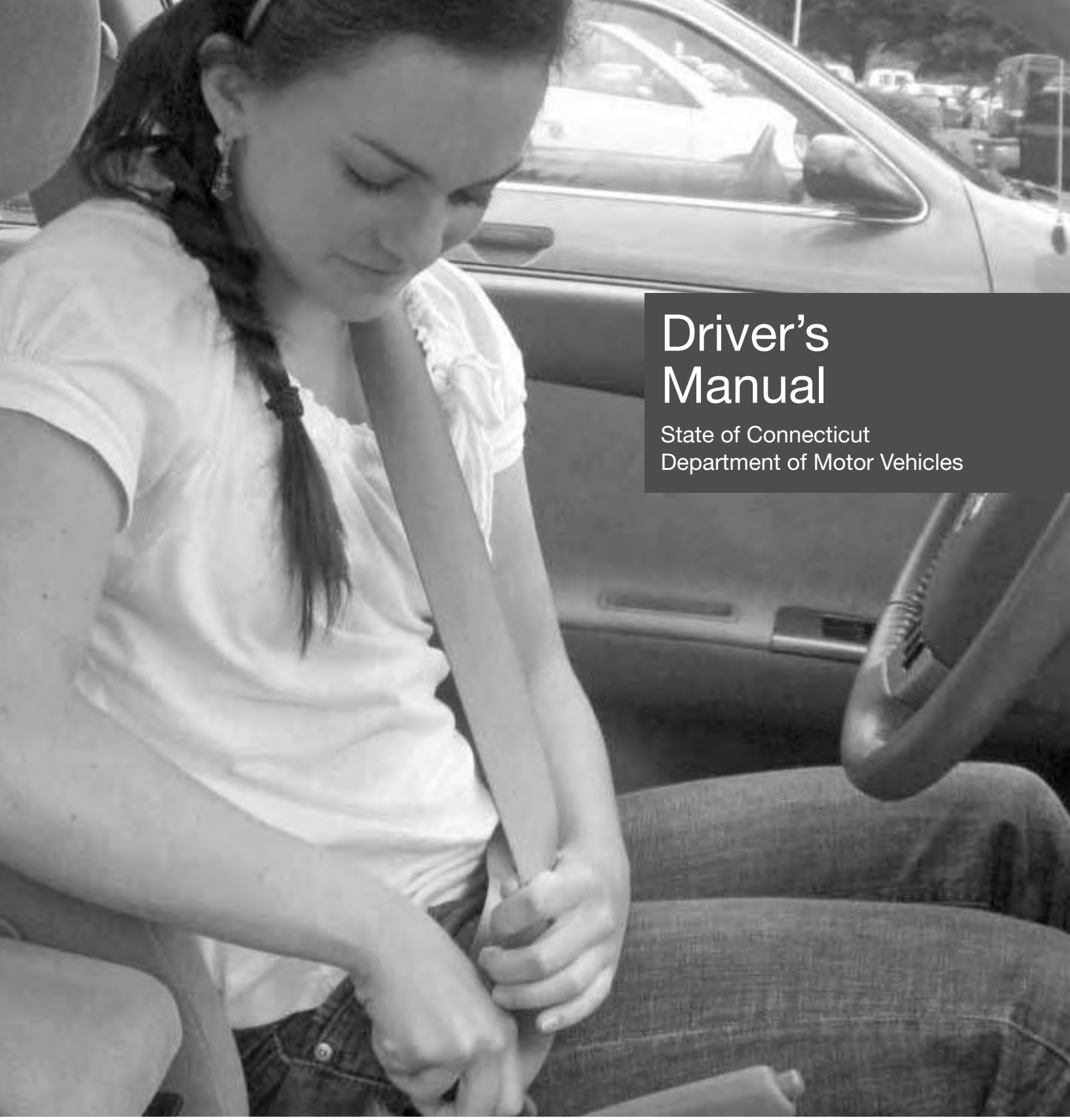


Driver's Manual

State of Connecticut
Department of Motor Vehicles

TEEN DRIVING:
YOU RISK,
YOU LOSE.

Ned Lamont
Governor

Antonio "Tony" Guerrera
Commissioner

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An Important Message from Governor Ned Lamont and Commissioner Antonio “Tony” Guerrera

Connecticut takes pride in its highway safety initiatives and efforts to make the roads safer for all who use them. This work involves driver licensing and ensuring that new and renewing drivers are aware of safety’s critical role when behind the wheel. For the state’s youngest drivers, obtaining your license is a time of joy and freedom, but it comes with great responsibility. Two years ago Connecticut imposed tougher teen driving laws for 16- and 17-year-old drivers. These laws, along with stiffer penalties, were put into place to keep you safe on the road as you learn and become a more experienced driver. It takes time and practice. We hope you understand that the laws and penalties are in place to help reduce crashes, injuries and deaths.

We want to remind all license holders that driving is a privilege and not a right. Connecticut has specific laws, such as speeding, driving too fast for conditions, reckless driving, driving under the influence, and others that aim to protect all people on the road whether vehicle drivers, passengers or pedestrians. Distracted driving, including the use of phones while driving, has been noted as a contributing factor in many serious accidents. We urge all drivers to remain focused on the task at hand — operating the motor vehicle safely when under your control.

Driving is a constant learning experience and it takes complete concentration at all times. Connecticut will be a safer place for all to drive if everyone drives more carefully. Both new drivers and experienced drivers will find many useful tips and explanations in this manual to accomplish that task.

We ask that you do your part to ensure safety on the road. Remember, please buckle up. Seatbelts save lives. Let’s make Connecticut’s roads a safer place for all.

Sincerely,
Governor Ned Lamont
Commissioner Antonio “Tony” Guerrera



Governor
Ned Lamont



Commissioner
Antonio “Tony” Guerrera



Compiled by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, with the assistance of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

This manual attempts to provide a general familiarity with the principles of safe and lawful operation of a motor vehicle. The manual's contents are not a precise statement of the Connecticut General Statutes pertaining to the operation of a motor vehicle.

Please use the most recent edition of the General Statutes for finding the specific wording in a law.

Corporate and Public Relations

Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

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1 Obtaining a Connecticut Driver's License

Obtaining a Learner's Permit

This manual provides information needed to drive a passenger vehicle. A non-commercial driver's license is known and designated as Class D. Unless restrictions appear on the license, a Class D license may be used to operate any motor vehicle except a commercial motor vehicle.

If you want a license to drive a commercial or public service vehicle (such as a truck or bus), you need to read the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) manual. If you want an endorsement to drive a motorcycle, you need to read the Motorcycle Operator's manual. Due to the continuous changes in DMV laws, you should always check the DMV Web site at **ct.gov/dmv** for the most up to date information.

For a list of required documents to apply for a learner's permit and to make your knowledge test appointment online, please visit **ct.gov/dmv**.

Managing Your Teen's Driving Experience

The DMV Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Teen Safe Driving wants parents to visit **ct.gov/teendriving** and know the following information:

- **Crashes Kill Teens:** Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of death for 15-19 year-old teenagers. Most teen crashes occur during the first two years of having their license. The first six months are the most dangerous for the newly licensed teen. Provide as much supervised practice as you can during the licensing period.
- **Brain Development:** Research shows that the portion of the brain that assesses risk and danger does not fully develop until the mid 20's. Teens are risk-takers, lacking the experience, judgment and maturity to recognize many potentially hazardous situations.
- **Passenger Restrictions:** Enforce at home state laws on passenger restrictions. Crash risk goes up when teens drive with other teens in the car. This risk also increases with the number of passengers, whether siblings, family or friends, in the vehicle.
- **Restrict Night Driving:** Fatal crashes are more likely to occur at night. Young drivers are at higher risk for drowsy driving, which causes thousands of crashes each year. Enforce the state curfew.
- **It's the Law: Require Your Teen to Buckle Up:** Teens have the lowest rate of seatbelt use. The simplest way to prevent car crash deaths and serious injuries is to buckle up.
- **No Drinking and Driving:** Connecticut has a **Zero-Tolerance Law** for teens drinking and driving. Even one drink impairs a teen's driving ability and increases the risk of a crash. Be a good role model: Don't drink and drive, and reinforce this message with your teens.
- **Teach your Teen About Distracted Driving:** Talking on the phone or with passengers, texting, dialing radio stations, unrestrained pets and other distracting activities in the car increase the risk of a serious crash.
- **Vehicle Selection Matters:** Avoid having your teen drive high performance vehicles or older model vehicles that lack improved safety technologies.
- **Financial Liability:** Make your teen aware of the financial consequences of a crash or a citation, including higher family insurance rates and liability for injuries or damage.
- **Know Connecticut Teen Driving Laws:** The teen driving laws are explained in this manual. More information, including teens-talking-to-teens videos created as part of the DMV teen safe driving video contest, can be found at **ct.gov/teendriving**.
- **Get Involved:** Be a role model. Establish your own household rules and consequences. Stick to them no matter the hassle you receive from your teens. Your determination could save their lives.

First Time Drivers (All Ages)

A learner's permit is required before you begin practicing driving. A permit holder must carry a learner's permit whenever he or she is operating a vehicle. Connecticut law requires anyone, regardless of age, who has not previously held a license in Connecticut or who does not hold a valid license issued by another state, to take an 8-hour Safe Driving Practices course at a Connecticut Commercial Driving School before he or she can obtain a license. DMV will mail a new photo image learner's permit to all qualified applicants.

An applicant for a learner's permit must meet the health and fitness standards for license holders. An applicant who has physical or medical conditions that may affect his or her capability to operate a motor vehicle safely will be required to

undergo a review of his or her condition(s). A favorable review must be obtained prior to issuance of the learner's permit. Therefore, to avoid the possibility of a delay in the issuance of a learner's permit, it is recommended the applicant or applicant's parent or legal guardian contact the DMV Driver Services Division at (860) 263-5720 as far in advance of making the application as possible.

To obtain a learner's permit:

- You must be at least 16 years of age.
- You must pass both a vision and a 25-question knowledge test.

NOTE: The permit will be valid until you obtain a driver's license or 2 years from the date it is issued (whichever comes first).

Preparing for your Driver's Test

SCHEDULE YOUR LEARNER'S PERMIT KNOWLEDGE TEST AND MAKE PAYMENT ONLINE – VISIT CT.GOV/DMV FOR DETAILS.

DMV offices conduct knowledge testing for operator licensing on an appointment basis.

After you successfully pass the knowledge test, you will be able to schedule an appointment for the road test. Please check **ct.gov/dmv/offices** for a convenient location for taking the knowledge and road tests. Applicants must be prepared with all the necessary documents before the knowledge test is administered.

The Knowledge Test

The knowledge test consists of 25 questions and you need 20 correct answers to pass. You must pass a knowledge test before you receive your learner's permit. The test is based on the information contained in this manual. Sample tests are available on the DMV mobile app. For more information, visit **ct.gov/dmv**.

The Vision Test

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, or reacting in a timely manner. Vision is so important that Connecticut requires that you pass a vision test before you get a driver's license.

The eye test evaluates:

- Acuity (how clearly you see).
- Peripheral vision (how far you can see to either side while looking straight ahead).

The minimum vision requirements for all classes of license are at least 20/40 with or without glasses or contact lenses. If the applicant is blind in one eye, the other eye must be at least 20/40 with a minimal visual field of 100 degrees or more. (Persons with monocular vision do not qualify for certain special licenses or endorsements).

Other important aspects of vision are:

- **Side Vision.** You need to see "out of 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 must also use your side mirrors or 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 in knowing how far you are from other vehicles and in judging safe openings 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. It is more difficult for drivers to see at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially with the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don't drive more than is necessary and be very careful when you do.

Because seeing well is so important to safe driving, 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. If your driver's license says you must wear corrective lenses and you are stopped by a law enforcement officer while not wearing them, you may be issued a citation.

Hearing can be helpful to safe driving as well. The sound of horns, a siren, or screeching tires can warn you of danger. Hearing problems, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice them. Drivers who know that they are deaf or have hearing problems can adjust to be safe drivers. These drivers learn to rely more on their vision and tend to stay more alert. Studies have shown that the driving records of hearing-impaired drivers are just as good as those drivers with good hearing.

Learner's Permit – Qualified Trainer Requirement

The person giving instruction to the learner's permit holder must sit in the front passenger seat next to the learner and must be alert and ready to take over control of the vehicle. The safe operation of the vehicle is the responsibility of both the instructor and the driver.

Learner's Permit Passenger Restrictions for 16- and 17-Year-Olds

The following restrictions apply to 16- and 17-year-old learners' permit holders.

For the entire time a 16- or 17-year-old driver holds a learner's permit, he or she may not have any passengers except for:

- A licensed driving instructor giving instruction and others accompanying that instructor.
- One person who is providing instruction and is at least 20 years old, has held a driver's license for four or more consecutive years and whose license has not been suspended during the four years prior to training. Parents or legal guardian may accompany the instructor.

Passenger restrictions do not apply during the actual time when a learner's permit holder is receiving specific instruction from a licensed driver instructor from a commercial driving school or driver education program.

Failure to follow the rules pertaining to a learner's permit may result in a permit suspension.

Driver Education Requirements

16- and 17-Year-Old Applicants

All 16- and 17-year-old applicants for a driver's license must complete a driver training program through one of the following:

- Licensed Commercial Driving School
- Secondary School Program (high school)
- Home Training Program and eight-hour course on safe driving practices (including 2-hour parent training)

Parent Training Requirements

A parent or legal guardian of a 16- or 17-year-old who obtains a learner's permit is required to complete two hours of instruction with his or her teen concerning the laws governing drivers under age 18 and the dangers of teen driving. This course may be offered by a commercial driving or secondary school and will be included in the eight-hour program already required for all 16- and 17-year-olds.

Commercial Driving School or Secondary School Training

Classes offered through a Connecticut commercial or secondary school licensed and approved by DMV consist of 30 hours of classroom instruction and at least 40 hours of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training for teens with a learner's permit. After successful completion of the courses, the school will issue you a course completion certificate (form CS-1). This certificate is required in order for you to be eligible for the road test.

Applicants who successfully complete driver education through a commercial driving school or a secondary school must wait 120 days after the issuance of the learner's permit before taking the road test. All other applicants must wait 180 days after the issuance of the learner's permit before taking the driver's exam.

Home Training Program

Applicants for home training must train with an instructor who is at least 20 years of age or older, and who has held a license for four or more years prior to training, which has not been suspended during the four year period. Home training may be done by one of the following people:

- Parent
- Foster parent or legal guardian
- Grandparent
- Spouse of a married minor applicant

If the applicant has none of the above, providing the person is qualified, home training may be done by:

- Uncle or aunt
- Brother or sister
- Stepparent

The home instructor must sign a statement at the time of the road test, which states that the applicant has obtained a learner's permit and successfully completed at least 30 hours of course study, including an 8-hour Safe Driving Practices class at a Connecticut commercial driving or secondary school. The home training course must cover all of the material in this manual, and such other information on driver education that is deemed necessary for a person to know in order to safely operate a motor vehicle under present day driving conditions. A student driver must also be given at least 40 hours of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road instruction as well as completing the two-hour parent training class accompanied by a parent/legal guardian.

In addition, home-trained applicants must also show a course completion certificate (form CS-1 a) from a local secondary school or commercial driving school of an approved eight-hour course that includes a minimum of four hours on the:

- Nature and the medical, biological and physiological effects of alcohol and drugs and their impact on the operator of a motor vehicle.
- Dangers associated with the operation of a motor vehicle after the consumption of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Problems of alcohol and drug abuse and the penalties for alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle violations.
- Two-hour mandatory parent training class

This eight-hour course requirement is also necessary for 16- and 17-year-old licensed drivers from out-of-state who wish to obtain a license in Connecticut.

Applicants who receive the full 30 hours of classroom training must also receive at least 8 hours of behind-the-wheel training from a Connecticut commercial driving school to be eligible to begin testing for a driver's license in 120 days. All other applicants must wait 180 days after the issuance of the learner's permit before taking the driver's exam.

All applicants who are 16 or 17 years of age must have at least 40 hours of behind the-wheel, on-the-road training. This training may be accomplished by any combination of professional (driving school) instruction or home training.

Applicants 18 Years of Age or Older

A person 18 years of age or older must obtain and hold a learner's permit for at least 90 days prior to taking a road test. The learner's permit holder must be under the instruction and while driving be accompanied by a commercial driving school instructor, secondary school instructor or a qualified trainer, who is a person 20 years of age or older who has held a license, which has not been suspended for four or more consecutive years prior to training. All applicants 18 years of age or older who have not previously held a license in Connecticut or who do not hold a valid license issued by another state will be required to take an 8-hour course on safe driving practices and present a certificate showing proof of attending this course.

Things you should know before you take your test:

Speed. What is an acceptable and proper speed and how to maintain that speed.

Turning. Which lane you should turn into, which lane you should drive in and which lane you should turn from.

Right of Way. When and to whom you must yield the right of way and recognize when it is being yielded to you.

Stopping. When you must stop for a yellow traffic signal and when it is permissible to keep going.

Backing. How to safely control your car while driving in reverse.

Parking. Park in and exit any style parking space as well as park next to a curb in front of, behind, or between cars and the proper way to park on a hill.

