is allowed. The maximum limits are for ideal conditions and you must reduce your speed when conditions require it, such as when the roadway is slippery (during rain) or it is difficult to see clearly down the road (during fog). Some high speed roads have minimum speed limits. If this minimum speed is too fast for you, then you should use another route.

Lane Control Signs



These signs mark where you can go and where you can turn, and often use an arrow symbol. The signs are along the road or hanging over the road. Sometimes arrows may be painted on the road.

Passing Signs

These signs mark where it may be safe to pass another vehicle and where you cannot. Passing areas are based on how far you can see ahead. They consider unseen hazards such as intersections, driveways and other places a vehicle may enter the roadway. The signs indicate where you may pass, or the beginning and ending of a passing zone, or where you may not pass. Where passing is allowed, you may do so only if it is safe.

Stop Sign

A stop sign is red, with white letters, and has eight sides. It means you must come to a full stop. You must wait until crossing vehicles and pedestrians have cleared. You must stop at the stop line if one is present. If necessary, you may then pull forward to the stop sign or the edge of the intersection and then proceed when it is safe to do so.

Yield Sign

A yield sign is shaped like a downward pointing triangle. It is red and white with red letters. It means you must slow down and yield the right of way to traffic in the intersection you are crossing or roadway you are entering.

Divided Highway

The road ahead is divided. This sign directs traffic to the right of an island or barrier.

Wrong Way

You made a wrong turn and have entered a lane of oncoming traffic. Get out the safest and quickest way possible.

One Way

Traffic moves only in the direction of the arrow.

Do Not Enter Sign

A square sign with a white horizontal line inside a red circle means you cannot enter. You will see this sign at roadway openings you are not to enter and when traffic is one way against you. You will see them at exit ramps, in crossovers on divided roadways, and at numerous locations on one-way roads.

Slow-Moving Vehicle Sign

A reflective orange triangle on the rear of a vehicle means it is traveling 35 mph or less. You may see this sign on road work equipment, farm vehicles, or horse-drawn wagons or carriages. It shows up as a solid orange triangle by day and a hollow red triangle at night.

Guide Signs

These signs are square or rectangular shaped, and are green or brown with white lettering. They show directions and distance to various locations, or areas such as cities, airports, state lines; or to special areas such as national parks, historical areas or museums.

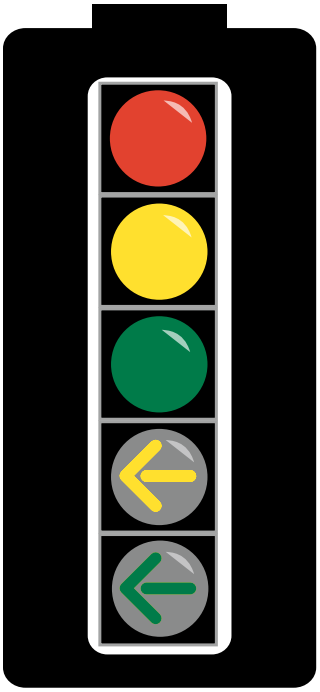
Service Signs

These signs are square or rectangular shaped, and are blue with white letters or symbols. They show the location of various services; such as rest areas, gas stations, campgrounds or hospitals.

Route Signs

The shape of route signs indicate the type of roadway, interstate, U.S., state, or county. When planning a trip, use a highway map to determine your route. During the trip, follow the route signs. This will help you stay on your route.

Traffic Signals



Red
Come to a complete stop at the stop line or before entering the intersection.

Yellow
Do not enter the intersection if you can stop safely. **If you cannot stop safely, proceed through the intersection with caution.** A yellow light warns pedestrians there is not enough time to cross the street. Anyone crossing the street on a yellow light shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles.

Green
Go, but only when the intersection is clear. You must yield to vehicles and pedestrians in the intersection. When the light changes, traffic may be caught in the intersection. You must give them the right of way while they clear the intersection.

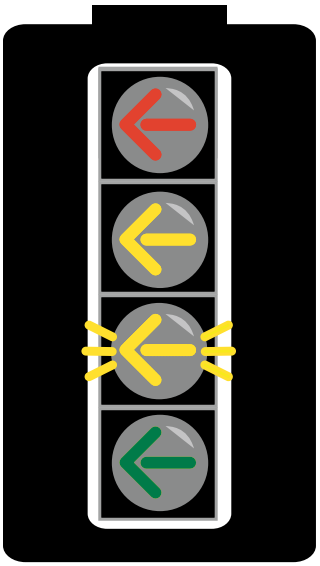
Yellow Arrow
Do not enter the intersection if you can stop safely. **If you cannot stop safely, proceed only in the direction of the arrow.**

Green Arrow
Drive only in the direction of the arrow. Yield the right of way to other vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection.

Flashing Red
Treat it the same as a stop sign.

Flashing Yellow
Proceed with caution. Yield to vehicles and pedestrians, and proceed when it is safe.

Left-Turn Signal Head



The new left-turn signal head has four signals.

Steady Red Arrow
Drivers turning left must stop and wait.

Steady Yellow Arrow
The left-turn signal is about to turn red. Do not enter the intersection if you can stop safely. Complete your left turn if you are already within the intersection.

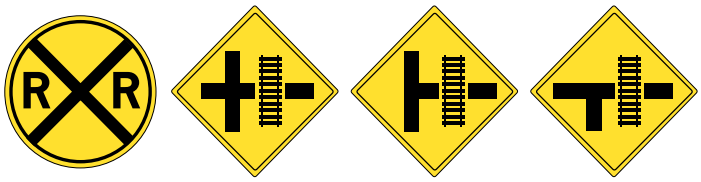
Flashing Yellow Arrow
Yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians; then turn left proceeding with caution. Oncoming traffic has a green light.

Steady Green Arrow
Drivers can proceed with the left turn. Oncoming traffic must stop. Do not go straight.

Railroad Crossings

- Motorists must use extra caution at railroad crossings. Trains cannot stop quickly.
- Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Even if it is a tie, you will be the loser.
- It is not wise to shift gears when crossing railroad tracks; you might stall.
- **Never stop your vehicle on the railroad tracks.**

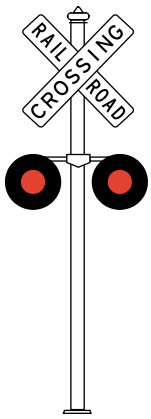
Advance warning signs and pavement markings indicate railroad tracks cross the road ahead. Be prepared to stop before you get to the tracks if a train is approaching the crossing. Pavement markings are a large "X" with the letters "RR" on the road. These marks are not used at all crossings.



Railroad/highway/side road intersection

Crossbuck signs have been put at many public railroad crossings. This sign means look both ways, listen for and yield to trains. A number sign under the crossbuck indicates there is more than one set of tracks following the sign.

Flashing light signals may be used with crossbucks. Stop when the lights are flashing. Do not cross until you can do it safely. If there is more than one track, be careful to watch for trains from either the same or opposite direction.



Flashing lights

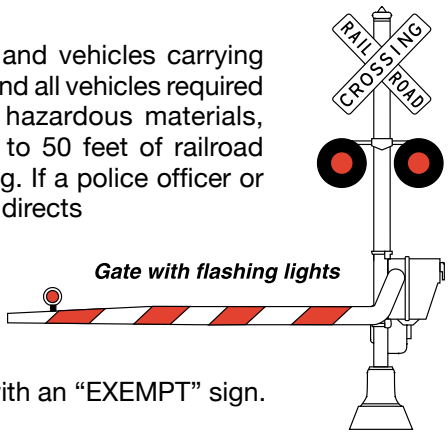
Gates are used with flashing lights at some crossings. Stop when the lights start to flash before the gate goes down. Remain stopped until the gates go up and the lights stop flashing. **Never drive around the gates.** It is dangerous and against the law.

Railroad gates and warning lights are to alert you that a train is in the area. You may collide with a train if you go onto the tracks.

It is against the law to pass any vehicle within 100 feet of a railroad crossing.

Required Stops

All school buses and vehicles carrying passengers for hire, and all vehicles required to be placarded for hazardous materials, must stop within 15 to 50 feet of railroad tracks before crossing. If a police officer or highway traffic signal directs highway traffic to proceed, you do not have to stop. You also do not have to stop if the crossing is marked with an "EXEMPT" sign.



Gate with flashing lights

Road Work Zones

These traffic control devices and signs are used to mark construction, maintenance, survey and utility work zones. These help direct drivers and pedestrians safely through the work area while keeping it safe for workers on the highway. Stay alert and drive cautiously as fines may double in work area zones.

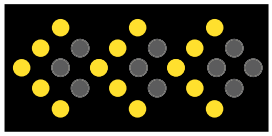
The most commonly used traffic control devices are signs, barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones, tubular markers, flashing arrow panels and flaggers. Most signs in work areas are diamond-shaped, although a few signs are rectangular. Orange is the basic color of these signs and warning devices. These signs and traffic control devices are reflectorized to attract your attention at night.

Slanting stripes on a panel or barricade tell you on which side to pass. Stripes sloping down to the right mean pass on the right. Stripes sloping down to the left mean pass on the left.

You may encounter road work zones throughout the year which can be a danger to motorists and road workers alike due to careless or inattentive drivers. In work zones, remember these tips:

- Adjust your speed to the traffic conditions.
- Obey all instructions provided by signs, traffic signals and flaggers.
- Don't follow other vehicles too closely.
- Always "Expect the unexpected in 'The Work Zone.'"

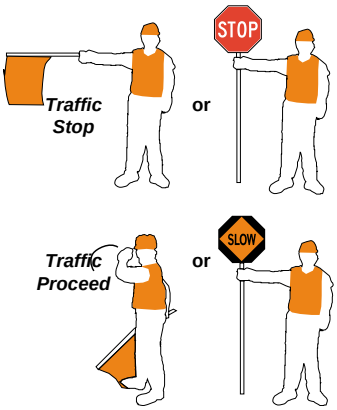
Flashing Arrow Panels



Large flashing arrow panels may be used in work areas to direct drivers into certain traffic lanes. These panels also alert you that part of the roadway is closed to traffic.

Flaggers

People with stop/slow paddles help control traffic in work zones. Follow their instructions. They should be wearing lime green or orange vests, shirts or jackets. They will normally use stop/slow signs. Red flags may be used occasionally.



Channelizing Devices

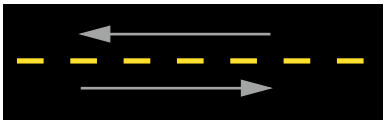
Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones and tubular markers are the most commonly used devices to alert drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in highway and street work areas, and to guide drivers safely through the work zone. Flashing lights are used to alert motorists of a hazard.

Tube *Drum* *Barricade*

Pavement Markings and Other Lane Controls

Pavement markings help direct and regulate traffic, just like highway signs. You will find them alone or used with signs and traffic signals. White lines separate traffic moving in the same direction. Yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions.

One direction roadway

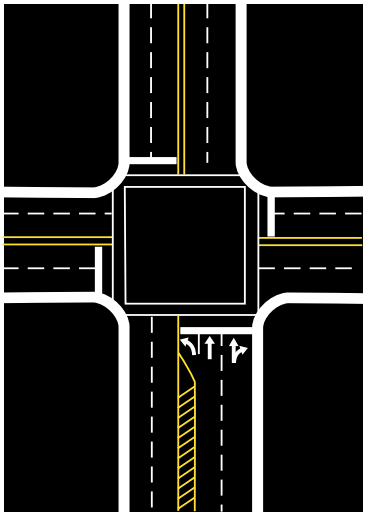

Two direction roadway

On two-way roads you will see a solid yellow line with a broken line beside it in some places. Passing is not allowed on the side with the solid yellow line. Vehicles on the side with the broken line may pass when the way is clear.

At intersections, special arrow markings or heavy white lines give you directions or mark off pedestrian crosswalks.

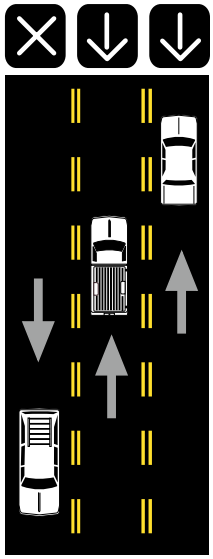
Crosswalks, Stop Lines and Directional Arrow Markings

When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line, or a crosswalk if there is one. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians are to cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians in or about to enter a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked. Be alert for pedestrians when crossing intersections that do not have defined crosswalks. Special arrow markings may be present.

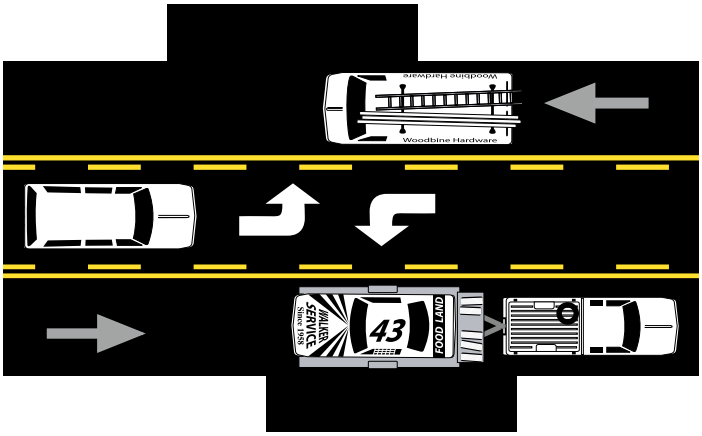


Reversible Lanes

Some travel lanes are designed to carry traffic in one direction at certain times and in the opposite direction at other times. These lanes are usually marked by double-dashed yellow lines. Before you start driving in them, check to see which lanes you can use at that time. There may be signs posted by the side of the road or overhead. Sometimes special lights are used. A green arrow means you can use the lane beneath it; a red "X" means you may not. A flashing yellow "X" means the lane is only for turning. A steady yellow "X" means that the use of the lane is changing and you should move out of it as soon as it is safe to do so.



Shared Center Lane



These center lanes are reserved for making left turns (or U-turns when they are permitted) but can be used by vehicles traveling in both directions. On the pavement, left-turn arrows for traffic in one direction alternate with left-hand arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by a solid yellow and dashed yellow lines.

General Lane Use

- Do not back a vehicle in a travel lane. It is unsafe to do so. Drivers do not expect a vehicle to be backing towards them and may not realize it until it is too late. If you miss your turn or exit, do not back up on the travel lane or shoulder. Continue to travel to the next exit or crossroad.
- Do not stop in travel lanes for any reason (confusion, breakdown, letting out a passenger). Keep moving until you can safely pull off the road.
- On a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction, stay in the right lane except to pass. If there is a lot of entering traffic, then use the center travel lane.
- Unless instructed to do so by a traffic control device or a flagger, never drive on the shoulder of the road.
- On multi-lane roads, the left-most lane is intended to be used to pass slower vehicles. If you pass on the right, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you. Never pass on the shoulder, whether it is paved or not. Other drivers will never expect you to be there and may pull off the road without looking.
- Where there are no signs or lane markings to control turning, you should turn from the lane that is closest to the direction you want to go, and turn into the lane closest to the one you came from.
- When making turns, go from one lane to the other as directly as possible without crossing lane lines or interfering with traffic. Once you have completed your turn, you can change to another lane if you need to.

Reserved Lanes

On various roadways one or more lanes may be reserved for special vehicles. Reserved lanes are marked by signs stating that the lane is reserved for special use, and often have a white diamond posted at the side of the road and/or painted on the road surface. Do not travel in one of these lanes unless operating that type of vehicle.

(Left) This sign means the lane is for bus and car pool use only.

(Right) This sign means the lane is reserved for bicyclists.

High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) lanes are reserved for car pools and vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs say how many people must be in the vehicle as well as the days and hours to which it applies. For example, "HOV 4" means there must be at least four people in the vehicle.

When to Yield the Right-of-Way

Where vehicles or pedestrians are likely to meet one another and there are no signs or signals to regulate traffic, there are rules that say who must yield the right-of-way. These rules tell drivers who goes first and who must wait in different traffic situations.

The law says who must **yield** the right-of-way; it does not **give** anyone the right-of-way. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

Be alert for bicyclists. While bicyclists and motorists must share the rights and responsibilities of using public streets and roads, motorists should realize bicycle riders are very vulnerable in crashes. Therefore, motor vehicle drivers should use good defensive driving skills to avoid collisions with bicyclists.

Intersections

The following right-of-way rules apply at intersections:

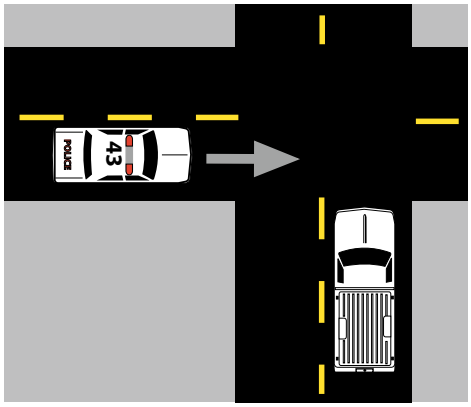
- You must yield when you want to make a right turn after stopping at a red light, but before the light turns green. However, turns on red must be permitted at that intersection.
- Drivers crossing a sidewalk entering or exiting a driveway, alley, or parking lot must yield to pedestrians. It is illegal to drive on a sidewalk except to cross it.
- Pedestrians using a guide dog or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. Do not use your horn as it could confuse or frighten the pedestrian who is blind.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming cars that are going straight ahead.
- You should watch out for bicyclists. Be ready to yield the right-of-way, even at times the bicyclists should yield to you. They have no defense against a car or truck, so it is your responsibility as a driver to watch out for them.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign or traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- At a four-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first gets to go first (after coming to a complete stop).
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside must yield to vehicles already on the main road.
- You must yield or stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks, and at unmarked crosswalks at intersections.
- You should yield to other vehicles when approaching the triangular shaped “yield” signs.

