

# MINNESOTA DRIVER'S MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

DVS Driver & Vehicle Services

drive.mn.gov

June 2026

# Table of contents

**New laws and information** ..... **1**

**Chapter 1: Your license to drive** ..... **6**

**Chapter 2: Your vehicle** ..... **22**

**Chapter 3: Traffic laws and vehicle operation** ..... **26**

**Chapter 4: Sharing the road** ..... **41**

**Chapter 5: Signs, signals and pavement markings** ..... **56**

**Chapter 6: Driving conditions** ..... **72**

**Chapter 7: Your driving privileges** ..... **88**

**Chapter 8: Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs** ..... **91**

**Information directory and index** ..... **97**

**Human trafficking is an everywhere problem** ..... **102**

## About this manual:

This manual concerns Minnesota laws and requirements. For complete standards, consult Minnesota state statutes and rules. This document is not a proper legal authority to cite in court.

This Minnesota Driver's Manual is printed with permission of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

This information can be made available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities. For assistance, call: 651-201-7777 TTY: 651-282-6555.

# New laws and information

## Motorcycle lane sharing

Motorcycles may ride or pass between you and the car in the next lane. You will see this most often at a stoplight when motorcycles ride up to the front, but you may see them passing slow-moving traffic on your right or left side while sharing part of your lane. This is legal, and you may not interfere with their safe movement.

## School bus flashing lights

Flashing red lights on a school bus warn drivers that the bus is loading or unloading students. When you see a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing, you must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet from the bus.

Reminder: You must stop for flashing red school bus lights even if the stop arm doesn't swing out. The only exception is on a divided highway when you are traveling in the opposite direction. Failure to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing may result in suspension of your driver's license and fines.

## Work zone safety

Minnesota is said to have two seasons: winter and road construction. You need to be extra cautious in work zones because people are working in dangerous conditions very close to moving vehicles. Drivers are moving past large construction vehicles which sometimes make unpredictable moves. You must be aware of distracted driving, zipper merges, and altered lanes when driving in work zones.

# The Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division is committed to creating a safe environment for our customers and staff.

It is a crime to interfere with the work of a DVS employee. Minnesota Statute 609.50, Subdivision 5.

## THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:

1. Unruly or disruptive behavior, including verbal harassment of staff or customers
2. Obscene or abusive language, gestures or actions
3. Interfering with services being delivered
4. Failure to follow instructions of the staff
5. Violent behavior, including conduct that endangers employees or customers, or damages state property

**You will be asked to leave the premises and law enforcement will be contacted if any of these behaviors occur.**

## Crime to obstruct the work of a DVS employee

It is a crime to obstruct the work of a DVS employee. Refer to Minnesota Statute 609.50, Subdivision 5.

## Completing the pre-application makes office visits quicker

Using the pre-application feature in DVS online services allows you to complete a large part of your application online, reducing your time at the counter. DVS online services, available on mobile devices, provides a list of required documents for each license type. This helps you ensure you have all necessary documents ready when you visit a driver's license office.

Remember to bring your confirmation page and the documents listed on the confirmation page. Start your application online using the pre-application feature no more than 30 days before visiting a driver's license office to avoid completing a paper application.

## A message from the Commissioner of Public Safety

Dear fellow Minnesotan,



Whether you're an experienced driver who has been behind the wheel for decades or a teenager just getting to know the rules of the road for the first time, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division is committed to ensuring that everyone with a driver's license knows the laws and practices that lead to safe driving.

There are more than 4.5 million licensed drivers in Minnesota and that number will only grow as we implement the Driver's License for All law passed by the Minnesota Legislature. Our goal is for all of those drivers — as well as the pedestrians and cyclists they share the road with — to navigate our state's roads safely and get home to their loved ones.

This manual lays out how we can all do our part to achieve that goal, as well as the process for becoming a licensed driver in Minnesota. DVS has taken great strides to make sure our vitally important services are accessible to Minnesotans of all backgrounds. Visit drive.mn.gov to access our multilingual virtual assistant in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong, and to set up your MyDVS account to track your license and registration information online.

Remember that driving is a privilege that comes with a responsibility to the others on the road. Please buckle up, obey the speed laws and never drive under the influence of alcohol. Respect for traffic laws and respect for other drivers is what keeps us all safe on the road.

Sincerely,

Bob Jacobson
Commissioner of Public Safety

## Written test checklist

**Do you have everything you need for your written test? Use this checklist to prepare for your visit:**

- ❑ I have made a Class D written test appointment.
- ❑ I have completed the online pre-application at dps.mn.gov/mydvs no more than 30 days before my appointment.
- ❑ I have the required identification (see page 9).
- ❑ I know my Social Security number if I am eligible for one.
- ❑ I have money to pay the fees.

**If under 18 years of age:**

- ❑ I am at least 15 years old.
- ❑ I have my certificate of enrollment ("Blue Card") proving that I completed classroom instruction and am signed up for behind-the-wheel instruction; or I have my certificate of enrollment ("Pink Card") proving that I am enrolled in a concurrent driver education course and have completed the first 15 classroom hours.
- ❑ If completed, I have the Supplemental Parental Curriculum completion certificate.
- ❑ My parent, court-appointed guardian, county-appointed foster parent or the director of the transitional living program I am residing in will sign and approve my application. If someone other than my parent will sign, I have the appropriate documentation.

## Road test checklist

**Do you have everything you need for your road test? Use this checklist to prepare for your visit:**

- ❑ I have made a road test appointment.
- ❑ I have completed the online pre-application at dps.mn.gov/mydvs no more than 30 days before my appointment.
- ❑ I have a licensed driver who will accompany me to my road test. I understand that if I do not have a licensed driver with me, my road test may be cancelled.
- ❑ I have my valid instruction permit to give to the examiner.
- ❑ I will provide a vehicle in safe working condition for the test:
  - Doors must open from the inside and outside.
  - Seat belts must work properly.
  - Headlights, taillights, brake lights and turn signals must work.
  - Vehicle registration must be current or have a 60-day permit.

- ❑ I have current proof of insurance for the vehicle I will use for the test. Acceptable proof includes original insurance card issued by the company, policy declaration page or e-insurance from the insurance company website or on an electronic device.
- ❑ I have money to pay the fees.

### If under 18 years of age:

- ❑ I am at least 16 years old.
- ❑ I have my certificate of course completion ("White Card") proving that I completed driver education.
- ❑ I have held an instruction permit for the last six months without a conviction for a moving violation or an alcohol or controlled substance violation.
- ❑ If all or part of my six months of driving experience was in another state, I have a certified driving record from that state to verify I qualify for the provisional license.
- ❑ I have my Supervised Driving Log completed and signed by a parent or guardian.
- ❑ If completed, I have the Supplemental Parental Curriculum completion certificate.
- ❑ My parent, court-appointed guardian, county-appointed foster parent or the director of the transitional living program I am residing in will sign and approve my application. If someone other than my parent will sign, I have the appropriate documentation.

### If 18 years of age:

- ❑ I have had my instruction permit for at least six months.

### If 19 years of age or older:

- ❑ I have had my instruction permit for at least three months.

# Chapter 1: Your license to drive

***This chapter provides information about how to obtain a Minnesota driver's license.***

## Getting your license to drive

To drive on public streets or highways in Minnesota, you need a valid, unexpired driver's license. If you have never had a driver's license in any state or country, you must pass a written test and a vision test, apply for an instruction permit and pass a road test. If your Minnesota driver's license has been expired for more than one year but less than five years, you must pass a written test and a vision test before applying for a new license.

If you are 21 years of age or older and moving to Minnesota from another state, certain U.S. territories or Canada, you can get a license by passing a vision test and completing an application. You are not required to take a written test or road test if you present a valid, unexpired driver's license. If your former state license is expired less than one year, you are required to pass the written test. If your former license is expired more than one year, you need to pass the written and road tests.

You have 60 days (30 days for commercial drivers) once you become a Minnesota resident to get your Minnesota license or permit. If you have a motorcycle endorsement on your valid, unexpired out-of-state license, you can get a Minnesota endorsement by paying the fees. If your license is expired and you want a motorcycle endorsement, you must pass a written test, a road test and pay the fees.

If you are moving to Minnesota from a country other than the U.S. or Canada, you must pass a written test, a vision test and a road test even if you have a valid license from your former country.

You will not be able to get your Minnesota driver's license until you present all other driver's licenses and identification cards to DVS.

## Who does not need a Minnesota license?

You can drive on public roads in Minnesota without a valid Minnesota driver's license or permit if you meet one of these exceptions:

- You are a nonresident who is at least 15 years old and has a valid driver's license from your home state or country.
- You have become a resident of Minnesota and have a valid driver's license from another state, a Canadian province or U.S. military authority. You have up to 60 days after becoming a resident to get your Minnesota license.
- You have a valid commercial driver's license from another state. You have up to 30 days after becoming a Minnesota resident to get your commercial Minnesota license.
- You are employed by or in service to the U.S. government and are driving a commercial motor vehicle for military purposes.
- You are not a Minnesota resident, are at least 18 years old, your home country does not require drivers to be licensed and the vehicle you drive is registered for the current year in your home country. You can drive this vehicle in Minnesota for up to 90 days in any calendar year without a valid license or permit.

- You temporarily drive a farm tractor or other farm implement on a public road.
- You are operating a snowmobile. For snowmobile laws, visit the Department of Natural Resources website at dnr.state.mn.us.
- You are a railroad operator driving a locomotive, train or on-track equipment on rails, including when crossing a street or highway.

## Who cannot be licensed?

**You will not be issued a Minnesota driver's license or instruction permit if:**

- You fail to present proper identification.
- You fail to complete or pass any part of the required driver's license tests.
- You cannot read and understand official road signs or state traffic laws.
- You are under 15 years of age.
- You are under 18 years of age, do not have a valid license from another state and cannot present a certificate proving that you completed an approved driver education course.
- You are 18 years old or younger and have had an instruction permit for less than six months.
- You are 19 years old or older and have had an instruction permit for less than three months.
- Your license is suspended, and you have not met all reinstatement requirements.
- Your license is revoked, and you have not met all reinstatement requirements.
- Your license is canceled.
- A court has ruled you mentally incompetent and the Department of Public Safety has determined that you cannot drive safely.
- The Commissioner of Public Safety has determined you cannot drive safely due to a physical or mental disability.
- The Commissioner of Public Safety has good cause to believe that allowing you to drive would be detrimental to public safety.

## Bring identification

To take the written and road tests, you must present proper identification that verifies your first, middle and last name, and your date of birth. If the names on your identification documents do not match, you must also provide proof of your legal name changes, such as your certified marriage certificates, certified divorce decrees or other certified court orders that specify the name change.

You must also present proper identification when you apply for an instruction permit, driver's license or state identification card.

If your documents are not in English, you must provide a qualified English translation (see page 11). DVS will verify your documents and may not accept them if they are laminated or altered. We cannot accept photocopies of identification documents, and we may confiscate fraudulent documents.

## What you need to bring when applying for a license or ID:

### Standard driver's license or ID

- You may present a Minnesota driver's license, identification card or permit that is current or expired for five years or less if it has a photo, or one year or less if it does not have a photo.
- If you do not have one of these items, you must present two documents. One document must contain your full name and your date of birth. These documents are referred to as primary and secondary documents and may include a birth certificate, passport or Social Security card.
- If the name on your driver's license, identification card or permit has changed, or if the names on your other documents do not match, you must also present proof of your legal name change(s). For standard driver's license or ID requirements, visit dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/class-d-regular-dl/class-d-dl-forms-documents-and-manuals.

### Driver's License for All

- When the Minnesota Legislature passed the Driver's License for All law, it changed the documents you need to get your standard driver's license, learner's permit or state ID. Starting Oct. 1, 2023, you can get your card, regardless of your immigration status. The law removes the need to show proof of legal presence in the U.S.

### REAL ID

Applying for a REAL ID compliant card requires more documentation than a standard Minnesota driver's license. You must provide the following in person when applying:

- One document proving identity, date of birth and legal presence in the United States.
  - If the name on your identity document is not the same as your current name, you must submit a name change document.
- You must know your Social Security number.
- Two documents proving your current residency in Minnesota. For REAL ID requirements, visit dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-and-id-card-information/real-id-dl-and-id-card.

### Enhaced driver's license or ID

Applying for an enhanced driver's license or identification card requires additional requirements and documentation compared to a standard Minnesota license.

- Only applicants who can provide proof of identity, full legal name,Social Security number, photographic identity, Minnesota residency and U.S. citizenship are eligible for a Minnesota enhanced driver's license or ID.
- Two types of documents must be submitted to prove Minnesota residency, such as an electric bill or phone bill, and a tax return.
- An enhanced driver's license or ID must list your Minnesota residence address.
- You must complete an interview questionnaire at the time of application.
- A $15 fee is required in addition to the fee for a driver's license or ID card. For enhanced driver's license or ID requirements, visit dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-and-id-card-information/enhanced-dl-and-id-card.

## Verification of name change

If you legally change your name through marriage, divorce or a court order, you must show proof of the change. You must present a certified marriage certificate, a certified court order specifying the name change or a certified divorce decree specifying the name change. If you have had multiple name changes, you must provide documentation for all of those changes.

## Translation of documents

If your documents are not in English, you must provide a qualified English translation. The Certificate of Translation form is available at drive.mn.gov, at DVS exam stations and at driver's license offices. The translator must certify the following:

- The document is accompanied by a full English translation.
- The translation of the document is true and accurate, meaning all words on the presented document have been correctly translated.
- The translator is not related by blood or marriage to the subject of the document.
- The translator is competent to translate from the original language into English.
- The translator understands that if any part of the translation is intentionally false, they will be subject to penalty.

## Social Security number

Applicants for DVS cards must provide their Social Security number on the application form. Your Social Security number is private and will be secure in the driver's license information system, accessible only to those lawfully authorized. If you have not been issued a Social Security number, you must check the appropriate box on the application form.

Social Security numbers are not printed on or embedded in driver's licenses or identification cards. Under federal law (42 U.S.C. § 405(c) (2)(C)(i)), the state is authorized to require Social Security numbers for driver's license programs. If you do not provide a Social Security number when eligible, Minnesota cannot process your application for a driver's license or identification card.

## Remote application option for incarcerated individuals

If you are serving a sentence longer than six months in a jail or correctional facility without an existing agreement with Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), you can now renew your driver's license or identification card by mail.

## Reintegration license

If you are being released from prison in Minnesota, you may be qualified to get a valid temporary driver's license without paying outstanding fines or reinstatement fees. You must meet eligibility requirements. The license expires 15 months after it is issued and is canceled if you break traffic laws and lose driving privileges.

## The written test

You can take the written test at DVS exam stations across the state. Appointments are required for the Class D written test. To schedule an appointment, visit dps.mn.gov/mydvs. The written test includes multiple choice and true-or-false questions that assess your knowledge of Minnesota traffic laws and road signs. The test may betaken on paper or on a computer.

At exam stations offering the test on a computer, you can take it in English, several other languages or in American Sign Language (ASL). Headphones are available to hear the questions as you read them. If you need special accommodations, please inquire at the exam station. You may take only one written test per day and must score 80 percent to pass.

You must show proper identification before taking the test. If you are under 18, you must also present a certificate of enrollment ("Blue Card" or "Pink Card") from an approved driver education course, showing that you have completed the required classroom instruction and enrolled in behind-the-wheel training. Classroom instruction is not required if you are 18 or older. Information on home-schooling rules and regulations is available at drive.mn.gov.

If you fail two consecutive written tests, a $10 fee is charged for the third and any subsequent tests.

## The vision screening

Your eyes will be screened when you apply for or renew your driver's license or instruction permit. This is not a medical exam; it checks if your vision meets the minimum standards. Your normal or corrected vision must be at least 20/40, and your peripheral vision must be at least 105 degrees.

If your peripheral vision is less than 105 degrees or you fail the vision screening, you will be asked to see an eye doctor and return the doctor's report to the DVS Driver Evaluation Unit. The report will determine if you see well enough to drive safely or if you need vision correction or other restrictions.

## The road test

The road test includes three parts: demonstrating your vehicle's safety equipment, showing your vehicle control skills and performing a driving test. You will be tested on road rules and your ability to drive safely under normal traffic conditions. The examiner will assess your risk awareness and reactions. Your ability to observe intersections, change lanes and handle other situations will be evaluated. You will not be asked to do anything illegal during the test.

When you have the necessary driving skills and meet all the requirements, you can take the road test. You must make an appointment online at dps.mn.gov/mydvs or call 651-201-7777.

To take the road test, you must present your valid instruction permit and current proof of insurance with the original insurance card or policy. If you are under 18, you must also present a supervised driving log and a certificate of course completion ("White Card") proving you completed an approved driver education course and behind-the-wheel instruction. You must provide your own vehicle for the test. Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) are not allowed. If using a rental vehicle, you must be listed as a driver on the rental agreement. You may use a vehicle with a backup camera, but the camera should not be the only method of observation when backing up.

**The vehicle must meet these requirements:**

- Doors open from both inside and outside.
- Seat belts work properly.
- Headlights, taillights, turn signals and brake lights work.
- Any equipment required by your license or permit restrictions must work unless you are trying to remove the restrictions.

**During the test:**

- No smoking is allowed, and the vehicle must be smoke-free before the examiner enters.
- No electronic devices or cell phone usage.
- No passengers, including pets, children or interpreters, are allowed.
- Loose objects that could break or cause injury must be removed.
- Vehicles with parking assist cannot use this feature for parallel parking during the test.

If you fail two consecutive road tests, you will be charged a $20 fee for each subsequent test.

## Vehicle safety equipment demonstration

Before starting the road test, you may be asked to perform a safety equipment check on your vehicle. Your vehicle must be in safe working condition and have all necessary equipment. You will need to demonstrate knowledge about the following:

- Seat adjustment.
- Seat belts.
- Emergency (parking) brake.
- Activating headlights, both high and low beams (vehicles with fully automatic headlights require the driver to manually activate the high and low beam headlights).
- Activating hazard warning lights (four-way flashers).
- Horn.
- Windshield wipers.
- Windshield defroster and fan controls.
- Mirrors.
- Fuel gauge.

This list does not include all equipment and items required by law.

If you are unable to pass the safety equipment demonstration, you will not be allowed to finish the road test that day.

## Vehicle control skills and driving performance

**During the road test, you will be examined and evaluated on your:**

- Control of the vehicle.
- Ability to parallel park.
- Ability to park on a hill.
- Response to traffic and road conditions, traffic signs and signals.
- Ability to signal and perform right and left turns properly.
- Ability to use both marked and unmarked lanes of traffic.
- Observation and consideration of pedestrians and other drivers.
- Ability to perform the 90-degree backing skill maneuver, which simulates backing into a 10-foot-wide driveway or parking space.

**These actions will cause you to fail the road test immediately:**

- Disobeying a traffic law.
- Driving dangerously, carelessly or recklessly, including any action that could result in a traffic crash.
- Inability to control your vehicle or complete a maneuver without assistance from the examiner.
- Involving your vehicle in a crash that you could have avoided, even if you are not legally at fault.
- Not cooperating with the examiner or refusing to follow the examiner's instructions.

If you fail the road test, you may retake it after you have had time to practice. You will be assigned practice time that must be completed before your next road test. If you fail the road test two times, a retest fee of $20 will be charged for each subsequent test. If you fail the road test four times, you must complete at least six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction with a licensed instructor before taking the test again.

When you pass the road test, you may apply for your Minnesota driver's license. If you are under 18, your parent, legal guardian, county-appointed foster parent or the director of the transitional living program where you live must sign and approve your application. Your temporary paper driver's license is valid until the expiration date listed or until you receive your permanent driver's license in the mail.

## Medical conditions

When applying for an instruction permit or driver's license, you will be asked questions about medical conditions. Providing false information on the application could result in you losing your driving privileges.

If you have a medical condition, you may need to provide a statement from a physician indicating whether or not the condition affects your ability to drive safely. If you already have a permit or license and are diagnosed with epilepsy or a condition that could cause loss of consciousness, you must submit a physician's statement within 30 days of the diagnosis. The statement must indicate whether or not the condition interferes with your ability to drive safely.

**Send medical statements to:**
Driver and Vehicle Services
Driver Evaluation Unit
445 Minnesota St., Suite 170
St. Paul, MN 55101-5170

## Parent's approval for under age 18

**If you are under 18, your application for a driver's license or instruction permit must be approved by one of the following:**

- One of your parents
- A court-appointed guardian
- A county-appointed foster parent
- The director of the transitional living program where you reside

If your parents are divorced, your custodial parent or a stepparent married to your custodial parent may approve your application. If you have no living parents or guardian, or if you are married or legally emancipated, a close family member, employer or a spouse who is at least 18 years old may sign your application. Approval can be withdrawn by the individual who signed the application. Forms can be obtained at driver's license offices, DVS exam stations and on the DVS website.

If you are a foreign exchange student, your host sponsors cannot sign your application unless they have legal guardianship of you as a minor (documentation required). You will need two application forms with notarized signatures from your parents: one for the instruction permit and one for the provisional license.

## Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) system

Minnesota has a Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) system to help ease inexperienced drivers into driving. Under the GDL system, if you are 18 years old or younger, you must hold an instruction permit for at least six months before taking the road test. After passing the road test, you may apply for your license.

### Your instruction permit

The first step to becoming a licensed driver is to get an instruction permit. Your permit is valid for two years of practice driving with a licensed supervising driver sitting in the front passenger seat. It is illegal to practice driving without a valid instruction permit. When you drive, you must have your instruction permit with you at all times.

### To qualify and obtain an instruction permit, you must:

- Be at least 15 years old.
- Complete 30 hours of classroom instruction and be enrolled in behind-the-wheel instruction; or be enrolled in a concurrent driver education course and have completed the first 15 classroom hours of the curriculum. If you are 18 or older, classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction is not required.
- Comply with identification requirements.
- Pass a vision screening and a written test.
- Complete a license application and pay the required instruction permit fee.

### If you are under 18

You must be supervised by a driver aged 21 or older. Everyone in the vehicle must wear a seat belt or use a child passenger restraint system. You may not use or talk on a cell phone while driving, with or without a hands-free device.

## If you are 18 and older

You must be supervised by a driver aged 18 or older. Everyone in the vehicle must wear a seat belt or use a child passenger restraint system.

After the required six months of practice driving (or three months if you are 19 years old or older), you may take the road test. For road test scheduling information, see Chapter 9 of this manual.

Before you can take the road test, you must present your valid instruction permit and current proof of insurance for the vehicle to the driver examiner. If your instruction permit is lost or expired, you can apply for a new permit. The new permit will be valid for two years from the day you apply.

## Your provisional license

The provisional license is the second phase of the GDL system. This license is valid for two years from the application date and has restrictions that do not apply to a full driver's license. Everyone in your vehicle must wear a seat belt or use a child passenger restraint system, and you may not use or talk on a cell phone while driving, including with a hands-free device.

## To qualify for your provisional license, you must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Have completed the classroom and behind-the-wheel phases of driver education.
- Have held an instruction permit for six months with no convictions for moving or alcohol/controlled-substance violations.
- Submit a supervised driving log. Parents/guardians have two options:
  - Complete a parent class provided by a Minnesota-approved driver education program and submit a log showing at least 40 hours of supervised driving, including 15 nighttime hours.
  - If not taking the parent class, your teen must submit a log showing at least 50 hours of supervised driving, including 15 nighttime hours.
- Have passed a road test.
- Have a parent, court-appointed guardian, county-appointed foster parent or director of the transitional living program where you reside sign and approve your license application.

Once these requirements are met, you may apply for your provisional license and pay the appropriate fee.

While you have a provisional license, you must follow the following restrictions:

**Nighttime limitations:**

- During the first six months, you must not drive from midnight to 5 a.m. unless you are:
  - Accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 25 years old.
  - Driving between home and work.
  - Driving between home and a school event for which the school does not provide transportation.
  - Driving for employment purposes.

**Passenger limitations:**

- During the first six months, you may have only one passenger under 20 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- During the second six months, you may have no more than three passengers under 20 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Note: You may have immediate family members under age 20 as passengers during both time periods.

## Vanessa's Law

Vanessa Weiss was killed before her 16th birthday in May 2003. In her memory, Vanessa's Law was passed a year later. She was a passenger in a vehicle driven by an unlicensed 15-year-old.

Vanessa's Law applies to all teens who commit an impaired driving crime or crash-related moving violation but applies differently whether you have a provisional license or are unlicensed.

### How this law applies to unlicensed teens

If you are convicted of a crash-related moving violation or an alcohol/controlled substance-related violation (such as Driving While Impaired, Implied Consent, Open Bottle, or Underage Drinking and Driving/Not a Drop Law) while you are driving without a license as a teenager, you cannot get a license, instruction permit or provisional license until you are 18.

After turning 18, you must meet the reinstatement requirements listed on the withdrawal notice(s), pass the written test for a class D driver's license and then apply for a Minnesota instruction permit. Once in possession of a valid instruction permit, you must hold this instruction permit for at least six months before taking the road test (or at least three months if age 19 or older).

### After turning 18 you must:

- Meet the reinstatement requirements listed on your withdrawal notice
- Pass the written test for a class D driver's license
- Apply for a Minnesota instruction permit
- Hold your instruction permit for at least 6 months (3 months if age 19 or older)
- Take your road test

### How this law applies to a provisional license holder

If you are a provisional license holder whose driving privilege is revoked due to a crash-related moving violation or an alcohol/controlled substance-related violation, you cannot regain a license until age 18 or until the withdrawal period has concluded, whichever is longer.