Things you should remember during your test

- ✓ Follow the directions you are given.
- ✓ Prior to entering the test vehicle, observe nearby parked cars, people, or objects that could affect your ability to safely put the car in motion.
- ✓ Make sure you can see clearly through the windows and in the mirrors. They should be cleaned and defogged.
- ✓ Apply the brake before you shift the car into gear from the "park" position.
- ✓ Accelerate and/or shift smoothly, maintaining good control of the vehicle.
- ✓ Bring the car up to driving speed in a reasonable amount of time.
- ✓ Maintain a "space cushion" around your vehicle that is appropriate for the existing speed, road, and traffic conditions.
- ✓ In normal traffic situations, you should be able to bring your vehicle to a stop by smoothly and safely applying your brakes.
- ✓ Use the turn signals every time it is appropriate and be able to demonstrate hand signals.
- ✓ Be aware of other traffic and pedestrians every time you make a turn and your speed should also be adjusted for the turn.
- ✓ You should have had enough experience and training to enable you to determine what your best course of action should be in a particular driving situation.
- ✓ Be alert to what is happening around you

The Road Test

After you hold your learner's permit for the required time and meet the training requirements, you will be able to schedule an appointment for the road test. Please check **ct.gov/dmv/offices** for a convenient location. At the time of the road test you must appear at the office with a vehicle that is appropriate for the license class for which you are applying that is mechanically safe, and have a valid registration and proof of insurance. A non-licensed operator cannot drive to the test location alone.

A long-term leased vehicle may be used for a road test if the vehicle has proof of insurance identifying the vehicle and the registrant (lease company). Only those long-term leased vehicles that are properly insured may be used for driver's testing. If you do not have a valid driver's license you cannot test in a rented vehicle.

If the test vehicle is found to be in an unsafe operating condition, no behind the-wheel evaluation will be conducted; the applicant will reschedule the road test for no fee.

To Begin the Road Test You Will Need:

- **Your Learner's Permit.**
- **Proof of completing 8-hour safe driving course (CS-1 form).**
- **License Fees.** You must pay $84 for a license after you pass the road test.
- **Clearance letter from DMV Medical Review Division** (only if required, see **page 4** under First Time Drivers).

If you are 16- or 17-years-old you will also need:

1. **Proof of Driver Training:** A permit holder must show proof of completion of a driver's education course:
   - If home trained, a completed CS-1 that certifies the student has attended an eight-hour course on safe driving practices.
   - Connecticut Commercial Driving School Certificate.
   - Connecticut Secondary Driving School Certificate.

2. **Proof of Parental Training (CS-1 form):** A parent or legal guardian of a teen who obtains a learner's permit is required to complete two hours of instruction concerning the laws governing drivers under age 18 and the dangers of teen driving. This course may be offered by a commercial or secondary driving school and will be included in the eight-hour program already required for all 16- and 17-year-olds.

The road test evaluates:

- Ability to properly adjust seat, mirrors, steering wheel, and seat belts
- Operation of vehicle equipment such as windshield wipers and washers, heater and defroster, parking brake, headlights and high beams, and the horn
- Response to traffic control signs and signals, signaling, interaction with other motorists (yielding right-of-way, response to emergency vehicles)
- Backing and/or parking the vehicle
- Proficiency in basic driving skills such as turns
- Ability to recognize any warning lights that may be displayed on your instrument panel
- Other driving maneuvers at the direction of the agent or inspector

Pay for Your License

Acceptable forms of payment at the DMV branch offices are cash, money orders, personal checks, debit and credit cards, and bank checks. DMV will mail the permanent driver's license card to all qualified applicants. Qualified applicants will receive a temporary paper card at the office. The permanent license card will arrive through the mail within 20 days. Please make all checks payable to DMV.

Restrictions for 16- and 17-Year-Old Drivers

Passenger Restrictions

The following restrictions are imposed on 16- and 17-year-old drivers who received their driver's license.

During the first six months the newly licensed driver may not have any passengers in the vehicle except for:

- A licensed driving instructor; **OR**
- His or her parents or legal guardian, at least one of whom holds a valid driver's license: **OR**
- One person who is at least 20 years old, has held a driver's license for four or more consecutive years and whose license has not been suspended during the four years preceding the time of being transported. Parents or legal guardian may accompany the instructor.

During the second six months (months seven through twelve) the only additional passengers allowed in the vehicle are members of the driver's immediate family.

Hour Restrictions (Curfew)

11 p.m. to 5 a.m. – unless the teen is traveling for employment, school, religious activities, medical necessity, or if the individual is an assigned driver in the Safe Ride Program.

Please note: These passenger and curfew restrictions do not apply to active members of a volunteer fire company or department, a volunteer ambulance service or company, or an emergency medical service organization who are responding to, or returning from, an emergency call or carrying out duties as an active member, or if the individual is an assigned driver in the Safe Ride Program.

Other Restrictions

In addition to the laws above, learner's permit holders and 16- and 17-year-old licensed drivers may NOT:

- Transport more passengers than the number of seatbelts in the vehicle.
- Operate any vehicle that requires a public passenger transportation permit or a vanpool vehicle.
- Use a cell phone (even if it is hands-free) or mobile electronic device while driving.
- Transport any passenger on a motorcycle for six months after the issuance of a motorcycle endorsement

Becoming an Organ and Tissue Donor

Registering to becoming an organ and tissue donor is easy! It can be done at the time you obtain or renew your driver's license or nondriver identification card, online at **www.ct.gov/dmv**, or through the mail with DMV's Change of Address form.

To register at DMV, you will need to make an appointment for driver license services at the location of your choice and bring your current Connecticut Driver's License or ID card. At the DMV office location you will need to visit the Driver Licensing area. At this location a DMV representative will assist in your decision to be included in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry and the organ and tissue donor insignia will be added to your license or nondriver identification card. Just so you know, there is "no fee" to be registered as an organ and tissue donor. If you are changing your organ and tissue donor registry choice and already have a valid driver's license or ID card and wish to add or remove the organ and tissue donor insignia, you will need to order a duplicate credential and pay a $30.00 duplicate credential fee.

When you join the Donor Registry, you add your name to the thousands of CT residents who want to save lives through donation. For individuals 18 and over, being included in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry is legal authorization for organ and tissue donation.

Please be sure to inform your family of your decision to be an organ and tissue donor.

To find more information on the organ and tissue donor registry, please visit our website at **ct.gov/dmv**.

Registering to Vote

You can apply for voter registration or update your voter registration information through DMV at any time. You will be offered the opportunity to apply for voter registration or update your voter registration information when you apply for, renew or replace a driver's license or identification card.

DMV will provide you with a receipt and if you have chosen to apply for voter registration, will transmit your voter registration application information to election officials.

You should also receive a confirmation notice in approximately three (3) weeks from the registrar of voters in your city or town of residence to confirm that your application has been received and accepted.

If you are changing your address with the DMV, your change of address form will be used to update your voter registration record unless you indicate on the form that the change of address is NOT for voter registration purposes.

Forms for voter registration and a link to register to vote online through the Office of the Secretary of State are also available on the DMV website at **ct.gov/dmv**.

Services for Drivers with Disabilities

Limited Licenses Program

The Connecticut DMV, with the help of its Medical Advisory Board (a group of medical doctors who volunteer their time), has developed a Limited Driver's License program. This licensing program is for the person whose physical abilities, for whatever reason, have changed since his or her initial licensing. It also allows the DMV to issue new licenses to persons who previously would not have qualified for a license. Before a limited license is issued to a person, reports made by one or more physicians must be submitted and the person may be required to pass an on-the-road skills test with a DMV inspector.

Even though a person may have certain conditions or limitations, that person still may be able to drive a motor vehicle safely if such conditions have been stabilized and are monitored by such person's physician. Information regarding license, health and fitness standards should be directed to the DMV Driver Services Division, which will advise as to the information that may be required to be filed depending on a person's condition. It is recommended that any person having a mental/medical/physical condition, impairment or disability that affects such person's driving capabilities contact the Driver Services Division at least four months prior to applying for a Connecticut license, whether a new driver or a new resident. For further information, please contact the Driver Services Division at (860) 263-5723.

Health standards are more stringent for the holder of a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or the holder of a license to operate a vehicle carrying passengers (taxi, delivery vehicle, bus, school bus, etc.).

A limited license may contain one or more of the following restrictions, which will be noted on the license document, and which permit operation of a motor vehicle:

- During the period of daylight beginning a half an hour before sunrise and ending a half an hour after sunset.
- When the person is using corrective lenses (not including telescopic lenses) as prescribed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- On highways that are not limited access highways.
- In a motor vehicle having an automatic transmission.
- In a motor vehicle equipped with external mirrors located on both the left and right sides of the vehicle to reflect to the vehicle operator a view of the highway at least 200 feet to the rear.
- In a motor vehicle having special controls or equipment.

Disabled Driver Training Services

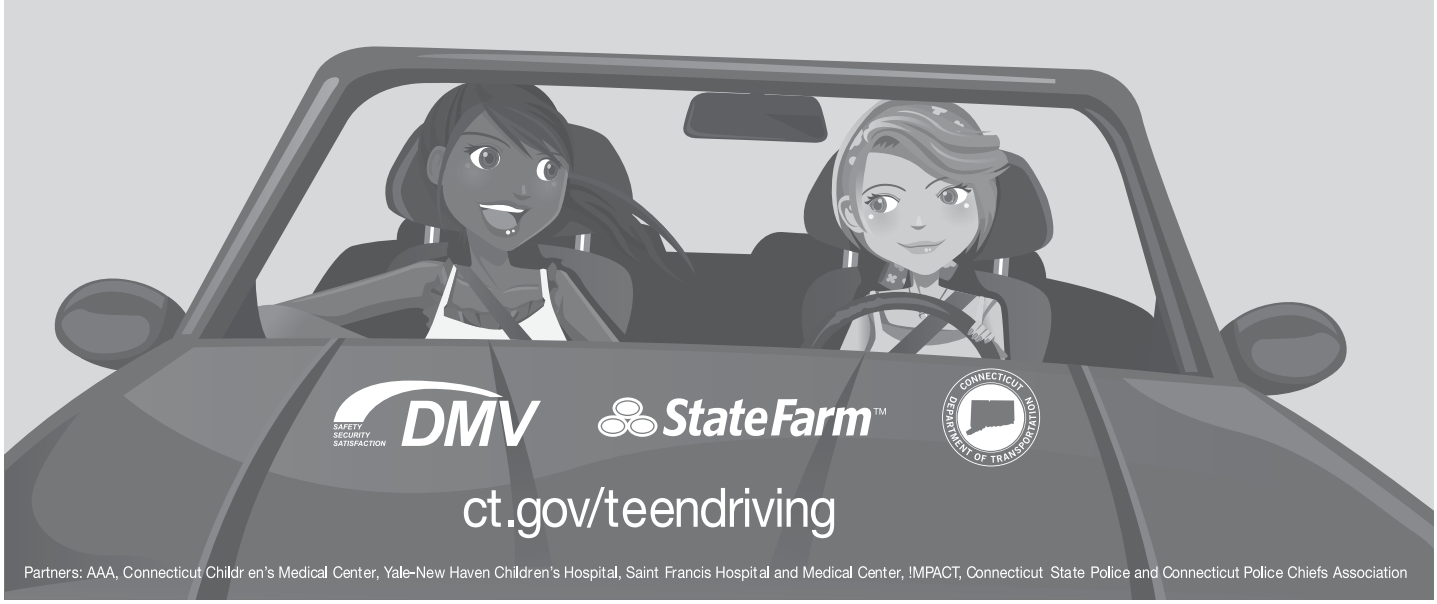
Connecticut offers training services for permanent state residents who are disabled and may still have the ability to drive using special adaptive equipment. Residents interested in the program should contact the state Bureau of Rehabilitation Services at (860) 424-4844.



THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO GO.

You're NOT just along for the ride. Safety is EVERYONE's responsibility. Teen drivers and passengers like you have a responsibility for safety, too. So make the right choice and steer your friends in the right direction. Be a real friend.

BE THE KEY TO SAFE DRIVING.



ct.gov/teendriving

Partners: AAA, Connecticut Childr en's Medical Center, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, !MPACT, Connecticut State Police and Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

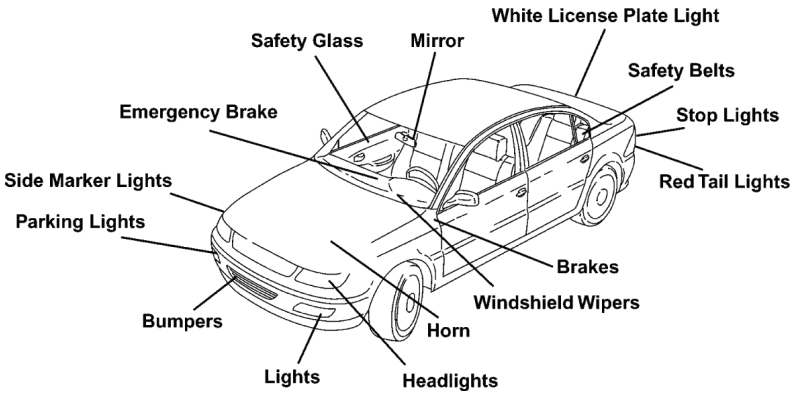
2 Before You Get Behind the Wheel

Know Your Vehicle Inside and Out

How safely you can drive starts with the vehicle you are driving. It is the duty of drivers to make certain that 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 maintained. It can break down or cause a collision. 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.

Your vehicle may be required to have an emissions inspection at an authorized inspection station. If the vehicle does not pass, you will be given 60 days to have the problem fixed and the emissions rechecked.

You should follow your vehicle owner's manual for routine maintenance. Some you can do yourself; a qualified mechanic must do some. A few simple checks will help prevent trouble on the road.



Exterior Equipment

Braking System. Only your brakes can stop your vehicle. It is very dangerous if they are not working properly. If they do not seem to be working properly, make a lot of noise, emit an unusual odor, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them. If the vehicle pulls to one side when the brake is applied this would indicate a problem in the braking system and that it should be serviced.

Lights. Make sure that turn signals, brake lights, taillights, and headlights are operating properly. These should be checked from the outside of the vehicle. Your brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping just as turn signals tell them that you are turning. 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 if other drivers are often flashing their headlights at you, have a mechanic check the headlights.

Windshield, Wipers, Windows. It is important that you are able to see clearly through the windows and windshield. Clear snow, ice, or frost from all windows before driving. Windshield wipers keep the rain and snow off the windshield. Some vehicles also have wipers for rear windows and headlights; make sure all wipers are in good operating condition. If the blades are not clearing water well, replace them. Keep your window washer bottle full. Make sure the inside of the windshield and windows are clean as well. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Damaged glass can break very easily in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. Have a damaged windshield replaced.

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 increase the effect of "hydroplaning" and increase the chance of having a flat tire. You can check tire pressure using the recommended psi (pounds per square inch) located in the vehicle owner's manual or the driver's side door jamb of the vehicle. Use a tire pressure gauge to check your psi.

Once every month, or before you embark upon a long road trip, check your tires for wear and damage problems. One easy way to check for wear is by using the "penny test."

1. Take a penny and hold Abraham Lincoln's body between your thumb and forefinger.
2. Select a point on your tire where the tread appears to be lowest and place Lincoln's head into one of the grooves.
3. If any part of Lincoln's head is covered by the tread, you're driving with the safe amount of tread. If your tread gets below that, your car's ability to grip the road in adverse conditions is greatly reduced.

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

Exhaust System. The exhaust system helps reduce the noise from the engine, helps cool the hot gases coming from the running engine, and moves these gases to the rear of the vehicle. Gases from a leaky exhaust can cause death inside a vehicle in a very short time. Never run the motor in a closed garage. If you sit in a vehicle with the motor running for a long time, open a window. Some exhaust leaks are easily heard, but many are not. This is why it is important to have the exhaust system checked periodically.

Engine. A poorly running engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, and pollutes the air. It could also die on you when you are on the road, causing a problem for you and other drivers around you. Follow the procedures recommended in the owner's manual for maintenance.

Green Driving

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the burning of fuels releases carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere and contributes to climate change. These 2 emissions can be reduced by improving your car's fuel efficiency. Buy smart. Before you purchase a vehicle, research the emissions and fuel economy of different vehicles. Drive smart. Many factors affect the fuel economy of your car. Learn about these and practice them.

Interior Equipment

Steering System. If the steering system 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.

Horn. The horn may not seem like it is important for safety, but it could save your life as a warning device. Only use your horn as a warning to others.

Seat Belts. Before you drive away, always fasten your safety belts and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints. Connecticut has a mandatory seatbelt law.

Mirrors. You should always check your seat and mirrors before you start to drive. Make any adjustments to the seat and mirrors before you drive off. Adjust your rear view mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view 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.

Loose Objects. Make sure that there are no loose objects in the vehicle that could hit someone in the event of a sudden stop or crash. Make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal and prevent you from stopping the vehicle.

Note: After market, changes to equipment such as tinted windows and lighting may violate legal standards.

Connecticut Seat Belt Laws

It is important that you and your passengers use seat belts. Studies have shown that if you are in an accident while using seat belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. In Connecticut, it is illegal to drive or to be a passenger without wearing a safety belt.

If either the driver or the passenger fails to wear the seat belt, each could be cited for a seat belt violation and fined $75.

If your vehicle has a two-part seat belt system, be sure to wear both the lap belt and the shoulder belt. Wearing either part alone greatly reduces your protection. If you have an automatic shoulder belt, be sure to buckle your lap belt as well. Otherwise, you could slide out of the belt and be hurt or killed in a collision. In addition to protecting yourself from injury as a driver, safety belts help you keep control of the vehicle. If you are ever struck from the side or making a quick turn, the force could push you sideways. You cannot steer the vehicle if you are not behind the wheel.

State law requires that safety belts must be worn even if the vehicle is equipped with airbags. While airbags 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 vehicle rolls over. Also, an airbag will not keep you behind the wheel in these situations.

Child Safety Requirements
State law requires children under 16 to be secured in proper child restraint and safety systems while riding in a vehicle.

