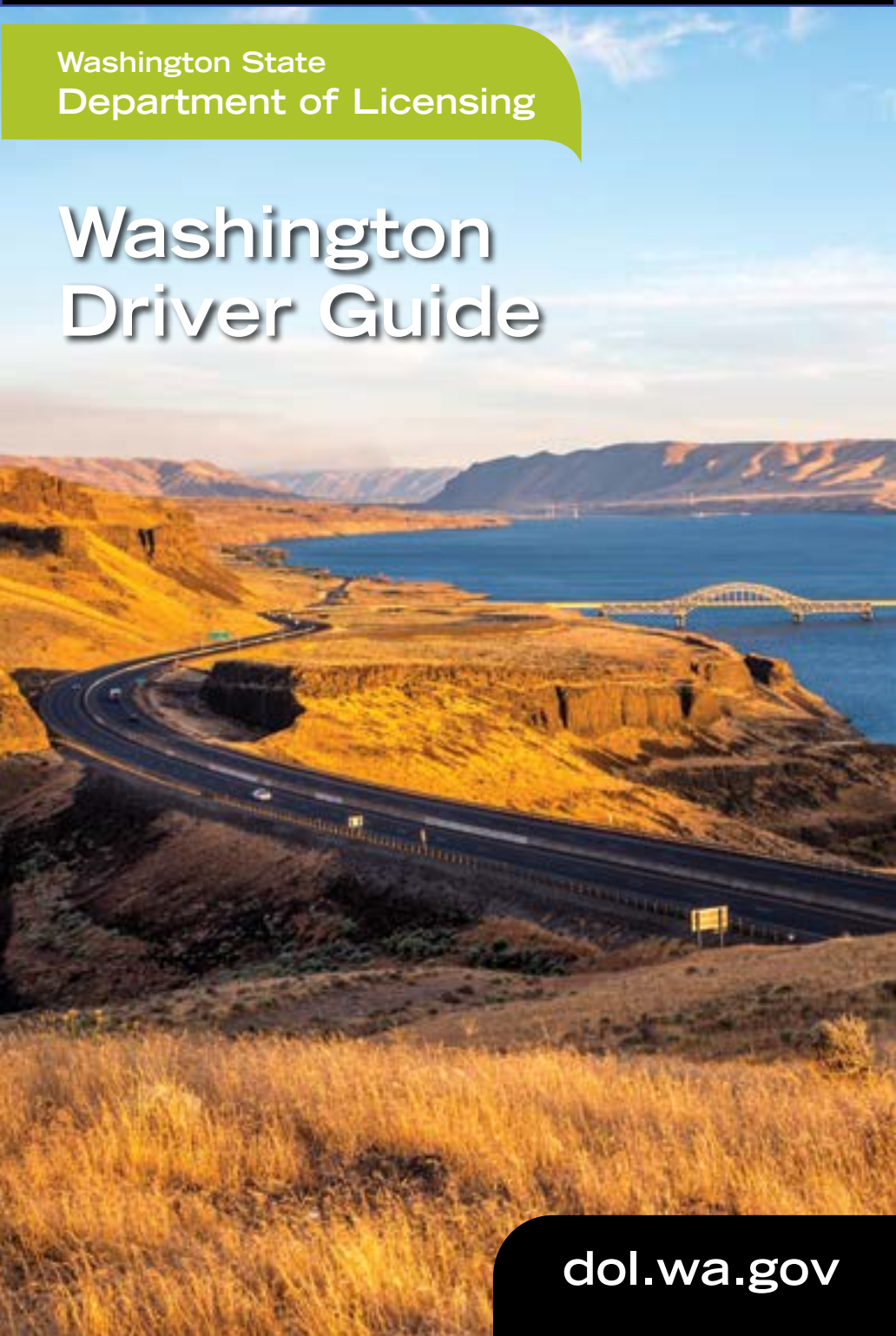
For audio: download, save, and open in Adobe Acrobat Reader DC.
Press Shift + Ctrl + Y to activate Read Out Loud, Shift + Ctrl + B to begin reading, and Shift + Ctrl + C to pause.