**At that time, you must complete these steps to obtain a full driver's license.**

- Comply with all requirements for reinstatement listed on the withdrawal notice. In most cases, this will be:
  - Serve the withdrawal period
  - Pass the Class D written test
  - Pay the $680 reinstatement fee
  - Complete a 30-hour classroom driver education course (an online computer course is unacceptable)
  - Apply for a Minnesota instruction permit
- Once reinstated, hold the instruction permit for 90 days. During this 90-day period, complete six hours of behind-the-wheel driver education
- After you complete the requirements listed above, apply for a driver's license

## Getting your under 21 Class D driver's license

To get your under 21 Class D driver's license, you must be at least 18 years old or have held a provisional license for 12 consecutive months with no convictions for alcohol violations, controlled-substance violations or crash-related moving violations. You also must not have more than one conviction for a moving violation that is not crash-related. If you are under 18, you must certify that you have driven for at least 10 hours under the supervision of a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old. You must complete an application for a driver's license and pay the fee. If you upgrade from a provisional license with no violations on your record, you will receive a $3.50 credit toward the fee. If you are under 21, you will receive a license marked "Under 21." This license will expire on your 21st birthday and will then expire every four years on your birthday.

## Exceptions to minimum age requirement

At age 15, you may qualify for a restricted farm work driver's license, a special medical driver's license, or a motorized bicycle (moped) permit after completing a driver education course and passing a road test.

### Restricted farm work driver's license:

- With this license, if you work on a farm, you may drive to help with farm work, regardless of whether their parent or guardian owns the farm.
- You may drive alone to perform farm work during daylight hours within 40 miles of the farmhouse.
- To obtain this license, your parent or legal guardian must fill out a form and present it to the driver examiner at the road test, along with a property tax statement classifying the property as agricultural. If the land is rented, a rental agreement and property tax statement are required.
- If you work for a farmer who is not your parent or guardian, the farm owner must fill out a form stating the need for the license and provide a property tax statement.
- You do not need to wait six months before taking the road test, but you must apply for an instruction permit. When ready for the road test, you must present a certificate of completion from an approved behind-the-wheel driver education course and a supervised driving log.
- The farm work restriction can be removed after you have held the license for six months and have reached 16 years of age, but you will need to apply to have it removed.

### Special medical driver's license:

- You may be issued this license at age 15 when there are no licensed drivers in the household, and you must drive for personal medical needs or the medical needs of a relative or disabled relative who cannot drive due to a disability.
- You must meet requirements and submit a completed License for Medical Reason Exemption form before a road test.
- The Commissioner of Public Safety may set conditions and limits to ensure public safety.
- You do not need to wait six months before taking the road test but must apply for an instruction permit. When ready for the road test, you must present a certificate of completion from an approved behind-the-wheel driver education course and a supervised driving log.
- The restriction will appear on the license as MEDLIM.

### Motorized bicycle permit:

You can get a motorized bicycle (moped) permit at age 15 after completing a motorized bicycle safety course and passing the written, vision and road tests. An electric-assist bicycle is not considered a moped, and you do not need a test or a license to ride one. However, you must be at least 15 years old.

## Driver's license classifications

Your driver's license allows you to drive a motor vehicle on public streets and highways. You must always carry your license with you when driving. You need the appropriate class of license and endorsements for the type of vehicle you are driving. Information about your license class, endorsements and any restrictions will be listed on the back of your driver's license.

There are four classes of driver's licenses and several endorsements available to Minnesota drivers.

## Class D license

The Class D driver's license is the most common license for Minnesota drivers. With a Class D license, more commonly known as the standard driver's license, you may drive:

- All single-unit vehicles (cars, pickups and small trucks) with these exceptions:
  - Those with a gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more.
  - Vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers (including the driver).
  - Vehicles that carry hazardous materials.
- Any farm truck transporting agricultural products, farm machinery or farm supplies (including hazardous materials) within 150 miles of the farm. You must be the farmer, an immediate family member or a farm employee to drive the farm truck.
- Authorized emergency vehicles, regardless of their weight.
- Recreational vehicles (motor homes and camping trailers) for personal use.
- Motorized bicycles (mopeds).
- Electric-assist bicycles.
- Motorcycles, with the appropriate license endorsement.
- Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs).
- Autocycles.

**You may also tow a trailer or other vehicle if either of the following is true:**

- It has a gross vehicle weight of 10,000 pounds or less
- It has a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, but the combined gross vehicle weight of the vehicle and trailer is 26,000 pounds or less.

## License endorsements

You must have an endorsement on your license to drive motorcycles, buses, school buses, double and triple trailers, tank vehicles, or carry hazardous materials. You must pass additional written tests to receive all endorsements and specialized road tests to receive the bus, school bus and motorcycle endorsements.

## Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs)

Class A, B and C licenses are called commercial driver's licenses (CDLs). A CDL allows you to drive all Class D vehicles, plus certain types of vehicles specific to each CDL class.

### Class C license

If you have a Class C license with a hazardous materials endorsement, you can transport hazardous materials in a Class D vehicle. With a tanker endorsement, you can carry hazardous liquid or gaseous materials in a permanently mounted or portable tank.

### Class B license

A Class B license, with necessary endorsements, allows you to drive all Class C and D vehicles and all other single-unit vehicles. You can tow vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of 10,000 pounds or less when operating a Class B power unit.

### Class A license

If you have a Class A license with all the appropriate endorsements, you may drive any vehicle or trailer combination.

### CDL information

For more information about CDLs and CDL requirements, see the Minnesota Commercial Driver's Manual, which includes the Minnesota School Bus Driver's Handbook. These are available at drive.mn.gov.

Note: If you drive any class of vehicle as an employer or employee, you may need to follow commercial motor carrier requirements. These requirements may apply to single-unit and combination vehicles of more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (such as construction vehicles), vehicles used to deliver packages and other items, and vehicles designed or used to transport more than eight passengers, including the driver. To legally drive these vehicles, you may need a valid U.S. Department of Transportation medical examiner's certificate. You may also have restrictions on driving hours and vehicle maintenance and inspection requirements.

For more information, contact the Minnesota State Patrol at 651-405-6196 or the Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations at 651-215-6330.

### CDL for people under 21 years old

You may obtain a CDL before you turn 21; however, the license will carry specific restrictions.

## License renewal and replacement

A driver's license issued by the state of Minnesota typically expires on your birthday and must be renewed every four years after you reach 21 years old. If your current license is lost, damaged or destroyed, you must apply for a duplicate license. If you have lost your license, you must present proper identification when it is time to renew it. To renew your license, you must pass a vision test.

## Name or address change

If you change your name or address before your license expires, you must apply for a duplicate license within 30 days. If you need a replacement instruction permit, you must renew your permit.

## Active military service

If you are in active military service with the U.S. Armed Forces and have a valid unexpired Minnesota driver's license upon entering military service, you are not required to renew your license until you are separated or discharged, regardless of your length of service. To ensure that your driving record will be maintained, you will need to submit military documents to DVS that shows your date of entry into the military. Documents can be submitted online or mailed to: Driver and Vehicle Services, 445 Minnesota St., Suite 180, St. Paul, MN 55101.

You must renew your license within one year of your separation or discharge from active military service by presenting your Minnesota driver's license and your DD-214 military discharge papers.

This exception also applies to your spouse, domestic partner or dependents under age 26 of those in active military service, if they do not reside in Minnesota during the active military service period.

If moving to Minnesota with an out-of-state license that has been expired for more than a year, you may be able to waive the road test. If you are still in the military, you need to provide an In-Service letter from your commanding officer.

## Fee and tax exemptions for veterans with total service-connected disability

Veterans with a 100 percent total-service connected disability are now exempt from sales, registration and wheelage taxes for up to two vehicles. They are also exempt from title fees and fees for driver's licenses and identification cards, including filing fees.

## Veteran indictor on your license or ID

To add a veteran indicator to your driver's license or identification card, you must be separated from the military. You will need to provide proof of veteran status with at least 181 total days of ACTIVE military service and either Honorable or General (under Honorable conditions) indicated. Individuals who have retired from the National Guard or Reserve or are veterans of the Secret War in Laos are also eligible.

The benefit of having the veteran indicator is that it may be easier to get discounts at businesses that provide discounts for veterans. You are not required to have the veteran indicator, and it will not give or prevent you from getting VA benefits. Simply provide one of the proofs listed below when you apply.

**Types of Proof:**

- Separation documents—DD214, WD AGO, NAVPERS or NGB 22
- Military retiree identification card
- Veteran identification card
- Veteran health identification card
- Secret War in Laos verification form
- Your other documents may be acceptable.

**Fee and tax exemptions for veterans with total service-connected disability**

Veterans with a 100 percent total-service connected disability are exempt from sales, registration and wheelage taxes for up to two vehicles. They are also exempt from title fees and fees for driver's licenses and identification cards, including filing fees.

## Peace Corps and federal foreign service employees

If you are serving outside Minnesota as a Peace Corps volunteer or as an employee of a federal department or agency assigned to foreign service, and you had a valid Minnesota driver's license when you started, you do not need to renew your license until your service ends, no matter how long your service lasts. To keep your driving record up to date, submit documents showing your start date to DVS. You can submit documents online or mail them to: Driver and Vehicle Services, 445 Minnesota St., Suite 180, St. Paul, MN 55101.

You must renew your license within one year after your service ends by presenting your Minnesota driver's license and service papers. This exception also applies to your spouse, domestic partner or dependents under age 26 if they do not live in Minnesota during the service period.

## Selective Service

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident between the ages of 18 and 26, you will be registered with the U.S. Selective Service, more commonly known as the draft, when you apply for any Minnesota license or ID card. If you are under 18 years of age, DVS will withhold Selective Service registration until your 18th birthday. "Consent to Registration" at the time of application is in compliance with the Military Selective Service Act, U.S. Code, Title 50, Appendix, Section 453.

## State identification cards

You can apply for a Minnesota state ID card at any office that accepts driver's license applications. You must present proper documentation for the type of card you are applying for (Standard, REAL ID or Enhanced). You can only hold one type of card. DVS will not issue an identification card to someone who already has a valid driver's license or instruction permit without a downgrade statement stating the person is giving up their driving privileges.

## Driver services fees

The Minnesota Legislature sets driver services fees. You can find a complete list of driver's license, identification card and other driver services fees at dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-and-id-card-fees.

## Expedited (fast track) services

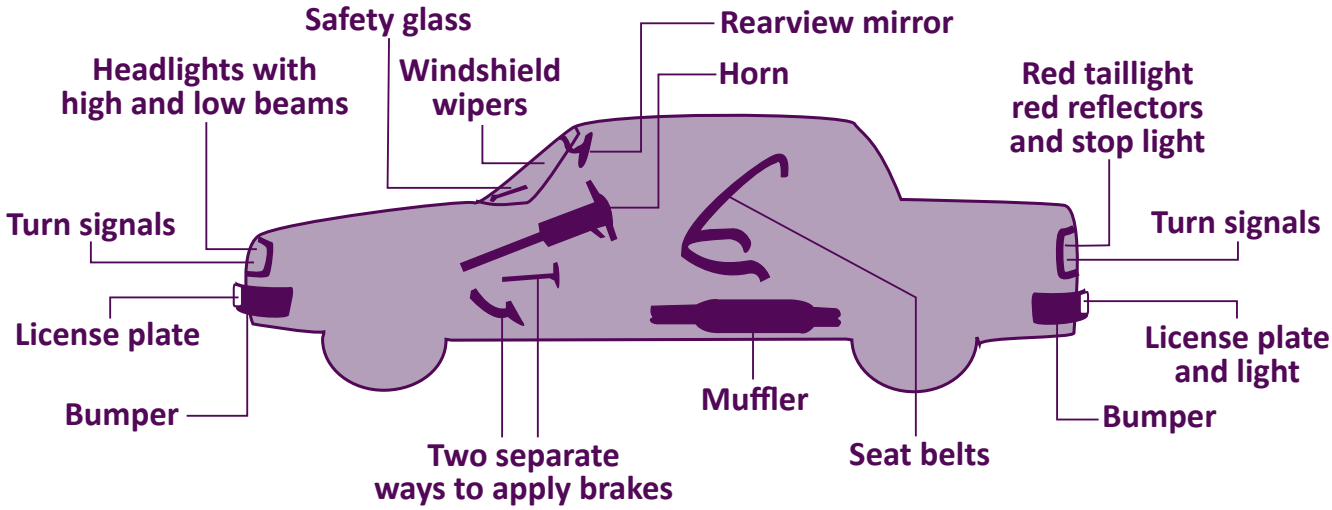
You can fast track your driver's license or state ID card for an additional fee of $20. If your fast track your services, your driver's license or ID will be processed within three business days, and you should receive your card via UPS within 10 business days. An adult must sign for your card when it is delivered.

You may not fast track your services when applying for the first time, for enhanced driver's licenses and ID cards, or when upgrading a license.

# Chapter 2: Your vehicle

## Your vehicle

### Your car must have this equipment




Before you drive any vehicle on public roads, make sure it is fully equipped and in good condition.

Get to know your vehicle. Read the owner's manual and learn how to use all the equipment. Regularly check the lights, windshield wipers, horn and tires to make sure they work. Understand the functions of the gauges and warning lights.

When you enter the vehicle, check your seat and mirrors to see if they need adjustment. Make sure passengers sit in positions that do not block your view or interfere with your driving. Adjust and buckle your seat belt and make sure all your passengers do the same.

## Vehicle requirements

### Brakes

All cars and trucks must have at least two separate brake systems, like the foot brake and the parking/emergency brake.

### Bumpers

All private passenger vehicles must have front and rear bumpers. Pickup trucks and vans must have front bumpers and either rear bumpers or reflectors.

### Horn

Your vehicle must have a working horn. Bells, sirens and whistles are not horns and can only be used by emergency vehicles. Use your horn to avoid a crash. Do not honk unnecessarily or to announce your arrival.

## Headlights and taillights

**All motor vehicles, except motorcycles, must have:**

- Two white headlights that work on high and low beam.
- Red taillights that light up when you press the brake pedal.

High beam headlights must make objects visible on the road at least 350 feet ahead. You must replace damaged headlights. A cracked lens can let moisture and dust in, reducing light and increasing glare for other drivers. Clean your headlights as often as you clean your windshield; dirty headlights can reduce light output by up to 75 percent.

Have your headlights inspected at least once a year to ensure they are aimed correctly. Some headlights need an adapter or special settings. Check your owner's manual for more information. Some vehicles have daytime running lights that turn on automatically to make your vehicle more visible during the day. Taillights and parking lights do not turn on automatically.

Turn on your headlights at sunset and keep them on until sunrise. Use them during rain, snow, hail, sleet, fog or any time you cannot see the road ahead for at least 500 feet.

## License plate light

A white light must illuminate the rear license plate so it is visible at night.

## Turn signals

All of your vehicle's turn signal lights must work.

## Prohibited lights

**Only certain vehicles can use blue lights, flashing lights and strobe lamps:**

- Snowplows, road maintenance equipment and authorized emergency vehicles can use blue lights.
- Authorized emergency vehicles, school buses, road maintenance equipment, tow trucks, service vehicles and farm equipment can use flashing lights.
- School buses, snow removal equipment and rural mail carrier vehicles can use strobe lamps.

## Mufflers

All motor vehicles must have mufflers to prevent sudden or prolonged loud noises, especially sharp popping or crackling sounds. Regularly check the muffler for carbon monoxide leaks.

## Rearview mirrors

All passenger vehicles must have rearview mirrors. Vehicles like rental moving trucks, which do not allow a view through a rear window, must have an additional side mirror. Pickup trucks, often used for hauling, must also have an extra side mirror. This side mirror helps you see clearly when materials block the rearview mirror.

## Seat belts and airbags

Make sure seat belts are clean and in good condition for all occupants. In Minnesota, all vehicles must have seat belts and everyone must use them. Airbags work with seat belts to prevent injuries but do not stop occupants from being ejected. Keep the dashboard free of clutter; objects can become dangerous if airbags inflate.

## Tires

Tires must support your vehicle's weight and grip the road properly. Inspect tires regularly for cuts, cracks, uneven wear, bald spots, bulges and punctures. Always carry a good spare tire and check its pressure often. Tires have less traction on gravel or dirt roads than on concrete or asphalt.

Tires can lose up to 1 PSI of pressure every month. Check your tire pressure often and never drive with under-inflated tires.

- Find your vehicle's recommended tire pressure on a sticker inside the driver's door or in the owner's manual.
- Check tire pressure before driving or at least three hours after driving.
- Insert a pressure gauge into the valve stem on your tire. The gauge will show the measured PSI.
- Compare the measured PSI to the PSI on the sticker inside the driver's door or in the owner's manual, not the PSI on the tire's sidewall.
- If the measured PSI is above the recommended number, let air out until it matches. If below, add air until it reaches the proper number.
- Check your tires often for wear and damage. A tire is illegal if the tread is less than one-sixteenth inch deep. Use the penny test to check for wear:
  - Hold a penny with Abraham Lincoln's body between your thumb and forefinger.
  - Place Lincoln's head into a groove where the tread is the lowest.
  - If any part of Lincoln's head is covered by the tread, your tires are legal and safe. If the tread is below that, your vehicle's grip on the road in adverse conditions is greatly reduced.

## Windshield and windows

Your view through windshields and windows must be clear and not obstructed by cracks, discoloration, steam, frost, ice or snow when driving. Do not hang objects between the driver and the windshield. Labels and stickers allowed by state law, such as state and national park stickers, safety inspection stickers and EZpass devices, can be placed on your windshield.

Global positioning and other navigation systems can be mounted near the bottom part of the windshield. Driver feedback and safety-monitoring equipment can be mounted immediately behind, slightly above or slightly below the rearview mirror. Windshields cannot be made of, covered by or treated with materials that make the glass more reflective or reduce the amount of light passing through it.

Any window tint applied to the side or rear windows after Aug. 1, 1985, must show the percentage of light transmitted and reflected. If it transmits less than 50 percent or reflects more than 20 percent of available light, you can only use it on the rear window of a pickup truck or the rear and side windows of a van, limousine or vehicle used by a funeral home.

## Windshield wipers and window defrosters

A vehicle with a glass windshield must have working windshield wipers. Window defrosters are necessary to keep windows and the windshield clear of steam and frost.

## Wheel guards or fenders

Passenger vehicles must have fenders or other wheel guards to prevent water, dirt and other material from being thrown into the air by the tires.

## Fuel efficient techniques

### Keep your car in good condition

- Tune your engine properly.
- Keep tires properly inflated.
- Use the recommended grade of motor oil.

### Drive efficiently

- Plan and combine errands into one trip.
- Drive sensibly; avoid speeding, rapid acceleration and sudden braking.
- Observe the speed limit.
- Remove unnecessary heavy items from your vehicle.
- Use cruise control on the highway.
- Use overdrive gears.
- Whenever possible, take public transportation, use carpools, rideshare, bike or walk.

# Chapter 3: Traffic laws and vehicle operation

***Minnesota traffic laws apply to everyone driving on public roads in this state. The following laws cover how to control and operate your vehicle.***

**On all wide roads, you must drive on the right side of the road except:**

- When passing another vehicle going in the same direction.
- When the right side of the road is closed for construction or repair.
- When the road has three marked lanes.
- When signs indicate the road is one-way.
- When you need to move over for an authorized vehicle parked or stopped on the road in accordance with the Move Over Law.

## Speed limits

The faster you drive, the less time you have to react to events on the road. Driving at higher speeds increases the chance of crashes. You are more likely to get seriously injured or killed in a crash at high speed.

Always obey the posted speed limit.

**Basic speed law:** Minnesota's basic speed law says you must drive at a speed that is reasonable for the current conditions, including weather, traffic and road conditions. Driving faster than the posted speed limit is illegal. The posted speed limit is the maximum speed allowed on that road. On two-lane highways with a speed limit of 55 mph or higher, you can increase your speed by 10 mph when lawfully passing another vehicle.

**Minimum speed limits:** Some roads have minimum speed limits. It is illegal to drive slower than the posted minimum speed under normal conditions.

**Right-of-way:** If you approach an intersection at an unlawful speed, you lose the right-of-way privilege associated with driving at a lawful speed.

**Speed limits under ideal conditions (unless otherwise indicated by signs):**

- 10 mph — in alleys
- 30 mph — on urban or town roads
- 55 mph — in all other locations that are not specified in this list

**Special zones:**

- In school zones, you must slow down when children are present.
- In work or construction zones, you must slow down and drive with care.

## Speed limits and fines

You can be fined for driving faster than the posted speed limit. Additional fines apply if you drive 20 mph or more over the limit. If you drive over 100 mph, your driving privileges will be revoked for at least six months.

## Reduced speed

You may need to reduce your speed in many driving situations. Remember, increasing speed decreases your field of vision and increases the risk of a crash.

You must slow down when you approach or pass a stopped emergency vehicle with flashing emergency lights. A surcharge of at least $25 is added to the speeding fine if you break this law. Slow down for flag persons, pedestrians, barricades, flares or reflectors on the road. You must also slow down in bad weather and poor road conditions.

Drive slower on narrow or winding roads, and when approaching a curve, hilltop or railroad crossing. On gravel or dirt roads, you need to slow down because it takes longer to stop and is easier to skid when turning.

## Speed limits on bridges

Watch for and obey special speed limits and "No Passing" signs posted on bridges.

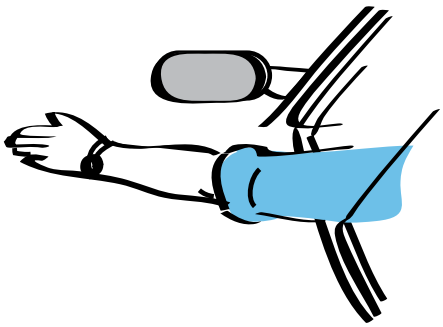
## Signaling

When you want to change lanes or make a turn, use your signal to inform other drivers. Activate your signal at least 100 feet before turning. Keep signaling until you have completed the turn or lane change.

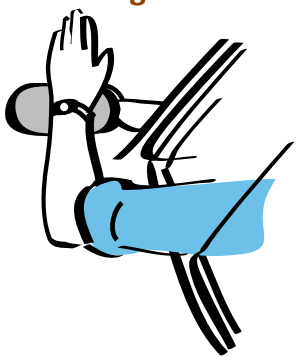
## Hand and arm signals

During daylight hours, you can use hand and arm signals in addition to or instead of turn signals. Do not use hand signals at night or when driving a vehicle that blocks other drivers from seeing your hand signals.

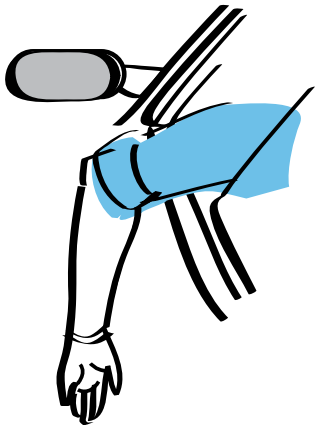
**Left turn**



**Right turn**



**Stop**



## Traffic lanes

A traffic lane is a part of the street or highway wide enough for a vehicle or line of vehicles to drive safely. You are in a traffic lane whenever you drive on any street or highway. Lanes may not always be marked, but they exist whether marked or not. You must stay within a single traffic lane without weaving or straddling the lane markings.

## Changing lanes

You often need to change lanes to turn, merge with traffic or do other driving activities. Changing lanes can be dangerous and must be done carefully. To stay safe, make sure you have space to the side behind and ahead of your vehicle before moving into another lane. Turn your head to check the lane you are moving into for vehicles. Don't rely solely on mirrors; you may miss vehicles in your blind spots.

## Blind spots

Blind spots are areas around your vehicle where your view is blocked. You cannot see pedestrians or other vehicles in your rearview or side mirrors when they are in these spots. The design of your vehicle and the position of the roof pillars determine the location of your blind spots. Dirty windshields and glaring lights can also create temporary blind spots.

Know where your blind spots are. Before changing lanes or turning, quickly turn your head to look for hidden pedestrians or vehicles. Avoid driving in other drivers' blind spots. Be especially aware of blind spots when driving near commercial vehicles.

## Turns

Drivers who turn improperly cause many traffic crashes. Move safely into the correct lane well ahead of the place where you will make the actual turn.

- Slow down before turning. Signal your intent at least 100 feet before the turn. Signals let pedestrians and drivers know what you plan to do.
- While waiting to turn, keep your wheels straight and your foot on the brake. If your vehicle is struck from behind, you are less likely to be pushed into oncoming traffic.
- Continue signaling until you begin your turn.
- Do not make sudden turns from the wrong lane.
- Watch for traffic or obstacles in the road you plan to enter.
- Always finish your turn in the correct lane.
- If the car ahead of you is signaling for a left turn, slow down and prepare to stop.
- When waiting to make a left turn at a green light with oncoming traffic, position your car into the intersection where your body is even with the curb line. You may only be able to make the turn when the light changes to yellow.

## Turning on a red light

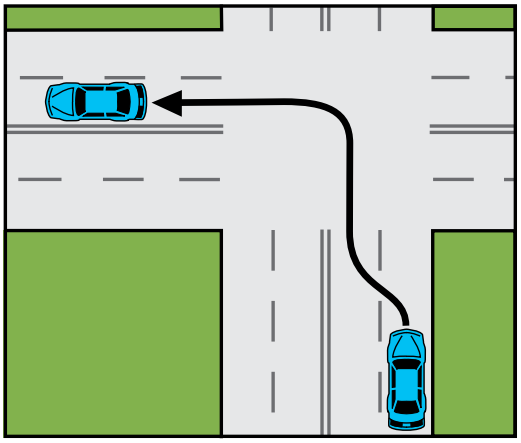
### Right turn

At many intersections, you can make a right turn while the traffic light is red. Make sure you are in the correct lane and come to a complete stop. Do not turn if there is a "No Turn on Red" sign. Check for pedestrians and traffic in all directions to make sure your path is clear. Watch for oncoming cars making left turns in front of you. Sometimes oncoming traffic will have a green arrow before your light turns green.