Age and Weight	Restraint Requirement
Under age 2, or weighing less than 30 pounds, regardless of age	Rear-facing-only car seat or rear facing convertible seat with a 5-point harness
Age 2 to 5, or weighing less than 40 pounds, regardless of age	Rear- or forward-facing child restraint with a 5-point harness
Age 5 to 8, or weighing between 40-60 pounds	5 point-harness or booster seat
Age 8 or older and weighing 60 pounds or more	Booster seat or seat belt

If a child's age and weight fall in two different categories (for example, a child is less than two years old but weighs more than 30 pounds) the more restrictive requirement (rear-facing car seat in this instance) applies. Under Connecticut law, child restraint systems are required to be equipped with a five-point harness. The law also prohibits the placement of a rear-facing child restraint system in the front seat of a vehicle with functional passenger side airbag.

In addition to complying with state laws requiring child restraint systems in vehicles, ALL drivers are obligated to ensure that any passenger between 7 and 16 years old is wearing a seat safety belt. All drivers and each of their passengers are required to wear a seat safety belt. If either the driver or the passengers fails to wear the seat belt, each could be cited for a violation.

Misconceptions still exist
Some people still have "bad information" about using safety belts. For example:

- *"Safety belts can trap you inside a car."*
  It takes less than a second to undo a safety belt. Crashes in which a vehicle catches fire or sinks in deep water and passengers are "trapped" seldom happen. Even if they do, a safety belt may keep you from being knocked out. Your chance to escape will be better if you are conscious.
- *"Safety 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 posted at less than 45 mph.
- *"Some people are thrown clear in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch."*
  Your chances of not being killed in an accident are much better if you stay inside the vehicle. Safety belts can keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle and into the path of another one.
- *"If I get hit from the side, I am better off being thrown across the car and away from the crash point."*
  When a vehicle is struck from the side, it will move sideways. Everything in the vehicle that is not fastened down, including the passengers, will slide toward the point of crash, not away from it.
- *"I can brace myself at slow speeds."*
  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 impact.

Remember: Click it or Ticket!

Connecticut Cell Phone Laws

Hand-held cell phones or mobile electronic devices may not be used while operating a motor vehicle on any public highway. State law also prohibits using these devices when a vehicle is temporarily stopped because of traffic, road conditions or a traffic control sign or signal. You may use your cell phone or mobile electronic devices if parked safely on the side or shoulder of a highway. Drivers are permitted only to use hands-free mobile telephone accessories. However, drivers who are 16 or 17 years of age are not permitted to use any type of cell phone or mobile electronic device, including a hands-free device. A "mobile electronic device" includes a laptop computer, personal digital assistant or paging or text-messaging device.

The exceptions to this requirement, where a cell phone or mobile electronic device may be used, by a driver of any age, is an emergency situation, when contacting an emergency response operator, a hospital, physician's office, health clinic, ambulance company or fire or police department. In addition, drivers who are 18 years of age and older who are peace officers, firefighters, or ambulance drivers may use hand-held cell phones and electronic devices.

Any 16- or 17-year-old found violating Connecticut's cell phone law will be charged with a moving violation. If an operator is under the age of 18, a conviction for violating the cell phone law will result in a license suspension. If an operator is under age 18, it is also a moving violation, which is counted when determining if attendance is required in the operator retraining program (see page 35).

Connecticut Insurance Laws

Connecticut law requires continuous insurance coverage on any registered vehicle. If you (or the vehicle owner) fail to maintain insurance, the insurance company will send a report of cancellation to the DMV. You will be notified by the DMV of the violation.

This notice offers the registered owner the opportunity to enter into an Insurance Compliance agreement, show proof of insurance and pay the insurance compliance fine. By doing so, no further action will be taken against the registered owner as long as insurance coverage on the vehicle is continually maintained while the vehicle is registered in the owner's name. Failure to respond to your warning notice will result in suspension of the registration. A vehicle cannot be operated legally on any public highway without registration.

For more information visit the DMV Web site under insurance at **ct.gov/dmv**.

Study Questions

(Answers can be found at the end of the manual)

1. Worn tires can cause

a) Difficult turning

b) Hydroplaning

c) Increased stopping distance

d) All of the above

2. Which statement is false?

a) You should always check your seat and mirrors before you start to drive

b) After market, any changes to equipment, such as tinted windows, are legal

c) The driver should always have his or her seatbelt on

d) Only your brakes can stop your vehicle

3 Driving Behaviors

Good Driving Practices

Starting

Check the vehicle owner's manual for how to best start the vehicle. 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. In some vehicles, the clutch must be depressed. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park."

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 that the engine does not over accelerate or stall when shifting between gears.

Steering

Both hands should be placed on opposite sides of the steering wheel (i.e., left hand between 8 and 10 o'clock and right hand between 2 and 4 o'clock). This position is comfortable; on high-speed roads it allows you to make turns without taking your hands from the wheel.

- **Hand-over-Hand**
  When turning sharp corners, turn the steering wheel using the "hand-over-hand" technique. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous.
- **Push/Pull**
  In the Push/Pull method a driver's knuckles should be facing outward as the hands are holding the steering wheel firmly on the outside rim. Push one hand to the 12 o'clock position letting the wheel slide through the other hand. Bring that hand to the 1 or 11 o'clock position and then pull down. The other hand slides back to the original starting position. Continue as necessary until the process is complete. If this is done correctly, the two hands will never cross and will remain on the wheel at all times.

Scanning

To be a good driver, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind your 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 you of problems ahead, and signs giving you directions.

Look Ahead. In order to avoid last minute braking or turning, you should look well down the road. 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 around your vehicle and along the road. Looking well down the road will also help you to steer more straightly with less weaving. Safer drivers tend to look at least 12 seconds ahead of their vehicles. This is the distance that your vehicle will travel in 12 seconds.

In the city, 12 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, you should try to look at least one block ahead. On the highway, 12 seconds is about four city blocks (or a quarter of a mile).

Here is how to figure how far ahead you are looking:

1. Find a non-moving object (a sign, a telephone pole, etc.) near the road about as far ahead as you are looking.
2. Start counting "one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand," etc. until you reach the object.
3. 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. By doing so, you can avoid the need to stop or turn quickly. The least amount of times you have to stop or turn quickly, the less likely you are to run into someone or have someone run into you.

By looking well ahead, you can save on fuel. Every time you have to stop quickly, it takes time and fuel to get your vehicle back up to speed. Drivers who look ahead can slow down gradually or change lanes and avoid the unnecessary braking, which leads to lower miles-per-gallon.

Traffic would flow more smoothly if everyone looked well ahead. Making driving changes early gives drivers behind you more time to react. The earlier you act, the earlier the vehicle behind you can act. By seeing necessary driving changes early, you can drive more safely; this helps drivers behind you drive more safely too. It also keeps traffic moving at a steady pace.

Look to the Sides. As other vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians may cross or enter your path at any time, you should look to the sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings, or while changing lanes.

Look Behind. You must also check the traffic behind you. You need to check 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. If you check, you will have time to do something about it. It is very important to look for vehicles behind you when you change lanes, slow down, back up or drive down a long or steep hill.

Intersections. Intersections are any place where traffic merges or crosses. These include cross streets, side streets, driveways, and shopping centers or parking lot entrances. Before you enter an intersection, look both left and right for approaching vehicles, bicycles, and/or crossing pedestrians. When stopped, look both left and right just before you start moving. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure that the path is clear all the way through the intersection and that you will not block it if you have to stop.

Before you turn left across traffic, look for a safe opening in the traffic. Remember, oncoming traffic, including bicycles, always has the right-of-way. Look to the street onto which you are turning to make sure that no vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians are in your path – this would leave you stuck in the path of oncoming traffic. Look one more time in the direction of oncoming traffic before you turn.

Before turning right, make sure that there is no traffic approaching from your left and no oncoming traffic turning into your path. Do not begin your turn without checking for pedestrians crossing where you will be turning. Do not turn immediately after passing a bicycle. You may turn right at a red light after stopping, unless it is prohibited by a traffic sign.

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs to tell you that no one will be crossing in front of you. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals or signs. Look left and right at an intersection, even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign. This is especially important just after the light has turned green. This is when people on the cross street are most likely to hurry through the intersection before the light changes to red. Some drivers who fail to pay attention may not stop. State law requires a driver at an intersection with an inoperative stop light to stop as though the intersection was controlled by a stop sign.

Make sure you can clearly see crossing traffic before entering an intersection. If you are stopped and your view of a cross street is blocked, edge forward slowly until you can see. When you move forward slowly, crossing drivers can see the front of your vehicle before you can see them. This gives them a chance to slow down and warn you if necessary.

During heavy traffic, drivers are prohibited from entering any intersection unless there is sufficient space on the opposite side of the intersection to accommodate their vehicle without obstructing the passage of other vehicles or pedestrians. This is commonly known as “blocking the box” or causing “gridlock.”

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 important to look to the sides when you are near shopping centers, parking lots, construction areas, busy sidewalks, playgrounds, school yards, etc.

Railroad Crossings. As you approach any railroad crossing, slow down and look up and down the tracks to make sure that no trains are coming. Even if you have never seen a train at that crossing before, do not assume that none are coming. Assuming that a train is not coming is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings. Make sure there is room for your vehicle on the far side before you cross the tracks.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the passing train is well down the track before starting to cross. The train that just passed may hide another one that is approaching.

Work Zones

A work zone is any type of roadwork that may delay traffic conditions. Many work zones involve lane closures and detours. Moving equipment such as sweepers, line-painting trucks, mowing equipment and heavy machinery are common in work zones. Highway work zones are set up according to the type of road and the work to be done on the road. The work zone can be long or short term and can exist at anytime of the year, but most commonly in the summer.

Work zones on U.S. highways have become increasingly dangerous places for both workers and drivers. Approximately 40,000 people per year are injured as a result of motor vehicle crashes in work zones. There are a large number of work zones in place across America, therefore, highway agencies are working on not only improving devices used in work zones, but to change the behavior of drivers so crashes can be prevented.

When approaching a work zone watch for materials such as cones, barrels, signs, large vehicles, or workers in bright colored vests to warn you and direct you where to go. All temporary signs in work zones have an orange background and black letters or symbols. These signs will be found on the right side of the road, or on both left and right sides when the roadway is a divided highway. The signs tell you what to do and how soon you will encounter the work zone.

Most work zones also have signs alerting you to reductions in the speed limit through the work zone. These speed reductions are necessary for the safety of the workers and motorists. The reduced speed limits are clearly posted within the work zone and if there are no reduced speed limit signs, you should obey the normal posted speed limit.

In Connecticut, anyone convicted of speeding, disobeying traffic control devices, using an improper lane or endangering a highway worker within a work zone could face fines of up to $1,000, can be assessed points against his or her driver’s license and may be required to complete the driver retraining program. In addition, distracted driving fines are doubled for anyone convicted of illegally using a hand-held cellphone or mobile electronic device while driving in a work zone.

Signing, traffic control devices, roadway markings, flaggers and law enforcement officers are used to protect highway workers and to direct drivers safely through work zones or along marked detours. As a driver, you should learn and abide by the following safety tips for driving in work zones:

- Slow down, obey posted speed limits and be alert to conditions around you. Workers could be present.
- Follow the instructions on the work zone warning signs and those given by flaggers.
- Do not become oblivious to work zone signs when the work is long term or widespread.
- Be aware that traffic patterns in work zones can change daily including lane shifts or alternating lane closures.
- Use extreme caution when driving through a work zone at night whether workers are present or not.

- Watch the traffic around you and be prepared to react to what the traffic is doing. Check for tail and brake lights of vehicles ahead of you for indications of what is happening on the road ahead. Be ready to respond quickly.
- Merge as soon as possible. Motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by moving to the appropriate lane at first notice of an approaching work zone.
- Adjust your lane position away from the side where workers and equipment are located when possible.
- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment and workers. Increase your following distance. Do not tailgate.
- Some work zones, such as line painting, road patching and mowing are mobile. Just because you do not see the workers immediately after you see the warning sign does not mean they are not out there. Observe the posted signs until you see the one that says “End Road Work.”
- Concentrate when driving through work zones. Pay attention to your surroundings and do not become distracted from cell phones, changing the radio station or applying make-up.
- When you can, avoid work zones altogether by using alternate routes.
- Expect delays, plan for them and leave early to reach your destination on time.
- Calm down. Work zones are not there to inconvenience you. They are there to improve the roads for everyone.

Sharing the Road with Others

Sharing the road means “getting along, not getting ahead.” A courteous, alert, and knowledgeable driver will make the highways safer for all. Connecticut residents are choosing alternative methods of transportation, such as bicycling or walking. Motorists must pay increased attention to their surroundings. Drivers of passenger vehicles share the road with many other users: Emergency Vehicles • Pedestrians • Bicyclists • Moped and Motorcycle Riders • Slow Moving Vehicles • Horseback Riders

Vulnerable Users

Connecticut has a Vulnerable User’s Law which provides for higher penalties for drivers who fail to exercise reasonable care and cause the serious injury or death of a vulnerable user. Vulnerable users include pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, a person riding or driving an animal, highway workers, garbage trucks, tank vehicles, vehicles authorized by the US Government to carry mail and express delivery carriers. Drivers must allow for three feet of distance when passing. Vulnerable users are at greater risk of serious injury or death than vehicle occupants in a crash. Because of this greater vulnerability, drivers need to exercise special care around these roadway users.

Emergency Vehicles

You must yield the right-of-way to police vehicles, fire engines, ambulances or other emergency vehicles using sirens, air horns or red or blue flashing lights. When you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction you must pull over to the right edge of the road, or as near to the right as possible, and stop your vehicle. You must remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by a state or local police officer or a firefighter.

“Move Over Law”

When any vehicle is pulled over on any part of a highway or road, drivers must:

- SLOW DOWN (below the posted speed limit) *and...*
- Move their vehicle over one lane whenever it is safe to do so.

Pedestrians

Drivers must recognize the special safety needs of pedestrians. Drivers should be especially alert for children, the elderly, and disabled pedestrians. They are the most frequent victims in auto pedestrian collisions. Elderly and disabled pedestrians may have poor vision and hearing and may move slowly. Generally, pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks. There is a crosswalk at every intersection, even if it is not marked by painted lines. To determine where an unmarked crosswalk is, imagine that the sidewalk or shoulder at the corner extends across the road and meets the sidewalk or shoulder on the other side. Drivers must **slow or stop your vehicle and grant the right-of-way** for a pedestrian crossing at a crosswalk (marked or unmarked) when the pedestrian **is within any portion of the crosswalk.** This includes when the pedestrian:

- Steps to the curb at the entrance to the crosswalk and indicates intent to cross the road by raising his or her hand and arm toward oncoming traffic; or
- Indicates intent to cross the road by moving into the crosswalk’s entrance any body part or any extension of a body part, including a wheelchair, cane, walking stick, crutch, bicycle, electric bicycle, stroller, carriage, cart, or leashed or harnessed dog.

Opening Your Vehicle Door. Do not open a vehicle door if it hits or gets in the way of a pedestrian, bicyclist, or other moving traffic.

Children at Play and School Zones. Children are often the least predictable pedestrians and the most difficult to see. Take extra care to look out for children, especially near schools, bus stops, playgrounds, parks and ice cream trucks. Always be extra watchful when backing in or out of a driveway. Children may run behind or be playing behind your vehicle. Be particularly alert at all times for children and pedestrians in a school zone. Follow the signs or flashing lights that warn you that you are approaching a school or a school crossing. School hours are not the only time children are present. You must obey the slower posted speed limit in school zones or be subject to fines. Stop and yield to students who are crossing or if a crossing guard signals you to do so.

White Canes and Guide Dogs. Blind or partially blind pedestrians may carry a white cane or use the assistance of a guide dog. You must give the right-of-way to a pedestrian with a guide dog or who is carrying a white cane, with or without a colored tip. Stop and stay stopped if the person is attempting to cross or is in the process of crossing the road. At regulated intersections, remain stopped until the pedestrian is out of the road, even if you have a green light.

Bicyclists

Bicyclists are considered vehicles when used on roadways. They are expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorized vehicles. As a motorist, you should know that a bicyclist has the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as you. You should expect to see bicyclists on the road, driving with traffic. You should not be surprised to see a bicyclist using the left lane when turning. Additionally, when a lane is too narrow for cars and bikes to drive side-by-side, the bicyclist will "take the travel lane" which means driving in or near the center of the lane.

Respect for each other will aid in the smooth flow of traffic. Bicyclists may not be easily seen in traffic. You must be alert for bicyclists and be extra careful when approaching them. Just as motorists have different levels of skill; bicyclists also have varying levels of skills. A skillful bicyclist rides predictably and holds a steady line. An unskilled bicyclist may swerve unpredictably, ignore traffic signs and signals, and ride without a light at night. If you see an unskilled bicyclist, be ready for any sudden movements.

As a bicyclist:

- You are to follow the rules of the road and you are required to ride on the right side of the roadway. You are to ride as far to the right as you deem safe. Bicyclists may ride in the left hand edge of a right turn lane if they are proceeding straight.
- You must obey all traffic signs and signals and use hand signals to let others know what you plan to do.
- You are required to yield to pedestrians.
- You are required to wear a helmet if you are under 16 years of age. If you are 16 years of age or older you should consider wearing a helmet as a safety precaution. All bicyclists should wear brightly colored clothing, use required lights and reflectors, and keep your bicycle in good repair.