Washington State
Department of Licensing

Washington Driver Guide



dol.wa.gov

Warning Signs

Winding Road

Divided Highway (Road) Begins

Divided Highway (Road) Ends

Cross Road

Merging Traffic

Lane Ends Merge Left

Slippery When Wet

Signal Ahead

Hill

Two-Way Traffic

School Crossing *

Pedestrian Crossing *

Railroad Crossing

Advance Warning Bicycles

Soft Shoulder

Added Lane (from right, no merging required)

Deer Crossing

Curve Left 35 mph or less recommended

No Passing Zone

Slow Moving Vehicle

* Color can be fluorescent green or yellow

Graphics provided in cooperation with Washington State Department of Transportation.

STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Message from the Governor

As you begin your journey to become a licensed driver in our state, I would like to remind you how important it is to always drive responsibly and use good judgment behind the wheel. There are more than 5.5 million licensed drivers in Washington, and everyone has to learn and follow the traffic laws in the Washington Driver Guide to help us keep our communities safe.

Our state has a fantastic transportation system and thousands of great destinations. Please study this guide carefully to help ensure a lifetime of safe driving. Once you get your license and hit the open road, don't forget to share it with pedestrians and cyclists.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
Olympia, Washington 98504-8001

From the Director:

It's my privilege to welcome you as a Washington state driver, and share this guide that outlines the state's rules for Washington's roads and highways. Whether you are operating a car, truck, motorcycle or RV, or enjoying our communities as a bicyclist or pedestrian, everyone who uses our roads shares a responsibility to make transportation safe.

Careful attention to our driving actions and decisions is critical to making our roads safe for everyone. In 2017, 565 people died and 2,219 were seriously injured in traffic collisions. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 16 to 25 year olds in our state. Fatalities involving this age group in 2017 alone were 168 with another 736 seriously injured. The rules and best practices in this guide are proven tactics to save lives. I encourage you to learn about the state's traffic safety plan, called Target Zero. Go to **www.targetzero.com** for further information.

The Department of Licensing is honored to support you in becoming a safe and responsible driver. Let's all work together to make our state roads and highways safe for all who travel them.

Sincerely,

Teresa Berntsen

Teresa Berntsen
Director

Manage your driver license or ID card, cars, motorcycles, boats, trailers, and their addresses all in one place—anytime, anywhere.

Go online and skip a trip to an office: We wanted to give you a different experience. Something you can use anywhere at any time, because nobody wants to visit an office when they don't have to.

The benefits: You'll be able to see all your driving-related information in one place, including your addresses—something you can't do with our individual online services. You'll also see when your license or tabs are due for renewal in your personal 'To do' list.

It's safe and secure: We understand how important it is to protect your information. License eXpress, like all our other online services, is safe and secure.

Need to get your first Washington driver license? If you are 15 years of age or older, or are new to the state, use our online pre-application service. This will save you time when you visit our office. Fill out some basic information, then come into an office to complete the process.

To get started visit **www.dol.wa.gov**.

Services Available Online

For your convenience various services are available online at **www.dol.wa.gov**. Acceptable forms of payment for online services include Visa, MasterCard, or American Express debit or credit cards (gift cards not accepted). Please have your printer ready to print documentation if your online service requires it.

Driver Licensing

- Renew your driver license or ID card
- Change your driver license/ID card address
- Pre-apply for your first WA driver license or ID card

- Replace a lost or stolen driver license or ID card
- Purchase a driving record
- Learn how to reinstate your license
- Check the status of a driver license
- Submit your DUI hearing request
- Request an Original Driver License

Vehicle Registration

- Renew your vehicle tabs
- Report the sale of a vehicle
- Get/Update email renewal reminders (vehicles & boats)
- Change your vehicle address
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- Renew your boat registration
- Calculate your vehicle tab fees
- Estimate your Regional Transit Authority (RTA) excise tax

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Disclaimer

This guide should not be used as a basis for legal claims or actions. Traffic regulations in cities, towns, and counties may go beyond state laws but cannot conflict with them. If you are interested in specific laws relating to motor vehicle operation and driver licensing, refer to Title 46 RCW, Motor Vehicles. Please read it carefully.

