

# Motorists' Handbook

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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## PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

### Address change

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) mails your renewal notice and other important information to your last known address. If you move, please change your address at the DMV within ten days of having moved.

Change your address online at [wisconsindmv.gov/online](https://wisconsindmv.gov/online), by telephone (608) 266-2353 or mail to Division of Motor Vehicles, P. O. Box 7917, Madison, WI 53707-7917.

### Obtain services online

[wisconsindmv.gov/online](https://wisconsindmv.gov/online)

- Find your closest DMV and check wait times
- Schedule, cancel or verify a road test appointment
- Change your address
- Get a duplicate driver license
- See if your driver license is valid
- Check eligibility for an occupational license
- Find out how long you need SR22 insurance
- Check eligibility and reinstate your driving privilege
- Get a duplicate or renew your ID card
- Title and register a vehicle
- Renew your license plates
- Apply for replacement license plate(s)
- Order a replacement title
- Check personalized plate message availability
- Print a copy of your current vehicle registration

- Find out when you'll receive your title
- Check if there is a lien on a vehicle
- And more!

### Obtain information

[wisconsindmv.gov](https://wisconsindmv.gov)

- Acceptable documentation
- How to obtain a driver license
- How to obtain an identification (ID) card
- REAL ID
- Fees
- Crashes and crash reports
- Medical concerns
- Driving schools
- Teen drivers
- Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)
- Parents and sponsors
- Driver handbooks
- Practice knowledge test mobile application
- Motorcycle/moped license
- Occupational license
- Revoked or suspended driver license
- Traffic safety courses
- New residents
- Forms and publications
- Commercial drivers
- Points system
- Buy or sell a vehicle
- Transfer a vehicle
- Vehicle title/plates
- Vehicle emissions testing
- Special plates
- Vehicle title
- Title-registration service providers
- Lemon law
- And more!

Have a question or need more information?  
E-mail your question to [driverrecords.dmv@dot.wi.gov](mailto:driverrecords.dmv@dot.wi.gov) or call (608) 264-7447.

## **Consider saving a life by becoming an organ donor**

[www.DonorRegistry.wisconsin.gov](http://www.DonorRegistry.wisconsin.gov)

You will be asked if you wish to register as an organ, tissue and eye donor when you apply for or renew your Identification (ID) card, instruction permit or driver license. Upon death, donors help save and improve lives through transplantation, therapy, research or education. If you are 18 or older, checking the box indicates your legal consent for donation. Check the box to include your name in the donor registry every time you update your driver record. Please share your decision with your family.

## **Absolute sobriety**

Wisconsin has an Absolute Sobriety or “Not a Drop” law. This means that drivers under 21 may not have a drop of alcohol in their system when operating a motor vehicle.

## **Wisconsin Graduated Driver Licensing Supervised Driving Log, HS-303**

Parents must certify that their teen has a minimum of 30 hours of supervised driving, with at least 10 hours at night. Keep track of driving time and experience with a printable [supervised driving log](#) or download a [free mobile app](#) from the Parent’s Supervised Driving Program. The more time you spend practicing with your teen, the better driver they will be on their own.

## **This manual**


This manual is intended to inform the user of the rules of the road (Wisconsin state laws and administrative rules) and provide important safety tips. Information in this and other handbooks and manuals published by the Division of Motor Vehicles is not all-inclusive and is subject to change at any time due to new or revised laws.

This manual gives you information on driving rules and practices to help you become a safe driver of a car or light truck (Class D license).

If you want a Commercial Driver License (CDL) to drive a commercial motor vehicle (heavy truck, bus, Class A, B, or C), you should study the *Wisconsin Commercial Driver’s Manual*.

If you want a license to operate a motorcycle (Class M license), you should study the *Motorcyclists’ Handbook*.

## **THE DRIVER LICENSE**

Wisconsin DMV issues REAL ID-compliant driver licenses (marked with a ) in accordance with the Federal Real ID Act of 2005.

Beginning October 1, 2020 the Department of Homeland Security will require that you have REAL ID-compliant identification to board federally-regulated commercial aircraft or enter federal facilities requiring identification. Don’t get left behind without a REAL ID.

Find more information about REAL ID on the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) web site at [wisconsin.dmv.gov](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov).



## Requirements

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle or motor-driven cycle on public roadways in Wisconsin is required to have a valid driver license.

You may obtain a Wisconsin Class D driver license (cars and light trucks) if you:

1. Are at least 16 years of age.
2. Present proof of U.S. citizenship, legal immigration status or legal temporary visitor status in the U.S., such as a:
  - Certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate;
  - Valid U.S. passport;
  - Valid foreign passport with appropriate immigration documents.

**All documents presented as proof must be original. Photocopies are not acceptable.**

3. Present proof of your name and date of birth, such as a:
  - Certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate;
  - Valid U.S. passport;
  - Valid foreign passport with federal I-551 or I-94, arrival and departure record.

**Note:** Hospital birth certificates, notification of birth registration or baptismal certificates are not acceptable. If you were born in Wisconsin, you can get a certified copy of your birth certificate at any county Register of Deeds or from [Wisconsin Vital Records Services](#). You will be charged a fee. If you were born in another U.S. state or territory, contact the [state or territory where you were born](#).

4. Present proof of your identity, such as a:
  - Social Security card with your signature;
  - Valid Wisconsin or out-of-state ID card with your photograph;
  - U.S. Military ID card with your photograph.
5. Present proof of your Wisconsin residency, such as a:
  - Utility bill for water, gas, electricity or land-line telephone service with your name and Wisconsin address;
  - Bank statement from a Wisconsin bank with your name and Wisconsin address.
6. Present proof of your Social Security number, such as a:
  - Social Security card;
  - W-2 form including your name, address and Social Security number. Currently you can provide your Social Security number without presenting proof of it to apply for a driver license that is not compliant with REAL ID requirements. If you are not eligible for a Social Security number, you must sign a Social Security number non-eligibility certification statement.

**For a complete list of acceptable documents, visit the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) web site at [wisconsin.dmv.gov/DL-docs](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov/DL-docs).**

7. Are under 18:
  - And have successfully completed an approved driver education course.
  - And have an adult sponsor (your parent or legal guardian) certify their sponsorship on your application.

8. Pass required driver license tests.  
 Note: New Wisconsin residents with a license from another state (which is valid or expired less than 8 years) **may** be able to get a Wisconsin license without taking the knowledge or skills tests. Visit [wisconsin.dmv.gov](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov) for more information.
9. Turn in any driver license and/or identification card issued in another state.
10. Are not suspended or revoked in another state.
11. Meet the physical and medical requirements for the type of driver license for which you are applying.
12. Pay required fees.

## Carrying the driver license and license replacement

You must carry your license with you while operating a motor vehicle. If your license is lost or stolen, you must obtain a duplicate license. Visit [wisconsin.dmv.gov](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov) for more information.

## Out of state transfers

If you are under 18 and hold an instruction permit from another state or country, in order to get a probationary license you will be required to meet the same conditions as a Wisconsin resident.

If you surrender a license from another state or country, some of the requirements for a probationary license may be waived. Visit [wisconsin.dmv.gov](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov) for more information.

New Wisconsin residents with an out-of-state license are required to apply for a Wisconsin driver license within 60 days of becoming a resident of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin allows certain **exemptions** from its licensing requirements. For example:

- A person in the armed services may operate a motor vehicle owned by, or leased to, the federal government without a Wisconsin driver license.
- A person from a state or territory of the United States, or Canada, who has not established residence in Wisconsin, is at least 16 years of age and has in their immediate possession a valid driver license issued to that person from their home jurisdiction, may operate a non-commercial vehicle.
- A commercial driver who is not a resident of Wisconsin, has in their immediate possession a valid commercial driver license issued to that person from another state or territory of the United States, a province of Canada, or Mexico, may operate a commercial motor vehicle in Wisconsin as long as the operation complies with all restrictions and endorsements on the license.
- A nonresident of the United States who holds an international driving permit or a valid driver license issued by a signatory country to either the 1943 Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic or the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic, may operate a non-commercial vehicle. This exemption applies for one year after the person arrives in the U.S.



## THE INSTRUCTION PERMIT

If you have not previously held a driver license, you must first get an instruction permit at a DMV Service Center.

1. To get an instruction permit, you must:

- Be at least 15 years, six months of age, **and**
- Pass the knowledge and highway signs tests and vision screening.

**Note:** Take a practice knowledge test on your mobile device at [wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/teen-driver/teen-hw-apply/practicetestapp.aspx](https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/teen-driver/teen-hw-apply/practicetestapp.aspx).

2. If you are under 18, you are required to:

- Have completed or be enrolled in an approved behind-the-wheel driver ed course which begins within 60 days of the date your driver ed instructor certifies your application.

**Note:** If you have not completed the classroom portion of driver education, you must be within 60 days of starting behind-the-wheel.

- Have your adult sponsor sign the application. The sponsor's signature must be witnessed by either a notary public or an authorized DMV employee.  
**Note:** Your instruction permit is valid for 12 months. If you need to renew your permit or get a duplicate, you will be asked to provide proof that you are currently enrolled in or have completed driver education.

3. Present proof of U.S. citizenship, legal immigration status or legal temporary visitor status in the U.S., such as a:
- Certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate;
  - Valid U.S. passport;
  - Valid foreign passport with appropriate immigration documents.

4. Present proof of your name and date of birth, such as a:

- Certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate;
- Valid U.S. passport;
- Valid foreign passport with federal I-551 or I-94, arrival and departure record.

**Note:** Hospital birth certificates, notification of birth registration or baptismal certificates are not acceptable. If you were born in Wisconsin, you can get a certified copy of your birth certificate at any county Register of Deeds or from [Wisconsin Vital Records Services](#). You will be charged a fee. If you were born in another U.S. state or territory, contact the [state or territory where you were born](#).

5. Present proof of your identity, such as a:

- Social Security card with your signature;
- Valid Wisconsin or out-of-state ID card with your photograph;
- U.S. Military ID card with your photograph.

6. Present proof of your Social Security number, such as a:

- Social Security card;

- W-2 form including your name, address and Social Security number. Currently you can provide your Social Security number without presenting proof of it to apply for a driver license that is not compliant with REAL ID requirements. If you are not eligible for a Social Security number, you must sign a Social Security number non-eligibility certification statement.

You may be required to show proof of Wisconsin residency. For more information, including a complete list of acceptable documents, visit [wisconsindmv.gov/DL-docs](http://wisconsindmv.gov/DL-docs).

All documents presented as proof must be original. Photocopies are not acceptable.

## Restrictions of the instruction permit

You may drive only when you are accompanied by a person with two years driving experience who holds a valid **regular** (not probationary or occupational) license and who sits in the front passenger seat **and is one of the following:**

- A qualified instructor 19 or older. (Up to three others may ride along if the car is equipped with dual controls), **or**
- A parent, guardian or spouse 19 or older (your immediate family members may ride along in the back seat), **or**
- A person 21 or older. (If you are under 18, this person must be designated in writing by your parent or guardian prior to accompanying you while driving a vehicle.)

Note: If you are at least 16 years of age, in addition to the licensed accompanying driver, one other licensed person 25 years of age or more with at least 2 years driving experience may occupy a seat in the vehicle other than the front seat.

## THE PROBATIONARY LICENSE

A probationary license is the first license issued to new drivers regardless of age. It is valid for two years from your next birthday. Points are doubled for the second and subsequent convictions for traffic violations.

To qualify for a probationary license, all applicants must meet the driver license requirements listed on page 1.

For those under 18, you must also meet the following requirements:

1. Present proof of completing an approved driver education class, **and**
2. Have had an instruction permit for a minimum of six months, **and**
3. Have accumulated 30 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience (10 of the 30 hours must be at night), **and**  

Note: Up to 5 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience with a qualified instructor may be double counted. For example, 3 hours will count as 6 hours.
4. Have had no moving traffic violations resulting in a conviction for the 6 months prior to the date of application for this license, **and**
5. Have your parent or adult sponsor certify (on the driver license application) the completion of 30 hours of driving experience (10 at night), **and**
6. Pass a driving skills test, **and**
7. Pay the required fees.

## Restrictions of the probationary license

If you are under 18, for the first 9 months of holding your probationary license you will have restrictions on who can ride with you.

From 5 a.m. to midnight, you can drive alone and travel anywhere. In addition, any number of your immediate family members (including legal guardian) and the following people can ride with you:

- **One** person who holds a valid regular (non-probationary) license with at least 2 years of licensed driving experience **and** who is one of the following:
  - ◇ A qualified instructor or spouse 19 or older, **or**
  - ◇ A person 21 or older.
- **One** other person.

From midnight to 5 a.m.

- If driving **between home, school, and/or work** you can drive alone. The same people listed above can be with you.
- If driving **anywhere else**, you must have one of the following people seated beside you:
  - ◇ A parent or guardian.
  - ◇ **One** person who holds a valid regular (non-probationary) license with 2 years of licensed driving experience **and** who is one of the following:
    - » A qualified instructor or spouse 19 or older, **or**
    - » A person 21 or older.
  - ◇ In addition, you can have any number of your immediate family members and one other person ride with you.

Restrictions will be extended 6 months if:

- You are convicted of a moving traffic violation (including failure to fasten seat belt), **or**
- You violate any of the restrictions, **or**
- Your license is revoked or suspended for any reason.

**Note:** The 9-month term of the passenger and time-of-day restriction stops while your operating privilege is suspended or revoked. It resumes again when your operating privilege is reinstated.

## The skills test

You must schedule an appointment for a driving skills (road) test. Schedule your appointment online at [wisconsin.dmv.gov/online](http://wisconsin.dmv.gov/online) or call (608) 266-2353.

Prior to the skills test, the examiner will conduct a safety inspection on the vehicle used for the test. The following items will be inspected and must be present and in safe operating condition:

- Brake lights
- Brakes
- Current license plate
- Defroster (if needed for test conditions)
- Directional lights
- Doors
- Exhaust system
- Headlights
- Horn
- License plate light
- Mirrors
- Safety belts
- Speedometer
- Tail lights
- Tires

- Windows
- Windshield wipers (if needed for test conditions)

During the skills test, the examiner will tell you where to drive. You will:

- Follow other traffic
- Change lanes
- Pass
- Back up
- Parallel park
- Make a Y-turn
- Pull over to the side of the road and stop
- Turn left or right on divided highways, two-lane or one way roads
- Move from a parked position onto the roadway

The examiner will score your attention and alertness, how well you obey traffic rules, handle the car (including shifting if the car has a manual shift), share space and communicate with other users of the road.

## KEEPING THE DRIVER LICENSE

In order to keep your driver license, you must drive safely at all times. You can **lose your driving privilege** for:

- A conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Refusing to be tested for alcohol or other drugs if you are asked to do so by a police officer.
- Leaving the scene of a crash in which you are involved, without identifying yourself.
- Failing to notify law enforcement of a reportable crash in which you are involved.

- Giving false information when you apply for a driver license.
- Failing to settle a financial judgment made against you for damages resulting from a motor vehicle crash.
- Attempting to change the information on your driver license.
- Failing to appear for a re-examination when requested to do so by the DMV.
- Using a motor vehicle to commit a felony or causing the death of someone in a motor vehicle crash.
- Having too many points on your driving record.
- Letting someone else use your driver license.
- Using someone else's driver license.

## Point system

Your driver record has zero points until you are convicted of violating certain traffic laws. Upon conviction, you are given demerit points which become part of your driving record. Probationary license holders and those who do not have any type of license (no matter what age) including those who hold only an ID card, will have their points doubled on their second and subsequent convictions.

If you get 6 demerit points within any 12-month period, you will receive a warning letter. The letter will tell you how you can reduce your points by 3 by completing an approved traffic safety course. If you get 12 or more demerit points within any 12-month period, your driving privilege will be suspended or revoked.

## Habitual offender

If you are convicted of 4 or more major traffic violations or 12 or more minor violations within 5 years, the DMV will declare you a habitual offender. (For information about points and major vs. minor violations, visit [wisconsindmv.gov](http://wisconsindmv.gov).) Your driving privilege will be revoked for a period of 5 years. Habitual offenders may be eligible for an occupational license after a two-year waiting period.

## Occupational license

If your license is suspended or revoked, visit [wisconsindmv.gov](http://wisconsindmv.gov) or call (608) 261-0368 to check your eligibility for an occupational license. If eligible, you will need to provide **proof of financial responsibility**. Provide proof by filing an SR22 insurance certificate or showing that you have other financial means to cover any damage resulting from any future traffic crash. An occupational license allows you to drive up to 12 hours a day and up to 60 hours a week.

## Reinstating a revoked or suspended license

A **revoked** license can be reinstated after:

- The period of revocation is over, **and**
- You file proof of financial responsibility with the Division of Motor Vehicles, **and**

**Note:** Proof must be filed for 3 years from the date you are eligible to reinstate.

- You present proof of identity (a skills test may be required if you have been suspended or revoked for 8 years or more), **and**
- You pay a reinstatement fee.

A **suspended** license can be reinstated at the end of the suspension period after a reinstatement fee is paid.

## Driver license renewal

Your probationary license will be valid for 2 years from your next birthday. You may renew your probationary license up to 90 days before it expires. Upon renewal you will be issued a regular license that will be valid up to 8 years.

## Motor vehicle liability insurance requirement

No person may operate a motor vehicle in Wisconsin unless the owner or operator of the vehicle has liability insurance in effect for the vehicle being operated.

One must present proof of insurance (such as a valid insurance card) when requested by a law enforcement officer.

The liability insurance must be issued by an insurer authorized to conduct motor vehicle liability business in Wisconsin if the vehicle is registered in Wisconsin. A driver of a vehicle registered in another state may provide proof from an insurance company in the state where the vehicle is registered.

Insurance coverage and limitations are the responsibility of the driver and owner of the vehicle if the proof of insurance does not list the driver or the specific vehicle being operated.

Law enforcement may request proof of insurance at any traffic stop or crash. Failure to have insurance could result in up to a \$500 fine. Failure to have proof of insurance when requested could result in a \$10 fine. Any person who fraudulently represents that they carry the required



liability insurance or provides fraudulent documents as proof could face fines of up to \$5,000. You may not be stopped by law enforcement solely for purposes of determining proof of insurance.

Proof of insurance includes, but is not limited to, a valid insurance card showing coverage levels and dates, a valid SR-22 insurance certificate, a letter from an insurance company on company letterhead explaining the benefits, a valid self-insurance certificate issued by the DOT, proof of bond or securities filed with the DOT, proof the vehicle is owned or leased by the US Government, Wisconsin or any other state, or any county or municipality in Wisconsin or any other state.

You are not required to show proof of insurance when you apply for, or renew, your license plates nor when you apply for, or renew, your driver license. You do not have to send insurance information to the DMV unless you are asked for the information. *Section 344.61–344.67 Wis. Stats.*

## **BEFORE YOU DRIVE**

Your safety, and that of the public, depends on what you do before driving, including adjusting the seat and mirrors, using safety belts, checking your vehicle, maintaining a clear view and securing items in and on the vehicle.

### **Plan ahead and save fuel**

When planning a trip, running errands, etc., you may wish to consider alternatives to driving. To help you save fuel and wear and tear on your vehicle:

- Take public transportation, use car pools, ride share, bike or walk whenever possible.
- Avoid driving during heavy traffic periods. Stop-and-go driving causes extra wear and tear on the vehicle (and you).
- Start slowly; slow down gradually and avoid unnecessary braking.
- Plan, and then combine your trips. Make a list of the things you need and the places you need to go. Go to as many places as possible on any one trip. Try to reduce the number of places you need to go. This will cut down on the number of trips you need to make.
- Call ahead to make sure they have what you need or what you are picking up is ready.

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

### **Check the vehicle**

It is the duty of the driver to make certain the vehicle they drive is safe to operate. How safely you can drive starts with the condition of the vehicle you are driving. A vehicle that is not in good condition is more likely to break down or cause a collision and costs more to run than one that is well maintained. If a vehicle is in an unsafe condition, you might not be able to get out of an emergency situation when you need to. A vehicle in good condition can give you an extra margin of safety when you need it. Your vehicle may be required to have an emission inspection at an authorized



inspection station. The DMV will notify you if and when an inspection is needed.

You should follow your vehicle owner's manual for routine maintenance. Some maintenance you can do yourself and some must be done by a qualified mechanic.

A few simple checks can help prevent trouble on the road.

**Braking system:** It is very dangerous to drive if your brakes are not working properly. If they do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, smell like they are burning, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

**Lights:** Make sure turn signals, brake lights, tail lights and head lights are operating properly. These should be checked from the outside of the vehicle. Brake lights alert other road users that you are stopping and turn signals let them know you will be turning.

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

**Windshield and wipers:** Damaged glass can break more easily in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. Have a damaged windshield replaced.

Windshield wipers remove rain and snow from the windshield. Some vehicles also have wipers for rear windows and headlights. Make sure all wipers are in good working condition. If the blades are not clearing water very well, replace them.

**Tires:** Worn or bald tires can increase your stopping distance and make

turning more difficult when the road is wet. Unbalanced tires and low pressure cause faster tire wear, poor gas mileage and make the vehicle harder to steer and stop. If your vehicle bounces, the steering wheel shakes or the vehicle pulls to one side, have a mechanic check it.

Worn tires can cause hydroplaning (riding on top of water on the road) and increase the chance of having a flat tire. Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check your vehicle owner's manual for the proper pressure. Check the tire tread with a penny.

Stick the penny "head" first into the tread. If the tread does not come at least to Lincoln's head ( $2/32$ "), the tire is unsafe and you should replace it.

**Steering system:** If the steering is not working properly, it is difficult to control the direction of the vehicle. If your vehicle is hard to turn, "wanders," or does not turn when the steering wheel is first turned, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

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

**Exhaust system:** The exhaust system helps reduce the noise from the engine, helps cool the hot gases coming from the engine, and moves these gases to the rear of the vehicle. Carbon monoxide gases from a leaky exhaust system can cause death inside a vehicle in a very short time. Never run the engine in a closed garage. If you

sit in a vehicle with the engine running for any length of time, open a window. Some exhaust leaks are easily heard but many are not. That is why it is important to have the exhaust system checked periodically.