As a driver:

- You must yield to bicyclists in intersections as you would for pedestrians and other vehicles.
- You must yield the right-of-way to a bicyclist when a bicycle path or bike lane intersects a road.
- You must yield to bicyclists in a bicycle lane or persons on a sidewalk, before you turn across the lane or sidewalk.
- Fines are doubled for failure to yield right-of-way to a bicyclist.
- When approaching or passing a bicyclist slow down and pass only when you are able to give a minimum of three feet distance between your vehicle and the bicycle. Be aware of the width of your vehicle and any load or trailer that you are hauling.
- Be careful after you have passed a bicyclist. Do not slow down or stop quickly or turn right immediately. A motor vehicle's brakes are more powerful than a bicycle's and you could cause a crash.
- Do not sound your horn close to bicyclists, unless you have good cause to warn the bicyclist. Sounding your horn to alert your presence may startle them and cause them to steer into your path and crash. There may be a good reason for the bicyclist to be riding in the travel lane, such as roadway hazards not visible to motorists.
- When making turns, watch carefully for bicyclists entering your lane. Be especially careful if you see children riding bikes on the sidewalk. They may come onto the road.
- Never turn sharply in front of a bicyclist and do not force a bicyclist off the road.
- Although bicyclists are required to ride in the direction of traffic, you should look for them riding anywhere on the road way.
- Be particularly careful around bicyclists when the roadway is wet or covered with sand or gravel. Like motor vehicles, bicycles cannot brake as quickly or turn as sharply under these conditions. These conditions affect bicycles much more than vehicles. Bicyclists may use the full travel lane in instances where the shoulder or bike lane is unsafe due to various conditions including, but not limited to, those just listed.
- You may pass slow moving vehicles, including bicyclists, in a no passing zone if you can make the maneuver safely.
- Cooperate with bicyclists. They are required to use hand signals as shown, when turning and stopping. However, keep in mind that a bicyclist may be unable to signal if road or traffic conditions require them to keep both hands on the handlebars. Look for other clues of a bicyclist's intent, like turning their head or looking over their shoulder before changing lane position.



STOP



LEFT TURN



RIGHT TURN or



RIGHT TURN

- Consider a bicyclist's speed when you pass. If you are about to make a right turn, you must not pass a bicyclist immediately before the turn. To avoid a collision, you should slow down and let the cyclist clear the intersection before making your turn.
- Do not stop, park or drive on a designated bicycle path or lane unless you are entering or leaving an alley or driveway, performing official duties, directed by a police officer, or an emergency situation exists. You must yield to bicycles in the bicycle lane. You may turn across a bicycle lane but may not drive in the bicycle lane when approaching a turn.
- When parked on the street, check to the sides and rear for bicyclists before you open your vehicle door.
- You should check for bicyclists in your path before backing. Be especially cautious near schools or residential areas where bicyclists may be present.

Motorcycles

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other drivers. However, it is more difficult to see them and it is more difficult to determine what they will do. There are special situations and conditions we need to be aware of so we can safely share the road with motorcycles:

- Motorcycle operators have the right to use a complete traffic lane and two motorcycles may share a lane. Do not pass a motorcycle in the same lane. The motorcycle needs space to react to other traffic.
- Motorcycles are small and, therefore, more difficult to see. Their size also allows them to duck easily into your blind spot. Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots by turning your head and looking before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.
- Approximately one-half of all motorcycle crashes involve another motor vehicle. Nearly 40 percent were caused by the other vehicle turning left in front of the motorcyclist. Motorcycles have a much smaller profile than motor vehicles, which can make it more difficult to judge the speed and distance as they approach. Before turning left, be alert for motorcycles by looking carefully to the front and sides of your vehicle.
- Do not assume a motorcycle is turning when you see its turn signal flashing. Motorcycle turn signals may not self-cancel and the motorcyclist may have forgotten to turn them off. Do not pull out in front of a motorcycle until you see that it is actually beginning to turn. Keep in mind that motorcycles may not have turn signals so it is important to leave enough space for the motorcyclist to maneuver.
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows the motorcyclist to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.
- Obstacles and road conditions that may be minor to a motorist can be deadly to a motorcyclist. Be prepared for them to make sudden changes in lanes or speed as they attempt to avoid a hazard on the road, such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings and grooved pavement. Allow room for the motorcyclists to maneuver.
- Always increase your following distance when road or weather conditions are bad, in areas of poor illumination, and in unfamiliar areas. When following a motorcyclist, allow for a 3 to 4 second following distance or more in wet conditions. Motorcycles can stop quickly and following too closely endangers your life and that of the motorcyclist. You may distract the motorcyclist and if the motorcyclist makes a mistake you will not have enough time or space to avoid a crash.
- Always dim your headlights when approaching a motorcycle. Because of their vulnerability, the blinding effect of your high beams can be far more dangerous to them than to drivers of motor vehicles.
- When a motorcycle is passing your vehicle, you should maintain your lane position and speed. Allow the motorcyclist to complete the maneuver and assume proper lane position as quickly as possible. Never speed up or interfere with their ability to pass safely.

Slow Moving Vehicles

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 a crash.

- 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.
- Drivers are required to yield the right of way to a bus traveling in the same direction when the bus appropriately signals.
- Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. These vehicles should have a slow-moving decal (an orange triangle) on the back.
- State law permits passing of slow moving traffic, and pedestrians, parked or standing vehicles, animals, bicycles, mopeds and scooters in no passing zones. You may cross over a double yellow line in these instances; however, you must make sure you can see far enough ahead to enable you to safely pass before attempting this passing maneuver.
- Drive at a speed where you can always safely stop. To tell if you are driving too fast for conditions, use the “four-second sight-distance rule.” Pick out a stationary object as far ahead as you can clearly see (e.g. a sign or a telephone pole). Start counting “one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand.” If you reach the object before you finish saying “four-one-thousand,” you need to slow down. You are going too fast for your sight-distance. You must not drive faster than the distance you can see. If you do, you are not safe and could injure or kill yourself or others.

Ice Cream Trucks

The state law requires drivers when approaching or overtaking an ice cream truck displaying flashing lights and extending its stop signal arm and crossing arm, to stop their vehicles at least 10 feet from the front or back of the truck.

After stopping, you may proceed past the truck at a reasonable speed, up to 5 mph, and must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian crossing the road to or from the truck. Drivers are not required to stop and proceed in this manner when approaching or overtaking an ice cream truck that is in another lane separated by a safety island or physical barrier.

Horses

Horseback riders are subject to, and protected by, the rules of the road. They also must ride single file near the right curb or road edge, or on a usable right shoulder, lane or path. When you approach a horse on a public highway, you must reduce your speed (or stop, if necessary) to avoid striking, endangering or frightening a horse.

The law requires you to exercise due care when approaching a horse being ridden or led along a road. You must drive at a reasonable speed, and at a reasonable distance away from the horse. It is illegal to sound your horn or cause loud or unusual noises when approaching or passing a horse.

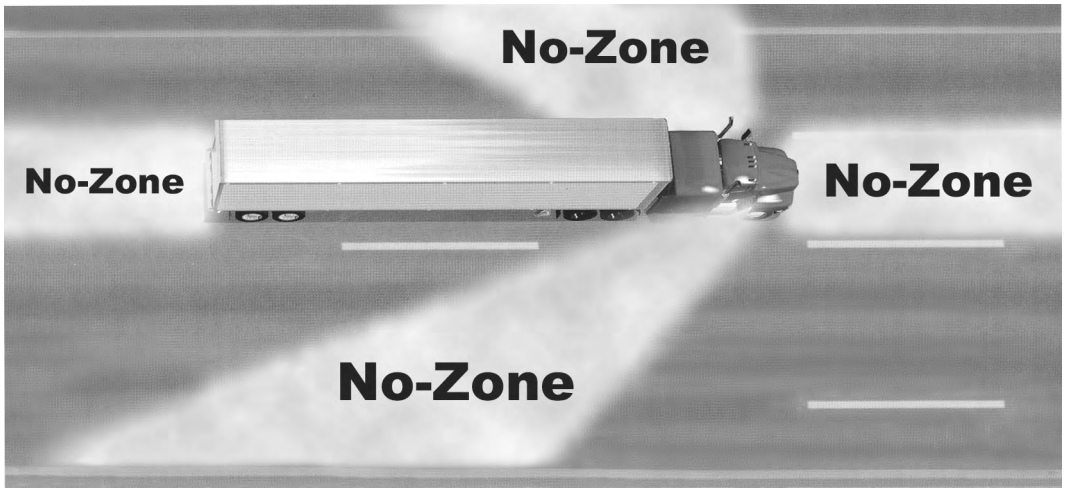
Sharing the Road with Trucks

Trucks, Tractor-Trailers and RV's

We all depend on trucks for everything we eat, wear, or use. A truck brought the car you are driving, the fuel to run it, and the parts and accessories that keep it in good condition. Safely sharing the road with trucks is an essential part of driving and is every bit as important as sharing the road with other vehicles.

No-Zone

Trucks, tractor-trailers, buses and recreational vehicles (RVs)— including motor homes, campers and travel trailers—are longer, higher and wider than other vehicles. They accelerate slowly and require greater stopping and turning distances. Plus, there are danger areas around these vehicles where crashes are more likely to occur. These areas are called No-Zones. No-Zones on the side,front and rear also include blind spots where your car disappears from the driver's view. Learning the No-Zones can save your life!



- **Side No-Zones:** Trucks, tractor-trailers, buses and RVs have big No-Zones on both sides, which are dangerous because these vehicles must make wide turns. These No-Zones or blind spots are much larger than your car's blind spots. If you can't see the driver's face in his side view mirror, then he can't see you.
- **Rear No-Zone:** Trucks, tractor-trailers, buses and RVs have huge No-Zones directly behind them. The driver can't see your car behind his vehicle and you can't see what's happening in traffic ahead of his vehicle. If the truck, bus or RV brakes or stops suddenly, you have no place to go and could crash into the vehicle's rear-end. Always maintain a safe following distance.
- **Front No-Zone:** You could get rear-ended by a truck, bus or RV if you cut in front too soon after passing the vehicle. If you cut in front and then suddenly slow down, truck, bus and RV drivers are forced to slam on their brakes. These vehicles need nearly twice the time and room to stop as cars. A truck and its tow vehicle may be as long as 65 feet and it may take you more than half a mile of clear road to pass. When passing, look for the entire front of the truck in your rearview mirror before pulling in front. And then, don't slow down!
- **Wide Turns:** Trucks, buses and RVs sometimes need to swing wide to the left or right in order to safely make a turn. They can't see the cars directly behind or beside them. In fact, their blind spots may stretch up to 20 feet in front of the cab and approximately 200 feet behind the truck. Trying to squeeze between a truck, bus or RV and the curb, or another vehicle is an invitation to disaster.

Truck Drivers Are Human

Like everybody else, truck drivers want to avoid being involved in crashes. If you make a mistake, the truck driver will try to avoid a crash. However, an evasive maneuver in a truck can result in the truck driver crashing, even though you may get away unscathed. We hope this information will help you avoid such situations.

- Trucks accelerate more slowly than cars.
- Trucks need more room to maneuver safely.
- In a panic stop, trucks need more stopping distance.
- Because trucks are higher than they are wide, it is harder for the truck driver to safely take evasive action.
- Avoid the No-Zone (blind spots) around trucks.

Pass Trucks Safely

- Don't take needless chances to pass a truck. Always make sure you have room to complete your pass without having to resort to excessive speed.
- Check traffic in both the front and rear. Signal and change lanes when it is safe and legal to do so. Pass only where it is safe – never where you will have to complete your pass in a no-passing zone.
- When you do pass, complete the pass as promptly as traffic conditions permit. If you linger alongside the cab, you may be in a position where the truck driver cannot see you in the mirrors. If the truck driver has to change lanes for any reason, your vehicle could be involved in a crash because you were in a position where the truck driver could not see you.
- Signal and return to the right lane when you can see the front of the truck in your inside mirror. After passing, keep your speed up. Passing a vehicle and then slowing down is both dangerous and irritating.

- Avoid pulling in front of a truck when traffic may stop or slow down. By doing so, you take away the truck driver's margin of safety and risk causing a crash. The trucking industry stresses the importance of safe following distance.
- If a truck passes you, help the truck driver to pass safely by slowing down slightly to shorten the time required to pass. Never speed up. That is dangerous and illegal.
- When you meet a truck going the other way, keep as far to the right as you safely can for a greater margin of safety and to minimize wind turbulence.

Keep a Safe Following Distance Behind Trucks
If you follow a truck closely, you are driving blind. You can't see around the truck and the truck driver can't see you in the mirrors. Never follow a truck at a time interval of less than three seconds. To check your following distance, pick a landmark on the side of the road. When the rear of the truck passes that point, count "one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand" at a normal rate. If you pass the same point before you have finished counting "three-one-thousand," you are following the truck too closely.

If you edge out to the left to see if there is room to pass, you may find yourself face-to-face with an oncoming vehicle that you could have seen if you had been following at a safe distance.

You may hit a pothole or debris that the truck has safely passed over.

In some cases, because of more brakes and more tires in contact with the road, a truck can slow or stop more quickly than a car. If you are following too closely, you may be unable to avoid a rear-end collision with the truck.

Never use your high beams when following a truck at night. The glare in the large side mirrors can blind the truck driver.

Avoid stopping too close behind a truck on an upgrade. If the truck rolls back when starting up, your vehicle could be damaged. Also, if you stop a little to either side of the truck, the truck driver will be able to see your vehicle in the mirrors.

Trucks Make Wide Right Turns
Did you ever feel the back of your vehicle go up over the curb when you were making a right turn? On every vehicle, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the shorter the path followed by the rear wheels. This is called off-track.

Off-track occurs on both left and right turns, but presents a greater safety problem on the right turns where a truck driver may have to first move to the left so the rear wheels won't jump the curb.

Resist the temptation to pass on the right of a truck that is approaching an intersection. If the truck driver makes a right turn, you could be caught between the truck and the curb.

Trucks Need Space While Backing Up
Truck drivers often must back from the street into a loading area. If you see a truck driver attempting to back, stop to give them a chance to do so safely. Never attempt to drive around a backing truck. You are likely to get out of the truck driver's field of view and may be needlessly involved in a crash.

Other Hints
- If a truck driver slows, stops, signals or changes lanes, you may be sure that there is a good reason for it. Be alert. Slow down and hold your position. Don't attempt to pass until you are certain that it is safe to do so.
- If you are approaching the entrance ramp to a highway, allow entering traffic to merge safely. When on the entrance ramp, check for an opening in the main flow of traffic that will allow you to merge safely. Never go all the way across several lanes of traffic from an on-ramp.
- Some trucks are required by law to stop at railroad crossings. Be alert and allow the truck driver to stop and to resume travel safely if no train is approaching.
- On a road with two or more lanes traveling in the same direction, except to pass, stay in the right lane. On a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction, use the center travel lane if there is a lot of entering or exiting traffic. Unless told to do so by officials, never drive on the shoulder of the road.

Maintaining a Space Cushion

You must always share the road with others. The more distance you keep between yourself and everyone else, the more time you have to react. This space is like a safety cushion. The more you have, the safer it can be. This section describes how to make sure you have enough space around you when you drive.

Space to Enter
When you enter into traffic, try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. 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 or you will not have enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If they 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 onto the main road.

Space to Merge
Any time you want to merge with other traffic, you need an opening of about four seconds. If you move into the middle of a four-second opening, both you and the vehicle that is behind you have a two-second following distance. You need a four-second opening whenever you change lanes or enter a roadway and when your lane merges with another travel lane. Do not try to merge into a opening that is too small. A small opening can quickly become even smaller. Enter an opening that gives you a big enough space cushion to be safe.

Keep Pace with Traffic
Vehicles moving in the same direction at the same speed cannot hit one another. Crashes, involving two or more vehicles, often happen when drivers go faster or slower than other vehicles on the road. If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for a collision. The vehicle you are passing may change lanes unexpectedly. An oncoming vehicle may also appear suddenly on a two-lane road. Slow down and keep pace with other traffic. Speeding does not save more than a few minutes an hour.

Space to Leave
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 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.

Space to Cross
When you cross traffic, you need a large enough opening to get all the way across the road.

- Stopping halfway across traffic is only safe when there is a median divider large enough for your vehicle. Do not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle is sticking into traffic.
- If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while stuck across a lane with vehicles coming toward you.
- Even if you have the green light, do not start across the intersection if there are vehicles blocking your way. If you are caught in the intersection when the light changes to red, you will block other traffic. You can get a ticket for blocking an intersection.
- Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. For example, do not assume that you can turn just because an approaching vehicle also has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn after they pass your vehicle or may have forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles, as their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn, then go if it is safe to do so.
- When you cross railroad tracks, make sure you can cross without having to stop on the tracks.

Space Ahead
Rear-end crashes are very common. They are caused by drivers who follow too closely to be able to stop before hitting the vehicle ahead when it suddenly stops. There is an easy way to tell if you are following too closely. It is called the “three-second rule” and it works at any speed.

How to use the “three-second” rule:

- Watch for when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign, pole, or any other stationary point.
- Count the seconds it takes you to reach the same spot – “one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand.”
- You are following too closely if you pass the mark before you finish counting.
- If so, drop back and then count again at another spot to check the new following distance.
- Repeat until you are following no closer than “three seconds.”

There are also situations where you need more space in front of your vehicle. In the following situations, you may need a four-second following distance to be safe.