### Left turn

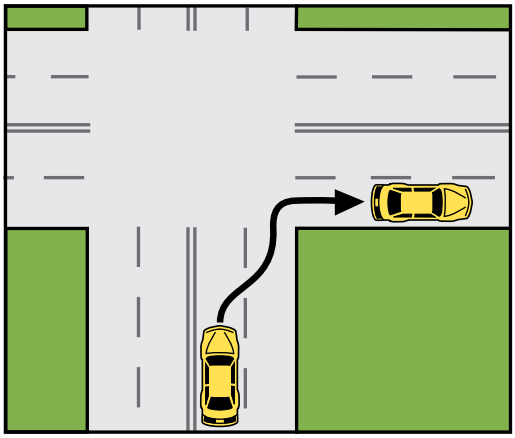
You can make a left turn from a one-way street onto another one-way street while the traffic light is red in certain situations. Before turning, come to a complete stop, make sure the intersection is clear and

## Left turns



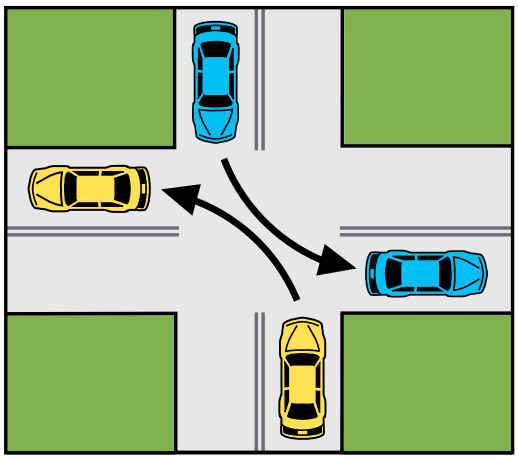
***Left turn:*** *After checking traffic behind you and signaling your intent, move into the lane closest to the center line. If there are no lines marking the lanes, move your vehicle to the right of the center of the road. Look right and left before starting the turn. Yield right of way, if necessary. Turn the steering wheel hand-over-hand, and complete the turn in the first lane right of the center line.*

## Right turns

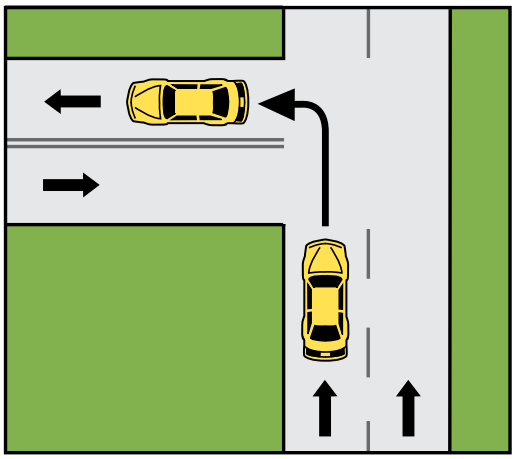


***Right turn:*** *After checking traffic behind you and signaling your intent, move close to the right curb. Look right and left before beginning the turn. Yield right of way, if necessary. Turn the steering wheel hand-over-hand, and complete the turn in the lane next to the curb.*

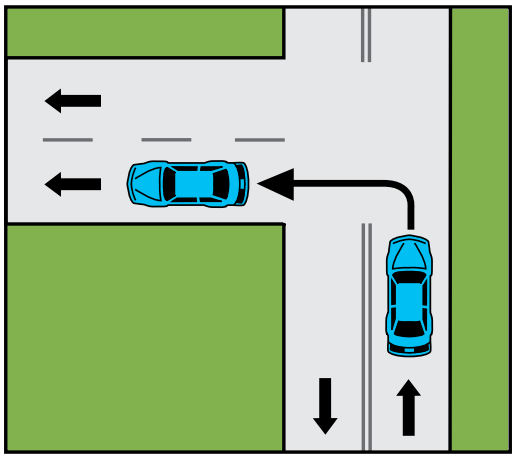
## Two approaching left turns



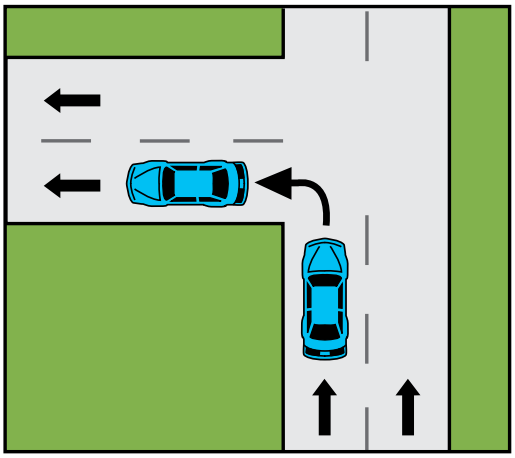
## From a one-way road onto a two-way road



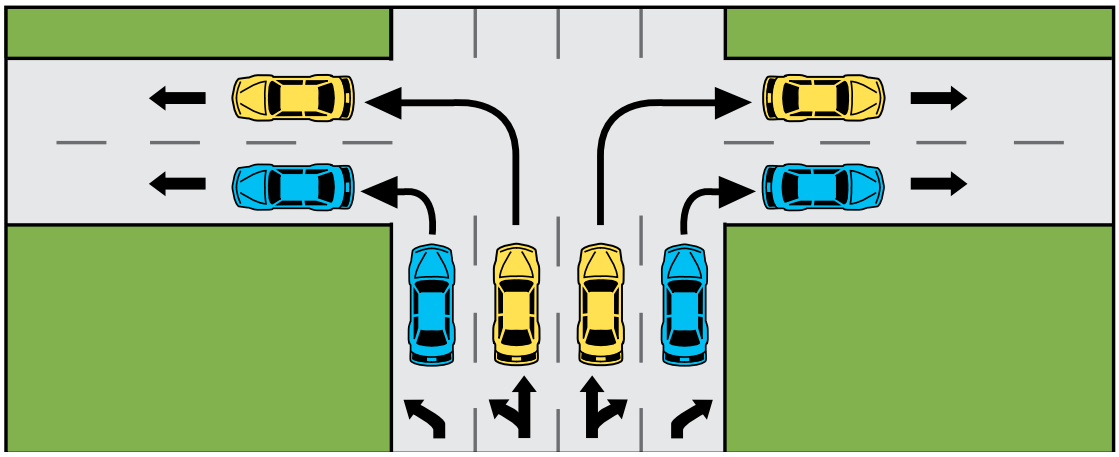
## From two-way road onto a one-way road



## From a one-way road onto a one-way road



### Multiple turn lanes



***Multiple turn lanes:*** *If there are signs or lane markings for two or more turning lanes, stay in your lane during the turn.*

yield to any pedestrians or vehicles. Traffic must be allowed to travel in the direction you are turning.

### When turning on a red light:

- Yield to traffic and pedestrians.
- If a "No Turn on Red" sign is posted, wait until the light is green to turn.

## Roundabouts

Roundabouts are designed to improve traffic flow and provide safer intersections than normal four-way stops. When approaching a roundabout:

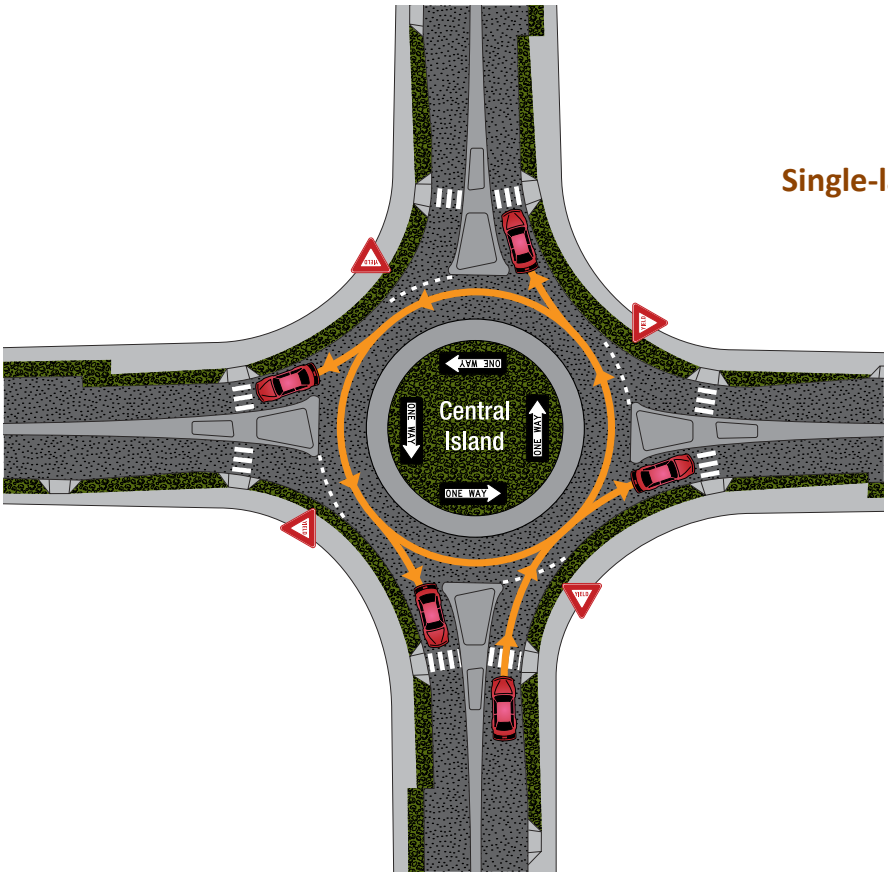
- Slow down as you approach.
- For multi-lane roundabouts, choose the correct lane before entering.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the road.
- Watch for signs or markings that require or prohibit certain movements.

### When entering a roundabout:

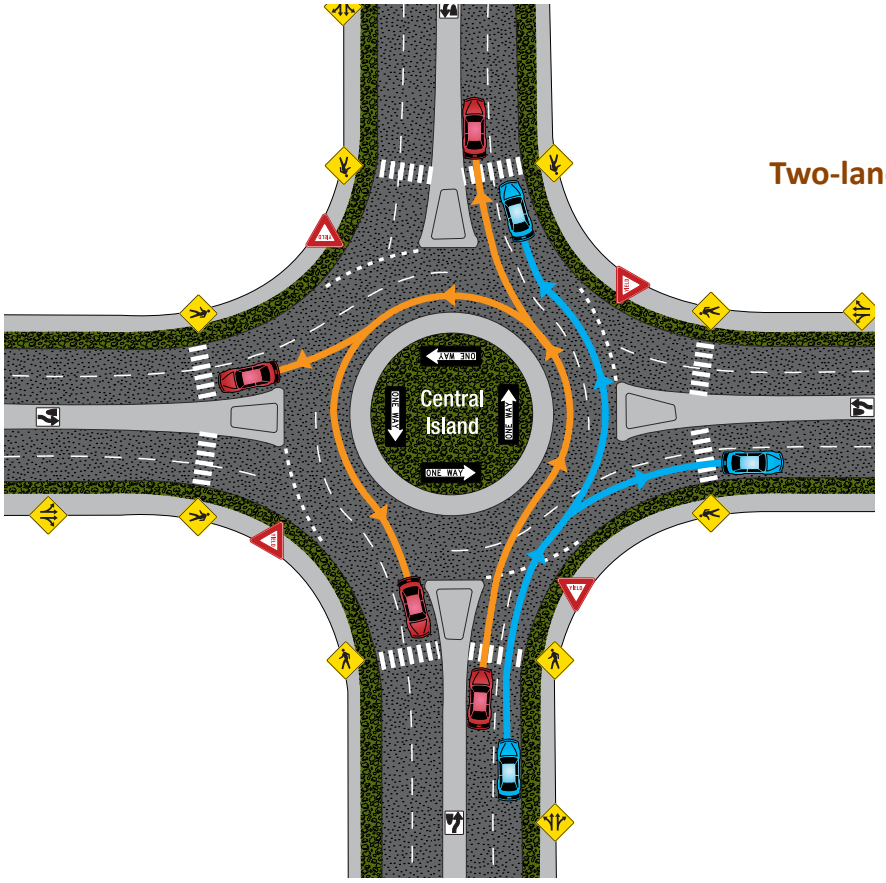
- Yield to vehicles already in the roundabout. Do not enter until all traffic from the left has cleared.
- Drive counterclockwise until you reach your exit.
- Do not stop, pass or change lanes within the roundabout.
- If an emergency vehicle approaches, exit the roundabout immediately and then pull over.

### For large vehicles:

- A vehicle longer than 40 feet or wider than 10 feet, or any combination vehicle, may deviate from the lane as needed to drive through the roundabout, while being cautious of other traffic.
- In multi-lane roundabouts, if two large vehicles approach and drive through at the same time, the driver on the right must yield to the vehicle on the left, reducing speed or stopping if necessary.




Single-lane roundabout




Two-lane roundabout

## J-turns

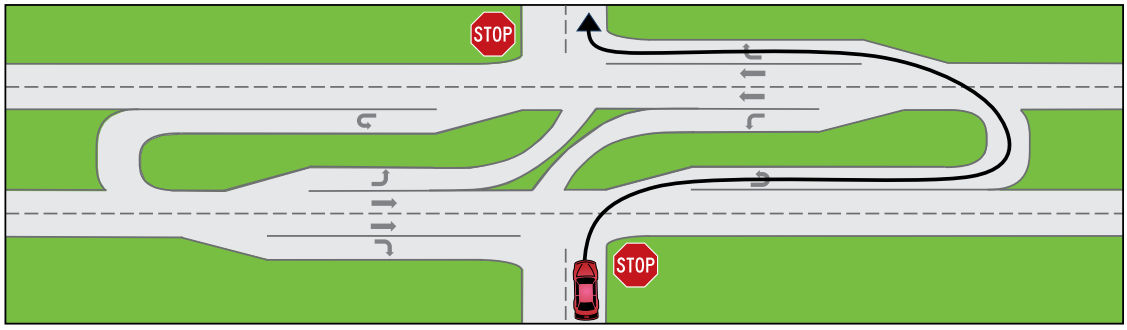
J-turns are used to decrease fatalities and injuries caused by broadside crashes on four-lane divided highways.

At a J-turn, drivers on the side street approaching the divided highway always make a right turn. To cross the highway or make a left turn from the side street:

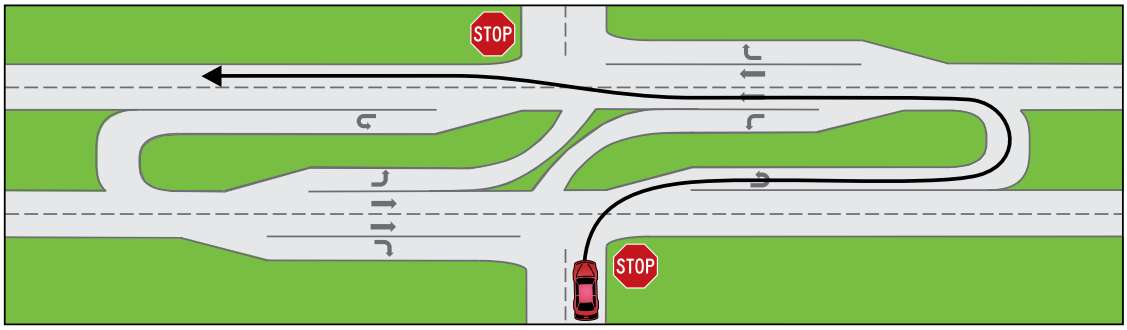
1. Come to a complete stop.
2. Turn right onto the highway.
3. Enter the designated left-turn lane that leads to the median opening and complete a U-turn.

When making the right turn, you can cross both lanes and move into the left-turn lane in one motion when it is safe to do so. This minimizes the time spent in the through lanes of the divided highway. When completing the U-turn, you must yield to oncoming traffic and stop if necessary, before entering the through lanes of the divided highway.

**Crossing a divided highway using a J-turn**



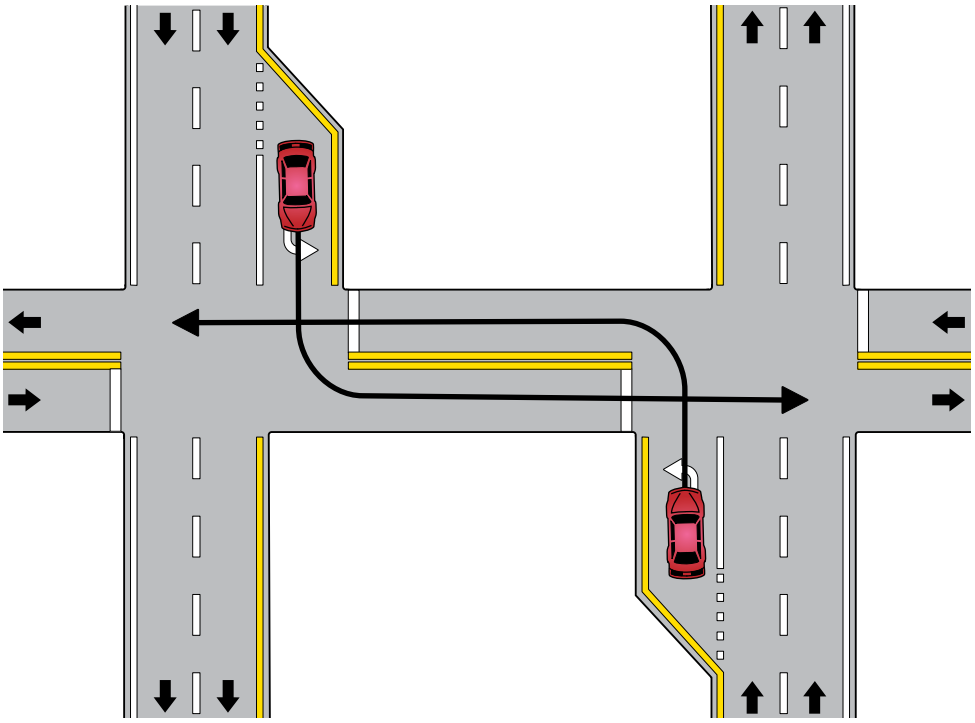

**Left-hand turn onto divided highway using a J-turn**




## Divided highway

Crossing a rural divided highway can be dangerous. If there is enough space between the two roadways, you can cross one half and wait in the middle until it is safe to cross the second half. If there is no traffic from either direction, you can cross both roadways if it is safe. When waiting between the roadways, stay to the right of the center. When turning left onto a divided highway, use the same procedure as crossing straight across. Ensure there is enough space from oncoming traffic, so you do not impede them as you get up to speed after completing your turn.

**Divided highway — left turn across traffic**



## U-turns

A U-turn is a 180-degree turn that reverses your direction of travel. Do not make a U-turn unless you can do so without disrupting other traffic. "No U-Turn" signs indicate where U-turns are not allowed. You must not make U-turns on interstate freeways. They are also illegal near the tops of hills and on curves where other drivers cannot see you from 1,000 feet away.

When necessary, a driver may turn the vehicle into the farthest lane and temporarily use the shoulder to make a U-turn on a roadway with two or more lanes in the same direction.

## Right-hand lane travel

When driving on a road with one lane in your direction, if you are going slow enough to create a traffic hazard, you must drive as close as possible to the right-hand curb or edge of the road.

On highways with more than one lane in the same direction, drive in the right-hand lane when available. If you are in the left-most lane, move out of the lane to allow another vehicle to pass when practical. The exceptions to this rule are:

- When overtaking and passing another vehicle in the same direction.
- When preparing for a left turn at an intersection, or into a private road or driveway.
- When preparing to exit an expressway, freeway or interstate highway on the left side.
- When driving an authorized emergency vehicle.
- When directed by an official traffic control device, a peace officer or in a highway work zone.

## Passing

Improper passing causes many crashes. Be extra cautious when passing at night, when visibility is poor and when the road is slippery.

On two-lane roads where passing is allowed and traffic moves in both directions, you may pass on the left side of vehicles ahead of you. Do not exceed the speed limit to complete a pass. However, on two-lane highways with a posted speed limit of 55 mph or higher, the speed limit increases by 10 mph when you are lawfully passing another vehicle in the same direction.

### When preparing to pass

- Ensure there is a safe distance between your vehicle and oncoming traffic.
- Check behind you to see if other drivers are preparing to pass you.

Use your left turn signal before moving into the left lane to pass. Use your right turn signal after passing and before returning to the right lane. Return to the right lane when you can see the entire vehicle you have just passed in your rearview mirror. You must return to the right side of the road before coming within 100 feet of an oncoming vehicle.

Do not pass in locations where a "No Passing Zone" sign is posted or where there is a solid yellow line on your side of the center line. Double solid yellow lines mean no passing is allowed in either direction.

### Do not pass

- On a curve or hill where you cannot clearly see the road ahead for at least 700 feet.
- Within 100 feet of an intersection, underpass, tunnel or railroad crossing.
- When you are about to meet a vehicle coming toward you from the opposite direction.
- When another driver is trying to pass you, stay in your own lane and do not increase speed.

### Passing on the right

**A driver may pass on the right of another vehicle only under the following conditions:**

- When it is safe to do so. Do not pass by driving in a bicycle lane, on the shoulder, or off the pavement or main part of the road.
- When the vehicle you are overtaking is making or about to make, a left turn.
- On a street or highway with enough space to allow two or more lanes of moving vehicles to travel in each direction.
- On a one-way street or any road where traffic moves in one direction only. You may only pass on the right if there are no obstructions and the road is wide enough for two or more lanes of moving vehicles.

## Backing up

Backing up is not allowed on freeways or expressways, except for emergency vehicles on duty. Backing up on public roads can result in a charge of reckless or careless driving.

If you must back out of a driveway onto a public road, back into the nearest lane and drive forward from there. Never back into or across lanes of traffic unless you are sure it is safe.

### Before you back up:

- Walk around your vehicle to make sure nothing is behind it.
- Look to the front, sides and rear.
- Continue looking out the rear window while backing up. Do not rely solely on your mirrors or back-up camera.
- Back slowly into the nearest traffic lane.

## Parking

When you parallel park, your vehicle's wheels closest to the side of the road should be no more than 12 inches from the curb. Turn the front wheels toward the curb or shoulder, place the vehicle in park and engage the parking brake. This way, if the vehicle comes out of park or the brakes fail, the wheels will help it roll toward the curb or off the road, not into a traffic lane.

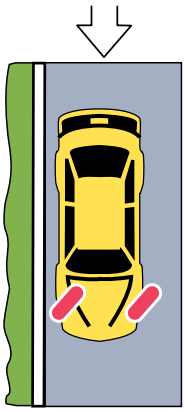
### Parking is not allowed in the following areas:

- Within intersections
- On a crosswalk or sidewalk
- Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection
- Within 30 feet of any flashing light, stop sign or traffic control signal on the side of a public road
- Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant
- Alongside or across the street from any excavation site or obstacle if your vehicle would be in the way of traffic
- At the street end of a driveway
- On any bridge
- Within any highway tunnel
- On the traffic side of any vehicle parked at a curb or at the edge of a highway. This is known as "double parking"
- Beside a curb that is painted yellow or where official "No Parking" signs are posted
- In front of mailboxes (refer to city/local ordinances)

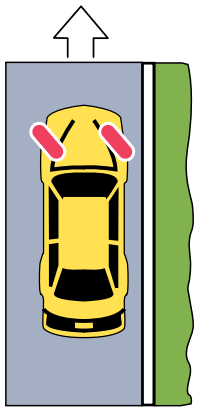
## Exiting a parked vehicle

When you are stopped or parked on the side of a road, do not open any doors until you have checked to make sure it is safe and will not interfere with other traffic. Look for vehicles, motorcycles, bicyclists and pedestrians that may be approaching your vehicle. Do not leave any door on the side closest to moving traffic open longer than necessary to load or unload passengers.

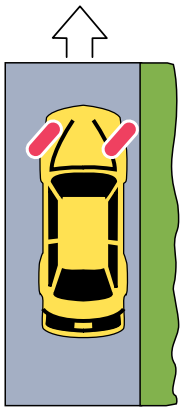
## Parking on a hill



*When the front of a parked vehicle points downhill, wheels should be turned toward the curb or shoulder of the road.*

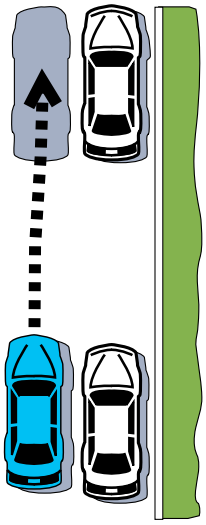


*When the front of a parked vehicle points uphill, and there is a curb, wheels should be turned away from the curb.*

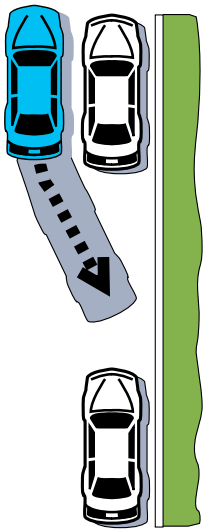


*When the front of a parked vehicle points uphill, and there is no curb, wheels should be turned toward the shoulder of the road.*

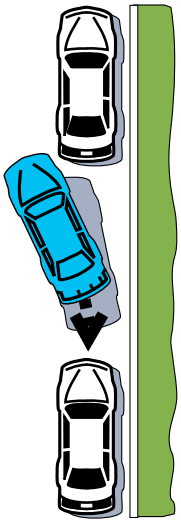
## Parallel parking



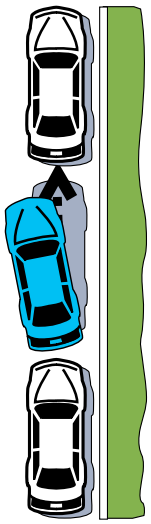
*1. Stop even with the car ahead and about one and a half feet away from it.*



*2. Turn wheel to right sharply, back up slowly.*



*3. When clear of car ahead, turn wheel sharply to left and continue to back up slowly.*



*4. Turn wheel sharply to right and pull toward curb in center of space.*

## Highway parking

If you are parking on state highways or freeways, you must move your vehicle away from the main part of the road. If your vehicle cannot be moved, use visible markers or signals to prevent damage and harm to other drivers.