**Engine:** An engine that runs poorly can lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies. It may not start, may get poor fuel economy, pollute the air and could quit when you are on the road, causing a problem for you and other traffic. Follow the procedures recommended in your owner's manual for maintenance.

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

**Horn:** As a warning device, the horn could save your life. If your horn doesn't work, get it fixed. Only use your horn as a warning to others.

## Clean glass surfaces

It is important that you are able to see clearly in mirrors and through the windows and windshield. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Keep your windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see.
- Keep your windshield washer container full. Use windshield washer antifreeze when the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Keep the inside of your windows clean, especially if anyone has been smoking in your vehicle.

Smoking causes a film to build up on the inside of the glass.

- Clear snow, ice or frost from all windows (front, sides and back) before driving.
- Do not hang things from your mirror or clutter up your windshield with decals. Besides being illegal, they could block your view.
- Keep your headlights, backup, brake and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can reduce the light and your visibility by up to 50%.

## Adjust seat and mirrors

You should always check the position of the seat and mirrors before you start to drive. Make any adjustments before you move the vehicle.

- Adjust the seat so you are in a comfortable driving position and can clearly see the road. If necessary, use a seat cushion.
- Adjust the rear view mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view mirror and to the sides with the side mirrors. A good adjustment for the side mirrors is to set them so that when you lean slightly backward, you can see the rear corners of your vehicle. Even though you have your side mirrors set this way, you still have "blind spots".
- If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set for the time of day you are driving.
- Head restraints are designed to prevent whiplash if you are hit from behind. They should be

adjusted so the head restraint contacts the back of your head.

## Use safety belts and child restraints

Wisconsin law requires you and your passengers to wear safety belts. If you are under GDL and are convicted of failure to fasten seat belt, your GDL restrictions will be extended for an additional 6 months.

Before you begin driving, always fasten your safety belts and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints.

It is important for you and your passengers to use safety belts. Studies have shown that if you are in a crash while using safety belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. Protect yourself by buckling up every time you get into a vehicle, whether you are the driver or a passenger.

If your vehicle has an automatic shoulder belt, or two-part safety belt system, be sure to wear both the lap belt and the shoulder belt. If you wear only one belt and you are in a collision, you could slide out of it and be hurt or killed. Wearing both belts greatly reduces your risk of injury.

The lap belt should fit snugly across your hip bones just under your stomach. The shoulder belt should be worn across the chest. It should be snug enough that you can fit your fist between the belt and your chest. Never put the shoulder belt under your arm or leave it so loose it hangs over your arm.

In addition to protecting you from injury, safety belts help you keep control of the vehicle when you are the driver. If you are struck from the side or make a quick turn, the force could push you

sideways. You cannot steer the vehicle if you are not behind the wheel.

Safety belts should be worn even if your vehicle is equipped with air bags. While air bags are good protection against hitting the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield, they do not protect you if you are hit from the rear or side (unless your vehicle also has side-impact air bags), or if the vehicle rolls over. An air bag will not keep you behind the wheel in these situations, but a safety belt will.

Generally, children must be properly restrained in a child safety seat until they reach age 4 and in a booster seat until age 8. The law includes the following four-step progression for effective child safety protection in vehicles.



**Rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat\*** is required when the child:

- Is less than 1 year-old or
- Weighs less than 20 pounds.

**Forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat\*** is required when the child:

- Is at least 1 year-old but less than 4 years-old
- Weights at least 20 pounds but less than 40 pounds.

**\*Child safety seat must be in the back seat if the vehicle is equipped with a back seat.**

**Booster seat** is required when the child:

- Is at least 4 years-old but less than 8 years-old
- Weighs at least 40 pounds but less than 80 pounds
- Is not 57 inches (4 feet, 9 inches) or taller.



**Safety belt** is required when the child:

- Is 8 years-old or older or
- Weighs 80 or more pounds or
- Is 57 inches or taller.

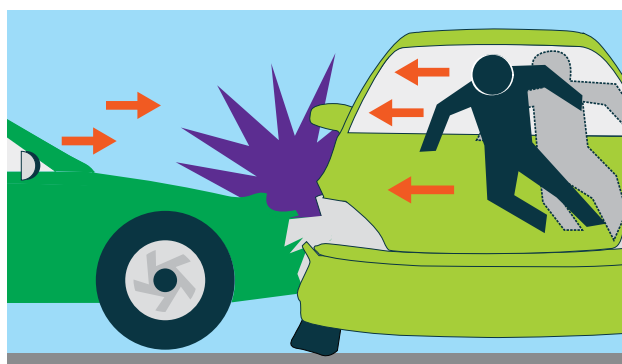
If because of age, weight or height a child falls into more than one of the four categories, the child must be transported according to the requirements of the more protective category listed above.

Never secure a child in the front passenger seat, especially if your vehicle has an air bag. If you are in a crash and the bag deploys, your child could be injured. Some vehicles have a switch which de-activates

the passenger side air bag; however, studies show children are still safer in the **rear** seat. A number of organizations will lend you a child safety device if you are unable to afford one. For further information, call (800) 261-9467.

A child at least 4 years old who cannot be properly restrained in a safety belt because of a physical or medical condition may be exempt from the booster seat and safety belt laws.

There is no personal needs exemption allowing a child to be removed from a safety restraint to attend to the child's personal needs, such as feeding or diapering, while the vehicle is moving.



Some people may have misinformation about using safety belts. Here are some facts:

**Your safety belt helps keep you securely in place in the event of a crash and better able to escape the vehicle if necessary.**

It takes less than a second to undo a safety belt. Crashes in which a vehicle catches fire or sinks in deep water seldom happen. Even if that were to occur, however, your safety belt helps protect you from crashing into things inside your vehicle and being knocked unconscious during the crash.

Your chances to escape the vehicle are much better when you are conscious.

**Your safety belt helps protect you on long trips, short trips, all trips.**

Many traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. About 20% occur on roads posted at less than 45 mph. Your safety belt helps protect you no matter the distance of your trip.

**Your safety belt helps protect you from being thrown out of the vehicle in a crash.**

Your chances of not being killed or injured in a crash are much better if you stay inside the vehicle. Safety belts help keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle, into the path of another vehicle, onto the road surface, into trees, posts, etc., where serious injury is caused by this second impact.

**If your vehicle gets hit from the side, your safety belt helps keep you from being thrown across the car into the crash point.**

When a vehicle is struck from the side, it will move sideways. Everything in the vehicle that is not fastened down, including the passengers, will tend to be thrown **toward** the point of crash. Your safety belt helps keep you from being thrown into the crash point.

**Your safety belt helps protect you when you cannot protect yourself, even when traveling at slow speeds.**

At a slow speed of 25 mph, the force of a head-on crash is the same as pedaling a bicycle full speed into a brick wall or diving off a three-story building onto the sidewalk. No one can ‘brace’ oneself for that. But your safety belt will help brace and protect you—but only when you wear it!

## **RULES OF THE ROAD**

Traffic laws establish where, when and how fast you may drive. These laws form the “rules of the road” and help to keep traffic moving safely. Rules of the road include traffic control devices, right-of-way and parking rules.

### **Traffic control devices**

Traffic control devices include traffic signals, signs and pavement markings. Traffic control can also be provided by law enforcement, highway personnel or school crossing guards. You must obey directions from these persons, even if their directions are different than what traffic lights and signs say.



## TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Traffic signals are lights that tell you when or where to stop or go. They are usually at intersections and are red, yellow and green, from top to bottom. Some locations may have single yellow or red lights.

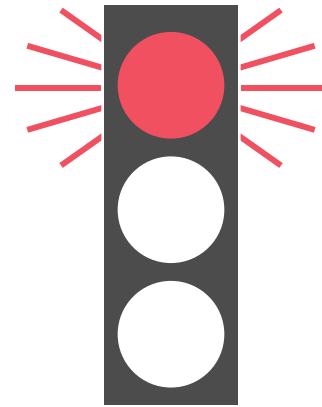


A **steady RED** traffic light means come to a full stop. You must wait until the traffic light turns green and there is no crossing traffic before you may go.

If it is safe to do so, you may turn right on red if no sign prohibits it. When the roadway has two right-turn lanes, you may also turn right on red from the left most right-turn lane into the available lane that is 2nd to the right most lane for traffic moving to the right.

You may turn left on red if you are turning from a one-way on to a one-way street.

When turning on red, stop first, yield to all traffic including pedestrians, bicyclists and cars and then proceed safely, staying in your lane.



A **flashing RED** traffic light means the same as a stop sign. You must come to a full stop and then may go when it is safe to do so.

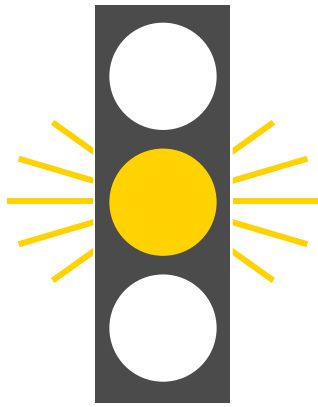


A **RED arrow** means the same thing as a red traffic light in Wisconsin.



A **steady YELLOW** traffic light means the traffic light is about to change to red. You must stop if it is safe to do so. If you are in the intersection when the yellow light comes on, do not stop but continue through the intersection.

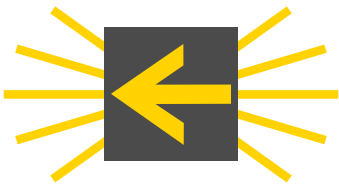




A **flashing YELLOW** traffic light means slow down, check for cross traffic, and proceed with caution.



If you are turning in the direction of the arrow, a **YELLOW arrow** means you should stop if it is safe to do so.



A **flashing YELLOW arrow** means turns are permitted but you must first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians, then proceed with caution.



A **steady GREEN** traffic light means you can go through the intersection but you must yield to emergency vehicles and others as required by law. If you are stopped and then the light turns green, you must allow crossing traffic to clear the intersection before you go ahead. If you are turning left, a steady green traffic light means you may turn, but only when safe to do so. Oncoming traffic has the right-of-way. Be alert for signs that prohibit left turns. When turning right or left, watch for pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle.



A **GREEN arrow** means you can turn in the direction of the arrow. There should be no oncoming or crossing traffic while the arrow is green. Remember to watch for pedestrians.

**If a traffic signal loses power and malfunctions, proceed as if the signal were a stop sign.**

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

Traffic signs tell you about traffic rules, hazards, where you are, how to get to where you want to go and where services are located. Each type of sign is identified by its **shape** and **color**.

### Warning signs

These signs are yellow with **black lettering or symbols** and most are **diamond shaped**. They warn you about a special situation or that a hazard is ahead. Some common warning signs are below.



Left to right: Intersection/Cross Road, Divided Highway, Slippery When Wet.



Left to right: Signal Ahead, Deer Crossing, Sharp Turn to the Left



Left to right: Right Lane Ends, Hill, Merge



Left to right: 2-way Traffic, Stop Ahead, Curve to the Right



Left to right: Roundabout Ahead, Pedestrian Crossing



School Crossing Signs: new signs may be fluorescent green

## Regulatory signs

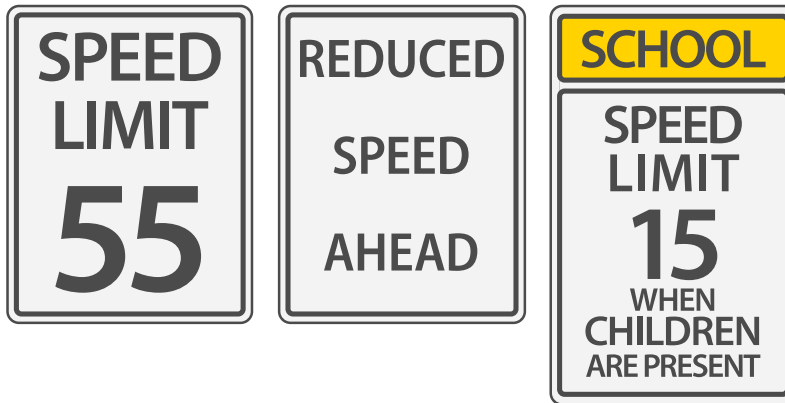
These signs are **square, rectangular, or have a special shape** and are **usually white or red with black, red, white or green letters or symbols**. They tell you the requirements for stopping, yielding, traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed limits, parking and other special situations.



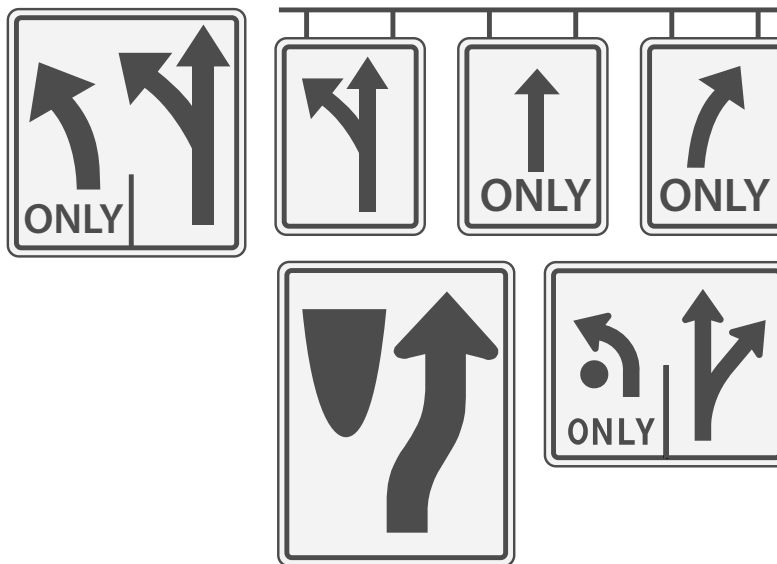
Some regulatory signs have a red circle with a red slash over a symbol. These signs prohibit certain actions, i.e., no right turn, no left turn, no U-turn, etc.



**DO NOT ENTER** is a square sign with a white horizontal line inside a red ball that means you cannot enter. You will see this sign at openings to roadways that you should not enter such as exit ramps where you would be going in the wrong direction, in crossovers on divided roadways and on one-way streets.



**SPEED LIMIT SIGNS** tell you the maximum speed allowed, the minimum speed required, or of a change in speed limit. The maximum limit should be driven only in ideal driving conditions. You must reduce your speed when conditions require it. For example, you should reduce your speed for curves and when the roadway is slippery (during rain, snow, icy conditions), or when it is foggy and difficult to see clearly down the road. Some high speed roads have minimum speed limits and you are required to travel at least this fast so you are not a hazard to other drivers. If the minimum posted speed limit is too fast for you, you should use another road.



**LANE USE CONTROL SIGNS** tell you where you can turn or what direction you can turn from a certain lane. They often use an **arrow symbol**. These signs may be located on the side of the road or hanging over the lane of travel.

The 'dot' to the left of the arrow represents the island in the center of a roundabout. It shows that the driver is required to drive counter-clockwise around the island in the center to make a left turn.

Sometimes arrows are also painted on the road.



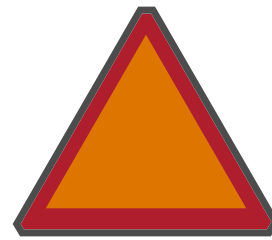
Pavement markings, along with the optional **NO PASSING ZONE SIGN** show where you can not pass. A yellow pennant no passing zone sign facing you on the left side of the road indicates the beginning of a no passing zone. Passing areas are based on how far ahead you can see. Where it is permitted to pass, you may do so only if it is safe.



A **STOP SIGN** has **eight sides** and is **red with white letters**. You must come to a **full stop**. You must wait until crossing vehicles and pedestrians have cleared your path. You can go only when it is safe to do so. If you cannot see traffic from your first stop, slowly move ahead and stop again **before** entering the intersection. Check for cross traffic and pedestrians before you go.



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



A **SLOW MOVING VEHICLE SIGN** is **reflective orange triangle** on the rear of a vehicle means it may be traveling less than 25 mph. You may see this sign on construction equipment and, in rural areas, on farm vehicles or horse-drawn wagons or carriages.

**Note:** The Amish are not required to use this symbol for religious reasons nor are bicyclists. However, both should still have reflective material on the rear of the vehicle. Slow down when approaching a slow-moving vehicle and, if possible, move over to the left to pass it.



## Railroad crossing warning signs

**RAILROAD CROSSING WARNING SIGNS** warn you that a train may be near. **Never** try to beat a train across the tracks. **Never** start to cross railroad tracks if you will have to stop on the tracks because there isn't room for your vehicle on the far side. It is wise not to shift gears when crossing railroad tracks, just in case your vehicle might stall. Remember that trains are large, heavy and may be moving faster than they seem.

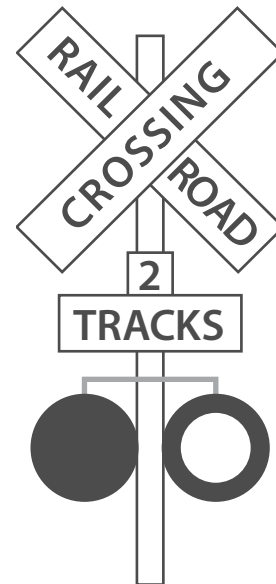


A **ROUND YELLOW WARNING** sign with an “X” symbol and **black “RR” letters** is placed along the road before you get to a railroad crossing.

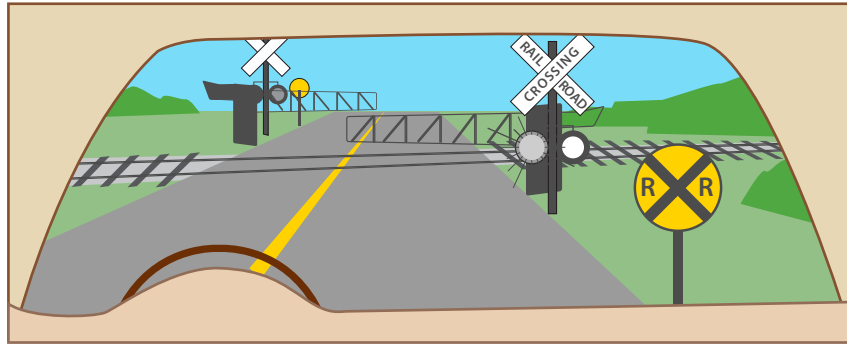


A **WHITE, X-SHAPED SIGN** or “**CROSSBUCK**” with “Railroad Crossing” on it is located at the railroad crossing. This sign has the same meaning as a “Yield” sign. You must yield to crossing trains.

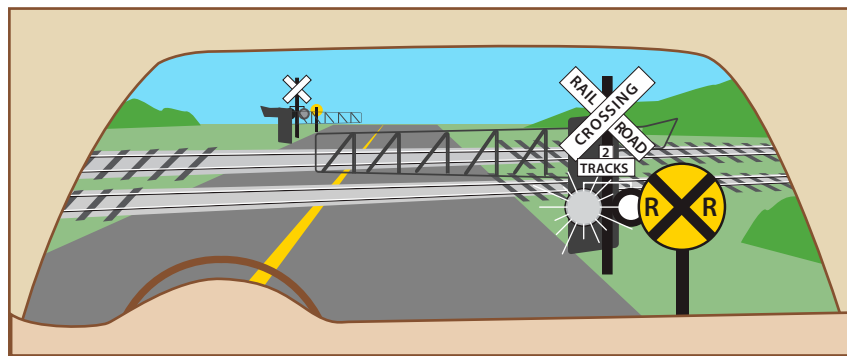
Crossings may have an “exempt” or “tracks out-of-service” sign. “Tracks out-of-service” means the crossing is no longer used by trains. “Exempt” means certain vehicles are not required to stop before crossing tracks marked “exempt” or “tracks out-of-service.” However, be cautious and look both ways before crossing these tracks.



At some crossings, along with the crossbuck sign, you will see side-by-side lights that will flash alternately when a train is approaching. When the lights are flashing, you must stop and wait until the train has passed and the track is clear.



At some crossings there is also a crossing gate that will lower when a train is coming. Do not drive around the gate or under a raising or lowering gate. Some crossings also have a bell or a horn that will sound. Do not cross until the bell or horn has stopped.



Crossings with more than one train track will often post a sign showing the number of tracks. These signs warn you there is more than one track and there may be more than one train crossing. Not all crossings with more than one train track will have these signs, so it is important to check for more than one track before crossing.



A blue **REPORT PROBLEM OR EMERGENCY SIGN** is at every highway-railroad crossing. You will see the sign either on the black and white cross buck or on the metal box near the crossing. The sign provides a telephone number to call and report unsafe conditions such as:

- A car or truck is stuck on the railroad tracks
- Warning signal or crossing gate does not work at a railroad crossing

Use the sign to report any unsafe condition at a railroad crossing.

## Construction signs



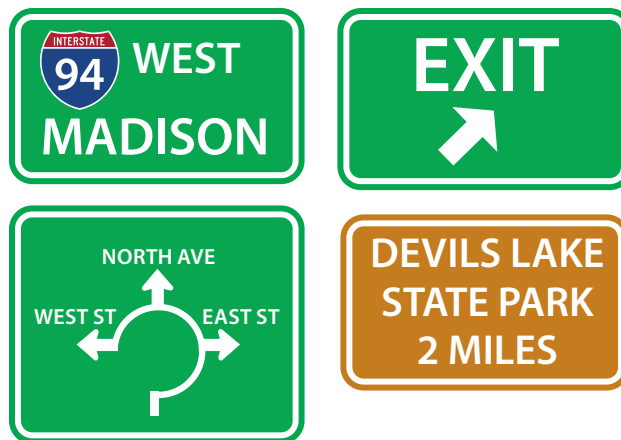
Left to right: Road Workers Ahead, Road Work Ahead, Flagger Ahead

These construction, maintenance or emergency operations signs are generally **diamond or rectangular** shaped, **orange with black letters or symbols** and warn you about people working on or near the roadway. These warnings include reduced speed, detours, slow moving construction equipment and lane closures. In work areas, traffic may be controlled by a person with a sign or flag. You must obey these persons.

