# Iowa Driver's Manual

2008-2009

Iowa Department of Transportation

Chester J. Culver
Governor of Iowa

# *Important Message to Drivers*

*There are two million drivers who currently retain an Iowa driver's license. It's important to remember that driving is an important privilege that carries with it an enormous responsibility.*

*Careful, considerate drivers, an increased emphasis on safety, and stiff penalties against drunk drivers help ensure a reduction in the number of traffic deaths. All drivers must do their part to avoid traffic accidents.*

*This driver's manual provides valuable information to help you become a safe and responsible driver. You'll learn how to avoid motor vehicle accidents and related injuries. It teaches you to be aware of your surroundings, how to drive defensively, and anticipate and react to dangerous situations on the roadway.*

*Obeying the law is the first step toward being a safe driver. This manual also provides information on how to navigate hazardous driving conditions. Study the information provided in this manual and you'll be on your way to being a responsible driver. It is our desire that your driving experience be enjoyable, but above all, safe.*

**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 6 and 7).
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 (see page 21).

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 800-532-1121.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ames**<br>515-296-2393 | **3708 Lincoln Way**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Ankeny**<br>515-244-1052 | **6310 S.E. Convenience Blvd.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Burlington**<br>319-754-8767 | **Fairway Shopping Center, 2700 Mount Pleasant St.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Carroll**<br>712-792-5269 | **510 Carroll St., Suite 1**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Cedar Rapids**<br>319-377-6461 | **152 Collins Road N.E.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Clinton**<br>563-243-7144 | **316 S. 2nd St.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Council Bluffs**<br>712-323-1219 | **Mall of the Bluffs, 1751 Madison Ave., Suite 330**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Davenport**<br>563-386-1050 | **Kimberly West Shopping Center, 2162 W. Kimberly Road**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Des Moines**<br>515-244-1052 | **2339 Euclid Avenue**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Dubuque**<br>563-583-9844 | **Asbury Square Shopping Center, 2255 JFK Road**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Fort Dodge**<br>515-573-5141 | **2313 First Avenue South**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Iowa City**<br>319-338-5294 | **Eastdale Mall, 1700 W. First Ave.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Marshalltown**<br>641-752-5668 | **Marshalltown Plaza Mall, 2500 S. Center Street**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Mason City**<br>641-423-8391 | **Southport Shopping Center, 1622 S. Federal Avenue**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Muscatine**<br>563-263-5414 | **1903 Park Ave.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Ottumwa**<br>641-682-4855 | **2830 North Court Road**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Sioux City**<br>712-255-5539 | **3005 Hamilton Blvd.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Spencer**<br>712-262-6278 | **Gateway North Shopping Center, East 18th and Grand Ave.**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |
| **Waterloo**<br>319-235-0902 | **103 Crossroads Center**<br>**Open:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. |

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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 800-532-1121 (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 7)
- 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 non-commercial 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.

### Vision Standards

| | |
|---|---|
| **Acuity** | |
| 20/40 | No restrictions unless you wear glasses or contacts. |
| Less than 20/40 but at least 20/50 | No driving when headlights are required. |
| Less than 20/50 but at least 20/70 | No driving when headlights are required; no driving at speeds over 35 mph. |
| Less than 20/70 | Not eligible for licensing.* |
| **Field of Vision** | |
| 140° or better | No restrictions. |
| Less than 140° but at least 115° in single best eye (70° temporal and 45° nasal) | Left and right outside rearview mirrors will be required. |
| Less than 115° | 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 knowledge test shows how well you know and understand highway signs and Iowa traffic laws. Each copy of the test tells you the number of questions you must answer correctly to pass the test. Iowa's larger driver's license stations offer a computer-based electronic way to complete the knowledge exam. If you renew your license within 60 days of its expiration, you probably will not have to take the knowledge test again.

## 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

When applying for any license, permit, duplicate license, renewal or nondriver ID, you must prove your age and identity.

If you are under 18 years old and not married, you must furnish a primary form of ID, a secondary form of ID, proof of a Social Security number, and a parent's/guardian's consent form. The Social Security card may be used for secondary ID AND proof of a Social Security number. The consent form proves permission from your parent or guardian to drive and is required even if you have a valid operator's license from another state. You can get the form at any Iowa driver's license station.

If you are under 18 years old and married, you will have to prove your age and identity by showing your birth certificate and marriage license.

**All persons must provide one item from the primary list and one item from the secondary list shown below, unless they have an Iowa-issued DL or ID in their possession. Photocopies or faxes of these documents are not acceptable.**

### Primary List

1. Photo driver's license or a certified copy of a license that is valid or has not been expired more than one year.
2. Photo ID card or certified copy of the card issued from the same state agency that issues driver's licenses, and the card must not have been expired more than one year. There are some exceptions to this. Check with the personnel at the driver's license station or call the Motor Vehicle Information Center at 800-532-1121.
3. Original or certified copy of U.S. or Canadian birth certificate that has a raised seal and is government-issued. A hospital birth certificate is **not** acceptable.
4. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) document
5. Court order containing your FULL name, date of birth, and court seal. This does **not** include an abstract.
6. Military ID card. This does **not** include a dependent ID card.
7. Valid U.S. or Canadian passport. Foreign passports must have a valid INS document.
8. ID card issued by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. A U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs or tribal ID card is **not** acceptable.
9. A notarized copy of either an Inmate Descriptor Inquiry or a Client Information Inquiry from the Iowa Department of Corrections.

### Secondary List

1. Any document from the primary list.
2. Bureau of Indian Affairs card.
3. Photo driver's license or photo ID card expired one year or more.
4. Court order that does not contain your date of birth, but does have your FULL name.
5. Foreign birth certificate translated by an approved translator.
6. Military discharge or separation papers (DD214).
7. Military dependent ID card.
8. Employer ID card.
9. Health insurance card.
10. IRS or state tax document completed by the government agency. W-2, 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ and related forms completed by the taxpayer are **not** acceptable.
11. Marriage license or certificate.
12. Medical records from doctor or hospital that are original or authenticated.
13. Gun permit.
14. Pilot's license.
15. Certified school record or transcript.
16. Social Security card issued by the Social Security Administration. A metal card is **not** acceptable.
17. Canadian Social Insurance card.
18. Photo student ID card.
19. Vehicle certificate of title. Vehicle registration is **not** acceptable.
20. Voter registration card.
21. Welfare card.
22. Prison release document.
23. Certified or notarized affidavit personally provided by the child's parent or guardian that identifies a minor child. The parent or guardian must provide acceptable proof of his/her identity.

Iowa law requires that a Social Security number be a part of the driver's license application. This requirement applies regardless of the class of license being issued or the age of the applicant.

## Social Security Number

You must give your Social Security number to the DOT. Your Social Security number will then become part of the DOT records, but will not be on your license.

To ensure the DOT records your correct Social Security number, there are certain documents the DOT will use for verification of the Social Security number if applying for a non-commercial license:

- Social Security card. A metal version of the card is **not** acceptable.
- Previous Iowa license if the Social Security number was used.
- IRS or state tax document completed by the government agency. W-2, 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ and related forms completed by the taxpayer are **not** acceptable.
- Financial statement containing your Social Security number.
- Payroll stub containing your Social Security number.
- Military ID card containing your Social Security number.
- If applying for a Commercial Instruction Permit or a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), you must show the examiner your actual Social Security card.

Driver's license personnel will make the final decision on what is acceptable proof of identity. If you have questions concerning this requirement, please contact your local examining personnel for more information.

If you are a foreign national temporarily in the United States and are not eligible for a Social Security number, the Social Security number requirement will not apply. However, you must bring your United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) documents to the examiner. The USCIS control number will be used in lieu of the Social Security number. Your license or nondriver identification card will be limited to the period of time you are authorized to be present, but not to exceed two years.

## Certification of Iowa Residency

Upon application for a driver's license or nondriver identification card, you must show evidence of Iowa residency. Acceptable items to certify your Iowa residency include:

- Iowa voter registration card.
- An Iowa vehicle registration certificate.
- Utility bill showing 30 days of residency.
- A statement from an Iowa financial institution showing 30 days of residency.
- Rental or lease agreement showing 30 days of residency.
- Pay check or pay stub from an Iowa employer.
- Children's school enrollment papers.
- Documentation showing a filing for homestead or military tax exemption on property in Iowa.
- Other items will be reviewed by licensing personnel.

## Types Of Driver's Licenses

### Graduated Driver's License

On January 1, 1999, Iowa began 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 the cause of a crash or accident.

**Instruction Permit**

- Available at age 14
- Must be held for a minimum of 6 months
- Written approval of parent/guardian
- Vision screening and knowledge tests
- 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 application for intermediate license
- Instruction permit will have the words "under eighteen"

**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; may use simulators for the remaining time
- 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
- Passengers limited to the number of seat belts in the vehicle
- Must drive accident- and violation-free for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding application 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
- Both the driver and a parent/guardian must participate in an interview with a Department of Transportation (DOT) official
- DOT official may impose additional driving restrictions or impose a suspension
- Must begin 6-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 twenty-one"

## Class C - Operator (Non-Commercial)

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 out-of-state license, if your Iowa license has been expired more than 60 days, 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 for five years if you are 17 years and 11 months through 69 years old. If you are age 70 or older, or less than 17 years and 11 months, your license will be issued for two years.

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

A two-year license costs $8 and a five-year license costs $20.

## Class D - Chauffeur (Non-Commercial)

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 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 knowledge tests for operator's and chauffeur's licenses. 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 is good for five years if you are 18 through 69 years old. It is good for two years if you are 70 years old or older, or where certain medical conditions and disabilities are involved. A two-year license costs $16 and a five-year license costs $40. The license expires on your birthday, but remains valid for another 60 days. During this time you can renew it without having to retake the knowledge test.

## 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 non-commercial 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 $1 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 $1 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 and prove your age and identity (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.

## Commercial Instruction Permit - Restriction 3

This permit allows a person to operate a commercial motor vehicle while learning to operate it as long as there is a person with a CDL valid for that type of vehicle occupying the seat beside the driver. To get this permit you must pass the vision screening and CDL general knowledge test. This restriction is added to your existing license. It is not possible to obtain a commercial instruction permit only. If you do not have a license when you apply for the commercial permit, you will be required to obtain at least the non-commercial Class C license (operator's license) and the commercial instruction permit will be added to the license. The commercial instruction permit is issued for six months and can be renewed only once in a two-year period. (When you are ready to apply for your commercial license, you will be required to pass any other applicable CDL knowledge tests and the skills test.) The permit costs $12.

## 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 chauffeur's knowledge test.

## Moped License - Restriction 5

If you are 18 years old or older and have never had a license, you will need to pass the vision screening and the knowledge test. You may also have to take a skills test to show you can properly operate a moped. Additional licensing is not required if you possess a valid driver's license. See page 53 for additional information.

To get a moped license you must be at least 14 years old and pass the vision screening and knowledge test and present a parental consent form, along with proof of age and identity (see page 6). (If you are under 16 years old, you must pass an approved moped education course to get a moped license.)

If you are 16 years old or older and have never had an Iowa driver's license, you must pass the vision and knowledge test. (If you are under 18 years old, you will also need to present a parental consent form, along with proof of age and identity. See page 6.)

## Minor's Restricted License - Restriction 6

A "Minor's 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's School License - Restriction 7

**This lets you drive back and forth to school and school activities between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. You must use the most direct and accessible route between your home and school.**

To get a school license you must have successfully completed an Iowa-approved driver education course (unless you show a hardship exists) and live one 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 station.

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.

## 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.

The fees for commercial licenses are $16 for two years and $40 for five years. 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.

## Summary Chart Of License Types

*A one-time surcharge of $3.00 will be added beginning July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2008. The surcharge will fund a driver information system upgrade.*

| License Class | Minimum Age | Expiration Date | Tests Required | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A (Commercial) | 18 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | See CDL Manual | $16*<br>$40* |
| B (Commercial) | 18 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | See CDL Manual | $16*<br>$40* |
| C (Commercial) | 18 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | See CDL Manual | $16*<br>$40* |
| C (Non-commercial - Operator) | 16 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision<br>Driving | $ 8<br>$20 |
| D (Non-commercial - Chauffeur) | 18 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision<br>Driving | $16<br>$40 |
| M (Motorcycle License only - new issuance) | 16 | 2- or 5-year on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision<br>Driving | $10<br>$25 |
| Restriction 1 (Motorcycle Instruction Permit - must be added to an existing license) | 14 | Same as current license | Knowledge<br>Vision | $ 1 &<br>$ 1 per yr |
| C Restriction 1 (Motorcycle Permit only - new issuance) | 14 | 4 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision | $ 8 |
| C Restriction 2 (Instruction Permit) | 14 | 4 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision | $ 6 |
| C Restriction 3 (Commercial Instruction Permit - must be added to an existing license) | 18 | 6 months | Knowledge<br>Vision | $12 |
| C Restriction 4 (Chauffeur's Instruction Permit) | 18 | 2 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision | $12 |
| C Restriction 5 (Moped/Motorized Bicycle License) | 14 | 2 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision | $ 8 |
| C Restriction 6 (Minor's Restricted License) | 16 | 2 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision<br>Driving | $ 8 |
| C Restriction 7 (Minor's School License) | 14 | 2 years on birthdate | Knowledge<br>Vision<br>Driving | $ 8 |

** There are additional fees for the commercial endorsements.*
*Persons under the age of 18, and age 70 or older may be issued a two-year license only. All others will be issued a five-year license.*

### 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 $40 for five years. There is a $1 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 October 4 through December 14.

## License Renewal

Your license expires on your birthday. It is valid for another 60 days, so you can renew it within that 60 days without having to take the knowledge test.

You will have to pass the vision screening any time you make a personal appearance for renewal. If your license has been expired for more than one year, 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. If you want to renew your license more than 30 days before the expiration date, you may have to explain to the licensing personnel why you are applying for the early renewal.

## Special 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 $1. 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 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 license or 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 station.

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 8 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 station. You must prove your age and identity (see page 6) and pay a $3 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.

To prove your Social Security number for your driver's license record, you must present your Social Security card when you first get your license. (See page 7 for other acceptable Social Security number verifications.)