Overtaking Vehicles

Drivers overtaking a vehicle traveling in the same direction must yield to that vehicle and allow the vehicle full use of the lane.

Emergency Vehicles

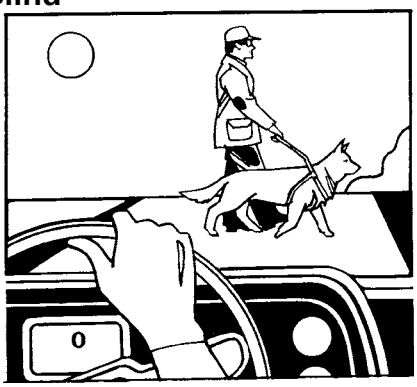
You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance or other emergency vehicle using a siren or air horn, and a red or blue flashing light. Pull over to the right edge of the road, or as near to the right as possible, when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction. Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle’s loudspeaker. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over. However, if you are on a street or highway separated by a median strip and the emergency vehicle is on the other side, you do not have to stop. You must stay at least 500 feet behind any emergency vehicle using lights and sirens on its way to an emergency.



Emergency vehicle

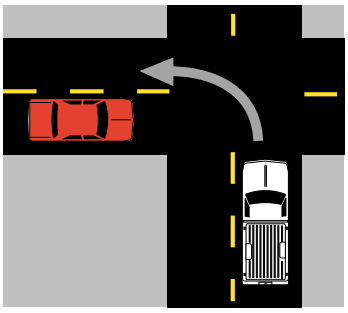
Persons who are Blind

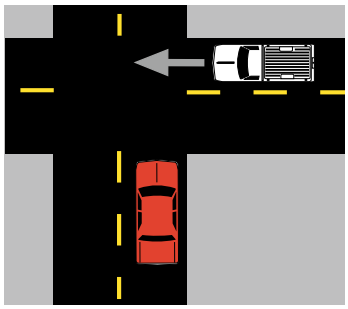
If you approach a person walking with a white cane or a white cane tipped with red, you must stop and take whatever action is necessary to prevent injury to that person. The same applies to a person being led by a guide dog which is wearing a harness and walking by or in front of the person.

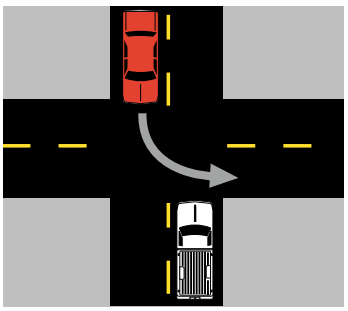


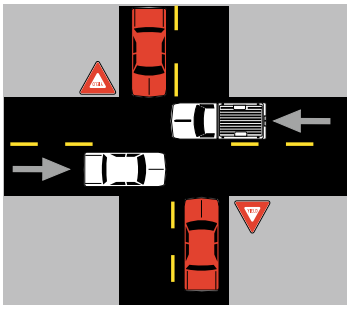
Yielding Situations

(red car shown here must yield to approaching vehicle)


Car in intersection


Car on right


Oncoming traffic


At yield sign

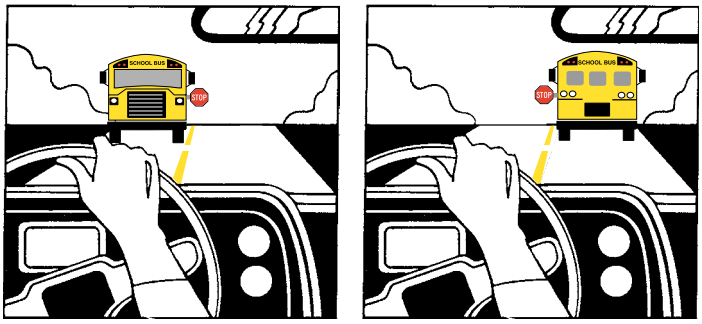
School Buses

When you meet an oncoming school bus displaying flashing amber lights, you must slow down to no more than 20 mph and be prepared to stop. If the red lights are flashing or if the stop arm is out, you must come to a complete stop at least 15 feet from the bus. You must remain stopped as long as the red lights flash or the stop arm is out.

The only exception to this is where you are approaching the bus from the opposite direction on a road with at least two lanes in each direction.

When overtaking a school bus, you may not pass when red or amber warning lights are flashing.

After a school bus has stopped to let students off, watch for children on the side of the road.

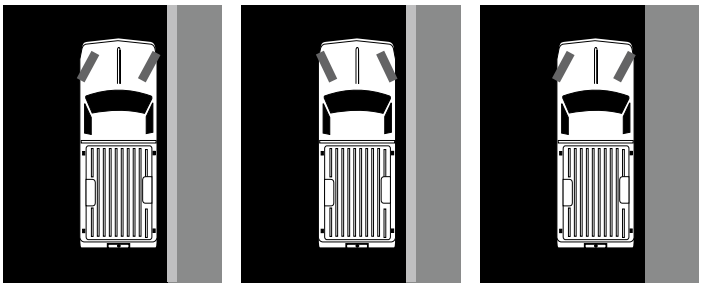


If the red lights are flashing or if the stop arm is out, you must come to a complete stop at least 15 feet from the bus and remain stopped as long as the red lights flash or the stop arm is out.

Parking

Drivers are responsible for making sure their vehicles do not become a hazard after they have been parked. Whenever you park your car, follow these guidelines.

- Park far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic.
- Make sure your car is visible to drivers approaching from either direction.
- Park in a designated area, if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission, or in “park” if it has an automatic transmission.
- Check traffic before you open the door. Get out of the vehicle on the curb side if you can. If you have to use the street side, check traffic before you get out. Shut the door as soon as you can after getting out.
- Never leave the ignition keys in a parked car. Lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle if it will be out of your sight at any time.
- If you must park on a roadway, park your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can.
- When you park headed downhill, turn your front wheels toward the curb or roadside so the vehicle will roll away from traffic if it moves.
- If you are headed uphill, turn your front wheels away from the curb. Then let the car roll back slightly until the right front tire hits the curb. If you are parking uphill and there is no curb, turn your front wheels toward the side of the road. That way, the vehicle will roll away from traffic if it moves.



Down hill (with or without curb) ***Up hill with curb*** ***Up hill without curb***

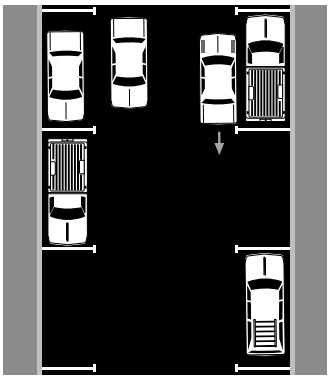
Parking Is Not Allowed

There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs that may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by colored curb markings. Do not park:

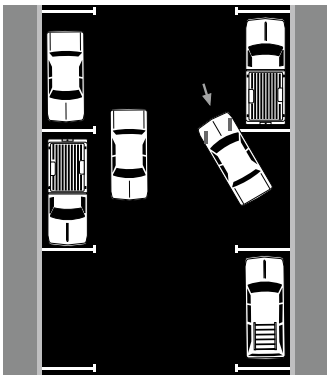
- on a crosswalk;
- in front of a public or private driveway;
- on any bridge outside city limits or in highway tunnels;
- alongside another stopped or parked car (double parking);
- closer than five feet from a fire hydrant;
- closer than 10 feet from a stop sign;
- closer than 20 feet from a fire station entrance;
- closer than 50 feet from a hotel or theater entrance;
- closer than 50 feet from a railroad crossing;
- closer than eight feet parallel to a railroad crossing;
- in “NO PARKING ZONES” which are usually marked with signs or yellow painted curbs;
- in an intersection; or
- on a sidewalk.

Parallel Parking

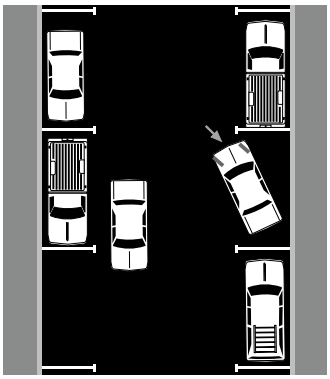
- Signal and stop with the rear bumper of your vehicle even with the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of the place you want to park. The two vehicles should be about one to two feet apart.



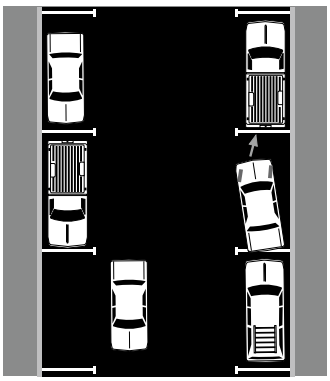
- Turning your steering wheel to the right, back slowly aiming the back of your car towards the front of the car behind you.



- As the front of your car clears the back of the car in front of you, turn your wheels sharply to the left and continue backing slowly until the back of your car almost touches the car behind you.



- Straighten your wheels and pull forward to center the car in the parking space. Your car should be no more than 18 inches from the curb. Put the transmission in park if your car has an automatic transmission and set the brake. Turn off the engine. (It is against the law to leave keys in a running, unattended vehicle.)



To park by the left-hand curb on a one-way street, follow the same directions but reverse right and left in the instructions.

If your car has a manual transmission, leave it in low gear when parked and headed uphill. Leave it in reverse when parked and headed downhill. This will help prevent an accident if your emergency or parking brake fails.

To leave a parallel parking space, signal your move. Watch for traffic and turn your steering wheel towards the open lane, easing your way into traffic.

If you park on a road outside city limits, you must make sure you are completely off the pavement. In all cases, police are authorized to remove illegally parked vehicles.

Approaching Stationary Emergency or Maintenance Vehicles

When approaching a stationary vehicle such as a police car, tow truck, utility or maintenance vehicle that is parked along side the road and displaying flashing lights, you are required to make a lane change. You must make the lane change only if it is safe to do so according to road and traffic conditions.

If a lane change is not possible, prohibited by law, or unsafe, you must slow down to a reasonable and proper speed for the existing conditions and be prepared to stop.

Cell Phones and Texting While Driving

It is highly dangerous to divide your attention from the task of driving by using cells phones, text messaging devices and electronic entertainment devices.

It is unlawful for any driver in Iowa to read, write or send a text message while driving. Before using a hand-held electronic communication device to write, send, or read a text message, the vehicle must be brought to a complete stop off the traveled portion of the roadway. Exceptions to reading a text message are limited to:

- A member of a public safety agency performing official duties
- A health care professional in the course of an emergency situation
- A person receiving safety-related information including emergency, traffic, or weather alerts.

It is unlawful for persons under the age of eighteen operating a motor vehicle with a Minor Restricted License, Instruction Permit, Intermediate License, or Minor School License to use an electronic communication device (including cell phones) or an electronic entertainment device unless the motor vehicle is at a complete stop off the traveled portion of the roadway.

Notes

3. Safe Driving Tips

No driver manual can completely teach you how to operate a vehicle or be a safe driver. Driving requires skill you can only gain through instruction and practice.

Basic Driving

Starting

Check the vehicle owner's manual for the best starting procedures for the vehicle. The procedures vary depending on whether the vehicle has fuel injection, and the type of transmission. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle.

If the vehicle has a manual transmission it must not be in gear, and, in some vehicles, you must depress the clutch. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park." Otherwise, the vehicle will not start. You must press on the brake in some newer vehicles in order to select a gear and/or start the vehicle.

Accelerating

Accelerate gradually and smoothly. Trying to start too fast can cause the drive wheels to spin, particularly on slippery surfaces, and cause the vehicle to slide. With a manual-shift vehicle, practice using the clutch and accelerator so the engine does not run too fast or stall when shifting between gears.

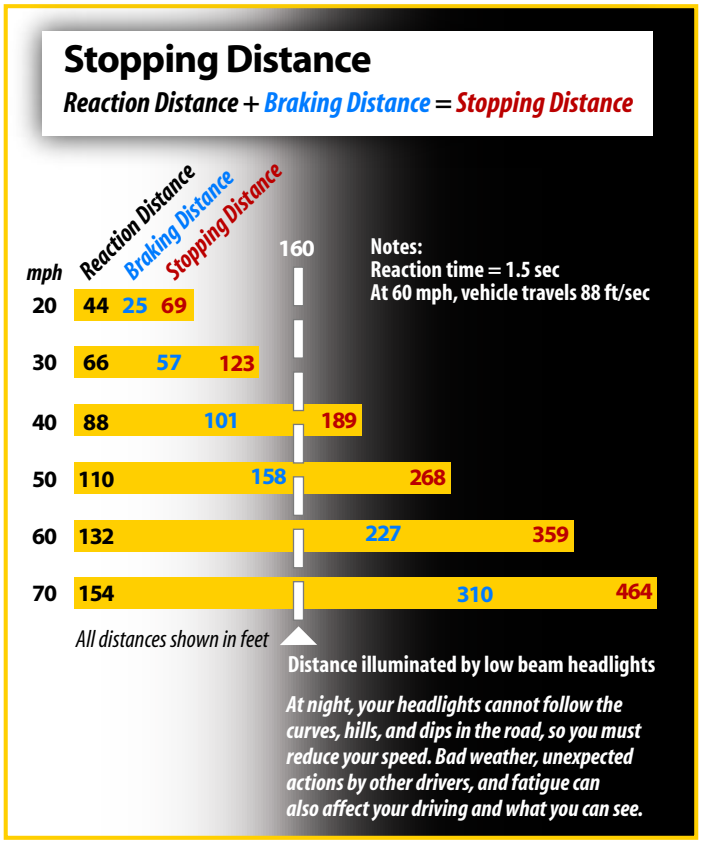
Braking and Stopping

Using your brakes to stop your vehicle is one of the most common driving techniques you must learn. The time it takes your wheels to stop depends on your vehicle's weight, size, height and load, and the size, condition and pressure of its tires. This distance is added to your reaction time. Your reaction time is the time it takes you to see the need to stop and get your foot on the brake pedal.

Even if your car and your reflexes are in top condition, the road surfaces still affect how fast you stop. Different road surfaces have different contact with your tires. Some surfaces are loose and allow your vehicle to skid easily. Even on dry pavement your car will skid if the brakes are applied too hard.

Try to avoid panic stops by watching for things well ahead of you. By slowing down or changing lanes, you may not have to stop at all. If you do have to stop, it can be a more gradual and safer stop.

As the condition of the road surfaces changes, you should change your following distance to make sure you have time to stop. The following table shows how far you will go before your car comes to a stop when driving at various speeds. Remember, these are distances figured under ideal conditions. Bad weather, road conditions, condition of your tires or slower reflexes can increase these distances.



Information courtesy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Required Stops

You must always stop:

- at railroad crossings if your vehicle is carrying hazardous materials;
- when entering a public road from a private drive;
- at all stop signs;
- before crossing a sidewalk;
- at the request of any law officer;
- at a flashing red light, then go ahead if it is clear;
- at all red traffic lights, including where right turns on red are allowed;
- when a blind person with a white cane or red-tipped cane is walking in front of you or close enough to you that the person could be in danger; and
- when a blind person with a guide dog in a harness walks in front of you or close enough to you that the person or guide dog is in danger.

See page 16 regarding stops at railroad crossings and page 19 for stops when approaching school buses displaying flashing lights and/or stop arms.

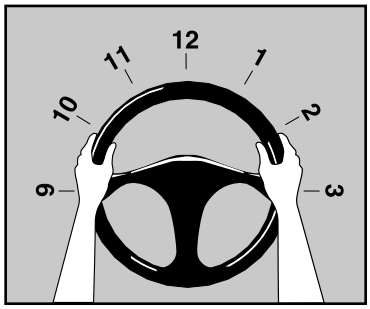
Steering

Use a proper grip. Your hands should be placed on opposite sides of the steering wheel (see illustration on the following page) in a comfortable position.

Look well down the road, not just at the road immediately in front of your vehicle. Look for traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

When turning corners, turn the steering wheel using the "hand-over-hand" or the "push-pull" technique.

Do not turn the wheel with just the palm of one hand; you could lose control. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous.



Drivers of vehicles equipped with airbags should be aware that arms positioned over the center of the steering wheel could be forced backward into the face if the airbag deploys during a collision.

Proper Turning Techniques

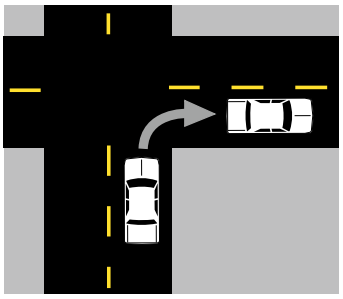
Plan your turns ahead of time. Decide where you want to be when you finish the turn. Give yourself a chance to slow down and watch out for both pedestrian and other vehicle traffic. Do not make sharp turns at the last minute; they are dangerous.

Make sure you signal properly and turn from the proper lane into the proper lane. Do not cut corners. Do not swing wide on your turns. These actions increase your chances of being in an accident. Generally, other drivers expect you to keep doing what you are doing. You must warn them when you are going to change direction or slow down. This will give them time to react, if needed, or at least not to be surprised by what you do.

Turn Signals

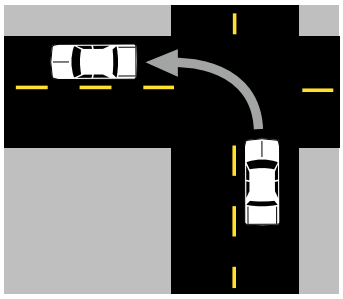
Turn signals give other drivers time to react to your moves. You should use your turn signals before you change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic, or park.

- Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.
- Signal as early as you can. Try and signal at least three seconds before you make your move. You must signal at least 100 feet before a turn if the speed limit is 45 mph or less. If the speed limit is faster than 45 mph, you must signal at least 300 feet before you turn.
- Be careful that you do not signal too early. If there are streets, driveways or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.
- If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where that driver is and he/she might pull into your path.
- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. After short turns, the signals may not turn off by themselves. Turn it off if it has not canceled by itself. If you do not, other drivers might think you plan to turn again.