We welcome your written comments or suggestions. Your comments should be addressed to:

Driver Examining
Department of Licensing
PO Box 9030
Olympia, WA 98507

You can always find the most recent version of this guide as well as other current information on our website at **www.dol.wa.gov**.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
LICENSING

We are committed to providing equal access to our services.
For information go to dol.wa.gov/access (TDD/TYY call 711).

THE DRIVER LICENSE

You must have a valid driver license to legally operate a motor vehicle, motorcycle, moped, or motor-driven cycle on public roadways in Washington State.

Washington Residents

To legally operate a vehicle on public roadways, Washington residents must hold a Washington State driver license. You are a resident if you do any of the following:

- register to vote in this state.
- receive payments, financial aid, or other public welfare benefits from the state or a local government.
- get any state license at the resident rate.
- pay in-state tuition fees as a student.
- intend to live in this state for more than six months in any one year.

New Residents

You must get a Washington State driver license within 30 days of the date you become a resident.

You may not need to take the knowledge test or the driving test if your out-of-state license is valid when you apply for a Washington license. If you are under 18, you must show proof that you have completed a driver-training course meeting Washington State standards before we will issue a Washington intermediate driver license. Visit **www.dol.wa.gov** for more information about our driver-training requirements.

Nonresidents and Visitors

If you are a nonresident or a short-term visitor, you can operate a motor vehicle in this state if you have a valid driver license from your home state, province, territory, or country and you are at least 16 years old. This applies to:

- members of the Armed Forces on active duty or members of a foreign military on temporary duty with the Armed Forces, as well as their spouses and children.
- students who are here to further their education and who are considered nonresidents for tuition purposes.
- employees of companies licensed to do business in Washington State, who are here for a short time to receive or give job instruction.
- foreign tourists, teachers, or business people who are here for up to one year.

Real ID

By October 1, 2020, standard driver licenses will no longer be an acceptable form of identification for boarding domestic flights and entering some secure federal facilities, like military bases and nuclear power plants. Go to Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) website (**www.tsa.gov**) for a complete list of federally approved forms of identification.

Even though the effective date for REAL ID is October 1, 2020, it only affects people who want to travel by plane or access certain secure federal facilities. A standard driver license will work for the U.S. travel like driving in Washington, across state lines, or riding a train.

Washington's enhanced driver licenses (EDLs) are REAL ID compliant and valid for air travel within the United States.

A full list of document options you need to obtain an enhanced driver license or ID card is available at **www.dol.wa.gov/driverlicense/edlget.html**.

Visit **www.ID2020wa.com**, to view informational videos, take a quiz to help determine which ID you need, and learn more about REAL ID.

For more information about REAL ID and what it means for Washington, visit **www.dol.wa.gov/about/real-id-overview.html**.

Types of Driver Licenses

Instruction Permit – This permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle within Washington State while you are being supervised by a licensed driver with at least five years of licensed driving experience. The licensed driver must sit in the right-front passenger seat.

This permit might not be valid in another state. Contact the intended state of travel to determine if they honor the document.

Intermediate Driver License – If you are 16 or 17 and meet the requirements, we will issue you an intermediate license with restrictions meant to ease you into your responsibilities as a driver.

Standard Driver License – This allows you to operate a motor vehicle on public roadways. Your license is valid for up to six years from the date of your last birthday. If you are 16 or 17 years old, you will first receive an intermediate driver license. The standard driver license is not Real ID compliant.

Enhanced Driver License – Washington's enhanced driver license (EDL) and identification card (EID) are REAL ID compliant and valid for air travel within the United States and can be used to cross the borders of Canada and Mexico by land or sea. For more information, visit our website or see the Enhanced Driver License and ID card brochure available at any of our offices.

Motorcycle or Trike Instruction Permit – These allow you to operate a motorcycle or a three-wheeled motorcycle-based vehicle on public roadways. For more information, visit **www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/motoendorsement.html**.

Commercial Learner Permit (CLP) and Commercial Driver License (CDL) – These allow you to operate a commercial vehicle on public roadways. For more information, see the Commercial Driver Guide available at **www.dol.wa.gov** or at any driver licensing office.