### 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 non-commercial 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, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., 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.

## 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 nondriver 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.

# Review Questions (Section 1)

**T/F**

_____ 1. Your vision will be checked any time you apply for or renew a permit or license in person. **True/False**

_____ 2. You need to take a knowledge test if you renew your license within 60 days after your license expires. **True/False**

_____ 3. The driving test determines if you can reasonably control your car. **True/False**

_____ 4. If you are under 18 years old and married, or you are 18 years old or older and are applying for your first license or permit, you must furnish acceptable proof of your age and identity. **True/False**

_____ 5. Acceptable proof of a primary document includes an out-of-state driver's license or passport with a valid immigration form, as long as it shows your full name and birthdate. **True/False**

_____ 6. If you are practicing driving a motorcycle, the person with you must have a driver's license which is valid for motorcycle and be within sight and hearing distance of you. **True/False**

_____ 7. Your school license allows you to drive to and from school over the most direct route between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. **True/False**

_____ 8. The only requirement to drive a motorized bicycle (moped) is to legally register the moped. **True/False**

_____ 9. If you are between 16 and 18, you must successfully complete an approved motorcycle education course to operate a motorcycle alone. **True/False**

_____ 10. Military personnel have one year to renew an operator's license after leaving active duty. **True/False**

_____ 11. Your license number may be your Social Security number. **True/False**

_____ 12. You should always carry your permit or license with you when operating a motor vehicle. **True/False**

_____ 13. If your license is lost or destroyed, you may get a duplicate, but must show proof of your age and identity again. **True/False**

_____ 14. Your instruction permit gives you the right to operate a moped if you are 14 to 16 years old. **True/False**

_____ 15. You need a license to operate farm machinery on your farm. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 2. 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. After 30 days, you may be able to get your permit back by passing a knowledge test.

## 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, 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 DOT can suspend your minor's restricted license or minor's school license for conviction of just one traffic violation. If you are convicted of two or more violations, your license will be revoked for at least one year. 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 16 and 17 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 18.)

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 $1,000 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, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., 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). However, if your license has been revoked for OWI or under the implied consent law, you may not be able to get a work permit.

Persons under the age of eighteen are not eligible for work permits and work permits may not be issued for operation of a commercial motor vehicle.

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

You must meet the financial responsibility requirements, pass the vision screening and knowledge test, and pay a reinstatement fee before you are issued a work permit. An ignition interlock device must be installed if your license has been revoked for OWI.

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.

## Review Questions (Section 2)

**T/F**

_____ 1. If you do not file an accident report with the Office of Driver Services within 48 hours, your license may be suspended. **True/False**

_____ 2. If you are involved in an accident, only the person at fault must file an accident report. **True/False**

_____ 3. In Iowa you are considered legally intoxicated if you have an alcohol concentration of .08 or greater. **True/False**

_____ 4. If a peace officer requests you take an alcohol test, you may refuse without penalty. **True/False**

_____ 5. You must prove your financial responsibility as the driver or owner of a motor vehicle if you are involved in an accident or if your license is revoked or suspended for a conviction or unsatisfied judgment. **True/False**

_____ 6. Traffic convictions in another state are added to your Iowa driving record. **True/False**

_____ 7. Immediate and future proof requirements do not apply to non-residents. **True/False**

_____ 8. Your license is subject to suspension if you incorrectly use a restricted license. **True/False**

_____ 9. If you are under age 21 and have an alcohol concentration of .02, your driving privileges will be revoked. **True/False**

_____ 10. You must pass the required tests to have your license reinstated after a revocation or suspension. **True/False**

_____ 11. If you have three or more moving violations within one month, you will be considered a habitual offender. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 3. Car and Truck Registration and Safety

The state of Iowa and county governments are responsible for registering all Iowa motor vehicles.

Each car, truck, truck-tractor, trailer, motor home, motorcycle or moped is registered to its owner with a registration number and a license plate number. Each plate number refers to only one vehicle. If your vehicle is stolen, this information helps the police find and return your vehicle.

If you sell or trade your vehicle, you must take the plates off the vehicle. If you get another vehicle within 30 days, you can put those plates on that vehicle, but you must apply for a new title and registration for the replacement vehicle within 30 days of the date you bought it. If you do not replace the vehicle in 30 days, you must turn the plates in to your county treasurer.

## New Vehicles

If you traded your old car or truck for a **NEW** car or truck, you can put the old plates on the new car or truck. To do this, you must pay the required tax and fees within 30 days. Most dealers will collect the fees and send the paperwork to the county treasurer for you. Then, when you pick up your new vehicle, the title and registration paperwork will already be done.

If you have never owned a vehicle in Iowa, or are trading one kind of vehicle for another (for example, a car for a motorcycle), the dealer may collect the fees and give you a "Registration Applied For" card. It is valid for 45 days and should be put on your car, truck, motorcycle or moped. Use it until your metal plates arrive.

If you take all the fees and paperwork to the county treasurer yourself, you can pick up your license plates right away.

If you are a non-resident, you must apply to the county treasurer in the county where the vehicle will be garaged or where the driver lives.

## New Residents

If you are new to the state, you have 30 days from the time you move into the state to register your vehicle in Iowa.

## Buying or Transferring a Used Vehicle

If you buy or trade a vehicle and do not go through a dealer, the procedure is the same. However, you will have to make sure the forms are filled out correctly.

If the vehicle is nine model years old or newer, make sure the seller completes the odometer statement on the back of the Iowa title. If there is not an odometer statement on the back of the title, the odometer statement form is available from the county treasurer or on line at www.iamvd.com (click on Office of Vehicle Services.) This is to make sure the mileage reading is accurate. Tampering with a vehicle's odometer or falsifying an odometer statement is a violation of state and federal laws. Punishment for breaking these laws can be a fine and/or prison sentence.

The seller must also provide a damage disclosure statement to the buyer when ownership of a motor vehicle is transferred. This statement, which must be given to the buyer at or before the time of sale, is required even though there has been no damage to the motor vehicle.

The damage disclosure statement is required for all motor vehicles except:

- motor trucks and truck tractors with a gross vehicle weight rating of 16,000 pounds or more;
- vehicles more than seven model years old;
- motorcycles;
- motorized bicycles;
- special mobil equipment; and
- new motor vehicles with a true mileage of 1,000 miles or less, unless the vehicle has sustained damage for which the cost of repair exceeds 50% of fair market value of the vehicle.

**Damage:** Damage must be disclosed if it exceeds 50% of the fair market value of the motor vehicle before it became damaged. The amount of damage shall be based on estimates of the RETAIL cost of repairing the vehicle, including labor, parts, and other materials if the vehicle has not been repaired; or on the ACTUAL RETAIL cost to repair, including labor, parts and other materials if the vehicle has been repaired. All repair charges, including sales tax, must be included.

**Example:** A vehicle had a retail value of $22,000 at the time it was damaged and the cost to repair it was $13,000. The cost to repair it is more than 50% of the retail value of the vehicle at the time it was damaged. Therefore, the "Yes" box in Section #1, Question #2, must be checked.

**Fair market value** refers to the average retail value found in the "National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Official Used Car Guide." NADA guides may possibly be available through a library, insurance agent,auto dealer, or at: http://nadaguides.com/.

The **seller** must complete if any of the following conditions apply:

- the Iowa title was issued prior to January 1, 2005;
- the Iowa title is not available;
- the face of the seller's Iowa title contains no indication that the vehicle was previously salvaged, titled as a salvage, rebuilt, or flood and the seller knows or reasonably should know that the vehicle was previously salvaged, titled as a salvage, rebuilt, or flood in another state; or
- the motor vehicle is a new vehicle sold in Iowa with 1,000 miles or less that has sustained damage exceeding 50% of its fair market value.

The buyer must complete if:

- the vehicle was purchased from a non-ressident and that owner's state does not require a damage disclosure statement; or
- the vehicle was acquired through a transfer by operation of law.

**Transfers of operation by law** include the following: Inheritance, devise or bequest, dissolution decree, order in bankruptcy, insolvency, replevin, foreclosure or execution sale, abandoned vehicle sale, artisan's lien sale, landlord's lien, storage lien, judgement in an action for abandonment of a manufactured or mobil home, repossession.

### You (the buyer) and the seller must complete the back of seller's title.

You then take the signed title and odometer statement to the county treasurer's office to pay the title, use tax and registration fees. You have 30 days from the date you purchased the vehicle to file these papers with the county treasurer. After 30 days you must pay a $10 title penalty. The seller is required to tell the buyer where and when the vehicle was last registered.

## Renewal (Vehicle Registration)

Vehicle registrations expire in your birth month. If you were born in May, the registrations on all your vehicles expire May 31. If you were born in January, all your vehicle registrations would expire January 31. There is a one-month grace period following the expiration date. This gives you time to get your registration renewed without a penalty or without getting a ticket.

If the vehicle you drive is owned by a corporation, its registration month is assigned by the county treasurer.

All trucks and truck-tractors with a gross weight of more than five tons will be registered on a calendar year basis. Their registrations will all expire on December 31 each year.

License plates are now being used for several years. When you renew your license plates, you will pay the required fee for each vehicle. When license plates are issued, you will be issued a validation sticker for the **rear** license plate of each vehicle. Put this sticker in the lower left corner of your **rear** license plate. Each year those plates are renewed, you will be given a new year validation sticker to place over the previous sticker.

Your registration receipt should be carried in your vehicle.

## Credits and Refunds

If you trade, sell or junk your old vehicle before getting another one, you may be able to get credit on the registration fees you paid on your old vehicle and have it applied toward the registration fee of the replacement.

To do this you must:

- sell, trade or junk your vehicle;
- claim the credit within 30 days from the date the vehicle was sold, traded or junked;
- indicate that credit is due on your replacement vehicle title application (no credit will be given for amounts less than $10.)

When you transfer a vehicle to a spouse, parent or child, you may also transfer the fee credit and plates. The relative you are transferring the credit and plates to must apply for the title within 30 days of the transfer. Write on the back side of the registration receipt that you are transferring fees and plates. If a motor vehicle is leased and the lessee purchases the vehicle when the lease expires, the lessor shall, within 30 days of the purchase, assign the registration fee credit and registration plates of the leased motor vehicle to the lessee if that assignment is requested by the lessee.

Refunds are made if:

- you sell or junk your vehicle;
- your vehicle was currently registered by the county treasurer and has since been registered with the Office of Motor Carrier Services;
- official errors and overcharges have been made;
- you put your vehicle in storage when you enter the U.S. Armed Services in time of war and you surrender your plates to the county treasurer for military storage before the end of your registration year; and
- the excess credit for your sold, junked or traded vehicle is $10 or more.

To do this you must:

- file your claim at the county where your vehicle records are maintained;
- submit the registration plates for the sold or junked vehicle; and
- file your claim for a refund within six months of the date the vehicle was sold, traded or junked.

Refunds of less than $10 will not be granted.

For further information, contact the Iowa DOT's Motor Vehicle Information Center at 800-532-1121.

## Special Plates

Personalized license plates are available for most vehicles registered by the county treasurer.

For more information on specialized plates, contact your county treasurer or the Iowa DOT Motor Vehicle Information Center at 800-532-1121, or visit our Web site at dot.state.ia.us/mvd/ovs/index.

## Change of Address

If you move, you must notify the county treasurer in the county where your vehicle is now registered. This must be done within 10 days. If you move out of the county, the treasurer where you are moving from will forward the records to the new county where you will be living.

## Lost or Damaged Certificates, Cards and Plates

You can get replacement license plates from your county treasurer. The cost is $5 for one or two plates.

If your certificate of title or registration is lost or damaged, apply to the county treasurer's office where the vehicle is registered. You will receive a duplicate copy of the original. A replacement title costs $15 and a duplicate registration costs $3.

## Refusing Registration

A county treasurer can refuse to register your car, truck, motorcycle or moped if:

- you have an unpaid traffic ticket or parking violation;
- the application contains false information;
- there is no odometer certificate (for a title transfer);
- the required fees have not been paid;
- the county treasurer has reasonable grounds to believe that the vehicle is stolen or embezzled and issuance would constitute fraud against the rightful owner;
- if you are required to have SR;
- if the Child Support Recovery Unit has issued a certificate of noncompliance; or
- you are under the age of eighteen years and do not have an Iowa driver's license, unless you are part owner of a vehicle with a person eighteen years old or older.

## Fines

You may have to pay a fine of $10 to $100 for registration violations.

## Motor Vehicle Storage

If you are going to store your vehicle, you can turn the plates in to the county treasurer before your registration year expires. You will not have to pay yearly registration fees when the vehicle is stored for longer than a year. When you want to use it again you will only have to pay the current year's fees.

## 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, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., 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.iamvd.com (click on Office of Vehicle Services.)

## 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.

## Seat Belts and Child Restraints

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 26.
- 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.

## Child Restraint Law

1. ***A child under one year of age and weighing less than 20 pounds must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.***
2. ***A child under six years of age who does not meet the description in #1 must be secured by a child restraint system.***
3. ***A child at least six years of age but under eleven 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.

# 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 unfamilar 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.

# Review Questions (Section 3)

**T/F**

_____ 1. If you sell your car, you must remove the plates after you deliver the vehicle to the purchaser. **True/False**

_____ 2. If you buy a new car, you may put your old plates on it if you send all fees to the county treasurer within seven days. **True/False**

_____ 3. The seller of a car must give the purchaser the odometer statement and the license plates of the car he or she is selling. **True/False**

_____ 4. You should keep your registration in a safe place in your car at all times. **True/False**

_____ 5. Your county treasurer may help you in obtaining personalized plates. **True/False**

_____ 6. You have 30 days after you move to notify your former county treasurer of your new address. **True/False**

_____ 7. You will pay $5 per vehicle to replace lost license plates. **True/False**

_____ 8. If you wish to avoid paying a registration penalty when you store your vehicle, you should turn in your plates and registration card to the county treasurer before they expire. **True/False**

_____ 9. When you have your vehicle's headlights on, you must also have a white light shining on your rear license plate. **True/False**

_____ 10. Motorcycles and mopeds need two separate brakes. **True/False**

_____ 11. The horn on your motor vehicle must be heard clearly at least 200 feet away. **True/False**

_____ 12. Front seat riders involved in an accident are twice as likely to have serious injuries or be killed if they do not use seat belts. **True/False**

_____ 13. Children under the age of 3 need not be secured in a safety seat. **True/False**

_____ 14. It is illegal to use your lights during daylight hours. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 4. 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

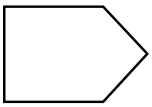
**Red**
Stop, yield or do what is shown on the sign.