If you park on the highway at night, or any time lights are needed. You must have at least one white or amber front light and one red taillight illuminated on your vehicle. Both lights must be visible from at least 500 feet. Use parking lights or hazard warning lights to alert other drivers. Set headlights on parked vehicles to low beam.

## Passenger safety

It is your responsibility as the driver to ensure the safety of all passengers. Insist that everyone wears seat belts. You must make sure children are buckled into an age-appropriate child restraint system.

## Seat belt laws

The seat belt is the most important safety equipment in your vehicle. In Minnesota, all vehicles must have seat belts, and everyone must use them. You as the driver and all of your passengers, including those in the back seat, must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt. Law enforcement can stop motorists solely for seat belt violations.

### If you do not wear a seat belt, consider the following:

- Your chances of being killed or injured in a crash are four times greater.
- You can be killed in a crash even at speeds as low as 12 mph.
- Seat belts prevent occupants from being ejected in a crash. People thrown from vehicles are likely to die or suffer serious injuries.

### You are not legally required to wear a seat belt if you are:

- Driving a passenger vehicle in reverse.
- In a seat where all seat belts are being used by other passengers.
- Possessing a written certificate from a physician for medical reasons.
- Engaged in work that involves frequent exiting and entering the vehicle, as long as you do not drive faster than 25 mph.
- A rural mail carrier delivering mail for the U.S. Postal Service.
- Driving or riding in a pickup truck while engaged in farm work.
- Driving a vehicle made before Jan. 1, 1965.

## Use seat belts correctly

**You are more likely to survive a car crash if you use both the lap and shoulder belts together.**

- **Lap belt:** Adjust the lap belt to fit snugly across your hipbones or upper thighs. It should never be positioned across your abdomen or the soft part of your stomach.
- **Shoulder belt:** Adjust the shoulder belt to fit snugly across your chest and the middle of your shoulder.

When positioned correctly, the seat belt is much less likely to cause injuries in the event of a crash.

## Infant and child safety seat laws

The back seat is the safest place in most vehicles. Children under 13 must ride in the back if it is available. Car seats and booster seats, also known as child safety restraint systems, must be federally approved and installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- Children under 2 years of age must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the weight or height limit of the car seat. If they are too heavy or too tall for the car seat, they must switch to a front-facing car seat. Once they turn 2 years old, if they are under both the height and weight limits, they must stay in the rear-facing car seat until they are too tall or heavy for the seat.
- Children older than 2 who exceed the rear-facing height or weight limit of the car seat must sit in a forward-facing car seat until they reach the height or weight limit (typically 40-60 pounds, depending on the manufacturer).
- A child from 4 to 9 years old must use a booster seat and be secured with a safety belt if they are too tall or too heavy for the car seat.
- When a child is 9 years old, or they exceed the weight or height limit of the booster seat, they must sit without the booster and be secured with a seat belt.

## Other child passenger safety guidelines

- Do not use a safety seat that has been in a crash.
- Child restraint systems expire six years from the date of manufacture. Some seats have a specific expiration date stamped on them. If no date is listed, follow the six-year recommendation.
- Never place rear-facing infant seats in front of an active airbag.
- Do not hold children on a passenger's lap while riding in a vehicle.
- Children should not ride in the cargo area of a truck or station wagon.

## Never leave children unattended in a vehicle

**Never leave children or vulnerable adults alone in a motor vehicle. Here are some dangers that could occur:**

- Unattended occupants could engage the vehicle and cause a crash.
- Temperatures can reach dangerous extremes inside a vehicle, leading to death or serious injuries from heat or cold.
- The vehicle could be stolen or broken into by someone unaware it is occupied.
- Someone could break into the vehicle and abduct or harm the occupants.

## Leaving your vehicle unattended

Protect yourself from theft. Lock your doors and take your keys with you. Do not leave the vehicle running or leave the keys in the ignition or inside the vehicle. Do not leave valuables, or anything that looks valuable, inside the vehicle.

## Animal safety

You are responsible for the safety of animals in your vehicle. Be aware of the dangers of leaving animals unattended in vehicles during warm weather. Do not leave pets in vehicles, especially on very hot or cold days. Temperature extremes can be very dangerous to animals.

## Airbags

An airbag is a supplemental restraint system. Airbags work with seat belts to prevent injuries but are not designed to keep occupants from being ejected. For safety reasons, children under age 13 must ride in the back seat if it is available.

### Airbag safety suggestions

Try to keep at least 10 inches between yourself and the steering wheel. Keep your hands at the 8 and 4 o'clock or 9 and 3 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Avoid the 10 and 2 o'clock position. Keep your thumbs turned out on the steering wheel.

Move front passenger seats as far back as possible. Read your operator's manual before driving or riding in a vehicle with airbags.

For more information about seat belts, airbags and car safety seats, visit the Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety at ots.dps.mn.gov.

## Do not litter

It is illegal to throw items from your vehicle onto streets, roads, and public or private land. Do not throw, leave, place or dump any items, including: cigarettes, fireworks, debris, snow, ice, glass, nails, tacks, wire, cans, garbage, papers, ashes, refuse, carcasses, offal, trash or rubbish.

## What to do in a traffic crash

**If you are involved in a crash, you must take certain actions to ensure safety and comply with the law:**

- Stop. If possible, pull out of the driving lane onto the shoulder. Turn off the ignition to reduce the risk of fire.
- Protect yourself and the crash scene. Use emergency warning lights, flares or a flashlight to warn other drivers of danger.
- Call for help. If someone is injured or killed, call the nearest law enforcement agency or 911 as quickly as possible.
- If you are able and qualified, administer first aid. If not, make anyone who is injured comfortable. You are required by law to provide reasonable assistance to crash victims.
- Exchange information. Provide your name, address, date of birth and vehicle registration number to other drivers and any law enforcement officer at the scene. Show your driver's license to anyone who asks for it and to any law enforcement officer.
- Provide insurance information. If asked, give the name and address of your insurance carrier and the name of your agent. Give this information to the investigating law enforcement officer. If you do not have it with you, provide it within 72 hours.
- Property damage only: If the crash only results in property damage, you do not need to notify law enforcement. If your vehicle is disabled, have it towed as soon as possible. If you damage property other than a vehicle, inform the property owner.

## Insurance

Owners of motor vehicles driven on public roads must carry no-fault and liability insurance. You must have valid proof of insurance in the vehicle at all times. Failing to provide proof of insurance when asked by a law enforcement officer can lead to revocation of your driver's license and vehicle registration.

### If your driving privileges are revoked for lack of insurance, you must:

- Pass a written test.
- Pay a $30 reinstatement fee in addition to any court fines or citations.
- Apply for a new driver's license.
- Submit an insurance certificate from your insurance company.

Operating an uninsured vehicle can result in the revocation of license plates and vehicle registration. Your driving privileges may be revoked for up to one year. If convicted of operating an uninsured vehicle, you may be fined up to $1,000 and sentenced to up to 90 days in jail.

## Motorcycle insurance

Motorcycle drivers in this state must have liability insurance that covers property damage and injuries to other people. No-fault and uninsured driver insurance coverage is optional. You can also get insurance for damage, loss or theft of the motorcycle.

## Registering your vehicle

If you are a Minnesota resident, all of your motor vehicles that are driven on public roads must be registered with DVS. You have up to 60 days after becoming a resident to register your vehicle in Minnesota.

To register your vehicle, bring the current vehicle title or registration card and your driver's license or other valid identification to your nearest deputy registrar's office.

## Cell phones

You may not use a wireless communication device, like a cell phone, to compose, read or send electronic messages while driving. Electronic messages include emails, text messages and instant messages. You also may not access the internet.

**Exceptions:**

- Using the device to get emergency assistance
- Reporting a crash or crime
- Using the device in voice-activated or hands-free mode

If you are convicted of two or more violations of using a wireless communication device to compose, read or send messages while driving, you will be required to pay a $275 fine in addition to the court-specified fine.

# Chapter 4: Sharing the road

***The following laws and safety information apply to situations involving other vehicles and pedestrians.***

## Stopping

### Stop signs:

- Come to a complete stop at stop signs.
- If there is a marked stop line, stop before the line.
- If there is a pedestrian crosswalk, stop before entering the crosswalk.
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists and traffic before proceeding.

### Obstructed view:

- If your view of the intersection is obstructed, be prepared to stop again for traffic or pedestrians in your path.

### You must also come to a complete stop:

- Before entering a road from an alley, private driveway, parking lot or parking ramp. Always stop before crossing a sidewalk or crosswalk.
- At an intersection or crosswalk with a traffic signal displaying a red light. Wait until the light turns green and your path is clear before proceeding.
- At any intersection or crosswalk, marked or unmarked, where a pedestrian or bicyclist is crossing the road. Stay stopped until they have passed your lane.
- At a flashing red traffic light. Treat it as you would a stop sign.
- At a freeway ramp meter when the light is red.
- At a railroad crossing with a stop sign.
- When a flag person or traffic device directs you to stop.
- At a bridge that has been raised to open a path for boats.

## Stopping for a school bus

School buses have yellow and red lights that flash alternately to warn drivers they are stopping to load or unload students.

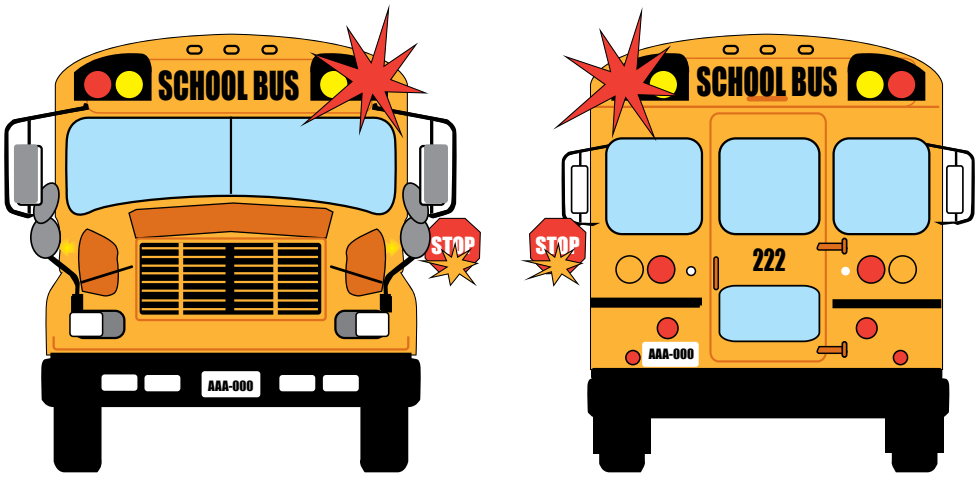
### Flashing yellow lights

Bus drivers will activate flashing yellow lights at least 100 feet before a school bus stops in a speed zone of 35 mph or less. They will activate the lights at least 300 feet before it stops in a speed zone of more than 35 mph. It is against the law to pass on the right side of a school bus while it is displaying red or yellow flashing lights.

### Flashing red lights

Flashing red lights warn drivers that the school bus is loading or unloading students. When you see a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing, you must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet from the bus.

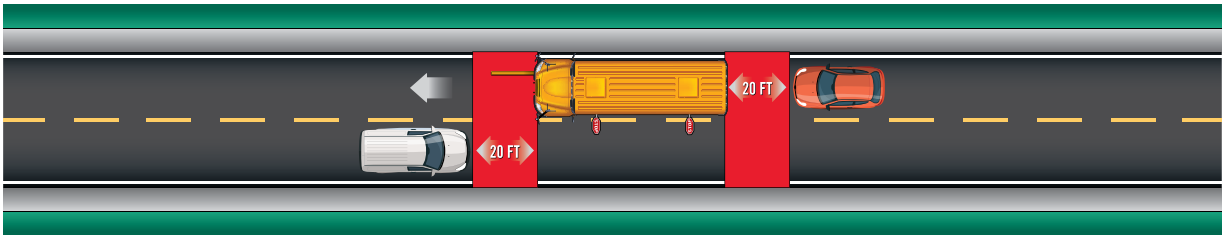
Regardless of whether you are facing the front or back of the bus, you must remain stopped until the red lights stop flashing. If you don't, you can be charged with a misdemeanor. If convicted, you must pay a fine of at least $500 and lose your driving privileges.



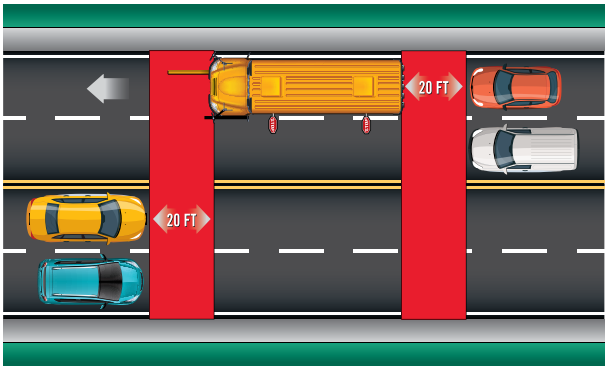

## Passing a school bus

It is illegal to pass a school bus when its red lights are flashing. If you are driving on a divided roadway, you do not need to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing if it is on the opposite side of the divider. A law enforcement officer with probable cause to believe you have violated this law may arrest you within four hours of the violation.

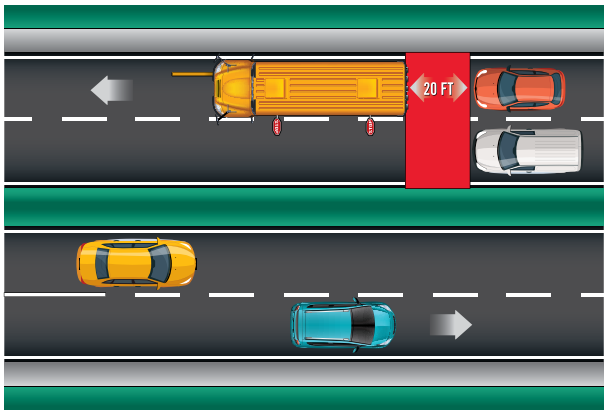
### Two lane, non-divided




### Multilane non-divided




### Divided highway



## Vehicle owner may be penalized

When your vehicle is used to violate Minnesota Statute 169.444, you are guilty of a petty misdemeanor if you own or lease the vehicle. However, if you can prove that another person was driving the vehicle at the time, the driver will be charged with the violation.

When you apply for a driver's license, you must certify, by signing the application, that you understand the requirement to stop for a school bus and are aware of the penalties for violating this law.

## School safety patrol

When you see a student safety patrol helping schoolmates cross a street or highway, you must come to a complete stop. You must also stop for adult crossing guards displaying a stop sign or flag. It is illegal to drive through a line of children crossing the road, even if a school safety patrol is not present. Violating this law is a misdemeanor. A second violation within a year is a gross misdemeanor.

## School bus flagger

You must stop for a school bus flagger directing traffic to allow school buses to leave school property. After being stopped by a school bus flagger, you may not proceed until directed to do so by the flagger or a police officer.

## Right of way and yielding

Right-of-way and yielding laws help traffic flow smoothly and safely. They are based on courtesy and common sense. Violating these laws is a leading cause of traffic crashes.

- **Intersections without traffic lights or signals:** When you reach an intersection at the same time as another driver, the driver on the left must yield to the one on the right.
- **All-way stops or flashing red traffic lights:** When you reach an intersection at the same time as another driver, the driver on the left must yield to the one on the right.
- **Left turns:** When you want to make a left turn, you must yield to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction that are in the intersection or close enough to pose a risk of a crash.
- **Green arrow signal for left turn:** When a green arrow signals that you are allowed to turn left, you must yield to other vehicles or pedestrians already in the intersection. After yielding, you may continue in the direction of the arrow.
- **Uncontrolled "T" intersections:** When you approach an uncontrolled "T" intersection, you must yield to all cross traffic if you are the one turning.
- **Entering a public road from a private road or driveway:** You must stop and yield to pedestrians and traffic.
- **Transit and metro mobility buses:** When driving in the right lane, you must yield to transit and metro mobility buses merging from a bus stop or shoulder. This includes yielding to any school bus trying to enter the lane from a shoulder, a right-turn lane, or other location where the school bus has stopped to load or unload passengers. The school bus must use the left turn signal to indicate intent to move into the right-hand lane.
- **Funeral processions:** When a funeral procession identifies itself with headlights or hazard warning lights, you must yield to the entire procession.
- **Pedestrians:** You must yield to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked.

## Yield to emergency vehicles

When an emergency vehicle (such as an ambulance, fire truck or police car) with flashing red lights and sounding a siren or bell approaches your vehicle on a two-way road, you must pull to the right and stop. On a one-way road, pull to the nearest side and stop. If you are in an intersection, proceed through it before stopping. Remain stopped until all emergency vehicles have passed.

A law enforcement officer with probable cause to believe you have violated this law may arrest you within four hours of the violation.

You do not need to stop if the emergency vehicle is separated from your lane of traffic by a physical barrier like a fence, wall or median strip.

## Passing parked emergency and service vehicles

When an emergency vehicle with flashing lights is stopped on or next to a road with two lanes in the same direction, the "Move Over Law" requires you to move to the lane farthest away from the vehicle if it is safe to do so. Emergency vehicles include tow trucks, ambulances, fire trucks and police cars. If you cannot move a lane away or are on a street or highway with only one lane in your direction, slow down and pass with caution.

You must follow the same rule when approaching stalled or disabled vehicles and when passing parked vehicles such as service patrol vehicles, road maintenance vehicles, utility company vehicles, construction vehicles, postal vehicles, or solid waste and recycling vehicles that are stopped with warning lights activated.

## Following firefighting vehicles

Only vehicles on official emergency business are allowed to follow within 500 feet of a firefighting vehicle on an emergency run. Do not drive over an unprotected fire hose unless directed by a law enforcement officer or fire department official.

## Following other vehicles

You must maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. You must be able to stop or turn to avoid a collision. Consider weather, traffic and road conditions when determining a safe following distance. Use the three-second rule to help maintain a safe following distance. (See "Three-Second Rule" in Chapter 6 of this manual.)

## Careless and reckless driving

Careless driving means driving or stopping a vehicle in a way that endangers the lives and safety of people or property. Reckless driving means driving a vehicle while knowingly disregarding a substantial and unjustifiable risk that may harm others or their property, including racing or contest driving. Racing is defined as intentionally comparing or contesting relative speeds by operating one or more vehicles, regardless of whether the speed exceeds the speed limit.

If you are charged with careless or reckless driving, you will be tried in court for a misdemeanor.

## What to do and expect when stopped by law enforcement

Being stopped by a law enforcement officer can be stressful, but knowing what to do can ensure a safe interaction for everyone.

**When you see emergency lights behind you:**

- Stay calm.
- Slow down and activate your turn signal.
- Pull to the right shoulder as soon as safely possible; if on a multi-lane road and closer to the left shoulder, move to the left shoulder if there is a full lane to park.
- Avoid stopping on a bridge, curve or within the lane of traffic.
- If stopped after dark, turn on your vehicle's interior light.
- Keep all doors shut and remain in the vehicle unless directed otherwise by the officer.
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel so they are easily visible.
- Give the officer your full attention.

The officer may ask to see your identification (driver's license, photo ID, etc.) and proof of insurance. If the documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are located before reaching for them.

When the officer completes their interaction with you, they may issue a verbal warning, written warning or traffic citation that may include a fine. If you disagree with the citation, do not argue with the officer. You can explain your point of view in court. If you have questions about the warning or citation, ask the officer before the interaction is completed. Avoid getting out of your vehicle after the officer walks away.

Failure to follow or comply with any lawful order or direction of a law enforcement officer is illegal and can result in your arrest. Do not resist if taken into custody.

The enforcement of traffic laws helps change unsafe driving behavior, reduces crashes and injuries, and saves lives. If you receive a warning or citation, the intent is to deter future illegal or unsafe behavior and keep roadways safe. Clear communication from all involved parties can make a traffic stop safe.

### If you have a firearm in the vehicle:

- Keep your hands on the steering wheel in a visible location.
- When the officer first approaches, inform them that you have a firearm and where it is located, while keeping your hands on the steering wheel.
- Do not reach for the firearm. The officer may take possession of the weapon for safety reasons until the interaction is complete.
- Do not make sudden movements or search for your documents; wait for the officer's instructions.

### You should not:

- Reach around inside the vehicle. If you need to reach for an item, tell the officer what you need to locate and wait for verbal permission before doing so.
- Get out of the vehicle unexpectedly or approach the officer. If you need to exit your vehicle, ask the officer verbally and wait for permission before exiting.

### What to expect during a traffic stop:

**While every traffic stop varies, you can generally expect the officer to:**

- Greet you.
- Identify themselves as a law enforcement officer.
- Obtain your driver's license and proof of insurance.
- Inform you of the reason for the stop and explain the circumstances for issuing a citation or warning.
- Check the validity and authenticity of your driver's license.

### Acceptable forms of identification:

- Minnesota driver's license
- Out-of-state driver's license
- Temporary license
- Learner's permit
- Military ID
- Consulate/International driver's license

### Possible outcomes of a traffic stop:

Depending on the nature of the stop, the officer may issue you a citation, give you a warning or take you into custody. The citation will contain the specific code or statute and a description of the violation. You are not admitting guilt or responsibility by accepting a citation; you are acknowledging receipt of the citation and promising to appear in court if required. All citations will be referred to a local jurisdiction for a hearing. You can use the court system to address criminal or civil matters and may have the option of a diversion program, such as driver education training.

### Conduct and complaints:

Law enforcement officers are expected to maintain professionalism during a traffic stop. If you have questions or concerns about the officer's conduct, contact the officer's law enforcement agency or supervisor using the officer information on the citation.

## Fleeing a police officer

Fleeing a police officer in a motor vehicle is illegal and dangerous. Violating this law is a felony. If you do so, you may be sentenced to up to three years and one day in prison, fined up to $5,000 or both.

**If someone is killed or injured while fleeing:**

- **If a death occurs:** You may be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison, fined up to $20,000 or both.
- **If great bodily harm occurs:** You may be sentenced to up to seven years in prison, fined up to $14,000 or both.
- **If substantial bodily harm occurs:** You may be sentenced to up to five years in prison, fined up to $10,000 or both.

## Watch for pedestrians

**Whether you are driving on busy city streets, in rural towns or on highways, stay alert for pedestrians.**

- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks.
- Watch for pedestrians on roads with parked cars, during poor visibility and when children are present.
- If a pedestrian is in a marked or unmarked crosswalk, stop and wait until they have passed your lane.
- Watch for blind pedestrians who may have a white or metallic cane or a guide dog. Do not use your horn or rev your engine as it may distract them.

It is illegal to pass a vehicle that has stopped for a pedestrian. If another vehicle has stopped, look for pedestrians in the crosswalk and be prepared to stop. Violating pedestrian right-of-way laws is a misdemeanor. A second violation within a year is a gross misdemeanor.

## Crosswalks

**Marked crosswalks** have solid white lines on the road and may have road signs or flashing lights to warn you that you are approaching a crosswalk.

**Unmarked crosswalks** are areas where a road intersects a sidewalk without solid lines painted on the road.

When stopping at a marked or unmarked crosswalk, do not block the crosswalk with your vehicle.

### As a pedestrian, obey the traffic laws designed to keep you safe and help drivers see you.

- Obey traffic control signals at intersections. Stay a few feet back from the road when waiting for the WALK signal.
- Yield to vehicles within the intersection when the WALK signal is activated.
- Make your intention to cross clear. Make eye contact with the driver and ensure they yield the right-of-way before crossing.
- Use sidewalks when available and in good condition.
- When crossing a road without crosswalks, yield to all vehicles on the road.
  - Stay out of traffic lanes when possible and make way for traffic on the road.
  - If walking on the road is necessary, stay on the left side or face oncoming traffic.
- When walking at night or in poor visibility conditions:
  - Wear light-colored clothing with reflective material or carry a flashlight to help drivers see you.
  - Be prepared to avoid drivers who do not see you. Pedestrians have the right-of-way within intersections and crosswalks, but motorists may not see you in time to stop. Glare from the sun and other factors can make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians in time to stop.

## Sharing the road with bicyclists

Bicycles are legal vehicles on Minnesota roads and share the same rights and responsibilities as other vehicles.

### Bicycle lanes

Bicycle lanes are designed to separate bicycle traffic from normal vehicle traffic. It is illegal to drive in bicycle lanes except to park (when permitted), to enter or leave the road, or to prepare for a turn. Before crossing a bicycle lane, make sure it is safe. You must yield to approaching bicyclists. When the bicycle lane is clear, signal your intention to turn and then move into the bicycle lane before making the turn.

### Passing a bicyclist

Use caution when passing a bicyclist. You must keep at least 3 feet between the side of your car and the bicyclist. Make sure the bicyclist is not signaling or making a left turn before passing. You are allowed to cross the center of the roadway to pass a bicyclist, even in a no passing zone, when it is safe to do so.

## Bicycle laws

Bicycle riders must obey all traffic laws.

**Note:** Electric-assist bicycles are considered bicycles regarding rules of the road and where they may operate. Electric-assist bicycles have an electric motor that helps with pedaling. They differ from motorized bicycles (mopeds), which have a gas engine and must adhere to different rules (see pages 18 and 49).