**Traffic fines double in work areas.**

## Guide signs

Guide signs help you navigate and inform you of services available. Some common types of Guide signs are:



Destination signs

**DESTINATION SIGNS** are **square or rectangular** and are **green or brown with white lettering**. They show directions and distance to various places such as cities, airports, and state lines, or to special areas such as parks, historical areas or museums.



Left to right: Service signs:  
Disabled Access, Hospital

**SERVICE SIGNS** are **square or rectangular** and are **blue with white letters or symbols**. They show the location of various services like rest areas, gas stations, campgrounds or hospitals. Some disabled signs are **white with green letters** and the **backgrounds on symbols are blue**.



The shape and color of **ROUTE NUMBER SIGNS** indicate the type of roadway: Interstate, U.S., state, city or county road. When planning a trip, use a road map to determine your route. During the trip, follow the route signs to help you get to your destination.



### Blue **REFERENCE MARKERS**

(sometimes called Enhancement Reference Signs) are designed to improve emergency responses to highway incidents. They help with faster emergency response, faster traffic incident clearance, fewer crash related delays and fewer secondary crashes.

Reference markers are installed on the right side or in the median. They may be placed every one to two-tenths of a mile.

Each reference marker includes the direction of travel, route number, and mile number. The sign in the example above means:

**W:** You are westbound

**12:** You are on Highway 12

**254/2:** You are at mile marker 254.2

### **PAVEMENT MARKINGS**

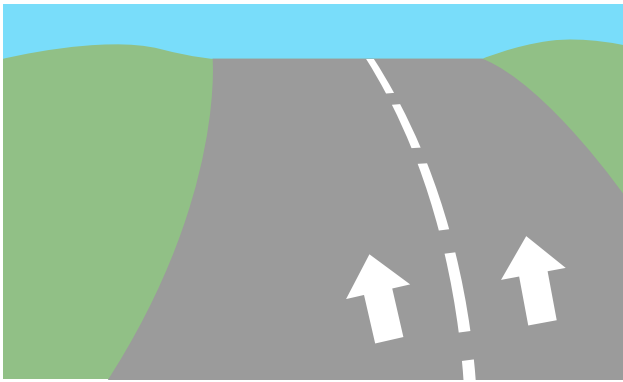
Lines and symbols on the roadway divide it into lanes, tell you when you may pass other vehicles or change lanes, and which lanes to use for turns. They define pedestrian walkways and show where you must stop for signs or traffic signals. **Line colors** tell you if you are on a one-way or two-way roadway.

## Edge and lane lines

Lines along the side of the road show you where the edge of the road is located. A **solid white** line indicates the **right edge of the traffic lane** on a road. A **solid or dashed yellow** line indicates the **left edge of traffic lanes going in your direction**. If you ever find yourself with **yellow to your right** and **white to your left**, you are going the **wrong way**.

## White lane markings

Multiple lanes of travel in the **same direction** are separated by **white lane** markings. You will find white lane markings on freeways and one-way streets, for example.



Dashed white lines between lanes of traffic mean you may cross the lines to pass or change lanes if it is safe to do so. A solid white line between lanes of traffic means you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes. You should not cross the line except to avoid a hazard or unless you are turning within the next block.

## Crosswalks and stop lines

Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians may cross the roadway. Crosswalks can be at intersections

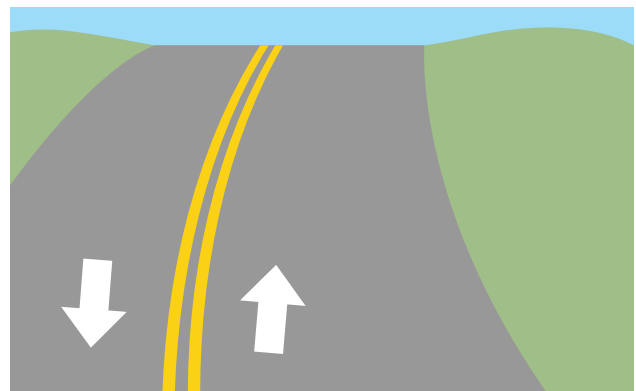
or in the middle of the block. You must yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk (marked or unmarked).

Proceed cautiously when approaching a crosswalk on multi-lane roads, especially when one lane of traffic has slowed or stopped.

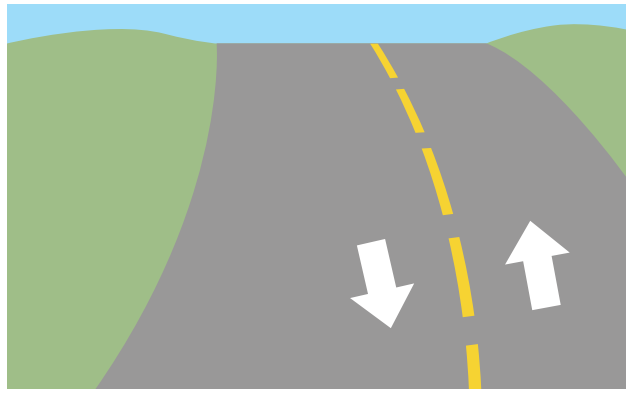
When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before the front of your vehicle reaches the stop line. If there is no marked stop line, stop before entering the marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection. If there is no marked stop line nor a marked or unmarked crosswalk, stop at a point nearest the intersecting roadway where you have a clear view of approaching traffic, but before entering the intersection.

## Yellow lane markings

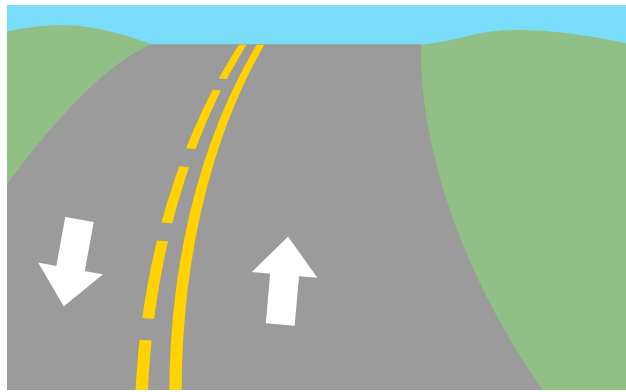
Lines separating traffic moving in **opposite directions** are yellow.



Two solid yellow lines between lanes of traffic means neither side can pass. Exceptions: 1.) You may cross a solid yellow line to turn into a driveway if it is safe to do so. 2.) You may pass a vehicle, **except an implement of husbandry or an agricultural commercial vehicle**, traveling at less than half the speed limit at the place of passing if it is safe to do so.

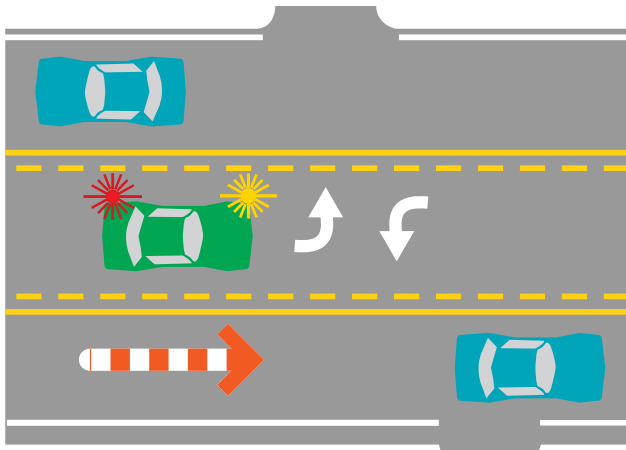


Dashed yellow lines mean you may pass, but watch for oncoming traffic.



Some passing zones have signs that tell you where you cannot pass. Where there is both a solid and a dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic, you may not pass if the solid yellow line is on your side. If the dashed line is on your side, you may pass if it is safe to do so.

### Shared center lane

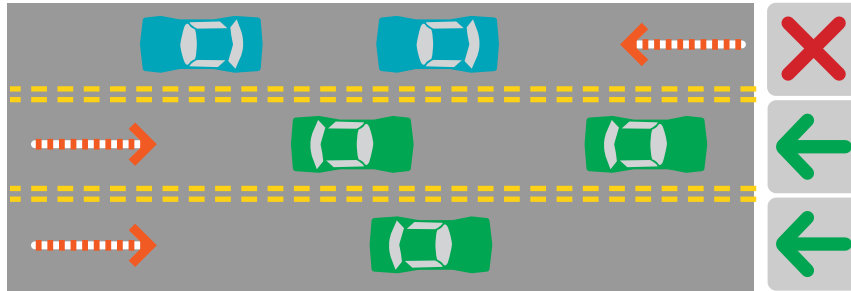


Shared center lanes are reserved for making left turns (or U-turns when they are permitted) by vehicles traveling in either direction. On the pavement, left-turn arrows for traffic in one direction alternate with left-turn arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by solid yellow and dashed yellow lines. Be sure you enter the lane only if it is safe to do so.



## OTHER LANE CONTROLS

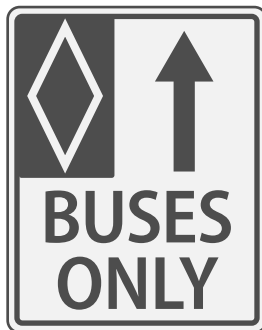
### Reversible lanes



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

### Reserved lanes

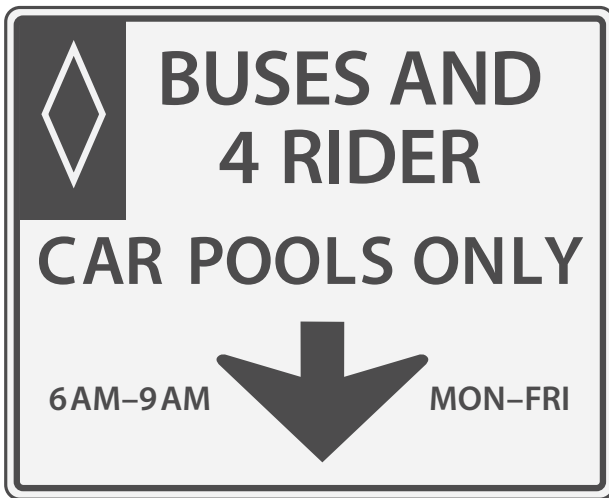
On various roadways, one or more lanes may be reserved for special vehicles. Reserved lanes are marked by signs stating the lane is reserved for special use. They often have a white diamond posted at the side of the road and/or painted on the road surface. It is illegal to travel in one of these lanes unless operating that type of vehicle, or unless you must turn across the reserved lane in the next half of a block.



“Transit” or “buses” means the lane is for bus use only.



“Bikes” means the lane is reserved for bicycles.

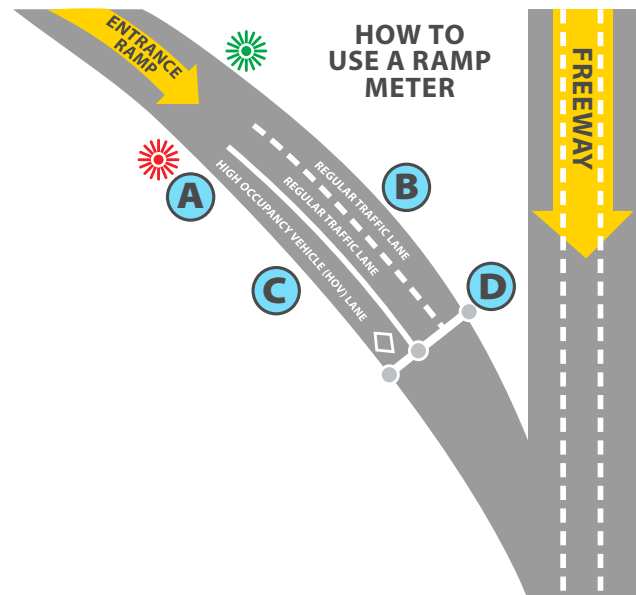


High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) lanes are reserved for car pools and vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs say how many people must be in the vehicle as well as the days and hours to which it applies. For example, “HOV 4” means there must be at least four people in the vehicle.

## METERED RAMPS



Some freeway entrance ramps have traffic signals that function as ramp meters. Ramp meters more evenly space the number of vehicles merging with traffic already on the freeway. This helps to reduce congestion and the stop and go traffic flow at freeway entrance points.



## How to use a ramp meter

### A. Ramp meter warning sign

As you enter a metered ramp, you will see a “Ramp Metered When Flashing” sign. If the sign’s yellow light is not flashing, you can merge into traffic without stopping or slowing down.

If the sign’s yellow light is flashing, it means the ramp meter is operating. You should follow these steps when the ramp meter is operating.

### B. Regular traffic lanes

Choose a traffic lane.

### C. HOV lane

Certain vehicles can use the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) bypass lane on the ramp. HOV lanes are for any vehicle with two or more people, or motorcycles, buses and emergency vehicles. HOVs must still obey the traffic signal in their dedicated lane. Generally, HOV lanes have little or no waiting. If you are traveling alone, you can be ticketed for using that lane.

### *D. Stop line and signals*

At the ramp signal, you should pull completely up to the white stop line so your tires will trigger the sensors in the pavement to change the light from red to green. Each lane on the ramp has its own traffic signal. The traffic signals will alternate between green and red. They will allow one vehicle to pass through for each green light. You should not try to squeeze through with someone else during one change to green. If you disobey a ramp signal, you can be ticketed.

### *Other features*

To keep traffic on the ramp from backing up onto local streets, sensors in the pavement will detect if a long line of vehicles is forming on the ramp. The sensor will trigger a computer to speed up the green light. This will shorten the wait time at the ramp meter. Cameras installed on the ramps help to monitor traffic flow or, if needed, to assist emergency personnel in responding to a crash.

## **RULES FOR DRIVING ROUNDABOUTS**

[wisconsinroundabouts.gov](http://wisconsinroundabouts.gov)

### **General information for all roundabouts**

Roundabouts are becoming more common in the U.S. because they provide safer and more efficient traffic flow than standard intersections. By keeping traffic moving one-way in a counterclockwise direction, there are fewer conflict points and traffic flows smoothly.

Crash statistics show that roundabouts reduce fatal crashes about 90%, reduce injury crashes about 75%, and reduce

overall crashes about 35%, when compared to other types of intersection control.

When driving a roundabout, the same general rules apply as for maneuvering through any other type of intersection.

### **Truck apron**

Large vehicles need more space when driving in a roundabout. A truck apron is a paved area on the inside of the roundabout for the rear wheels of large trucks to use when turning, sometimes referred to as off-tracking. Truck aprons are not to be used by cars, SUVs or pickup trucks.

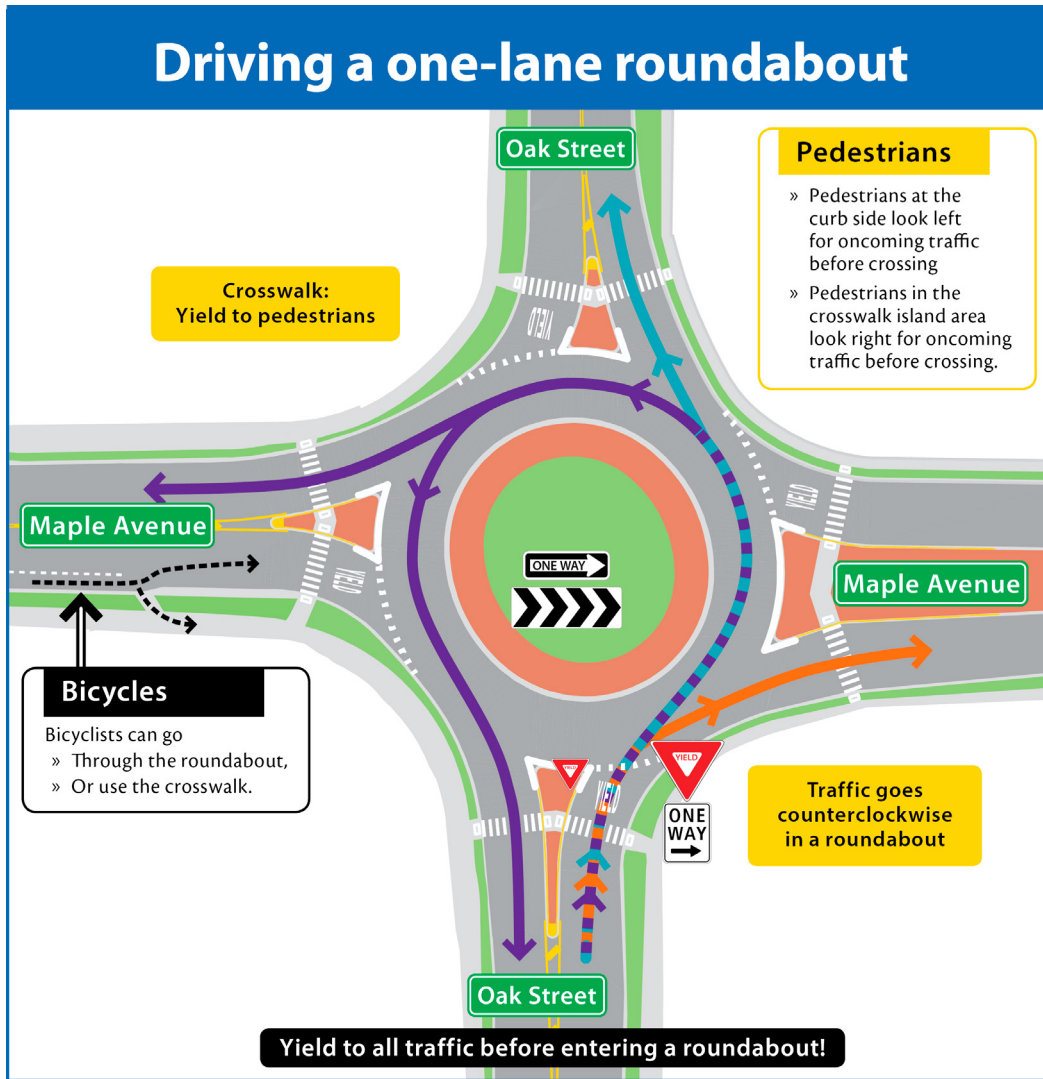
### **Steps for driving a roundabout**

1. Slow down. Obey traffic signs.
2. Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Yield to traffic on your left already in the roundabout.
4. Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic.
5. Keep your speed low within the roundabout.
6. As you approach your exit, turn on your right turn signal.
7. Yield to pedestrians and bicycles as you exit.

### **Emergency vehicles in the roundabout**

- Always yield to emergency vehicles.
- If you have not entered the roundabout, pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- If you have already entered the roundabout, safely exit the roundabout at the next right, then pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass.
- Avoid stopping in the roundabout.

## Driving a one-lane roundabout



This example above shows the traffic movement patterns through a one-lane roundabout.

## Driving a roundabout with two or more lanes

### Lane choice is critical at roundabouts

**Crosswalk:**  
Yield to pedestrians

**Maple Avenue**

**Oak Street**

**Oak Street**

**Maple Avenue**

**Bicycles**  
Bicyclists can continue  
» Through the roundabout taking the travel lane, or  
» May exit the roadway and use the crosswalk.

**Traffic circulates counterclockwise in a roundabout**

**Choose your lane and yield to all traffic in both lanes before entering roundabout!**

**Pedestrians**  
» Pedestrians at the curb side look left for oncoming traffic before crossing  
» Pedestrians within the crosswalk island area look right for oncoming traffic before crossing.

**Left turns/U-turns: use left lane**

**Going straight: follow the pavement markings, arrows or signs**

**Right turns: use right lane**

**Black and white signs:**  
» At the side of the road

- » Right lane is for right turns only.
- » Left lane is for left turns, U-turns, or through traffic only.
- » Right lane is for right turns or through traffic only.
- » Left lane is for left turns, U-turns, or through traffic only.
- » Right lane is for right turns or through traffic.
- » Left lane is for left turns or U-turns only.

**Choose the proper lane before entering.** As you get closer to the roundabout entrance, it is very important to observe the signs and arrows to determine which lane to use before entering a roundabout. Black and white signs on the side of the road and white arrows on the road will show the correct lane to use. In general, if you want to make a left turn, you should be in the left lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as left turn lanes. If you want to make a right turn, you should be in the right lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as right turn lanes. If you want to go straight, observe the signs and arrows to see what lane is correct.

### Left turns/U-turns: use left lane

- When approaching the roundabout, use the left lane, or other lanes that are signed and marked as a left turn lane.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Yield to all traffic on your left before entering the roundabout.
- Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic.
- Stay in your lane.
- Use your right turn signal to exit the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk at the exit.



## Going straight: use right lane or left lane

- When approaching the roundabout, choose the correct lane for your desired exit.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Yield to all traffic on your left before entering the roundabout.
- Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic.
- Stay in your lane.
- Use your right turn signal to exit the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk at the exit.

## Right turns: use right lane

- When approaching the roundabout, use the right lane, or other lanes that are signed and marked as a right turn lane.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Yield to all traffic on your left before entering the roundabout.
- Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic.
- Stay in your lane.
- Use your right turn signal to exit the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk at the exit.

## Large vehicles

- Large vehicles need more space in a roundabout.
- All drivers should be cautious and avoid driving next to or passing large trucks while approaching and maneuvering through a roundabout.

- A truck apron is a paved area inside a roundabout.
- It is for the rear wheels of large trucks to use when turning.
- Trucks may cross into other lanes or onto the truck apron.
- Truck aprons are not to be used by cars, SUVs or pickup trucks.

## GENERAL RULES ABOUT TRAFFIC LANES

When there are no signs or markings to control the use of lanes, there are rules that indicate which lane is to be used. These rules cover general driving, passing and turning.

### General driving

It is illegal and unsafe to back a vehicle in any travel lane unless you are parallel parking or completing a Y-turn. Drivers do not expect a vehicle to be backing toward them and may not realize it until it is too late. If you miss your turn or exit on a freeway, do not back up. Go on to the next exit where you can exit and re-enter the freeway to go back to the exit you missed.