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

**Blue**
Services for drivers. These signs direct you to places such as hospitals, hotels, gas stations, eating places, campgrounds or picnic areas.



**Yellow**
General warning or caution.



**White**
These signs tell you about regulations, enforceable laws and ordinances.

**Orange**
Road work and maintenance warnings. Be sure to watch for workers on the road.

**Brown**
Recreation and historical 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 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 tell you what you should or should not do. Horizontal signs give directions or tell about services drivers may want.

**Pentagon**
School crossing. These signs mark school areas and school crossings. The color of this sign may also be fluorescent yellow/green.

**Crossbuck**
Railroad 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.

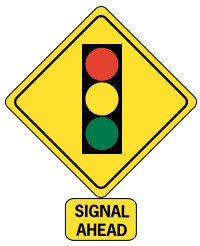
# Warning Signs

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 which 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.

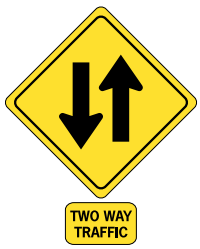
**Farm Machinery**
Farm equipment may be crossing the road. Be ready to slow down for slow moving equipment.

**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 cars and trucks blending into your lane.

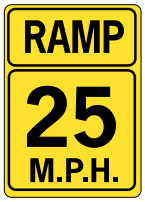
**Pedestrian Crossing**
Watch out for people who might walk or run in front of you.

**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.

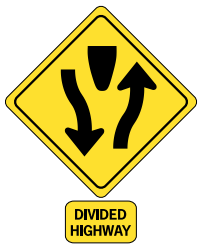



**Two-Way Traffic**
Keep to the right because you are leaving a one-way street and are entering a two-way street.

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



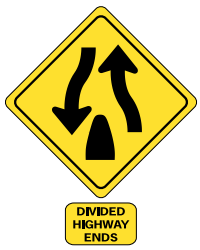

**Ramp Speed**
The recommended speed on an exit ramp.




**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 florescent yellow/green.




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

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

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

# Regulation Signs

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

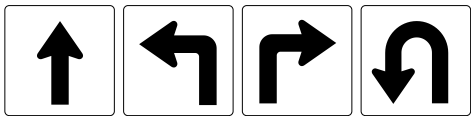
Some regulation signs have a red circle with a red slash over a symbol. These indicate you cannot do something; for example, no left turn, no right turn, or no U-turn.

## 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 tell you 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 tell you 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. They 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.

## Keep Right

The road ahead is divided. Stay on the right side of the 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 ball means you cannot enter. You will see this sign at roadway openings you are not to enter. They are one way against you. You will see them at exit ramps, in crossovers on divided roadways, and at numerous locations on one-way streets.

# 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, on 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 such as cities, airports or state lines, or to special areas such as national parks, historical areas or museums.

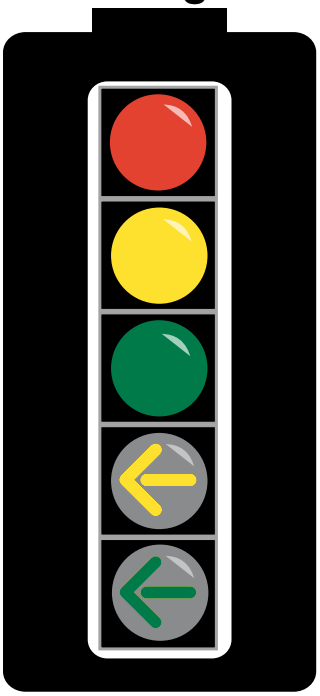
# Service Signs

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.

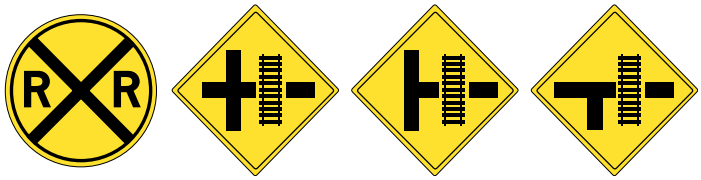


**Flashing Yellow**
Proceed with caution. Yield to vehicles and pedestrians, and proceed when it is safe.

## 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.

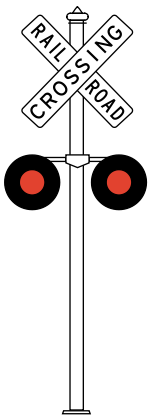
**Advance warning signs and pavement markings** tell you railroad tracks cross the road ahead. Be prepared to stop before you get to the tracks if a train is approaching the crossing. Pavement markings are a large "X" with the letters "RR" on the road. These marks are not used at all crossings.




*Railroad/highway/sideroad 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*

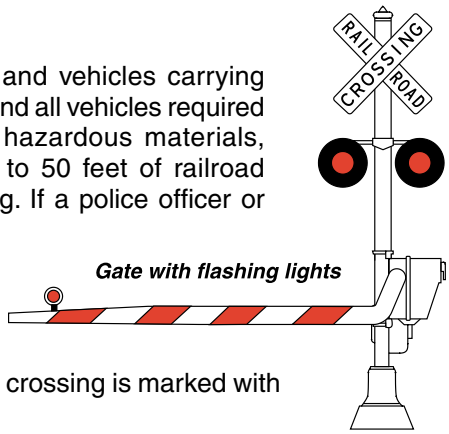
**Gates** are used with flashing lights at some crossings. Stop when the lights start to flash before the gate goes down. Remain stopped until the gates go up and the lights stop flashing. NEVER DRIVE AROUND THE GATES. It is dangerous and against the law.

**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.

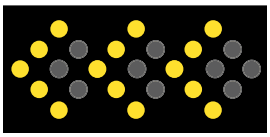
Slanting stripes on a panel or barricade tell you on which side to pass. Stripes sloping down to the right mean pass on the right. Stripes sloping down to the left mean pass on the left.

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.'"

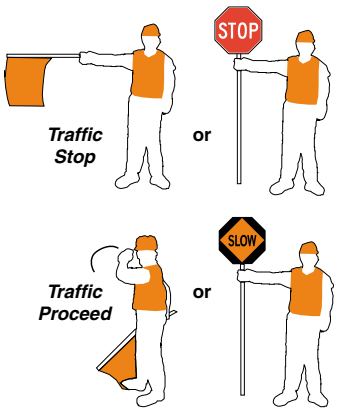
## Flashing Arrow Panels

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.

# 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*

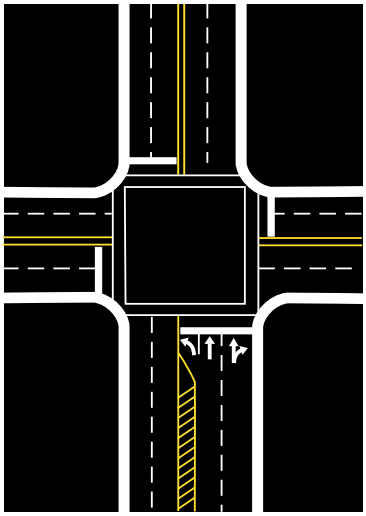
*Two direction roadway*

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.

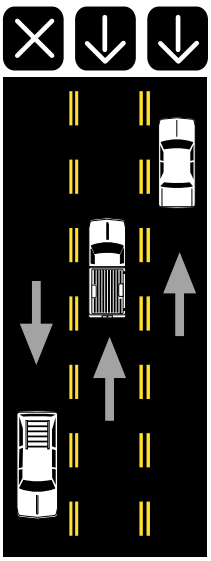
## Crosswalks, Stop Lines and Directional Arrow Markings

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.

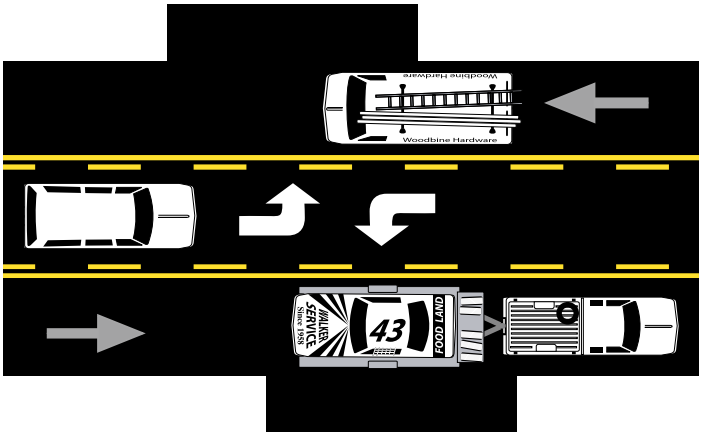


## Reversible Lanes

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.

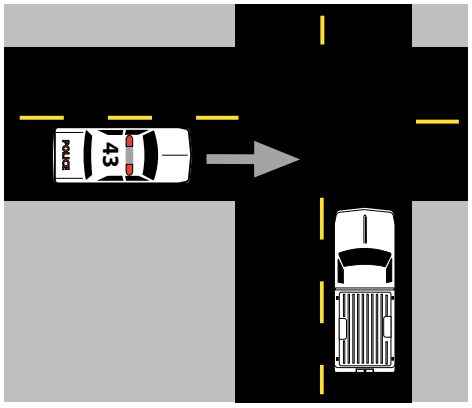
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign or traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- At a four-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first gets to go first (after coming to a complete stop).
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside must 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

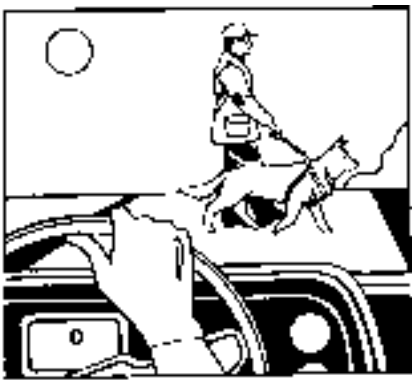
You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance or other emergency vehicle using a siren or air horn, and a red or blue flashing light. Pull over to the right edge of the road, or as near to the right as possible, when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from 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*

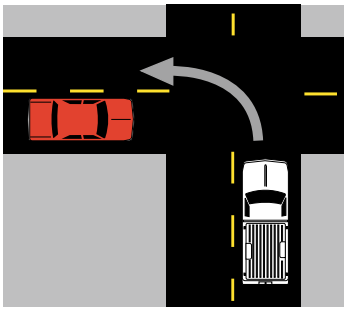
## Persons who are Blind

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.

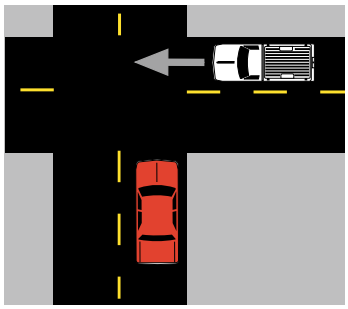


## Yielding Situations

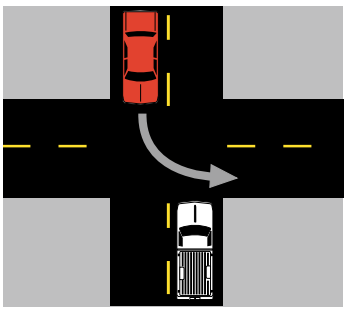
(red car shown here must yield to approaching vehicle)



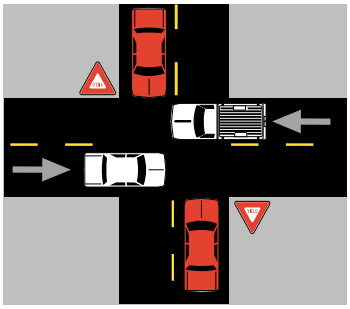
*Car in intersection*



*Car on right*



*Oncoming traffic*



*At yield sign*

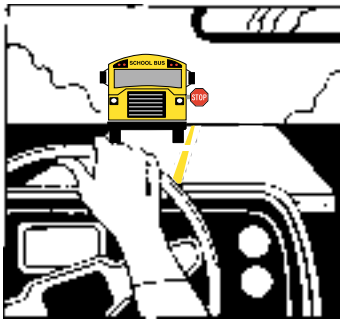
# School Buses

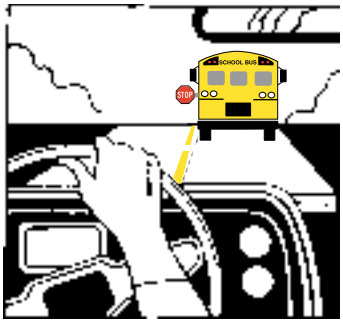
When you meet an oncoming school bus displaying flashing amber lights, you must slow down to no more than 20 mph and be prepared to stop. If the red lights are flashing or if the stop arm is out, you must come to a complete stop at least 15 feet from the bus. You must remain stopped as long as the red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



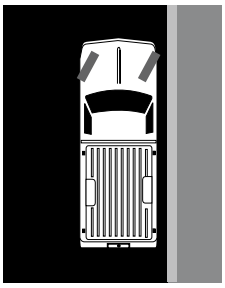




***If the red lights are flashing or if the stop arm is out, you must come to a complete stop at least 15 feet from the bus and remain stopped as long as the red lights flash or the stop arm is out.***

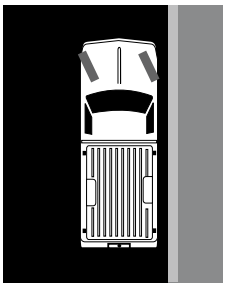
# Parking

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.