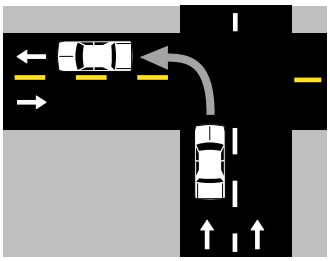
Right Turn

After checking to the rear and signaling, move to within four feet of the right curb. Begin turning to the right as soon as your front wheels are even with the bend of the curb around the corner. Turning the steering wheel hand-over-hand, move the car around the corner and into the lane next to the curb. Straighten out the wheels as you get around the corner.

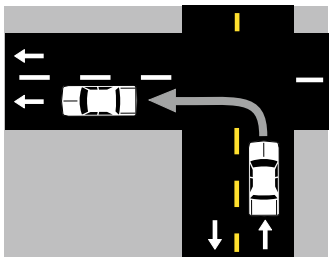


Left Turn

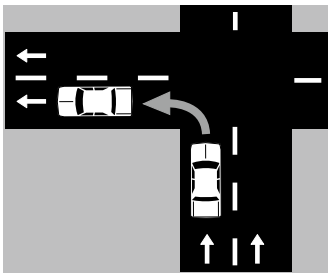
Check traffic in your mirrors and use your turn signals. Move into the lane closest to the center line. When you are turning left onto a two-way street, start your turn just before the front of the car reaches the center of the intersection. Do not cut the corner. Steering hand-over-hand, turn the corner and finish in the first lane right of the center line.



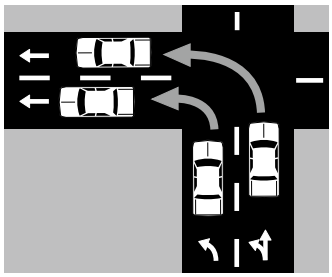
One-way to two-way street



Two-way to one-way street



One-way to one-way street



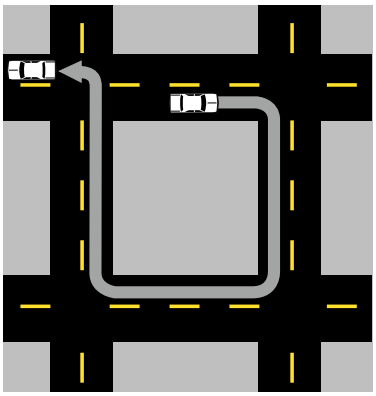
One-way to one-way street with more than one turning lane

Turns on Red

You may make a right turn at a red light unless there is a “NO TURN ON RED” sign. Before you turn, you must come to a complete stop and yield to all other vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

You may also make a left turn at a red light if you are turning from the left lane of a one-way street onto another one-way street.

At some stop lights, turns are allowed only on green arrows.

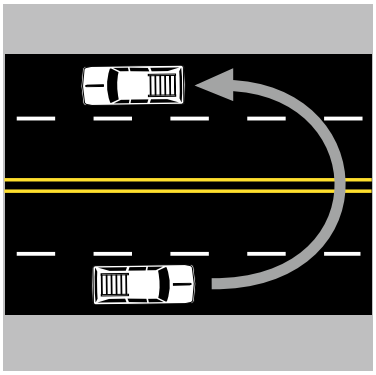


Turnabout

Turnabouts

There are times when you will find yourself headed in the wrong direction. The safest way to change direction is to go around the block. The best way is to turn right and then circle around the block. This avoids most left turns across traffic. If at all possible, avoid backing into traffic from alleys or driveways.

If you are on the interstate system, go to the next exit and turn around. It is illegal to cross the median strip or to use the crossover areas reserved for emergency vehicles.



U-turn

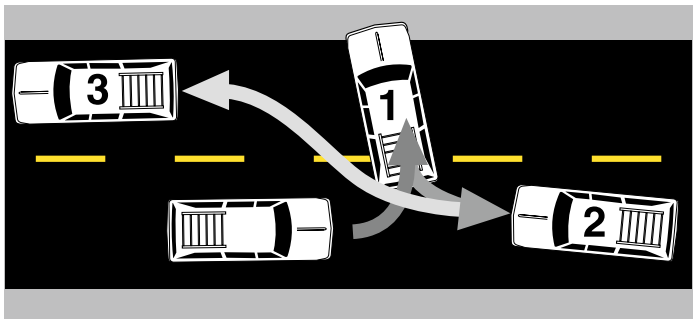
U-Turns

These turns require wide streets or cars that can turn in a very small area. U-turns are not legal in all places, so watch out for signs that forbid them. If you must make a U-turn, move as far to the right as you can. Wait for a big gap in the traffic in both directions. Then turn left quickly, ending up in the opposite lane, and adjust your speed to match the traffic flow.

Three-Point Turns

This is the most difficult and dangerous way to turn around. Use it only when the road or street is too narrow to make a U-turn and you cannot go around the block.

Move to the far right edge and signal a left turn. Wait until traffic is clear in both directions. When your spot is open, turn left, stopping just before your front wheels go off the pavement. Turn your steering wheel sharply to the right and back up if traffic is clear. Then start moving forward while pulling into the proper lane.



Three-point turn

Signal When You Slow Down

Your brake lights let people know that you are slowing down. Always slow down as early as it is safe to do so. If you are going to stop or slow down at a place where another driver does not expect it, tap your brake pedal three or four times quickly to let those behind you know you are about to slow down.

Hand Signals

Hand signals are extra precautions.

Stop

Left Turn

Right Turn

Appropriate Speed

The speed you can drive your vehicle depends on the posted speed limit, the road conditions and the weather. The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow or stop. For example, stopping at 60 mph does not take twice the distance it takes at 30 mph as one might think, but over three times the distance. The posted speed limit is the FASTEST speed you can legally drive **under ideal driving conditions.** The following general limits have been set:

- 20 mph in any business district;
- 25 mph in a residential district or school district;
- 45 mph in any suburban district, or for any vehicle pulling another vehicle unless it was designed for that purpose;
- 50 mph on unsurfaced secondary roads from sunset until sunrise, and for all trucks on secondary roads at any time of day;
- 55 mph on all primary roads, urban interstate highways and secondary roads, including unpaved roads from sunrise to sunset; and
- 70 mph on rural interstate highways.

A lower limit may be set for any conditions listed above.

Driving too fast is a major cause of traffic accidents. Driving too slow is also an important cause of traffic accidents. Try to drive with the general traffic flow on any road.

On the interstate system there is a minimum speed of 40 mph. Vehicles that cannot go at least that fast under normal conditions are not allowed on the interstate.

Closed Cars on a Hot Day

Leaving children in an enclosed car on a hot day can be deadly. In as little as 10 minutes the temperature inside a car can reach well above 120 degrees depending on the temperature outside, the humidity, and how far windows are rolled down. Heat exhaustion can occur at temperatures above 90 degrees. When a child is enclosed in a hot car, body fluids and salts are lost through sweating, causing heat exhaustion. If not treated immediately, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. In heat stroke, a child can no longer sweat. The body temperature rises to deadly levels, leading to severe damage to the brain, liver and kidneys, or even death. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately. Steps should be taken to cool the patient down as soon as possible.

NEVER leave children, elderly persons, dependent persons or pets in an enclosed car alone.

Bad Weather Driving

There are various road conditions where to be safe you must slow down. You must slow down before a curve, when the roadway is slippery, and when there is standing water on the road.

The only contact your vehicle has with the road is its tires. How good a grip the tires have with the road depends on the type and condition of the tires, and the type and condition of the road surface.

Many drivers do not pay enough attention to the condition of their tires or to the condition of the roadway. It is important that the tires be in good condition and have enough air in them. See the vehicle owner's manual for correct tire pressure.

You do not have as much traction on gravel and dirt roads as you do on concrete and asphalt roads.

When driving on gravel or dirt, you must slow down. It will take you much longer to stop, and it is much easier to skid when turning.

Curves

A vehicle can travel much faster in a straight line than it can in a curve. It is easy to go too fast in a curve. If you go too fast, then the tires will not be able to grip the road and the vehicle will skid. Always slow down before you enter the curve so you do not have to brake in the curve. Braking in a curve can cause the vehicle to skid.

Slippery Roads

Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow or sleet. These all make the roadway slippery.

Rain

Rain cuts the distance you can see. Having good wiper blades is important to safe driving and good car maintenance. Check them regularly.

Water and oil do not mix. During the first few minutes of a rain storm, the oil on the surface of the roadway forms a slick film on the rainwater. At this time your car is riding on a thin film of oil and water, and is ready to "ski." You should be most careful when turning and stopping during the first half hour of rain.

Higher speeds make driving in rain even more dangerous. As you go faster, your tires start to ride up on the surface of water on the road. This is called hydroplaning. The chances of hydroplaning get more and more dangerous between 35 and 55 mph. The results are reduced traction, not much braking ability, and little steering ability -- perfect conditions for your car to skid.

Usually these skids are short. To recover, keep your wheels turned in the direction you are skidding. Preventing hydroplaning is better than trying to control it. Check your tires on a regular basis for proper inflation and tread wear.

Fog

Fog is one of the most dangerous weather conditions in which to drive. You are basically driving in a cloud of water vapor. If you do not have to drive - don't!

Darkness makes the problem of fog even worse. The water droplets in the fog reflect your headlights right back at you. Keep your headlights on low beam to reduce glare as much as possible. Drive slowly and be ready to stop if you see any red or white lights in front of you. It is impossible to tell if someone is stopped ahead, or if someone is in the wrong lane. Approach any lights with a great deal of caution.

Ice and Snow

Iowa winters always bring ice and snow. You must be prepared to deal with these weather forces.

For traction in snow and ice, snow tires or chains are advisable. Extra weight in your trunk may give you added traction if you have a rear-wheel drive vehicle. Studded snow tires can be used on motor vehicles from November 1 to April 1.

NOTE: Studded snow tires can increase stopping distances on dry roads.

Radial tires and non-radial tires do not mix. The risk of a skid is greater if you have radials on the front and non-radial snow tires on the back. If your front tires are radials, your snow tires should also be radials.

Starting and stopping on ice or snow can be very tricky. When trying to stop, do not slam on the brakes or the wheels will lock and you may be thrown into a dangerous skid. Use brakes and accelerator gently. If you do begin to skid, take your foot off the accelerator, and turn your steering wheel in the direction of the skid.

However, if you have antilock brakes, the motto is "stomp and steer." This means that you should apply brakes firmly and steer straight ahead. The antilock brake system will adjust the braking to avoid skidding. If you have time, tap your brakes lightly several times to alert other drivers, then brake firmly.

It is recommended you do not use cruise control if icy conditions exist.

When starting out on the road, use the gas pedal carefully or you may put yourself into a skid, or spin your wheels and get yourself stuck in the snow. If you do get stuck, keep the wheels pointed straight and rock the car back and forth. You will have the greatest traction just before the wheels spin.

As winter temperatures go up and down, water freezes and melts. This makes hidden ice problems worse. Wet ice at the freezing point (32 F) is twice as slippery as hard, frozen ice.

Hidden ice patches on bridges and other open areas make it easy to slide off the road -- especially on curves. Turn slowly to avoid spinning or sliding. Creep along if you have to. If you do skid, take your foot off the gas but do not brake. Steer in the direction the back end of the car is moving.

When the weather warms up a bit, be very careful on bridges. The road on both sides of the bridge may be ice-free. However, cold air blowing under the bridge quickly freezes water, making icy patches a real problem.

If you become stranded in a blizzard and no help seems available, keep the following points in mind:

- It is easy to get lost in the snow. Leave the car **ONLY IF YOU ARE POSITIVE YOU CAN REACH SAFETY**. Many people have died of exposure because they became disoriented in the swirling snow and lost their way even though they had only a short distance to go.
- Stay in the car. Wrap yourself in blankets, floor mats, newspapers or anything that is available. If other people are in the car, sit or huddle together to take advantage of body heat. Cover up with whatever is available.
- Fast idle the engine to run the heater, but do not keep the engine running all the time. Try to run the engine and heater only 10 minutes or so every hour.
- Move slowly and avoid overexertion.
- Keep fresh air circulating in the car. Carbon monoxide can build up from running the engine if the vehicle is sealed by blowing and drifting snow or freezing rain. Open only the downwind window for ventilation.
- If you have a brightly-colored object, tie it to your antenna or some other high point on the car to make you more visible. Turn on the car's dome light; it will make you easier to see.
- Keep active. From time to time, flap your arms up and down and stomp your feet. It will help stimulate circulation to your arms and legs. It will also help relieve tense muscles and help you stay awake.
- Do not let all the people in the car go to sleep at the same time.

Carry a small winter car safety kit in case you get stuck. It should include the following emergency items:

- a snow shovel or hoe;
- an ice scraper and a brush;
- sand, gravel, cat litter or something to help give your wheels traction if you are stuck;
- blankets or sleeping bags, in case you are stranded;
- candles and matches (They can be used as a light source and to melt snow for drinking water if you are stranded. Be sure you have adequate ventilation when burning any candles. If your car is buried in the snow and the windows are blocked, the candle may use the available oxygen you need for breathing.);
- a selection of empty coffee cans for melting snow and for a portable toilet;
- tissue paper;
- extra hats, gloves, scarves and socks; and
- jumper cables and a tow chain.

Space to Cross or Enter

When you cross traffic, you need a large enough gap to get all the way across the road. When you enter traffic, you need enough space to first turn and then to get up to speed.

- If you want to cross several lanes of traffic going the same way you are, take them one at a time. Like going up or down stairs one step at a time, it is safest and easiest to merge from one lane to another one lane at a time. It is very difficult to determine if all the lanes are free and safe to cross. If you were to wait until all the lanes were clear, you could tie up traffic, or even cause an accident.
- When you cross traffic, you need room to get all the way across. Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough to hold your car. Do not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle is sticking out into traffic.
- If you are turning left, make sure your path will be clear of both pedestrians and vehicles. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while being stuck across a lane that has an oncoming vehicle bearing down on you.
- Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. Beware of the "false" signal. Do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn beyond you, or has forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles; their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn and then proceed if it is safe to do so.

Passing

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to pass safely. Do not count on having enough time to pass several cars at once. Be safe! As a general rule, only pass one vehicle at a time. Good judgment and a clear road ahead are needed to safely pass another vehicle.

- **Oncoming Vehicles.** At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10-second gap in oncoming traffic and enough sight distance to pass. You must judge whether you have enough space to pass safely.

  At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1,600 feet, or about one-third of a mile, to pass safely.

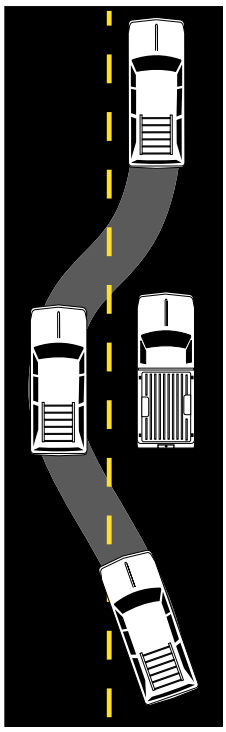
  It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance. They do not seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A vehicle that is far enough away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can really see it coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are not sure, wait to pass until you are sure there is enough space.
- **Hills and Curves.** You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile, or about 10 seconds, ahead.

  Any time your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume that there is an oncoming vehicle just out of sight. Therefore you should treat a curve or a hill as you do an oncoming vehicle. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.
- **Intersections.** It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people, vehicles or a train can be blocked by the vehicle you are passing. Also, drivers turning right into the approaching lane will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.
- **Lane Restrictions.** Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane. You might lose your space for passing because of:
  - people or bicyclists near the road;
  - a narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width; or
  - a patch of ice, pot hole, or something on the road.
- **Space to Return.** Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do not count upon other drivers to make room for you.

Passing Procedure (Multi-lane Highways)

1. If the road has two or more lanes in the same direction, you should not have to face oncoming traffic.
2. Check for traffic behind you, especially in your blind spots. Signal your left turn. Move into the left lane.
3. Accelerate and move around the vehicle in front of you. Move back to the right only when you can see the passed vehicle's headlights in your rearview mirror. This ensures you have enough room to safely pull back in front of the vehicle you passed.

Passing Procedure (Two-Lane Highways)



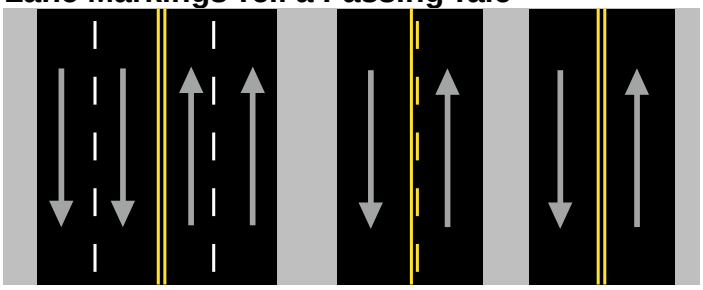
1. Check traffic ahead and behind, including your blind spot. Move slightly left to see if there is any oncoming traffic. REMEMBER, YOU NEED AS MUCH AS 1,600 OR MORE FEET TO GET AROUND A VEHICLE AND BACK INTO THE RIGHT LANE.

   BE READY TO PULL BACK INTO YOUR OWN LANE WITHOUT PASSING IF THERE IS ONCOMING TRAFFIC.
2. If the way ahead is clear, signal. Move left of center and accelerate around the vehicle you are passing. (In accelerating around the vehicle you are passing, you should not exceed the posted speed limit.)

If you have to speed to pass, you probably do not need to pass. If you go over the speed limit while passing, you can be given a ticket.

3. When you can see the headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rearview mirror, signal a right turn, check your mirror again and pull back into the right lane.