Do not stop in travel lanes for any reason (confusion, breakdowns, letting out a passenger). Keep moving until you can safely pull off the road.

On a road with two or more lanes traveling in the same direction, stay in the right lane except to pass. On a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction, stay as far to the right as practical.

As a general rule, never drive on an unpaved shoulder of the road.



## Passing

You should never pass on the shoulder. However, a **paved** shoulder may be used to pass a stopped vehicle or one that is slowing to make a left turn. On multi-lane roads, the left-most lane is intended to be used for passing slower vehicles. If you pass on the right, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you.

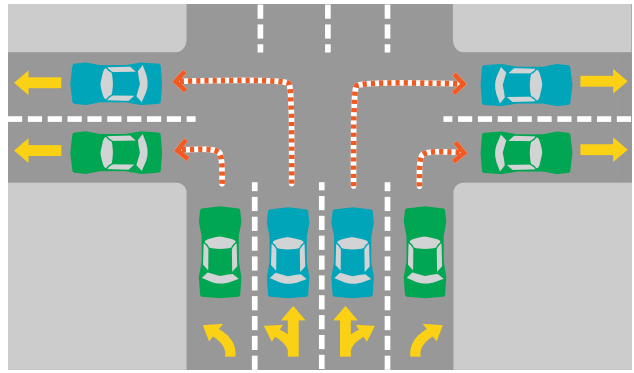
## TURNING

The safest way to make turns is to go from one travel lane to the other as directly as possible without crossing lane lines or interfering with other traffic. Once you have completed your turn, you can change to another lane if you need to.

Do not drive in a reserved lane. Reserved lanes or those marked for parking, or restricted to buses, bicycles, or marked for turns only, are not travel lanes except for buses or bicycles. You should only drive in them when you are within half a block of where you plan to turn. When you need to move into a restricted lane to turn right and a bicyclist is beside or ahead of you in that lane, slow down, signal your lane change and move into the restricted lane behind the bicyclist. Safely make your turn when the lane is clear.

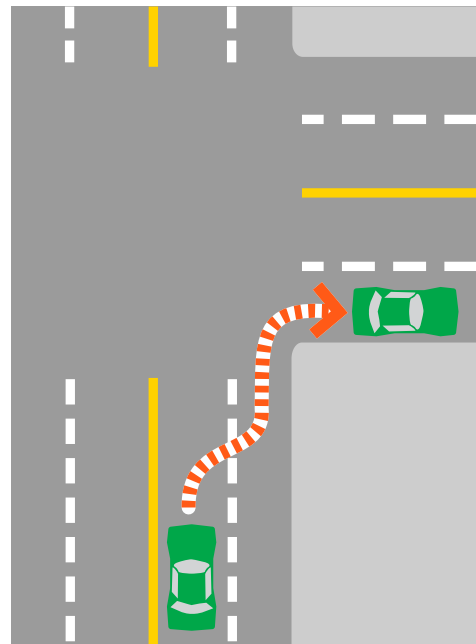
If you start turning at an intersection, do not change your mind about turning. Last second changes can cause a crash. Complete your turn and go on to the next intersection where you can turn and work your way back to where you want to go.

## Multiple turn lanes

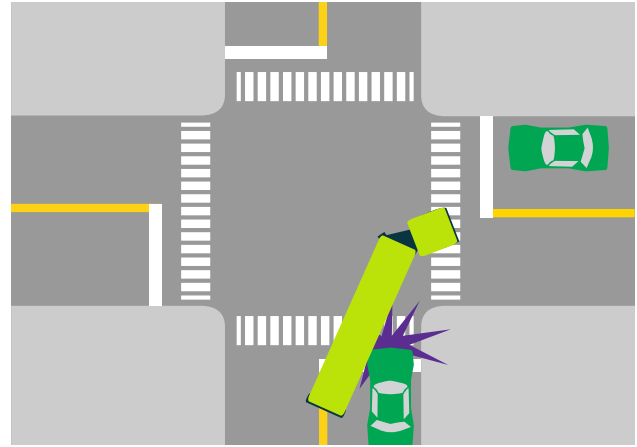
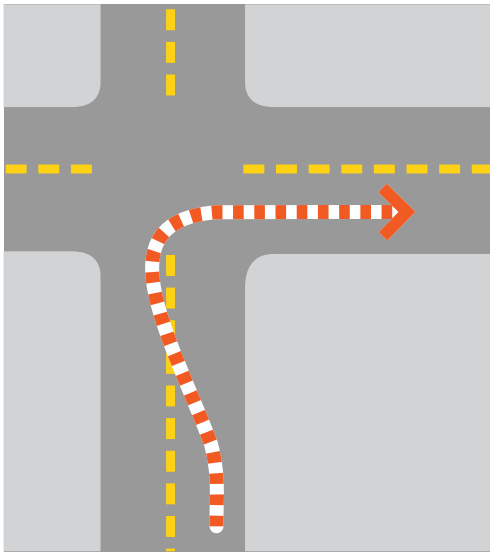
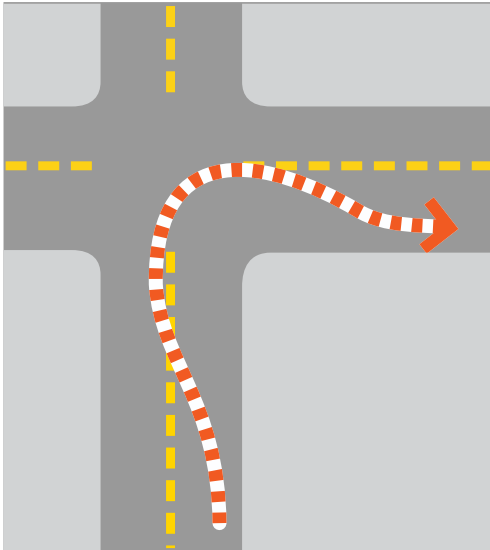


If there are signs or lane markings that allow for two or more turning lanes, stay in your lane during the turn.

## Right turns



After checking traffic to the rear and signaling, move into the travel lane farthest to the right. Before starting to turn, look right and left. Remember to yield the right-of-way, if necessary. Move your vehicle around the corner and into the travel lane farthest to the right.



Watch for large trucks and buses making right turns. In order to make the turn, they may need to swing left before turning right. Do not attempt to pass these vehicles on the right.

Do not swing wide as shown in the examples above.

Avoid swinging wide to the left before starting to make the turn. The driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or going to turn left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers in the far lane will not expect to see you encroaching on their lane.

## Left turns

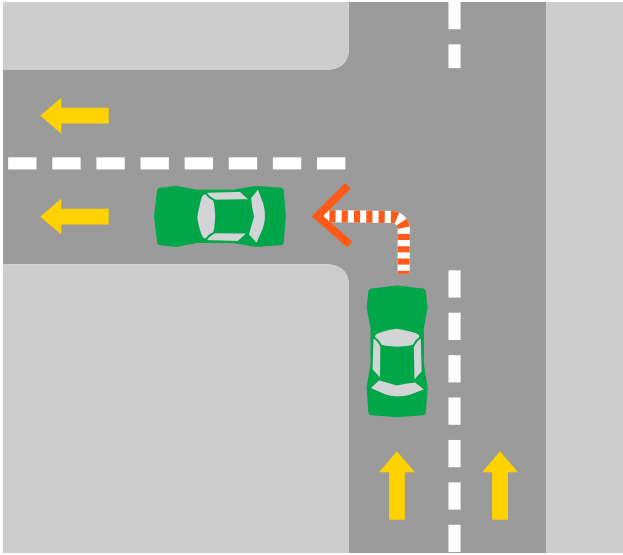


Figure 1: One way onto one way

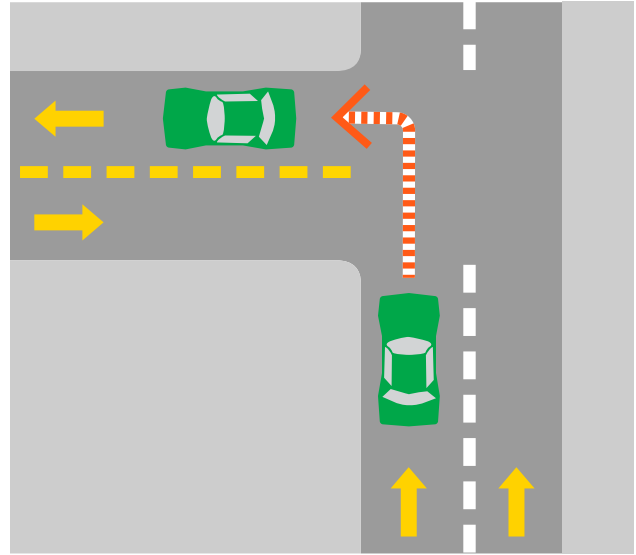


Figure 3: One way onto two way

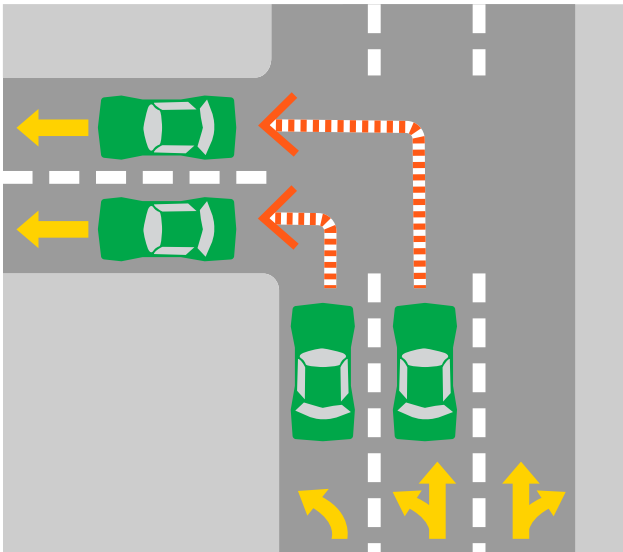


Figure 2: One way with multiple turns onto one way

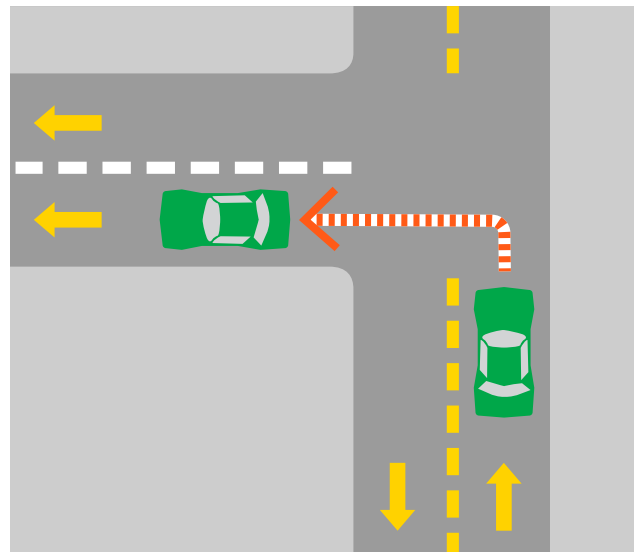


Figure 4: Two way onto one way

On a left turn or U-turn, turn into the travel lane farthest to the left going in your direction; (See Figures 1–4 for examples of the lanes to use when making a left turn.) This way, you will cross the fewest lanes of traffic.

After checking traffic to the rear and signaling, move into the turn lane (if there is one) or the travel lane farthest to the left. If there is a bicyclist ahead of you in the turn lane, slow down and follow the bicyclist through the turn. Before starting to turn, look left, right, across the intersection, then left again. Remember to yield the right-of-way, if necessary.

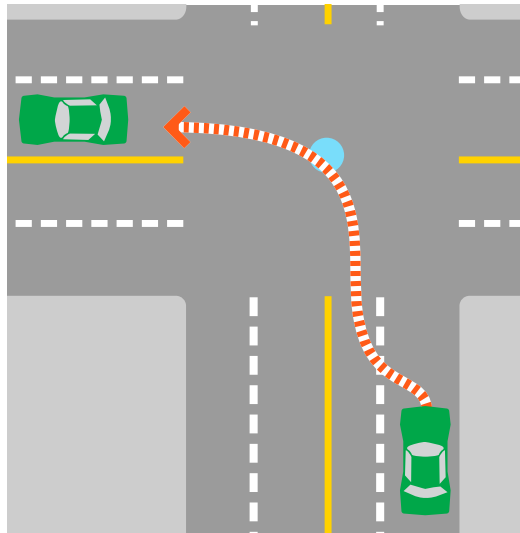


Figure 5

Pull out toward the midpoint of the intersection. (See *center dot in Figure 5*.) Wait, with wheels straight, until it is clear to turn. If the traffic light turns red, complete the turn when it is safe. Keep just left of the midpoint (*center dot in Figure 5*) of the intersection as you turn.

Don't turn the wheels while you are waiting to make a left turn or U-turn. If your wheels are turned and you are hit from behind, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic.

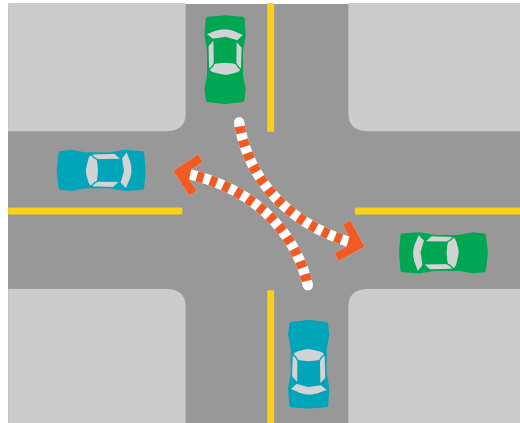


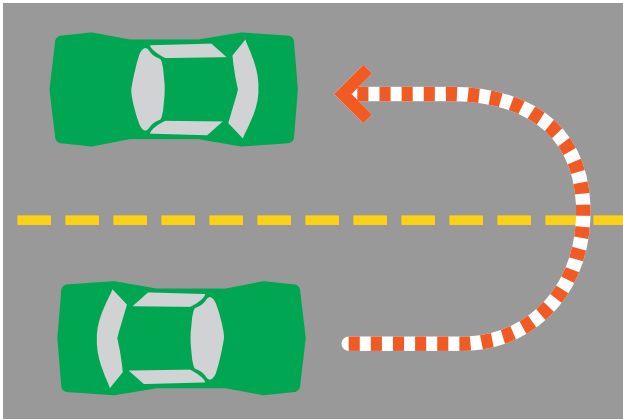
Figure 6: Two approaching left turns

Be sure to leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you. (See *Figure 6*.)

Be aware of traffic approaching on your left. When you make a left turn, avoid cutting the corner so sharply that you run into traffic approaching on your left. When you make a U-turn, watch for cars turning right-on-red that may not watch for you and yield as they should.

If you follow a bicyclist through a left turn, you may pass the bicyclist after you complete the turn and it is safe to pass. Remember to give bicyclists at least three feet of space.

## U-turn



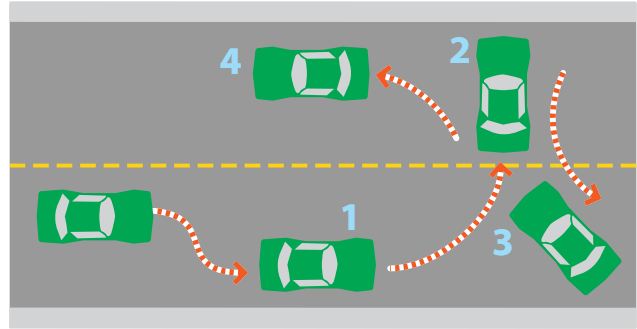
A U-turn is a turn within the road, made in one smooth U-shaped motion, so as to end up traveling in the opposite direction.

You may **not** make a U-turn:

- At any intersection where a police officer is controlling traffic unless the officer instructs you to make a U-turn.
- In mid-block on any street in a business district or in mid-block on a through (main) highway in a residential district, except where the street or highway is divided and the turn is made at a legal opening or crossover.
- At any place where signs prohibit such turns.
- Upon a curve or upon the approach to or near the crest of a grade on any undivided highway where the vehicle cannot be seen by the driver of any other vehicle with 500 feet approaching from any direction.
- At any place where a U-turn cannot be made safely or without interfering with other traffic.

## Y-turn

This is used in the driving exam as a test of skill and judgement. It is not recommended for use in general driving, but may be used in residential areas on streets too narrow for a U-turn.



### How to make a Y-turn

1. Check for traffic in your mirrors and blind spot. Signal right. Pull as far right as possible and stop.
2. Check traffic in mirrors and blind spot. When the way is clear, signal left. Make a left-angle turn to the opposite curb or side of the road.
3. Check traffic to left and right. Turn front wheels as far right as possible. Looking behind the vehicle, back far enough so the vehicle clears the curb when you pull forward.
4. Check traffic to left and right and proceed when the way is clear.

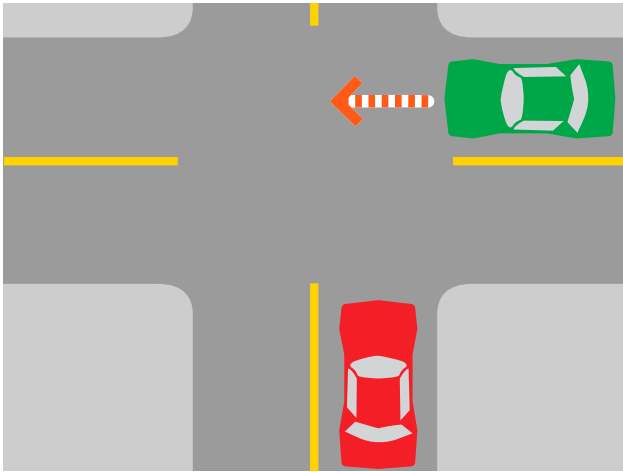
## RIGHT-OF-WAY

Vehicles or pedestrians are likely to meet one another where there are no signs or lights to control traffic. These rules tell who goes first and who must wait in different traffic situations. The one who must wait is yielding right-of-way to the one who goes first.

The law says **who** must yield the right-of-way. It does not **give** anyone the right-of-way. You should do everything you can to keep from hitting a pedestrian or another vehicle. This includes bicycles and animal-drawn vehicles.

### Intersections

At an intersection where there are no signs or traffic lights, you must yield to vehicles coming from the right.



At a four-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first goes first (after coming to a complete stop.) If more than one vehicle arrives at the same time, the vehicle on the right goes first. You must yield to vehicles already on the main road if you are entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside.

You must yield to traffic already in a roundabout, traffic circle or rotary.

You must yield to cross traffic if your roadway dead-ends.

### Passing

When passing a vehicle traveling in the same direction, you must yield to it even if it is slowing or coming to a stop.

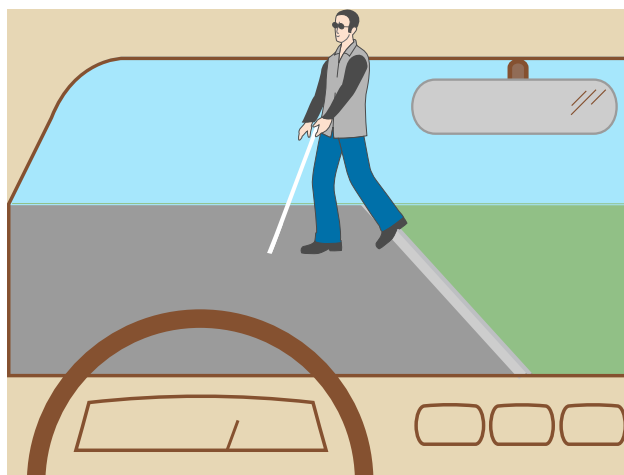
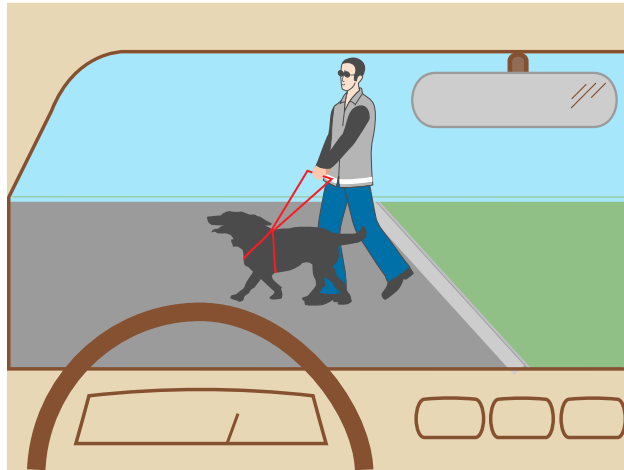
### Pedestrians

You must yield where necessary to avoid striking pedestrians who are crossing the road.

You must yield to pedestrians when you are entering or exiting a driveway, alley or parking lot.

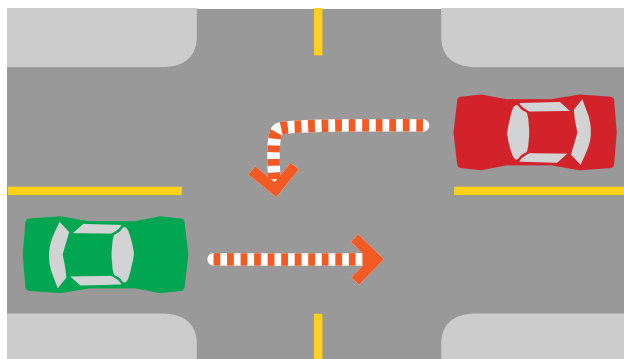
**You must stop before crossing a sidewalk if you are entering or crossing a highway from a driveway, alley or parking lot.** It is illegal to drive on a sidewalk except to cross it.





Pedestrians using a dog guide or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way (even if not at an intersection.) Do not use your horn as it could startle the blind pedestrian. If you see anyone in the roadway with a dog guide or a white cane, stop at least ten feet away until the person is off the roadway.