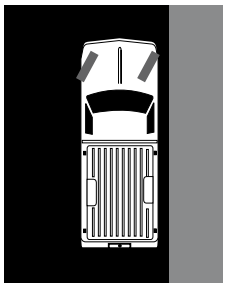
- Park far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic.
- Make sure your car is visible to drivers approaching from either direction.
- Park in a designated area, if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission, or 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***

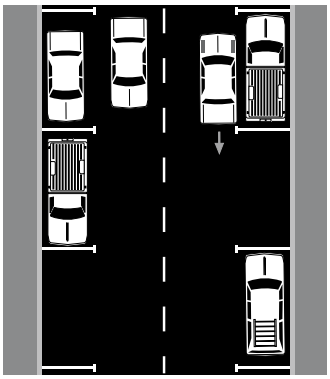
## Parking Is Not Allowed

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:

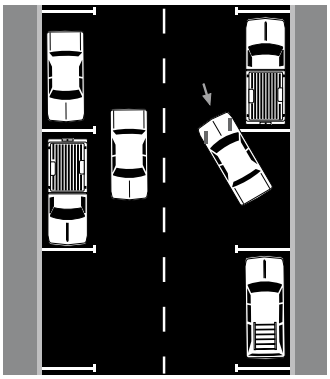
- on a crosswalk;
- in front of a public or private driveway;
- on any bridge outside city limits or in highway tunnels;
- alongside another stopped or parked car (double parking);
- closer than five feet from a fire hydrant;
- closer than 10 feet from a stop sign;
- closer than 20 feet from a fire station 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

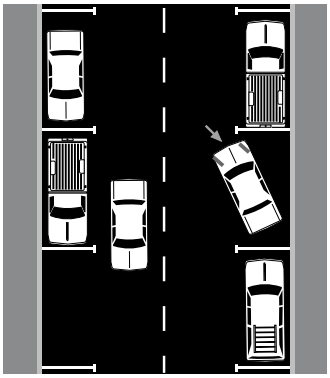
- Signal and stop with the rear bumper of your vehicle even with the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of the place you want to park. The two vehicles should be about one to two feet apart.



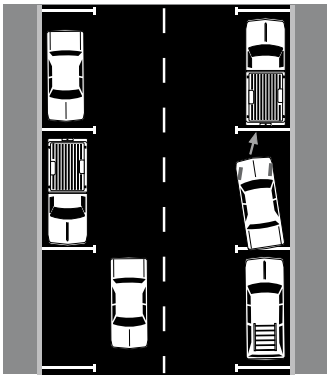
- Turning your steering wheel to the right, back slowly aiming the back of your car towards the front of the car behind you.



- 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.

## Review Questions (Section 4)

**T/F**

_____ 1. An octagon-shaped sign means there is road work being done on the road ahead. **True/False**

_____ 2. Yellow signs are used for general recreational areas. **True/False**

_____ 3. The equilateral triangle is used to stop or prohibit vehicles. **True/False**

_____ 4. Diamond-shaped signs are used as warning signs. **True/False**

_____ 5. School crossing signs are triangular and yellow/green in color. **True/False**

_____ 6. Advance warning signs at railroad crossings tell you to be prepared to stop if a train is approaching. **True/False**

_____ 7. It is against the law for one vehicle to pass another within 100 feet of a railroad crossing. **True/False**

_____ 8. The sign below the railroad crossbuck will indicate the number of sets of tracks ahead. **True/False**

_____ 9. A driver who has stopped at a railroad crossing may go around the crossing gates if no train is in sight. **True/False**

_____ 10. Buses and some trucks are required to stop at railroad crossings. **True/False**

_____ 11. Green signs usually indicate motor services ahead. **True/False**

_____ 12. The chevron alignment sign is used to draw more attention to changes in a road's direction. **True/False**

_____ 13. Orange signs warn motorists there is road work ahead. **True/False**

_____ 14. Red and white signs indicate "stop" only. **True/False**

_____ 15. Public parks and recreational areas are identified by blue signs. **True/False**

_____ 16. Broken white lines separate traffic moving in the same direction, while broken yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions. **True/False**

_____ 17. A flashing yellow light means stop and proceed with extreme caution. **True/False**

_____ 18. A red flashing light at an intersection means the same as a stop sign. **True/False**

_____ 19. You must yield at all stop signs after you have made a complete stop. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 5. 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.

### 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.

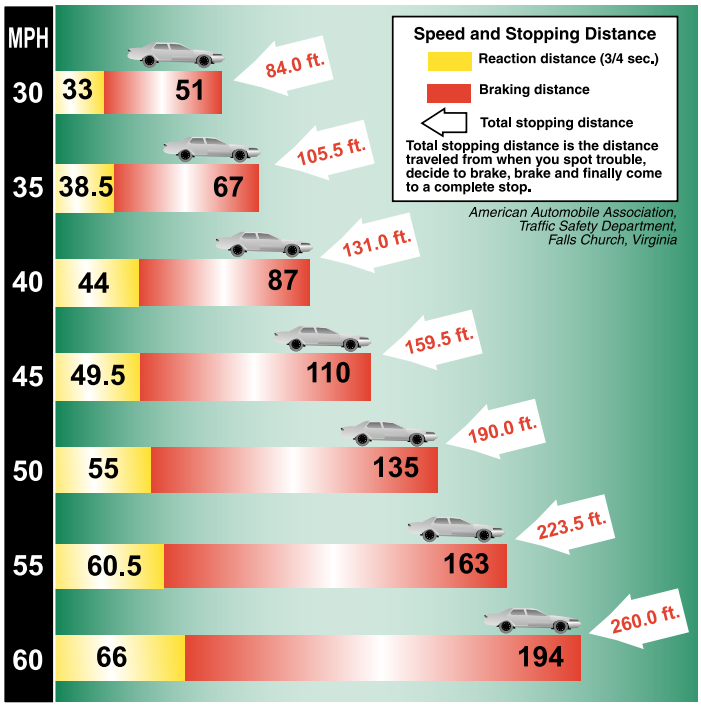
### Braking and Stopping

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.



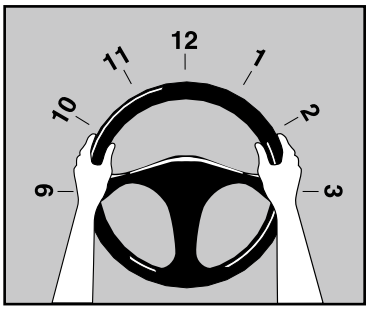

### Required Stops

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 32 regarding stops at railroad crossings and page 35 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) 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

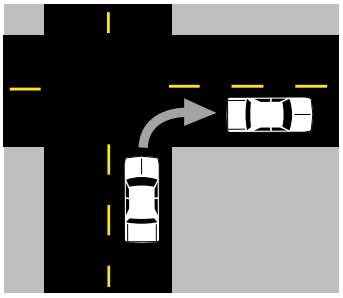
Plan your turns ahead of time. Decide where you want to be when you finish the turn. Give yourself a chance to slow down and watch out for both pedestrian and other vehicle traffic. Do not make sharp turns at the last minute; they are dangerous.

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

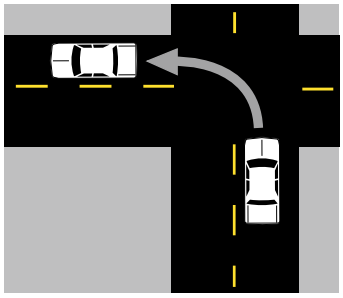
Turn signals give other drivers time to react to your moves. You should use your turn signals before you change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic, or park.

- 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.



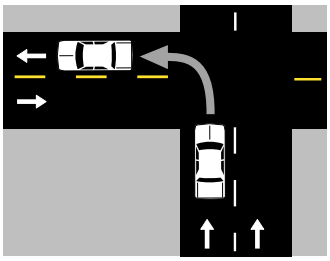
### Right Turn

***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.***

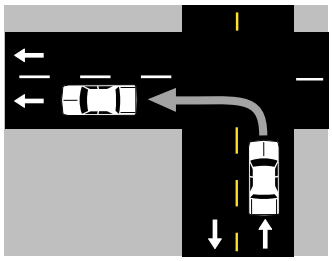


### Left Turn

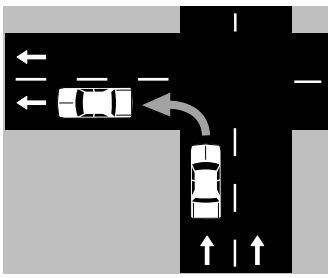
***Check traffic in your mirrors and use your turn signals. Move into the lane closest to the center line. When you are turning left onto a two-way street, start your turn just before the front of the car reaches the center of the intersection. Do not cut the corner. Steering hand-over-hand, turn the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



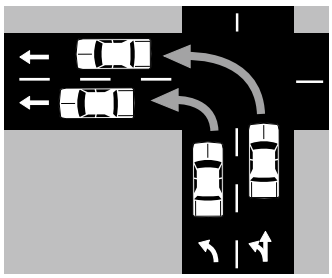
***One-way to two-way street***



***Two-way to one-way street***



***One-way to one-way street***



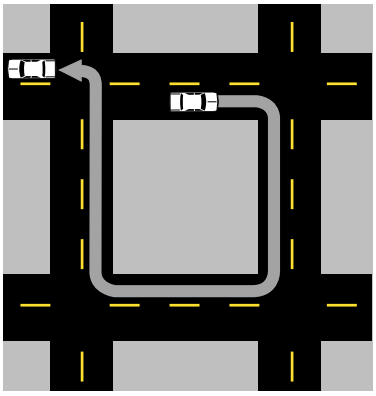
***One-way to one-way street with more than one turning lane***

### 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.

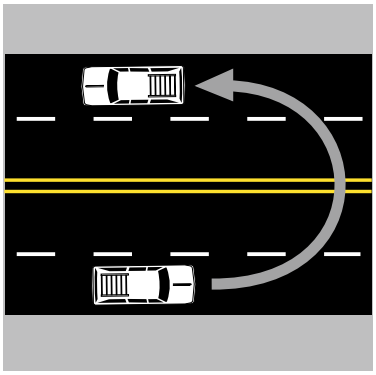


*Turnabout*

### 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*

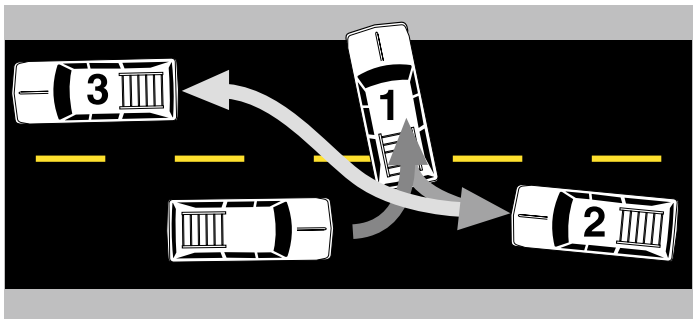
### U-Turns

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.

## 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.

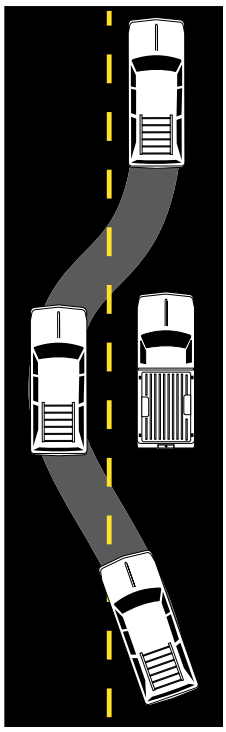
  At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1,600 feet, or about one-third of a mile, to pass safely.

  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)

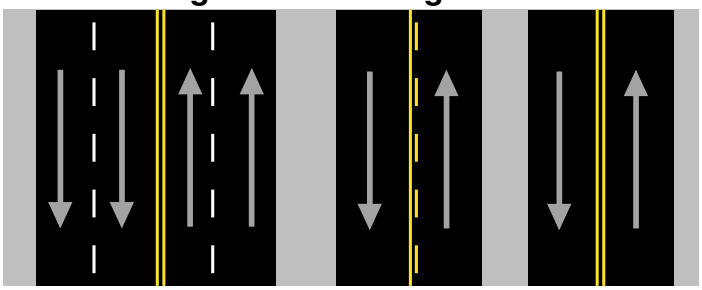


1. Check traffic ahead and behind, including your blind spot. Move slightly left to see if there is any oncoming traffic. REMEMBER, YOU NEED AS MUCH AS 1,600 OR MORE FEET TO GET AROUND A VEHICLE AND BACK INTO THE RIGHT LANE.

   **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



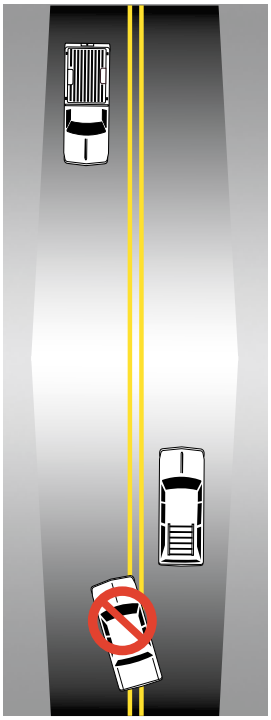
*Lane Lines: No passing either way over center yellow lines.*

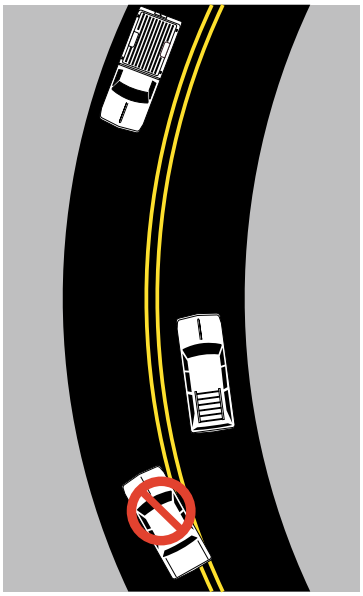
*Solid and Broken Yellow: Do not pass when solid line is in your lane.*

*Double Yellow Center Line: No passing in either lane.*

## Do not pass when:

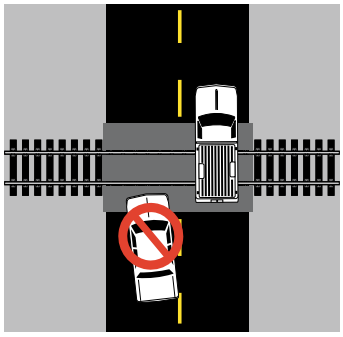
- you are coming to the top of a hill;
- you are going around a curve when your view along the highway is obstructed;
- you are within 100 feet of a narrow bridge, viaduct, or tunnel that has a sign posted to let you know it is there;
- you are within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing;
- 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 on-coming 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).*

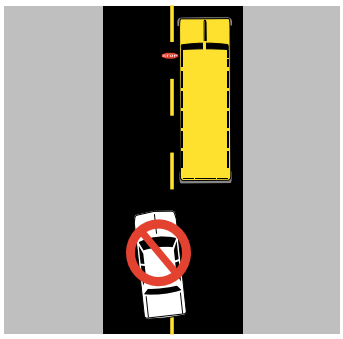
*Bridge/tunnel*



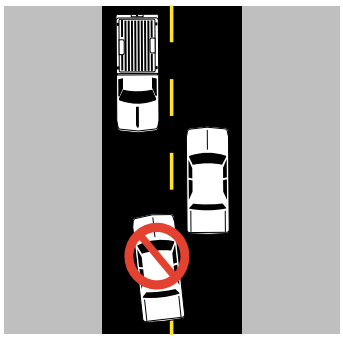
*Railroad*

*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.