When to use the “four-second” rule:

- **Slippery Roads.** Because you need more distance to stop your vehicle on slippery roads, you must leave more space in front of you. If the vehicle ahead suddenly stops, you will need the extra distance to stop safely.
- **The Driver Behind You Wants to Pass.** Slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle. Slowing will also allow the pass to be completed sooner.
- **Following Motorcycles.** If the motorcycle should fall, you need extra distance to avoid the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet and icy roads, gravel roads, and metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings and streetcar or railroad tracks.
- **Following Drivers Who Cannot See You.** The drivers of trucks, buses, vans, or vehicles pulling campers or trailers may not be able to see you when you are directly behind them. They could stop suddenly without knowing you are there. Large vehicles also block your view of the road ahead. Falling back allows you more room to see ahead.
- **You are Being Followed Closely.** If you are being followed closely, pull to the right and allow the vehicle behind you to pass.
- **Pulling a Trailer.** The extra weight increases your stopping distance.
- **Low Visibility.** When it is hard for you to see ahead because of darkness or bad weather, you need to increase your following distance.
- **Following Emergency Vehicles.** Police vehicles, ambulances, and fire trucks need more room to operate.
- **Railroad Crossings.** Leave extra room for vehicles required to stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses, and vehicles carrying hazardous materials.
- **Stopped on a Hill or Incline.** Leave extra space when stopped on a hill or incline. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

Space Behind
It is not always easy to maintain a safe distance behind your vehicle. However, you can help keep the driver at a safe distance by keeping a steady speed and signaling in advance when you have to slow down or turn.

- **Stopping to Pick Up or Let Off Passengers.** Try to find a safe place out of traffic to stop.
- **Parallel Parking.** If you want to parallel park and there is traffic coming behind you, put on your turn signal, pull next to the space and allow following vehicles to pass before you park.
- **Driving Slowly.** When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other vehicles, pull to the side of the road when it is safe to do so and let them pass. There are "turnout" areas on some two-lane roads you can use. Other two-lane roads sometimes have "passing lanes."
- **Slowing Down.** Always check behind your vehicle whenever you slow down or stop. This is very important when you slow down quickly or at points where a following driver would not expect you to slow down, such as private driveways or parking spaces.
- **Being Tailgated.** Every now and then, you may find yourself being followed closely or "tailgated" by another driver. If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the road ahead is clear, then reduce speed slowly. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater. It increases your risk of being hit from behind.

Space to the Side
You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes.

- Avoid driving next to other vehicles on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead of or drop behind the other vehicle.
- Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. This means not crowding the centerline on a two-lane road. In general, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.
- Make room for entering vehicles on a roadway that has two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.
- Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle or from between vehicles or a parked vehicle could also pull out.
- Give extra space to pedestrians, bicycles and especially children. They can move into your path quickly and without warning. Do not share a lane with a pedestrian or bicyclist. Wait until it is safe to pass in the adjoining lane.
- "Split the difference" between two hazards. For example, steer a middle course between oncoming and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the dangerous side. If the oncoming vehicle is a tractor-trailer, leave a little more room on the side that the truck will pass.
- When possible, take potential hazards one at a time. For example, if you are overtaking a bicycle and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down and let the vehicle pass first so that you can give extra room to the bicycle. You must allow at least three feet of space between your vehicle and the bicycle when passing a bicycle.

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. You will be in their blind spot. 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 towards you.
- Never stay alongside a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots — it is hard for drivers of large vehicles to see you. Please see page 19 on sharing the road with trucks.

Trouble Spots
Wherever people or traffic gathers, 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 or situations 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.
- **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, preparing to stop, and then speeding up again when they leave the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- **Schools, playgrounds and residential streets.** There are often children in these areas. Always be alert for children crossing the street or running or riding into the street without looking.
- **Railroad crossings.** You need to make sure that there are no trains coming and that you have room to cross. Some crossings are bumpy, so you need to slow down to cross safely. Do not pass if there is a railroad grade crossing ahead.

Changing Lanes

When there are no signs or markings to control the use of lanes, there are rules that indicate which lane is to be used. Remember that you must allow 3 feet between your vehicle and a bicycle when passing a bicycle. These rules cover general driving, passing, and turning. Whenever you want to change lanes, you must check that there are no vehicles in your way in the lane you want to enter. This means you must check for traffic to the side of and behind your vehicle before you change lanes. Changing lanes includes: moving 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:

- **Look in your rear-view 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. You must turn your head and look to see vehicles in your blind spot.
- **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, the 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 vehicles ahead of you at the same time. Check over your shoulder for traffic in your blind spot just before you change lanes. Look several times if you need to so as not to look for too long a period at any one time. 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 that you want to enter.
- **Take one lane at a time.** If you want to change several lanes, take them one at a time. Like going up or down stairs one-step at a time, it is safest and easiest to merge one lane at a time. It is very difficult to determine that all of the lanes are free and safe to cross. If you wait until all of the lanes are clear, you can tie up traffic and even cause a crash.

Passing

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to pass safely. Remember that you must allow 3 feet between your vehicle and a bicycle when passing a bicycle. Do not count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once. Be safe. As a general rule, only pass one vehicle at a time.

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.
- A patch of ice, a pothole, or something on the road.

Rules of Passing. At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10-second opening in oncoming traffic and sight-distance to pass. You must judge whether you will 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 1600 feet (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 away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can actually see that it is coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are not sure, wait to pass until you are sure that there is enough space.

Return to your lane. Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do not count on other drivers to make room for you. Before you return to the driving lane, be sure to leave enough room between yourself and the vehicle you have passed. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rear-view mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

When Not to Pass. Signs or lane markings that indicate a no passing zone tell you that you cannot see far enough ahead to pass. 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 trains can be blocked. 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. 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.

On Multi-Lane roads. The left-most lane is intended for passing 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. When your direction of travel is less than three lanes, Connecticut law requires you to drive in the right lane, except when passing. If you need to make a left turn or exit the highway on the left you may move into the left lane. Always remember to do so safely and with a signal.

Turning

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. This way, you will cross the fewest lanes of traffic. 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 and once it is safe to do so, you can change to another lane if you need to. Remember to always look and signal before changing lanes.

- **Right turns.** On right turns, avoid swinging wide to the left before making the turn. If you swing wide, the driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or going to turn left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers who are in the far lane will not expect to see you there.
- **Left turns.** When making a left turn, avoid cutting the corner so sharply that you run into someone approaching from the left. However, be sure to leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you.
- **Multiple lanes turning.** If there are signs or lane markings that allow for two or more turning lanes, stay in your lane during the turn. Remember when your direction of travel is less than three lanes, Connecticut law requires you to drive in the right lane, except when passing.
- **Turning and Bicycles.** State law and safety require special care when turning near bicyclists. Be aware of the position of bicyclists when turning. Never turn right immediately after passing a bicyclist. Yield to bicycles when turning as you would to any other road vehicle.

Backing

Never back a vehicle in any travel lane, it is illegal and unsafe to do so, except to parallel park or to perform a three-point or K turn. 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 but go on to where you can safely turn around. 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.

It is hard for you to see behind your vehicle. Try to do as little backing as possible. In a shopping center, try to find a parking space you can drive through so that you can drive forward when you leave.

Here are some hints that will help you back your vehicle safely when backing is necessary:

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
- Turn around and look over your right shoulder so that you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors, as you cannot see directly behind your vehicle with these.
- Back slowly – your vehicle is much harder to steer when you are backing.
- It's also helpful to stop occasionally and check your rear view mirrors as the design of some vehicles prevents a clear view to the rear.
- Whenever possible, use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.

Visibility

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 crashes is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides, and behind your vehicle. You must also be alert for unexpected events. You must use your headlights at night and at other times when it's hard to see. You must pay attention to what is going on around you. Many crashes occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving.

Hills and Curves. You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile (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.

Check your mirrors when you are going down hills or mountains. Vehicles often build up speed going down a steep grade. Be alert for large trucks and buses that may be going too fast.

Others Who Cannot See You. Anyone who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. Those who could have trouble seeing you include:

- A driver at an intersection or driveway whose view is blocked by buildings, trees, or other vehicles.
- A driver backing into the roadway or backing into or pulling out of parking spaces.
- A driver whose windows are covered with snow or ice or are steamed-up.
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or with their hats pulled down.
- People who may be ready to get out of a vehicle or walk out from between parked vehicles. Give parked vehicles as much room as you can.

Things NOT to do while driving:

- **Do not** take your eyes off the road for more than a few seconds at any one time. 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. In many crashes with motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians, drivers reported that they looked but did not see them.
- **Do not** drive with head or earphones that cover or go into both ears. These are illegal in many states and make it too hard to hear emergency horns or sirens.
- **Do not** slow down just to look at a crash or someone getting a ticket or other roadside activity. This is called "rubber necking" and could cause you to be in a crash. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. Rubbernecking can also increase congestion. When you pass these roadside activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as quickly and safely as you can.

Hazardous Conditions

There are various road conditions that require slow speeds for safety. For example, you must slow down before a sharp 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 through the 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.

Tire Conditions
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 or dirt roads as you do on concrete or asphalt roads. When driving on gravel or dirt, you must slow down. It will take you much longer to stop and it is also 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, 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.

Stop Light Not Working
State law requires a driver at an intersection with an inoperative stop light to stop as though the intersection was controlled by a stop sign.

Slippery Roads
Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow, or sleet. These all make the roadway slippery. When the road is slippery, the vehicle's tires do not grip as well as they do on a dry road. On a wet road, you should reduce your speed by about 10 mph. On packed snow, you should cut your speed in half. Use snow tires or chains when the road has snow on it. On ice, you must slow to a crawl. It is very dangerous to drive on ice.

If at all possible, do not drive when the roads are icy. In some areas where there is a lot of icy weather, special studded tires are allowed. Because these tires can cause road damage, they are not allowed in many areas or on certain roads. Studded tires are permitted in Connecticut from November 15th through April 30th. Some road surfaces are slippery at certain times or places. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- On cold, wet days, shady spots can be icy. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Overpasses and other types of bridges can have icy spots. The pavement on bridges can be icy even when other pavement is not. This is because bridges do not have earth underneath them to help insulate them against the cold and thus can be colder and icier than other roadways.
- When the temperature is around the freezing point, ice can become wet. This makes it more slippery than at temperatures well below freezing.
- When it starts to rain on a hot day, pavement can be more slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes the oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. The road is more slippery until the oil is washed off.

Water on the Roadway
When it is raining or the road is wet, most tires have good traction up to about 35 mph. As you go faster, however, your tires will start to ride up on the water like water skis. This is called "hydroplaning." In a heavy rain, your tires can lose all traction with the road. Bald or badly worn tires will lose traction at much lower speeds. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down in the rain or when the road is wet.

If it feels like your tires have lost traction with the surface of the road, you should:

- Ease your foot off the gas pedal.
- Keep the steering wheel straight. Only try to turn if it's an emergency. If you must turn, do it slowly, or you will cause your vehicle to skid.
- Do not try to stop or turn until your tires are gripping the road again.

Dangerous Driving Behaviors

Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving, which can evolve into violent behavior known as "road rage," can cause many serious problems on our highways, including the deaths of drivers and passengers. Both new and veteran drivers must be aware of aggressive driving and road rage and must know how to deal with each when they occur. In particular, aggressive driving can occur sometimes without the driver even knowing it, yet it affects others with whom they share the road. Most people know that driving is a privilege and comes with responsibilities. One of those is self-control.

Reasons for Aggressive Driving
Experts across the country have been studying the issue of aggressive driving and road rage. There are a number of different reasons for the increase of incidents:

- Increased traffic congestion on roads.
- Parents who teach children that getting angry with other motorists and behaving aggressively toward them while on the road is permissible.
- A general decline in courtesy and civility.
- More youths today operate vehicles but lack the maturity to drive them responsibly and with caution during tense situations.

- Conflicts from other areas of our lives that distract us while driving, such as: family issues, marital problems, resentments from the job, difficulties with authority and feeling controlled by others.
- A sense of "territory" that leads people to presume that they own the space around themselves and their vehicles. When another vehicle invades that space in a way they dislike, they have an increased and unfounded tendency to strike back.
- A sense that as vehicles have become safer to drive, everyone is immune from danger in them, even at high speeds.
- Vehicles are often seen as "extensions" of the drivers. Ease of operation gives drivers the false sense that they control all aspects of the vehicle, including mechanical functioning of the vehicle as they operate it carelessly.

Avoiding the Risks

How to Avoid Conflict on the Road

There are solutions to these problems, but most of them come from within the driver. Here are some helpful hints to remember:

- Very often, another driver's aggressive driving makes one feel compelled to retaliate. However, it is best to leave punishment to the police. Call the police to report any instances of aggressive driving when you arrive at your destination.
- Don't compete on the road. Driving is not a contest. Let others who are racing pass you.
- If a driver, bicyclist, or any other user of the road does something that angers you, talk to your passengers about it instead of using your vehicle as a weapon to retaliate.
- If you get angry easily and feel that you do not have the best frame of mind while driving, consider postponing the trip until you feel better or have a friend drive or call a taxi.
- Give an aggressive driver the benefit of the doubt – it is possible or likely that he or she made a mistake from fatigue or from failing to pay attention, but did not intentionally set out to cause a problem for you.

Motorists would be well advised to keep their cool in traffic. Be patient and courteous to other drivers and correct unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger, infuriate or antagonize other motorists. Be aware of the behaviors that have resulted in violence in the past.

Behaviors That Can Cause Trouble

Lane Blocking. Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to pass.

Tailgating. Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations begin when one driver tailgates another.

Signal Lights. Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention to do so, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off.

Gestures. If you want to wave to another driver, please use all of your fingers. Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed and beaten.

Horn. Use your horn sparingly. If you must get someone's attention in a non-emergency situation, tap your horn lightly. Think twice before using your horn to say "hello" to a pedestrian. The driver in front of you may think you are honking at him or her. Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green. A stressed-out motorist may be set off. Various kinds of violence begin with a driver honking the horn.

Failure to Turn. In most areas, right-hand turns are allowed after a stop at a red light. Avoid the right-hand lane if you are not turning right.

Parking. Do not take more than one parking space. Do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped. Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle. When parallel parking, do not tap the other vehicles with your own. Look before backing up.

Headlights. Keep headlights on low beam, except where unlighted conditions require the use of high beams. Dim your lights for oncoming traffic. Don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson." Don't approach a vehicle from the rear with high beams and dim your lights as soon as a passing vehicle is alongside. You should also use the "four-second sight-distance rule" at night to make sure you are not "over-driving" your headlights.

Merging. When traffic permits, move out of the right-hand lane of a multi-lane highway to allow vehicles to enter from the on-ramps.

Blocking Traffic. If you are pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over when you have the opportunity so that motorists behind you can pass. Also, do not block the road while talking to a pedestrian on the sidewalk. This behavior has resulted in violence from angry motorists.

Alarms. If you have an anti-theft alarm on your vehicle, learn how to turn it off quickly. When buying an alarm, select one that turns off after a short period of time.

Eye Contact. If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. This can be seen as a challenging gesture and can incite the other driver to violence. Get out of the way and do not acknowledge the other driver. If a motorist pursues you, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station, convenience store, or other public and well-lit location where you can get help.

Driver Distractions

A distraction is anything that takes your attention away from driving. Driver distractions may occur anytime and anywhere. Distracted driving can cause collisions, resulting in injury, death or property damage. Costs associated with such crashes, including those resulting from criminal and civil lawsuits can be extremely high. Taking your eyes off the road or hands off the steering wheel presents obvious driving risks. Mental activities that take your mind away from driving are just as dangerous. Your eyes can gaze at objects but fail to see them because your mind is thinking of something else.

Possible distractions that could occur inside a moving vehicle:

- Dialing numbers or talking on a cell phone
- Adjusting radio, compact disc or climate controls
- Using global positioning systems (GPS) or navigation systems
- Using digital video disc (DVD) players
- Using the dashboard control panel
- Grooming (shaving, applying makeup, combing hair, etc.)
- Talking to passengers
- Attending to children or pets in the vehicle
- Eating, drinking or smoking
- Reading maps or other literature
- Picking up something that fell

Possible distractions that could occur outside a moving vehicle:

- Outside traffic/vehicle
- Police pulling someone over
- Sunlight/sunset
- People/objects in roadway
- Crash scene
- Road construction
- Reading billboards or other road advertisements

There are things you can do to keep from getting distracted:

- Avoid arguments and stressful or emotional conversations with passengers that may distract your attention from the road.
- Instead of eating while driving, leave a little early to allow yourself time to stop to eat.
- Be sure children are properly and safely buckled up and give them books, toys or games to occupy their time.
- Properly secure pets in a pet carrier or portable kennel before moving your vehicle.
- Adjust vehicle controls before you begin your trip, take advantage of normal stops to adjust controls or ask your passenger to adjust controls.
- Do not look at something in the distance. Those things are never more important than concentrating on your immediate path of travel.
- Review maps and plan your route before you begin driving. If you need to look at a map while driving stop in a safe parking area.
- Do not talk with friends in other vehicles or wear headphones to listen to music. These can be deadly when combined with driving.
- Stay focused, pay attention, and expect the unexpected.

You also need to be able to recognize other drivers who are distracted. Not recognizing other distracted drivers can prevent you from perceiving or reacting correctly in time to prevent a crash. Watch for:

- Vehicles that may drift over the lane divider lines or within their own lane
- Vehicles traveling at inconsistent speeds
- Drivers who are busy with objects, such as maps, food, cigarettes or cell phones
- Drivers who appear to be involved in arguments with other passengers
- Drivers of slow moving or commercial vehicles

Give a distracted driver plenty of room and maintain a safe following distance of 3 to 4 seconds. Be very careful when passing a driver who seems to be distracted. The other driver may not be aware of your presence, and he/she may drift in front of you.

You must maintain your attention to the driving task. You are completely and solely responsible for operating your vehicle in a safe manner. This includes the responsibility for controlling everything that occurs within the vehicle as well. If you are distracted and you experience a crash, the responsibility falls on you, not the distraction.

Fatigue

Fatigue is physical or mental tiredness that can be caused by physical or mental strain, repetitive tasks, illness or lack of sleep. Just like alcohol and drugs, it impairs your vision and judgment. Fatigue causes errors related to speed and distance, increases your risk of being in a crash and causes you to take more time to make decisions, which can make you more irritable and make you get upset more easily. When you are fatigued, you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash, injuring or killing yourself or others.