Lane Markings Tell a Passing Tale



Lane Lines: No passing either way

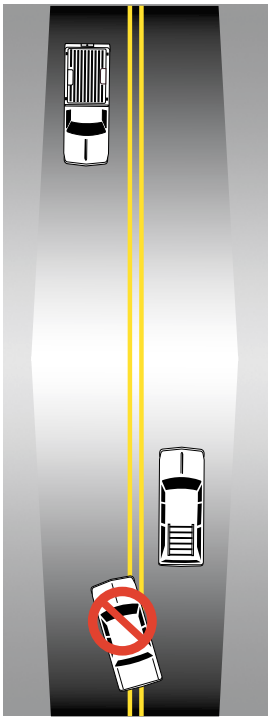
Center Line: Yellow solid line when center lines.

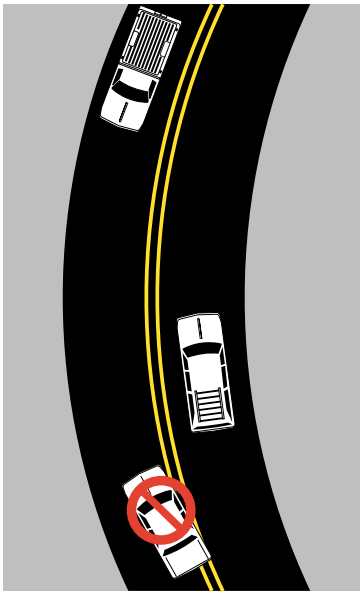
Solid and Broken Yellow: Do not pass if No passing in your lane.

Double Yellow Lines: Do not pass in either lane.

Do not pass when:

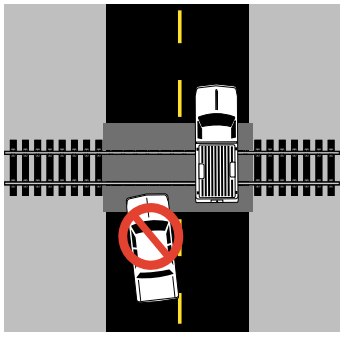
- you are coming to the top of a hill;
- you are going around a curve when your view along the highway is obstructed;
- you are within 100 feet of a narrow bridge, viaduct, or tunnel that has a sign posted to let you know it is there;
- you are within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing;
- you must go off the pavement or onto the shoulder of the road while passing;
- there is a stopped school bus in your lane or the oncoming lane, or a school bus when its red or amber warning signal lights are flashing or has its stop arm out; or
- oncoming traffic is so close it would be dangerous to try to make it around the vehicle you are passing.



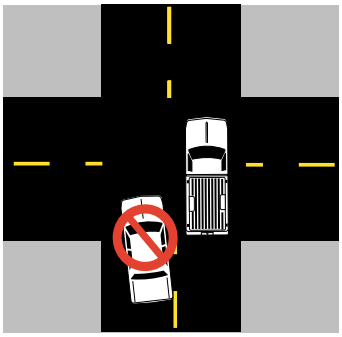


Do not pass on a hill (left), or on a curve (above).

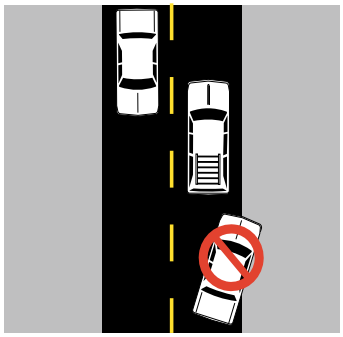
Bridge/tunnel



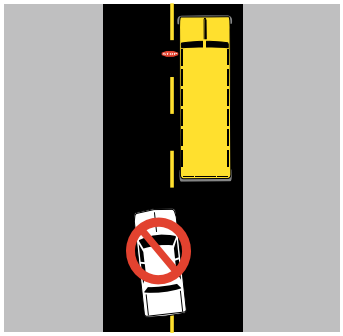
Railroad



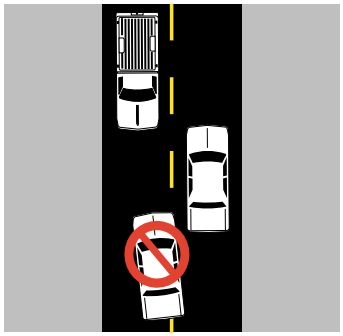
Intersection



Onto shoulder of road



Stopped school bus or a school bus when red or amber warning signal lights are flashing or has its stop arm out



Vehicle approaching

Defensive Driving

Scanning

To be a good driver, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind the vehicle. Scanning helps you to see problems ahead, vehicles and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them, signs warning of problems ahead, and signs giving you directions.

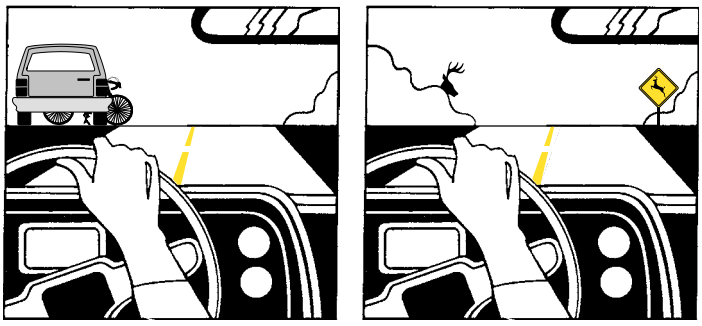
Searching and scanning critical areas should be done in a regular sequence. A visual search pattern, such as in the guidelines described below, helps you adjust to any unusual events.

Whenever there is a lot of activity along the side of the road, there is a good chance that someone will cross or enter the road. Therefore, it is very important to look to the sides when you are near shopping centers and parking lots, road work areas, busy sidewalks, and playgrounds and schoolyards.

Looking Ahead

In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn, you should look down the road at least 10 seconds ahead of your vehicle. By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel, help keep traffic moving at a steady pace, and allow yourself time to better see things around your vehicle and along the side of the road. Looking well down the road will also help you to steer straighter with less weaving.

In the city, 10 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, you should try to look at least one block ahead. On the highway, 10 seconds is about four city blocks or a quarter to one-third of a mile.



Scan to the left and right. Watch for changing conditions and be prepared for the unexpected.

How do you know how many seconds you are looking ahead? Here is how to figure if you are looking 10 seconds ahead.

- Find a non-moving object like a sign or telephone pole near the road about as far ahead as you are looking.
- Start counting one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, etc., until you reach the object.
- The number of seconds you have counted is the number of seconds ahead that you were looking.

You can be a safer driver by looking well ahead. You can avoid the need to stop or turn quickly.

By looking well ahead, you can save on fuel. Every time you have to stop quickly, it takes time and fuel to get your car back up to speed. Traffic would flow more smoothly if everyone looked well ahead. Making driving changes before the last moment gives drivers behind you more time to react.

As your speed increases, it is most important to look farther ahead.

Look to the Sides

Since other vehicles or pedestrians may cross or enter your path anytime, you should look to the sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings.

Intersections

Intersections are any place where traffic merges or crosses. They include: cross streets, side streets, driveways, and shopping center or parking lot entrances. Before you enter an intersection, look left, right and left again for approaching vehicles and/or crossing pedestrians. If stopped, look left, right and left again just before you start moving. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure the path is clear through the intersection.

Railroad Crossings

As you approach any railroad crossing, look both ways on the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. Do not assume a train is not coming even if you have never seen one at that crossing before. That is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the passing train is well down the track before starting to cross. Another train that might have been hidden by the one that just passed could be coming.

Look Behind

Besides watching traffic ahead of you, you must check traffic behind you. You need to check your mirrors more often when traffic is heavy. This is the only way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast and will give you time to do something about it. It is very important to look in your mirrors for vehicles when you change lanes, slow down, back up, or are driving down a long or steep hill.

Avoiding/Minimizing Accidents

When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. In some cases they do act, but do something that does not help to reduce the chance of the collision. There almost always is something you can do to avoid the accident, or reduce the results of the accident. In avoiding a collision, drivers have three options: (1) stop, (2) turn, and (3) speed up.

Speeding Up

Sometimes it is best or necessary to speed up to avoid a collision. This may happen when another vehicle is about to hit you from the side or from behind and there is room to the front of you to get out of danger. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

Protect Yourself in Collisions

You may not always be able to avoid a collision. The most important thing you can do is to use your lap and shoulder belts. Other than your seat belts, there are a couple of other things that could help prevent more serious injuries.

Hit From the Rear

If your vehicle is hit from the rear, your body will be thrown back towards the rear of your vehicle. Press yourself against the back of your seat and put your head against the head restraint. Be ready to apply your brakes so that you will not be pushed into another vehicle.

Hit From the Side

If your vehicle is hit from the side, your body will be thrown towards the side that is hit. Front air bags will not help in this situation. Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

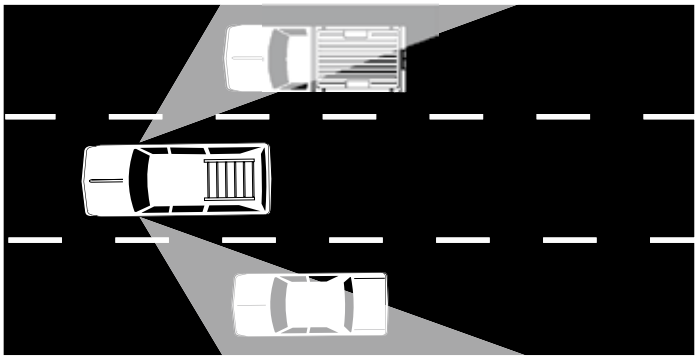
Hit From the Front

If your vehicle is about to be hit from the front, it is important to try and have a "glancing blow" rather than being struck head on. This means that if a collision is going to happen, try and turn the vehicle. At worse, you hit with a glancing blow, and you might miss it. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It also will deflate following the accident, so be ready to keep your vehicle from hitting something else. You must use your lap and shoulder belts to keep you behind the wheel, and to protect you if your vehicle has a second collision.

Changing Lanes

Whenever you want to change lanes, you must check that there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. You must yield to vehicles in that lane. This means you must check for traffic to the side and behind your vehicle before you change lanes. Changing lanes includes: changing from one lane to another, merging onto a roadway from an entrance ramp, and entering the roadway from the curb or shoulder. When changing lanes, you should do the things listed here.

- Look in your rearview and side mirrors. Make sure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. Make sure that nobody is about to pass you.
- Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move. Be sure no one is near the rear corners of your vehicle. These areas are called "blind spots" because you cannot see them through your mirrors.



Before you move your vehicle to the left or right, turn your head and check these areas. When you turn your head to check the blind spots, make sure you keep the steering wheel straight; people have a natural tendency to turn their arms in the same direction as their head turns. Looking to the left may make you veer the car that direction if you are not careful. You may sideswipe someone else if you do not check your blind spots when changing lanes.

- Check quickly. Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking traffic to the sides, rear or over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to change lanes, merge, or pull onto the roadway. This way you can keep an eye on cars ahead of you at the same time. Look several times if you need to. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you and in the lane you are entering.
- Check the far lane. Be sure to check the far lane, if there is one, as someone in that lane may be planning to move into the same lane you want to enter.
- Check for other road users. Remember there are other road users such as motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians that are harder to see than cars and trucks. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from the curb or driveway.
- Inform other drivers of your plans by proper signaling. When you do make your lane change, do it carefully but without slowing down unless you are moving into a slower lane of traffic. While you are changing lanes, constantly check traffic so you will see anyone coming up on you unexpectedly.

Backing

It is hard for you to see behind your vehicle. Try to do as little backing as possible. Where backing is necessary, here are some hints that will help you back your vehicle safely.

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
- Place your right arm on the back of the seat and turn around so that you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors since you cannot see directly behind your vehicle.
- Turn the steering wheel the direction you want the rear of the vehicle to go.
- Back slowly, your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing.
- Whenever possible, use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.

Night Driving

It is much harder to see at night. Here are some things you can do that will help you see better.

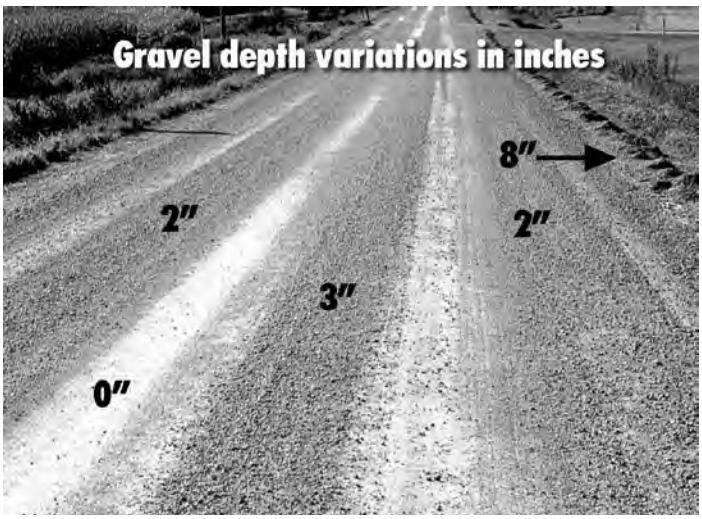
Night driving creates its own special problems. Headlight glare masks the position and number of oncoming vehicles.

You can only see what your headlights light up. That is why it is important to keep your headlights clean and in good condition. You should drive a little slower at night because it is easy to "over drive" your headlights. That means the distance you can see is shorter than the distance in which you can stop. You may not be able to stop by the time you recognize a hazardous situation.

- Iowa law requires you to use your headlights from sunset to sunrise or whenever visibility is 500 feet or less.
- You must switch to low-beam headlights within 1,000 feet of an oncoming vehicle.
- You must also use your low-beam headlights when you are within 400 feet of the car you are following.
- If you meet an inconsiderate driver who does not dim his or her vehicle's bright lights, slow down slightly and watch the white stripe at the right edge of the pavement. The bright light may make you feel somewhat blinded, but the feeling disappears in a few seconds. As you get older, it takes longer and longer to recover from such lights.
- Windshields, headlight covers and mirrors that are dirty all reduce your overall night driving safety. Keep them clean and you will be safer.

Rural Road Driving

Some road conditions and driving hazards are unique to rural roads when compared to a paved interstate or city street. Rural roads consist of paved, gravel and dirt roads. It is important to realize the characteristics of different types of rural roads.



Gravel

Stopping or turning on loose gravel is more difficult compared to pavement because tire traction is reduced. Skidding can occur as traction is lost. A "washboard" effect can occur on gravel roads. This is a series of potholes that can affect steering and vehicle control. When driving on gravel, you must slow down. It will take you much longer to stop and it is much easier to skid when turning.

Dust

During dry periods of the year, gravel roads can become extremely dusty. Vision can be reduced. It is recommended that drivers use low beam headlights to make the vehicle more visible to others.

Narrow bridges and roads

Gravel or dirt roads can be narrow and have little to no shoulder. Ditches can be very steep and dangerous. Drivers should look for narrow bridge signs and be prepared to stop for oncoming traffic.

Steep hills and curves

Hills and curves on rural roads are often steeper and sharper than on highways. Before reaching the crest of a hill or before entering a curve, slow down, move to the right side of the road and watch for oncoming vehicles.

Railroad crossings

Many railroad crossings on rural roads are marked only with a round yellow railroad crossing ahead warning sign and a white X-shaped railroad crossing crossbuck. Unlike most railroad crossings on major roads, there are typically no red flashing lights, warning bells, crossing gates or pavement markings at rural road railroad crossings. Always slow down, look both ways and be prepared to stop for a train before crossing the tracks.

Uncontrolled intersections

Some intersections on rural roads are not controlled by yield or stop signs. These intersections can be very dangerous if drivers don't approach them with caution. When approaching an uncontrolled rural intersection slow down and be prepared to stop for oncoming traffic.

Blind spots

Intersections, hills and curves become even more dangerous when there are objects such as trees, cornfields or buildings blocking the driver's view of oncoming traffic.

Large and/or slow moving vehicles

It is common to encounter slow moving and large vehicles such as farm equipment, animal drawn vehicles and road maintenance equipment on rural roads. It is important to identify these vehicles early and slow down when meeting them or coming up behind them. Slow moving equipment may make wide turns, either left or right at unmarked entrances. Some farm equipment is wider than the road itself. Make sure the driver of the slow moving vehicle can see your vehicle before passing. Always use extreme caution when passing.

Wildlife

While animals can be present on any roadway, drivers often encounter more animals on rural roads as these roads extend through wildlife habitats and close to farms with livestock. Be aware and look for animals while driving on rural roads, especially at sunrise and sunset.

Deer are by far the highest cause of animal related automobile crashes. October and November are the peak months for deer accidents. If an animal is spotted, slow down and be prepared to stop. If there isn't time to stop or avoid the animal, don't swerve sharply. The driver's chance of getting seriously hurt are decreased if he/she hits the animal and avoids swerving into oncoming traffic or rolling the vehicle over in the ditch. Deer travel in groups, so always look for more animals if one is seen.

Communicating - Headlights, Horn and Emergency Signals

Some drivers do not always pay attention to what is going on around them. Accidents often happen because one driver does not see another driver, or when one driver does something the other driver does not expect. It is important that drivers let other road users know they are there, and what they plan to do.

Use Your Headlights

Besides helping you to see at night, headlights help other people see you. Remember to turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing others. If you have trouble seeing them, they are having trouble seeing you.

- On rainy, snowy or foggy days, it is sometimes hard for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. Remember, if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights.
- Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. If you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.
- Whenever lights are necessary, use your headlights, not your parking lights. Parking lights are for parked cars only.

- When driving at dusk or dawn, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming toward you may have trouble seeing your vehicle. Your headlights will help them see you.

Use Your Horn

People cannot see you unless they are looking your way. Your horn can get their attention. Use it whenever it will help prevent an accident. If there is no immediate danger, a light tap on the horn should be all you need. Use your horn when:

- a person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your lane of travel;
- you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane;
- there is a driver who is not paying attention or who may have trouble seeing you; or
- you are coming to a place where you cannot see what is ahead, such as exiting a narrow alley.