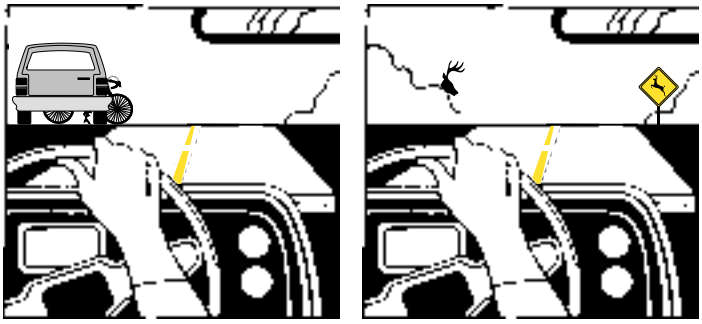
Searching and scanning critical areas should be done in a regular sequence. A visual search pattern, such as in the guidelines described below, helps you adjust to any unusual events.

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.

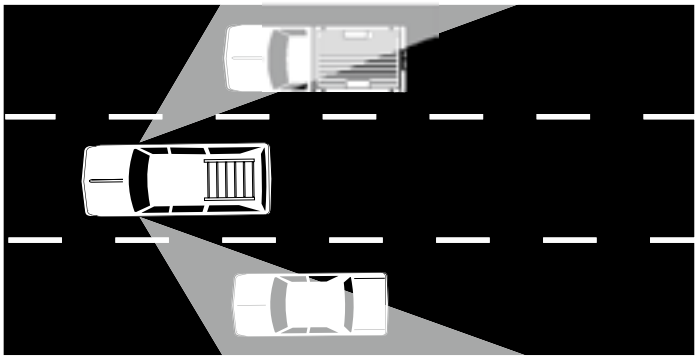
### Hit From the Front

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.

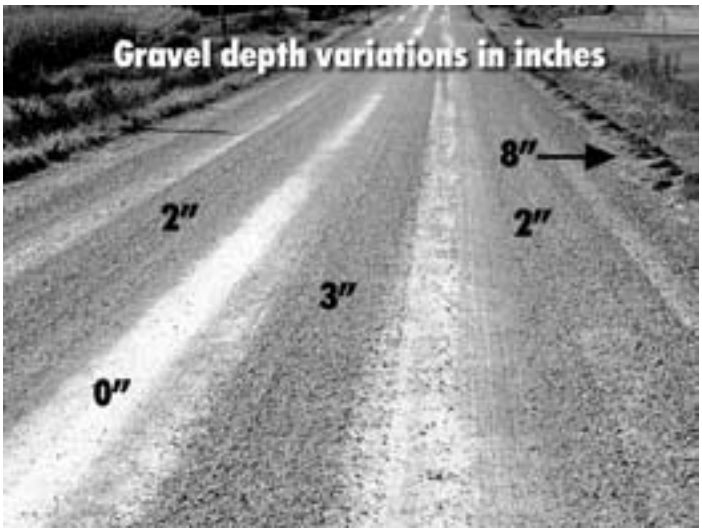
Night driving creates its own special problems. Headlight glare masks the position and number of oncoming vehicles.

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, try to watch the center line and slow down slightly. 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:

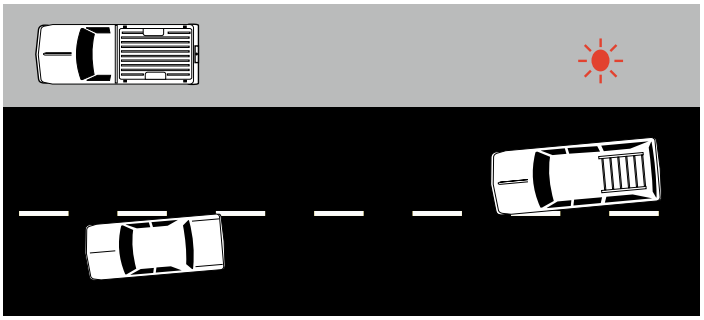
- to encourage someone to drive faster or get out of the way;
- to scold another driver for an error;
- to greet a friend; or
- around pedestrians who are blind.

### 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.

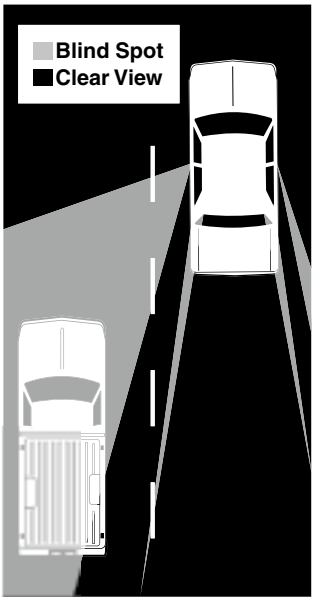
- If at all possible, get your vehicle off the road away from traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.
- If you cannot get your vehicle off the roadway, try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- 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.

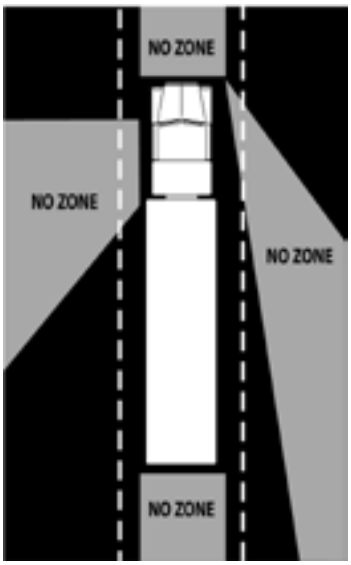
***Blind spots occur anywhere your vision is blocked. Two common causes of these problems are vehicle equipment (rearview mirrors, door post, etc.) and landscaping (trees, hedges, hills and walls).***

## 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 predicitably 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 multi-lane roads with wide outside lanes, allow at least three to four feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist for clearance. 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 and costs $7. 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**

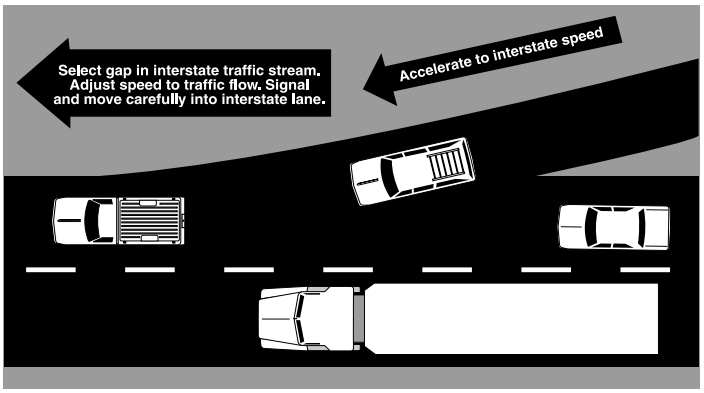
Because motorcycles, mopeds and bicycles have narrower tires, they can get caught in cracks easier. Railroad tracks, steel bridge expansion joints, sewer grates, metal grating on bridges and other metal surfaces are dangerous for cyclists. Give riders plenty of room to move around when approaching these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

## 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.

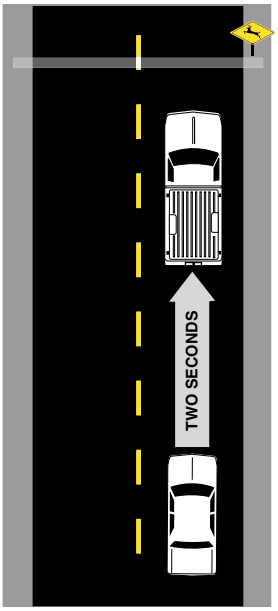
### Following Another Vehicle

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.”

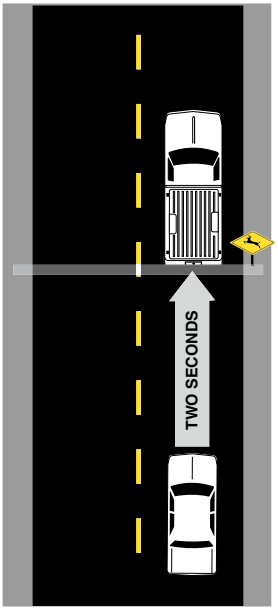
This will keep the vehicles in front of you far enough ahead that you will be able to stop within the assured clear distance ahead. The “Two-Second Rule” gives you about 1-1/2 car lengths between you and the car ahead of you for every 10 mph of speed you are traveling. If weather or road conditions are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

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

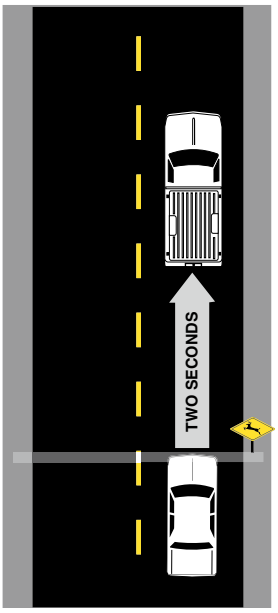
1. The car ahead of you is about to pass a highway sign, utility pole, or some other spot you can keep your eye on.




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.

### 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.

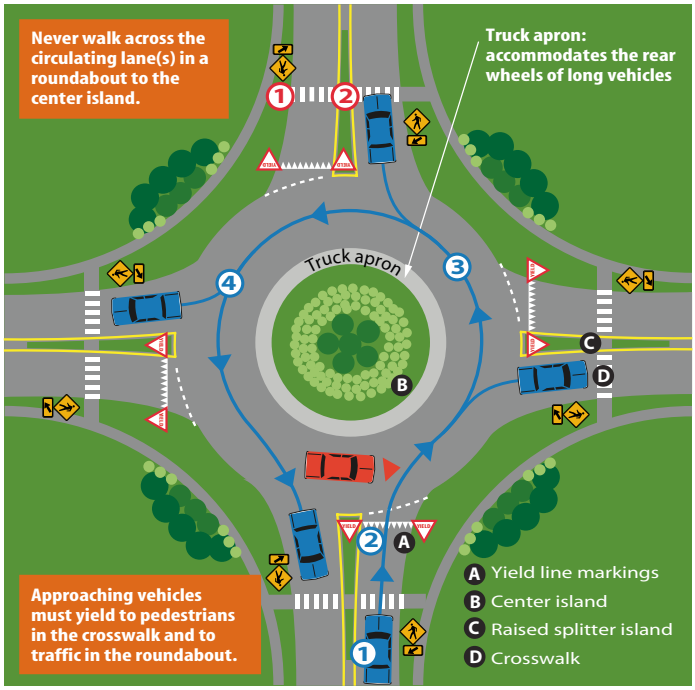
# Roundabouts

***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




***This diagram is an example only and does not represent all roundabout designs.***

### Motorists (see diagram above)

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 left)

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

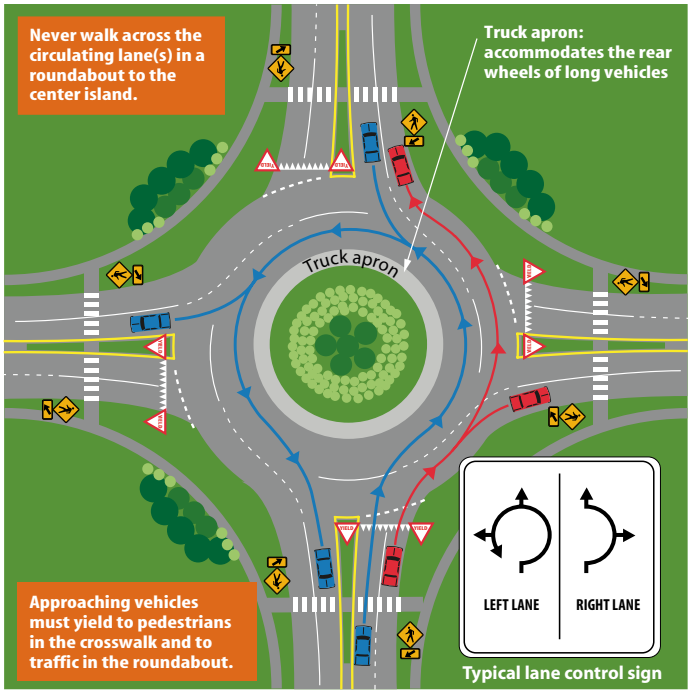
② **Cross:** Cross to the raised splitter island. Look ***right***. Finish crossing to the opposite sidewalk.