### **Left turns/U-turns**



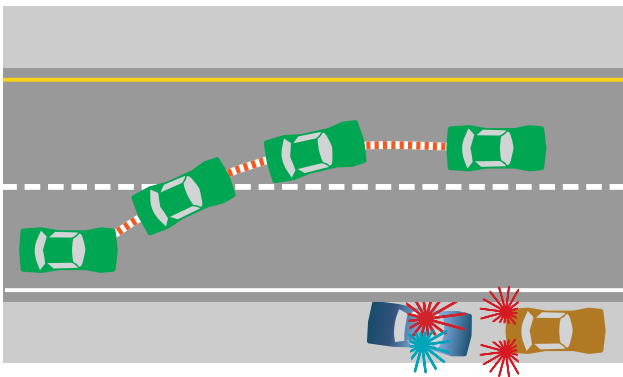
Drivers making a left turn or U-turn must yield to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction, including bicycles.

## Emergency vehicles

You must yield the right-of-way to police vehicles, fire trucks, ambulances or other emergency vehicles using a siren, air horn or a red or blue flashing light. Pull over to the **right edge** of the road or as near to the right as possible and stop when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction. Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle's loud- speaker. If you are in an intersection, including a roundabout, drive through the intersection before you pull over. **If the emergency vehicle using lights or siren is on the other side of a divided highway, you do not need to pull over and stop.**

You must not pass an emergency vehicle that is about to back into, or is backing into, the driveway entrance of a fire station. It is illegal to pass or follow within 500 feet of a moving emergency vehicle with its red or blue lights on and siren operating. This includes while driving on freeways or other limited access highways.

## Move over or slow down law



When approaching law enforcement or other emergency vehicles, tow trucks, road machinery, highway construction

or maintenance vehicles, public utility, telecommunication carrier or cooperative association vehicles stopped on or near a highway and using flashing warning lights, you must move into a lane **not** nearest the stopped vehicle and travel in that lane until you have safely passed the stopped vehicle(s). If it is unsafe to move into another lane, slow down until you have safely passed the stopped vehicle(s).

## Animals

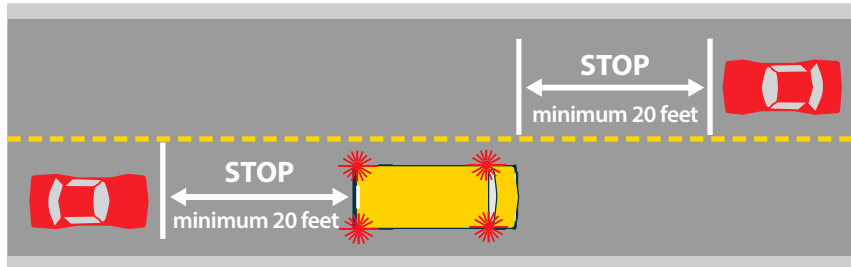
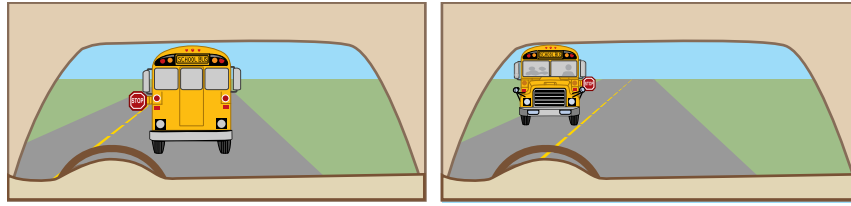
People riding animals or driving animal-drawn vehicles on a roadway have the same rights and duties as motor vehicle operators. To avoid scaring the animals, do not sound your horn near them. Slow down and keep a safe distance away while passing them.

You should yield the right-of-way to livestock on or along the highway. However, the person in charge of the livestock must try to open the way for traffic. If the person in charge of the animals gives a signal of distress, you must stop or do what is necessary to avoid injury or a crash.

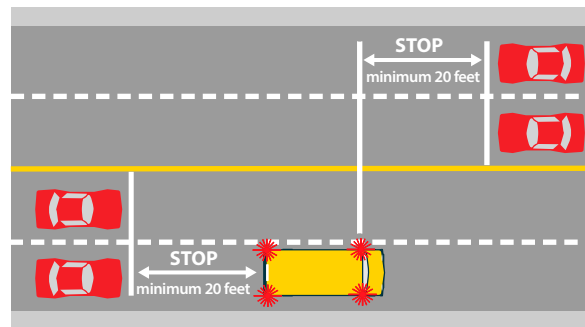
## Funeral processions

Only the first vehicle in a funeral procession must obey traffic signs and signals. Vehicles in the procession must have headlights on. Do not cut into or interfere with a funeral procession.

# SCHOOL BUSES



Two-lane highway

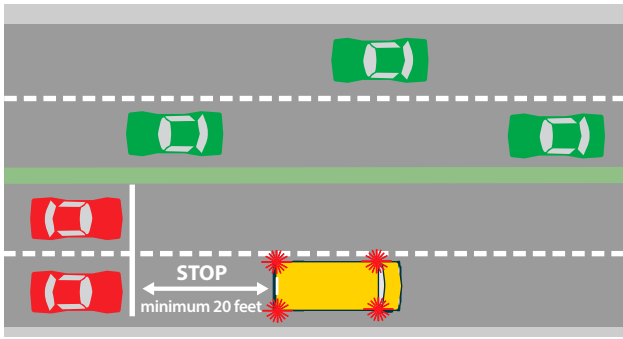


Multi-lane highway

You must stop a **minimum of 20 feet** from a stopped school bus with its **red lights flashing**.

You must stop whether the school bus is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road or at an intersection that you are approaching.

After the school bus red lights have stopped flashing, watch for children along the side of the road. Do not go until they have completely left the roadway.



Divided highway

**Divided highways (roadways):** Unless signs say other-wise, you are not required to stop for a school bus if you are driving in the opposite direction on a **divided** highway.

## PARKING

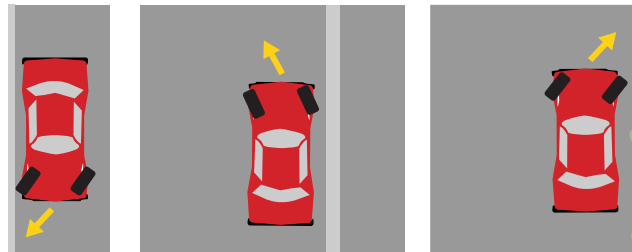
You are responsible for making sure your vehicle is not a hazard when it is parked. Whenever you park, be sure it is in a place far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic and that is visible to vehicles approaching from either direction.

- Park in a designated parking area if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in the lowest gear if it has a manual transmission, or in “park” if it has an automatic transmission.
- A possible exception to this is during cold weather when it is possible the parking brake could freeze in the “on” position. At such times, you may choose to leave the parking brake off. Your vehicle should still be left in the lowest gear or in “park”.
- If parked on a rural highway, you must leave at least 15 feet of road width for other traffic to pass your

vehicle. Your vehicle must be visible for at least 500 feet in either direction. Your parking lights and taillights must be on if it is dark outside.

- Get out of the vehicle on the curb side if you can. If you have to use the street side, check traffic before you open the door. Shut the door as soon as you can after getting out.
- Never leave the ignition key in a parked vehicle. It is a good habit to lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle.
- If you must park on a roadway, park your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can.

## How to park on a hill



Left to right: Down hill with or without curb, Up hill with curb, Up hill without curb

1. Check for traffic in your mirrors and blind spot. Signal right. Pull over as far right as possible and stop. Slow as you are moving out of traffic.
2. Turn your wheels sharply to the left if there is a curb and you face uphill.
3. Turn your wheels sharply to the right if there is no curb or if you face downhill. See the illustrations. This way, if your vehicle starts to roll, it will roll away from traffic.

4. Set your emergency brake and place your vehicle in park. If your vehicle has manual transmission, shift into reverse if parking downhill or into the lowest gear if parking uphill.
5. To resume travel, put your turn signal on, check mirrors and blind spot. When safe, pull out into your traffic lane.

## No parking zones

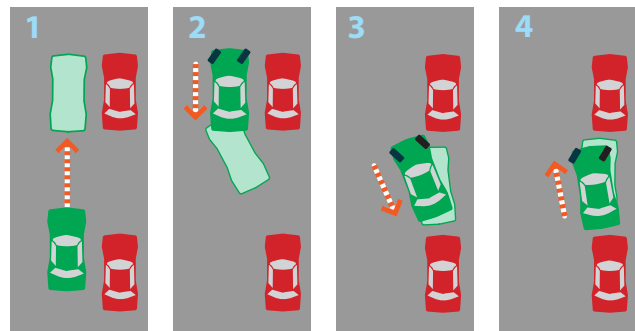
There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs which may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by painted curb markings (usually yellow).

Do not park in the following locations:

- In an intersection
- In a construction area if your vehicle will block traffic
- Within 15 feet of a crosswalk or intersection
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant
- Within 25 feet of a railroad crossing
- More than one foot from the curb
- Within 15 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street or directly across from the entrance
- Within 4 feet of a driveway, alley, or private road, or blocking the area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk
- In front of a school (grades K–eight) from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on school days, or as posted
- On a bridge or overpass, or in a tunnel or underpass
- On the wrong side of the street (opposing traffic)

- In a space marked for the disabled, unless you have a special parking permit or plates for the disabled
- On the road side of a parked vehicle (double parking)
- On railroad tracks
- Wherever a sign says you cannot park.

## How to parallel park

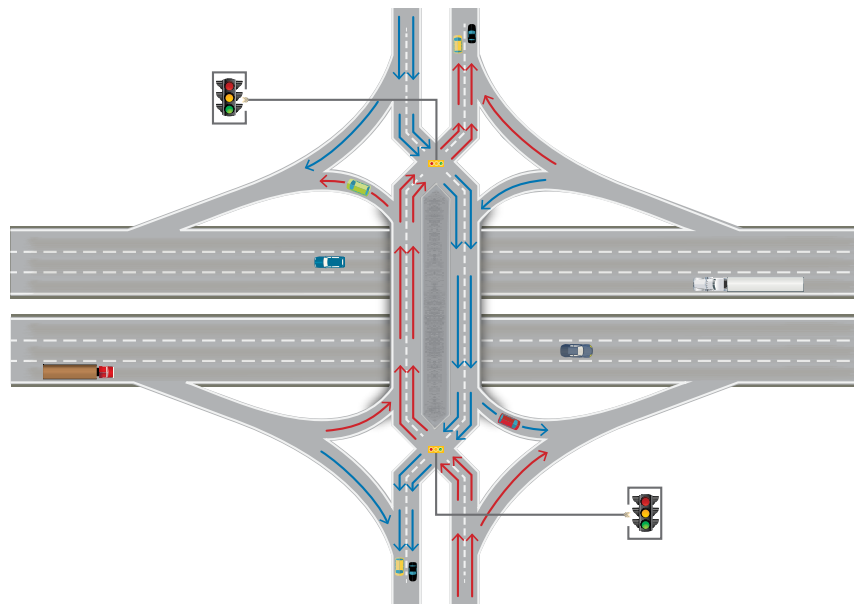


*Observe other traffic, pedestrians and fixed objects throughout these steps.*

1. Check traffic in rear-view mirrors as you slow. Put your turn signal on. Stop even with the vehicle ahead and about 2 feet away from it.
2. Turn wheels right and slowly back toward the vehicle behind. As the front door passes the back bumper of the vehicle ahead, straighten the wheels and continue to back straight.
3. When clear of the vehicle ahead, turn wheels sharply left and back slowly to the vehicle behind. Be looking to the sidewalk area and towards the vehicle behind you.
4. Turn wheels right and pull toward the center of the parking space. Straighten wheels unless you are on a hill. When the maneuver is finished, your vehicle should be within 12 inches of the curb or edge of the road, and at least 2 feet away from parked vehicles.

To resume travel, put your turn signal on, check mirrors and blind spot. When safe, pull out into your traffic lane.

## DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE (DDI)



A Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) is designed to intuitively guide motorists through the interchange. This type of interchange has been shown to increase capacity and safety, decrease congestion and minimize the cost of new infrastructure. You will encounter the first DDI in Wisconsin at the I-39/90 and WIS 11 (Avalon Road) interchange, south of Janesville. Find more information at: <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/safety-eng/inter-design/ddi.aspx>

### Advantages of a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)

**Safety:** Reduces the number of ways vehicles can collide by almost half (14 compared to 26 for a conventional diamond interchange).

**Greater capacity and efficiency:** Accommodates more traffic than conventional designs. Drivers make free-flow right and left turns onto the major freeway.

**Easy navigation:** Guides drivers with overhead signs, pavement marking and traffic signals.

**Meets the needs of all road users:** Accommodates large trucks, vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

When driving a DDI, the same general rules apply as for maneuvering through any other type of intersection.



## Navigating a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)

- Drivers follow the signs, signals and pavement markings to cross through the intersection at the first set of traffic lights. Traffic appears as if on a one-way street.
- All left turns onto the freeway are free flow, meaning vehicles do not stop to access the ramp.
- Vehicles going straight simply proceed through a second set of traffic lights.
- Pedestrians travel on designated walkways and cross only at the crosswalks.
- Bicyclists may choose to use the bike lane or pedestrian walkways and crosswalks.

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS

No driver manual alone can teach you how to operate a vehicle or be a safe driver. Driving requires skills you can gain only through instruction and practice. The following offers some **basic driving information**.

### Starting

Check your vehicle owner's manual for how to best start your vehicle. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle. If your vehicle has a manual transmission, it must be in neutral. In some vehicles, the clutch must be depressed. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park." On some vehicles, the brake pedal must also be depressed.

### Accelerating

Accelerate gradually and smoothly. Trying to start too fast can cause the drive wheels to spin and will cause your vehicle to slide. With a manual-shift vehicle, practice coordinating use of the clutch and accelerator to prevent killing or over-revving the engine when shifting gears.

### Steering



Left to right: Correct hand position, Incorrect hand position, Incorrect hand position  
Both hands should be on the steering wheel, except when making necessary adjustments to the driving controls. To help avoid injury if your vehicle's air bag goes off, it is best to hold the steering wheel with your right hand at 3:00 and your left hand at 9:00. Never drive with your hands at the top of the steering wheel or with your hands, thumbs, fingers or arms resting on the center of the steering wheel. It is

recommended not to wrap your thumbs around the steering wheel spokes. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous. Look well down the road (10 to 15 seconds ahead) and on both sides of the road, not at the road just in front of your vehicle. Look for traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

## Stopping

Be alert so you know well ahead of time when you will need to stop. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and usually means a driver was not paying attention. When you brake quickly, you could skid and lose control of your vehicle. You also make it harder for drivers behind you to stop without hitting you, especially if the road is slippery and/or there is a large vehicle behind you that cannot stop quickly.

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

Do not coast (transmission in neutral or clutch depressed) while driving. Stay in “gear” so you have the braking power of the engine available.

## SPEED LIMITS

Maximum speeds in Wisconsin, **unless otherwise posted:**

**15 mph:** Within a school zone or school crossing when children and/or a crossing guard are present, in an

alley, or passing a safety zone where a bus has stopped to load or unload.

**25 mph:** On residential and business streets.

**35 mph:** In outlying parts of cities or villages, or semi-urban districts outside cities or villages.

**55 mph:** On any highway or freeway in Wisconsin, except on multi-lane freeways and expressways posted for 65 or 70 mph.

**65 mph:** On rural interstate highways and some posted freeways and expressways. Look for speed limit signs.

**70 mph:** On some posted freeways and expressways. Look for speed limit signs. Speed limits are posted on many roads. Posted speed limits do not tell you at what speed you should drive. They only say you cannot go faster than the speed shown. By law, you must go slower if conditions make the posted speed unsafe.

It is illegal to exceed the posted speed limit. Racing on the highway and driving recklessly are not allowed. You may not exceed the speed limit to pass another vehicle.

Speeding does not save you much time. If you travel 20 miles at 66 mph in a 55 mph zone, you only save 3.6 minutes. You can be stopped and ticketed, in which case you would lose more than 3.6 minutes, and you will be assessed points and a fine.

**Wisconsin law says you must not drive so slowly that you interfere with the normal and reasonable movement of traffic. You can be ticketed for impeding traffic. Some highways have minimum posted speed limits.**

## SEEING WELL

Most of what you do in driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well. The single biggest contributor to crashes is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides and behind your vehicle, and be alert for unexpected events. At night and at other times when it's hard to see and be seen, you must use your headlights.

You must be alert to what is going on around you. Many crashes occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. Do not take your eyes off the road for more than a few seconds at any one time. If you need to look at a map, pull safely off the road before you try to look at it. Do not try to read the map while you are driving.

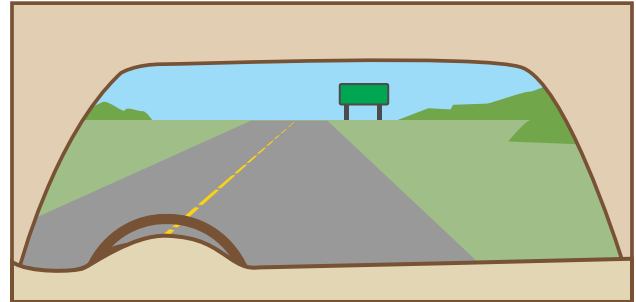
Remember that cars and trucks are not the only “users” of the road. In many crashes with motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians, drivers say they looked but did not see them.

Never underestimate the size or speed of an approaching truck or bus. Because of their large size, they often appear to be traveling at a slower speed than they actually are. Give them extra room.

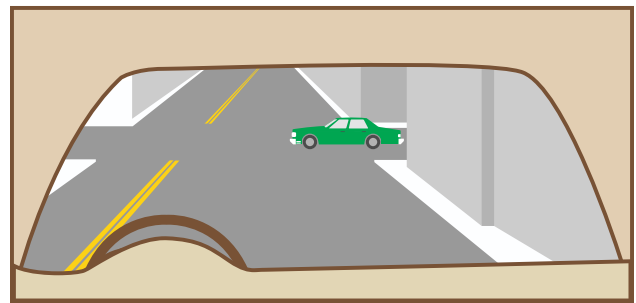
Do not slow down just to look at a crash, someone getting a ticket or other roadside activity. This could cause you to be in a crash. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. When you pass these roadside activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as soon and as safely as you can.

## Scanning

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



Top: Look one quarter mile ahead,



Bottom: Look one block ahead

### Look ahead

In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn, you should look well down the road. By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel, help keep traffic moving at a steady pace and allow yourself time to see better around your vehicle and alongside the road. Looking well down the road will also help you to steer straighter with less weaving. Safer drivers tend to look 10 to 15 seconds ahead of their vehicle. How far is this? It is the distance your vehicle will travel in 10 to 15 seconds.

In the city, 10 to 15 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, you should try to look at least one block ahead. On the highway, 10 to 15 seconds is about 4 city blocks, or a quarter of a mile.

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

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

You can be a safer driver by looking well ahead. You can reduce the need to stop or turn quickly. The less you have to stop or turn quickly, the less likely you are to run into someone or have someone run into you.

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

Traffic flows more smoothly when everyone looks well ahead. Making driving changes before the last moment gives drivers behind you more time to react. The earlier you act, the less often someone behind you has to quickly react to your vehicle. By seeing needed driving changes early, you can drive more safely and that helps drivers behind you drive more safely, too. It also keeps traffic moving at a steady pace.

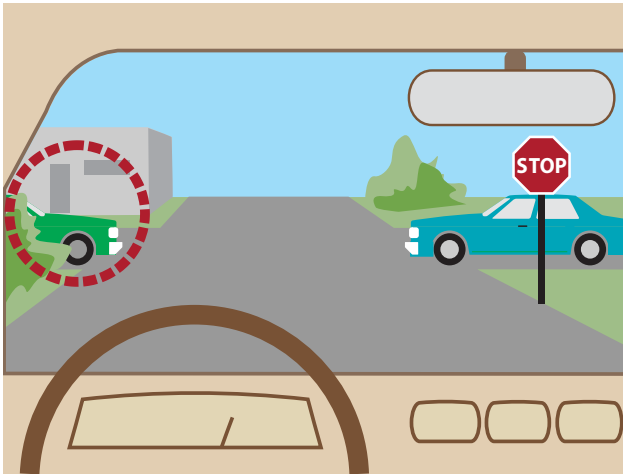
## Look to the sides

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

## Intersections

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

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs to tell you that no one will be crossing in front of you. Some drivers do not obey, or may not notice, traffic signals or signs. At an intersection, look left and right, even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign. This is especially important just after the light has turned green. This is when people on the cross street are most likely to hurry through the intersection before the light changes to red. Individuals who have been drinking and reckless or aggressive drivers may also run red lights.



Make sure you can clearly see crossing traffic before entering a controlled intersection (one with a stop sign or light). If you are stopped and your view of a cross street is blocked, slowly move ahead and stop again before entering the intersection. Check for cross traffic and pedestrians before proceeding.

If you are coming to an uncontrolled intersection, slow down so you can safely see up and down the cross street before crossing it. If your view is blocked at an uncontrolled intersection, be prepared to brake, if needed, as you slowly edge forward until you can see up and down the cross street. By slowly moving forward, crossing drivers can see the front of your vehicle and it gives them a chance to slow down and warn you that they are approaching.

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

## Railroad crossings

As you approach any railroad crossing slow down and look up and down the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. Do not assume a train is not coming even if you have never seen one at that crossing before. Assuming a train is not coming is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings. Make sure there is room for your vehicle on the far side before you cross the tracks.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the passing train is well down the track before starting to cross. Another train may be hidden by the one that just passed. Be especially watchful if you are following a bicyclist or motorcyclist across railroad tracks. They may swerve in order to cross the tracks at a 90° angle so their tires don't get caught in the tracks.