If there is danger, do not be afraid to sound a SHARP BLAST on your horn. Do this when:

- another car is in danger of hitting you; or
- you have lost control of your vehicle and are moving towards someone.

When Not to Use Your Horn

There are several occasions when you should not use your horn. They include:

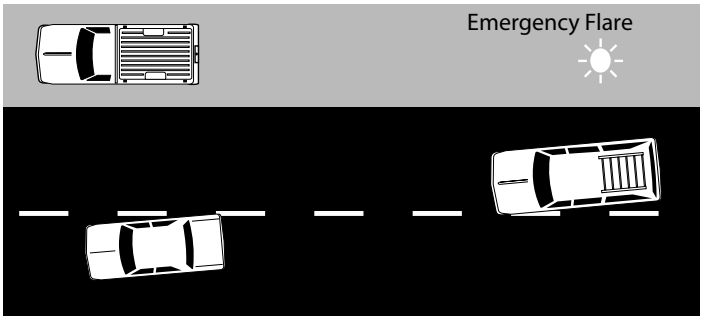
- to encourage someone to drive faster or get out of the way;
- to scold another driver for an error;
- to greet a friend; or
- around pedestrians who are blind.

Emergency Signals

If your vehicle breaks down on a highway, make sure that other drivers can see it. All too often accidents occur because a driver did not see a stalled vehicle until it was too late to stop.

If available, use your two-way radio or telephone to notify authorities that you or someone else has broken down. Many roadways have signs that tell you the CB channel or telephone number to call in an emergency. Here are some guidelines if you are having vehicle trouble and have to stop.

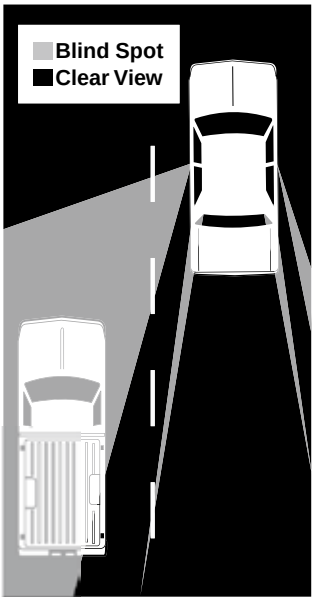
- If at all possible, get your vehicle off the road away from traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.
- If you cannot get your vehicle off the roadway, try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.



- If you are stalled on the roadway:
  - Have your passengers get out of the vehicle quickly and stand safely off the roadway. A rear-end collision could prove to be deadly.
  - If you do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand off the road, where you are safe from traffic, and wave traffic around your vehicle. Use a white cloth if you have one.
- Never stand in the roadway. Do not even try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- Lift the hood and tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror or door handle to signal an emergency.

Blind Spots

Drive your vehicle where others can see you. Do not drive in another vehicle's blind spot.



- Try to avoid driving on either side and slightly to the rear of another vehicle. Either speed up or drop back so the other driver can see your vehicle more easily.
- When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can. The longer you stay there, the longer you are in danger of them turning into you.
- Never stay along side a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots and it is hard for their drivers to see you.
- There may also be blind spots in front and to the side of you caused by parked vehicles, shrubbery, trees, pedestrians and other fixed objects. Be careful of them when pulling into cross traffic.

- The sun can also create blind spots with reflections off any of your window surfaces. The front windshield is the most common place for such reflections and blind spots. Sunglasses or use of the visors in most cars help shield your eyes from those reflections that make it hard to see. For tall drivers, the rearview mirror may cause a blind spot.

Blind spots occur anywhere your vision is blocked. Two common causes of these problems are vehicle equipment (rearview mirrors, door post, etc.) and landscaping (trees, hedges, hills and walls).

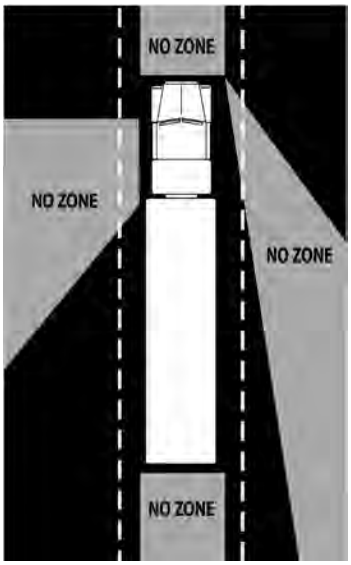
Sharing the Road

You always must share the road with others. The more distance you keep between yourself and everyone else, the more time you have to react to them. This space is like a safety cushion. The more you have, the safer it can be. The following are examples where you may need to increase your space:

Large Trucks

- A loaded truck with good tires and properly adjusted brakes, traveling at 55 mph on a clear, dry roadway, requires a minimum of 290 feet to come to a complete stop. It is essential therefore to not enter a roadway in front of a large vehicle. It is also important to avoid changing lanes in front of a large vehicle if you are turning off the roadway.
- A truck or bus has blind spots on each side where an automobile cannot be seen. These blind spots are referred to as the "No-Zone." No-Zone is a highway safety term that describes blind-spot areas on the side, front and rear of large trucks where passenger vehicles "disappear" from view and where accidents are most likely to occur.

- Do not drive in the No-Zone, except when absolutely necessary. It is advisable to avoid driving alongside a large vehicle for prolonged periods under any circumstances. If truck drivers cannot see you, the possibility of a collision is greatly increased. When you stay in the No-Zone, you make it impossible for the driver to see you.



- When traveling up or down steep hills, large vehicles must drive slowly, approximately 35 mph, and therefore use the right lane. Avoid driving in the right lane when traveling up or down hills, as well as in the vicinity of truck weigh stations, where slow-moving trucks will be attempting to re-enter faster-moving traffic. By avoiding the right lane in these areas, you will reduce the possibility of rear-ending or being rear-ended by a large vehicle.
- On long, downhill slopes, there are sometimes special "escape" or "runaway" ramps for trucks. The ramps are used <u>only</u> by large vehicles that are out of control or cannot stop because of brake failure. Never stop or park near these ramps.
- Unlike the hydraulic brakes on automobiles, trucks and buses have air brakes. Air brakes do not operate instantly like hydraulic brakes. Air brakes' air lines are empty until the brake pedal is depressed, at which time the air lines fill with air. Only then will the brake on a large vehicle begin to operate. It is therefore imperative that drivers do not make sudden stops in front of large vehicles.
- Pay close attention to truck turn signals. Trucks make wide right turns and sometimes must leave an open space to the right just before the turn. To avoid an accident, do not pass a truck on the right if there is a possibility it might make a right turn.

Motorcycles*

- Make sure you see the motorcycle and know its speed before you start to turn or enter an intersection.
- Intersections are the most likely places for car/motorcycle collisions to occur.
- Respect the vehicle space of a motorcycle and its position in traffic.
- Turn signals do not automatically shut off on a motorcycle and riders occasionally forget to cancel them after a turn is completed. Make sure you know what the rider is going to do BEFORE you move into the motorcycle's path.

- When driving behind a motorcycle, allow at least a two-second following distance. This provides the cyclist enough room to maneuver or stop in an emergency. When the road is wet or slippery, stay further behind. With only two wheels in contact with the pavement, motorcycles may be very unstable when trying to stop quickly.
- When passing a motorcycle, allow a full lane for the motorcycle; never crowd into the same lane as the cycle.
- Watch for the unexpected and give motorcyclists their share of the road.

***Source: AAA Iowa**. *For more information on motorcycle operation, a separate manual called "Iowa Motorcycle Operator Manual," is available from any driver's license station. It gives a more complete explanation of operating techniques for motorcycles and traffic laws that relate to motorcycles.*

Bicycles

Bicycle riders are common on Iowa's roads. You will meet them in cities and on country roads. Bicycles are a recognized form of transportation. **Under Iowa law, bicyclists and motorists must comply with the same rules of the road and be given the same rights. Sharing the road means sharing these rights and responsibilities.**

Just as motor vehicle operators have different levels of skill, you will find bicycle riders with varying levels of skills. When you approach bicycle riders,assess the bicyclists' capabilities. A skillful cyclist rides predictably and holds a steady line.

Common signs of bicyclist inexperience may include:

- riding near the gutter;
- swerving unpredictably;
- ignoring traffic signs and signals; and
- riding without a light at night.

If you see these signs, be ready for any sudden movements by the bicyclist.

Give bicycle riders the room they deserve and need for safety. When passing a bicycle rider, pass as if the cyclist were a vehicle and move into the other lane. On narrow, two-way roads, wait for a break in traffic before passing. Do not pass if oncoming traffic is near. After passing, cautiously return to your lane - a bicyclist could be in your blind spot. Do not honk your horn or flash your headlights at bicyclists. They may be startled and lose control. Bicycles often travel nearer the right edge of a traffic lane. However, they may swerve to avoid road hazards such as potholes, glass debris, drainage grates, or a strong crosswind.

Failure to see bicycle riders can cause vehicle/bicycle crashes. Use extra caution during peak morning and afternoon traffic - the sun's glare may hide a bicyclist in your path. An experienced bicyclist on a multi-speed bike can maintain a speed of 15 to 25 miles per hour on level pavement.

When making a right turn near a bicycle rider, move to the far right before turning. If there is a bicycle lane, merge into it to prevent being overtaken by a cyclist. Do not race around a cyclist and make a right turn across his or her path. You may be setting up a collision if the cyclist cannot stop in time. Be sure to check the blind spot over your right shoulder before beginning to turn.

Some bicyclists may choose to ride on the street even though there is a bicycle path available nearby. If so, give the rider the needed space. Some studies have shown there are more bicycle collisions on bike paths than on the roadways.

Be careful when opening your vehicle door. Road widths can force bicyclists to ride close to parked vehicles where they may be injured by an opening door.

Give bicyclists the extra courtesy they need to negotiate railroad tracks and narrow bridges.

When in doubt, yield to bicyclists!

Pedestrians

Even though you are walking, not driving, you are still subject to traffic laws. You have the same responsibility to obey traffic laws as do motorists.

Motorists should yield to you in marked crosswalks, but do not bet your life on it! Watch out for yourself. If you cross the street anywhere but at a crosswalk, you must yield to motorized traffic.

Jaywalking and dashing across intersections could be the end of you. Of every five people killed in a traffic accident, one is a pedestrian.

If you must walk where there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the street facing the oncoming traffic. At night wear light colored clothes so you can be seen easily.

Driver Responsibilities

As a driver you must yield to pedestrians at all times. Even if they are jaywalking or crossing where they should not be, you must stop for them!

School and residential areas are very dangerous. Watch out for children running out from between cars. It is a good idea to drive slower than the speed limit in these areas so you can stop quickly.

Mopeds (Motorized Bicycles)

Mopeds are a cross between a motorcycle and a bicycle. They are small, lightweight, and cannot go very fast.

Iowa law says a moped (motorized bicycle) is a "motor vehicle that has a saddle or seat for the use of the rider and is designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground and not capable of operating at a speed in excess of thirty miles per hour on level ground unassisted by human power."

Some mopeds are bigger and faster than this. They are illegal in Iowa. Make sure you know your moped's size and top speed before you buy it. It may be illegal in Iowa.

Your moped must be registered each year. This is done through your county treasurer. To drive one you need a valid license.

An instruction permit does not license you to drive a moped. If you are between 14 and 16 years old, you can get a moped license. You can get this by taking a moped education course and passing a written test, if you do not have a valid permit already, and vision screening. If you are 16 years old or older and do not have an operator's license, you can get a moped license by taking the written test and vision screening.

When riding your moped you must obey all Iowa traffic laws. Be very careful when you ride because your top speed is fairly slow. You could become a traffic hazard when riding in faster moving traffic.

It is against the law for you to carry a passenger. You must also ride your moped with the headlight on day and night.

You must sit astride the moped on the permanently attached seat. You should not ride more than two abreast on the highway. Mopeds cannot be operated between two lanes of traffic. Do not carry packages or bundles that keep you from having both hands on the handlebars.

You must display a flag that is 30 square inches and is five feet from the ground when riding on the streets. This is a law to help you be more visible to other users of the road.

Driver Responsibilities

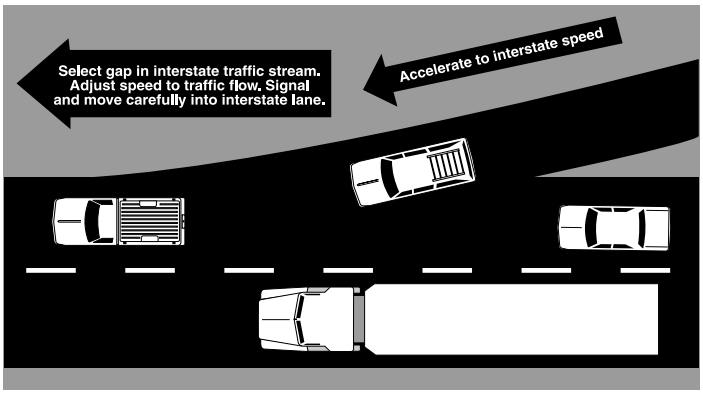
Because motorcycles, mopeds and bicycles have narrower tires, they can get caught in cracks easier. Railroad tracks, steel bridge expansion joints, sewer grates, metal grating on bridges and other metal surfaces are dangerous for cyclists. Give riders plenty of room to move around when approaching these road structures.

Interstate Driving

Multi-lane highways or freeways with limited access are a way of life. They help you get across the state or across the country. In the larger cities, they even help you get across town. Freeways have fewer accidents per mile than other roads, but the accidents they do have are generally more serious. These accidents are usually caused by drivers failing to yield, or drivers who did not keep a safe distance at the higher speeds.

Entering Traffic

When you merge with traffic, be sure to signal well in advance and try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. Do not try to merge into a gap that is too small. A small gap can quickly become even smaller. Enter a gap that gives you a big enough space cushion to be safe. High-speed roadways generally have ramps to give you time to build up your speed. Use the ramp to reach the speed of other vehicles before you pull onto the road. Do not drive to the end of the ramp and stop. This will not leave you enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Watch for vehicles coming up behind you; they may not realize you are going slower. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If you are watching the traffic on the main road, you may be hit from the rear. If you have to wait for space to enter a roadway, slow down on the ramp so you have some room to speed up before you have to merge. Be prepared for vehicles in front of you on the ramp to slow down.



Which Lane is Best

It is best to drive on the right and pass on the left. On three-lane freeways, use the right lane for slower speeds, the center lane for normal speeds and the left lane for passing. If you stay in the right lane, watch out for vehicles entering the highway from the acceleration lanes. Adjust your speed when necessary to help them blend into traffic.

Leaving Traffic

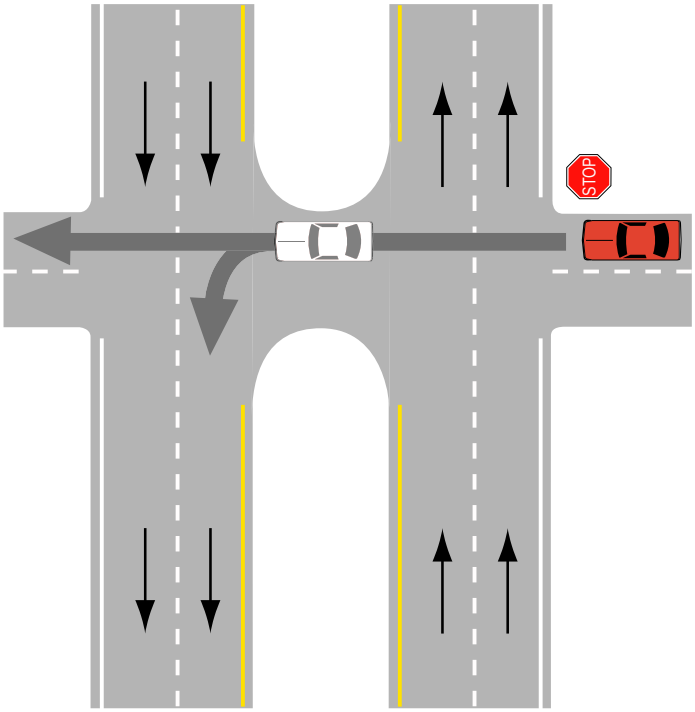
Keep up with the speed of traffic as long as you are on the main road. If the road you are traveling has exit ramps, do not slow down too much until you move onto the exit ramp. When you turn from a high speed, two-lane roadway, try not to slow down too early if you have traffic following you. Tap your brakes and reduce your speed quickly but safely. Thinking ahead is the key to leaving a freeway or interstate. If you miss your turnoff, do not stop and back up; keep going until you get to the next exit.

Rural Four-Lane Road with Intersecting Road

Left turn or straight through crossing:

Treat this as two separate roadways. Stop at the stop sign, look left and into the median, then proceed to the median. Stop again and look right. **Also look straight across the road for approaching or stopped traffic.** Cross or turn left **when safe**.

Drivers must be aware that traffic is moving very fast in this environment. Caution and concentration are very important.



Driving Safely in Traffic

Keep Pace With Traffic

If you are going faster than other traffic, you will have to continue passing others. Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for a collision. The vehicle you are passing may change lanes suddenly, or on a two-lane road, an oncoming car may appear suddenly. Slow down, and keep pace with other traffic. Speeding does not save more than a few minutes an hour.

Going much slower than other vehicles can be just as bad as speeding. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to pass you. Pull over and let them pass when safe to do so.

Slow-Moving Traffic

Some vehicles cannot travel very fast, or have trouble keeping up with the speed of traffic. If you spot these vehicles early, you have time to change lanes or slow down safely. Slowing suddenly can cause an accident. Always be ready to change your speed to the speed of traffic.

- Watch for large trucks and small, underpowered cars on steep grades or when they are entering traffic. They can lose speed on long or steep hills, and it takes longer for these vehicles to get up to speed when they enter traffic.
- Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 35 mph or less. These vehicles may have a slow-moving vehicle sign (an orange triangle) on the back.