## 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.

## Multi-lane Roundabout




***This diagram is an example only and does not represent all roundabout designs.***

## 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.

# Review Questions (Section 5)

**T/F**

_____ 1. You must always stop at all red lights, including where right turns on red are allowed. **True/False**

_____ 2. If the speed limit is less than 45 miles per hour, you must begin using your turn signals at least 100 feet before the turn. **True/False**

_____ 3. When you are making a left turn on a two-way road, you should check to the rear, signal, then move into the lane closest to the center line and start turning as the front bumper crosses the sidewalk. **True/False**

_____ 4. You should move to within one foot of the right curb when making a right turn. **True/False**

_____ 5. The posted speed limit is the fastest speed you can drive under all conditions. **True/False**

_____ 6. The speed limit in a residential area of town is 25 miles per hour. **True/False**

_____ 7. The speed limit in a business district is 25 miles per hour. **True/False**

_____ 8. The speed limit in a school zone is 25 miles per hour. **True/False**

_____ 9. Wet ice at the freezing point (32° F) is twice as slippery as hard frozen ice. **True/False**

_____ 10. When traveling on snow and ice, you should use your accelerator and brakes gently. **True/False**

_____ 11. Good judgment and a clear road ahead are necessary to pass another vehicle. **True/False**

_____ 12. You may pass if the solid yellow line is on your side of the centerline. **True/False**

_____ 13. Do not pass if you must go off the pavement or onto the shoulder of the road. **True/False**

_____ 14. You should check the blind spot and look over your shoulder before changing lanes. **True/False**

_____ 15. When changing lanes, you should constantly check traffic so you will see anyone coming up on you unexpectedly. **True/False**

_____ 16. If you are driving at night within 400 feet of the car ahead of you, or 1,000 feet from an oncoming car, you must use low beams. **True/False**

_____ 17. If you are stalled on the roadway, have your passengers get out of the vehicle and stand off the roadway. **True/False**

_____ 18. On three-lane freeways, use the right lane for faster speeds. **True/False**

_____ 19. The "two-second rule" allows you about three car lengths behind the vehicle ahead for every 10 miles per hour you are traveling. **True/False**

_____ 20. Moving slightly to the right and signaling early are two ways of getting a tailgater's attention. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 6. 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.

## Seeing Clearly

Most of what you do in driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well. The single biggest contributor to accidents is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides and behind your vehicle, and be alert for unexpected events. At night and at other times when it is hard to see, you must use your headlights. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see with your headlights. For example, in many accidents with motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians, drivers reported that they looked but did not see them.

In order to see, drivers must be alert to what is going on around them. Many accidents occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. Do not take your eyes off the road for more than an instant at any one time. For example, if you need to look at a map, pull safely off the road before you try to look at it. Do not try to read the map while you are driving.

If you have a cellular phone or CB radio, avoid using it when the vehicle is in motion. Even with "hands free" equipment, conversing on a phone or radio takes your attention away from driving. This increases the chance you won't notice hazardous situations.

Do not stare at accidents, someone getting a ticket, or other roadside activity. Staring could cause you to be in an accident. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. Staring also can increase congestion. When you pass these roadside activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as soon and as safely as you can.

Make sure you do not drive with your Persons With Disabilities Parking Permit hanging from your rearview mirror. Your Persons With Disabilities Parking Permit can hide cars and pedestrians from your view. **Remember:** This permit should be displayed only when parked.

Good vision is a must for safe driving. You drive based on what you see. If you cannot see clearly, you will have trouble identifying traffic and road conditions, spotting potential trouble, and reacting in a timely manner. Refer to pages 5 and 6 for vision information and standards.

### Rain or Snow

In a very heavy rain or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 200 feet ahead. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to see well enough to drive. If this happens, pull off the road in a safe place and wait until it clears.

### 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.

### Hills And Curves

You may not know what is on the other side of a hill or just around a curve, even it you have driven the road hundreds of times. If a car is stalled on the road just over a hill or around a curve, you must be able to stop. Whenever you come to a hill or curve where you cannot see over or around, adjust your speed so you can stop if necessary.

### 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.

## Fatigue

When you are tired you cannot drive as safely as when you are rested. It takes you more time to make decisions and you do not always make good decisions. You can be more irritable and can get upset more easily. Lastly, when you are tired you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash.

There are things you can do to help from getting tired on a long trip.

- Try to get a normal night's sleep before you leave.
- Do not leave on a trip if you are already tired. Plan your trips so you can leave when you are rested.
- Do not take any medicine that can make you drowsy.
- Eat lightly. Do not eat a large meal before you leave. Some people get sleepy after they eat a big meal.
- Take breaks. Stop every hour or so, or when you need to. Walk around, get some fresh air, and have coffee, soda or juice. The few minutes spent on a rest break can save your life. Plan for plenty of time to complete your trip safely.
- Try not to drive late at night when you would normally be sleeping.
- Never drive if you are sleepy. It is better to stop and sleep for a few hours than to take a chance you can stay awake. If possible, switch off with another driver.

# 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 16.

## 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.

## Health, Emotion and Age

Many health problems can affect your driving, including a bad cold, infection or virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not feeling well and need to go somewhere, let someone else drive.

Some conditions can be very dangerous.

You cannot operate a motor vehicle if you suffer from any type of loss of consciousness or voluntary control until you have remained free of such occurrences or episodes for six months. Your doctor must complete a medical report, available from any driver's license examiner, with a favorable recommendation towards driving.

You will have to take the knowledge, vision and driving tests, and this first license will have the restriction "medical report to be furnished at the end of six months."

A duplicate license will be issued at the end of the six-month period if you meet the medical requirements. It will have a restriction that says "medical report needed for renewal." When this license expires and you can show medical proof of being episode-free, you can renew your license for another two years. You will have the same restriction and all renewals will be for two years.

Help yourself. Take prescribed medication on time and in the proper dosage. Avoid driving when tired and stop to rest along the way.

You may want the medical alert indicator on your license. It is also a good idea to keep the name and number of emergency source for your medication with you in case your regular supply is not available when you need it.

**Diabetes:** Diabetics who take insulin should not drive when there is any chance of going into shock. Such a situation could result from skipping a meal or snack, or from taking the wrong amount of insulin. It also might be a good idea to have someone else drive for you during times when your doctor is adjusting your insulin dosage. If you have diabetes, you should also have your eyes checked regularly for possible night blindness and other vision problems.

**Heart Condition:** People with heart diseases, high blood pressure or circulation problems and in danger of a blackout, fainting or a heart attack should not get behind the wheel. If you are being treated by a doctor for a heart condition, ask if the condition could affect your driving safely.

Emotions can have a great affect on your driving safely. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry or just "down."

- If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary, take a short walk, but stay off the road until you have calmed down.
- If you are worried or down about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some find listening to the radio helps.
- If you are impatient, give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early. If you have plenty of time, you may not tend to speed or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or cause an accident.

**You** are responsible for what your vehicle does! In addition to limitations your vehicle may have, you should be aware of the limitations **you** may have at different times in your driving career.

If you are 14 to 24 years old, you have some advantages in driving. You also have some serious disadvantages.

As a young driver, your eyesight, depth perception, reflexes and reaction times are at their peak. Unfortunately, you also have major disadvantages -- inexperience and lack of driving maturity.

Young drivers account for only 22 percent of all drivers. Unfortunately, they are involved in nearly 40 percent of all traffic accidents. The accident rate climbs steeply between the ages of 16 and 19 and then drops off after age 20. Your physical advantages do not fully compensate for your lack of driving experience and judgment.

There are several reasons for this.

- You are new at driving. It takes many years to develop good driving skills.
- You are at a time in your life when there is added emotional and physical stress. Pressure from friends and family can be hard to handle. Sometimes it seems like a good idea to hop into the car and drive until you calm down. But, this is **NOT** the time to drive. Your attention will be on your problems, not on the road.
- Alcohol and drugs also relate to the high accident rates for young drivers. Drinking, driving and drugs do not mix. All drugs lower your ability to think clearly and act rapidly. Put this together with driving inexperience and you are an accident waiting to happen.
- High speed is related to the large number of accidents in the 14 to 24 age group. When you are still learning how to handle normal driving conditions, high speed just exaggerates any mistakes you make. The results can be fatal. This age group has the highest percentage of fatal, off-the-road, one-car accidents.

These are reasons insurance companies charge higher rates for younger drivers.

**Buckle up every time you get in your car.** This simple action can reduce your chance of injury or death by at least 50 percent.

If you are an older driver, you have a great deal of driving experience gained by a lifetime of driving. By age 65, many drivers in your age category have rolled up over 500,000 miles -- equivalent to about 19 times around the earth.

Although you have a great deal of experience and driving maturity, you probably have slowed down physically. In addition, as we age our eyesight weakens and our eyes do not adjust to bright headlights like they used to.

One of the major causes of accidents for the older driver is "failing to yield the right-of-way." Double check intersections before starting out just to make sure you did not overlook a car or truck approaching the intersection.

Many older drivers say they cannot hear as well as they did when they were younger. They worry about how it will affect their driving. In most cases, partial or complete deafness is not much different than driving with the radio or stereo volume on high, the air conditioner on high, or driving with the windows rolled up on a rainy day. Effective use of your mirrors and constant alertness to what is happening around you will compensate for most hearing loss.

With age may come tighter muscles and stiffer joints that combine to reduce overall flexibility. This sometimes makes turning corners and maneuvering your car or truck more difficult than it used to be. If you find this is the case, consider leaving more space between vehicles when driving. Try to drive in areas you are familiar with. Avoid high speeds and congested routes of travel.

Be sure to let other drivers know what you plan to do. Be sure you use your turn signals and move with the flow of the traffic. Remember, driving too slow can be as dangerous as driving too fast.

And remember, alcohol and drugs, including doctor-prescribed medications, can affect your driving ability. If your doctor tells you not to drive because of the medication you are taking or your medical condition, **do not drive!**

**Beware of drug interactions.** Often older drivers see different medical specialists for a variety of medical conditions. Each of these doctors may prescribe drugs to help the patient. The combination of these drugs may cause unforeseen reactions. Make sure that each of your doctors knows all of the drugs you are taking. Also, make sure you are aware of all the possible side effects of those drugs and change your driving accordingly. Report any drug reactions to all of your doctors.

If you use any mechanical attachments on your vehicle or any artificial limbs, you can still be licensed to drive in Iowa. You may be asked to demonstrate your ability for the examiner. Explain the extent of your disability to the examiner. If you normally wear a prosthesis, wear it for your driving test. The devices must fit properly and let you easily operate all necessary controls.

If there has been a change in your condition or the current license restrictions do not reflect your current condition, the driver examiner may ask you to take a driving test. This is nothing to be afraid of. The examiner will be checking to see what equipment will provide the safest operation of your vehicle. This equipment is designed to make driving easier and safer.

# Review Questions (Section 6)

**T/F**

_____ 1. You should keep your headlights on high beam when driving in fog. **True/False**

_____ 2. Driving when tired or fatigued can affect your decision-making skills. **True/False**

_____ 3. Hearing problems can come on so slowly that you may not notice it. **True/False**

_____ 4. Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time. **True/False**

_____ 5. Alcohol reduces your ability to see clearly and cuts your night vision in half. **True/False**

_____ 6. Amphetamines make you a better and safer driver. **True/Fals**e

_____ 7. Although young drivers make up only 22 percent of the licensed drivers, they are involved in about 40 percent of all highway accidents. **True/False**

_____ 8. Failure to yield right-of-way is one of the major causes of accidents for older drivers. **True/False**

_____ 9. If you use any mechanical car attachments or artificial limbs, you cannot be licensed as an Iowa driver. **True/False**

_____ 10. Doctor-prescribed medications can affect your driving ability. **True/False**

Answers on page 71

# 7. Other Types of Vehicles

Cars are not the only means of transportation on the road. It is very likely you will operate some other type of vehicle during your life. It could be a bicycle, motorcycle, truck or bus.

Even though you may never use any other kind of vehicle, you still should know about them. They affect you as a driver and as a pedestrian.

Learn the "rules of the road" for each kind of vehicle and something about their operation. This puts you in a better position to anticipate their movements when you approach them on the highway. This will help you become a better and safer driver.

## Snowmobiles and All-Terrain Vehicles

Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) can be a lot of fun and useful too, but they can also be extremely dangerous if not ridden carefully and not driven in the proper places.

The rules and regulations vary somewhat for the two vehicles, so be sure you are familiar with the proper laws.

### Snowmobiles

You **cannot** drive your snowmobile on the interstate or any other freeway, on the right-of-way of any interstate or freeway, or on a public highway, shoulder, or within five feet of the roadway except when crossing a bridge or culvert or to avoid an obstruction. However, you **can** ride a snowmobile in the following places:

- on city streets that have not been plowed during the snow season, or any street the city has designated for snowmobile use;
- on county roads that have not been plowed during the snow season and are not maintained for use by regular two-wheel drive vehicles;
- on county roads designated by the board of supervisors for snowmobile use;
- on highways during an emergency when the snow makes travel by regular two-wheel drive vehicles impossible;
- on the roadway or shoulder when necessary to cross a bridge or culvert, but you must stop before entering the roadway and must yield to all other traffic; and
- on primary highway rights-of-way at night as long as you stay on the right side and travel in the same direction as the traffic on that side of the road.

### All-Terrain Vehicles

Iowa law limits highway access even more for ATVs than it does for snowmobiles. The only time you can drive your ATV on the highway is when you are driving it for agricultural purposes between sunrise and sunset. You must also have a valid driver's license and drive at a speed of no more than 35 mph. It is against the law to drive an ATV while carrying a passenger.

### Registration and Licensing

All snowmobiles and ATVs must be properly registered with your county recorder. All snowmobiles and ATVs must have a headlight and taillight that can be seen for 500 feet, and must display a fluorescent orange pennant or flag at least 60 inches above the ground.

Any person, regardless of age, may be prosecuted for violation of Iowa's snowmobile and ATV laws and regulations.

If you are 18 years old or older, you do not need a snowmobile or ATV safety certificate if you have a valid driver's license. If you are 12 to 17 years old, you must obtain a safety certificate. You can get a safety certificate by passing a safety course given by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. You must also pay the registration fee. Contact the conservation officer in your county if you need additional information.