Getting Your License

You can get an instruction permit or a driver license at any driver licensing office. Some offices do not offer testing, so before you come in, be sure the one you plan to visit offers the testing you need. In an effort to reduce wait times, legislation was passed to allow driver training schools, licensed by the Department of Licensing, and school districts that offer a traffic safety education program, under the supervision of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to administer driver licensing examinations. A list of approved schools, as well as driver licensing offices, can be found on our website. Please contact an approved school for their specific testing requirements.

To be issued an **instruction permit**, you must:

- be at least 15-1/2 years old (or 15 years old if enrolled in an approved driver-training course);
- pass the knowledge test (unless enrolled in an approved driver-training course);
- complete the vision and medical screenings, and;
- pay an application/examination fee.

If you are under 18, you must also bring your parent or guardian with you to the licensing office when you apply. They must show proof of identity and proof of relationship to you and must also sign a Parental Authorization Affidavit. **When last names are different, we require more documents proving relationship.** The permit is valid for one year and you can renew it.

If you are enrolled in an approved driver-training course you can get an instruction permit at age 15. You will need a waiver from your school, allowing you to apply for the permit up to 10 days before the class starts. The waiver allows you to be issued a permit without taking the knowledge test, however, you will be required to take the knowledge and skills test as part of your future license application.

To be issued an **intermediate driver license**, you must:

- be between the ages of 16 and 18 years old.
- show us proof that you have passed an approved driver-training course with at least **30 hours of classroom** and **six hours of behind-the-wheel** instruction.
- get the consent of your parent or guardian.
- pass the medical and vision screenings, the knowledge test, and the driving test.
- have had an instruction permit for at least six months.
- show us that your parent or guardian certifies you have had at least 50 hours of driving experience, including 10 hours at night, which you gained while a licensed driver with at least five years of licensed driving experience supervised you.
- not have been issued a traffic ticket that is pending when you apply for your license.
- not have been convicted of and must not have been found to have committed a traffic violation within the last six months before the day you apply for your license.
- not have been convicted of and must not have been found to have committed an offense involving the use of alcohol or drugs while you had an instruction permit.
- provide your Social Security number, which we will verify when you apply for a driver license (42 USC 405 and 666(a)(13), RCW 26.23.150). If you have not been issued a number, you can sign a Social Security Number Declaration.

An intermediate license comes with these driving restrictions:

- you cannot drive between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless you are with a parent, a guardian, or a licensed driver who is at least 25 years old.
- for the **first six months**, no passenger under the age of 20 may be with you while you drive unless that person is a member of your immediate family.

- for the remaining time, no more than three passengers under the age of 20 may be with you while you drive unless they are members of your immediate family.
- may not use a cell phone or other wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle unless the holder is using the device to report illegal activity, summon medical or other emergency help, or prevent injury to a person or property.

There are tough penalties in the first year:

- First violation – the passenger and nighttime restrictions are extended until age 18 and a warning letter is sent to you and your parent or guardian if you receive a ticket for violating the restrictions or any other traffic law or you are involved in an collision where:
  - you receive a ticket.
  - you are determined to have caused the collision.
  - no one involved in the collision receives a ticket.
  - no one was found to cause the collision.
  - only your car was involved in the collision.
- Second violation – you are suspended for six months (or until age 18 if that comes first).
- Third violation – you are suspended until age 18.

You and your parent, or guardian, are notified before any suspension action is taken.

On your 18th birthday, your license will become a standard driver license without the intermediate license restrictions. You do not need to visit a driver licensing office to make this change.

To get a **standard driver license**, you must:

- be at least 18 years old.
- show us acceptable proof of identity and age.

- provide your Social Security number, which we will verify when you apply for a driver license (42 USC 405 and 666(a)(13), RCW 26.23.150). If you have not been issued a number, you can sign a Social Security Number Declaration.
- show us acceptable proof of Washington State residence.
- pay an application/examination fee.
- pass the medical and vision screenings, the knowledge test, and the driving test.
- turn in any other driver licenses.
- not have a currently suspended, revoked, or cancelled driving privilege.
- pay the licensing fee.

You can get a first driver license without showing complete proof of identity, though you must show proof of your name of record and date of birth. The license will be marked "Not Valid for Identification" until you show us complete proof of identity.