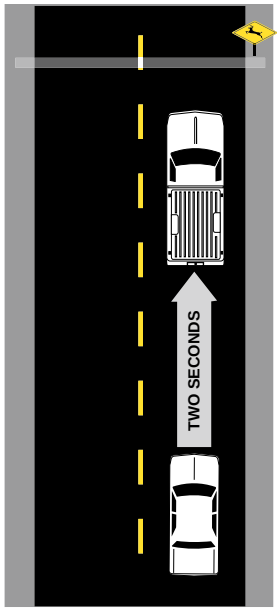
Trouble Spots

Wherever people or traffic gather, your room to maneuver is limited. You need to lower your speed to have time to react in a crowded space. Here are some of the places/times where you may need to slow down:

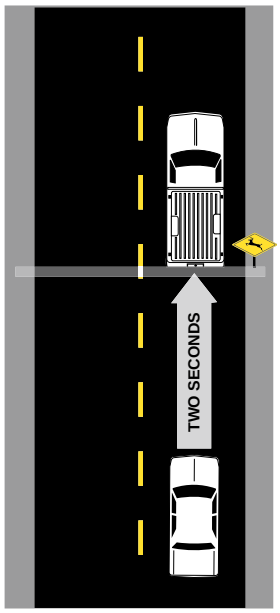
- shopping centers, parking lots and downtown areas. These are busy areas with vehicles and people stopping, starting and moving in different directions.
- during rush hours. Rush hours often have heavy traffic and drivers that always seem to be in a hurry.
- narrow bridges and tunnels. Vehicles approaching each other are closer together.
- toll plazas. Vehicles are changing lanes and preparing to stop and then speeding up again leaving the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- schools, playgrounds and residential streets. These areas often have children present. Always be alert for them crossing the street, or running or riding bicycles into the street without looking.

Follow These Steps for a "Two-Second Rule" Spacing

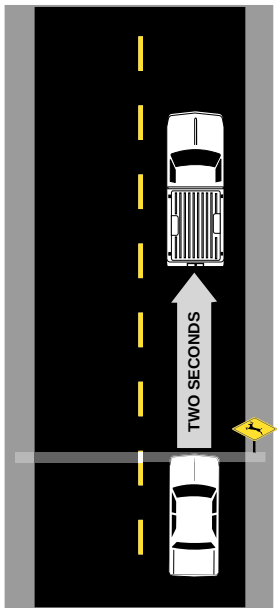
1. The car ahead of you is about to pass a highway sign, utility pole, or some other spot you can keep your eye on.



2. As the back of that car passes the spot you have selected, start counting off seconds. (A good way is to count one, one-thousand; two, two-thousand; three, three-thousand; etc.)



3. Stop counting as soon as the front of your car reaches the selected spot. If it takes less than two seconds, increase the distance between your car and the one in front of you. If it takes two seconds or more, you have a safe following distance. You also can use the "Two-Second Rule" at night to make sure you are not "over-driving your headlights."



Outside a business or residential district, trucks or towing vehicles must keep at least 300 feet apart.

Stay at least 500 feet behind any emergency vehicle responding to alarm.

Following Another Vehicle

Many accidents are caused by following the vehicle ahead too closely. You must be able to stop before hitting anything in front of you. Higher speeds require greater stopping distances. Keep this in mind when following another vehicle. The safest and easiest way to judge a safe following distance is to use the "Two-Second Rule."

This will keep the vehicles in front of you far enough ahead that you will be able to stop within the assured clear distance ahead. The "Two-Second Rule" gives you about 1-1/2 car lengths between you and the car ahead of you for every 10 mph of speed you are traveling. If weather or road conditions are not ideal, use three seconds or more to be safe.

Tailgating

Tailgaters can be real headaches. If your rearview mirror shows another vehicle is too close to you, you should realize you are dealing with an unsafe driver. Be sure you still maintain the proper distance from the vehicle ahead of you.

If you are being tailgated, move slightly to the right and give the tailgater a better view of what is ahead and signal early for turns, stops or lane changes. Try slowing down and encouraging the driver behind you to pass. If all else fails, pull out of the traffic flow. **IF YOU STOP, BE SURE TO KEEP ALL YOUR WINDOWS CLOSED AND THE DOORS LOCKED.**

Economizing

How you drive has a definite effect on the amount of fuel your car burns. If you reduce gasoline consumption, you save money and conserve energy. You can increase your gas savings by as much as 44 percent simply by driving at a steady pace. Fast accelerations pour more fuel into the engine, but the fuel is not completely burned so gas mileage goes down. Just increasing your speed from 50 to 70 mph increases fuel consumption by 30 percent!

To make additional cuts on your fuel consumption:

- **Don't let your car idle unnecessarily.** Idling more than one minute uses more gas than it takes to restart the engine.
- **Don't warm up your car for long periods.** Your engine will warm up faster by accelerating gently as soon as the oil pressure is up.
- **Don't rev up your motor before shutting off your engine.** That only dumps gasoline into the cylinder walls and washes away the protective oil film.
- **Don't use your air conditioner as much.** You lose about 9 percent fuel efficiency with it running and up to 20 percent during stop-and-go driving.
- **Don't carry unnecessary weight in your car.** An extra 100 pounds can decrease your fuel economy by more than 1 to 2 percent.

Roundabouts

Roundabout ahead sign with advisory speed

Roundabouts are intersections that direct traffic in a counterclockwise direction around a center island. They have no stop signs or traffic signals. Yield signs, directional signs and pavement markings guide traffic through the intersection. Traffic generally continues to move, but at a slower speed that reduces traffic backup encountered at traditional intersections controlled by stop signs or traffic signal lights.

Roundabouts are generally safer than other intersections because they tend to reduce head-on, right angle and left-turning traffic crashes. They encourage slower speeds and eliminate left turns across traffic. Roundabouts can improve pedestrian safety by offering a short crossing of one-way traffic moving at slow speeds.

Single-lane Roundabout (see diagram below)

Motorists

① **Approach:** Slow down to the posted advisory speed. Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. They have the right-of-way.

② **Enter:** As you approach the yield line markings (shark's teeth), yield to vehicles in the roundabout. Wait for a gap in traffic, then merge into traffic in the roundabout in a counterclockwise direction.

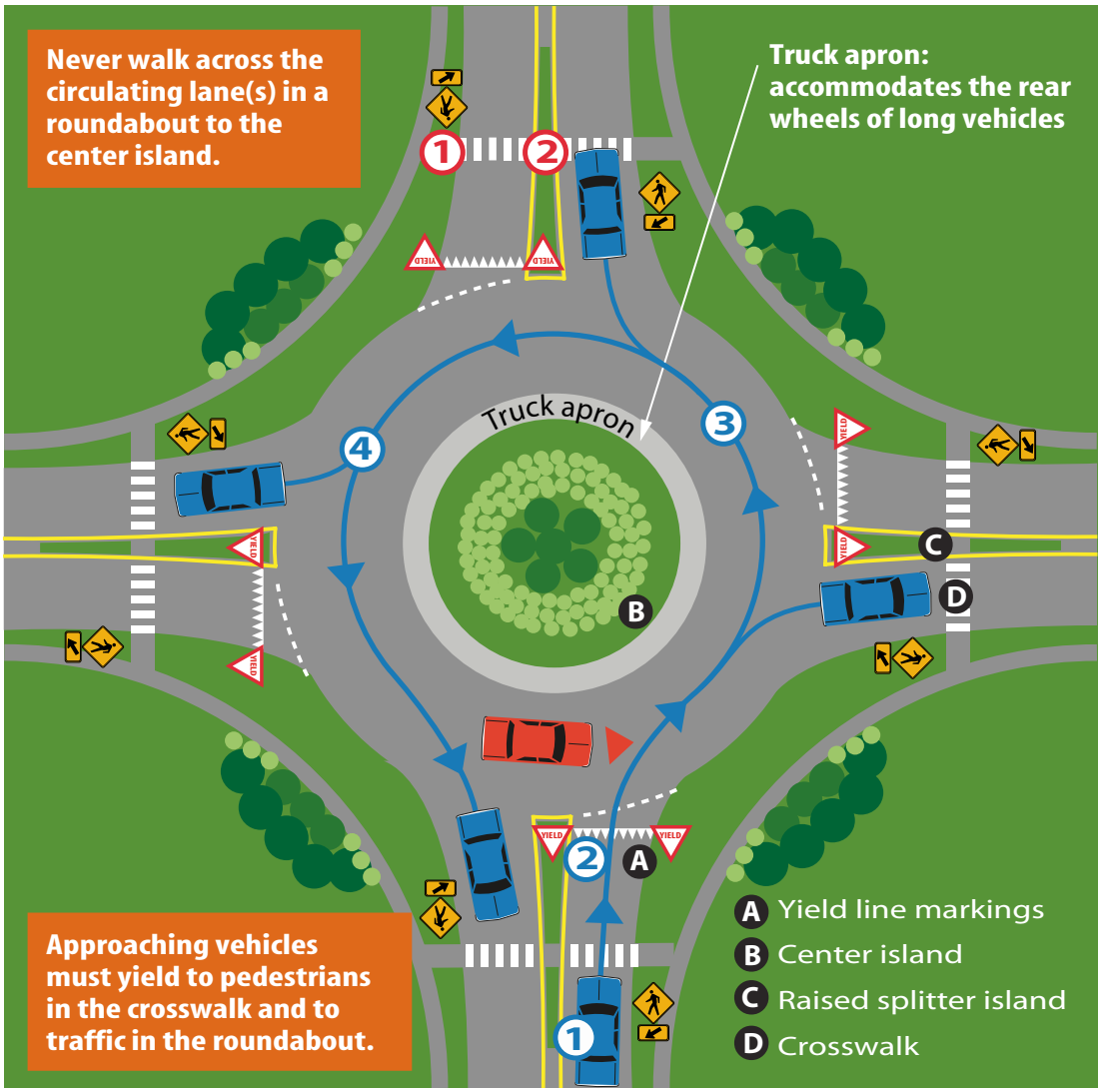
③ **Proceed:** Continue through the roundabout until you reach your street. Avoid stopping in the roundabout.

④ **Exit:** Signal, then exit the roundabout to your right. Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Pedestrians (see diagram below)

① **Approach:** At the pedestrian crosswalk, look ***left***.

② **Cross:** Cross to the raised splitter island. Look ***right***. Finish crossing to the opposite sidewalk.

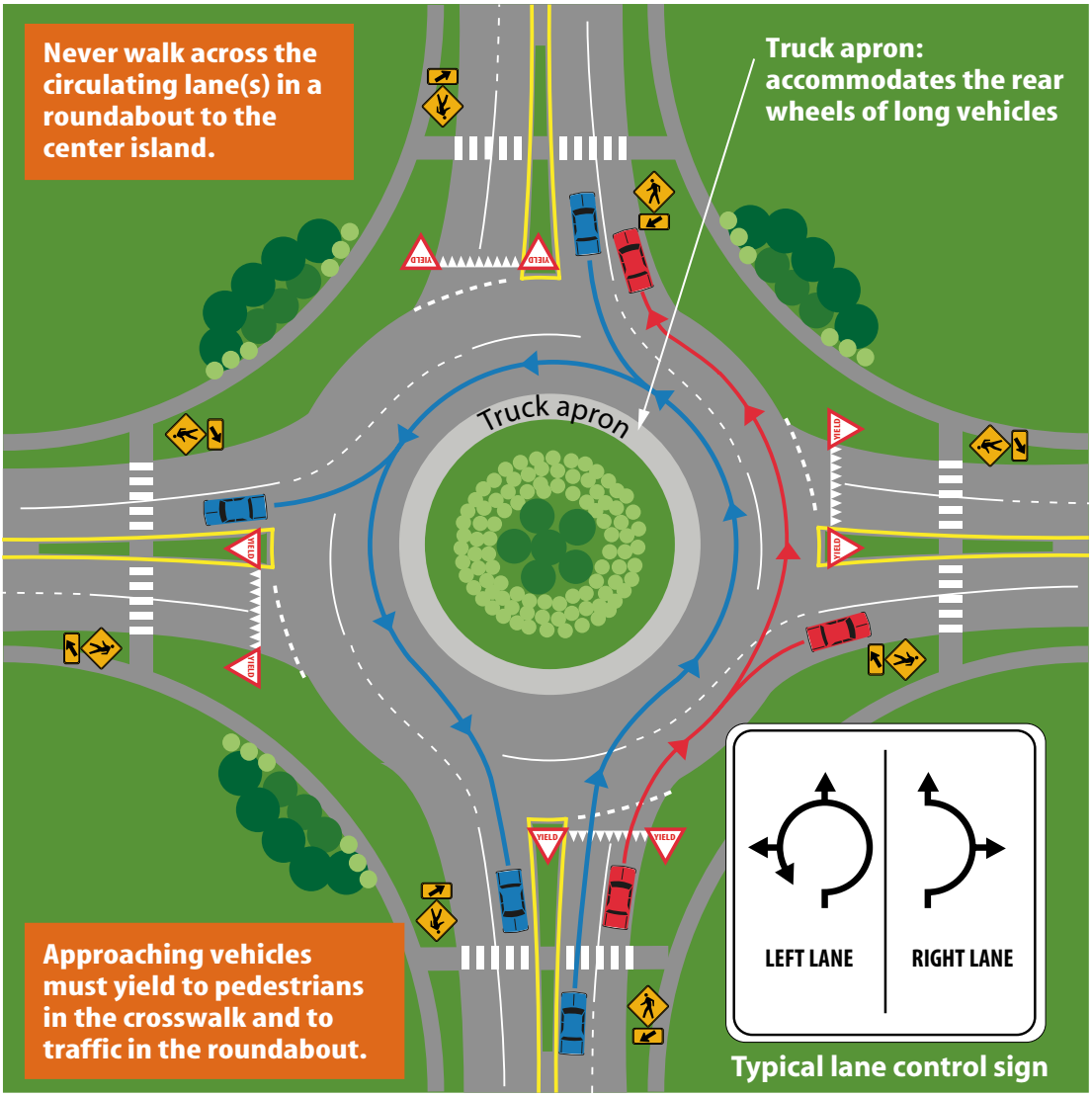


This diagram of a single-lane roundabout is an example only and does not represent all roundabout designs.

Cyclists

Generally, cyclists should walk their bicycles across the pedestrian crosswalk using the same rules as pedestrians.

Experienced cyclists may navigate roundabouts like motorists. Do not hug the curb. Bicyclists using the roundabout should follow the same rules as motorists. Ride in the middle of the lane to prevent vehicles from passing. Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.



This diagram of a multi-lane roundabout is an example only and does not represent all roundabout designs.

Multi-lane Roundabout (see diagram above)

Do

- As you approach the roundabout, and in advance of the yield line, select the appropriate lane according to the lane control signs and pavement markings.
- When entering the roundabout, yield to all traffic already in the roundabout.
- After passing the street before your exit, signal for a right turn, then exit.
- Be aware of traffic in the other lane.

Don't

- Do not change lanes in the roundabout.
- Do not pass or drive beside trucks or buses. They may straddle lanes or may not see you.
- Do not drive in the outside lane farther than allowed. This decreases the efficiency of the roundabout and creates a hazard to vehicles legally exiting from the inside lane.

Handling Emergencies

All drivers sooner or later will find themselves in an emergency situation. As careful as you are, there are situations that could cause a problem. If you are prepared, you may be able to prevent any serious outcomes.

Brake Failure

If your brakes stop working, try the following things.

- Pump the brake pedal several times. This will often build up enough brake pressure to allow you to stop.
- If that does not work, use the parking brake. Pull on the parking brake handle slowly so you will not lock the rear wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if the vehicle starts to skid.
- If that does not work, start shifting to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure your car is off the roadway. Do not drive without brakes.

Many newer vehicles have ABS (antilock braking system). Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. The ABS will allow you to stop without skidding. In general, if you need to stop quickly:

With ABS - If you have an antilock braking system and you need to stop quickly:

- Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep pressing.
- You might feel the brake pedal pushing back when the ABS is working. Do not let up on the brake pedal. The ABS will only work with the brake pedal pushed down.

Without ABS - If you must stop quickly and you do not have an antilock braking system:

- You can cause the vehicle to go into a skid if you brake too hard.
- Apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking them.
- If the brakes lock up, you will feel the vehicle start to skid. Quickly let up on the brake pedal.
- As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, push down on the brake pedal again. Keep doing this until the vehicle has stopped.

In most cases, you can turn the vehicle quicker than you can stop it. You should consider turning in order to avoid an accident.

Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel. Once you have turned away or changed lanes, you must be ready to keep the vehicle under control. Some drivers steer away from one collision only to end up in another. Always steer in the direction you want to go.

With ABS -

- One aspect of having ABS is that you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn and stop or slow down.

Without ABS -

- If you do not have ABS, you must use a different procedure to turn quickly. You also step on the brake pedal, but then you let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle some, and it puts more weight on the front tires and this allows for a quicker turn. Do not lock up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle can only skid ahead.

Lights

If your headlights suddenly go out:

- try the headlight switch a few times;
- put on the emergency flashers, turn signals or fog lights if the headlights do not come back on when you try the headlight switch; and
- pull off the road as soon as possible.

Flat Tire

If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- hold the steering wheel tightly and keep the vehicle going straight;
- slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal and use the brakes lightly;
- do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place; and
- if a front tire blows, the emergency may be more serious. A front tire blowout will jerk the car violently towards the side of the car with the flat. Be careful not to overcorrect when steering after a front tire blowout. Try to straighten the car out; then, gradually move to the right shoulder of the roadway as soon as possible.

Engine Stalls

If the engine stalls while driving:

- keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. The steering wheel will be difficult to turn, but you can turn it; and
- pull off the roadway. The brakes will still work, but you will have to push very hard on the brake pedal.