## Trailers

### Registration

Like your car, truck, motorcycle or moped, you must also register your trailers except bumper hitch farm trailers.

The registration fee is based on the size and/or class of your trailer. If you have a travel trailer or a fold-down camper, you pay 20 cents per square foot, using the outside dimensions of your trailer.

If you have a utility trailer, you pay a flat fee of $10.

Motor home registration fees depend on the class of the vehicle. The class is determined by the value of the vehicle. Each class has a set registration fee.

For semitrailers, commercial fertilizer trailers and other commercial trailers, see page 64.

To register your trailer, fill out the proper forms and pay the fees at the county treasurer's office.

#### Non-Resident Registration

If you are not an Iowa resident, your trailer must still have valid plates and registration papers from your home state if your home state requires registration for the type of trailer you are towing. You cannot legally tow your trailer in Iowa without them.

### Trailer Towing

Driving with a trailer hitched behind you is much different than driving your car or truck alone. The extra weight makes it more difficult to control your vehicle, to stop, and to handle the trailer and the towing vehicle.

**Offtrack** The wheels of your trailer do not follow the same path as the wheels of the towing vehicle. Trailer wheels follow a path closer to the inside of any curves. This is called "offtrack." For any turn, you must allow extra turning space.

**Speed** The faster you go, the less control you have over your trailer. If you have trouble keeping the trailer in line behind you, slow down.

**Hitch Load** A properly loaded trailer should have about 15 percent of the total trailer weight on the hitch. If you have too much or too little weight on the hitch, the trailer will be more likely to sway back and forth while you are pulling it.

**Hitch Location** The closer you can get the hitch to the rear axle of the towing vehicle, the better your trailer will ride. Try to keep the hitch up against the bumper. Do not put too much stress on the bumper without bracing it to the frame.

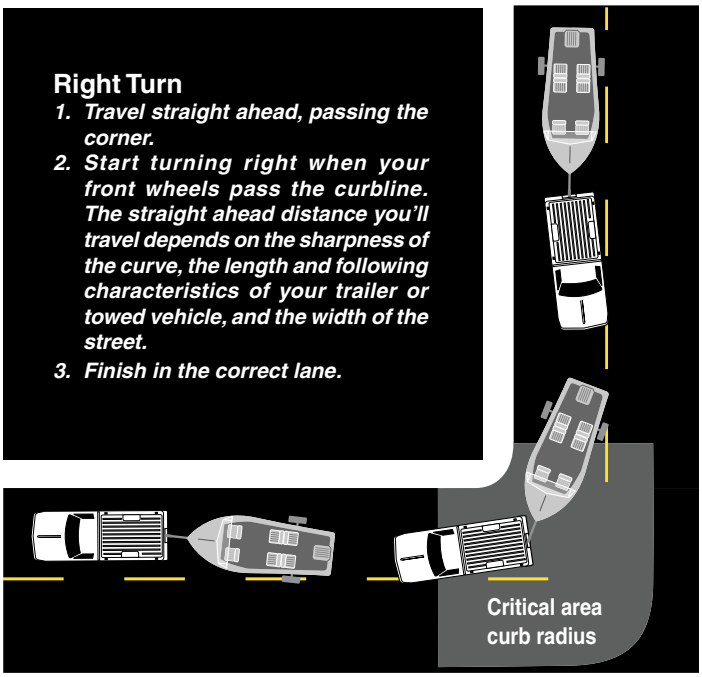
**Tire Stiffness** Stiffer tires make your trailer sway less. A well inflated six-or eight-ply tire is usually suggested for heavier trailers.

**Trailer Size** Use the smallest and lightest trailer that will carry your load. Your stopping distance will increase as the weight of your trailer increases.

Trailer offtrack makes turning and backing up difficult. Practice your turns to make up for your trailer's load and offtrack.

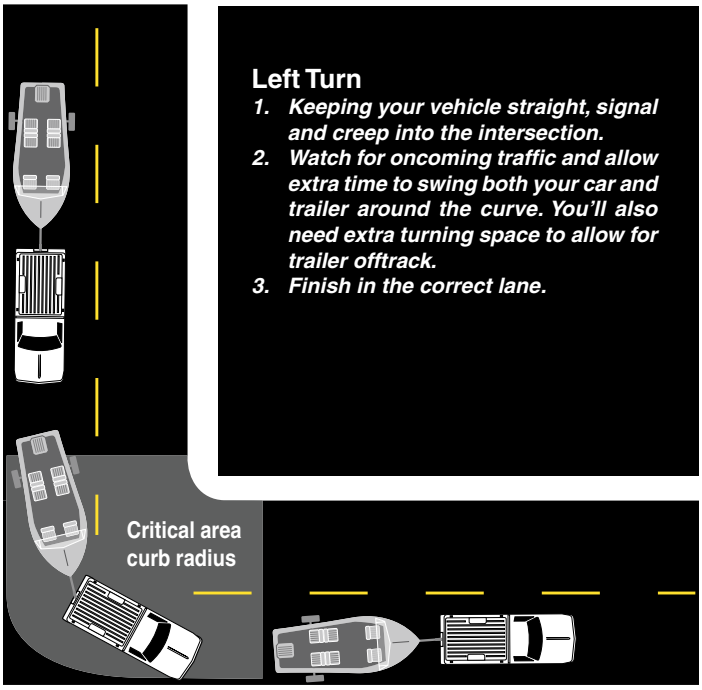
## Right Turns

As you come to the place you want to turn, slow down and signal. As you slow down, line up the vehicle and trailer further to the left than you would if you were only driving your car.

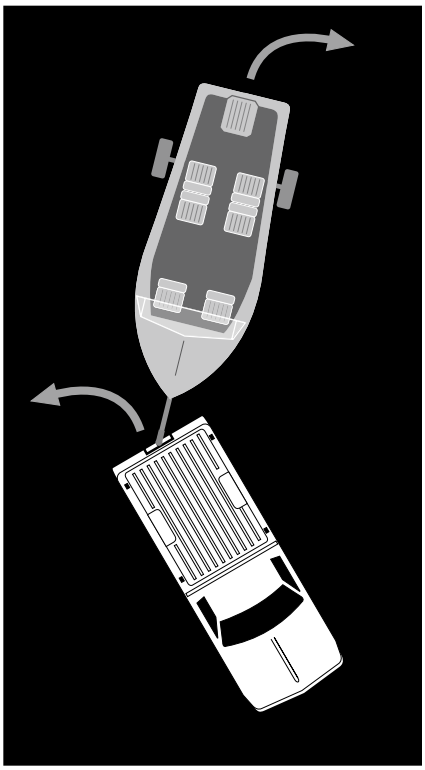



## Left Turns

Left turns are usually easier because they are not as sharp, but you still need to pay close attention to what you are doing.




## Backing



Backing a trailer is tricky. It is a good idea to think it through before you start moving. Remember, the trailer will move the opposite direction from the back of your car. If you move the back of your car to the right, the trailer will go to the left.

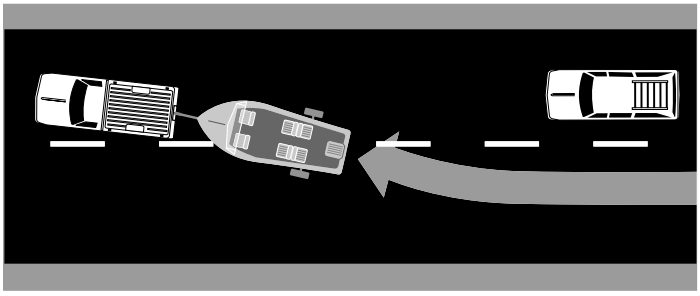
If you want to back to the left, steer right. Then make any adjustments by pulling slightly forward and repeating the move. Creep through the whole maneuver since backing a trailer is a difficult skill to master.

Usually it is easier to back up so the trailer moves to the left side of your car where you can see it better. Steer gradually in a series of slight turning and straightening actions. This will help prevent jackknifing the trailer.

***Backing a trailer is a tricky business. Proceed slowly with slight turning and straightening actions.***

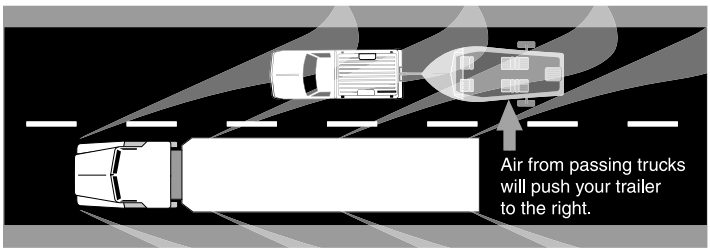
## Passing

Your vehicle cannot accelerate quickly when pulling a trailer. If you must pass another vehicle, make sure you have plenty of room. Remember, you must pull your car and trailer far enough ahead to safely move back into the right lane. Avoid sudden swerves; they can send your trailer out of control.



## Being Passed

Air from passing trucks will push your trailer to the right. Be ready for the trailer to pull to the right when being passed by another vehicle. Be ready to correct any swaying by steering in the direction of the sway. A quick burst of acceleration may help pull the trailer back in line. Never brake hard -- it may cause the trailer to jackknife or flip over.

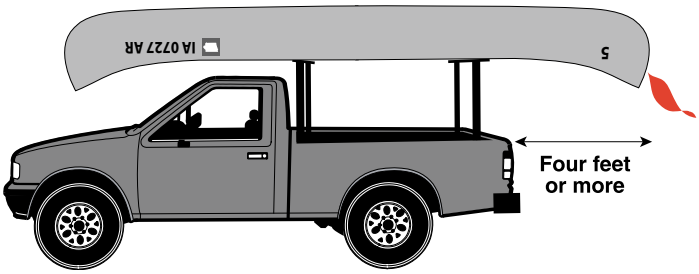



## Speed

Follow the same speed limits as for cars, unless posted otherwise. Remember to increase your following distance because you will not be able to stop as fast as you did without the trailer.

Be careful going around large curves or down steep hills. The forces on your trailer can make handling dangerous. If you are going too fast, these forces can take command of your trailer and vehicle.

## Projecting Loads




If you have a load that sticks out from the end of your trailer or vehicle four feet or more, it must be marked. Normally, during the day a red flag should be tied on the end. When lights are required, a red light or lantern must be used to mark the end of the load.

## Required Equipment

If your trailer and load weighs more than 3,000 pounds (1-1/2 tons), it must have brakes on all axles. They can be self-actuating if the combination is less than 10,001 pounds combined GVWR, or brakes you can apply from the towing vehicle. On certain combinations of over 10,001 pounds combined GVWR, self-actuating surge brakes are allowed depending on the GVWR of the towed unit.

## Drawbar and Chain

When towing another vehicle or trailer, the drawbar must be connected to prevent side sway. Safety chains must also be used to connect the trailer to the towing vehicle. They must be strong enough to hold the load in case the hitch breaks.

## Lamps and Lights

Clearance lights must be mounted on the widest part of the trailer. You can use white, yellow or amber reflectors in the front. The rear lights must be red. Taillights must also be used. A white light must illuminate the license plate.

## Mirrors

When pulling a trailer you must still be able to see 200 feet behind your trailer. If the trailer or its load blocks your rearview mirror, you will need additional side mirrors to see behind the trailer. If your trailer is wider than the towing vehicle, you will need extended side-view mirrors to see to the rear.

# Trucks

To determine which class of license is necessary for you to operate a particular vehicle, please refer to the explanation of Iowa's classification plan on page 8. If you decide you need a commercial license, you will need to study the Commercial Driver's License Manual. The commercial manual will help you pass the written tests. The information in this manual will help you pass the knowledge test for a chauffeur's license.

## Class D (Chauffeur's) License Requirements

You need a chauffeur's license if you are:

- transporting 15 or fewer persons (including driver) for wages, compensation or hire;
- operating a farm truck-tractor or tractor-trailer within 150 air miles of the farm and while transporting farm products to or from that farm; or
- operating a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) specified by the manufacturer of 16,001 to 26,000 pounds, except when the operation by the owner or operator is occasional and merely incidental to the owner's or operator's principal business.

**Persons exempt from Class "D" (Chauffeur's) license requirements are:**

- military personnel while on active duty and while operating military vehicles;
- a farmer or farmer's hired help while operating a farm truck, other than a truck-tractor, controlled by the farmer and used to transport the farmer's own products or property within 150 air miles of that farm;
- a person operating a farm tractor or implement of husbandry to or from the home farm to any adjacent or nearby land;
- a **volunteer** firefighter or **volunteer** ambulance driver while operating a fire, ambulance or rescue vehicle; or
- a Department of Corrections or a Department of Human Services employee transporting persons in an automobile.

A chauffeur's license is required for farmers or their hired help who drive truck-tractors or truck-tractor semitrailer combinations on or for their farms. The requirement does not apply to farmers or their hired help who drive straight trucks only on or for their farm.

A chauffeur's license costs $16 for two years and $32 for four years. The license expires on your birthday. You then have 60 days to renew your license without having to retake the knowledge test. If you are 70 years old or older, your license will only be issued for two-year periods. Review chauffeur's licensing procedures on page 8.

**Age Requirements**

You must be at least 18 years old to get a chauffeur's license.

In most cases, you must be at least 21 years of age to drive across state lines (interstate), to carry hazardous materials in the state, or if any part of your company's operation is involved in interstate transportation of goods. A farmer, operating a farm truck, may operate only 150 miles from the farm, regardless of whether the operation is totally intrastate or across state lines. To operate over 150 miles, a farmer needs a commercial driver's license and must be over 21 years of age if crossing state lines and outside 150 miles.

## Registration

If you are an Iowa resident and your vehicles move intrastate (within Iowa), register them with your county treasurer. All other registration questions should be directed to the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Carrier Services, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., Des Moines, IA 50306-0382, phone 515-237-3264.

To find out about commercial vehicle registration, authority, fuel permits, trip permits, and overdimensional or overweight permits, contact the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Carrier Services, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., Des Moines, IA 50306-0382, phone 515-237-3264. The hours are listed on the inside back cover.

## Maximum Size and Weight

**1. Weight**

A single axle of a vehicle or combination of vehicles shall not exceed 20,000 pounds gross weight if equipped with pneumatic tires, and may not exceed 14,000 pounds gross weight if equipped with solid rubber tires.