Proof of Identity and Residency

To get your license, you will need to show proof of identity and proof of Washington state residency. Our identification requirements can be complex. We recommend visiting our website at **www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/gettingalicense.html** to understand what you'll need to provide to get your license.

Vision and Medical Screenings

We will check your vision before we issue a license. If corrective lenses are used to meet vision standards, your license will reflect this with the appropriate restriction. We will also ask you whether you have a mental or physical condition or are taking any medication which could impair your ability to operate a motor vehicle. If so, we may require you to be examined by an eye care or medical specialist before we proceed with your application.

The Knowledge Test

The knowledge test is used to ensure you understand road signs, traffic laws, and safe-driving practices before you drive on the roadways. Everything you must learn to pass the test is in this guide. You may take the test at any approved driver training school in the state. If you take your test at a driver licensing office that offers testing, it will be taken on a computer unless you need special accommodation. It is a multiple-choice test with 40 questions, and you must correctly answer 32 of them to pass the test. A passing test score is good for two years.

The Driving Test

The driving test is used to ensure you are able to legally and safely drive on the roadways. An examiner will ride with you to ensure that the vehicle is safe to drive, that you maintain control of the vehicle, and that you obey the rules of the road. The examiner will not try to confuse or trick you, and will not ask you to do anything that is illegal. You may ask questions before the test begins; once the test has begun, any unnecessary talking will only cause distractions for you and the examiner. Scoring is done throughout the test.

If you are testing for a Washington License, you must:

- first pass the knowledge test.
- bring a vehicle. It must be legally licensed and registered, and it must not have defective parts. All brakes, brake lights, turn signals, tires, seat belts, and windshield wipers will be checked before the test begins.
- present acceptable proof of liability insurance showing the policy holder's name or the vehicle's description and the dates of insurance coverage.

Only you, the examiner, a service animal, and an interpreter for the deaf or hard of hearing are allowed in the vehicle during the test. Foreign language interpreters, parents, children, or pets cannot be in the vehicle.

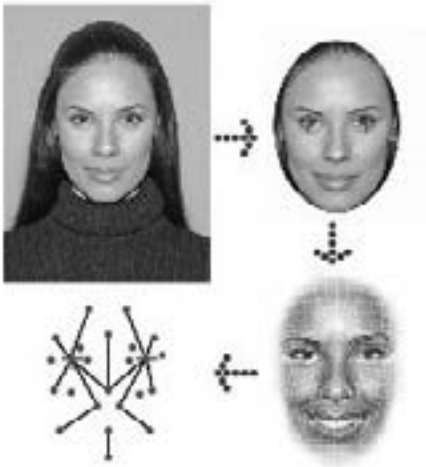
During the test, you must:

- show correct arm and hand signals when asked to do so. You may use automatic signals during the test. You must use hand signals when signal lights cannot be seen by other drivers. Signal even when no one is nearby to see it.
- turn your head and look to the rear for motor vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians when you are backing your vehicle. If you cannot see through the rear window, use the side windows and mirrors. Do not back the vehicle until you can do so safely.
- stop completely at all stop signs and signals. Do not stop in crosswalks or beyond stop lines.
- obey all rules of the road.
- be attentive to surrounding motor vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- demonstrate safe driving habits throughout the test.

If testing with a driver training school you will need to schedule an appointment with the school to complete the required tests. If testing with the Department of Licensing, you may make an appointment for the driving test only after you have passed the knowledge test and provided proof of residency. You should arrive 15 minutes early for your driving test. Let us know you have arrived, if we have requested that you do so. For the list of testing locations in the area you live in visit the website at **www.dol.wa.gov**.

Your Photograph

Your new driver license, instruction permit, or ID card will include a photo showing a full front view of your face. Before we take your photo, we will ask you to remove anything that obstructs a full view of your face and head (like a hat, sunglasses, or hair in the face). If you choose not to remove it, your license will be marked “Not Valid for Identification.” We will make exceptions for medical and religious reasons.