Stuck Gas Pedal

If the motor does not slow down, or speeds up when you take your foot off the accelerator:

- keep your eyes on the road;
- quickly shift to neutral;
- pull off the road when safe to do so; and
- turn off the engine.

Steering Lock Systems

Many vehicles are equipped with steering lock systems intended to prevent theft. However, some of these locking systems may pose a significant safety hazard if the key is removed from the ignition while the vehicle is being operated. Never remove the key or allow passengers to touch the key while driving. If the key is removed, the steering wheel will lock. This may cause loss of control of the vehicle and could result in serious vehicle damage or personal injury.

Before driving an unfamiliar vehicle, always check what type of locking system the vehicle is equipped with. If not, you may have difficulty removing the key from the ignition when the vehicle is parked.

Before You Drive - Vehicle Maintenance and Equipment

Before you drive, make sure your trip is needed. If you drive, your safety, and that of the public, depends a lot on what you do before driving. This includes adjusting your seat and mirrors, using seat belts, checking your vehicle, maintaining a clear view, and making sure there are no loose objects in your vehicle that could be a hazard.

Trip Planning

The cost of driving is not going down, but there are ways you can help reduce your driving costs. First, determine your overall transportation needs. For each trip determine if it is necessary. If so, there may be times you do not need to drive yourself. You might ride with someone else, or you could take public transportation if it is available.

The best way to prolong the life of your car and save on fuel is to use it as little as possible. Trip planning can make your life easier, and help cut down on your driving.

- Take public transportation when it is available.
- Avoid driving during heavy traffic. It causes extra wear and tear on you and the vehicle.
- Use car pools or share rides whenever possible.
- Plan and combine your trips. Make a list of the things you need and the places you need to go. Go to as many places as possible on any one trip. Take the shortest distance between places. Try to reduce the number of places you need to go. This will cut down on the number of trips you need to take.
- Call ahead to make sure what you need is available, or what you are picking up is ready.

By doing these things, you can help cut down on the amount of traffic on the road, cut your travel costs, and save yourself time and effort.

Check Your Vehicle

How safely you can drive starts with the condition of the vehicle you are driving. It is the duty of drivers to make certain the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle that is in bad shape is unsafe and costs more to run than one that is well maintained. It can break down or cause a collision. Also, if a vehicle is in bad shape, you might not be able to get out of an emergency situation. A vehicle in good shape can give you an extra safety margin when you need it, and you never know when you will need it. You should follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in the vehicle owner's manual. Following these preventive measures greatly reduces the chance your vehicle will have a problem.

A few simple checks will prevent trouble on the road.

Braking System

Cars and trucks need two separate brake systems, a foot brake and a parking brake. Motorcycles and mopeds need at least one. It is very dangerous if they are not working properly. If they do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, have an unusual odor, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

Lights

Make sure the turn signals, brake lights, taillights and headlights are operating properly. These should be checked from outside the vehicle. Brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping and turn signals tell them you are turning.

All cars and trucks need two headlights on the front of the vehicle: one on the right and one on the left. You also need at least one red light on the back of the vehicle. It should be visible for at least 500 feet. A white light to illuminate the rear license plate is also required.

If a vehicle is equipped with turn signals, they must work. Turn signals are required for all cars, trucks and trailers wider than 40 inches.

Backup lights and side running lights are not required, but are a good safety precaution.

Daytime running lamps (DRL) are beginning to appear on new model vehicles. DRL conversion kits are now available in after-market auto supply stores. Research has shown a reduction in accidents and fatalities when DRLs or headlights are used during daytime travel. It is also legal to use low beam headlights during daytime hours. This could help approaching vehicles see you better.

An out-of-line headlight can shine where it does not help you and may blind other drivers. If you are having trouble seeing at night, or other drivers are flashing their headlights at you constantly, have a mechanic check the headlights.

Windshield, Wipers and Clean Glass Surfaces

It is important that you are able to see clearly through all windows, including the windshield, and by using mirrors. Here are some things you can do to help you.

- Damaged glass can break more easily in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. It can also obscure vision. Have the windshield replaced if it has been damaged.
- Any window or windshield must be made of safety glass and permit clear vision. Windshield wipers are required for all windshields.
- Iowa law requires tinted windshields and windows to the immediate right or left of the driver to allow 70 percent of the light through.
- Windshield wipers keep the rain and snow off the windshield. Make sure they are in good operating condition. If the blades have not been keeping the windows clear, replace them.
- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Carry liquid cleaner and a paper or cloth towel so you can clean your windshield whenever it is necessary.
- Keep your window washer bottle full. Use antifreeze wash in areas where the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Keep the inside of your windows clean, especially if anyone has been smoking in the vehicle. Smoking causes a film to build up on the inside glass.
- Clear snow, ice or frost from **all windows**. Clean the front, side and back windows before you drive.
- Do not hang things from your mirror while driving your vehicle or clutter up the windshield with decals. They could block your view.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can cut the light's effectiveness by 50 percent.

Tires

Worn or bald tires can increase your stopping distance and make turning more difficult when the road is wet. Unbalanced tires and low pressure cause faster tire wear, reduce fuel economy, and make the vehicle harder to steer and stop. If the vehicle bounces, the steering wheel shakes, or the vehicle pulls to one side, have a mechanic check it.

Worn tires can cause "hydroplaning" (see page 42) and increase the chance of having a flat tire during a trip. Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the proper pressure.

Check tread with a penny. Stick the penny into the tread "head" first. If the tread does not come at least to the top of Lincoln's head, the tire is unsafe. You need to replace it.

Steering System

If the steering is not working properly, it is difficult to control the direction you want to go. If the vehicle is hard to turn or does not turn when the steering wheel is first turned, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

Suspension System

Your suspension helps you control your vehicle and provides a comfortable ride over varying road surfaces. If the vehicle bounces a lot, or keeps bouncing after a bump or after you stop, you may need new shocks or other suspension parts. Have a mechanic check it out.

Exhaust System

The exhaust system helps remove toxic gases from the engine, helps reduce noise from the engine, and helps cool the hot gases coming from the engine. Fumes from a leaky exhaust can cause death in a very short time. Never run the motor in your garage, or sit in the car with the motor running without opening a window.

Cut-outs, bypasses or similar devices are not allowed. Catalytic converters must be maintained in good working order. Fortunately, most exhaust problems are leaks which are easily heard. Have them fixed.

Engine

A poorly tuned engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies; may not start; gets poor fuel economy; pollutes the air; and could stall on you when you are on the road causing a traffic problem. Follow the procedures recommended in the owner's manual for maintenance.

Loose Objects

Make sure there are no packages or other objects on the rear shelf or back seat that could hit someone on the head in the event of a sudden stop or accident. Make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal so you could not stop the vehicle.

Horn

The horn may not seem like it would be important for safety, but as a warning device, it could save your life. It should only be used as a warning to others. The horn must be loud enough to be heard at least 200 feet away, but should not make too loud or harsh a sound.

Mirrors

You must be able to see at least 200 feet behind you in your rearview mirror. If your view is blocked by a load, you must have an outside mirror. Vans or van-type vehicles must have both left and right outside mirrors.

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

You should always check the driver's seat and mirrors before you start to drive to make sure they are set right for you. Make any adjustments to the seat and mirrors before you drive.

- Adjust your seat so you are high enough to clearly see the road. If necessary, use a seat cushion. Do not move the seat so far forward that you cannot easily steer. In an air bag-equipped vehicle, there should be a 12-inch clearance between you and the steering wheel hub.
- Adjust your rearview mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rearview mirror, and to the sides with the side mirrors. A good adjustment for the side mirrors is to set them so that when you lean forward slightly, you can see the side of your vehicle.
- If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set correctly.
- Head restraints are designed to prevent whiplash if you are hit from behind. They should be adjusted so the head restraint touches the back of the head.

4. Protecting Your Driving Privileges

Driving on Iowa's streets and roads is a privilege many drivers take for granted. That privilege can be taken away if you abuse it. Protect your driving record by operating your motor vehicle according to Iowa laws and rules of the road.

The Office of Driver Services in Des Moines keeps track of your license and your driving record. Your driving record shows all traffic violations and traffic accidents. The Office of Driver Services tries to make sure only safe, responsible persons are driving on Iowa's roads. If you have too many accidents or traffic violations, your driving privileges may be limited or taken away.

There are six ways your driving privileges may be withdrawn: cancellation, suspension, revocation, barred, denial and disqualification (commercial license only - see Iowa's CDL Manual).

Unlawful Use of Your License

Misusing your license is a misdemeanor punishable by fines, jail sentences and license suspensions. For your sake, don't. Here are some unlawful uses of your driver's license/permit that could get you into trouble:

- showing or having a canceled or fraudulent license or permit;
- lending your license or permit to anyone else;
- using anyone else's license or permit;
- keeping any license or permit if it is suspended, revoked or canceled, if the DOT has requested it be turned in;
- using a false or fictitious name;
- permitting any unlawful use of your license or permit; or
- altering your license or permit in any way.

Cancellation

- Any existing license will be canceled if it should not have been issued in the first place.
- A moped permit will be canceled if you are convicted of a moving traffic violation.

Suspension

Your license can be suspended for several reasons. These reasons include:

- habitual recklessness or negligence - having a combination of three or more moving violations and accidents, or contributing to three or more accidents in a 12-month period;
- habitual violator - three or more convictions for moving traffic violations within any 12-month period, or contributing to three or more accidents in a 12-month period;
- failure to pass an examination, or a mental or physical condition making you unable to drive safely;
- violation of license restriction;
- being a juvenile who a court has ruled delinquent for violating drug or alcohol laws;
- failure to pay a fine, penalty, surcharge or court costs resulting from a traffic ticket;
- conviction for excessive speeding, unlawful passing of a school bus, traffic violation(s) contributing to a fatality, or an arresting officer or court stating an unusually serious violation occurred;
- failure to attend an approved school if you are under age 18; or
- falsifying information on an application.

In any of these cases, you may request a hearing to talk about your suspension. Failure to pay child support or to satisfy debts owed to the state may result in suspension without the opportunity for a hearing.

Minor's Restricted License and Minor's School License

The Iowa DOT can suspend your minor's restricted license or minor's school license for conviction of just one traffic violation.

It is important to note that a suspension or revocation of a minor's restricted license or a minor's school license also suspends or revokes your instruction permit and/or other driving privileges you hold.

Mandatory Revocations

Your license will be taken away for any of the following:

- manslaughter resulting from driving a motor vehicle;
- using a motor vehicle when committing a felony;
- failure to stop and give aid at the scene of a personal injury or fatal accident in which you were involved;
- lying about the registration or operation of a motor vehicle;
- eluding or trying to elude a marked law enforcement vehicle driven by a uniformed peace officer after being signaled with lights or a siren to stop, and while doing that, going over the speed limit by 25 mph or more;
- driving a motor vehicle under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or other drug or a combination of such substances (see pages 46 and 47 for penalties);
- refusing to take a chemical test when requested by a peace officer;
- having an alcohol concentration of .08 or more (.02 or more if under age 21) in a chemical test;
- a second conviction for reckless driving;
- drag racing;
- conviction of an Iowa resident in a court in Iowa, or in another state or federal court, of certain drug-related offenses; or
- conviction, or juvenile court action, for drug/drug-related violations.

Barred (Habitual Offender)

You may be ruled a habitual offender if you are convicted of three or more certain violations in a six-year period. Your operating privileges may be barred in accordance with the following point system:

Conviction	Points
• Perjury or making a false statement under oath to the Department of Public Safety	2
• Driving while under suspension, revocation, or denial	2
• Driving while under an alcohol or drug-related revocation	3
• Driving while barred	4
• Driving while under the influence of alcohol or a drug or having an alcohol concentration of .08 or more	4
• An offense punishable as a felony under motor vehicle laws or any felony in which a motor vehicle was used	5
• Failure to stop and leave information or render aid at an accident site	5
• Eluding or attempting to elude law enforcement	5
• Serious injury caused by the operation of a motor vehicle	5
• Manslaughter resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle	6

Points	Length of Bar
6-7	2 Years
8-9	3 Years
10-12	4 Years
13-15	5 Years
16 +	6 Years

Another way you may be considered a habitual offender is if you are convicted of six or more moving violations within two years. If the six moving violations include speeding, the speeds must be at least 15 mph over the legal speed limit. This may result in you being barred from operating a vehicle for one year. **IF YOU ARE CAUGHT DRIVING AFTER BEING BARRED AS A HABITUAL OFFENDER, YOU CAN BE IMPRISONED FOR AS LONG AS TWO YEARS.**

Moving Violations

A moving traffic violation involves any traffic law violation except those involving:

- equipment (except brakes)
- city parking regulations
- expired licenses or permits
- failure to appear
- weights and measures
- disturbing the peace with a motor vehicle
- failure to display flag on moped
- seat belt violations
- child restraint violations

Reinstatement

To get your driving privilege back after a suspension or revocation you must go through a reinstatement process which may include passing required tests and paying appropriate fees. If your driving privilege is taken away, you may have to show future proof of financial responsibility. (See page 48.)

If your license is suspended or revoked due to a conviction(s) or for reasons relating to financial responsibility, you will have to pay a $200 civil penalty prior to reinstatement. However, for persons age 19 or under, the civil penalty will be $50.

OWI - Operating While Intoxicated or Drugged

Iowa has tough laws against driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The OWI law makes it illegal to drive under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, another drug, or any combination of such drugs.

Iowa also has an Implied Consent Law. Under this law, any peace officer can ask you to submit to a breath test, urine test or blood test if the officer feels you may be driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This applies to both resident and non-resident drivers.

If you take the test and fail, or refuse to take the test, your license can be taken away on the spot.

If the tests show an alcohol concentration of .08 or more, you will be considered legally intoxicated.

Test Failure

- Immediate notice of revocation
- Ten-day temporary driving permit
- Six months to one year revocation, depending on prior record
- Course for drinking drivers
- Substance abuse evaluation and/or treatment

Test Refusal

- Immediate notice of revocation
- Ten-day temporary driving permit
- One to two year revocation depending on prior record
- Course for drinking drivers
- Substance abuse evaluation and/or treatment

Court Conviction For OWI

- 48-hour jail sentence, first offense
- Seven-day jail sentence, second offense
- Course for drinking drivers
- Substance abuse evaluation and/or treatment
- Other penalty

Under Age 21

- Alcohol concentration level of greater than .02 and less than .08
- Immediate notice of revocation
- Ten-day temporary driving permit
- Sixty-day revocation
- Course for drinking drivers
- Substance abuse evaluation and/or treatment

It is a serious misdemeanor to drive while your license is revoked. This could result in fines up to $1,000. Law enforcement officers may impound a vehicle if it is being driven by a person whose driver's license is revoked for an OWI.

The law also requires you to show proof of financial responsibility before you can get your license back. This is usually done through special insurance. The insurance form SR-22 must be filed by your insurance company with the Office of Driver Services. A person under the age of 21 whose license was revoked because he/she tested .02 or more but less than .08 is not required to file an SR-22.

Substance abuse evaluation and treatment, as well as a course for drinking drivers, is also required for offenders. This course must be taken at their own expense.

Open Container Law

It is illegal in Iowa to drive with an open container of beer or any other alcoholic beverage if the open beverage container is in the passenger compartment of any car or truck, including the glove compartment. This applies to both drivers and passengers.

Civil Penalty (Victim Reparation)

If your license is revoked for refusing to submit to a chemical test for OWI, having an alcohol concentration of .08 or greater (.02 if under 21), or a conviction of operating while intoxicated or drugged, you will have to pay a $200 civil penalty in addition to other reinstatement fees.

Accidents - Financial Responsibility and Reporting Requirements

The Financial and Safety Responsibility Act law protects you by suspending the driving and registration privileges of anyone who has not been able to show financial responsibility following an accident. It also makes sure that anyone who has had his/her driving privileges suspended or revoked because of certain convictions, an unsatisfied judgment, or a violation of implied consent laws will be able to financially compensate others for future damages or injuries that the driver may cause.

At the Scene

- If you are in an accident, you are required to stop as close to the accident scene as possible without blocking traffic. You must supply the driver of the other vehicle your name, address and the registration number of your motor vehicle. You must also show the other driver your driver's license if asked to do so.
- If anyone is hurt in the accident, you must help get medical attention if the injured person asks for assistance. If anyone is seriously hurt and cannot ask for help, be sure to summon an ambulance or medical assistance immediately.
- When someone is hurt or killed in an accident you must immediately report that accident to the nearest law enforcement agency. If the accident happened in a city of 15,000 or more people, contact the chief of police in that city.
- Leaving the scene of a personal injury accident in which you were involved is a serious misdemeanor. Punishment could be one year in jail and/or a fine up to $1,500. If someone was killed in the accident, it is an aggravated misdemeanor and can be punished by two years in jail and/or a $5,000 fine.
- If someone is hurt or killed, or if there is more than $1,500 in property damage, you must also file an accident report with the Iowa DOT's Office of Driver Services. You can get these report forms from most peace officers. You must file the report within 72 hours of the accident or your license may be suspended. However, if a peace officer investigates the accident and files an Investigating Officer's Report, you do not have to file a report.
- If the accident investigation shows you contributed to the accident, you must prove your financial responsibility or your license will be suspended.

How to Avoid Suspension Following an Accident

If you do not have liability insurance when you are involved in an accident, you must do one of the following:

- post cash, cashier's check, certified check, bank draft, surety bond or postal money order, payable to the Iowa Office of Driver Services. This must be deposited with the Office of Driver Services, P.O. Box 9204, Des Moines, IA 50306-9204. The money will be held by the state treasurer for one year. If you have not been sued in that time, the money will be returned to you.
- get written releases from all persons whose property was damaged and/or the injured parties. Forms are available from the Office of Driver Services.
- get a court decision resulting from civil action that relieves you of all liability.
- file an agreement to pay for damages or injuries on the installment plan. Forms are available from the Office of Driver Services.
- prove to the Office of Driver Services that you have paid for all damages or injuries, or that the other parties have paid you for your damages or injuries.