- Ride in the same direction as the flow of traffic, not against it.
- Signal all turns and obey all traffic control signs, signals and devices.
- At stop signs, slow to a speed that allows stopping before entering the intersection or crosswalk. If no vehicle is nearby, you may turn or proceed without stopping.
- Travel just to the right of faster-moving traffic but move toward the center of the lane if there are hazards, when passing another vehicle or when making a left turn.
- Use the same hand and arm signals as other drivers. Signal a left turn by holding your left arm straight out. Signal a right turn by holding your left arm out and bending it upward. You can also hold your right arm straight out to indicate a right turn. You can signal that you are stopping by holding your left arm out and bending it toward the ground.
- Two people may ride next to each other as long as you do not impede traffic and stay within a single lane.
- Wear helmets for safety.
- Use legal lights and reflectors when riding at night. A bicycle may have a front lamp with a white flashing signal or a rear lamp with a red flashing signal or both.
- Bicycles may have tires with spikes or other features for increased traction.

### Riding on sidewalks and crosswalks

- Yield the right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing them.
- Do not ride a bicycle on a sidewalk within a business district unless allowed by local authorities.
- Local authorities may prohibit riding on any sidewalk or crosswalk.
- When riding on a sidewalk or crosswalk, you have the same rights and duties as pedestrians.

### Traffic light malfunctions

When you're riding any kind of bicycle and are not detected by control systems at traffic lights and a signal change, you can proceed through the intersection after a reasonable amount of time if:

- The bicycle has come to a complete stop.
- The traffic signal shows a red light for an unreasonable time.
- The traffic signal appears to be malfunctioning or fails to detect the bicycle.
- No vehicle or person is approaching the roadway to be crossed or entered.
- Approaching vehicles or persons are far enough away to not pose an immediate hazard.

This defense only applies to violations for entering or crossing an intersection controlled by a red light and does not defend against other civil or criminal actions.

### Safety tips for drivers

- Watch for bicyclists in intersections, on sidewalks, and when entering or leaving alleys and driveways.
- Be extra cautious of bicycle traffic at night.

## Motorized bicycles

A "motorized bicycle" is a moped and is defined by its speed capacity, which is 30 mph or less. The rules that apply to bicycle riding generally apply to motorized bicycles. Motorized bicycles are not allowed on sidewalks, freeways, or lanes and trails designated for pedestrians and bicycles.

## Sharing the road with motorcyclists

Motorcyclists must obey the same traffic laws as other drivers.

- **Judging speed and distance:** Motorcycles are smaller than cars, making it difficult to judge their speed and distance when approaching.
- **Following distance:** Your following distance from a motorcycle should be the same as, or greater than, your following distance from other vehicles. Riders may experience difficulty controlling the motorcycle, which could result in weaving. Allow maneuvering room to avoid hitting a motorcyclist.
- **Moving into a lane:** When you prepare to move into a lane in front of a motorcycle, allow as much space from the rear of your vehicle as you would for a car.
- **When a motorcyclist passes:** If a motorcyclist attempts to pass you, maintain your lane position and speed, and allow the rider to complete the pass.
- **Crowding a motorcyclist:** Crowding a motorcyclist is illegal and dangerous. Never attempt to drive alongside a motorcycle in the same lane.
- **Lane splitting and filtering:** Motorcyclists may share your lane to pass you in slow moving or stopped traffic. This is legal and you must not get in their way or attempt to stop them.

- **Lane splitting** is allowed when two or more lanes of traffic are traveling in the same direction and traffic is moving. It allows a motorcycle to pass another vehicle in the same direction of travel and in the same traffic lane only under these conditions:
  - At no more than 25 miles per hour.
  - No more than 15 miles per hour over the speed of traffic in the relevant traffic lanes.
- **Lane filtering** is allowed when two or more lanes of traffic are traveling in the same direction and traffic is NOT moving. It allows a motorcycle to move through traffic that is stopped, such as at a traffic light or traffic jam, only under this condition:
  - No more than 15 miles per hour over the speed of traffic in the relevant traffic lanes.

**Lane splitting**



**Lane filtering**



- **Protection in crashes:** Motorcycles do not provide the same protection in crashes as other vehicles. Crashes at urban intersections are the most common motorcycle-car collisions. Many occur when drivers fail to yield right of way and make a left turn in front of an oncoming motorcycle.
- **Right-of-way laws:** Right-of-way laws apply to motorcyclists, as well as other drivers. Motorcyclists may use high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

## Vulnerable road users

Drivers need to watch out for more than pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists; they also must pay attention to other vulnerable road users. These are people on highways, bikeways, sidewalks or trails who have less protection than those in cars. Vulnerable road users include people riding two- or three-wheeled vehicles, using electric mobility devices, riding horses, walking or using motorized scooters. They don't have seat belts or airbags, and are at a higher risk of injury in a crash. You must share the road safely with these users and any passengers they have. Vulnerable road users must also follow all traffic laws.

## Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs)

A Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) is an electric-powered vehicle with three or four wheels that can reach speeds between 20 and 25 mph. NEVs must be titled and registered with Driver Vehicle Services. Anyone with a Class D driver's license may drive an NEV, but only on streets with speed limits of 35 mph or less. NEVs may not be used during a road test.

## Commercial vehicles

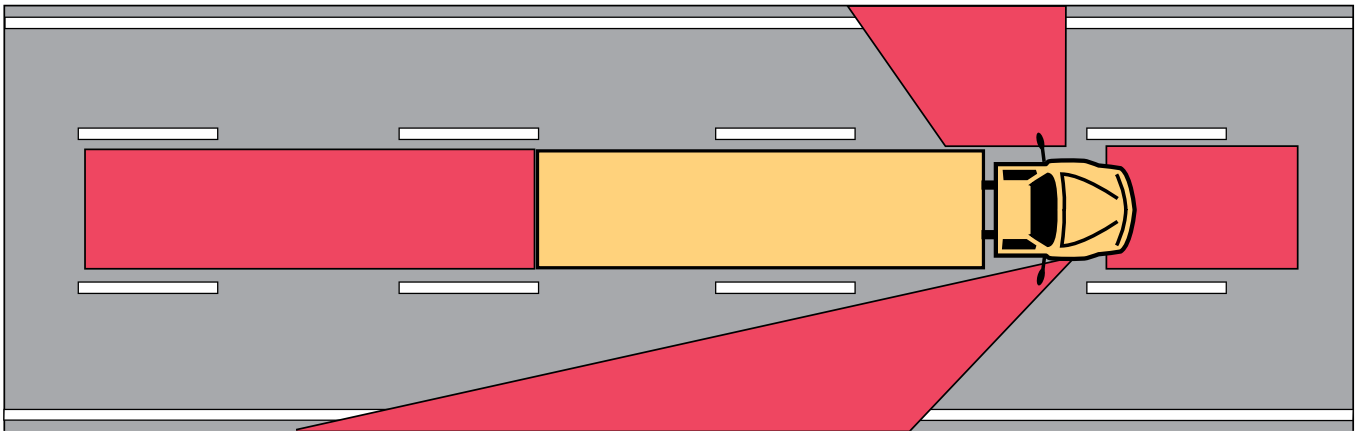
A commercial vehicle is a motor vehicle or a combination of motor vehicles that weighs more than 26,000 pounds and is used to transport passengers or property. Buses, including school buses of all sizes, and smaller vehicles with hazardous materials placards are also considered commercial vehicles.

### Passing a commercial vehicle

Before passing a commercial vehicle, make sure you have safe clearance to the side, behind and ahead of your vehicle.

- **Passing on a level highway:** It takes three to five seconds longer to pass a commercial vehicle than a car. Allow enough time to pass and return to the right lane before coming within 100 feet of oncoming traffic.
- **Do not pass:** If you plan to exit or turn off the road soon, stay behind the commercial vehicle until you reach the exit.
- **Passing while going uphill:** Commercial vehicles often lose speed on an upgrade, making them easier to pass than a car.
- **Passing while going downhill:** Commercial vehicles increase speed on a downgrade. Allow more distance to pass.
- **Complete your pass quickly:** Do not remain alongside the commercial vehicle. Move back into your lane only when you can see the front of the commercial vehicle in your rearview mirror. Maintain your speed after passing.
- **When a commercial vehicle passes you:** Keep to the far side of your lane and slightly reduce your speed. Do not speed up while the commercial vehicle is passing.
- **Meeting a commercial vehicle from the opposite direction:** Stay as far to the right as possible to avoid a sideswipe crash and reduce wind turbulence between the vehicles. Turbulence will push the vehicles away from each other, not toward each other.
- **Judging speed and distance:** Because of their large size, commercial vehicles often appear to be traveling slower than they actually are. Many car-commercial vehicle collisions occur at intersections because the driver of the car misjudges the speed and distance of the commercial vehicle.

### Commercial vehicle "no zones"



## Lane changing in front of commercial vehicles

Changing lanes and cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous but it's especially dangerous to cut off a commercial bus or truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you're likely to be in a blind spot, so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you're visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow down quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the time it takes to stop.

## Following a commercial vehicle

Commercial vehicles need more stopping distance than cars.

- **Stopping distance:** An average passenger car traveling at 55 mph can stop within 130 to 140 feet. A fully loaded tractor-trailer may need more than 400 feet to stop completely.
- **Safe following distance:** Following a commercial vehicle too closely reduces your ability to see the road ahead. Maintain a safe following distance and position your vehicle so the driver can see you in their side mirrors. This will also give you time to react if the commercial vehicle stops suddenly.
- **Headlights at night:** Commercial vehicles have large side mirrors that can reflect light. When following a commercial vehicle at night, always dim your headlights to avoid blinding the driver.
- **Merging:** When a commercial vehicle merges into traffic, it needs more time than a car to accelerate and reach normal speed. Be prepared to slow down or change lanes to allow the truck to merge safely.
- **Stopping on an upgrade:** If you stop behind a commercial vehicle on an upgrade, allow space for the truck to roll back slightly when it starts to move. Position your vehicle on the left side of your lane so the driver can see you in the side mirror.

## Commercial vehicles and wide turns

Pay close attention to the turn signals of commercial vehicles. Many commercial vehicles make wide right turns and must sometimes leave an open space to the right just before turning. The rear wheels of a turning vehicle follow a shorter path than the front wheels, the longer the vehicle, the greater the difference. To avoid a collision, do not pass a commercial vehicle on the right side if there is a possibility that it might make a right turn.

## Commercial vehicle "no zones"

If you are following a commercial vehicle, stay out of its "no zones" illustrated in the image below. These zones are blind spots to the front, sides and rear of the vehicle. Some truck drivers may not be able to see up to 20 feet in front of the cab, on either side of the trailer, and up to 200 feet to the rear.

### Patience around commercial vehicles

Trucks and buses have operating restrictions and sometimes use technology like speed limiters. Honking, driving aggressively or weaving through traffic won't make your trip faster but can cause dangerous distractions and crashes.

## Railroad crossings

Railroad crossings can be especially dangerous places for collisions. Because of the size and weight of a train, most vehicle-train collisions are deadly for the driver. Drivers should pay extra attention for trains or other on-track equipment when approaching and crossing railroad tracks.

### Railroad crossing warning devices

Public railroad crossings have warning devices to let drivers know when railroad tracks are present. Warning signs and pavement markers indicate that you are approaching a railroad crossing. Signs near the track show how many tracks are present. When approaching a crossing, observe the tracks carefully and be prepared to stop when you see these markings.

Flashing lights, bells and gates indicate that a train or other on-track equipment is approaching. When you see these lights or gates activated, do not proceed across the tracks. Stop your vehicle at least 10 feet from the nearest rail or gate. It is safe to cross when traffic ahead has moved and you can proceed without stopping within 10 feet past the rails.

At some crossings, a flag person may control traffic while a train or other on-track equipment is approaching. Obey the flag person as you would a warning device.

### Special vehicles at railroad crossings

Some vehicles, such as passenger vans, buses and larger trucks, are required to stop at all railroad tracks, whether or not a train is present. Do not pass these vehicles. It is illegal to pass any vehicle within 100 feet of a railroad crossing.

### Railroad crossing safety

More than one train may approach at the same time from different directions. When the last car of a train passes, do not proceed across the tracks until you are sure a second train is not approaching on another track. Look for trains in both directions at every railroad crossing, whether or not there are warning devices.

When there is heavy traffic on both sides of a crossing, wait behind the tracks until you are sure you can make it to the other side without stopping on the tracks. Never race a train to get to the other side of the crossing. Trains cannot stop as quickly as motor vehicles. If you misjudge a train's speed or your vehicle becomes stuck, you may be killed or severely injured.

Do not shift gears while your vehicle is within a crossing. If your vehicle has a manual transmission, shift down before entering the crossing. Motorcyclists should approach railroad crossings with caution. Do not swerve to get a better angle for crossing, as this may cause you to enter into a lane of oncoming traffic.

Although trains are equipped with bright lights and loud horns, their distance and speed are difficult to judge, especially at night. If you feel hesitation about crossing railroad tracks when a train is in sight, stop and wait for the train to pass before proceeding. Never stop on railroad tracks.

### Emergency Notification System (ENS) for highway-rail grade crossings

Every highway-rail crossing has an Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign that provides a 24/7 telephone number to call to report problems or emergencies at the railroad location.




The blue ENS sign is located on the railroad crossing posts or the metal control box near the tracks. The ENS is for emergencies that require stopping train traffic due to an obstruction or any other problem at the crossing. By providing the number on the sign, dispatchers can identify the exact location of the grade crossing and notify trains moving in that direction to either stop or slow down.

## Highway work zones

Highway work zones are areas where road construction or maintenance work is underway. Machinery operates day and night and can be moving or stationary. Road workers set up zones with signs and road markings to direct traffic. Motorists must understand and react to these directions.

- **Be patient:** Expect delays, especially during peak travel times.
- **Reduce speed:** Watch out for workers and equipment and follow any flag person's directions. Failure to obey a flag person in a work zone will result in a violation and financial penalty.
- **Speed limits:** Reduced speed limits are posted in many work zones. If there are no reduced speed limit postings, obey the posted speed limit. Disobeying the speed limit in a work zone will result in a violation and financial penalty. Fines for speeding in work zones are $300 in addition to the regular speeding ticket.
- **Stay alert:** Watch for workers and equipment and adjust your lane position to keep a safe distance away. In work zones, lanes may be altered, and you may be driving dangerously close to people fixing the road. Distractions can be fatal!

## Late merge (zipper merge)

The zipper merge is a driving strategy that requires drivers to change their mindset about merging. Traditionally, drivers have been taught to merge early when a lane is ending. Early merging leads to longer backups, more crashes and road rage incidents.

### Zipper merge procedure

- When you see the "lane closed ahead" sign and traffic is backing up, stay in your current lane until the point of merge.
- Take turns with other drivers to safely and smoothly merge into the remaining lane.
- When traffic is heavy and slow, it is safer to remain in your current lane until the point where traffic can take turns merging orderly.

### Benefits of the zipper merge

- Increases worker safety when a lane is closed due to construction, reconstruction or maintenance.
- Reduces the difference in speeds between two lanes, making lane changes easier and safer.
- Reduces the overall length of traffic backups by up to 40 percent.
- Reduces congestion at freeway interchanges, especially in metropolitan areas.
- Creates a sense of fairness when all lanes are moving at the same speed.
- Reduces incidents of road rage.

# Chapter 5: Signs, signals and pavement markings

***Minnesota signs, signals and pavement markings follow national standards. They provide clear instructions to help you drive safely. Learn to recognize and understand traffic signs, signals and pavement markings.***

## Signs

Road signs use uniform symbols and pictures, along with written instructions. The shapes and colors of signs are coded to give you a general idea of what the sign means, even before you can read it up close.

## Sign color meanings

### Regulatory

- Red: Prohibits and commands
- White: Regulates

### Warning

- Yellow: Warns
- Yellow-green: Warns and controls in pedestrian and bicycle crossings and school areas
- Orange: Warns and controls in construction zones

### Informational

- Green: Guides and informs
- Blue: Describes services for motorists
- Brown: Indicates historic, cultural or recreational sites

## Common shapes




Octagon




Triangle



Diamond




Rectangle



Pentagon




Crossbuck




Circle

## Regulatory signs

Regulatory signs direct drivers to follow certain traffic laws. You must obey these signs to drive safely and lawfully. If you do not obey these signs, you may receive a traffic citation and a fine.




### Stop

Come to a complete stop. Remain stopped until pedestrians and vehicles with the right of way have cleared the intersection. Then proceed with caution.




### Yield

Slow down or stop if necessary. Give the right of way to all other vehicles and pedestrians. Wait until it is safe to proceed.




### Do Not Enter

Do not enter that lane or road if this sign is facing you.




### Wrong Way

You have entered a lane of oncoming traffic. You are traveling in the wrong direction.



**No Left Turn**



**No Right Turn**

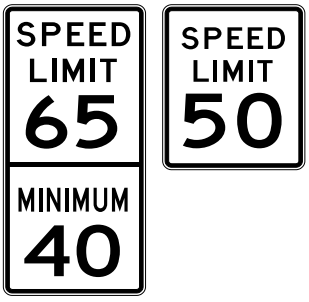


**No U Turn**



**No Parking**

A red circle with a red slash mark across a symbol indicates that you should not take a certain course of action.




### Speed Limit

Speed limit signs indicate the maximum speed you may drive on a road. You may also see minimum speed limits on interstate freeways with controlled access. Do not drive slower than the minimum posted limit unless bad weather or poor road conditions make it necessary.




### Do Not Pass

Marks the beginning of a no-passing zone.



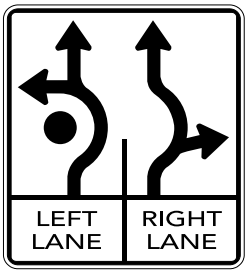

### One Way

Traffic in the specified lane flows only in the direction of the arrow.



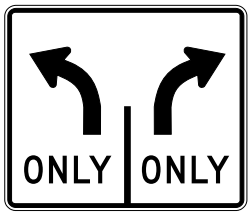
### Keep Right

Stay to the right of a traffic island, median or obstruction ahead.




### Roundabout

When approaching a multilane roundabout, get into the appropriate lane well in advance. The signs will show you which lanes to use for different turns. For example, to turn right, get into the right lane only. To turn left, get into the left lane only. The sign shows that you can go straight from either lane.




### Lane-Use Control Signs

You must turn if you are in the specified lane.




Traffic in the right lane may proceed straight ahead or turn.




### No Turn on Red

Wait for the traffic signal to turn green before you turn.




### Center Lane Left-turn Only

You must share the center lane and use it only for making left turns when traveling in either direction.




### Reduced Speed Ahead

A slower speed limit is posted ahead. Begin slowing down.




### Lane for Limited Uses

The diamond symbol indicates that the traffic lane is reserved for specific use or certain types of vehicles. The lane may be designated for cars with two or more passengers, buses, commercial vehicles or bicycles.




### Handicapped Parking

Parking spaces with blue handicapped parking signs are reserved for vehicles with disability license plates or a disability parking permit. If designated disability parking spaces are occupied or unavailable, you may park at an angle and occupy two standard parking spaces if you have a valid disability parking permit or license plates.

## Warning signs

Warning signs alert you to possible hazards ahead. For your safety and the safety of others, you must recognize and react to them.

**Some common warning signs are shown below.**

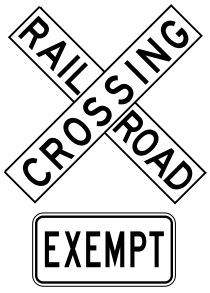
- Most warning signs are yellow.
- Pedestrian or bicycle crossing signs and school zone signs may be yellow or fluorescent yellow-green.



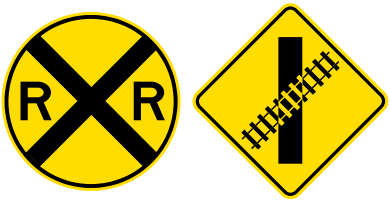

### Railroad Crossings

Warning signs, pavement markings, gates and flashing red lights are positioned at most railroad crossings. Pavement markings include a stop line, an “X” and the letters “RR” painted on the pavement in front of the crossing.

An X-shaped sign identifies a railroad crossing. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks.

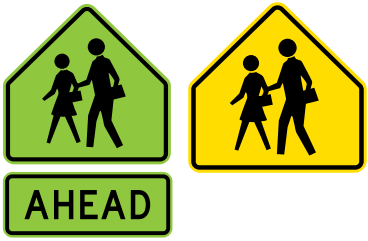



An “exempt” sign means that bus and truck drivers, who are usually required to stop at railroad crossings, may proceed without stopping. However, drivers still need to look in both directions for trains.



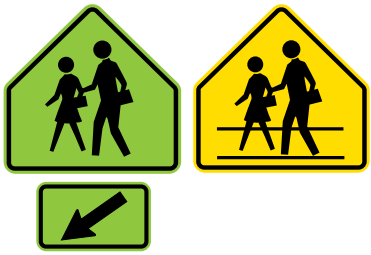

### Railroad Crossings Ahead

These signs alert you that a railroad crossing is ahead. Slow down and look carefully in both directions and be prepared to stop. Remember, trains cannot stop quickly.




### School Zone

These yellow or fluorescent yellow-green, pentagon-shaped warning signs indicate that a school or an approved school crosswalk is ahead. Watch for children and be prepared to stop.



### School Crossing

Watch for children in crosswalk and be prepared to stop. Drivers must yield to all pedestrians in crosswalks. The school crossing sign with the arrow below is the standard marking.



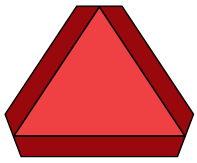
### Pedestrian Crossing

These signs direct drivers to watch for pedestrians crossing the road. Slow down and be prepared to stop for pedestrians. Yield the right of way to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks. The pedestrian crossing sign with the arrow below is the standard marking.




### No Passing Zone

This sign is on the left side of a two-way highway. It warns of the beginning of a no passing zone.



### Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem

This emblem must be displayed on all vehicles that travel at speeds of 30 mph or less, such as farm implements or animal-drawn vehicles, when they are making use of a public road. Adjust your vehicle speed or prepare to change lanes when you see this sign.



### Animal-Drawn Vehicle

Be alert for slow-moving, animal-drawn vehicles on the roadway. Reduce your speed and pass slowly. Animal-drawn vehicles are required to have a light or lamp visible within 500 feet from sunset to sunrise, or during periods of reduced visibility, inclement weather or insufficient light.

## Intersection warning signs



### Crossroad

An intersection is ahead. Prepare to yield.



### Side Road

Traffic is coming from your right. Watch for vehicles entering the roadway.



### T-Intersection Ahead

The road you are traveling on will end soon. Prepare to turn right or left. Yield to cross traffic.



### Y-Intersection Ahead

The road ahead splits into two different directions. Be prepared for traffic crossing in your path and prepare to turn in one direction or the other.




### Curve

The road curves in the direction indicated. If the sign displays a speed limit, slow to the indicated speed.




### Roundabout

As you approach a roundabout slow down to the advisory speed and prepare to stop if necessary.



### Winding Road Ahead

The road ahead winds back and forth. Slow to a safe or indicated speed.



### Two-way Traffic Ahead

You are leaving a one-way road and entering a two-way road. Stay to the right.



### Divided Highway Begins

The road is dividing. Stay to the right.



### Divided Highway Ends

The divided road ends ahead. Two-way traffic will no longer be divided by a center island.



### Traffic Signal Ahead

There is a traffic light at the next intersection.



### Road Turns Ahead

The road ahead sharply changes direction. Slow to a safe speed.



### Crossing Signs

Crossing signs warn you to watch for animals, humans and vehicles crossing the road.



### Slippery Road

The road surface is slippery when it is wet. This sign is often located near bridges and overpasses.



### Steep Hill

The road ahead declines steeply. Make sure your vehicle's brakes are in working order before you proceed.




### Lane Ends

Two lanes will become one. In this example, vehicles in the right lane must merge into left-lane traffic. Right-lane vehicles must yield.



### Merging Traffic

Vehicles merge onto the roadway on which you are traveling. Be prepared to allow vehicles to enter.



### Added Lane

The roadway will gain an additional lane of traffic. New traffic will not have to merge.




### Low Clearance Ahead

Do not proceed if your vehicle is taller than the height indicated on the sign, or your vehicle may become stuck.



### Narrow Bridge

The bridge ahead is narrower than the roadway.

## Construction signs

Orange signs with black letters are used in construction and work zones. Slow down when you see an orange sign. These signs warn drivers of restricted lanes of traffic, detours and other road work hazards.




Drums, cones, tubes, flashing arrows, and orange- and white-striped barriers are all used to keep traffic out of a construction area or areas where it is dangerous to drive. You may also see people holding orange signs, flags or stop signs, giving directions in work zones. Always follow their directions.



Indicates that a person with a flag is ahead. Drive cautiously.



Indicates that workers are performing maintenance on the roadway. Slow down and adjust your lane position to stay away from workers.




Reduced speeds are often posted in work zones. Motorists who violate the posted speed limit in work zones when workers are present will be assessed a $300 fine.

## Historic, cultural and recreational signs

Brown signs point out historic sites, parks and other points of interest.







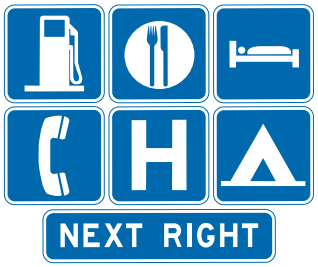




## Motorist services signs

Blue signs direct you to services such as telephones, gas, food, motels, hospitals and rest areas.







## Guidance and information signs

Green signs indicate exits, distance to cities, interstate interchanges, street or route names and bicycle routes.










## Route signs

Route signs indicate different types of roadways.




Interstate Freeway




U.S. Highway




Minnesota Highway




County Road




County Road

## Traffic-control signals

Traffic-control signals are used at intersections with high traffic volume. They promote safety and orderly traffic flow. If a traffic signal is not functioning, treat the intersection like an uncontrolled intersection.

### Intersection gridlock

You should not enter an intersection controlled by a traffic signal unless you can move through the intersection immediately, continuously and completely without blocking cross traffic.