While anyone who drives tired is taking a risk, studies show that the groups described below are regularly sleep-deprived and are at special risk for having a fatigue related crash:

- Young Adults – People 16 to 24 years old often need more sleep than an average adult. Many young adults have died due to drowsy driving. It is a real threat that you should take seriously.
- People with Undiagnosed or Untreated Sleep Disorders – People with untreated obstructive sleep apnea are 7 times more likely to fall asleep at the wheel. Sleep apnea is a serious, potentially life-threatening condition that often goes unrecognized and undiagnosed.
- Shift Workers and People Working Long Hours – A person's biological clock is naturally tuned to sleep during the night. Working the night shift increases your risk of falling asleep at the wheel by nearly 6 times; rotating-shift workers and people working more than 60 hours a week need to be particularly careful (source: AAA Foundation Study – Why Do People Have Drowsy Driving Crashes).

Before a Trip Do the Following:

- Get adequate sleep—most adults need 7 to 9 hours to maintain proper alertness during the day
- Schedule proper breaks—about every 100 miles or 2 hours during long trips
- Arrange for a travel companion—someone to talk with and share the driving
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medications—check your labels or ask your doctor

Warning Signs of Fatigue:

- You turn up the radio or roll down the window to wake yourself up
- You have trouble focusing, keeping your eyes open or your head up
- You yawn or rub your eyes repeatedly
- You drift from your lane, tailgate or miss signs or exits
- You daydream or have wandering thoughts
- You feel restless, irritable or aggressive
- You have Impaired reaction time and judgment
- You have decreased performance, alertness and motivation

Ways to Prevent a Fatigue-Related Crash While Driving:

- Watch for the warning signs of fatigue.
- Stop driving—pull off at the next exit, rest area or find a place to sleep for the night.
- Take a nap—find a safe parking area to take a 15 to 20 minute nap.
- Consume caffeine – the equivalent of 2 cups of coffee can increase alertness for several hours. Avoid drinking too much caffeine and keep in mind that it will wear off. Do not rely on caffeine to prevent fatigue.
- Try consuming caffeine before taking a short nap to get the benefits of both.
- Driving at night – Try not to drive late at night between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.
- The best way to prevent fatigue is sleep.

Fatigue-related crashes tend to be single-vehicle crashes in which a car or truck leaves the roadway and then turns over or hits a fixed object. These crashes are due to driver fatigue, drowsiness or inattention. Rumble strips help prevent fatigue-related crashes. They consist of raised or grooved patterns installed in the pavement of shoulders or directly in travel lanes. When a vehicle's tires pass over them, you are alerted by a sudden and loud rumbling sound followed by a loud vibration of the vehicle. If you run over a shoulder rumble strip, pull off the road at a safe place immediately and check your alertness level.

Health

Driving is a complex skill. Many health problems – a bad cold, infection or virus can affect your driving. 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.

There are many health conditions that can affect your driving. Many over-the-counter and prescription medications can affect your driving. Check with your doctor if you feel you may have a condition that could prevent you from driving safely.

Emotions

Emotions can have a great effect on your driving safely. They can interfere with your ability to think, can create mental distractions, increase risk taking, create a lack of attention, and can interrupt the ability to process information. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry or depressed.

There are ways of dealing with your emotions:

- If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary take a short walk or nap, but stay off of the road until you have calmed down.
- If you are worried, down or are upset about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some drivers find that listening to the radio helps, as long as it is not distracting from safe driving.
- 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 tend not to speed or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or cause a crash. For example, do not drive faster than the flow of traffic. Darting in and around other traffic can be fatal.
- Have someone else drive.

Remember to Follow Connecticut's Teen Safe Driving Laws
Read them at ct.gov/teendriving

CONNECTICUT
Teen-Parent Driver Agreement

Teen-Parent Driving Agreements are a proven way to raise awareness of the dangers of teen driving and reduce a teen driver's crash risk. Motor vehicle crashes remain the #1 killer of teens. This Agreement spells out safety risks and what happens if the teen driver violates his/her obligations. Complete and sign this Agreement when your teen obtains a learner's permit, and review it again when your teen obtains a license.

Safety Risks *(check-off after discussing)*

- ❏ Driving is especially dangerous for teens because the human brain does not fully develop its ability to assess risk and danger or control impulse until we reach our mid-20s. Teen driver training cannot overcome this condition.
- ❏ Passing a training course and obtaining a driver's license means that a teen is only a beginner; ***it does not mean that a teen is a safe driver.***
- ❏ Failure to follow state driving laws can cause injury, death, damage to property, and can result in criminal and civil penalties.
- ❏ Speeding, reckless driving, alcohol or drug use, not using seat belts, illegal or distracting electronic devices, illegal passengers, and/or driving while fatigued risk the life of the driver, passengers, other drivers, and pedestrians.

Supervising Adult's Obligations (to be initialed)

I am a role model, and I will teach safe driving habits and be a safe, responsible driver at all times. I will obey all traffic laws, always wear my seat belt, never drink and drive, and not use illegal or distracting electronic devices.

I will, at any time and for any reason, give my teen a ride to avoid a dangerous driving or other situation. I agree that a call from my teen to provide a ride will not count as a violation of this Agreement.

Tips for Supervising Adults

Is your teen ready to drive?

Connecticut allows 16 year olds to obtain a learners permit, but an adult must decide if a teen is ready to drive. Some teens are not.

Connecticut allows parents to block teens from getting a license.

Understand the dangers of texting and cell phones.

Texting is a major cause of motor vehicle crashes. Texting takes the driver's eyes off the road and eliminates the time needed to avoid a crash. Teen drivers should not use any illegal or distracting electronic device.

At least 100 hours on the road before solo driving.

Connecticut law requires a minimum of 40 hours of supervised driving practice prior to getting a license. **It is recommended that a teen have at least 100 hours of supervised driving practice** before getting a license and driving solo.

For further information, go to:
www.ct.gov/teendriving

CONNECTICUT
Teen-Parent Driver Obligations

- ❑ **Supervising Adult:** My driving will be supervised by one or more adults who will decide, day by day, whether it is safe for me to drive.
- ❑ **Driving Plan:** I will get permission from the supervising adult every time I drive, and we will agree on my route, destination, time of return, and passengers. Joyriding, (driving with no destination or reason) is not allowed.
- ❑ **Seatbelts:** I will wear my seatbelt and I will make sure that every passenger in my car, of any age, wears one.
- ❑ **Electronic Devices:** Driving while texting, or talking on a cell phone (even hands-free) is illegal. I will not use any illegal or distracting electronic device while my vehicle is in motion.
- ❑ **Curfews:** I understand that in Connecticut I may not drive between 11pm and 5am, except for school, a job, a medical or religious reason, or a Safe Rides program, and I will not do so.
- ❑ **Passengers:** For my first six months with a license I may carry one adult who is supervising my driving. In the next six months I may add immediate family, but I may not transport friends until I have had my license for one year.
- ❑ **Alcohol or Drug Use, Fatigue:** I will NEVER drive under the influence or alcohol or drugs, or when I have not had sufficient rest. I will call my supervising adult for a ride if I find myself in need of avoiding a dangerous driving situation.
- ❑ **Speeding:** I will obey speed limits, stop signs, traffic signals, and the rules of the road. I will drive at a reasonable speed and adjust my speed based on road conditions (i.e., weather, turns, hills, visibility, and unfamiliar roads).
- ❑ **Suspension of Driving:** IF I VIOLATE ANY OF THESE OBLIGATIONS, MY DRIVING PRIVILEGES WILL BE SUSPENDED FOR _____ DAYS. Violations may be reported by law enforcement, neighbors, school personnel, or friends. This suspension will be in addition to state law requirements. If I drive while my privileges are suspended, they will be suspended indefinitely.
- ❑ **Finances:** During this Agreement, costs of insurance, gas, and maintenance will be divided:
- ❑ **Time Period:** This Agreement will remain in effect until _____

12 months at a minimum, or until the age of 18, whichever is later.

Commitment to Safety:

By signing below, we commit ourselves to the safe driving requirements and understandings stated in this Agreement.

_____ _____

Teen Driver Date

_____ _____

Supervising Adult Date

Help to Promote Teen Safe Driving by Participating in DMV's Contest for Teens: From the Driver's Seat to the Director's Chair

ct.gov/teendriving/contest

Drinking and Driving

Alcohol is involved in more than 40 percent of the traffic crashes in which someone is killed. If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chances of being in an accident are much greater than if you had not had any alcohol.

No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if they have been driving for many years. New drivers are more affected by alcohol than experienced drivers because they 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 heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of license, and even jail sentences.

Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous? Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. Alcohol goes from your stomach to your blood and to all parts of your body. 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. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. It is a little like a sunburn, by the time you feel it, it is already too late. Good judgment is important to driving.

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 skills decrease. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds, and the movement of other vehicles. You will also have trouble controlling your vehicle.

Alcohol and You

If You Drink, When Can You Drive? The best advice is if you drink alcohol – do not drive. Any amount of alcohol can affect your driving. You may be impaired and could be arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol. In Connecticut, people under 21 years old could be considered impaired after having only one drink of alcohol.

An alcohol drink is: 1.5 oz. of 80-proof liquor (one shot glass) straight or with a mixer, 12 oz. of beer (a regular size can, bottle, mug, or glass), or a 5 oz. glass of wine. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and are the same as having several normal drinks.

There is no way to sober up quickly. Coffee, fresh air, exercise, or cold showers will not help. Time is the only thing that will sober you up.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more persons and agree which one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group to be a “designated driver.” You can also use public transportation or a cab if available. **Do NOT drink and drive!**

Drugs and Driving

Besides alcohol, there are many other drugs that can affect a person’s ability to drive safely. These drugs can have effects like those of alcohol, or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs, and even many over-the-counter drugs. Drugs taken for headaches, colds, hay fever or other allergies or those to calm nerves can make a person drowsy and can affect their driving. Other prescription drugs can affect your reflexes, judgment, vision and alertness in ways similar to alcohol.

If you are driving, check the label before you take a drug for warnings about its effect(s). If you are not sure whether it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects.

Never drink alcohol while you are taking other drugs. These drugs could multiply the effects of alcohol or have additional effects of their own. These effects not only reduce your ability to be a safe driver, but could also cause serious health problems – even death.

Your License and Law

Alcohol and the Law

Connecticut law provides strict penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol. Penalties are imposed by the courts and the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. If you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, you will be asked to submit to a blood, breath, or urine test, which shows your blood alcohol content (BAC). If you fail this test, your operator’s license will be suspended for at least 45 days. You will be required to install and maintain an ignition interlock device (IID) as a condition of reinstatement. The IID will be required for at least six months or possibly more, depending on the number of prior offenses on your driving record.

In addition, if you are under 21 years of age, you are subject to “zero tolerance.” The law provides penalties for driving with any measurable amount of alcohol in your blood, defined as two hundredths of one percent (.02%) or more on both public roads and private property. If you are placed under arrest for DUI, you may be asked to submit to testing. If your test results are .02 percent or higher, the police will make a report to the Commissioner and your operator’s license will be suspended for at least 45 days. You will be required to install and maintain an ignition interlock device (IID) as a condition of reinstatement. The IID will be required for at least one year or possibly more, depending on the number of prior offenses on your driving record.

Regardless of age, if you refuse to take a test, your operator’s license will be suspended for at least 45 days. You will be required to install and maintain an ignition interlock device (IID) as a condition of reinstatement. The IID will be required for at least one year or possibly more, depending on the number of prior offenses on your driving record.

Other Suspensions for 16- and 17-Year-Old Drivers
The following table explains the suspension violations for 16- and 17-year-old drivers, all individuals who do not have a driver's license and teens with learner's permits. DMV will suspend the driver's license or privilege to obtain a license of a 16- or 17-year-old for any conviction of violating a teen driving restriction, speeding, reckless driving, street racing or using a cell phone or text messaging device.

VIOLATION	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense
Graduated Driver's License (GDL) violations under §14-36g(a) including: Passenger restrictions; Driving curfew; Operating public service vehicle or vanpool; More passengers than seat belts; Carrying passengers on a motorcycle less than six months after obtaining a motorcycle endorsement;	30-Day Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	(For all 2nd and subsequent offenses) 6-Month Suspension or until age 18, whichever is longer $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	
Use of Cell Phone/ Text Messaging §14-296aa	30-Day Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	90-Day Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	6-Month Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.
Speeding (20 mph over speed limit) §14-219	60-Day Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	90-Day Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.	6-Month Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines.
Reckless Driving §14-222 (a)	6-Month Suspension $175 license restoration fee court fines or imprisonment of not more than 30 days, or both.	1-Year Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.	1-Year Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.
Street Racing §14-224(c)	6-Month Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.	1-Year Suspension $175 license restoration fee, court fines or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.	1-Year Suspension $175 license restoration fee, Court fines or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.

Youthful Offender Status

Someone under the age of 18 who commits the following cannot be considered a youthful offender:

- Negligent homicide with a motor vehicle
- Evading responsibility following an accident that results in a death or serious injury
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Any youth adjudicated as a youthful offender for the following offenses shall have his or her record disclosed to DMV for the purpose of imposing a driver's license suspension or privilege to obtain a license:

- Reckless driving
- Operating while under suspension
- Evading responsibility following an accident involving property damage or non-serious injury
- Street racing
- Disregarding a police officer's signal to stop or increasing speed to elude an officer

Stopping for Police Vehicles

Police vehicles attempting to stop drivers will do so by means of a visual, flashing blue or flashing blue and red lights, or audible signal.

When being stopped by a police vehicle, police recommend:

- Drive as close as is safely practical to the right-hand edge or curb of the road, clear of any intersection, stop, and park.
- Limit the movements of the driver and/or passengers while stopping your vehicle.
- Drivers should keep their hands on the steering wheel and passengers should keep their hands in plain view.
- Obtain your driver license and/or vehicle registration only when requested.
- Keep all vehicle doors closed as the officer approaches, and remain in the vehicle unless requested to get out.
- If at night, turn on the vehicle's interior light after stopping and before the officer approaches.

If enforcement action is taken against you that you disagree with, do not argue with the officer at the scene. Traffic violations and traffic crimes charged against you are decided in court.

Operator Retraining Program for Repeat Offenders

The DMV also has a program for repeat offenders who commit moving violations. It is called the Operator Retraining Program and covers the principles of motor vehicle operation, how attitude contributes to the behavior found in aggressive driving, and the need to practice safe driving behavior.

Anyone age 24 or younger who commits two or more moving violations or suspension violations must complete the DMV-certified operator retraining program. A motorist who is 25 years old or older and who has three or more such convictions is required to attend and successfully pass a certified operator retraining program.

The following list is some of the offenses that may require a 16-or 17-year-old to take the retraining program:

- Driving in violation of learner's permit requirements.
- Driving in violation of Graduated Driver's License Laws (such as passenger restriction and driving curfew laws).
- Using a cell phone or other mobile electronic device outside of permitted uses. By law, drivers under 18 cannot use a cell phone or mobile electronic device, even if it is "hands-free."

After completing operator retraining, an additional moving violation within three years of the completion date will result in a license suspension of at least 30 days.

Study Questions

(Answers can be found at the end of the manual)

3. When you hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any directions, you must

a) Slow down

b) Pull to the right side of the road and stop

c) Continue driving at the same speed

d) Speed up

4. The No-Zone area is

a) An area where pedestrians cannot cross the street

b) An area where vehicles are not allowed to park

c) The danger areas around a truck where there are blind spots for the driver

d) None of the above

4 Road Safety

Rules of the Road

Speed Limits



You must comply with speed limits. They are based on the design of the road and the types of vehicles that use them. They take into account things you cannot see, such as side roads and driveways where people may pull out suddenly and the amount of traffic on that road.

Remember, speed limits are posted for ideal conditions. If the road is wet or icy, if you cannot see well, or if traffic is heavy, you must slow down. Even if you are driving the posted speed limit, you can get a ticket for traveling too fast for road conditions.

Speeding. The best way to prevent speeding is to know how fast you are going. Check the speedometer often. People are not very good at judging how fast they are driving. It is easy to be traveling much faster than you think. This is especially true when you leave high-speed roads and are driving on local roads. Follow the speed limit signs-they are there for your safety.

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. Driving safely means adjusting your speed for road and traffic conditions, how well you can see, and obeying speed limits.

Driving Too Slow. 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. If vehicles are piled up behind you, pull over when it is safe to do so and let them pass. You should either drive faster or consider using roads with slower speeds.

Stopping



Be alert so that you know when you will have to stop well ahead of time. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and usually points to a driver who was not paying attention. When you brake quickly, you could skid and lose control of your vehicle. You also make it harder for drivers behind you to stop without hitting you.

Try to avoid panic stops by seeing events well in advance. By slowing down or changing lanes, you may not have to stop at all. If you do, you can make a more gradual and safer stop. Remember, you must come to a complete stop at a stop sign or stop line.

How Well Can You See?

If something is in your path and you need to stop, you need to see it in time to be able to stop. It takes much longer and a farther distance to stop than many people think. If the pavement is dry and you have good tires and brakes:

- At 50 mph, it can take you about 400 feet to react to something you see and bring your vehicle to a stop. That is about the length of a city block.
- At 30 mph, it can take about 200 feet to stop. That is almost half a city block in length.

If you cannot see 400 feet ahead, it means you may not be driving safely at 50 mph. If you cannot see 200 feet ahead, you may not be driving safely at 30 mph. By the time you see an object in your path, it may be too late to stop without hitting it.

Right-of-Way

Where vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians are likely to meet one another and there are no signs or signals to regulate traffic, there are rules that dictate which driver must yield the right-of-way.