Failure to Meet Requirements

If you do not use one of the above methods to meet the requirements, your license can be suspended for one year from the date of the accident. **These requirements apply to both the driver and the owner of the vehicle.** If your motor vehicle was involved in an accident and you were not the driver, you still must show financial responsibility. Failure to do this may result in the suspension of your vehicle registration privileges.

The only exceptions to the requirements are if your car was legally stopped or parked, or if your vehicle was being used without your consent, or if damage or injury occurred only to you.

You will also have to show future proof after a revocation or suspension of your license for convictions or for operating while intoxicated. Future proof is required from the first day of your revocation or suspension and lasts two years. By immediately posting future proof you can avoid the suspension of your registrations. If you must show future proof, you may drive and register only those vehicles which are covered by your SR-22 insurance or other future proof filing. Violating these restrictions can result in fines of $1,500 and/or a one-year prison term.

Methods of Proving Financial Responsibility

- Have your Iowa-licensed insurance company submit Insurance Certificate Form SR-22 to the Office of Driver Services. It must cover you on all vehicles you operate or register. It must provide for at least the following limits: $20,000 for one death or injury; $40,000 for two deaths or injuries; and $15,000 for property damage.
- File a surety bond, cash or securities equal to $55,000.
- Proof can also be given by your employer's insurance company if you operate a vehicle owned by your employer, or by the insurance company for the owner of the vehicle you drive if you are part of the owner's immediate family.
- If your employer owns a fleet of motor vehicles, your employer's insurance company can file Form SR-23. This covers you while operating any of the vehicles in the fleet.
- Proof can be given for you to operate a vehicle owned by a person who has a certificate of self-insurance from the Office of Driver Services. The person must supply that office with a letter giving you permission to drive cars or trucks covered by that certificate.
- If you work for someone with truck operator authority granted by the Office of Motor Carrier Services of the Iowa Department of Transportation, the permit holder must send the Office of Driver Services a letter giving you permission to drive the vehicles covered by the permit.

If you fail to maintain future proof during the two years, your driving and registration privileges will be suspended again. When your future proof requirements end, you will receive a notice explaining the reinstatement process. Licenses and registrations then will be issued without future proof requirements.

Exemptions

Any vehicles owned by state, federal or local governments or political subdivisions are exempt from the financial responsibility requirements. Motor carriers, truck operators and liquid transport carriers regulated by the Iowa DOT's Office of Motor Carrier Services and interstate commerce carriers are also exempt.

Mandatory Insurance Coverage - Proof Needed

Beginning January 1, 1998, drivers of vehicles registered in Iowa must carry with them an insurance card verifying liability coverage is currently in force. Failure to do so could result in fines and possible impoundment of the vehicle.

Non-Resident Responsibility

Immediate and future proof rules apply to non-residents. A non-resident cannot drive or register a vehicle in Iowa until all of the requirements are met.

Out-of-State Convictions

Traffic violations in other states apply to your Iowa record. If you are convicted in another state and the offense is grounds for suspension or revocation in Iowa, your license may be suspended or revoked.

Work Permits (Temporary Restricted Licenses)

If your regular job depends on your being able to drive, and your driving privilege has been suspended or revoked, you may apply for a temporary restricted license (work permit).

Persons under the age of 18 are not eligible for work permits.

You may not be eligible for a work permit if you have been convicted of certain serious traffic offenses.

An ignition interlock device must be installed if you have repeat OWI offenses, were involved in an accident causing personal injury or property damage, refused the chemical breath test, or had a BAC of more than 0.10.

The work permit may be canceled for any moving traffic violations.

A work permit may not be issued for operation of a commercial motor vehicle.

If your license is revoked under the operating while intoxicated law because you were under age 21 and your alcohol concentration was .02 or more but less than .08, you cannot apply for a work permit.

If your license is revoked for an OWI offense, you cannot obtain a work permit until minimum periods of ineligibility have passed. Depending on your prior record, the minimum periods of ineligibility vary from 30 days to one year.

5. Be in Shape to Drive

Driving safely is not always easy. In fact, it is one of the most complex things that people do. It also is one of the few things we do regularly that can injure and kill us. It is worth the effort to be a careful driver.

To be a safe driver takes a lot of skill and judgment. This task is even more difficult when you are just learning to drive. Driving can easily take all the ability you have. Your ability to be a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while on drugs, being generally healthy, and being emotionally fit to drive. In other words, being in "shape" to drive safely.

Alcohol and Drugs

The use of alcohol while driving is one of the leading causes of accidents, especially fatal accidents. Twenty eight percent of all fatal Iowa accidents are related to alcohol use. More than 70 percent of these alcohol-related deaths are people between the ages of 16 and 34!

No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if you have many years of driving experience. New drivers are more affected by alcohol than experienced drivers because new drivers are still learning to drive.

Because drinking alcohol and then driving is so dangerous, the penalties are very tough. People who drive after drinking risk getting heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of their driver's licenses, and even jail sentences.

Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. After you drink alcohol, it goes from your stomach into your blood and to all parts of your body. It reaches your brain in 20 to 40 minutes. In your brain, alcohol affects those areas of your brain that control judgment and skill. This is one reason why drinking alcohol is so dangerous; it affects your judgment. Good judgment is important to driving. You may think you are driving better or are more capable when the exact opposite is true.

Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces your ability to see clearly, and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and your skill decreases. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds and the movement of other vehicles.

It reduces your coordination and relaxes your eye muscles, causing your vision to lose its sharpness. Your **night vision is cut in half and your side vision is reduced by one-third**. Your speech and reflexes become worse with each drink.

Alcohol takes effect quickly but it is slow to let go. Only time will get it out of your system. Cold showers, black coffee and exercise will do nothing to sober you up. Once in the body, alcohol must be chemically broken down and oxidized by the liver. This is a slow process.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more persons, where one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group being a "designated driver." If available, you might use public transportation, or use a cab.

The penalties for drinking and driving are severe. See page 46.

Other Drugs and Driving

Drugs can be legal or illegal. They may be taken in any amount under any circumstances. Many people are multiple drug users. That means they use more than one drug.

Drugs are very complicated and so is your body. The same drug may have a different effect on you, depending on what you have been doing or how you are feeling. When you combine drugs, it is very difficult to be sure what will happen. This includes mixing alcohol and prescription medications given to you by your doctor.

One way to group different kinds of drugs is the way you can get them: over-the-counter, prescription, and illegal. Reduce the chance of serious side effects from prescription and over-the-counter drugs by closely following package instructions. Many over-the-counter and prescription medications warn you not to drive or operate heavy equipment while taking the drug.

Illegal drugs are usually bought "on the street," and their content and side effects are unknown. Their strength and purity may vary a great deal. They are very dangerous. For your own safety and the safety of others on the road, do not use street drugs.

All drugs produce two side effects. They produce the effects desired, such as fighting illness or disease. They also can produce side effects that can range from simply unpleasant to fatal.

Most drugs act on the central nervous system. Stimulants speed the body up, depressants slow it down, and hallucinogens affect the way the drug user views the world.

Here is a quick look at some of the more common drugs and their effects:

Amphetamines speed up your body. Tired people, including drivers, incorrectly use these drugs to keep going when they are worn down. That is why they are known as "pep pills" or "uppers." They give users a false sense of alertness and self-confidence which may make a driver take chances he/she would not take when not under the influence of drugs.

Some common amphetamines include cocaine, speed, etc.

Barbiturates are used to slow the body down. They are one of the most abused groups of prescription drugs around. They reduce alertness and energy. They are often prescribed by medical doctors to counteract nervousness or other emotional symptoms. They affect alertness, reaction time, sight and coordination.

Depression often follows when the effects wear off. Tranquilizers are probably the most used barbiturates.

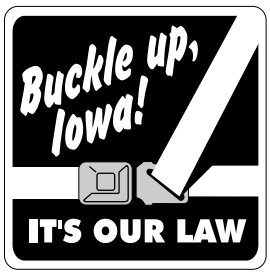
Hallucinogens affect the way the user sees the world. Marijuana, LSD and PCP are some of the most common hallucinogenic drugs, but they are by no means the only ones. These drugs affect the way users view their surroundings. The drugs affect mood, reaction time and the ability

to judge time.

Drug use in the U.S. is common. One of every four Americans uses some type of drug each day. Most of these are over-the-counter drugs. Most are used according to the direction and at the proper dosage so they cause no problems. Using drugs for the proper purpose at the recommended dosage and avoiding illegal drugs is the best way to avoid excessive drug use. Be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist when using a new drug. Your doctor or pharmacist can tell you if it will affect your driving ability or how the drug may be affected by drugs you are already taking. If you plan to use alcohol, check to see how the drug reacts with alcohol.

Persons With Disabilities Parking Identification Permits

If you are disabled, you may qualify for a disability parking identification permit. A statement is required from your physician, chiropractor, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner on his or her letterhead stationery verifying you are disabled and whether the condition is temporary or permanent. Your condition must meet the criteria in the definition of a disabled person. There is no charge for the device. Organizations and persons in the business of transporting the disabled may obtain a persons with disabilities parking device. Contact your local driver's license station, county treasurer, or the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Vehicle Services, P.O. Box 9278, Des Moines, IA 50306-9278, for further information, or to apply for a disability parking device. Applications are available on line at www.iowadot.gov/mvd/vehicleregistration/disabled.htm



Seat Belts and Child Restraints

Seat Belts

All passenger cars and pickup trucks manufactured since 1966 are required to have seat belts. They offer the best chance of survival and reduced injuries if you are in an accident. If you ride in the front seat, your chances of being seriously injured or killed in an accident are reduced at least 50 percent if you are wearing a seat belt.

Iowa law requires ALL drivers and other persons riding in the front seats of automobiles, trucks, motor homes or buses to wear seat belts or harnesses unless:

- The person is a child under 6 years old and is properly restrained in an approved child seat or belt. For optimum safety, it is recommended that children under age 12 not ride in the front seat whenever possible. Children required to use a front- or rear-facing safety seat should never be placed in the front passenger seat of a vehicle equipped with an active passenger-side air bag. See the section concerning the child restraint law on page 52.
- The vehicle is not required to have seat belts or harnesses.
- The driver or passenger must get in and out of the vehicle often to do his or her job, and the vehicle is not driven faster than 25 mph.
- The driver is a rural mail carrier delivering the mail between the first and last stops on the route.
- The passenger is riding on a bus.
- The driver or passenger is unable to wear a seat belt or safety harness for medical reasons. A person seeking an exemption from wearing seat belts or harnesses must have the need for that exemption certified by a physician on a form available from the Iowa DOT. The certification is valid for the maximum of 12 months, but can be renewed at the end of each 12-month period if necessary.
- The front seat passengers in a vehicle owned, leased, rented or primarily used by a physically disabled person who uses a collapsible wheelchair.
- The passenger is being transported by an authorized emergency vehicle in an emergency situation.

Wear your lap belt snugly across your hips. If you are pregnant, you can safely wear the belt across the pelvis, as low under your abdomen as possible.

In addition to protecting you from injury, as a driver, seat belts help you keep control of the vehicle. If you are struck from the side or make a quick turn, the force could push you sideways. You cannot steer the vehicle if you are not behind the wheel.

Seat belts should be worn even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. While air bags are good protection against hitting the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield, they do not protect you if you are hit from the side or rear, or if the car rolls over. Also, an air bag will not keep you behind the wheel in these situations.

Some people still have incorrect information about using seat belts. For example:

"Seat belts can trap you inside a car."

It takes less than a second to undo a seat belt. This information tells of a car that caught fire or sank in deep water. Accidents like this seldom happen. Even if they do, a seat belt may keep you from being "knocked out." Your chance to escape will be better if you are conscious.

"Seat belts are good on long trips, but I do not need them if I am driving around town."

Over half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Many of them occur on roads with speed limits of less than 45 mph.

"Some people are thrown clear in an accident and walk away with hardly a scratch."

Your chances of not being killed in an accident are much better if you stay inside the car. Seat belts can keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle into the path of another one.

"If I get hit from the side, I am better off being thrown across the car; away from the crash point."

When a car is struck from the side, it will move sideways. Everything in the car that is not fastened down, including the passengers, will slide toward the point of crash, not away from it.

"At slow speed, I can brace myself."

Even at 25 mph, the force of a head-on crash is the same as pedaling a bicycle full speed into a brick wall or diving off a three-story building onto the sidewalk. No one can "brace" for that.

1. ***Applies to all seating positions in the vehicle.***
2. ***A child under one year of age and weighing less than 20 pounds must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.***
3. ***A child under six years of age who does not meet the description in #1 must be secured by a child restraint system.***
4. ***A child at least six years of age but under eighteen years of age shall be secured by a child restraint system or a safety belt or safety harness.***

All child restraint systems must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Safety seats must meet federal motor vehicle safety standards and must be used properly.

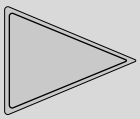
There is a fine for violation of this law. The fine for the first violation can be waived by the court if you prove you have obtained a safety seat.

Supplemental Restraint Systems (Air Bags)

Air bags help save drivers and front seat passengers from death or serious injury in motor vehicle accidents. Please remember that wearing your seat belt is part of the supplemental restraint system. Your air bag is a supplemental system; alone it may not prevent serious injuries. Air bags may not inflate in side or rear-end crashes.

Self-help Review

1. A pennant-shaped sign is used to indicate what? On what side of the road will a pennant-shaped sign be placed?



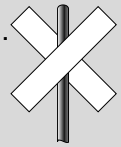
Information found in "Traffic Signs and Rules of the Road" in Section 2.

2. You come to an intersection that has no stop signs or traffic signals. At the same time, another vehicle has arrived at the intersection and this vehicle is on your right. Who has the right-of-way?
Information found in "When to Yield the Right-of-Way" in Section 2.

3. What must you do if you come up behind a school bus and the school bus has its amber lights near the top of the bus flashing?
Information found in "School Buses" in Section 2.

4. How close can you park to a fire hydrant?
Information found in "Parking is Not Allowed" in Section 2.

5 .



Do you know what a "crossbuck sign" is and where you might come across one?
Information found in "Railroad Crossings" in Section 2.

6. Do you know how pavement markings help you determine which way traffic flows on a particular street?
Information found in "Pavement Markings and Other Lane Controls" in Section 2.

7. If you are driving in bad weather conditions such as rain, ice, snow or fog, what is the first safe thing you should think about doing? Do you know what "hydroplaning" means?
Information found in "Bad Weather Driving" in Section 3.

8. What is the speed limit in a business district?
Information found in "Appropriate Speed" in Section 3.

9. Do you know what "blind spots" are and where they are?
Information found in "Changing Lanes," "Blind Spots," and "Sharing the Road" all found in Section 3.

10. Do you know what "Implied Consent" means?
Information found in "OWI-Operating While Intoxicated or Drugged" in Section 4.

Commercial Vehicle Information Phone
515-237-3305
Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Iowa State Patrol Emergency:

911

Non-Emergency:
800-525-5555
Toll Free

Local Emergency Numbers

_____

_____

_____

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For further information call:
The Motor Vehicle Information Center
In Des Moines 515-244-8725
Toll Free 515-244-8725

To learn more about transportation in Iowa,
visit our Web site at iowadot.gov.

Produced by

Revised June 2016
Form 430009

IOWA DOT

Federal and state laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran's status. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 800-457-4416 or Iowa Department of Transportation's affirmative action officer. If you need accommodations because of a disability to access the Iowa Department of Transportation's services, contact the agency's affirmative action officer at 800-262-0003.

Do more online and skip a trip.

Many of the services you receive at driver's license issuance sites are now available to you online, anytime.

myMVD
MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION SERVICES
online, anytime

Specialty and personalized plates. new
Check availability of a personalized number/letter combination and order your plates.

Online renewal
Renew your driver's license or ID online.

Electronic renewal notification
Sign up to receive an email reminder when it's time to renew your driver's license/ID.

Mailing address change
Review or change your mailing address on file with the Iowa DOT.

Driving record
Obtain a free, noncertified copy or purchase a certified copy of your driving record.

To access myMVD,

scan the QR code with a QR reader on your smartphone or other mobile device, or visit https://mymvd.iowadot.gov.

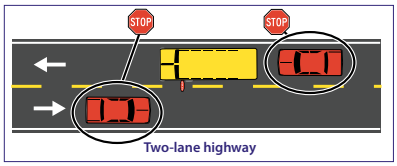
Know when to stop or pass a school bus?

Not knowing could cost you your driver's license and a whole lot more.

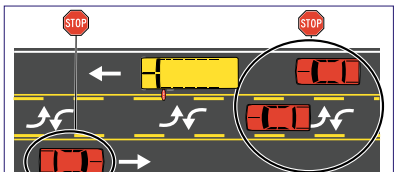
For more information about school bus safety,

including penalties for violation, visit: iowadot.gov/schoolbus.

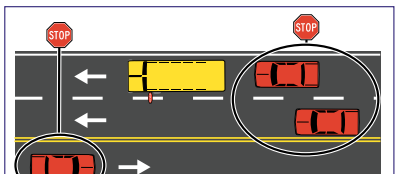
Traveling on a two- or three-lane road



Two-lane highway

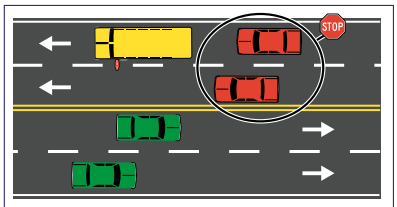


Two-lane highway with center turn lane

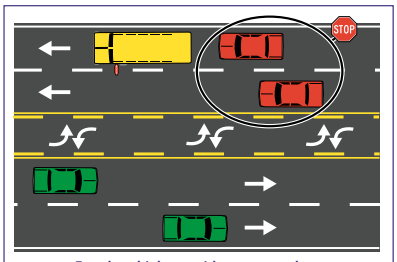


Three-lane highway

Traveling on a road with two or more lanes in each direction



Four-lane highway



Four-lane highway with center turn lane