**This does not apply if you are:**

- Directed by a traffic-control agent or a peace officer.
- Moving to allow the passing of an authorized emergency vehicle with its lights activated.
- Making a turn that allows the vehicle to safely leave the intersection.



### A steady red light means "stop."

Stop and wait for the light to change. Come to a complete stop at the stop line, before the crosswalk or before entering the intersection.

**Right turn on red:** After stopping, you may make a right turn when the intersection is clear, if traffic is permitted to travel in that direction. If a "No Turn on Red" sign is posted, you must wait for the light to turn green.

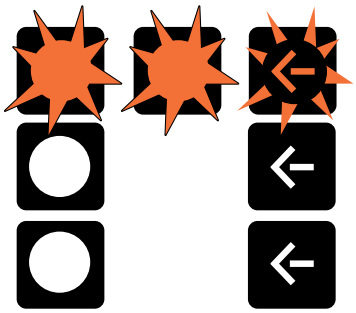
**Left turn on red:** If certain conditions are met, you may make a left turn from a one-way road onto a one way cross street while the traffic light is red. Before turning, you must:

- Come to a complete stop.
- Make sure the intersection is clear.
- Yield to any pedestrians or other vehicles.
- Ensure traffic is permitted to travel only in the direction you are turning.



### A red arrow means "stop."

You must come to a complete stop at the stop line, before the crosswalk or before entering the intersection. When the arrow turns green, you may proceed in the direction it indicates.



Treat a flashing red light as a stop sign. Come to a complete stop, yield to vehicles and pedestrians who reach the intersection before you, and proceed when the intersection is clear.



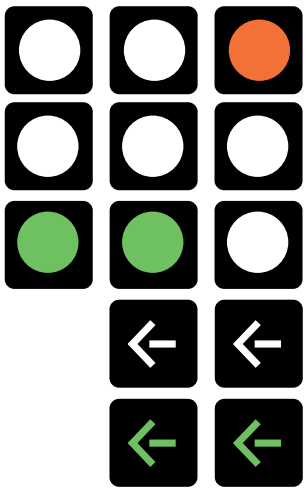
### A steady yellow light or arrow means "caution." The signal is about to turn red.

Do not enter the intersection if you can stop safely before doing so. If you cannot stop safely, proceed through the intersection with caution. If you are waiting in the intersection to make a turn and the signal turns from yellow to red, complete the turn as soon as it is safe. Do not back up.



### A flashing yellow light or arrow means "caution."

Proceed through the intersection with caution. Yield the right of way to vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection. If you are turning left or making a U-turn, you must yield to oncoming vehicles that are close enough to be an immediate hazard.



### A green light.

You may cross the intersection as soon as it is clear. Yield to any vehicles or pedestrians in the intersection. When turning left, yield to oncoming traffic. When turning right or left, yield to pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle.

### A green arrow means you can safely turn in the direction of the arrow.

Your turn should be protected from oncoming or crossing traffic.

### Pedestrian signals

There are stop and go signals for pedestrians. Pedestrians must obey these signals.




- **"Walk" signal:** When the pedestrian or "Walk" signal is visible, pedestrians should look to see if it is safe to cross before proceeding. Once in the intersection, pedestrians may continue walking to the other side of the road.




- **Flashing "Don't Walk" signal:** When the raised hand or "Don't Walk" signal is flashing, pedestrians should not begin to cross. Pedestrians already in the intersection may continue walking to the other side at a normal pace.




- **Steady "Don't Walk" signal:** When a steady raised hand or "Don't Walk" signal is visible, pedestrians should not attempt to cross. Pedestrians already in the intersection should walk to the nearest safe location as quickly and safely as possible.

## Lane use control signals

These signals allow lanes to be used by traffic from different directions at different times. You must also follow all other traffic signs and signals that apply.



A steady downward green arrow means you are allowed to drive in the lane below the green arrow.



A steady yellow X means you should prepare to move safely into another lane. A lane-control change is being made in the lane below the steady yellow X. A steady red X will be displayed next, and you cannot occupy the lane at that time.



A flashing yellow X means you can use the lane below the flashing yellow X to make a left turn. You must use caution because left-turning vehicles from the other direction may be using the same lane.



A steady downward yellow arrow means you should prepare to move safely into another lane. The freeway lane below the steady downward yellow arrow will be closed.



A flashing downward yellow arrow means you can use the freeway lane under the flashing downward yellow arrow. Exercise caution in this lane.



A steady red X means you cannot drive in the lane.

## Freeway ramp meters

Ramp meters are signal lights on freeway entrance ramps that help control the flow of merging traffic. Like traffic signals at intersections, red, yellow and green lights indicate when drivers can proceed. Only one car may proceed each time the light is green.




### One car per green light

When the ramps are metered, you must take turns entering the highway at the light each time the light turns green.

## Pavement markings

Pavement markings direct and regulate traffic.

### White lines

**White lines separate lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction.**

- **White dashes:** You can change lanes where this marking is present.
- **Shorter and thicker white dashes:** The lane is ending.
- **Solid white line:** You should not change lanes. Solid white lines also mark crosswalks, stop lines at intersections, parking stalls and the edges of a roadway.
- **Double solid white lines:** You must not change lanes.
- **Solid white line with bicycle insignia:** This area is for bicycle or electric-assist bicycle traffic only. If you are on a bicycle, you must travel in the same direction as adjacent traffic.

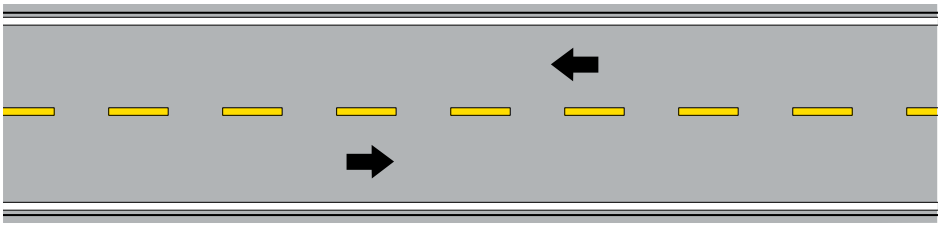
### Yellow lines

**Yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions.**

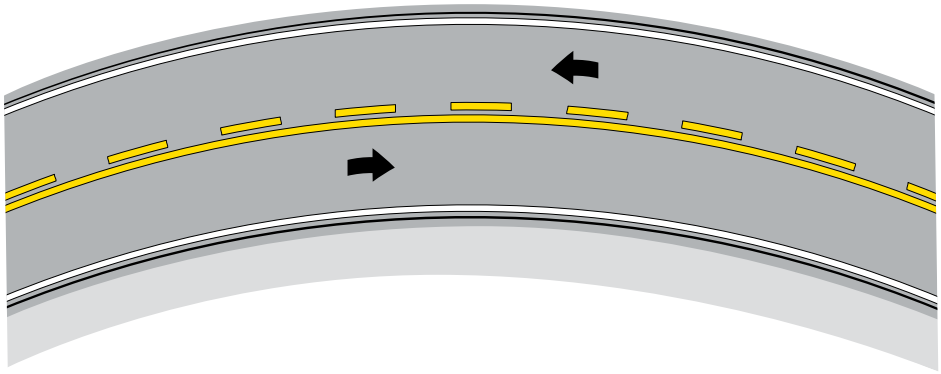
- **Solid yellow line:** You must not pass. Passing in a no-passing zone is illegal.
- **Yellow dashes:** You may pass.
- **Mixed lines (solid and dashes):** A solid yellow line may appear on one side of the roadway while a line of dashes appears on the other side. You must obey the marking in your lane of traffic.
- **Double solid yellow lines:** You must not pass, regardless of which side of the line you are driving.

### Lane markings

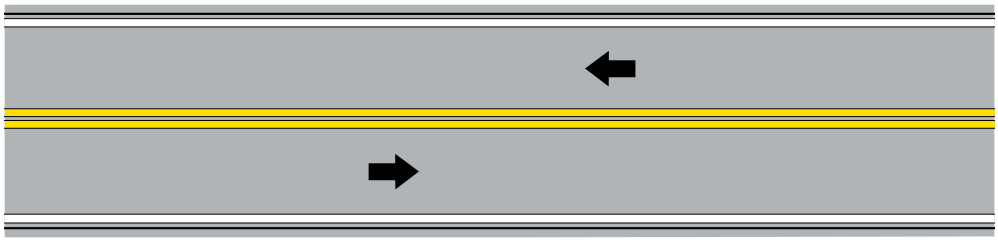
Road markings can be used to separate lanes reserved for certain actions or types of vehicles.



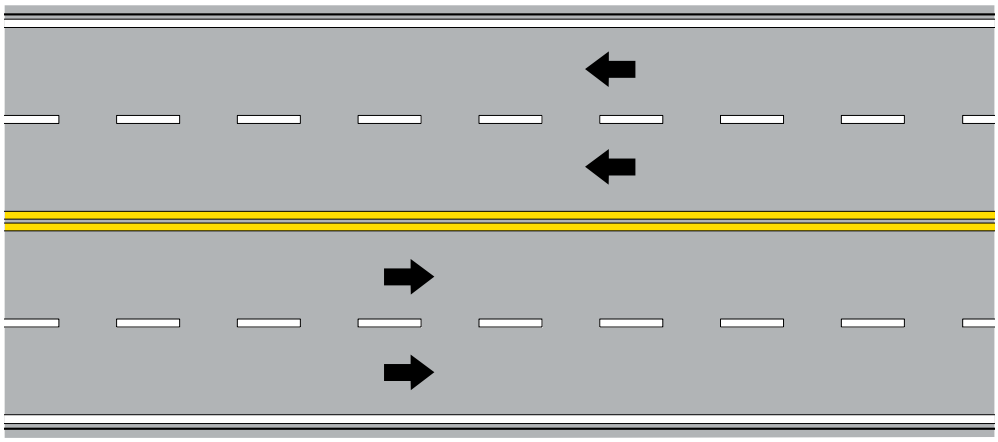
*Two-lane road with traffic moving in both directions. Traffic is separated by a line of yellow dashes, which means you may pass from either lane.*



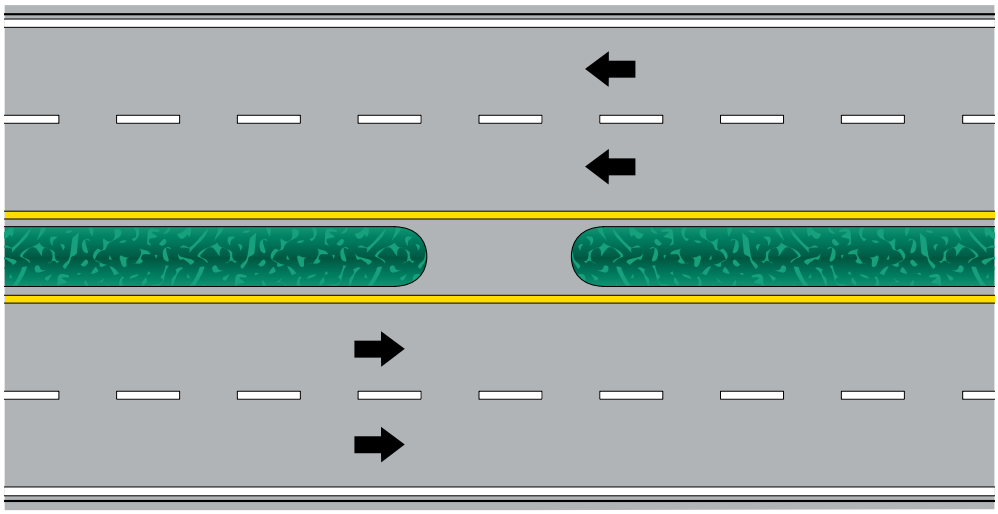
*Two-lane road with traffic moving in both directions. Do not pass in the lane with the solid yellow line.*



*Two-lane road with traffic moving in both directions. You must not pass, regardless of which direction you are driving.*



*Road with four lanes, two in each direction separated by two solid yellow lines. Do not cross solid yellow lines to pass.*



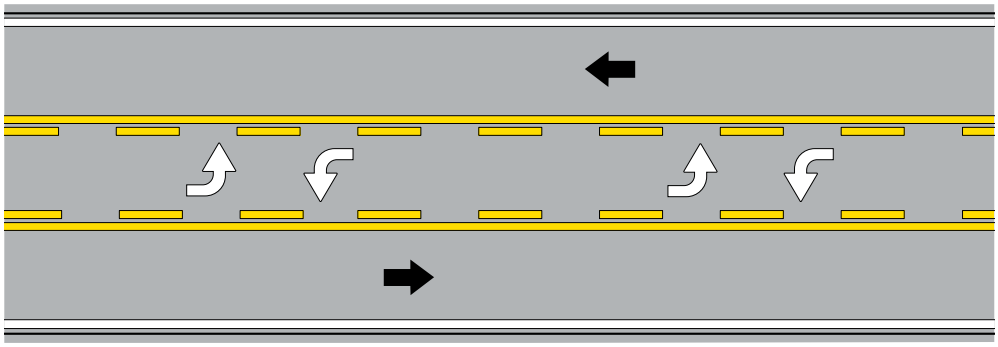
*Multilane road with traffic moving in both directions separated by a solid traffic divider. No shoulders at inner edges of roadway.*

## Turn lanes

Turn lanes near intersections separate left-turning or right-turning traffic from through traffic. White arrows, sometimes accompanied by the word "only," indicate that drivers must stay within a designated lane while turning onto the cross street. If your vehicle is in this type of lane, you must turn. Some turn lanes have multiple arrows, allowing you to turn left or right, or to go straight. To discourage drivers from changing lanes near an intersection, turn lanes are separated from through traffic lanes by solid white lines.

## Center turn lanes

A center lane between lanes of traffic traveling in opposite directions may be designated for left turns only. This type of lane is marked by parallel solid and dashed yellow lines. These lines are sometimes accompanied by white arrows on the pavement. Vehicles traveling in either direction can use these lanes to make left turns onto another roadway or a driveway.



*Road with three lanes with traffic moving in both directions. Center turn lane is reserved for traffic turning left from both directions.*

## Reversible lanes

Reversible lanes help keep traffic flowing during rush-hour periods. They are separated by dashed double yellow lines. You may cross these lines only if the overhead signal above the lane you wish to enter has a green arrow, or if a sign permits you to do so.

## Carpool lanes

Carpool lanes are restricted to vehicles with two or more occupants. They are marked by a diamond symbol or with "Carpool Only" signs. They are usually located on the far-left side of a freeway and are separated from other traffic lanes by combinations of white or yellow lines.

## Warning markings

Pavement messages may be used to warn you of certain conditions, such as "School Zone Ahead."

## Traffic officers

Law enforcement officers and other individuals direct traffic on some occasions. When an officer is present, obey any hand signals you are given rather than traffic signals, signs or pavement markings. Most traffic officers signal drivers to stop by holding up one hand with the palm facing the vehicle and giving a long blast on the whistle. Officers signal drivers to start or keep moving by motioning with the hand and giving a series of short blasts on the whistle. Officers may signal with a flashlight during low-light conditions.

# Chapter 6: Driving conditions

*This chapter provides guidance on how you can drive safely in a variety of conditions.*

## Using the Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide and Execute (SIPDE) System

Nothing you do will guarantee that others will see you. The only eyes you can really count on are your own. Experienced drivers practice being aware of what is happening around them. They create their driving strategy using a system known as SIPDE.

**SIPDE is a five-step process used to make appropriate judgments and apply them correctly in different traffic situations.**

- Scan
- Identify
- Predict
- Decide
- Execute

Let's examine each of these steps.

### Scan

Search aggressively ahead, to the sides and behind to avoid potential hazards before they arise. How assertively you search, and how much time and space you have, can eliminate or reduce the impact of a crash. Focus on finding potential escape routes around intersections, shopping areas, schools and commercial zones. Search for:

- Oncoming traffic that may turn in front of you.
- Traffic coming from the left and right, including bicycles and pedestrians.
- Traffic approaching from behind.
- Hazardous road conditions.

### Identify

**Locate hazards and potential conflicts.**

- **Moving vehicles and pedestrians:** Cars, motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians or other vehicles may move into your path and increase the likelihood of a crash.
- **Unpredictable children and animals:** Unattended children and animals can make short, fast moves.
- **Stationary objects:** Potholes, guard rails, bridges, roadway signs, hedges or trees won't move into your path but may influence your driving strategy.

### Predict

Consider the speed, distance and direction of hazards to anticipate how they may affect you. Cars moving into your path are more critical than those moving away or sitting still.

### Decide

Based on your prediction, decide what you would need to do if the situation changed quickly. You must constantly make decisions to cope with changing traffic situations.

### Execute

**Carry out your decision. To create space and minimize harm:**

- Communicate your presence with your lights, horn or both.
- Adjust your speed appropriately.
- Adjust your position, direction or both.

## Three-Second Rule

Applying the "Three-Second Rule" helps you keep a safe distance between your car and the vehicle ahead of you. This rule is for standard-length vehicles driving in ideal conditions.

1. Choose a fixed reference point at the side of the road ahead, such as a telephone pole, signpost, tree or bridge.
2. When the vehicle ahead of you passes the reference point, begin counting: "One-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three."
3. If you pass the reference point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.
4. Gradually slow down until you reach a safe following distance and speed.

When road conditions are poor, or if you are driving a vehicle longer than the standard length, increase your following distance to a four- or five-second count.

If the vehicle behind you is following too closely, slow down slightly and allow it to pass.

## Stopping distance

The distance you need to stop your vehicle can help determine a safe following distance. However, your actual stopping distance depends on many factors, including:

- The time it takes to see and recognize danger ahead.
- The length of time from perceiving the danger to using the brakes, which is about 3/4 of a second.
- Weather conditions.
- The condition of your tire treads.
- The type and condition of your brakes.

## Night driving

Although there is usually less traffic at night, nearly half of all fatal traffic crashes in Minnesota occur after dark. To help ensure you reach your destination safely:

- Study road maps and directions before starting out.
- Make sure your vehicle lights are working.
- Ensure your windshield is clean and free of defects.

## Headlights

When you are within 1,000 feet of an oncoming vehicle or following another vehicle at a distance of 200 feet or less, your headlights must remain on low beam.

Your headlights must be turned on at sunset and used until sunrise. Use them during weather conditions that include rain, snow, hail, sleet or fog, and any time you cannot clearly see the road ahead for at least 500 feet. You should be able to stop within the distance your headlights illuminate the road. For most vehicles, this distance is no more than 350 feet on high beam.

When driving in the dark, you may encounter glare from oncoming headlights or from the reflection of headlights in your rearview mirror. If you are blinded by the glare, use the white line along the edge of the road as a reference.

For glare caused by headlights from behind you, use a "day-night" mirror or adjust your regular mirror.

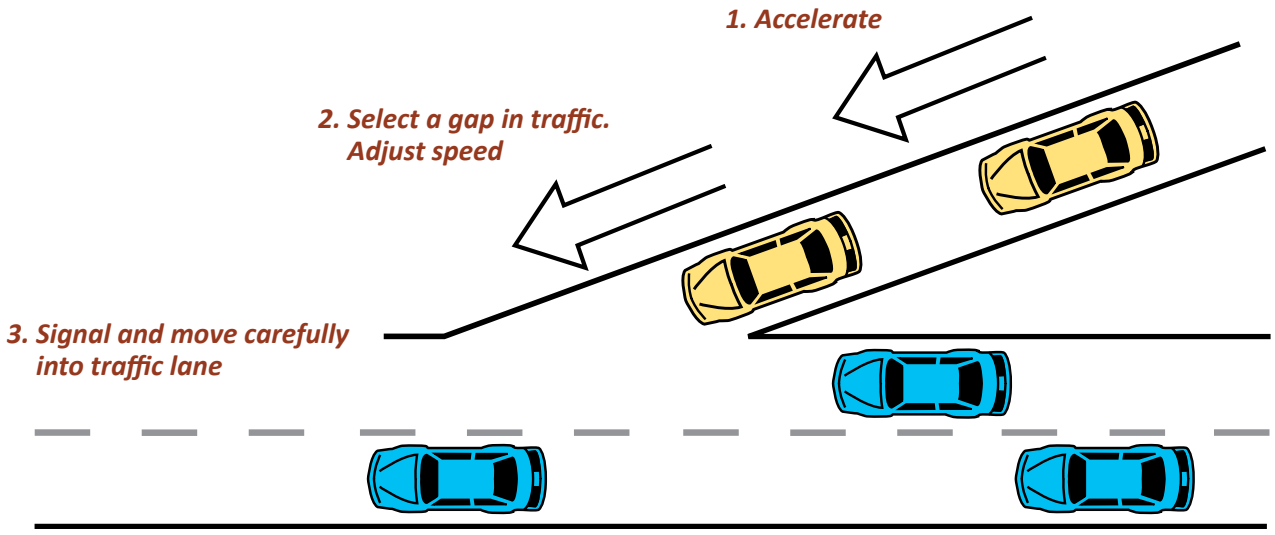
## Freeway driving

Freeways are multi-lane, divided highways with limited access from other roads. They allow you to travel long distances without stopping because there are no stops or cross traffic.

### Entering the freeway

Entry ramps are short, one-way roads that provide access to freeways. At the end of most entry ramps, there is an acceleration lane that allows you to increase your speed to safely merge with traffic already on the freeway.

To avoid disrupting traffic flow or cutting off other drivers when you merge, adjust your speed to match the vehicles already on the freeway. You must yield to other vehicles when merging. Use your turn signal to let other drivers know your intention. Watch for an opening in the nearest traffic lane and merge into the flow of traffic when you can do so safely.




Do not stop on the ramp or in the acceleration lane unless it is absolutely necessary.

When an acceleration lane is not available and a "Yield" sign is posted on the entry ramp, obey the sign. Stop if necessary. Do not force your way into the lane of traffic.

### Freeway ramp meters

Ramp meters are used on many freeway entry ramps in metropolitan areas to reduce traffic jams and crashes, and to make merging onto the freeway easier.

The meters are traffic signals placed about halfway down the entry ramp and are usually activated during peak travel hours. Red, yellow and green lights indicate when you can proceed. It is illegal to go through the red light. Only one car may proceed each time the light is green.

### Freeway speed and lane use

Maintain the same approximate speed as surrounding vehicles when possible but never exceed the posted speed limits. If you are driving slower than other traffic, stay in the lane nearest to the right side of the road. If you need to change lanes to pass other vehicles or to leave the freeway, signal your intent and make sure your path is clear before moving over.

### Use of freeway or expressway shoulders by buses

Transit buses and metro mobility buses are permitted to use the shoulder of a freeway or expressway. Buses can use the shoulder only when main-line traffic speeds are less than 35 miles per hour. Bus drivers on the shoulder may not exceed the speed of main-line traffic by more than 15 miles per hour and may never exceed 35 miles per hour. Bus drivers on the shoulder must yield to merging, entering and exiting traffic and to other vehicles on the shoulder.

## Message signs

Message and lane-use signs on some freeways warn drivers of traffic crashes, stalled vehicles or other traffic conditions ahead.

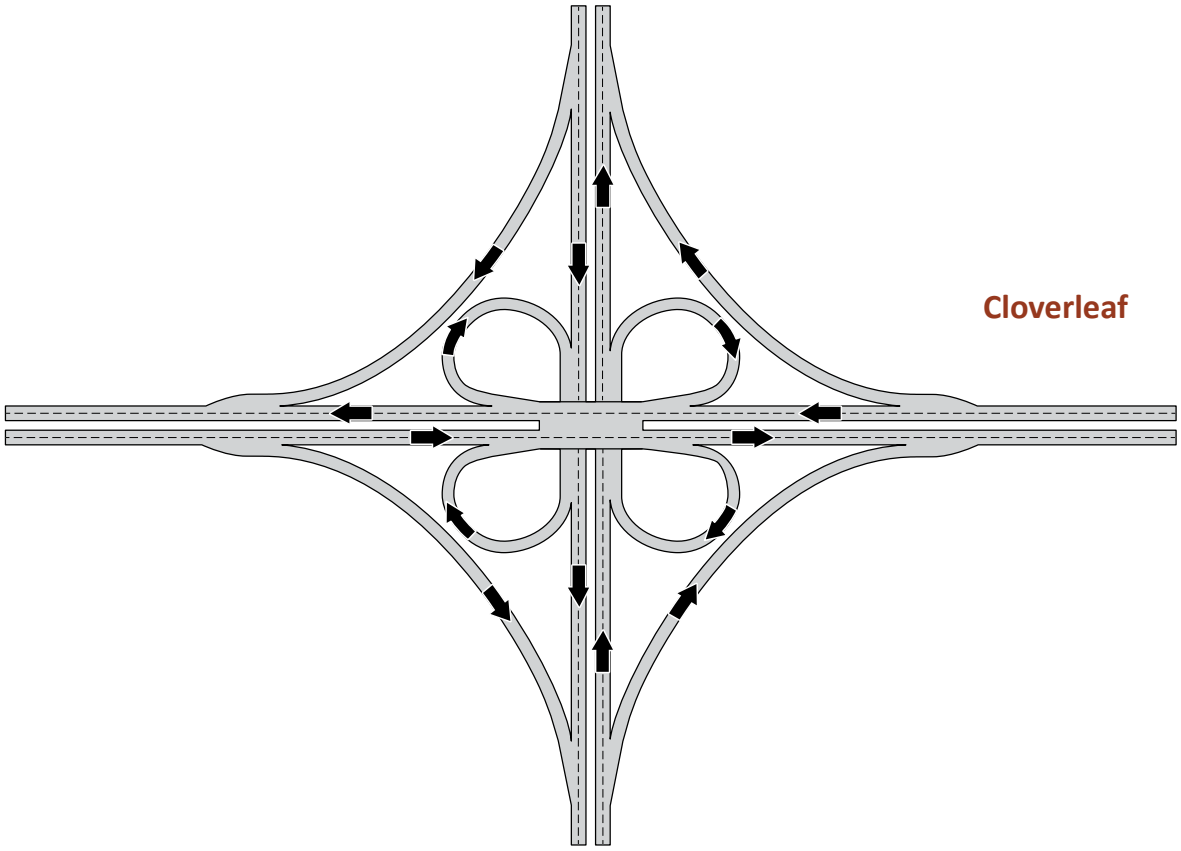
Message signs may also be activated when the state issues an AMBER Alert in response to a child abduction. The signs will provide information such as a vehicle description. Drivers who see a vehicle fitting the description, or who have other information about the missing child, will be asked to notify law enforcement.