As part of our ongoing efforts to uphold the integrity of Washington documents and prevent fraudulent activity, an accurate and non-obtrusive Facial Recognition System (FRS) is used. The FRS works behind the scenes after you have a taken your photo, constructing a unique digital template developed from facial features that are difficult to alter (eye sockets, cheekbones, and sides of your mouth). Your unique template is then compared against all other templates in our database and any possible matches that are detected will be reviewed by specially-trained Department of Licensing (DOL) staff. Use of this system and its results are not shared with other agencies without a court order unless DOL has determined that an applicant has committed a prohibited practice under RCW 46.20.0921.

Driver License Renewal

Your renewed license can be valid for up to six years and will expire on your birthday. You may renew up to one year before your license expires. We will mail a courtesy reminder notice to your address of record six weeks before your license expires. The notice will inform you if you may renew online, by mail, or if you must instead renew in-person at a driver licensing office. If you renew in-person, bring your current license or other proof of identity. If you wear contact lenses or glasses, bring them with you for the vision test. We may also require you to take the knowledge and driving tests.

In addition to the cost for a license renewal, you will pay additional fees if you have motorcycle or CDL endorsements.

If you renew your license more than 60 days after it has expired, you must pay an additional late fee.

Replacement License

If your license is lost, stolen, destroyed, or illegible, you may apply for a replacement at any driver licensing office, or request a duplicate online at **www.dol.wa.gov**.

Visit our website for information about identity theft and fraud.

Change of Address or Name

You must notify the Department within ten days of:

- an address change.
- a legal name change.

A name change may only be made in-person and you must bring documents proving identity in your new name. Address changes can be done online at **www.dol.wa.gov**.

Washington State requires that all documents, other than ID cards, list your physical Washington residence address. A separate mailing address can be added in addition to the physical address upon request. Your driver license, identification card, or instruction permit will be sent to your mailing address if one is provided.

Keeping Your Driver License

To keep your driver license, you must drive safely at all times. You can lose your license for:

- driving or being in physical control of a vehicle while you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- refusing to allow a police officer to test you for alcohol.
- leaving the scene of a collision in which you were involved, without first identifying yourself.

- giving false information when you apply for a license.
- being involved in a collision when you are uninsured. We may suspend the license of an uninsured driver, and/or owner, involved in a collision for up to three years. Also, failing to settle a civil court judgment resulting from the collision can result in a suspension for 13 or more years.
- failing to appear and complete a reexamination that we have requested within the required period of time.
- using a motor vehicle to commit a felony or for causing the death of someone in a motor vehicle collision.
- having too many moving traffic violations on your driving record (Habitual Traffic Offender).
- reckless driving or reckless endangerment of a roadway worker.
- racing, vehicular assault, or vehicular homicide.
- trying to elude a police vehicle.
- leaving a gas station without paying for fuel you have pumped.
- failing to appear or failing to respond to a traffic citation or Notice of Infraction for a moving traffic violation.
- driving while your license is suspended, revoked, cancelled, or denied.
- carrying a license that shows a false name, incorrect information, or fraudulent alterations.
- lending a license to another person or for using another person's license.
- using a driver license issued by another state while your driving privilege in Washington is suspended.
- receiving two or more traffic offenses while driving with an intermediate license.
- making, selling, or delivering a forged, false, counterfeit, altered, blank, or unlawfully issued driver license or identification card.

Failure to Appear

A Failure to Appear (FTA) notice is the result of failing to appear for, comply with, respond to, or pay a traffic infraction or criminal citation for a moving traffic offense.

If you get a ticket, instructions to help you comply will be printed on the back. If you don't comply within 15 days, the court notifies us and we will mail you a Notice of Suspension. You then have 45 days to comply or we will suspend your driving privilege. You also have the right to request an administrative review. If you comply within the 45 days, the suspension will not go into effect.

If you do not comply, we will suspend your driving privilege and you must not drive. You may be arrested and your vehicle may be impounded if you are caught driving while your privilege is suspended.

An FTA violation will prevent us from issuing any license until it has been resolved and an adjudication is presented. Suspensions resulting from FTA violations will require a reissue fee in addition to the cost of your service. A reissuance of the license is required after your driving privilege has been released from a suspension. Check Online Services (Learn how to reinstate your license) before arriving at your local office.