Tandem axles may not exceed 34,000 pounds gross weight if equipped with pneumatic tires (tandem axles are any two or more consecutive axles with centers more than 40 inches but not more than 96 inches apart).

**2. Length**

Single trucks are limited to an overall length of 40 feet. Single buses are limited to an overall length of 45 feet.

Power units designed to carry cargo when used in combination with a trailer or semitrailer are limited to an overall length of 65 feet. However, when transporting automobiles, may have an additional three-foot overhang in the front and a four-foot overhang in the rear.

A combination of three vehicles, one of which is a motor vehicle other than a truck-tractor, is limited to an overall length of 70 feet.

Semitrailers, loaded or unloaded, may not have an overall length in excess of 53 feet.

Trailers or semitrailers operating in a double-bottom combination may not have an overall length in excess of 28-1/2 feet each.

A combination of four vehicles is not allowed on the highways of this state, except for power units saddle-mounted on other power units. These combinations are restricted to a maximum overall length of 97 feet.

Stinger-steered auto transporters are limited to an overall length of 75 feet with an additional three-foot overhang on the front and four-foot overhang on the rear.

**3. Width**

The total outside width of any vehicle or the load on the vehicle shall not exceed 8 1/2 feet.

Width of these vehicles shall not exceed eight feet six inches, exclusive of safety equipment, and are exempt from the permit requirements for overdimensional loads as long as they or their load do not exceed eight feet six inches.

If an implement of husbandry is used to haul hay or straw and the total width of the load exceeds eight feet, the implement of husbandry is not subject to the permit requirements for overdimensional loads. However, if the hay or straw is loaded on any other vehicle subject to registration, the moves would be subject to the permit requirements for transporting loads exceeding eight feet.

**4. Height**

The vehicle and load may not exceed 13 feet 6 inches high; 14 feet allowed for vehicles used exclusively for the transportation of vehicles.

## Overdimensional Permits

Overdimensional permits can be obtained from the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Carrier Services, Park Fair Mall, 100 Euclid Ave., Des Moines, IA 50306-0382, phone 515-237-3264.

## Safety

Commercial vehicle means a vehicle or combination of vehicles designed to transport passengers or property of any kind if any of the following apply:

- the vehicle or any combination of vehicles has a gross weight or combined gross weight of 10,001 or more pounds;
- the vehicle or any combination of vehicles has a gross weight rating or gross combination weight rating of 10,001 or more pounds;
- the vehicle is designed to transport 16 or more persons, including the driver; or
- the vehicle is used in the transportation of hazardous materials of a type or quantity requiring vehicle placarding.

As a driver, you may be required to follow all federal highway safety and hazardous materials regulations under United States Code, Title 49, and found in 49 CFR, chapters 100 to 180 and chapters 390 to 399, as adopted by Iowa Code sections 321.449 and 321.450, when operating commercial vehicles as defined above.

If you are not certain if you fall under these guidelines, contact Motor Vehicle Enforcement at 800-925-6469 before you operate any vehicle in question.

**Medical Proof**

Iowa exempts drivers of commercial vehicles from providing proof of physical/medical qualifications who engage exclusively in intrastate (in Iowa) commerce when GVWR is 26,000 pounds or less, unless you are hauling hazardous materials requiring placarding, or operating a passenger vehicle designed to carry 16 or more persons. In most cases, if you operate a commercial motor vehicle with a GVWR of more than 26,000 pounds, you need a medical certificate and you need to log your hours.

## Special Equipment

In addition to standard equipment such as brakes, mirrors and tires, which are required on all motor vehicles, your vehicle may need some special equipment, especially if you are subject to federal regulations.

**Fire Extinguishers**

Every power unit must carry at least one 5 B.C. or two 4 B.C. fire extinguishers. When transporting placarded quantities of hazardous materials, a 10 B.C. extinguisher is required.

**Reflective Devices**

Every commercial truck and truck-tractor must be equipped with reflective triangles rather than flags and reflectors.

If you have to stop during the night, you must warn other drivers. As soon as possible, place three reflectors around your truck. Put one at least 100 feet ahead of the truck, one at least 100 feet behind the truck and the third on the traffic side by the middle of the truck.

If you carry flammable liquids or explosives, you cannot carry open burning flares or fuses, whether you are loaded or empty.

**Seat Belts (Required Use)**

Except for motorcycles or motorized bicycles, 1966 model year or newer motor vehicles registered in Iowa must be equipped with seat belts and safety harnesses of a type and installed in a manner approved by rules adopted by the department.

**Battery Cover**

Every storage battery on a truck, unless it is located in the engine compartment, must be covered by a fixed part of the motor vehicle or protected by a removable cover or enclosure.

**Hazardous Material**

Any vehicle, including private carriers, must display the correct placards and markings when carrying regulated classes and amounts of a hazardous material.

**Rear-End Protection**

All trucks and trailers must have some type of rear-end protective device or bumper. It must be within 30 inches of the ground, not more than 24 inches from the rear, and within 18 inches of each side of the vehicle. These devices shall be strongly constructed and firmly attached. Vehicles constructed and maintained so the body chassis or other parts of the vehicle affords the rear-end protection (including rear duals of a vehicle) comply with this requirement.

**Spare Fuse**

If the electrical circuits on your truck cannot be reset, you need one spare fuse for each kind and size.

**Mirrors**

All buses, trucks and truck-tractors must have two outside rearview mirrors, one at each side, unless the truck is constructed so you can see to the rear by using the interior rearview mirror. If you can use the inside rearview mirror, you only need an outside rearview mirror on the driver's side of the vehicle.

## Lighting

All trucks must have two white headlights, one at each side of the truck. All trucks must also have one reflector on each side at or near the rear, two reflectors on the rear, one at each side. Additional clearance lights and reflectors are needed, depending on the length or weight of your truck.

**Color and Mounting**

All lamps and reflectors mounted on the front of any truck or trailer, except school buses, must be white, yellow or amber. Rear-mounted lamps and reflectors must be red. Stop lights must be red. Mount clearance lamps on the widest part of the permanent part of your vehicle.

**Trucks**

**80 inches or wider but 30 feet or less in length.**

**Front:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side; three identification lights.

**Side:** one reflector -- at or near the rear.

**Rear:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side; two reflectors -- one at each side; three identification lamps; rear lamps; signal stop lamp.

**80 inches or wider and longer than 30 feet.**

**Front:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side; three identification lights.

**Side:** two side marker lamps on each side -- one at or near the front and one at or near the rear.

**Rear:** two reflectors -- one at each side; two clearance lamps -- one at each side; three identification lights; rear lamp; stop light.

**Truck-Tractor or Road Tractor**

**All truck-tractors or road tractors must have these lights:**

**Front:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side if the tractor cab is as wide or wider than the widest part of the towed object.

**Side:** one side marker lamp at or near the front on each side.

**Rear:** one tail lamp.

**Trailer or Semitrailer**

**If the trailer or semitrailer you haul has a gross weight over 3,000 pounds, you must meet these lighting requirements:**

**Front:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side -- if the trailer is at all wider than the cab that pulls it.

**Side:** one side marker lamp at or near the rear on each side; two reflectors -- one at or near the front and rear.

**Rear:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side; one tail lamp; one stop light; two reflectors -- one at each side.

**Tractor/Trailer Combinations**

**These requirements apply to tractor/trailer combinations longer than 30 feet or wider than 80 inches and with a trailer gross weight greater than 3,000 pounds.**

**Front:** *cab wider than trailer:*
two clearance lamps -- one at each side of the cab; three identification lights.
*trailer wider than cab:*
two clearance lamps -- one at each side at the widest point of the trailer; three identification lights.

**Side:** one side marker lamp on each side at or near the front; one side marker lamp on each side at or near the rear; two reflectors -- one at or near the front and one at or near the rear.

**Rear:** two clearance lamps -- one at each side; one stop light; one tail lamp; two reflectors -- one at each side.

## Speed

Your driving speed depends on the speed limit, your vehicle and load, road conditions and weather. Generally you should try to drive with the flow of traffic. Remember to stick to the posted limits.

**70 mph** Rural interstate highways and some designated divided highways.

**55 mph** Controlled access, divided highways and primary roads.

**50 mph** All other roads.

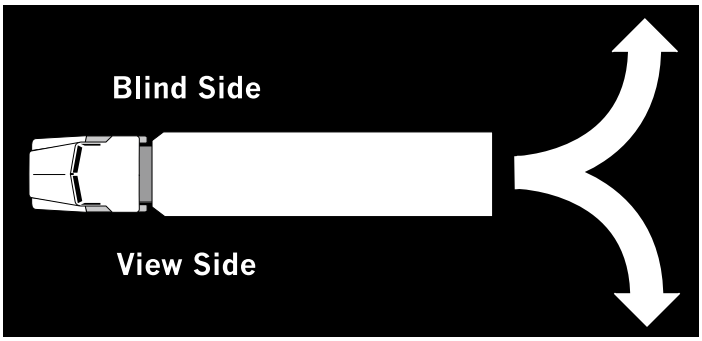
### Following

The driver of a motor truck or a motor vehicle drawing another vehicle must stay at least 300 feet behind other similar vehicles when traveling outside of business or residential districts. Larger vehicles need added space to come to a complete stop at highway speeds.

## Maneuvering

### Backing

You are responsible for your vehicle while backing up even if someone is guiding you. If you are driving a large truck or truck-tractor semitrailer rig, backing is difficult, so reduce backing as much as possible. Before you back up, get out of your vehicle and get a good look at the area.



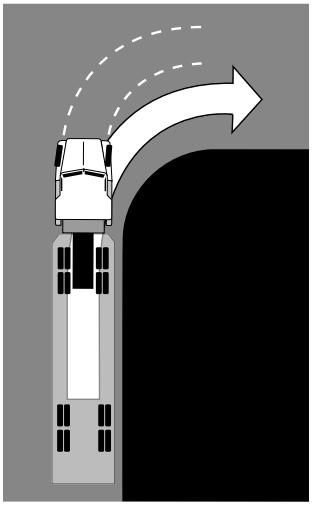

Back out of traffic instead of into it. That way, you will be able to see traffic when you enter the roadway.

Even though you have mirrors, there is a blind side on the right side of your truck. Use a guide if you must back to this side. If no guide is available:

- get out and check out the area;
- sound your horn; and
- use both mirrors while backing slowly.

Periodically blow your horn to warn vehicles or pedestrians who may have entered your path.

### Curves

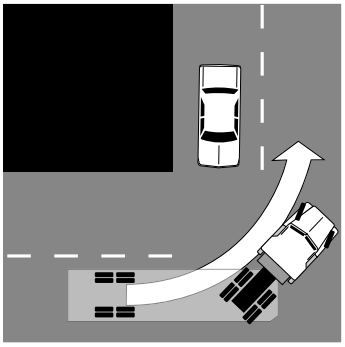


To make it around a tight curve, keep the turning arc of the front wheels in line with the sharpness of the curve. When turning right, keep your front wheels close to the center line. This prevents the rear wheels from dropping off the pavement. Curving left, keep your front wheels close to the right edge to prevent the rear wheels from drifting into the other lane.

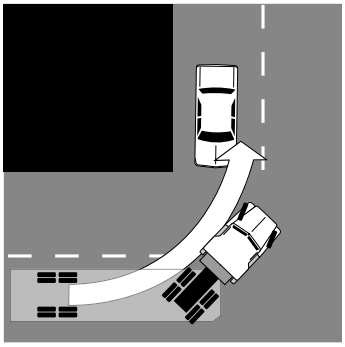
Avoid braking in a curve because this can cause you to skid out of control. Slow down before you get into the curve. Accelerate after you have passed the midpoint of the turn.

### Left Turns

You must be sure you can complete your turn without your vehicle's rear wheels striking other vehicles due to offtrack. If you need more than one lane, pull into the other lane carefully and continually check traffic in all directions.



***Right***

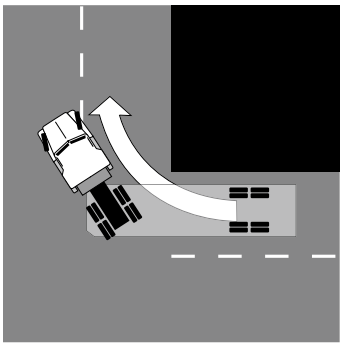


***Wrong***

### Right Turns

Try to stay in your own lane when making a right turn. Because of your trailer's offtrack, that may not be possible. If your rear wheels run over the curb and sidewalks, you risk damage to your tires and create a danger for pedestrians.

Right angle turns are the biggest problem. Narrow streets mean you might have to pull well into the intersection before starting a turn. Be sure to check for smaller vehicles and pedestrians before you move.



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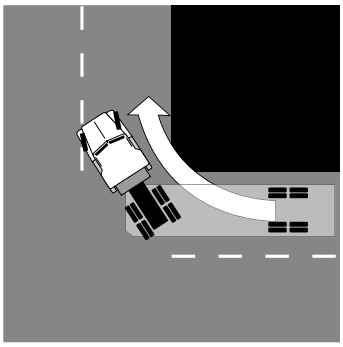

***Wrong***

# Review Questions (Section 7)

**T/F**

_____ 1. You cannot drive a snowmobile on the interstate. **True/False**

_____ 2. You may carry one passenger on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV). **True/False**

_____ 3. When pulling a trailer, you should increase your following distance. **True/False**

_____ 4. If you have a load that projects out from a trailer four feet or more, you must mark it, usually with a red flag. **True/False**

_____ 5. Seat belts are required in 1966 model year or newer vehicles. **True/False**

_____ 6. It is best to avoid braking in a curve. **True/False**

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## Commercial Vehicle Information Phone

800-925-6469
Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Motor Carrier Services Oversize Loads/Permits Phone

515-237-3264
Monday - Friday: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

## Iowa State Patrol Emergency Phone

800-525-5555
Toll Free
or
Cell *55

## Local Emergency Numbers

_____

_____

_____

_____

For further information call:
The Motor Vehicle Information Center
In Des Moines 515-244-8725
Toll Free 800-532-1121

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