## High-occupancy vehicle lanes

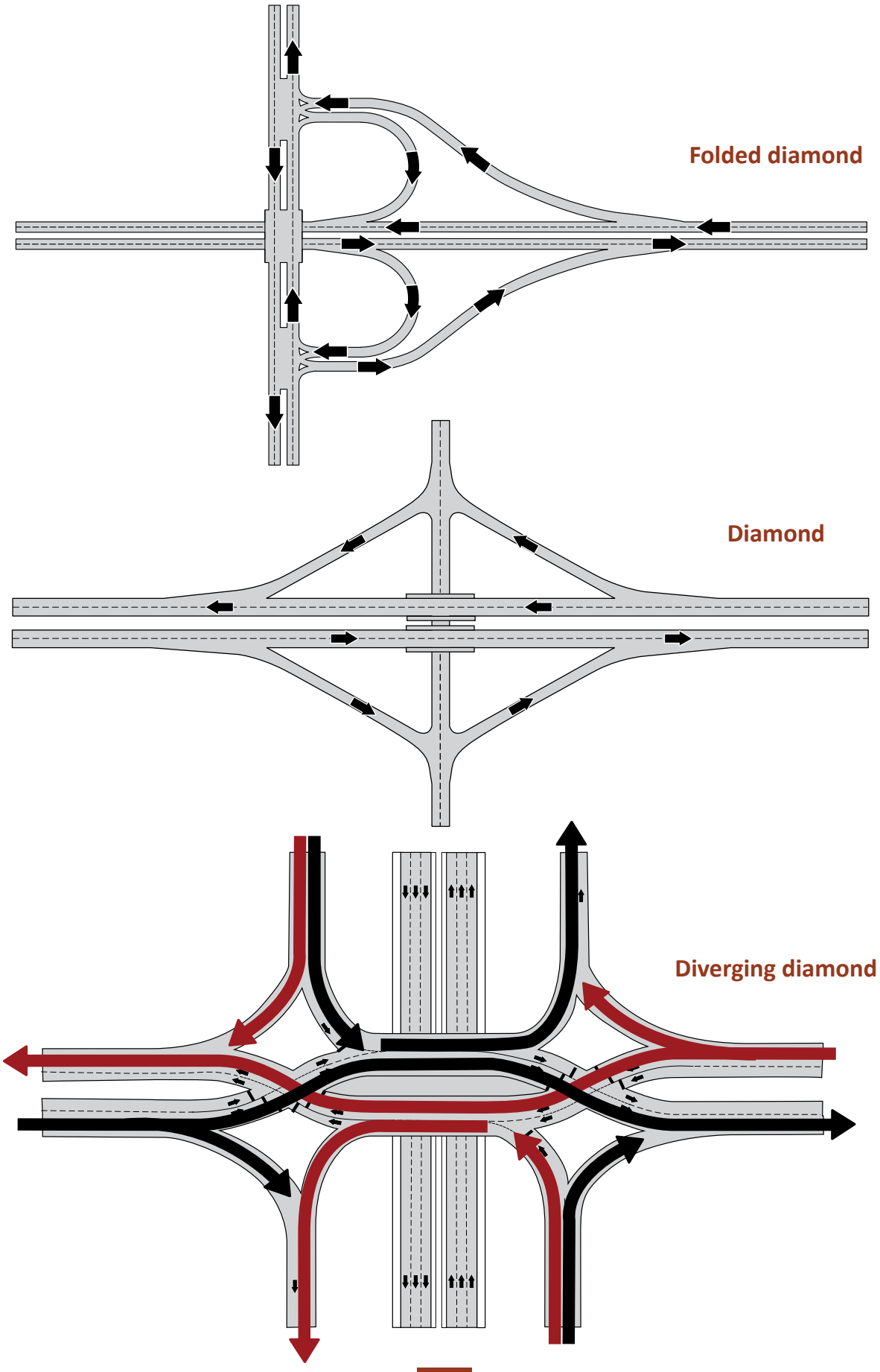
These lanes are for use only by motorcycles, buses and vehicles carrying two or more people.

## Freeway interchange

An interchange connects a freeway to a road or another freeway by a series of ramps. These connecting roadways allow you to leave one road and enter another safely, without disrupting the flow of traffic.



Cloverleaf


Folded diamond
Diamond
Diverging diamond

## Diverging diamond interchange

A diverging diamond interchange is designed so that traffic lanes cross over at each end of the bridge, eliminating left-hand turns across opposing traffic. Instead of making a sharp left turn, you veer to the left for access. These interchanges improve traffic safety and mobility, and reduce overall traffic delays by up to 60 percent.

**Safety benefits of diverging diamond interchanges include:**

- There are fewer conflict points.
- Conflict points are spread out throughout the interchange.
- Drivers have a longer sight distance at turns.
- Wrong way entry to ramps is extremely difficult.
- Pedestrian crossings are shorter.

## Navigating a diverging diamond interchange

Traffic crisscrosses at either end of the bridge. Instead of making hard left turns, you veer to the left for access. Pedestrians cross to the middle of the bridge and walk between traffic lanes with protective barriers on either side.

## Stopping, parking and backing up

It is illegal to stop or park a vehicle on an interstate freeway, except in an emergency. Running out of fuel is not considered an emergency, and you could receive a citation.

**If you must stop on the freeway because of an emergency, take the following actions:**

- Park your vehicle on the shoulder, as far from the main roadway as possible.
- Open the trunk and raise the hood or tie a white cloth to the radio antenna or a door handle.
- Use hazard warning lights if you have them.
- If you have flares or reflectors, place them from 100 to 500 feet behind your vehicle on the right edge of the main road.
- Stay with your vehicle, if possible. If you must leave your vehicle, do not walk on the area of the highway reserved for vehicle traffic. This is illegal and extremely dangerous.

It is illegal to back up or turn around on a freeway. An exception to this law applies to drivers of emergency and road repair vehicles. Drivers of these vehicles may back up or turn around as necessary to perform their duties.

## Emergency vehicles on the freeway

When you see the flashing lights of an ambulance, fire truck or police car on the shoulder of the road, you must move a lane away from the emergency vehicle if it is possible to do so safely. If you cannot safely move a lane away, slow down.

When you see an emergency vehicle with its lights and siren activated behind you, move to the nearest side of the road and stop. Do not slam on the brakes or swerve into other lanes. Remember to use your turn signal. Remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has completely passed. Look for other emergency vehicles that may be following it before pulling out.

Stay at least 500 feet back from any firefighting vehicle.

### Getting off the freeway

It is helpful to know where you need to exit the freeway before you begin driving. Watch for signs that provide information about upcoming exits. As you near your desired exit, signal your intent to change lanes and move into the deceleration lane when you can do so safely. This gives you time to slow down before reaching the exit ramp and helps you avoid obstructing faster-moving traffic.

If you miss your exit, proceed to the next one. Do not back up or make a U-turn to return to the desired exit.

## Caretaker information included on driver's license or identification card record

You can use your DVS records to let law enforcement know if you're the caretaker for someone else. That way, if you are involved in a crash, law enforcement officers will know that there is someone at home who depends on you. They can quickly respond and ensure that the people you care for are not left alone. This can give you reassurance that your loved ones will be taken care of if something happens, reducing your anxiety and stress about leaving them alone.

## Crashes

If you are involved in a crash that results in injury, stay where you are. If you are able, call 911 or the nearest law enforcement agency for help.

If the crash results only in property damage, move to a safe location. Do not step out of your vehicle until you have moved to a safe location, away from traffic.

Exchange driver's license and insurance information with the other driver or drivers. Write down the license plate numbers of other vehicles involved. You may also wish to exchange vehicle identification numbers. Call for law enforcement assistance if necessary.

## Distracted driving

Driver distraction or inattention is a leading factor in crashes in Minnesota, accounting for at least 25 percent of all crashes annually. Distracted drivers fail to recognize potential hazards on the road and react more slowly to traffic conditions, decreasing their margin of safety.

### Types of driver distraction:

- **Visual:** Looking away from the road.
- **Mechanical/physical:** Taking hands off the wheel.
- **Cognitive:** Being "lost in thought."

### Distractions inside the vehicle

Distractions inside the vehicle can include activities such as: using a cell phone, using a GPS, reaching for items, eating and drinking, adjusting the radio, talking to other passengers, and reading maps and other materials. Even when you are watching the road, behaviors such as looking at a crash scene or daydreaming can divert attention from your driving responsibilities. For safety, give the task of driving your full attention at all times.

### Illegal driver behaviors in Minnesota

Certain driver behaviors are illegal on Minnesota roads. These include using a cell phone or wireless computer device for text messaging, emailing or accessing the internet while driving, including while stopped in traffic. Drivers under age 18 with an instruction permit or provisional license are prohibited from using a cell phone, whether handheld or hands-free, except to call 911 in an emergency. It is also illegal to wear headphones or earphones in both ears simultaneously to listen to a radio or other sound-producing device.

## Aggressive driving

People who drive aggressively tend to have a low level of concern for other motorists. They exhibit anger and frustration while driving, not necessarily because of other drivers' actions, but because of their personal mindset. Aggressive driving usually involves driving faster than surrounding vehicles, leading to behaviors such as following too closely, changing lanes frequently and abruptly, often without signaling, passing other vehicles on the shoulder, and glaring at or threatening other motorists.

If you recognize your own behavior in this description, make a greater effort to stay calm when driving. It is important to share the road. Safe driving requires courtesy and cooperation from all drivers. If you are confronted by an aggressive driver, do not challenge them. Stay out of their way, avoid eye contact and do not allow the situation to escalate.

## Obstructed view

It is illegal to drive a vehicle packed with a load or occupied by more than three people in the front seat. The items or people will obstruct your view to the front or sides of the vehicle or interfere with your ability to control the vehicle.

## Carrying a projecting load

A load must not stick out more than three feet in front of the front wheels or bumper of any motor vehicle.

If a load extends four feet or more from the rear of any vehicle, a red, yellow or orange flag at least 16 inches square must be attached to the end of the load. At night, a red lantern or lamp, visible from a distance of at least 500 feet, must be attached to the end of the load.

Passenger vehicles may not carry loads that extend beyond the line of the fenders on the left side and more than six inches beyond the fender line on the right side.

## Campers and trailers

If you pull a camper or trailer with your vehicle, you must maintain at least 500 feet of following distance from other vehicles.

When loaded, 10 to 15 percent of the trailer's weight should be balanced on the hitch between the trailer and vehicle. When correctly loaded, the trailer's floor should be level. After the first few miles, stop and check the hitch, tires, lights and load. Repeat this process at all rest stops.

Travel at a slower speed. Many trailers have smaller wheels that turn faster than your car wheels, causing heat buildup that can lead to trailer wheel bearing failure.

Remember that the brakes on your vehicle were probably not designed to handle heavy trailer loads. A sudden stop at high speed could flip both the trailer and the car.

Speed up carefully, using a lower gear if necessary. Maintain enough following distance to prevent the need for sudden stops. When passing other vehicles, remember the additional length of your trailer and be aware that your ability to accelerate is reduced.

Wind and rain will affect your ability to handle and control a vehicle pulling extra weight. When towing a trailer or camper in wet or windy conditions, slow down more than you would normally do in such weather.

Allow plenty of room for turns. Long trailers will swing closer to the edge of the road than your vehicle.

Pay extra attention to your vehicle's cooling system when towing extra weight. Your engine will overheat more easily in warm weather, at high speeds and in hilly areas.

## Trailer requirements

Maximum length — 45 feet
Maximum width — 8 feet 6 inches
Maximum height — 13 feet 6 inches
Tail lamps — two red
Reflectors — two red
Rear license plate lamp — one white

Trailer stop and turn signals must be used for night driving and whenever stop and turn signals on the towing vehicle are not visible to other drivers.

The 102-inch width limit (8 feet, 6 inches) for recreational vehicles does not include attachments that do not extend beyond the vehicle's exterior rearview mirrors if the recreational vehicle is self-propelled. The width of a trailer may not extend beyond the exterior rearview mirrors of the towing vehicle.

Type A, B or C motor homes may not be longer than 45 feet. The general length limit for single-unit vehicles is 40 feet.

All trailers with a gross vehicle weight of 3,000 pounds or more must be equipped with brakes.

All recreational trailers must have a clearly visible plate with current registration.

A safety chain must be permanently attached to the trailer and fastened to the vehicle used for towing.

## Recreational vehicle combinations

A recreational vehicle combination consists of a pickup truck or recreational truck-tractor attached to a camper trailer, which can also have a trailer hitched to it. The trailer can carry watercraft, motorcycles, mopeds, off-highway motorcycles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, motorized golf carts or equestrian equipment or supplies.

You must be at least 18 years old to drive a recreational vehicle combination. The towing rating of the pickup or recreational truck-tractor must be equal to or greater than the total weight of all vehicles being towed.

A recreational vehicle combination may not be more than 70 feet in length. It may not be driven in the Twin Cities Metro Area from Monday through Friday during the hours of 6 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.

## Winter driving vehicle safety

**Remove snow and ice from your vehicle's hood, windows and lights before driving.**

- Make sure your windshield wiper fluid contains antifreeze.
- Get the feel of the road. Try your brakes while driving slowly to test the road surface.
- Adjust your speed to road conditions.
- Avoid using cruise control on slippery roads.

If your vehicle becomes stuck on ice or snow, try to free it by "rocking" it back and forth. Keep the front wheels straight and slowly drive forward, then backward, as far as possible, without spinning the tires. Accelerate gently when the tires grip. If your vehicle starts to slide or your tires start to spin, apply the brake, and repeat this operation in the opposite direction.

### Snow emergencies and parking rules

When a significant amount of snow accumulates, city officials may declare a snow emergency. Certain parking rules may go into effect while snow is removed from streets.

Obey snow emergency parking rules to avoid towing and fines.

### Sharing the road with snowplows

When roads are covered with snow or ice, watch for the flashing white, yellow and blue lights of snowplows.

Never crowd a snowplow. Pass snowplows only when you can see the entire vehicle. Stay well behind plows to avoid flying sanding materials, snow and ice that could hit your vehicle. Be alert for dangerous snow clouds or "whiteout" conditions. Snowplows can create clouds of blowing snow that may conceal the road and hide driving hazards.

Snowplows and other removal equipment often move at slow speeds. In residential areas, they may back up to turn around. Give equipment operators room to do their job safely.

## Winter survival

### Keep a survival kit in your vehicle

For safety, it is important to keep a winter survival kit in any vehicle you drive. Some recommended items include:

- Shovel
- Container of sand or salt
- Warm clothing and footwear
- Red flag for your vehicle's antenna
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Quick energy foods, drinking water and an empty waste container
- Tow chain and tire chains
- Road flares or reflectors
- Jumper cables
- Candles and matches or a lighter
- First aid kit

### What to do if you become stranded

If you become stranded while traveling in cold weather, stay with your vehicle. Most deaths in these situations occur when people leave their vehicles, become lost and suffer prolonged exposure to the cold.

**Stay calm, wait for help to arrive and take as many of the following steps as possible:**

- Turn on your hazard warning lights.
- Attach a red flag to your radio antenna or door handle.
- Set out flags and flares, if possible.
- If clothing, blankets and other survival supplies are stored in the trunk, bring them inside the vehicle.
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow and debris.
- Run the engine and heater until the vehicle is reasonably warm, then turn it off. Repeat this process as long as fuel is available or until you are rescued. Running the engine for about 10 minutes each hour to charge the battery and warm the interior is recommended.
- Even in extremely cold weather, leave at least one window partially open to let in fresh air. Occupants of an idling vehicle can suffer carbon monoxide poisoning if ventilation is not adequate.
- At least one person in the vehicle should remain awake at all times.

## Maintaining alertness and concentration

Becoming tired or sleepy while driving is common but very dangerous. To prevent this, make sure to get plenty of rest before starting a long drive.

**Here are some suggestions to help you stay alert, but, remember, these will not have a lasting effect:**

- Stop as often as you need to — at least once every 100 miles or every two hours. Get out of the car to walk, stretch, loosen up and relax. Have something to eat or drink.
- If you have passengers, talk to stay alert. Ask someone else to drive when you begin to feel tired.
- If you are alone, listen to the radio or sing aloud.
- When the weather permits, open a window slightly to increase fresh airflow. Do not rely on "stay awake" drugs.
- If none of this works, stop for the day or park far from the road and rest. If you stay in the car, lock all doors and open windows slightly to let in fresh air.

## Skidding

When driving on a slippery road, slow down and maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Do not use cruise control when the road surface is slippery.

Your vehicle skids when tires lose their grip on the road surface. If this happens, stay calm. Do not overreact or slam on the brakes. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and brake until you can turn in the desired direction.

## Anti-lock braking

Some vehicles have an electronic anti-lock braking system (ABS) that helps keep the vehicle under control while braking. If you have anti-lock brakes, do not pump them as you would regular brakes. Instead, press down on the brake pedal and continue to steer the vehicle until you regain control. If you are not sure if your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, read your vehicle's owner's manual for specific instructions before you drive.

## Driving in heavy rain or fog

If you encounter thunderstorms or fog, reduce speed, use extra caution and be prepared to stop. Increase your following distance. Your headlights must be used when you cannot see more than 500 feet ahead and when it is raining, snowing, sleeting or hailing. Keep them on low beam to reduce glare. If you cannot see a safe distance ahead, pull off the road and stop until visibility improves.

## Hydroplaning

At speeds of 35 mph or less, most tires will "wipe" water off the road surface to keep tires in contact with the road. At higher speeds, water can collect under tires and lift them off the road surface — this is called "hydroplaning." When your tires hydroplane, they lose all contact with the road. If this happens, you will be unable to brake, accelerate or change direction. If your tires begin to hydroplane, take your foot off the gas pedal.

Hydroplaning is less likely to occur at normal highway speeds if your vehicle has good tires with deep treads, which allow water to escape. However, hydroplaning can occur at any speed if the depth of the water on the road is greater than the depth of the tire treads. In heavy rain, standard cars may begin to hydroplane at 35 mph.

To prevent hydroplaning, keep your tires in good condition and reduce speed when driving on wet roads.

## Driving on narrow roads and hills

When you approach curves on narrow roads, or in areas where brush and trees block your view of the road ahead, you can use your horn to warn other drivers or pedestrians that you are on the road.

Do not coast down steep hills with your transmission in neutral. On steep hills, check your speedometer frequently. Vehicle speed will increase even when your foot is not on the accelerator.

## Blowouts

A "blowout" is a burst tire that can throw your vehicle out of control. Before a blowout occurs, you may hear a thumping sound or notice the steering wheel pulling to the right or left.

If you experience a blowout, hold the steering wheel tightly, steer straight ahead and slowly ease your foot off the accelerator. Do not brake until the vehicle is back under your control. Pull the vehicle completely off the road at the nearest safe location.

## Steering failure

If the front wheels of your vehicle do not respond when you turn the steering wheel, ease up on the accelerator. Do not brake unless it is necessary to avoid a crash.

Your vehicle may balance on its own and travel in a straight path as you reduce speed. If you must apply the brake, do so gently. If you brake suddenly or try to shift gears, the change in speed may throw the vehicle off balance and out of control.

## Brake failure

A brake pedal that sinks slowly when pressure is applied is a sign that your vehicle's brakes may be failing. A warning light should come on if there is a serious problem.

If your brake pedal suddenly sinks all the way to the floor, try pumping the pedal to build pressure. If this does not work, slowly apply your emergency/parking brake. Applying the brake too abruptly could throw the vehicle into a skid. Remember, the emergency/parking brake engages only the rear brakes.

If road conditions allow you to coast to a stop, shift your car into a lower gear. Continue to downshift as you decelerate until you can safely pull over and stop.

## Running off the pavement

If your wheels drift onto the shoulder of the road, do not try to swerve back onto the pavement. Stay on the shoulder and slowly release the gas pedal. After you have reduced your speed, turn back onto the pavement. Then speed up again.

## Watch out for deer

There are some things you can do to reduce your risk of hitting a deer. Deer are most active from dusk to dawn, so be especially alert during those times. Scan the sides of the road at night to watch for the reflection of your vehicle headlights in the eyes of deer. If you see such a reflection on the side of the road, slow down. Blow the horn and be ready to stop. Always watch for more than one deer. While deer crossings typically occur in rural settings, deer sometimes wander into towns or even cities. Deer may cross anywhere, anytime.

## Vehicle approaching in your lane

If a vehicle is traveling toward you in your lane, move to the right. Do not use the left lane to avoid the vehicle. The driver may return to the correct lane and then be in your path.

If the vehicle continues toward you, steer off the road to the right if necessary to avoid a crash. Sounding your horn and flashing your headlights may help a sleepy or distracted driver become alert.

## Vehicle trying to pass you

If another driver tries to pass you on a two-lane road with traffic moving in both directions and misjudges the speed of oncoming traffic or cannot complete the pass, you and the other drivers are in danger. You must act to prevent a crash. If the passing vehicle is nearly in position to move back into the right lane, slow down and allow the driver to complete the pass as quickly as possible.

If the passing vehicle must drop back, speed up to make sure there is adequate room for the vehicle to move into the lane behind you. If a crash seems likely and the right shoulder is wide enough for your vehicle, quickly move to the right and allow the passing vehicle to move into your lane.

## Stalling on railroad tracks

If your vehicle stalls on railroad tracks and a train is approaching, leave the vehicle immediately. To avoid being struck by debris from the collision, keep a safe distance from the tracks. Walk quickly at a 45-degree angle away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is approaching.

## Flooded roadways

Flooding can happen when streams and rivers overflow, dams or levees break, snow melts rapidly, or during heavy rainfall. Floodwaters can cover roads, bridges and low areas. Flash floods can come quickly and without warning, within minutes or hours of excessive rainfall.

- Do not drive through flooded areas. If you see a flooded roadway ahead, turn around and find another route.
- Be cautious, especially at night when visibility is limited.
- Remember, 6 inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control or possible stalling.
- 2 feet of moving water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pickup trucks.
- Even if the water appears shallow, do not attempt to cross a flooded road. Water can hide dips or damage roadways by washing away the surface.
- If there is no other route, proceed to higher ground and wait for the waters to subside.

## Plunging under water

Most vehicles will float on the surface of the water for 30 to 60 seconds. If your vehicle enters deep water, get out of the vehicle immediately. If possible, exit the vehicle through open windows before the water reaches the window level.

If your vehicle becomes submerged, try not to panic. Vehicle doors cannot be opened until the water pressure inside the car is equal to that outside. When the vehicle is completely filled, the doors can be opened if there is no structural damage. The weight of the engine will cause the front end of the car to sink first. The rear passenger compartment may provide an air pocket while you plan your escape. If there are other people in the vehicle, check their condition and try to exit the vehicle together.

## Fire

If you notice smoke rising from beneath the hood of your vehicle, pull off the road, turn off the ignition and exit the vehicle immediately. Do not use water to put out the fire — this will actually spread the blaze.

## Overheating

Most vehicles have dashboard gauges or lights that indicate the engine temperature. Activities such as driving in stop-and-go traffic on a hot day, driving on steep inclines and towing a trailer can cause your engine to run hotter than normal.

When your engine becomes hot, turn off any unnecessary vehicle equipment, such as the air conditioning. If the temperature is still too high, turning on the heater will help draw hot air away from the engine. If these techniques do not work and the engine temperature suddenly increases or steam rises from the engine, pull over to the side of the road, stop the vehicle and turn off the ignition immediately.

## Headlight failure

If your headlights suddenly go out, try using your parking lights, hazard warning lights or turn signals — one of them may work and give you enough light to guide you off the road. If your headlights fail on a busy or lighted road, you will probably have enough light to guide you. If all your lights fail on a dark, deserted road, slow down and keep your vehicle on the pavement until you can move safely onto the shoulder.

## Windshield wiper failure or sudden opening of hood

If your windshield wipers suddenly fail in heavy rain or snow, slow down and activate your hazard warning lights. Do not brake suddenly if other vehicles are behind you. Pull off the road and move to a safe location as soon as possible.

If the hood of your vehicle suddenly opens and obstructs your view, you may be able to see through the space between the hood and the dashboard. If this is not possible, roll down the window and lean over to look past the side of the hood. Activate your hazard warning lights, slow down and steer off the road safely.

## Stuck gas pedal

If your gas pedal sticks, you may be able to free it by hooking your toe under the pedal and raising it. If this does not work, apply the brakes and shift into neutral to disengage the engine. Next, choose a safe path and steer to the shoulder of the road. If the shoulder is not paved, switch on your hazard lights and continue steering the vehicle in a straight path until you can safely pull over to the shoulder of the road.

## Vehicle crash with a utility pole or power box

**If your car comes into contact with a utility pole, wire or power box, you should:**

- Stay in your vehicle and call 911.
- Only get out of the vehicle if it is on fire.
- If you must get out, jump from the vehicle with both feet together and shuffle your feet on the ground as you move away from the scene.
- Always assume all wires and equipment are electrified.

## Carbon monoxide poisoning and safety tips

Carbon monoxide is a deadly, odorless and colorless gas produced by engines. It can collect inside your vehicle when the windows are closed or in your garage if your engine is idling. The only cure for carbon monoxide poisoning is a good supply of fresh air.

Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sudden fatigue, headache, dizziness and nausea. If you experience any of these symptoms, open the windows, turn off the ignition, and get out of the vehicle or garage as soon as possible. Have the vehicle's exhaust system inspected if you suspect it is leaking.

Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs most frequently during winter months when vehicle windows tend to be closed. When temperatures are cold, carbon monoxide can get trapped inside the garage even when the garage door is open completely. Carbon monoxide can seep into an attached house and render a person unconscious within a few minutes.

**To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and possible death:**

- Avoid idling a vehicle in a garage. A safer place to warm up a vehicle is in the driveway.
- Avoid sitting in a vehicle with the engine idling.
- Do not drive with all windows tightly closed.
- Avoid idling a vehicle when stuck in the snow or mud.
- Make sure your vehicle's exhaust system does not leak and is not blocked.
- Periodically allow fresh air into the vehicle by lowering the windows.

# Chapter 7: Your driving privileges

***Driving in Minnesota is a privilege. You can lose this privilege if you break certain laws or fail to meet certain requirements. DVS keeps a record of your driving, which includes information about violations in Minnesota and other states. Serious or repeated violations can lead to losing your driving privilege or having restrictions on where, when and what types of vehicles you can drive. You can get a copy of your driving record at drive.mn.gov.***

## License withdrawal

Your license may be withdrawn by suspension, revocation or cancellation. If this happens, DPS will send you a notice of withdrawal and a list of requirements for reinstatement.

Here are some conditions that could cause you to lose your driving privileges.

### Suspension

**Your driver's license may be suspended if you:**

- Repeatedly violate traffic laws.
- Are convicted in court for a violation that contributed to a traffic crash resulting in death, personal injury or serious property damage.
- Use or allow someone else to use your license for an illegal action. It is illegal to let anyone use your license or permit.
- Commit a traffic offense in another state that would be grounds for suspension in Minnesota.
- Are judged in court to be legally unfit to drive a motor vehicle.
- Fail to report a medical condition that would result in cancellation of driving privileges.
- Fail to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing, within five years of a conviction for the same offense.
- Are found to possess a fake or altered license.
- Make a fraudulent application for a license or identification card.
- Take any part of the driver's license examination for someone else or allow someone else to take the examination for you.
- Falsely identify yourself to a police officer.
- Fail to appear in court or pay a fine on a motor vehicle-related violation when required to do so.
- Are convicted of a misdemeanor for a violation of Minnesota traffic law.
- Fail to pay court-ordered child support.
- Use or allow someone else to use your license, permit or ID card to buy tobacco products for someone under 18 years of age or alcohol for someone under 21 years of age.
- Are under 21 years of age, and the court determines that you drove a motor vehicle while consuming or after consuming alcohol.

- Pay a fee to the state or driver's license agent with a bad check. The suspension will be removed when the bad check and any related fees have been paid in full.
- Are convicted for theft of gasoline.

After the period of suspension has ended, your driving privilege may be reinstated if all requirements are met. One requirement is payment of the reinstatement fee. If your license expired during the suspension period or if your name or address changed, you must apply for a new license and pay the appropriate fee.

### Revocation

**Your driver's license may be revoked if you:**

- Refuse to take a test to determine whether you are under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, or if you fail the test.
- Are convicted of manslaughter or any other criminal action while driving a motor vehicle.
- Are convicted of driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Are convicted of a felony in which you used a motor vehicle.
- Are convicted of driving in excess of 100 mph.
- Are convicted of fleeing a police officer.
- Are convicted of failing to stop, identify yourself and render aid when involved in a motor vehicle crash, especially one that involves death or personal injury to others.
- Are convicted of lying under oath, signing any legal document that contains false information about legal ownership or operation of a motor vehicle, or making a false statement to DPS about that information.
- Plead guilty or forfeit bail for three violations in a single year of any Minnesota traffic law or ordinance that requires a jail sentence upon conviction.
- Are convicted of an offense in another state that would be grounds for revoking your license if you were convicted in Minnesota.
- Are convicted of a misdemeanor for driving a motor vehicle with prior knowledge that the owner of the vehicle did not have no-fault vehicle insurance.
- Own a vehicle without no-fault insurance and are found to have driven it or allowed others to drive it, with full knowledge that the vehicle was not insured.
- Are convicted of a gross misdemeanor for failing to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing.
- Are convicted of selling or possessing a controlled substance while operating a motor vehicle.

After the period of revocation has ended, your driving privileges may be reinstated if all the reinstatement requirements on your withdrawal notice are met. You must show proper identification when you take the written test or road test. You must apply for a new license after all your testing requirements are met.

### Limited license

Under some circumstances, a limited license may be issued to a person whose driving privileges are revoked or suspended. Before a limited license is issued, you must meet certain requirements, including completing any mandatory waiting periods.

**If you are issued a limited license, you are restricted to:**

- Traveling to and from your place of employment.
- Traveling to and from chemical dependency treatment or counseling.
- Providing transportation for dependent children and other dependents living in your household for medical, educational or nutritional needs.
- Traveling to and from a post-secondary institution where you are enrolled.

### Cancellation

Your license may be canceled if you do not have a legal right to the driver's license issued to you.

**Your license may be canceled if you:**

- Acquire a mental or physical disability that makes you unable to drive safely.
- Do not pass a test legally requested by DPS to determine your ability to drive safely.
- Give false or misleading information on your license application. Your license will be canceled for 60 days or until the correct information is provided, whichever is longer.
- Commit a crime for which cancellation of your license is a legal punishment.
- Do not qualify for a driver's license under Minnesota law.

## Commercial driver's license disqualification

You can lose your commercial driver's license privileges for committing certain driving offenses. See the Minnesota Commercial Driver's License Manual for information about commercial driver's license requirements.

# Chapter 8: Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs

***It is illegal to operate a vehicle on Minnesota roads when impaired by alcohol or other substances.***

## Alcohol and driving

Drinking and driving is a serious problem in Minnesota and across the nation. There is a strong link between alcohol use and the severity of traffic crashes. Alcohol is involved in more than one-third of the deaths on Minnesota roads each year. Crashes involving impaired drivers kill an average of 240 people each year in Minnesota and injure thousands more. The person most often killed in an alcohol-related crash is the impaired driver. Young men are more likely than others to engage in this deadly behavior.

## Drugs and driving

Driving while impaired by drugs is as dangerous as driving while impaired by alcohol. Minnesota law prohibits driving while impaired by controlled or intoxicating substances. These substances include illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs (like cold medicines) and household products. These substances can cause drowsiness and impair your ability to operate a vehicle safely and respond to driving conditions.

Legal drugs that may not cause impairment alone can have powerful intoxicating effects when mixed with alcohol. The safest rule is to not mix drugs with driving at all. Using drugs can lead to traffic crashes resulting in death, injury and property damage. It can also lead to arrest, fines and jail sentences. Possession and use of a drug prescribed by a doctor is permitted if the doctor informs the driver that it will not affect their ability to drive safely. Pay attention to warning labels on drugs and medicines and follow doctor's orders regarding possible effects.

Stay away from illegal drugs and don't use any drug to hide fatigue — the only cure for fatigue is rest.

## Effect of alcohol on driving skills

Alcohol is a depressant that slows body functions and impairs motor skills. The amount of alcohol in the blood is called the "alcohol concentration." Higher alcohol concentration means a greater degree of impairment. Your driving ability becomes impaired after just one drink.

## Types of effects

Alcohol affects the central nervous system and impairs the ability to drive safely. Here is how specific functions are affected by alcohol consumption:

### Judgment

When you consume alcohol, you misjudge your degree of impairment. You may drive too fast, misjudge stopping distances, fail to wear a seat belt and forget to drive defensively.

### Vision

Alcohol reduces the range of eye movement, decreasing peripheral vision. Blurred vision may also occur at high alcohol concentration levels.

### Reaction time

Alcohol slows reaction time. When you are impaired, you cannot respond quickly to traffic signals, actions of other drivers and pedestrians, and events that take place on the road around you.

### Steering

Impaired drivers tend to over-steer, which can result in weaving and running off the road.

### Perception

Impaired drivers do not notice or correctly interpret sounds and sights.

### Coordination and balance

Alcohol impairs the ability to combine steadiness with speed and accuracy.

### Attention

Alcohol makes it difficult for drivers to focus on the many tasks required to operate a motor vehicle.

## Things to know about alcohol

A 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, a typical mixed drink and a 9-ounce wine cooler usually contain about the same amount of alcohol. However, it's important to realize that mixed drinks may contain more than the standard 1.5 ounces of alcohol and the amount of alcohol in beers can vary by as much as 40 percent.

The term "proof" refers to the strength of a drink and is equal to twice the percentage of alcohol it contains. For example, a bottle of 80-proof whiskey contains 40 percent alcohol.

The period over which you drink affects your alcohol concentration. If you consume more than one standard drink per hour, your alcohol concentration will increase. The effects of alcohol vary greatly among individuals due to factors such as age, gender, body weight, mood, food intake, metabolism and genetics.

You may be affected differently by alcohol on different occasions due to fluctuating factors like mood, food intake and sleepiness.

Men and women are affected differently by alcohol. Men generally have more muscle tissue, which does not absorb alcohol into the bloodstream as readily as fat. A person with a higher percentage of fat than another person of the same weight will reach a higher alcohol concentration by consuming the same amount of alcohol.

The only way to reduce your alcohol concentration is to wait. Alcohol is generally eliminated at the rate of about one drink per hour, but many factors influence the amount of alcohol that is retained. The body eliminates 95 percent of alcohol through oxidation by the liver. The remaining alcohol is eliminated through breathing, sweating and urination. Drinking coffee, exercising and taking cold showers do not increase the rate of oxidation.

## Making lower-risk choices

Social drinking frequently leads to impaired driving. The safest policy is simple: If you are going to drink, don't drive; and if you are going to drive, don't drink.

**Here are some alternatives to driving impaired:**

- Designate a driver who will not drink.
- Call a taxi or a rideshare service.
- Call a friend or family member for a ride.
- Stay overnight at a friend's house if you have been drinking.
- Take away the keys from a friend if they are impaired.

Because alcohol consumption impairs judgment, it is crucial to make a plan while you are sober about how you will avoid impaired driving later.

## Minnesota Driving While Impaired (DWI) law

A person with an alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or higher (0.04 percent if driving a commercial vehicle) who is in control of a moving or parked vehicle can be arrested for driving while impaired (DWI).

If a law enforcement officer can prove that alcohol caused the driver to commit driving errors, the driver can be arrested for DWI with an alcohol concentration as low as 0.04 percent.

This law also applies to the operation of off-road recreational vehicles and motorboats.

## Implied consent/search warrant law

If a law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe you are impaired and are operating or in physical control of a motor vehicle, you must submit to a test of your blood, breath or urine. Refusing to take this test is a crime and will result in a revocation of driving privileges for one to six years, depending on the number of offenses on record. This law also applies to the operation of off-road recreational vehicles and motorboats.

A law enforcement officer may ask you to blow into a roadside preliminary screening device, which helps the officer determine the amount of alcohol in your system. This pre-arrest breath test is used as an indicator of your alcohol concentration level, and the results have limited use as evidence in court. If you are arrested, you will be required to submit to a blood, breath or urine test that can be used as evidence.

**A law enforcement officer may ask you to take a test when you:**

- Are under arrest for DWI.
- Refuse to take a pre-arrest breath test.
- Take and fail a pre-arrest breath test.
- Are involved in an alcohol-related crash that caused personal injury, property damage or death.

The pre-arrest breath test can be beneficial to you if you appear intoxicated but are not. Some medical conditions have symptoms similar to those associated with intoxication, and law enforcement officers will obtain medical assistance for drivers who are ill.

## Penalties

Penalties associated with an alcohol-related revocation of a driver's license include a $680 reinstatement fee, application for a driver's license and possibly enrollment in the Ignition Interlock Device Program. Each offense has unique criminal penalties in addition to administrative sanctions, depending on the arrest situation, previous driving violations and criminal record.

**Penalties will be more severe if you:**

- Have prior DWI arrests.
- Have an alcohol concentration of 0.16 percent or above.
- Have a child younger than 16 years of age in the vehicle at the time of the stop.
- Are under age 21.
- Refuse a pre-arrest breath test.

If you are found to have an alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or above or refuse to take a test to determine an alcohol concentration, you may receive a seven-day temporary license. At the end of the seven-day period, your driver's license will be revoked.

### First offense

- Minimum of 90-day revocation (30 days if you plead guilty to DWI).
- No work permit will be issued until a 15-day revocation period has passed, and until reinstatement requirements have been met. A work permit is not an option if you had an alcohol concentration of 0.16 percent or greater.
- Optional enrollment in the Ignition Interlock Device Program.
- 90 days in jail, a $1,000 fine or both.

### Second offense

- Minimum one-year license revocation if the second offense occurred within 10 years of the first offense.
- Possible required enrollment in the Ignition Interlock Device Program.
- One year in jail, a $3,000 fine or both.
- Impounded license plates.

### Third offense

- Loss of license for a minimum of three years if the third offense occurred within 10 years of the first two offenses.
- Canceled license.
- Required chemical use assessment.
- Required enrollment in the Ignition Interlock Device program.
- One year in jail, a $3,000 fine or both.
- Forfeited vehicle and impounded license plates.
- Jail or maximum bail and electronic monitoring.

## Ignition Interlock Device program

The Ignition Interlock Device program enhances public safety by monitoring alcohol offenders. The ignition interlock device is installed and connected to the vehicle's starter. To start the vehicle, you must blow into the device. If the device detects an alcohol concentration at or above 0.02 percent, it prevents the vehicle from starting.

First-time alcohol offenders with an alcohol concentration of 0.16 or above have the option to regain their driving privileges by participating in the Ignition Interlock Device Program. Drivers whose licenses are canceled and whose privileges are denied as "inimical to public safety" are required to enroll in the Ignition Interlock Device Program for a period of three to six years to regain full driving privileges.

## Felony DWI

You may be charged with a felony DWI if you are arrested for a fourth DWI in a 10-year period, have previously been convicted of a felony DWI, or have been convicted of criminal vehicular homicide while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A fourth offense may result in a loss of license for four years and until rehabilitation and other reinstatement requirements are met. The criminal penalties for felony DWI can include a sentence of up to seven years in prison with a five-year conditional release and a $14,000 fine.

## Underage drinking — no tolerance rule

The legal age to buy and drink alcohol in Minnesota is 21. It is illegal for a person under age 21 to operate a motor vehicle with any detectable amount of alcohol in their system. If convicted of this offense, you will have your driving privileges suspended for 30 days. A second conviction will result in a suspension of driving privileges for 180 days.

## Commercial driver's licenses and alcohol and controlled substances

**You will lose your commercial driver's license for at least one year on the first offense if you:**

- Drive a commercial vehicle when your alcohol concentration is 0.04 or more. If your alcohol concentration is less than 0.04 but detectable, you will be put out of service for 24 hours.
- Drive any vehicle when your alcohol concentration is 0.08 or higher.
- Refuse a blood, breath or urine test while driving any motor vehicle.
- Are under the influence of a controlled substance.
- Leave the scene of a crash involving a motor vehicle that you were driving.
- Use any motor vehicle to commit a felony.

If the offense occurs while you are operating a commercial motor vehicle that is placarded for hazardous materials, you will lose your commercial driver's license for at least three years. A second offense will result in the permanent loss of your commercial driver's license. Using a commercial motor vehicle to commit a felony involving controlled substances will result in the permanent loss of your commercial driver's license. Drivers who have a commercial license and are arrested for impaired driving in a passenger vehicle will be unable to obtain a work permit for a commercial vehicle during the withdrawal period.

## Other laws related to alcohol and controlled substances

### Cannabis

It is illegal to operate a vehicle while under the influence of a cannabis product, lower-potency hemp edible, a hemp-derived consumer product, an artificially derived cannabinoid or tetrahydrocannabinols.

### Use

It is illegal for you to use cannabis flower, a cannabis product, lower-potency hemp edible, a hemp-derived consumer product, an artificially derived cannabinoid or any other product containing an artificially derived cannabinoid in a vehicle when the vehicle is on a street or highway.

### Possession and open package law

It is illegal to possess cannabis flower or products, lower-potency hemp edibles, hemp-derived consumer products or any other products containing artificially derived cannabinoids in a private motor vehicle on a street or highway if:

- The packaging has been opened or the seal broken
- Part of the contents have been removed from the packaging

You may keep these products in the trunk of a vehicle or, if the vehicle does not have a trunk, in another area of the vehicle not normally occupied by the driver and passengers. You must not keep these products in the utility compartment or glove compartment of a vehicle.

If the owner of a private vehicle is not present in the vehicle, it is also illegal for the owner to keep or allow these products to be kept in the vehicle when the vehicle is on a street or highway if:

- The packaging has been opened or the seal broken.
- Part of the contents have been removed from the packaging.

### Open container

You must not drink or have an open container of any alcoholic beverage inside a motor vehicle when it is on a public street or highway. It is also unlawful to allow a passenger to drink, or to have an open container of, any alcoholic beverage inside a motor vehicle.

### Controlled substances in motor vehicles

You must not use, possess or sell controlled substances in a motor vehicle.

# Information directory and index

***This chapter helps you locate services and information related to driving in Minnesota.***

## Web services

**Online services and information are available at drive.mn.gov. Here's a sample of what you can do:**

- Schedule or reschedule a road or Class D written test.
- Check to see if your driving privileges are valid.
- Report the sale of a vehicle.
- Renew your vehicle registration.
- Find the location of the office nearest to you.
- Print a driver's license manual.
- Download forms and information related to driver's licenses and the operation and ownership of a motor vehicle.
- Find approved driver education schools and improvement clinics.

## Office locations

Driver's license and motor vehicle services are available at more than 200 locations throughout the state. Office location information is available 24/7. Visit dps.mn.gov/mydvs or call 651-201-7777 TTY: 651-282-6555.

## Contacts

Email: dvs.driverslicense@state.mn.us or call 651-201-7777 TTY: 651-282-6555 for:

- Road test scheduling (metro only)
- Driver's license information
- Commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) information
- Driver evaluation
- Ignition interlock
- No-fault insurance compliance
- Impounded plates
- Vehicle registration and title
- Specialty plates
- Customer assistance for hearing impaired

## Other state services

State Patrol information line ..... 651-201-7100

MnDOT road conditions ..... 511 or visit 511mn.org

MnDOT motor carrier services ..... 651-215-6330

## Consumer information from the attorney general

Office line ..... 651-296-3353

Toll-free ..... 800-657-3787

Minnesota relay for hearing impaired ..... 800-627-3529

Website: ag.state.mn.us/office/contactus.asp

## Voter registration

When you apply for or renew a driver's license or identification card and provide documentation of citizenship (such as a U.S. Passport, U.S. Birth Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship), your data will be automatically sent to the Office of the Secretary of State to register you to vote.

If you have previously applied for a credential in Minnesota, DVS may no longer have a record of the documents you used to prove identity. You can provide documentation demonstrating citizenship to start the voter registration process under the new system. DVS will not send your data to the Office of the Secretary of State if you provided these documents before Oct. 1, 2023.

If you do not wish to be registered to vote after providing DVS with citizenship documents, you must opt out with the Office of the Secretary of State.

More information about voting can be found at: sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/register-to-vote

## Organ, eye and tissue donation

Donating organs is a beautiful and selfless act that can save and heal up to 75 lives. The need for donors is significant, with thousands of people waiting for life-saving or life-enhancing transplants.

When you apply for a Minnesota license or identification card, you can indicate your wish to become a donor after death. This indication serves as your consent. It is also important to share your decision with your family. Drivers under the age of 18 can also designate themselves as donors with their parent's consent.

- **Organs:** Heart, lungs, liver, kidney, pancreas and intestines.
- **Eyes:** Whole eyes or corneas to help restore sight.
- **Tissue:** Used for reconstructive surgeries to repair damaged skin, heart defects and more.

**Organs are allocated to recipients based on medical urgency, length of time waiting, genetic matching and geography. Additional Information:**

- The donation process does not prevent an open casket funeral.
- There is no charge for donation to the donor or their family.
- For more information about donating organs or tissue, visit donatelifemn.org or contact: LifeSource at 1-888-5-DONATE (1-888-536-6283) or visit life-source.org.
- For information about donating whole eyes or corneas, contact the Lions Gift of Sight at 1-866-88-SIGHT (1-866-887-4448) or visit lionsgiftofsight.umn.edu.
- For more information about donating tissue, contact American Donor Services at 1-877-365-DON8 (1-877-365-3668) or visit americandonorservices.org.

# Index


Aggressive driving....79
Airbags....23, 39, 51
Alcohol and driving....91
Animal safety....39
Bicycles....47, 48
Blind spots....28
Campers and trailers....79
Carbon monoxide....86, 87
Careless and reckless driving....44
Carrying a projecting load....79
Changing lanes....28, 52
Child safety seat....38
Commercial vehicles....51, 52
Crashes....50, 78, 91
Driver's license
- Active military service....19
- Applying for a license....8
- Bring identification....7
- Commercial driver's license disqualification....90
- Commercial driver's licenses....90, 95, 97
- Driving while impaired....91
- Drugs and driving....91
- Emergency vehicle....27, 30, 33, 44, 65, 77
- Endorsements....17, 18
- Fees....4, 5, 6, 19, 20, 89
- Getting your license....6
- Graduated Driver's Licensing....13
- Instruction permit....4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 79
- License classifications....17
- Name change....7, 8, 9
- Peace Corps and federal foreign service employees....20
- Provisional license....5, 13, 14, 16, 79
- Renewal and replacement....19
- Revocation....89
- Road test....4, 97
- Suspension....88
- Vision screening....10, 13
- Who cannot be licensed....7
- Who does not need a Minnesota license....6
- Written test....4, 6, 10, 13, 40, 89, 97

Fleeing a police officer ..... 46
Freeway driving ..... 74
Highway work zones ..... 54
Identification cards ..... 6, 9, 19, 20
Ignition Interlock ..... 94, 95
Impaired drivers ..... 91
J-turns ..... 32
Lanes
- Changing lanes ..... 28, 52
- Lane markings ..... 69
- Lane use control signals ..... 68
- Traffic lanes ..... 27
- Lane filtering ..... 50
- Lane splitting ..... 49, 50

Motorcycles ..... 17, 49, 50
Motorized bicycles ..... 17, 49
Parking ..... 35, 36, 57, 59
Passing ..... 27, 34, 42, 44, 48, 51, 60, 69
Pavement markings ..... 59, 69
Pedestrians ..... 3, 12, 27, 28, 30, 35, 41, 43, 47, 48, 49, 51, 57, 60, 66, 67, 72, 83, 92
Railroad Crossings ..... 59, 60
Registering your vehicle ..... 40
Right of way and yielding ..... 43
Roundabouts ..... 30
Safety seat ..... 38
School buses ..... 23, 41, 42
School safety patrol ..... 43
Seat belts ..... 4, 11, 23, 37
Signaling ..... 27
Signs ..... 53, 56, 58, 63
Speed limits ..... 26, 27
Stopping ..... 41, 52, 73, 77
Traffic crash ..... 12, 39, 88
Traffic laws ..... 26
Traffic signal ..... 41, 49, 58, 65
Turns ..... 28, 62
Vehicle requirements ..... 22
What to do and expect when stopped by law enforcement ..... 45
Winter driving ..... 81
Zipper merge ..... 54, 55

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS AN EVERYWHERE PROBLEM...

# WITH AN EVERYBODY SOLUTION

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. It occurs in all 50 states in the U.S., in both rural and urban settings, when people are subject to forced labor or illegally bought and sold for commercial sex.A minor being sold for sex is always a victim of human trafficking.



**EVERYDAY HEROES NEEDED.**

While the recruitment or purchase of victims may occur online, survivors may be recovered in many locations, including truck stops, bus terminals, local businesses, restaurants, hotels, strip clubs, private homes, a variety of events, etc. The movement of victims may include the use of rideshares, taxis or other modes of transportation.

As a licensed driver, you may intersect with a human trafficking situation while you're en route somewhere, stopped at a business or in a neighborhood or attending a sporting or other event where a large number of people are gathered.

## RED FLAGS TO LOOK FOR

- Signs that prostitution is taking place or if you see a minor being sexually exploited
  - Any mention of making a quota or having a pimp/daddy
  - Multiple cars and different men continually going in and out of a residence
- People looking fearful, disheveled or crying
- Someone being controlling, threatening or even violent with an individual
- People whose communication is being restricted or controlled; the person is not allowed to speak for self; being watched or followed
- Extraordinary security measures for a business or home (e.g., barred or covered windows, barbed wire, excessive exterior cameras, locked front doors with entrances in the alley, etc.)
- Workers who appear to live at the place of business or are always working
  - Excessive work hours with little to no breaks
  - Workers who exhibit signs of mental or psychological exhaustion
- Signs of branding or tattooing of trafficker's name (often on the neck)

***If you suspect someone could be a victim of human trafficking, time is of the essence.***

1. **If you're seeing a crime in progress, call 911.** When reporting a tip, provide "actionable information," including times, dates, location and address of the situation, descriptions of cars or trucks involved (make, model, color, license plate, distinguishing marks and/or USDOT number, etc.) and people (height, weight, hair color, eye color, age, etc.). Take a picture if you can. When you contact law enforcement, tell them you suspect human trafficking.
2. **To access the national human trafficking hotlines** to ascertain if you're witnessing human trafficking, to access services, make a report or share incidents that have been reported to law enforcement, **call 888-3737-888 in the U.S., 833-900-1010 in Canada or 01800-5533-000 in Mexico.**
3. **Please do not approach traffickers.** Allow law enforcement to deal with traffickers and recover victims. Approaching traffickers is not only dangerous for you and their victims but could lead to problems in the eventual prosecution of traffickers. **If you do interact with a human trafficking victim, provide support based on your comfort level.**

**Download the TAT app!**

MINNESOTA

drive.mn.gov