Sex-Offender/Kidnapping Offender Registration

State law requires state and local departments to notify the county sheriff of any person residing in this state who has been found to have committed or been convicted of any sex or kidnapping offense. Sex offenders and kidnapping offenders in Washington State must register within three business days of establishing, or re-establishing, residence. The duty to register under this requirement applies to those convicted under the laws of another state, foreign country, federal or military statutes, or Washington State law. Out-of-state offenders must register if convicted of any federal or out of state offenses that would be classified as a sex or kidnapping offense under Washington State laws, or the state of conviction, unless a court in the state of conviction has determined the offender

should not be required to register. These persons must register with the sheriff of the county in which they reside. Failure to register may result in criminal prosecution. Contact your county sheriff for information.

Other Licensing Services

Identification cards – We issue photo identification cards to non-drivers of any age. You must show the same identification that we require for a driver license.

Voter registration – You may register to vote at any driver licensing office if you meet the following requirements. You must be:

- a United States citizen whose civil rights are not currently revoked.
- a Washington State resident.
- at least 18.

If you have moved, you may change your voter registration at the same time you submit a change of address.

Federal Selective Service System Registration – All male applicants applying for a driver's license, instruction permit, intermediate license, and ID card who are under the age of 26 must be given the opportunity to register with the Selective Service System (SSS). An applicant who declines to register with the SSS may not be denied the requested document if they meet all of the other requirements to receive the requested document.

Organ Donor Program – We will ask if you wish to be an organ donor at the time of issuance. The donor symbol will appear on your license and your information will be given to the donor registry to ensure your wishes will be carried out. For more information, call LifeCenter Northwest at 1-877-275-5269 or visit the registry website at **www.donatelifetoday.com**.

Twin Registry – We will ask you if you are a twin or triplet in cooperation with the University of Washington. The university has the largest twin registry in the United States. The registry is helpful for medical research to help determine if a disease is

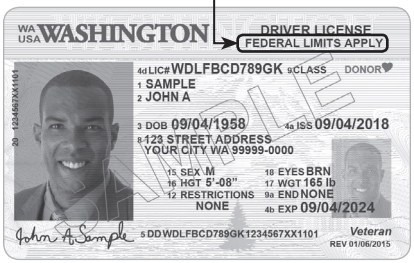
caused by environmental factors or genetics. If you have any questions about the Twin Registry please call the University of Washington at 1-888-223-0868.

Abstract of driving record – We keep a record of license applications, traffic infractions, convictions for motor vehicle violations, collision involvement, and Failure-to-Appear notices for every driver in the state. For a fee, we are allowed to provide a copy of your record to you, an insurance carrier, an employer, and some volunteer organizations, attorneys, governmental agencies, drug/alcohol treatment agencies, and school districts where you provide transportation. A certified record is also available online at www.dol.wa.gov."

Choose the type of identification that works best for you!

Standard Driver License/ID

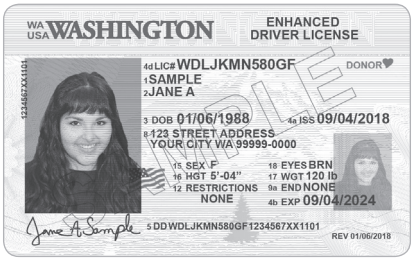
(not Real ID compliant)



- ✓ **Identification**
- ✓ **Operating a motor vehicle** (driver license only)
- ● **Domestic air travel** (until Sept 30, 2020)
- ✓ **Access to federal facilities that don't require ID**
- ✗ **Access to federal facilities that require ID**
- ✗ **International border crossing by land or sea**

Enhanced Driver License/ID

(Real ID compliant)



- ✓ **Identification**
- ✓ **Operating a motor vehicle** (driver license only)
- ✓ **Domestic air travel**
- ✓ **Access to federal facilities that don't require ID**
- ✓ **Access to federal facilities that require ID**
- ✓ **International border crossing by land or sea**

For more information:
www.dol.wa.gov

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

BEFORE YOU DRIVE

Your safety and that of the public can depend on what you do before and while driving. Things like adjusting the seat, mirrors, using safety belts, checking your vehicle, locking your doors, maintaining a clear view, and securing items in and on the vehicle minimizes the risk you present out on the road.