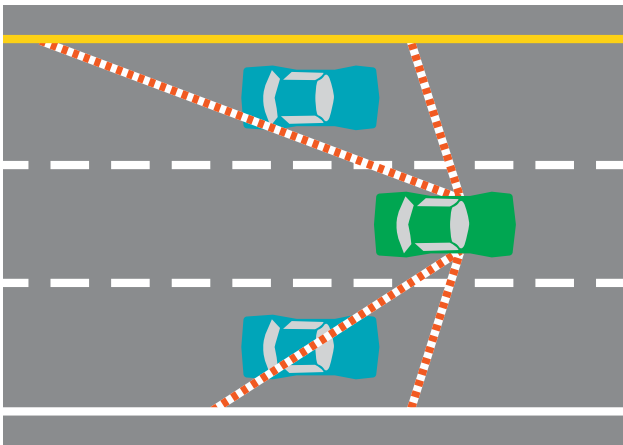
## Look behind

Besides watching traffic ahead of you, you must check traffic behind you. Check your mirrors every 6 to 8 seconds. You will need to check more often than that when traffic is heavy. This is the only way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast, and it will give you time to do something about it. It is very important to look for vehicles behind you when you change lanes, slow down, back up, or are driving down a long or steep hill. When going down a long or steep hill, check your mirrors frequently. Vehicles often build up speed going down a steep grade. Be alert for large trucks and buses behind you that may be going too fast.

## When changing lanes

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

- Look in your rear view and side mirrors.
- Make sure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter.
- Make sure nobody is about to pass you.



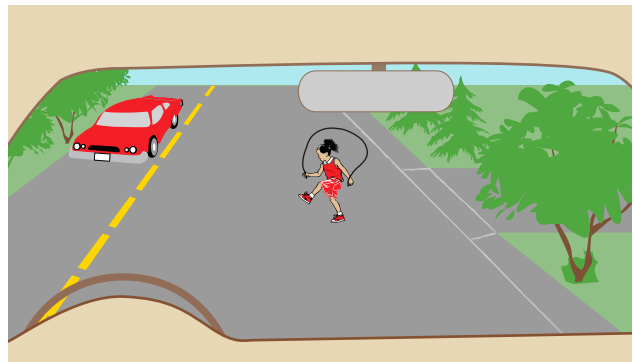
Blind spots

Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move. Be sure no one is near the rear corners of your vehicle. These areas are called **blind spots** because you cannot see them in your mirrors. To see vehicles in your blind spot, you need to turn your head and look.

## Check quickly

Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are looking to the sides, rear or over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to merge or pull onto the roadway. This way you can keep an eye on vehicles ahead of you at the same time. Just before you change lanes, check over your shoulder for traffic in your blind spot. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you **and** in the lane you are entering.

Check the far lane, if there is one, as someone in that lane may be planning to move into the same lane you want to enter.



Check for other road users. Remember, there are other road users such as motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians that are harder to see than cars and trucks. Children may run or ride out into the road without looking. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from the curb or driveway. Signal before you change direction.



## When you slow down

You must check behind your vehicle whenever you slow down. This is very important when you slow down quickly or at points where a driver following you would not expect you to slow down, such as private driveways or parking spaces.

## When you back up

It is hard for you to see behind your vehicle. Try to do as little backing as possible.

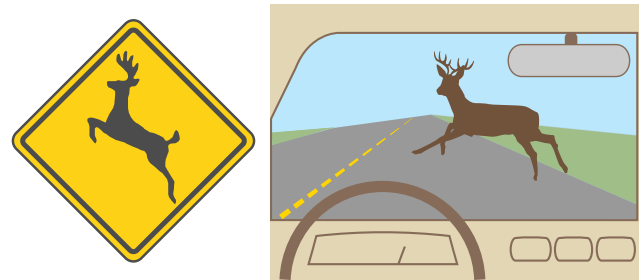
Where backing is necessary, here are some hints to help you back your vehicle safely.

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in it. Children or small objects often cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
- Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors to see things around you. You should turn and look directly through the rear window. Place one hand over the passenger seat if needed.
- Back slowly: no faster than a slow walk. Your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing.
- Whenever possible, use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.
- When you are done backing up, scan around you, left and right, before moving into traffic.

## Watch out for deer

The number and severity of collisions between motor vehicles and deer continues to increase. In fact, deer are the third most commonly struck object in Wisconsin, with other vehicles and fixed objects topping the list. However, there are some things

you can do to reduce your risk of hitting a deer. Be especially alert for deer in October and November, the months with the highest number of car/deer crashes.



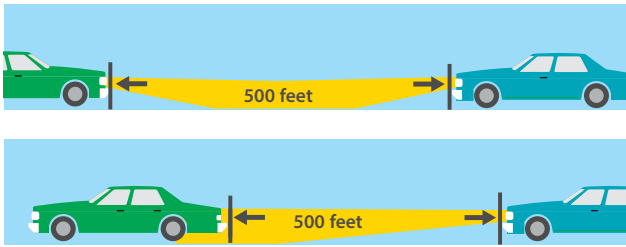
- Deer are most active in the dusk to dawn hours, so you should be especially alert while driving during those times. Scan the sides of the road to watch for the reflection of your vehicle headlights in the eyes of deer.
- If you see such a reflection on the side of the road, slow down. Blow the horn 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.

## Use your lights

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

- Use your high beams whenever there are no oncoming vehicles. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams. It is important to use high beams on unfamiliar roads, in construction areas, or where there may be people along the side of the road.





- Dim your high beams whenever you come within 500 feet (about a one block distance) of an oncoming vehicle, including horse-drawn carriages.
- Use your low beams when you are closer than 500 feet behind another vehicle or when in heavy traffic.
- Use the low beams in fog or when it is snowing or raining hard. Light from high beams will reflect back, causing glare and making it more difficult to see ahead. Some vehicles have fog lights that you should also use under these conditions.
- Do not drive at any time with only your parking lights on. Parking lights are **for parking only**.
- If a driver approaching you fails to dim their headlights, you may flash your high beams to let them know. If they still don't dim the lights, look toward the right side of the road. This will keep you from being blinded by the other vehicle's headlights and will allow you to see enough of the edge of the road to stay on course until the other vehicle has passed.

**Wisconsin law:** You must have your headlights on when driving from half an hour **after** sunset to half an hour **before** sunrise, and at any other time you cannot see a vehicle or person on the roadway at a distance of 500 feet.

## COMMUNICATING

Crashes often happen because one driver does not see another driver, or when one driver does something another driver does not expect. It is important for you to let other road users know you are there and what you plan to do.

### Let others know you are there

Some drivers do not always pay attention to what is going on around them. It is important for other road users to know you are there.

### Use headlights

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



On rainy, snowy or foggy days, it is sometimes hard for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. A good rule to follow is if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights.

Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. Even if you turn them on a little early, it will help other drivers see you.

Whenever it's necessary to drive with your lights on, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked vehicles only.

When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming toward you may have trouble seeing your vehicle because of the glare. Your headlights will help them see you.

### Daytime running lights

Some newer vehicles have headlights that are on anytime the vehicle is running. They are called daytime running lights. These lights make it easier for others to see the vehicle, even in daylight. It helps to reduce the chance of a crash. However, daytime running lights are not meant to replace the use of headlights for night driving or when it is foggy, raining or snowing. If your vehicle does not have daytime running lights, you can get the same effect by manually turning your headlights on. Just remember to turn them off when you turn the engine off.

### Use your horn

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

- When a person on foot or on a bicycle appears to be moving into your lane of travel. However, **pedestrians and bicyclists crossing at an intersection have the right-of-way. Do not** use your horn in these instances, but **do yield the right-of-way.**

- When you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane.
- When a driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you.
- When coming to a place where you cannot see what is ahead: a steep hill, a sharp curve or exiting a narrow alley.

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

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

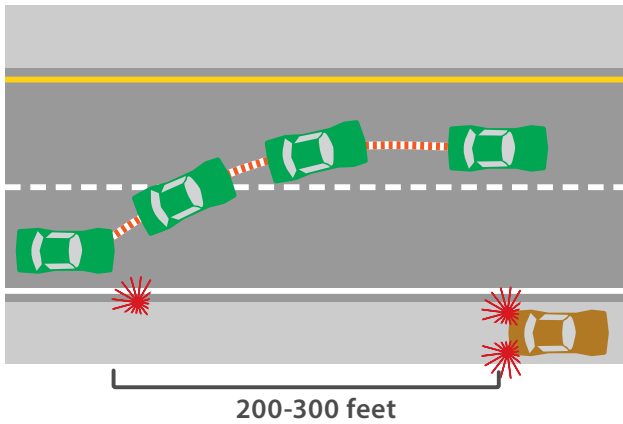
### When NOT to use your horn

You should not use your horn in the following circumstances:

- Encouraging someone to drive faster or get out of the way.
- Informing other drivers of an error.
- Greeting a friend.
- Around blind pedestrians.
- Around animal-drawn vehicles or animals being herded on the roadway.

### Use emergency signals

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



Try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares or triangles behind it. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.

If available, use your cellphone to notify authorities that your vehicle or another has broken down. Many roadways have signs that tell you the telephone number to call in an emergency. If you are having vehicle trouble and have to stop:

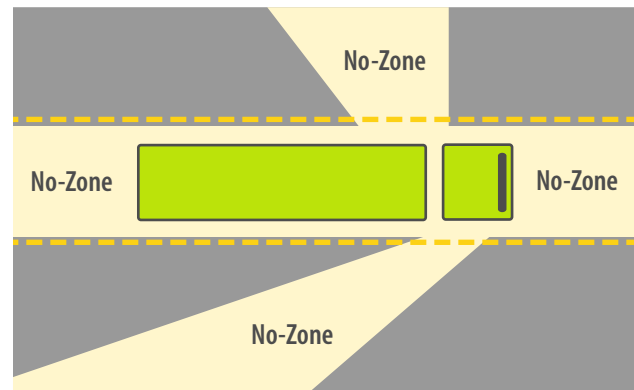
- Get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic, if at all possible.
- Turn on your (4-way) emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.
- Try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle if you cannot get completely off the road. (Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.)
- Stand off of the road where you are safe from traffic. Use emergency flares or other warning devices if you have them.
- Never stand in the roadway. Do not try to change a tire if it means you will be in a traffic lane.
- Raise the hood or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror or door handle to signal an emergency.

## Stay out of the blind spot

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

Try to avoid driving in the area on either side of and slightly to the rear of another vehicle where you will be in their blind spot. Either speed up or drop back so the other driver can see your vehicle more easily.

When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can. The longer you stay there, the longer you are in danger because they may not see you.



Never stay alongside or right behind a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. Many drivers think truck drivers can see the road better because they sit twice as high as the driver of a car. While truckers can see ahead better, and trucks have bigger mirrors, they have very serious blind spots. A car can disappear from their view while it is up to 20 feet in front of the cab, on either side of the truck (especially alongside the cab), and up to 200 feet behind! These areas are all part of what is called the "No Zone".

Drivers who travel in the "No Zone" restrict a trucker's ability to take action to avoid a dangerous situation—and the possibility of a crash is increased. A good rule of thumb for drivers sharing the

road with a truck or bus is, **if you can't see the truck or bus driver in their side mirror, they can't see you.**

## Let others know what you are doing

Generally other drivers expect you to keep doing what you are doing. You must warn them when you are going to change direction or slow down. This will give them time to react, if needed, or at least to not be surprised by what you do.

## Signal when you change direction

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

Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. This includes signaling before beginning to pass another vehicle, and before completing the pass. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing. Signal 100 feet before your intended turn. Be careful that you do not signal too early, though. If there are streets, driveways or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.

If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where they are and they could pull into your path.

After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. If you don't, others might think you plan to turn again.

## Signal when you slow down

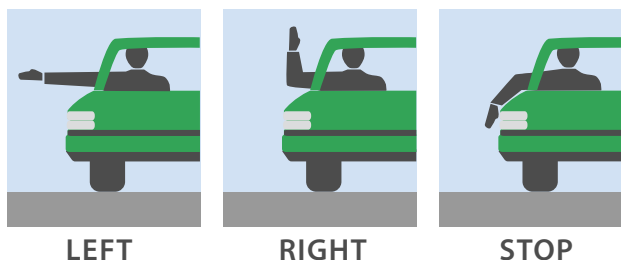
Your brake lights let people know that you are slowing down. Always slow down as early as it is safe to do so. If you are going to stop or slow down at a place where another driver may not expect it, quickly tap your brake pedal 3 or 4 times to let those behind you know you are about to slow down.

Signal when you slow down:

- To turn off a roadway which does not have separate turn or exit lanes.
- To park or turn just before an intersection. Traffic following you may expect you to continue into the intersection.
- To avoid something in the road, or for stopped or slowing traffic that a driver behind you cannot see.

## Hand signals

Sometimes, in addition to using your turn signals, hand and arm signals may be used. An example would be when bright sunlight can make it hard for other drivers to see your flashing turn signals, or when driving an antique vehicle (one manufactured before July 1, 1958) that may not be equipped with turn signals.



When using hand and arm signals, these are the standard positions:

**Left turn:** Hand pointing straight out.

**Right turn:** Hand pointing up.

**Stop or slow down:** Hand pointing down.

## ADJUSTING SPEED

The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow or stop. For example, stopping at 60 mph does not take twice the distance it takes at 30 mph, as one might think. It takes over three times the distance! Driving safely means obeying speed limits, but adjusting your speed for road and traffic conditions, and how well you can see.

### Adjusting to road conditions

There are various road conditions where, to be safe, you need to slow down. For example, slow down before a sharp curve, when the roadway is slippery or when there is standing water on the road.

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

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

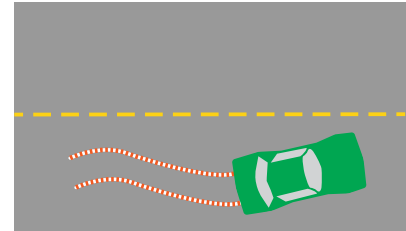
Your tires do not have as much traction on gravel or dirt roads as they do on concrete or asphalt roads. When driving on gravel or dirt, you need to slow down. It will take you much longer to stop on gravel or dirt and it is much easier to skid when turning.

### Curves

A vehicle can travel much faster in a straight line than it can in a curve. It is easy to go too fast in a curve. If you go too fast, the tires will not be able to grip the road and

your vehicle will skid. Always slow down before you enter a curve so you do not have to brake while in the curve. Braking in a curve can cause your vehicle to skid.

### Slippery roads



Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow or sleet. They make the roadway slippery. When the road is slippery, your vehicle's tires do not grip as well as they do on a dry road. How slow should you go? On a wet road, you should reduce your speed about 10 mph. On packed snow, you should cut your speed in half. On ice, you must slow to a crawl. It is very dangerous to drive on ice.

### If at all possible, do not drive when the roads are icy

Some road surfaces are slippery at certain times or places. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- Shady spots can be icy on cold, wet days. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Overpasses and other types of bridges can have icy spots, even when other pavement is not icy. This is because bridges do not have earth underneath them to help insulate them against the cold so they freeze sooner than other roadways.
- When the temperature is around the freezing point, ice can become wet. This makes it more slippery than at colder temperatures.



- If it starts to rain on a hot day, the pavement can be very slippery for a while. Heat causes the oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. The road is more slippery until the oil is washed off.

### Water on the roadway

When it is raining or the road is wet, most tires have good traction up to about 35 mph. However as you go faster, your tires will start to ride up on the water, like water skis. This is called “hydroplaning.” In a heavy rain, your tires can lose all traction with the road at about 50 mph. Wide tires or tires that are bald or badly worn will lose traction at much lower speeds. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down in the rain or when the road is wet. If it feels like your tires have lost traction with the surface of the road, you should:

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

## WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

Each year about 30 snowstorms drop about 50 inches of snow in Wisconsin. Winter driving calls for special precautions.

**First is worst.** In the first storm of the season, most drivers have forgotten their safe winter driving skills. They’ll drive too fast and try to stop too quickly. Go slowly. Increase following distances. Drive defensively. Relearn your skills.

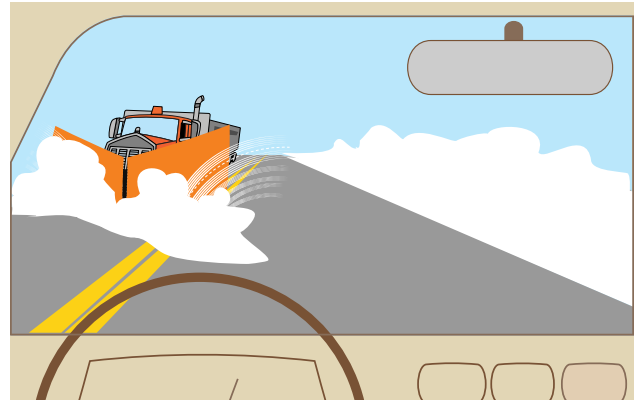
**Go slowly.** Drive well below the posted speed limit. Posted limits are intended for summer months on dry pavement. Avoid sudden, sharp turns. Use light braking by gently pumping the brakes.

**Plan ahead.** Plan on trips taking extra time. Leave earlier. Consider an alternate route. **STAY HOME** if conditions are too bad.

**Use your head, use your feet.** Never use cruise control on slippery roads.

**Lighten up.** Turn on your headlights. To prevent glare, avoid using your high beams during a night storm.

*Wear your seat belt.*



**Give snow plows room.** Snowplows are wide. They often need to operate very close to the center line. Sometimes they throw up clouds of snow, which affects your vision. Slow down and give them as much room as possible. On roads with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or more, the law requires drivers to stay at least 200 feet behind a snowplow when its red or amber lights are on.

## ADJUSTING TO TRAFFIC

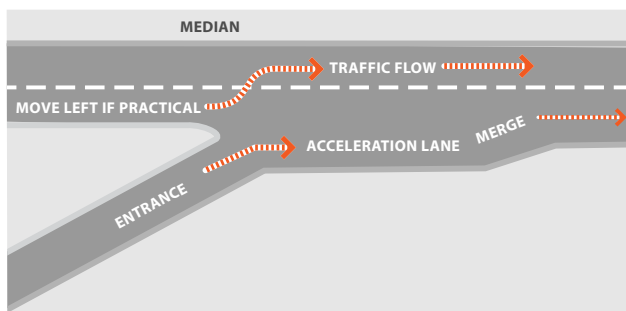
On a roadway with multiple lanes going in the same direction, crashes involving two or more vehicles often happen when drivers go faster or slower than other vehicles.

### Keep pace with traffic

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

Going much slower than other vehicles can be just as bad as speeding. It is dangerous and you can be ticketed for impeding traffic. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes other traffic to pass you. If vehicles are lined up behind you, pull over when safe to do so and let them pass. You should either drive faster or consider using a road with slower posted speeds.

### Entering traffic

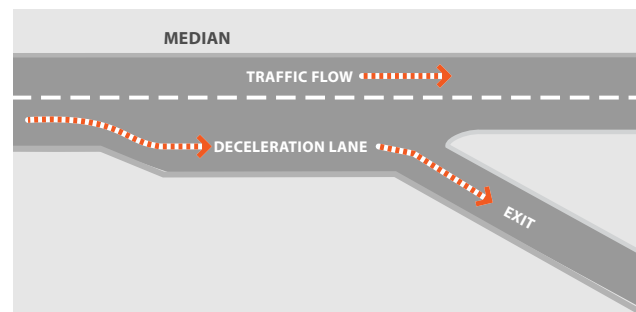


#### Entrance ramp

When you merge with traffic, try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. High-speed roadways generally have an acceleration lane with the entrance ramp

to give you time to build up your speed. Use the lane to reach the speed of other vehicles before you merge into traffic. Do not drive to the end of the lane and stop or you will not have enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If they are watching the traffic on the main road, you may be hit from the rear. If you have to wait for space to enter a roadway, slow down on the ramp so you have some room to speed up before you have to merge. You must yield to traffic already moving on the roadway.

### Leaving traffic



#### Exit ramp

Keep up with the speed of traffic as long as you are on the main road. If the road on which you are traveling has exit ramps, do not slow down until you move onto the exit ramp. When you turn from a high speed, two-lane roadway, try not to slow down too early if you have traffic following you. Tap your brakes quickly but safely and reduce your speed.

### Slow moving traffic

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



Watch for large trucks and small cars on steep grades or when they are entering traffic. They can lose speed on long or steep uphill climbs and it takes longer for them to get up to speed when they enter traffic.

Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. Generally, these vehicles should have a slow-moving vehicle sign on the back. Slow down when approaching a slow moving vehicle and, if possible, move over to the left to pass it.

Bicyclists should have reflectors or lights on their bikes. However, some bikes may not have this equipment. Be especially watchful for bikes.

### **Trouble spots**

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

**Shopping centers, parking lots and downtown areas** are busy areas with vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists stopping, starting and moving in different directions.

**Rush hours** often have heavy traffic and drivers may be in a hurry.

**Narrow bridges and tunnels** force vehicles approaching each other closer together.

**Toll plazas** may cause vehicles to change lanes and prepare to stop, and then speed up again when leaving the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.

**Schools, playgrounds and residential streets** often have children present. Always watch for children

crossing the street, or running or riding into the street without looking.

**Railroad crossings** require you to make sure there are no trains coming and that you have room to cross. Some crossings are bumpy so you should slow down to cross safely.

## **HOW WELL CAN YOU SEE**

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

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

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

### **Tips you can follow to be a safer driver**

Some things limit how well you see.

**Darkness:** It is harder to see at night. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead with your headlights. Your headlights will let you see about 400 feet ahead. You should drive at a speed that allows you to stop within this distance.

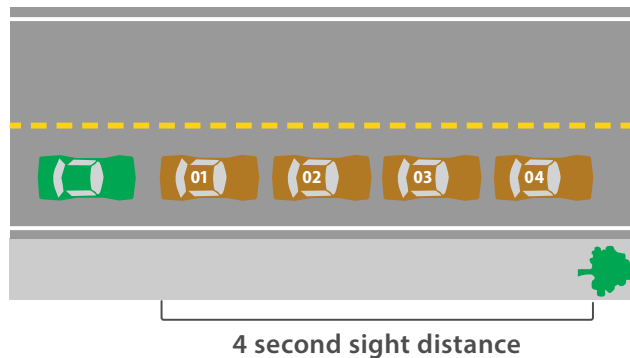
**Rain, fog or snow:** In very heavy rain, a snowstorm or thick fog, you may not be able to see much more than 200 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to see well enough to drive. If this happens, pull off the road in a safe place and wait until the rain lets up.