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.

The following “right-of-way” rules apply:

- You must obey signals given by a law enforcement officer, even if the officer’s signals contradict the traffic signal.
- Drivers must yield the right-of-way at all times to pedestrians who are in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. Additionally, drivers must yield the right-of-way to bicyclists and pedestrians where a bicycle path crosses the roadway.
- Pedestrians using a guide dog or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. Do not use your horn because it could confuse or frighten the pedestrian.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming vehicles going straight.
- Drivers entering a traffic circle or rotary must yield to drivers already in the circle.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign, yield sign or oncoming traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- At a four-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first goes first (after coming to a complete stop). If more than one vehicle arrives at the same time, the vehicle on the right goes first.

- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside must yield to vehicles already on the main road.
- Drivers may not enter an intersection unless they can get through it without having to stop. You should wait until traffic ahead clears so that you are not blocking the intersection.
- Drivers overtaking a vehicle traveling in the same direction must yield to that vehicle, even if the vehicle is slowing or coming to a stop.
- Drivers are required to yield the right-of-way to a bus traveling in the same direction when the bus appropriately signals.
- You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance or other emergency vehicle using a siren, air horn or a red or blue flashing light. When you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction you must pull over to the right edge of the road, or as near to the right as possible, and stop your vehicle. You must remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by a State or local police officer or a fire fighter. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over.
- You must stop for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing whether it is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road, or at an intersection you are approaching. You are not required to stop if the bus is traveling towards you and a median or other physical barrier separates the roadway. After the school bus red lights have stopped flashing, watch for children along the side of the road and do not proceed until they have completely left the roadway and it is safe to proceed.
- You must yield the right-of-way to trains crossing the roadway.

Roundabouts



Roundabouts are intersections that are controlled by a circular island in the center. They may have one lane or two lanes. Entering traffic must yield the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Each road approaching them is marked with a yield sign and may also have yield line markings on the pavement. They are easy to use. Simply position your vehicle correctly and use your turn signals to indicate where you want to go.

When approaching a roundabout, slow down. You must yield to traffic already in the roundabout and to any pedestrians in the crosswalk. If there is more than one lane as you approach the roundabout, follow the posted signs and lane-use controls to choose the proper lane for your intended movement. Enter the roundabout when there is a sufficient gap in traffic, use your right turn signal when you are about to reach your intended exit point, and yield to any pedestrians in the crosswalk on the exiting leg. Do not stop within the roundabout to allow traffic to enter the roundabout from another leg.

U-Turns



U-turns are not legal everywhere. So before you make a U-turn, check for signs prohibiting them. Never make a U-turn on an expressway. When making a U-turn, give a left turn signal, stop, check for approaching traffic. Proceed into the outside or right hand lane traveling in the opposite direction.

Parking

Drivers are responsible for making sure that their vehicle is not a hazard when it is parked. Whenever you park, be sure it is in a place that is far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic and visible to vehicles approaching from either direction.

- Always 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 curbside 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 vehicle. It is a good habit to lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle.
- 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 on a hill, turn your wheels sharply towards the side of the road or curb. This way, if your vehicle starts to roll downhill, it will roll away from traffic.

No-Parking Zones



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:

- In an intersection.
- On a crosswalk or sidewalk.
- In a construction area if your vehicle will block traffic.
- Within 25 feet of a stop sign.
- Within 25 feet of a pedestrian safety zone.
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- More than one foot from the curb.
- Blocking a driveway, alley, private road or area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk.
- On a bridge or overpass or in a tunnel or underpass.
- On the wrong side of the street.
- In a space marked for the handicapped, unless you have a handicap license plate or placard.
- On the roadside of a parked vehicle (double parking).
- On railroad tracks.
- Where a sign says you cannot park.
- In a bike lane.

Lights

Crashes often happen when 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 Headlights. Besides helping you see at night, headlights help other people see you. If necessary, flash your high beams to tell other road users you are there. Remember to turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing others. If you have trouble seeing them, they may have trouble seeing you. Use your headlights:

- 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. It's the law.
- When it begins to get dark. Even if you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.
- Whenever you are driving and lights are necessary, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked vehicles only.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming towards you may have trouble seeing your vehicle. Your headlights will help them see you.

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

- Use your high beams whenever there are no oncoming vehicles. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams. It is important to use high beams on unfamiliar roads, in construction areas, or where there may be people along the side of the road.
- Dim your high beams whenever you come within about a one-block distance of an oncoming vehicle.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle or when in heavy traffic.
- Use the low beams in fog or when it is snowing or raining hard. Light from high beams will reflect back, causing glare and making it more difficult to see ahead. Some vehicles also have fog lights that you should use under these conditions.
- Do not drive at any time with only your parking lights on. Parking lights are for parking only.

If a vehicle comes toward you with high beams on, flash your headlights quickly a couple of times. If the driver fails to dim the lights, look toward the right side of the road. This will keep you from being blinded by the other vehicles' headlights and allow you to see enough of the edge of the road to stay on course. Do not try to "get back" at other drivers by keeping your bright lights on. If you do, both of you may be blinded.

Here are some things that limit how well you can see and hints you can follow to be a safer driver:

- **Darkness.** It is harder to see at night. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see with your headlights. Your high beam headlights will let you see about 400 feet ahead. You should drive at a speed that allows you to stop within this distance, or about 50 mph.
- **Rain, Fog, or Snow.** In a very heavy rain, snowstorm, or thick fog, you may not be able to see much 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.
- **Hills and Curves.** You may not know what is on the other side of a hill or just around a curve, even if you have driven the road many times. If a vehicle 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.

Horn

Use Your Horn for Safety. 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. Give your horn a light tap:

- When a person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your lane of travel.
- When you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane.
- When a driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you.

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

- A child or older person is about to walk, run, or ride into the street.
- Another vehicle is in danger of hitting you.
- 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:

- Encouraging someone to drive faster or get out of the way.
- Notifying other drivers of an error.
- Greeting a friend.
- Around blind pedestrians.
- When approaching horses.

Turn Signals

Other drivers generally 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 necessary), or at least not be surprised by what you do.

Signal When You Change Direction. Signaling gives other drivers time to react to your moves. You should use your turn signals or hand signal before you change lanes, turn, merge into traffic, or park.

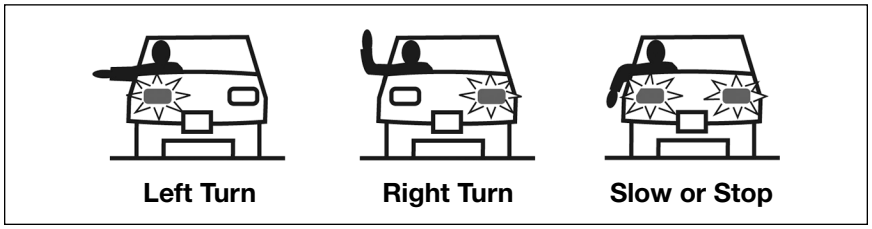
- Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.
- Try and signal at least three seconds before you make your move.
- Be careful that you do not signal too early. If there are streets, driveways, intersections, or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have reached that point before signaling. For example: If you intend to turn into a driveway just after an intersection, wait until you reach the intersection before signaling.
- 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 they are and they might pull into your path.
- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. After small turns, the signals may not turn off by themselves. Turn the signal off if it has not clicked off by itself. If you don't, others might think you plan to turn again.

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 quickly three or four times to let those behind you know you are about to slow down. Such as:

- Turning off a roadway that does not have separate turn or exit lanes.
- Parking or turning just before an intersection.
- Approaching an intersection where you expect to turn.
- Avoiding something in the road that a driver behind you cannot see, including stopped or slowing traffic.

Hand Signals



Vehicle Emergencies

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

Use Emergency Signals. If your vehicle breaks down on a highway, make sure that other drivers can see it. All too often, crashes occur because a driver did not see a stalled vehicle until it was too late to stop. Notify authorities that your vehicle (or someone else's) has broken down. If you are having vehicle trouble:

- Get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic if at all possible.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show that 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 do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand by the side of 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 try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- Lift the hood or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror or door handle to signal an emergency.

Equipment Failure

There is always a chance of you having a vehicle problem while you are driving. You should follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in the vehicle owner's manual. Following these preventive measures greatly reduces the chance of your vehicle having a problem. Here are some possible equipment failures and what you can do if they happen:

Brake Failure. If your brakes stop working:

- 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 does start 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 the vehicle is off the roadway. Do not drive the vehicle without brakes.

Tire Blowout. 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.

Power Failure. If the engine dies while you are driving:

- Keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Be aware that it may be difficult to turn, but it is possible.
- Pull off the roadway. The brakes will still work, but you may have to push very hard on the brake pedal.

Headlight Failure. If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Slow down gradually and pull off the road as soon as possible.
- Try the headlight switch a few times.
- If that does not work, put on the emergency flashers; turn on signals or fog lights if you have them.
- Do not operate your vehicle.

Gas Pedal Sticks. If the motor keeps going faster and faster:

- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Quickly shift to neutral.
- Pull off the road when it is safe to do so.
- Turn off the engine.

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

Avoiding Collisions

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

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

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

If you must stop quickly and you do not have an Antilock Braking System (ABS):

- 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.

Turning Quickly
In most cases, you can turn the vehicle more quickly than you can stop it. You should consider turning in order to avoid a collision.

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 the vehicle 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 should step on the brake pedal, then let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle, put more weight on the front tires, and allow for a quicker turn. Do not lock up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle can only skid ahead.

Remember that it is generally better to run off the road than to crash head-on into another vehicle.

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 to get out of danger. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

Dealing with Skids
Any road that is safe under normal conditions can be dangerous when it is wet or has snow or ice on it. High speeds under normal conditions also increase the possibility of a skid if you must turn or stop suddenly. Skids are caused when the tires can no longer grip the road. As you cannot control a vehicle when it is skidding, it is best not to cause your vehicle to skid in the first place. Skids happen when a driver travels too fast for conditions.

If Your Vehicle Begins to Skid:

- **Stay off the brake.** Until the vehicle slows, your brakes will not work and could cause you to skid more.
- **Steer.** Turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. As soon as the vehicle begins to straighten out, turn the steering wheel back the other way. If you do not do so, your vehicle may swing around in the other direction and you could start a new skid.
- **Continue to steer.** Continue to correct your steering, left and right, until the vehicle is again moving down the road under your control.

Traffic Crashes

Do not stop at an accident unless you are involved or if emergency help has not yet arrived. Keep your attention on your driving and keep moving, watching for people who might be in or near the road. Never drive to the scene of an accident, fire, or other disaster just to look. You may block the way for police, firefighters, ambulances, tow trucks, and other rescue vehicles.

No matter how good of a driver you are, there may be a time when you are involved in a crash. If you are involved in an accident, you must stop. If you are involved in an accident with a parked vehicle, you must try and locate the owner. If any person is injured or killed, the police must be notified. It is a crime for you to leave a crash site in which your vehicle was involved if there is an injury or death before police have talked to you and gotten all the information they need about the crash.

You may want to carry a basic vehicle emergency kit. These kits have emergency flares, first aid supplies, and basic tools.

Try everything you can to keep from getting hit. If nothing works, try to lessen any injuries that could result from the crash. The most important thing you can do is to use your lap and shoulder belts. Besides your safety 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 backwards. 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 airbags 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 about to happen, you should try to turn the vehicle. At worst, you will hit with a glancing blow; you might also miss it. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It will also deflate following the crash, so be ready to prevent 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 crash.

At the Accident Scene:

- Stop your vehicle at or near the accident site. If your vehicle can move, get it off the road so that it does not block traffic or cause another crash.
- Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes. You could be struck by another vehicle.
- Turn off the ignition of each wrecked vehicle. Do not smoke around wrecked vehicles. Fuel could have spilled; fire is a real danger.
- If there are power lines down with wires in the road, do not go near them.
- Make sure that other traffic will not be involved in the crash. Use flares or other warning devices to alert traffic of the accident.

If someone is injured:

- Get help. Make sure the police and emergency medical or rescue squad have been called. If there is a fire, tell this to the police when you call them.
- Do not move the injured unless they are in a burning vehicle or in other immediate danger of being hit by another vehicle. Moving a person can make their injuries worse.
- First, help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Check for breathing, and then check for bleeding.
- If there is bleeding, apply pressure directly on the wound with your hand or with a cloth. Even severe bleeding can almost always be stopped or slowed by putting pressure on the wound.
- Do not give injured persons anything to drink – not even water.
- To help prevent an injured person from going into shock, cover them with a blanket or coat to keep them warm.

Report the Accident:

- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the accident and any witnesses, including injured persons.
- Exchange information with other drivers involved in the crash; name, address, driver’s license number, vehicle information (license plate, make, model, and year of vehicle), and insurance company and policy number (if available).
- Record any damage to the vehicles involved in the crash.
- Provide information to the police or other emergency officials if requested.
- Should the accident involve a parked vehicle, try to find the owner. If you cannot, leave a note in a place where it can be seen with the date and time of the accident and information on how the owner can reach you.
- You must report the accident to police if there is an injury, a death or property damage.

Study Questions

(Answers can be found at the end of the manual)

5. At a four way stop

a) The vehicle on the left goes first

b) You do not have to stop if there are no other vehicles around

c) The vehicle on the right goes first

d) School buses go first

6. When you change lanes you should

a) Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move

b) Blow your horn before changing lanes

c) Cross two or more lanes at one time

d) Flash your headlights

7. If an approaching vehicle fails to dim their headlights, you should

a) Look to the center of the road

b) Flash your headlights quickly a couple of times

c) Keep your bright lights on

d) Turn your headlights off

5 Know the Road

Reading the Road

Pavement Markings

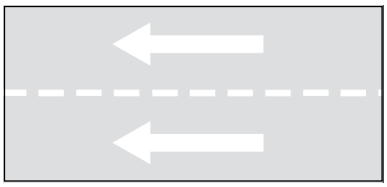
Lines and symbols on the roadway divide lanes, tell you when you may pass other vehicles or change lanes, which lanes to use for turns, where you must stop for signs or traffic signals, and define pedestrian walkways. These provide lane control.

Edge Lines
Edge lines are solid lines along the side of the road that show you where the edge of the road is located.

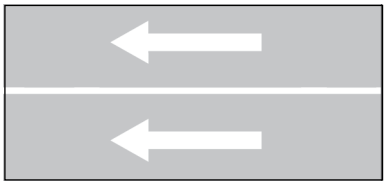
- **Solid White Lines** are used on the right of the roadway edge.
- **Solid Yellow Lines** are used on the left of the roadway edge of divided streets or roadways.

Lane Lines
Lane lines are white lines that separate multiple lanes traveling in the same direction.

- **Dashed White Lines** are between lanes of traffic moving in the same direction that indicate you may cross to change lanes if it is safe to do so.

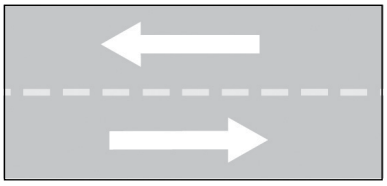


- **Solid White Lines** are between lanes of traffic that indicate you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes.

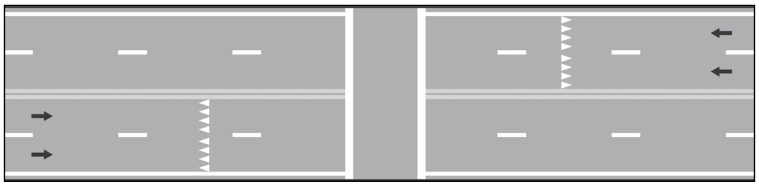


Center Lines
Center lines are yellow lines that separate lanes of traffic moving in opposite directions.

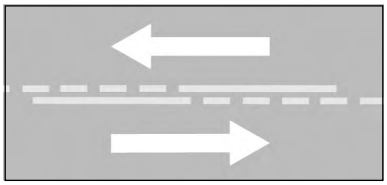
- **Dashed Yellow Lines** separate single lanes of traffic moving in opposite directions. Passing is allowed.



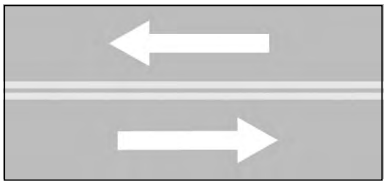
- **Yield Lines** are used at locations where drivers are required to yield, such as a mid-block crosswalk.



- **Dashed Yellow Line Alongside a Solid Yellow Line** indicates that passing is permitted on the side of the broken line, but not on the side of the solid line.



- **Solid Double Yellow Lines** are used where there are lanes with traffic moving in opposite directions. Two solid lines mark the center of the roadway. Solid yellow lines may be crossed to make a left turn to or from an alley, private road, driveway, or street.

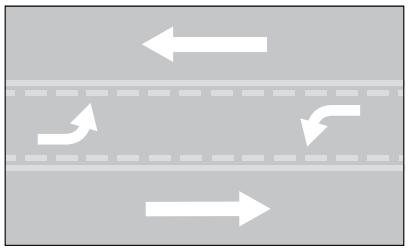


Crosswalks and Stop Lines. When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians may cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians in or about to enter a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked. Be alert for pedestrians when crossing intersections.

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 or painted on the road surface. The following apply:

- "Transit" or "bus" means the lane is for bus use only.
- "Bicycle" means the lane is reserved for bicycles.
- "HOV" stands for "High Occupancy Vehicles;" a diamond-shaped marker indicates lanes reserved for vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs are posted that say how many people must be in the vehicle.

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-turn arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by solid yellow and dashed yellow lines. In some areas, the shared center lane becomes a "reversible lane" during rush hours. Be sure you can enter the lane and that it is safe before you do so.



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. Special lights are often used. A green arrow means you can use the lane beneath it; a red "X" means you cannot. 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.

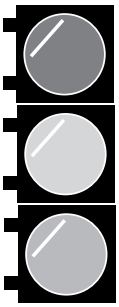
Other Markings
A driver must be aware of the following additional pavement markings:

- Yellow or white diagonal stripes are used to mark fixed obstructions.
- Solid white or yellow lines are sometimes used to channel traffic around a hazard.
- A double solid white line prohibits lane changing.
- Curb markings, fire lanes and pavement markings may be designated as "No Parking" areas by local authorities.
- A bicycle sharrow, two chevrons painted above a bicycle symbol on the road, indicates the lane is shared. Vehicle or bicycle traffic may be in the lane. Although you should always keep on the lookout for bicyclists, this serves as an additional warning to watch for bicycles in the lane.



Traffic Signals

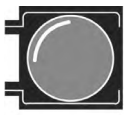
Traffic signals are lights that tell you when or where to stop and go. A green light means you can go if it is safe. A yellow light means caution, and a red light means stop. Traffic lights are usually at intersections and are green, yellow, and red (bottom to top) when together. There are some intersections and other locations where there are single green, yellow, or red lights.



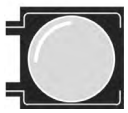
Traffic Lights and Signals
Red traffic lights mean stop. You must wait until the traffic light turns green and there is no crossing traffic before you may move ahead. If you are turning right on red, you may turn after coming to a full stop and checking to make sure that there is no oncoming traffic and no sign prohibiting the turn on a red light. Watch out for pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle.

Yellow traffic lights mean the traffic light is about to change to red. You must stop if it is safe to do so. If you are in the intersection when the yellow light comes on, do not stop-continue through the intersection.

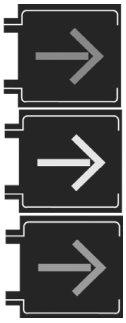
Green traffic lights mean you can go through the intersection. You must yield to emergency vehicles and others as required by law. If you are stopped and then the light turns green, you must allow crossing traffic to clear the intersection before you go ahead. If you are turning left, a steady **green** traffic light means you may turn but only when safe to do so. If you are turning right, yield to pedestrians crossing the street.



Flashing Lights
A flashing **red** traffic light means the same as a stop sign. You must come to a full stop and you may proceed when it is safe to do so.



A flashing **yellow** traffic light means slow down and proceed with caution.



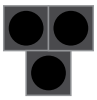
Arrows
A **red** arrow means you must stop and you cannot go in the direction of the arrow. You may proceed when the red arrow goes out and a green arrow or light goes on.

A **yellow** arrow means that the protection of a green arrow is ending; if you are turning in the direction of the arrow, you should prepare to stop.

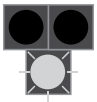
A **green** arrow means you can safely turn in the direction of the arrow. There should be no on-coming or crossing traffic while the arrow is green.



High-Intensity Activated CrossWalK (HAWK) Signals
A pedestrian signal activated by a push button. The HAWK is composed of a circular yellow signal centered under two horizontally-aligned circular red signals. When activated, vehicles must come to a complete stop as the pedestrian crosses. Then vehicles may move once the pedestrians have finished crossing.



Dark — HAWK signal has not been activated. Vehicles proceed through pedestrian crossing.



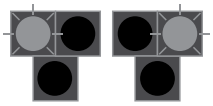
Flashing Yellow — Pedestrian has activated the HAWK signal.



Solid Yellow — Pedestrian signal is about to change. Motorists are notified their movement is ending and a red signal will be displayed.



Solid Red — Pedestrians in crosswalk. Motorists must stop.

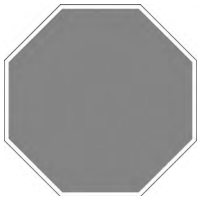


Flashing Red — The HAWK signal is about to deactivate. Drivers must stop but may proceed when pedestrians have cleared the crosswalk.

Traffic Signs

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

Shapes



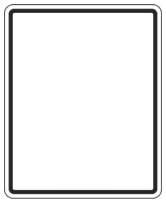
Octagon: Stop
The octagon (eight-sided) shape always means stop. You must come to a complete stop at the sign, stop line, pedestrian crosswalk or curb. Then, yield the right-of-way to any vehicle or pedestrian approaching from either direction.



Triangle: Yield
Slow down to a speed reasonable for the conditions and yield the right-of-way. Stop if necessary.



Diamond: Warning
These signs warn you of special conditions or hazards ahead. Drive with caution and be ready to slow down or stop.



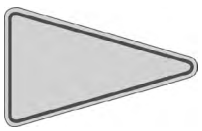
Rectangle/square: Regulatory, Warning, and Guide
Vertical signs generally give instructions or tell you the law. Horizontal signs may give directions or information.



Pentagon: School Zone and School Crossing
The pentagon (five-sided) shape marks school zones and warns you about school crossings. Signs may have a separate downward-pointing arrow plaque, which indicates the actual location of the crosswalk.



Circle: Railroad Crossing
A circular sign indicates that you are approaching a railroad crossing. Slow down, look and listen for trains.



Pennant: No Passing Zone
This three-sided sign is shaped like a pennant. When used, the sign is on the left side of a two-lane, two-way roadway. It is posted at the beginning of a NO-PASSING ZONE where “no-passing” pavement markings are also used.

Colors

All red signs are regulatory signs and must be obeyed. They include STOP, YIELD, DO NOT ENTER or WRONG WAY.

Some black and white signs are regulatory signs and must be obeyed. Other black and white signs are used as route markers and are illustrated in the "Guide Signs" section.

Yellow is used for warning signs. These signs tell you of road conditions and dangers ahead.

Orange is also used for warning signs. They alert you to possible dangers ahead due to construction and maintenance projects.

Green is used for guide signs. They tell you where you are, which way to go and the distance. Fluorescent yellow-green may be used for pedestrian, bicycle, and school warning signs.

Fluorescent Yellow-Green may be used for pedestrian, bicycle, and school warning signs.

Blue is also used for guide signs. They tell you about services along the roadway.

Brown is used for parks and recreation signs.

Regulatory Signs

These signs are square, rectangular, or have a special shape and are usually white, red, or black with black, red, white, or green letters or symbols. They give you information about rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking, and other special situations. Some regulatory signs have a red circle with a red slash over a symbol. These signs prohibit certain actions, i.e., "no left turn," "no right turn," "no U-turn," etc.

Common types of regulatory signs are:



Stop Sign
A stop sign has eight sides and is red with white letters. You must come to a full and complete stop at a stop sign or stop line, if one is present. You must wait until crossing vehicles and pedestrians have cleared. You may pull forward only when it is safe to do so.



Yield Sign
A yield sign is 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.



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 road way openings that you should not enter, such as exit ramps where you would be going in the wrong direction, crossovers on divided roadways, and at numerous locations on one-way streets.



Wrong Way
This sign is used to identify a one-way street, expressway ramp or the wrong direction or wrong side of a divided highway. Do not drive past this sign — turn around.



No U-Turn
U-turns prohibited. Special mention should be made of “NO U-TURN” signs that are posted on divided highways or expressways. You may see one where there is an opening in the divided highway that leads to the other side.



Movement Prohibition
These signs indicate movements that are prohibited from a lane or approach. These signs can be located on the side of the road or hanging over the lane of travel. Sometimes arrows are painted on the road as a supplement to the sign.



One Way
These signs are used on one-way streets or driveways. You must always go only in the direction of the arrow.



Lane Use Control
This sign indicates permitted movement from a lane.



Keep Right
This sign tells you where to drive when you approach traffic islands, medians or other obstructions in the middle of the roadway. You must drive to the side indicated by the arrow.



No Passing Signs
These signs tell you where passing is not permitted. Passing areas are based on how far you can see ahead. They consider unseen hazards such as hills and curves, intersections, driveways, and other places where a vehicle may enter the roadway. These signs, along with pavement markings, indicate where you can pass another vehicle, the beginning and ending of a passing zone, or where you may not pass. Where it is permitted to pass, you may do so only if it is safe. Be aware of road conditions and other vehicles.



Disabled Parking
Parking spaces marked with these signs are reserved for individuals with disabled parking privileges.



Speed Limit
The sign indicates the maximum speed that should be driven on the roadway.

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



Signal Ahead
Traffic signals are ahead. Slow down and prepare to stop.



Stop Ahead
A stop sign is ahead. Slow down and prepare to stop.



Reduction in Lanes
This sign is used on multi-lane highways to warn you of a reduction in the number of traffic lanes in the direction you are traveling. Be prepared to change lanes or to allow other vehicles to merge into your lane.



No Passing
This sign marks the beginning of a no passing zone. You may not pass cars ahead of you in your lane.



Merge
Two lanes of traffic are about to become one. Drivers in both lanes are responsible for merging smoothly.



Pedestrian Crossing
Watch for people crossing your path. Be prepared to slow down and stop. Signs may have a separate downward-pointing arrow plaque, which indicates the actual location of the crosswalk.



School Zone
Slow down – School grounds nearby. Watch out for children crossing the street or playing. Be ready to stop. Obey signals from any crossing guards.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
Designed to allow pedestrians to safely cross streets with high volumes of traffic at uncontrolled approached to unsignalized intersections or mid-block pedestrian crossings.



Slippery when Wet
When pavement is wet, reduce your speed. Do not brake hard or change direction suddenly. Increase the distance between your car and the one ahead. These actions are needed on all wet roads and especially on roads where this sign is posted.



Two-Way Road Way
This sign tells you that you are leaving a divided roadway and will be driving on a two-way highway.



Advisory Speed Plaque
Usually installed below another warning sign. This sign is used to indicate the advisory speed for a condition.



Divided Highway Begins
The highway ahead is split into two separate roadways by a median or divider and each roadway is one-way. Keep right.



Change in Direction
This sign warns you of a change in direction or narrowing of the road. You may find several of these signs on the outside of a sharp curve or on approaches to a narrow bridge.

Intersections Ahead
Four signs warn you of intersections ahead where traffic may exist or where a right or left turn may be required. A sign naming the intersecting road may also be posted.



Crossroad



Side Road



"T" Intersection



"Y" Intersection

Turns and Curves
Certain signs are posted before turns and curves. The shape of the arrow tells you what to expect. A small sign showing the maximum safe speed may also be posted below the arrow.



Right and Left Turns Coming



Road Curves to Right and Left



Road Curves to Right



Right Turn Ahead



Winding Road Ahead

Guide Signs
These are signs that direct a motorist to certain places. They tell you where you are, what road you are on and how to get where you want to go. Most guide signs are rectangular. Listed below are some that you will find frequently along the road.



Route Number Signs
The shape and color of a route number sign indicate the type of roadway: interstate, U.S., state, city, or county road. When planning a trip, use a road map to determine your route. During the trip, follow the route signs to keep from getting lost.



US Route Marker Signs
The shape and color of a route number sign indicate the type of roadway: interstate, U.S., state, city, or county road.



Parks and Recreation
These signs are brown. They guide you to recreational areas and parks.



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





Destination and Distance Signs
These signs are always green. They direct you to bike routes, parking areas, mileposts and specific exits. Mileposts are placed every mile along the freeway from one end of the state to the other. Zero usually starts at the south and west borders of the state. Mileposts can be used to determine the distance to exits, cities or state lines. By using the milepost number and the exit number, you may compute how far you are from the exit you want to use.



Information Signs
These signs are always green. They include items such as state lines, city limits and other boundaries. You may also find names of streams, elevations, landmarks and other items of geographical interest.

Work Area Signs
These construction, maintenance, or emergency operations signs are generally diamond or rectangle-shaped and orange with black letters or symbols. These warn you that people are working on or near the roadway. These warnings include reduced speed, detours, slow moving construction equipment, and poor or suddenly changing road surfaces. In work areas, a person with a sign or a flag may control traffic. You must obey these persons.









Detour
This sign is used at the beginning of an alternate route that has been established because a road has been closed.



Flag Person
This sign warns that there is a flag person ahead. Always follow his or her directions. Flaggers normally wear orange or yellow vests, yellow-green shirts or jackets. They use STOP/SLOW paddles and red flags to direct traffic through the work zone and to let workers or construction vehicles cross the road.

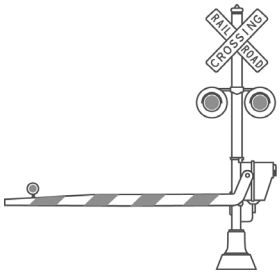
Railroad Crossing Signs
Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to warn drivers. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Never start to cross if there is not room for your vehicle on the far side and if you will have to stop on the tracks; wait until there is room for your vehicle on the far side. It is wise not to shift gears when crossing railroad tracks; you might stall. Remember that trains are large and may be moving faster than they seem to be. A blue colored Emergency Notification System sign can be found at highway-rail grade crossings, and provides the public with a 24/7/365 telephone number to call to report problems or emergencies at these railroad locations. Some common railroad crossing warning signs and signals are shown in the following illustrations.



Railroad Crossing Sign
A round yellow warning sign with an “X” symbol and black “RR” letters is placed along the road before you get to a railroad crossing.



Railroad Crossbuck
A white, X-shaped sign or “crossbuck” with “Railroad Crossing” printed on it is located at the railroad crossing. This sign has the same meaning as a “Yield” sign. You must yield to crossing trains.



Railroad Crossbuck, Flashing Lights and Gate
Gates are used with flashing light signals at some crossings. Stop when the lights begin to flash and before the gate lowers. Remain stopped until the gates are raised and the lights stop flashing. Do not attempt to drive around the lowered gate. Also, pedestrians may not cross railroad tracks when warned of a train by an automatic signal, crossing gates, flagman or law enforcement officer.

Message Boards

You may see portable or permanent message boards along the highway. They may provide information about traffic, road, weather or other hazardous conditions. Always obey any directions posted on these message boards. For information about road conditions or road construction, visit the Connecticut Department of Transportation Web site at **www.ct.gov/dot**.

Study Questions

(Answers can be found at the end of the manual)

8. A Pentagon shaped sign means

a) There is a railroad crossing
b) There is a No Passing Zone
c) There is a school zone
d) You must yield

9. Green road signs are

a) Regulatory signs
b) Guide signs
c) Warning signs
d) Used for parks and recreation

10. Solid yellow lines between lanes indicates

a) Only cars on one side of the lane may pass
b) You may change lanes if you choose to do so
c) Passing is not allowed
d) None of the above

DMV Consumer Directory

DMV Web Site

http://ct.gov/dmv or http://ct.gov/teendriving

DMV Telephone Numbers

In the Greater Hartford area (or outside Connecticut):	(860) 263-5700
Outside Greater Hartford (within Connecticut only):	(800) 842-8222
Pre-recorded information is available 24 hours a day.	Agents are available:
	Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
For Suspension Matters:	(860) 263-5720
	Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please Note: Suspension and revocation inquiries are handled by telephone and mail only.

Answers to Study Questions

1. **Worn Tires can cause**

   d) All of the above

2. **Which statement is false?**

   b) After market, any changes to equipment, such as tinted windows, are legal

3. **When you hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction, you must**

   b) Pull to the right side of the road and stop

4. **The No-Zone area is**

   c) The danger areas around a truck where there are blind spots for the driver

5. **At a four way stop**

   c) The vehicle on the right goes first

6. **When you change lanes you should**

   a) Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move

7. **If an approaching vehicle fails to dim their headlights, you should**

   b) Flash your headlights quickly a couple of times

8. **A Pentagon shaped sign means**

   c) There is a school zone

9. **Green road signs are**

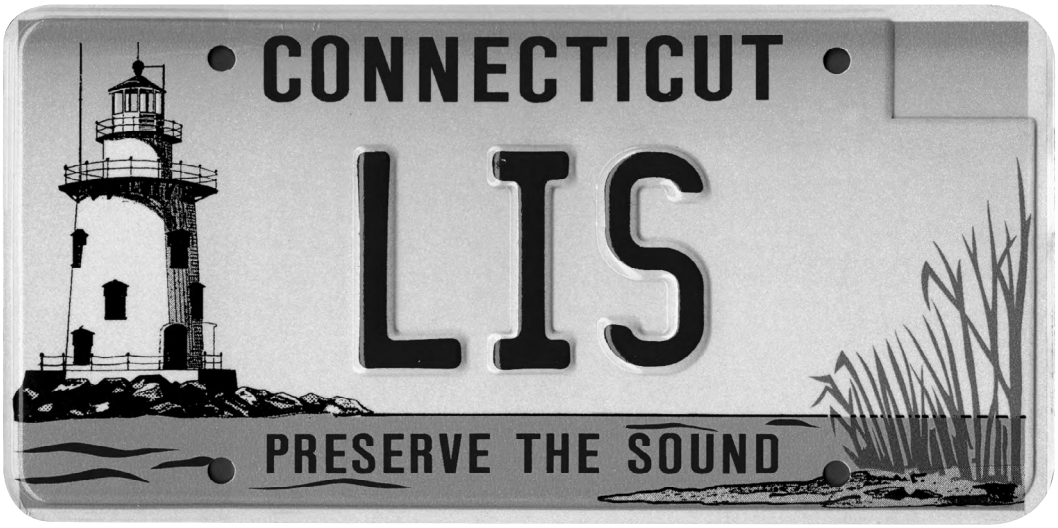
   b) Guide signs

10. **Solid yellow lines between lanes indicates**

    c) Passing is not allowed



The Connecticut Coalition for Organ and Tissue Donation sees a world where everyone who needs an organ or tissue transplant – gets one. A future where no one waits, no life is lost, no family grieves because time ran out.



Buy the Sound Plate

Help To Preserve Long Island Sound, Connecticut's Treasured Resource