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

**Parked vehicles:** Vehicles parked along the side of the road may block your view. People may be ready to get out of a vehicle or walk out from between parked vehicles. Give parked vehicles as much room as you can.

**Animals:** Many deer are hit by cars, especially in October and November. Be especially cautious when you see “Deer Crossing” signs, especially during the dusk to dawn hours when deer are most active. If you see a deer, reduce speed and sound the horn. Look for other deer following the one you see.

**Animal-drawn vehicles:** Animal-drawn vehicles move slowly. Slow down when approaching an animal-drawn vehicle and, if possible, move over to the left to pass it.



**Sight-distance rule:** Drive at a speed where you can always safely stop. To tell if you are driving too fast for conditions, use the “Four Second Sight Distance Rule.” Pick out a stationary object as far ahead as you can clearly see (e.g. a sign or a tree). Start counting “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three, one-thousand-four.” If you reach the object before you finish saying “one-thousand-four,” you need to slow down because you are going too fast for your sight distance. You must not drive so fast that you cannot stop in your sight distance. If you do, you are not driving safely and could injure or kill yourself or others.

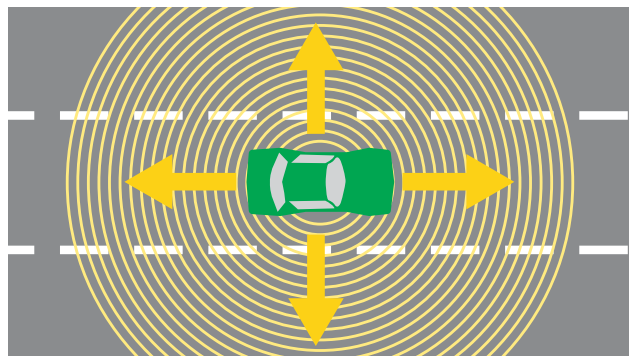
You should also use the “Four Second Sight Distance Rule” at night to make sure you are not “over-driving” your headlights.

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

Remember, speed limits are posted for ideal conditions. If the road is wet or icy, if you cannot see well, or if traffic

is heavy, you must slow down. Even if you are driving under the posted speed limit, you can get a ticket for traveling too fast under these conditions.

## CUSHION OF SPACE



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

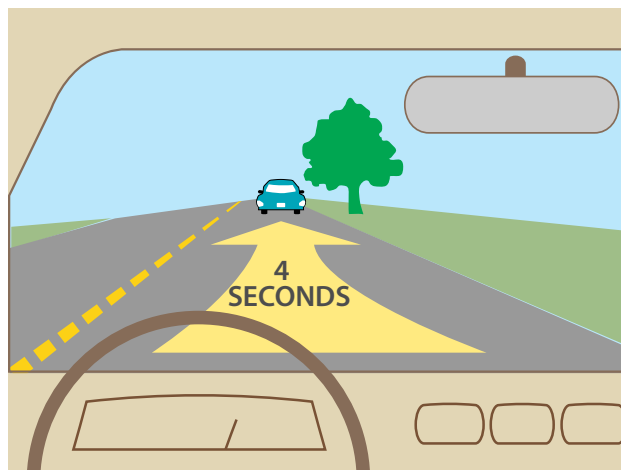
### Space ahead

Rear-end crashes are very common. They are caused by drivers following too closely (tailgating) to be able to stop before hitting the vehicle ahead when it suddenly slows or stops.

Professionals believe a safe following distance should be no less than four seconds under ideal conditions. Here is an easy way to find out if you are following too closely.

### Following-distance rule

Watch for when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign, tree or any other stationary point. Consider it to be your “mark.”



Count the seconds it takes you to reach the same mark. (“One-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three, one-thousand-four.”)

You are following too closely if you pass the mark before you finish counting.

If so, drop back and then count again at another mark to check the new following distance. Repeat until you are following no closer than the minimum recommended following distance.

A minimum four second following distance is recommended under ideal driving conditions. However, in the following situations, you **may need more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front** to be safe:

**On slippery roads.** Because you need more distance to stop your vehicle on slippery roads, you must leave more space in front of you. If the vehicle ahead suddenly stops, you will need the extra distance to stop safely.

**When the driver behind you wants to pass.** Slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle. Slowing also will allow the pass to be completed sooner.

**When following motorcycles or bicyclists.** If the cycle should fall, you need extra distance to avoid hitting the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, gravel roads or metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings or railroad tracks.

**When following drivers who cannot see you.** The drivers of trucks, buses, vans or vehicles pulling campers or trailers may not be able to see you when you are directly behind them. This “blind spot” to the rear of large trucks can extend for 200 feet! They could stop suddenly without knowing you are there. Large vehicles also block your view of the road ahead. Falling back allows you more room to see ahead.

**When you have a heavy load or are pulling a trailer.** The extra weight increases your stopping distance.

**When it is hard for you to see because of darkness or bad weather.** You need to increase your following distance so you can see ahead, or have time to stop if it’s necessary.

**When being followed closely.** You should allow extra room so you will be able to stop without being hit from behind.

**When following emergency vehicles.** Police vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks need more room to operate.

**When approaching railroad crossings.** Leave extra room for vehicles required to come to a stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses or vehicles carrying hazardous materials (gasoline tankers, etc.)

**When stopped on a hill or incline.** Leave extra space because the vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts moving.

## Space behind

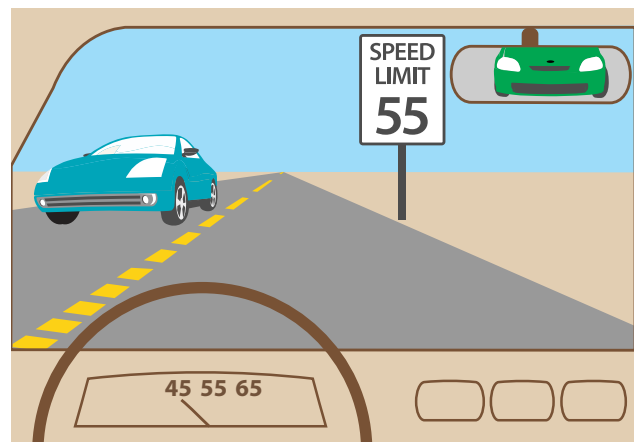
It is not always easy to maintain a safe distance behind your vehicle. However, you can help a driver behind you maintain a safe distance by keeping a steady speed and signaling in advance when you have to slow down or turn.

Try to find a safe place out of traffic if you need to stop to pick up or let off passengers.

If you want to parallel park and there is traffic coming behind you, put on your turn signal, pull next to the space, and allow vehicles behind you to pass before you park.

If you are driving more slowly than other traffic on a multi-lane road, drive in the right most travel lane. When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other vehicles, pull to the side of the road when safe to do so and let them pass.

There are “turnout” areas on some two lane roads you can use. Other two lane roads sometimes have “passing lanes.”



Every now and then you may find yourself being followed too closely or being “tailgated” by another driver. If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the road ahead is

clear and passing is legal, then slowly reduce speed. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater. All that does is increase your risk of being hit from behind.

The increased risk of being hit from behind is especially true if you are being followed by a large truck or bus, neither of which can stop as quickly as a car. Give large vehicles extra room to move.

### Space to the side

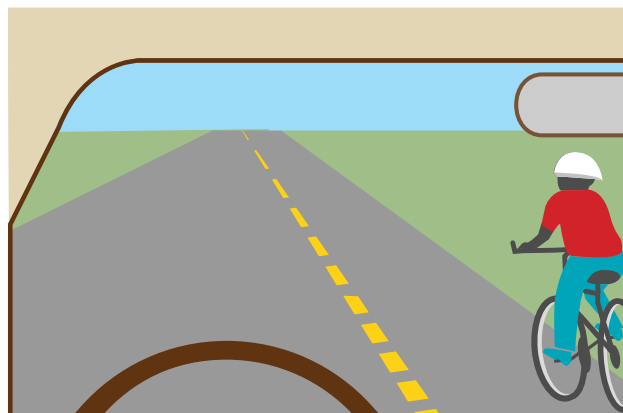
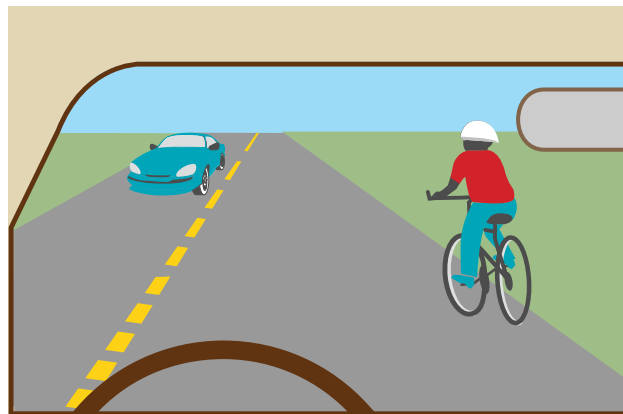
You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes.

Avoid driving next to other vehicles on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and run into you. Move ahead or drop back from the other vehicle.

Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. On a two lane road, this means not crowding the center line. In general, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.

Make room for vehicles entering a roadway with two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over to the next lane.

Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle or from between vehicles, or a parked vehicle could suddenly pull out.



Give extra space to pedestrians and bicyclists, especially children. They can move into your path quickly and without warning. Do not share a lane with a pedestrian or bicyclist. Wait until it is safe to pass in the adjoining lane. Bicycles are vehicles, and are **entitled to a full traffic lane**. Give a bicycle at least **three feet of room** when you pass.

Give snowplows as much room as possible. They often need to operate very close to the centerline, and sometimes throw up clouds of snow affecting your vision.

“Split the difference” between two hazards. For example, steer a middle course between oncoming traffic and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the dangerous side. For



example, if the oncoming vehicle is a semi-truck, leave a little more room on the side the truck will pass.

When possible, take potential hazards one at a time. For example, if you are meeting or passing a bicycle or a motorcycle and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down and let the vehicle pass first so you can give extra room to the bicycle or motorcycle.

## Space to merge

Anytime you want to merge with other traffic, you need a gap large enough to safely move into the flow of traffic. You need a minimum four-second gap whenever you change lanes, enter a roadway or when your lane merges with another travel lane.

Do not try to merge into a gap that is too small. A small gap can quickly become even smaller. Enter a gap that gives you a big enough space cushion to be safe.

If you want to cross several lanes, take them one at a time. Like going up or down stairs one step at a time, it is safest and easiest to merge one lane at a time. It is very difficult to determine that all the lanes are free and safe to cross. If you wait until all the lanes are clear, you can tie up traffic and even cause a crash.

## Space to cross or enter

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

When you cross traffic, you need room to get all the way across. Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough for your vehicle. Do

not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle will be in the way of other traffic.

If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while you are stopped across a lane with vehicles coming toward you.

Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. For example, do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn after they pass your vehicle or they may have forgotten to turn off the signal after a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles, as their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn and then go if it is safe to do so.

When you cross railroad tracks, make sure you can cross without having to stop on the tracks.

## Space to pass

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will need to judge whether you have enough room to safely pass.

Do not count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once. Be safe. As a general rule **pass only one vehicle at a time** and **pass on the left** side.

Do not linger in the passing lane. Get around the vehicle as quickly as possible and move safely back into your lane. You may not exceed the speed limit to pass.

## Oncoming vehicles

At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10-second gap in oncoming traffic and sight

distance to pass. You must judge whether you will have enough space to safely pass. At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds; so will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1,600 feet or about one-third of a mile to safely pass. It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance.

**It can be especially hard to judge the speed of large trucks, which, because of their size, often appear to be moving slower than they really are. A vehicle that is far away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can actually see that it is coming closer (getting larger), it may be too close for you to pass.**

At night, it is especially hard to judge distance and speed of oncoming traffic. If you are not sure, **wait to pass until you are absolutely sure there is enough space.**

### Hills and curves

You need to be able to see at least one-third of a mile or about 10 seconds ahead. Anytime your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume there is an oncoming vehicle just out of sight. Therefore, you should treat a curve or a hill as you would an oncoming vehicle. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.

### Intersections

It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people, vehicles or trains can be blocked by the vehicle you

are passing. Also, drivers turning right into the approaching lane will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.

### Passing large trucks

A typical car is 15 feet long. A multiple-trailer truck can be 75 feet long or longer. It can take much longer to pass a truck than it would to pass a car; therefore, you must have more clear road ahead before you can safely pass.

### Lane restrictions

Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane. You might lose your space for passing because of:

- People or animals near the road,
- A narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width,
- A patch of ice, pot hole or something on the road.

### Space to return

Do not pass unless there is enough space in front of the vehicle you want to pass. Do not count on another driver to make room for you.

Before you return to the driving lane, be sure to leave enough room between you and the vehicle you have passed. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rear-view mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

### Railroad grade crossing

Do not pass if there is a railroad grade crossing ahead.



## Space for dangerous situations

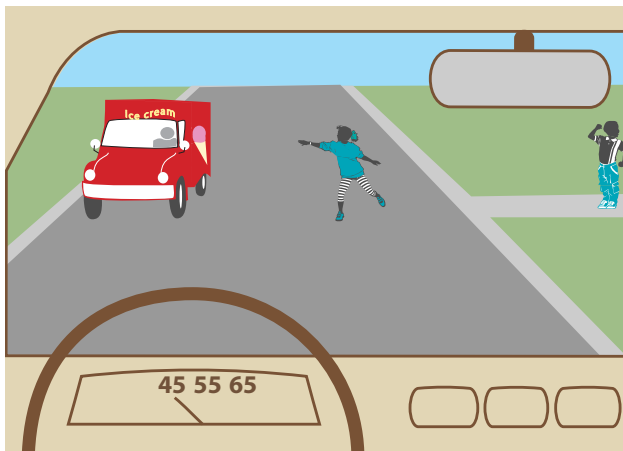
You should give extra room to certain drivers and other road users. Some are listed here.

### Those who cannot see you

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

- Drivers at intersections or driveways where their view is blocked by buildings, trees or other vehicles
- Drivers backing into the roadway or backing into or pulling out of parking spaces
- Drivers whose windows are steamed up or are covered with snow or ice
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or with their hats pulled down
- Pedestrians with white canes and/or dog guides.

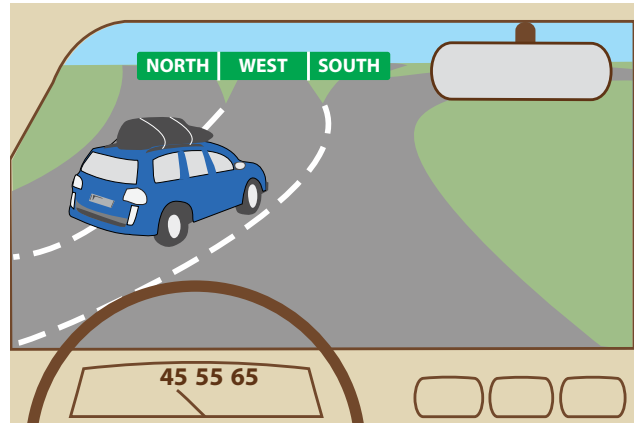
### People who are distracted



Even when others can see you, allow extra room or be extra cautious if you think they may be distracted. People who may be distracted include:

- Delivery persons
- Construction workers
- Children
- Drivers who are not paying attention to their driving.

### People who may be confused



People who are confused may cause an unsafe situation. People who may be confused include:

- Persons driving cars with out-of-state plates (especially at complicated intersections)
- Drivers who slow down for what seems like no reason
- Drivers looking for street signs or house numbers
- Pedestrians who have been drinking.

### Large vehicles and wide loads

Large trucks and buses cannot accelerate, stop, or change direction as quickly as smaller vehicles. Give large vehicles extra room to move on the road, including in roundabouts where they are making turns or going through the roundabout.

Sometimes **extra-wide loads** are transported on highways. Give vehicles transporting wide loads as much room as possible.

### **Drivers in trouble**

If another driver makes a mistake (drivers who pass you when they do not have enough room, for example), do not make it worse. Slow down and let them safely return to the driving lane. If another driver needs to suddenly change lanes, slow down and let them merge. These gestures will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

### **Farm safety/rural driving**

You should be aware of special hazards in rural areas. These may include slow moving tractors, horse driven wagons or carriages, people on horseback, farm machinery exiting fields or on the roadway, wide machinery, debris on the road, and livestock on or crossing the highway. Farm machinery operators may have difficulty seeing or hearing other traffic, and the machinery may not have brake lights or turn signals. Use caution and exercise patience when farm machinery is on the road.

**No one may let a child under the age of 16 years of age operate a farm tractor or self propelled farm machinery on the highways unless the child has successfully completed a tractor and machinery operation safety training course and is certified to operate such a vehicle. Check with your local Technical College for these courses.**

You should yield the right-of-way to livestock on or along the highway. Be courteous to and aware of people riding horseback or driving a horse drawn carriage

or wagon. You can help to avoid scaring the horse by slowing down and keeping a safe distance away while passing them.

## **INATTENTIVE DRIVING**

### **Distractions while driving**

Being distracted from, or not giving your full attention to your driving, can cause you to strike a pedestrian, crash, leave the roadway, not notice a hazard or danger, or miss important traffic signs or signals. Anything that takes your attention away from driving can lead you to make a poor choice while driving. This includes distractions by passengers. Studies show that when a teen driver has another teen in the vehicle, the chances of being in a crash double. That's why graduated driver license restrictions limit the number of passengers in a vehicle. It reduces distractions for the teen driver. Your concentration should be completely on your driving and what is around and ahead of your vehicle.

**Texting while driving is against the law in Wisconsin.**

*Section 346.89(3) Wis. Stats.*



All distractions can endanger safety. Wisconsin law states that no driver may engage in any activity other than driving that interferes or reasonably appears to interfere with safe driving. *Section 346.89(1) Wis. Stats.* Texting is especially alarming because it takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel and your mind off of driving.

**Texting while driving is against the law in Wisconsin. *Section 346.89(3) Wis. Stats.***

**Concentrate completely on driving:**

Avoid using a cell phone, eating, drinking, putting on makeup, shaving, brushing your teeth, reading, writing, using a computer, smoking, changing CDs, looking for things on the floor, trying to find change for tolls, etc. Plan ahead and take care of as many of these things as you can before you start driving. Otherwise, wait until you get to where you are going, or pull over in a safe location to do them. For example, if you need to read a map or directions, pull over to the side of the road in a safe place. Stop until you are ready to give your complete attention to driving.

Keep your stereo or radio at a volume low enough so you can hear things outside your vehicle. If the volume is too loud, you may not be able to hear a siren, horn honking, screeching tires or other things that would lead you to react to an emergency or hazard in order to prevent a crash. Do not drive with headsets or earphones that cover or go in both ears. They make it too hard to hear emergency horns or sirens.

**Talking on a cell phone can increase your chances of being in a crash by as much as four times because it distracts your attention from**

**driving.** If you have a mobile device, don't use it while driving. Even with hands-free equipment, using a mobile device takes your attention away from driving and can cause you to be less likely to notice a dangerous situation. If you need to use your mobile device, pull over to the side of the road in a safe place to use it.

**If you have a probationary license or instruction permit, using a cell phone while driving is against the law in Wisconsin, except to report an emergency.**

*Section 346.89(4) Wis. Stats.*

If you have a Probationary license or Instruction Permit, using a cell phone while driving is against the law in Wisconsin except to report an emergency. *Section 346.89(4) Wis. Stats.*

**No driver may use a handheld mobile device when driving through a road work zone, except to report an emergency.**

*Section 346.89(4m) Wis. Stats.*

No driver may use a handheld mobile device when driving through a road work zone, except to report an emergency. *Section 346.89(4m) Wis. Stats.*

Children or pets can also be distracting. Pets should always be in a carrier, or you should have a passenger hold the animal while you are driving. If children do not behave in

the vehicle, pull over to the side of the road in a safe place to deal with the situation.

## BE IN SHAPE TO DRIVE

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

Being a safe driver takes a lot of skill and judgment. This task is even more difficult when you are just learning to drive. Driving can easily take every ability you have. If anything happens so you are not up to your ability, you may not be a safe driver. Your ability to be a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while using drugs, being generally healthy and emotionally fit to drive. In other words, being in “shape” to drive safely.

### Vision

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

Vision is so important that Wisconsin law requires you to have at least 20/40 vision in at least one eye, with or without corrective lenses. You will be required to pass a vision screening before you get a driver license and at each renewal.

**Side vision:** You need to see “out the corner of your eye.” This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you cannot focus on things to the

side, you must also use your side mirrors and glance to the side if necessary.

**Judging distances and speeds:** Even if you can see clearly, you still may not be able to judge distances or speeds very well. Many people have problems judging distances and speeds. It takes a lot of practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important in knowing how far you are from other vehicles and judging safe gaps when merging and when passing on two lane roads.

**Night vision:** Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing at night. It is more difficult for everyone to see at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don’t drive more than is necessary and be very careful when you do.

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

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

- Always wear them when you drive, even if it is only for short trips. If your driver license says you must wear corrective lenses, you could get a ticket if you are stopped and you are not wearing them.
- Try to keep an extra pair of glasses in your vehicle. If your regular glasses are broken or lost, you can use the spare pair to drive safely. This can also be helpful if you do not wear glasses all the time and misplace them.

- Avoid using dark glasses or tinted contact lenses at night, even if you think they help with glare. The problem is they reduce the light that you need to see clearly.

## Hearing

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

## Fatigue

You cannot drive as safely when you are tired as when you are rested. You do not see as well, nor are you as alert. It takes you more time to make decisions and you may not always make good decisions. You can be more irritable and can be more easily upset. When you are tired, you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash, injuring or killing yourself or others.

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

- Try to get a good night's sleep before you leave.
  - Do not leave on a trip if you are already tired. Plan your trip so you can leave when you are rested.
  - Do not take any medicine that can make you drowsy.
- Eat lightly. Do not eat a large meal before you leave. You can get sleepy after eating a big meal.
  - Take breaks. Stop every hour or so or when you need to. Walk around, get some fresh air and have some coffee, soda or juice. The few minutes spent on a rest break can save your life. Allow for plenty of time to safely complete your trip.
  - Try not to drive late at night when you would normally be asleep. Because your "inner body clock" will be telling your body it is time to be sleeping, you may have trouble staying awake and alert.
  - Never drive if you are sleepy. It is better to stop and sleep for a few hours than to take the chance that you can stay awake. If possible, switch driving with someone so you can sleep while they drive.

Studies show that a person who has been awake for 18 hours is as impaired for driving as a person with an alcohol content (AC) of .05. A full 24 hours of being awake causes impairment nearly equal to that of an AC of .10: above the legal limit.



## DRINKING AND DRIVING

### Alcohol content

Alcohol is involved in 40–50% of traffic crashes in which someone is killed. If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chances of being in a crash are much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol.

Alcohol content	Increased risk*
.02	x 2
.04	x 8
.06	x 8
.08	x 16
.10	x 32
*Compared to 0.00 alcohol content	

Every .02 increase in alcohol concentration (AC) nearly doubles the risk of being in a fatal crash. AC is the percentage of alcohol in your body and is usually determined by a breath, blood or urine test.

No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if they have been driving for many years. Because they are still learning to drive, new drivers are more affected by alcohol than experienced drivers.

Because drinking alcohol and then driving is so dangerous, the penalties are very high. People who drive after drinking risk arrest, heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of their driving privilege and jail.

### Why is drinking and driving so dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. Alcohol goes

from your stomach into your blood and to all parts of your body. It reaches your brain in 20 to 40 minutes. Alcohol affects those areas of your brain that control judgment and skill. Drinking alcohol is very dangerous because it affects your judgment. Good judgment is important to driving but in this case, judgment helps you to know when to stop drinking. In a way, it is as if alcohol puts good judgment on hold. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces your ability to see clearly and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and your skills decrease. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds and the movement of other vehicles. You will also have trouble controlling your vehicle.

### If you drink, when can you drive?

The best advice is **do not drive if you drink alcohol**. Even one drink of alcohol can affect your driving. With two or more drinks in your bloodstream, you are **impaired** and could be arrested.

An alcohol “drink” is one and a half ounces (one shot glass) of 80-proof liquor, straight or with a mixer, 12 ounces (a regular size can, bottle, mug or glass) of beer or a 5 ounce glass of wine. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and may be the same as having several 5-ounce normal drinks.

For the average adult, it may take up to two hours for your body to get rid of each drink. There is no way to quickly

sober up. Coffee, fresh air, exercise or cold showers will not help. Time is the only thing that will sober you up.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more people. Agree ahead of time which one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group being the “designated driver”. Otherwise, use public transportation or a cab, if available.

There are ways to slow down the effects of drinking alcohol. The best way is to increase the amount of time between drinks. Another way is to eat before and while you are drinking. Food slows down how fast alcohol gets into your body. Starchy foods like potato chips, pretzels, bread and crackers are best. Remember, food only slows when the alcohol gets into your body, it will not keep you from getting drunk.

### **Wisconsin’s alcohol laws**

#### **Operating While Intoxicated (OWI):**

You can be arrested for operating while intoxicated if you have a Prohibited Alcohol Concentration (PAC), or a detectable amount of a restricted controlled substance, in your blood. If you are found guilty of an OWI violation and it is your first conviction, you will be fined. Your driving privilege will be revoked for at least six months and you’ll face other sanctions. The penalties become more severe for a second conviction. You face a minimum one-year revocation. You will spend time in jail. All vehicles that have your name on the title or registration may be subject to immobilization or Ignition Interlock Device (IID.) If it is your third or greater conviction, your vehicle

could be seized. OWI convictions remain on your driving record for 55 years.

**Implied Consent:** If a police or traffic officer asks you to take a PAC test, you must comply. If you refuse, the officer must arrest you for violation of the Implied Consent Law. You will lose your driving privileges for at least one year and face other sanctions.

**Absolute Sobriety or “Not a Drop”:** Drivers under age 21 can be arrested for driving with **any amount of alcohol** in their body.

## **OTHERS DRUGS AND DRIVING**

Besides alcohol, there are many other things that can affect your ability to drive safely. Many prescription drugs and even medications you buy without a prescription for headaches, colds, hay fever or other allergies or those to calm nerves can make you drowsy and affect your driving. Pep pills, “uppers,” and diet pills can make you feel more alert for a short time. Later, however, they can cause you to be nervous, dizzy, unable to concentrate and they can affect your vision. Prescription drugs can affect your reflexes, judgement, vision and alertness in ways similar to alcohol.

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

Never drink alcohol while you are taking medications. Medications may multiply the effects of alcohol or have additional effects of their own. These effects not only reduce



your ability to be a safe driver, but could cause serious health problems, even death.

It is illegal to drive under the influence of any drugs (including prescription drugs) that may negatively affect your driving.

Under Wisconsin's Drugged Driving law, use of ANY measurable amount of a controlled substance is considered to be operating impaired and will be treated the same as an Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) offense. Examples of restricted controlled substances are marijuana, heroin, LSD, PCP, cocaine, hallucinogens, narcotics and methamphetamine.

Illegal drugs affect your ability to be a safe driver and are not good for your health.

For example, studies have shown that people who use marijuana make more mistakes, have more trouble adjusting to glare and get arrested for traffic violations more often than other drivers.

If you are stopped and an officer believes you are under the influence of a controlled substance, they may ask you to take a blood test which will be used to identify a detectable amount of a controlled substance.

Refusal to take this blood test will be treated the same as refusal to take a test for alcohol. Your license will be revoked.

Should you have a valid prescription for a controlled substance, you can claim a defense by providing proof you had a valid prescription for that drug at the time of the incident.

## HEALTH

Many health problems can affect your driving: a bad cold, infection or virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a

cough or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not feeling well and need to go somewhere, let someone else drive.

## Some potentially dangerous health conditions

**Epilepsy:** As long as it is under medical control, epilepsy generally is not dangerous. In Wisconsin, you may drive if you are under the care of a doctor and have not had a seizure for three months.

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

**Heart condition:** People with heart diseases that can cause fainting or a heart attack should not get behind the wheel. If you are being treated by a doctor for a heart condition, ask if the condition could affect your ability to drive safely.

## Emotions

Emotions can have a great effect on your ability to drive safely. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry or depressed.

If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary take a short walk, but stay off the road until you have calmed down. If you are worried, "down", or upset about something, try to

keep your mind on your driving. Some people find listening to the radio helps. If you are impatient, allow extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early. If you have plenty of time, you will not tend to speed or do other things that can result in a traffic ticket or cause a crash. Don't be impatient about waiting for a train to cross in front of you. Driving around lowered gates or trying to beat the train can be fatal.

## EMERGENCIES

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

### Vehicle emergencies

**There is always a chance of a vehicle problem while driving.** You should follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in your vehicle owner's manual. Following these preventive measures greatly reduces the chance your vehicle will have a problem. **Possible vehicle failures and what you can do if they happen are listed below.**

#### Brake Failure

If your brakes stop working:

- Pump the brake pedal several times. This will often build up enough brake pressure to allow you to stop.
- If that does not work, use the parking brake. Apply the parking brake slowly so you will not lock the wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if your vehicle

does start to skid (by holding in the brake release button or holding the foot brake release, you can avoid having the parking brake lock up).

- If that does not work, start shifting to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure your vehicle is off the roadway. Do not drive a vehicle without brakes.

#### Tire blowout

If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- Tightly hold the steering wheel and keep the vehicle going straight.
- Gradually slow down. Take your foot off the gas pedal but don't apply the brakes until the vehicle has almost stopped.
- Do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place.

#### Power failure

If the engine dies while you are driving:

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

#### Headlight failure

If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Try the headlight switch a few times.
- If that does not work, put on the emergency flashers, turn signals or fog lights if you have them.
- Pull off the road as soon as possible.

## Gas pedal sticks

If the engine keeps going faster and faster:

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

## Leaving your vehicle on the roadside

Contact the nearest law enforcement agency if your vehicle breaks down and you must leave it for any period of time. Be sure to get it off the roadway and onto the shoulder so it is out of the way of other traffic.

## Avoiding collisions

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

## Stopping quickly

Many newer vehicles have Anti-lock Braking System (ABS). Be sure to read your vehicle owner's manual on how to use ABS. ABS will help you stop with less or no skidding by keeping the wheels from locking up. In general, follow these guidelines if you need to stop quickly.

### With ABS

- Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep pressing on it. You will feel the brake pedal pushing back when the ABS is working. You will also hear the noise ABS makes when it is working.

- Do not let up on the brake pedal. ABS will only work when the brake pedal is pushed down hard and held there.

### Without ABS

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

## Turning quickly

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

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

### With ABS

A valuable feature of ABS is that you can turn your vehicle while braking with less or no skidding. Do not "jerk" the steering wheel (steer violently) while braking if you have ABS. Doing so may send you farther to the side than intended, because the vehicle will continue to respond to steering input while ABS is working. Practice using ABS in an empty parking lot so you know how the vehicle will respond.

## Without ABS

If you do not have ABS, you must use a different procedure to turn quickly. You should step on the brake pedal, then let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle, put more weight on the front tires, and allow for a quicker turn. Do not lock up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle can only plow ahead.

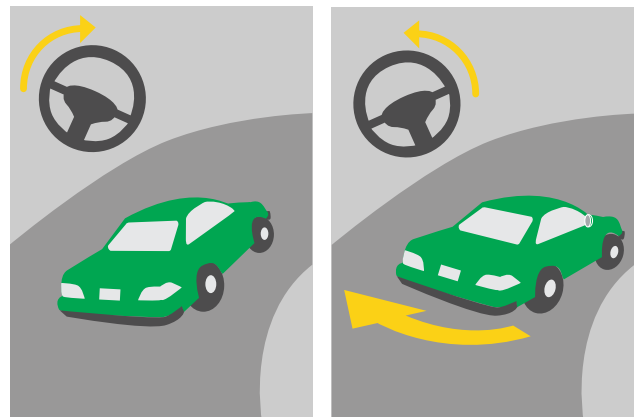
Remember, generally it is better to run off the road than to crash head-on into another vehicle. Do not swerve into the opposing lane; turn to the right, going off the roadway if necessary.

## Speeding up

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

## Dealing with skids

Any road that is safe under normal conditions can be dangerous when it is wet or has snow or ice on it. High speeds under normal conditions also increase the possibility of a skid if you must suddenly turn or stop. Skids are caused when the tires can no longer grip the road. Because you cannot control a vehicle when it is skidding, it is best to keep your vehicle from skidding in the first place.



Left: Turn back to straighten,  
Right: Turn into the skid

If your vehicle begins to skid:

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

## Protect yourself in collisions

Try everything you can to keep from getting hit. However, you may not always be able to avoid a collision. If it looks like nothing will work, try to lessen any injuries that could result from a crash. The most important thing you can do is to use your lap and shoulder belts. Besides your safety belts, there are a couple of other things that could help prevent more serious injuries.

### Hit from the rear

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

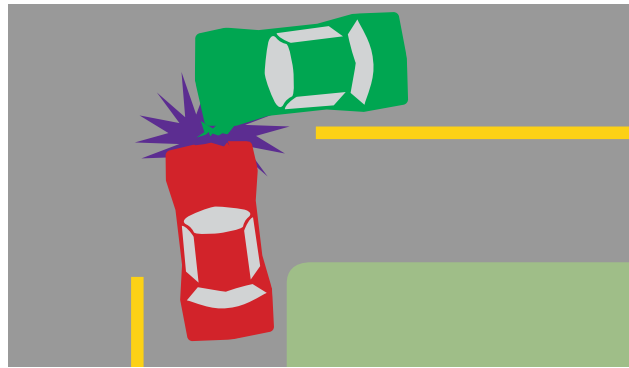
### Hit from the side

If your vehicle is hit from the side, your body will be thrown toward the side that is hit. Air bags will not help in this situation (unless your vehicle is equipped with side-impact air bags which will help). Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

### Hit from the front

If your vehicle is about to be hit from the front, it is important to try to have a “glancing blow” rather than being struck head on. This means that if a collision is going to happen, you should try to turn the vehicle. This will help to avoid a head on collision. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It will deflate following the crash, so be ready to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

## CRASHES



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

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

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

### If you are in a crash

- Stop your vehicle at or near the crash site. If your vehicle can be moved,

get it off the road so it does not block traffic or cause another crash.

- Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes. You could be struck by another vehicle.
- Turn off the ignition of wrecked vehicles. Do not smoke around wrecked vehicles. Fuel could have spilled and fire is a real danger.
- If there are power lines down with wires in the road, do not go near them.
- Make sure other traffic will not be involved in the crash. Use triangles, flares or other warning devices to alert traffic to the crash.

### **If someone is injured**

**Get help:** Make sure the police and emergency medical or rescue squad have been called (call 911). If there is a fire or downed power lines, tell the police about it when they are called.

**Aid the injured:** Do not move the injured unless they are in a burning vehicle or in immediate danger of being hit by another vehicle. Moving a person can make their injuries worse. However, Wisconsin law protects you from civil suits if you give aid to the injured.

First help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Check for breathing first, then check for bleeding.

If there is bleeding, apply pressure directly on the wound using your hand or a cloth. Even severe bleeding can almost always be stopped or slowed by putting pressure on the wound.

Do not give an injured person anything to drink, not even water.

To help prevent an injured person from going into shock, cover them with a blanket or coat to keep them warm.

### **Report the crash**

Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the crash, including injured persons, and any witnesses.

Exchange information with other drivers involved in the crash. (Name, address, driver license number, vehicle information [license plate, make, model and year of vehicle] and insurance company and policy number, if available.)

Record any damage to vehicles involved in the crash.

If requested, provide information to the police or other emergency officials.

Try to find the owner if a crash involves a parked vehicle. If you cannot find them, leave a note in a place where it can be easily seen with information on how the owner can reach you, the date and time of the crash.

You must report a crash to a law enforcement agency if there is an injury, a death or property damage of \$1,000 or more to any one person's property, or property damage of \$200 or more to government property (example: signs, guard rails, etc., [government vehicles, if \$1,000 or more damage]). The law enforcement agency will file a crash report with State Patrol. If the law enforcement agency does not investigate the crash or file a report, you need to file the report online at [www.wisconsin.gov/Pages/safety/crash-rpt/default.aspx](http://www.wisconsin.gov/Pages/safety/crash-rpt/default.aspx) within ten days of the crash.



## WHAT TO DO

### What to do in case of a crash, stalled vehicle or other emergency

1. Locate the nearest reference marker (see [Reference Markers](#)).
2. Make sure you are in a position to safely make a call.
3. Dial 911.
4. Be ready to answer questions:
  - What is your location? (Give the information from the reference marker.)
  - What is your wireless phone number?
  - Describe the problem.
  - Depending on your answers to these questions, you may be asked for more information.

### What to do if you hit a deer

- First, make sure your vehicle is still safe to drive. If not, get assistance.
- If your vehicle can be moved, get it off the road so it does not block traffic or cause a crash.
- Record the time, place and other circumstances of the incident for insurance and crash reporting purposes.
- If you hit a deer, you are entitled to keep it. If you do not want the deer, the next motorist on the scene is entitled to the deer. In either case, before the deer can be taken, law enforcement will need to issue a tag for the deer. Contact the Sheriff's Office or local Police Department to obtain a tag.
- If you decide to leave the deer, you should notify a local law

enforcement agency of the location where the deer was hit, especially if the deer is not dead.

### What to do when stopped by law enforcement: general guidelines for motorists

Getting pulled over by a law enforcement officer can be a difficult experience.

Following some simple guidelines will enhance safety for motorists and law enforcement, and in many cases, will get you back on your way as soon as possible. Things for drivers and passengers to keep in mind:

- State law (§346.19) requires you to pull over immediately when you observe emergency lights approaching from either direction. Move out of the lane of traffic and stop as near as possible on the right-hand shoulder of the roadway. Do not continue traveling to a location you believe is more suitable to stop; a police officer may be responding to another incident (crash, robbery, medical emergency, etc.) and drivers who remain in the traffic lane can inhibit law enforcement from assisting those in need.
- When stopped by a police officer, try to stay calm. Remember, the top priority for law enforcement is the safety and well-being of the travelling public. Law enforcement officers are trained to consider the totality of a situation before making any enforcement-related decisions.
- Place your vehicle in park. Turn off the ignition and put the keys on the dashboard in front of you.

- Do not exit the vehicle (unless asked to do so). At night or during low-light conditions, turn on your vehicle's interior dome light. Also, the officer will likely shine a bright light into your vehicle. This is to keep you and the officer safe.
- Place your hands in plain sight, preferably on top of the steering wheel. Keep movements to a minimum. Refrain from reaching into your clothing, purse, glove box, console, etc. to locate your license, registration or insurance cards. Wait for the officer to request such items.
- When the officer arrives at your window (this could be the driver or passenger side), comply with any orders. Provide clear and concise answers to the officer's questions.
- Be polite and patient. The officer may need time to verify your identification, etc. If you are given a citation, don't argue. You will have an opportunity before a judge or court to express any concerns.
- Always merge carefully when entering a highway.

2. How far ahead should you look when you are on the open highway?
3. How can you see if there is a car in your blind spot?
4. At what times does Wisconsin law say you must turn on headlights?
5. When else would you turn on your headlights?
6. What is a good rule of thumb for turning on your headlights?
7. You plan to pull into a driveway just beyond an intersection. When should you signal?
8. Name two places where you are likely to find slippery spots.
9. You are on a freeway entrance and have to wait for a gap in traffic before you can enter the roadway. What should you do?
10. What does a yellow sign mean?
11. What does an orange sign mean?
12. Under most conditions, what is the minimum safe following distance?
13. Name some conditions in which you need extra following distance.
14. What should you do if you are in an intersection and you hear a siren?
15. How do safety belts help you keep control of your car?
16. What should you do if you are involved in a crash with another car?
17. How many drinks does it take to affect your driving?
18. What drugs can affect your ability to drive safely?
19. What is "implied consent"?

## STUDY QUESTIONS

These questions will help you study what you have learned from reading this handbook. First, try to answer the questions without looking at the answers. The answers are listed next to the questions.

### Questions

1. At an intersection, drivers turning left must yield to what?

## Answers

1. Pedestrians and vehicles approaching from the opposite direction, including bicycles.
2. Ten to 15 seconds.
3. Look over your shoulder.
4. Wisconsin law says between half-an-hour after sunset and half-an-hour before sunrise and when you cannot see a vehicle or person on the roadway at a distance of 500 feet.
5. On rainy, snowy or foggy days, when it begins to get dark, and when driving away from a rising or setting sun.
6. A good rule to follow is to turn on your headlights when you need to turn on your wipers.
7. After you cross the intersection.
8. In shady spots and on overpasses and bridges.
9. Slow down on the entrance ramp to wait for a gap, then speed up so you enter at the same speed that traffic is moving.
10. Yellow signs warn of a special situation or a hazard ahead.
11. Orange signs warn of construction work ahead.
12. A minimum of four seconds is the recommended following distance under ideal conditions.
13. Driving on slippery roads.  
The driver wants to pass.  
Following a motorcycle.  
Following drivers who cannot see you (trucks, buses, vans or vehicles pulling campers or trailers).  
Have a heavy load or are pulling a trailer.  
It is hard to see.  
Being followed closely.  
Following emergency vehicles.  
Approaching railroad crossings.  
Stopping on a hill or incline.
14. Drive through the intersection, then pull over to the right side of the road and stop.
15. They protect you from injury and, as a driver, keep you behind the wheel if you are hit from the side or make a quick turn.
16. Stop at or near the crash site. If your vehicle can be moved, get it off the road. Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes. Turn off the ignition of wrecked vehicles. Stay away from downed power lines. Use triangles, flares or other warning devices to alert traffic. If someone is injured, get help. Help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Get names and addresses of persons involved and of witnesses. Exchange information with other drivers involved. Contact the police and give them information on the crash. If it is a reportable crash, file a report with the State Patrol within ten days if the police did not file a report.
17. Even one drink of alcohol can affect your driving.
18. Almost any drug, prescription or over-the-counter, can affect your ability to drive.
19. You will honor any request by police to take an alcohol concentration or other drug test.

## WISDOT CONTACT INFORMATION

### Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

- Obtain driver licensing and vehicle registration information online at [wisconsindmv.gov](http://wisconsindmv.gov)
- Obtain DMV services online at [wisconsindmv.gov/online](http://wisconsindmv.gov/online) including:
  - ◇ Schedule, cancel or verify your appointment for a skills (road) test
  - ◇ Change your address
  - ◇ Request your driver or vehicle record
  - ◇ Apply for a duplicate driver license or ID card
  - ◇ Check the status of your driver license
  - ◇ Look up your vehicle title transfer
  - ◇ Renew your license plate
  - ◇ And more!
- Email your driver license/ID card questions to [information.dmv@dot.wi.gov](mailto:information.dmv@dot.wi.gov)
- Email your vehicle titling/license plate questions to [vehiclequestions@dot.wi.gov](mailto:vehiclequestions@dot.wi.gov)
- Telephone DMV at (608) 264-7447
- Find your local DMV Customer Service Center, hours of operation and directions at [wisconsindmv.gov/online](http://wisconsindmv.gov/online)

### Publication notes

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### Wisconsin State Patrol

Southwest region: (608) 374-0513

Southeast region: (262) 785-4700

Northeast region: (920) 929-3700

North central region: (715) 845-1143

Northwest region: (715) 839-3800

### Wisconsin State Patrol office locations and contacts:

[wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/who-we-are/dsp/loc-contact.aspx](http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/who-we-are/dsp/loc-contact.aspx)



Wisconsin DMV: [wisconsindmv.gov](http://wisconsindmv.gov)

BDS126, Ch. 346 Wis. Stats.

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