Understand Risk

Risk is generated by all three components of the Highway Transportation System: the driver, the vehicle, and the roadway environment. Even though risk is always present, driving safely can reduce it.

As a driver, you should try to do everything possible to reduce risk. The more risk factors that are present, the more likely it is that you will be involved in a collision. Keeping the vehicle in good working order and wearing seat belts can reduce risk. Safe driving habits will also protect you and reduce risk.

Each year from 2009 to 2011, an average of 469 people died and 2,421 people were seriously injured on Washington's roadways. Even though every collision is different, here are the most common factors that are present in fatal crashes:

- Driver impairment: 50.1%
- Running off the roadway: 43.7%
- Speeding: 39.5%
- Young driver (16-25 years old): 34.6%
- Driver distraction: 30.3%
- Unrestrained occupants: 24.8%
- Errors at intersections: 20.6%

Overall, at least one of the top three factors was present in 72% of all traffic fatalities, and 17% involved all three.

Young drivers face increased risks due to their inexperience. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people ages 16 to 25 in Washington. Drivers in this age group

have the highest crash rate, and the highest rates of speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving of any driver age group in the state. From 2009-2011, nearly 35% of traffic fatalities involved a young driver age 16 to 25. In that same time frame, young drivers were involved in 38% of all serious injury collisions even though they only represented 14% of the driving population.

If you are a young driver, you should be aware of the increased risks you face. Following all traffic laws and making safe driving decisions will help you avoid a crash.

Insurance Required

If you operate a motor vehicle registered in this state, you must have liability insurance and carry proof that you have such insurance. Drivers of government vehicles, mopeds, and common or contract carrier vehicles are exempt from this insurance requirement.

You must have an automobile liability policy or bond from a state-approved insurance or surety company that provides the following:

- $25,000 or more, payable for the bodily injury or death of one person in a collision in which only one person was injured or killed.
- $50,000 or more, payable for the bodily injury or death of two or more persons in any one collision, and;
- $10,000 or more, payable for injury to or destruction of property of others in any one collision.

Check the Vehicle

Your safety and minimizing risk on the road, starts with the vehicle you are driving. It is the duty of drivers to make certain that the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle that is not working properly creates risk, is unsafe, and costs more to run than one that is maintained. It can also break down or cause a collision. If a vehicle is not working well, you might not be able to get out of an emergency situation. A vehicle in good

working order can give you an extra safety margin when you need it most.

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

Braking system – Only your brakes can stop your vehicle. It is very dangerous if they are not working properly. If they do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, smell funny, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

Lights – Make sure that turn signals, brake lights, tail lights, and headlights are operating properly. These should be checked from the outside of the vehicle. Brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping and turn signals tell them you are turning. Passenger trucks, cars, vans, and sport utility vehicles (SUVs) manufactured after 1993 must have a third rear brake light mounted high in the center of the vehicle.

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

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

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

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

Worn tires can cause hydroplaning and increase the chance of a flat tire. Check the tread with a penny. Stick the penny into the tread, head first. If the tread does not come at least to Lincoln's head (2/32 inch), the tire is illegal and unsafe and you need to replace it.

Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the recommended pressure.

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

Never turn your vehicle's ignition to the "lock" position while it is in motion. This will cause the steering to lock if you try to turn the steering wheel and you will lose control of your vehicle.

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

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. Gases from a leaky exhaust can cause death inside a vehicle in a very short time. Never run the motor in a closed garage. If you sit in a vehicle with the motor running for a long time, open a window.

Some exhaust leaks are easily heard but many are not. This is why it is important to have the exhaust system checked periodically.

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

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

Loose objects – Unsecured objects, such as groceries or luggage, can become dangerous in a collision or a sudden stop. Put loose objects into the vehicle's storage compartments or trunk. If this isn't possible, secure the objects in place. Make sure there are no objects at your feet or under your seats that could roll under the pedals or distract you while you drive.

Litter – The fines for littering are severe. Vehicle drivers and passengers should always properly dispose of all waste paper, glass, plastic, and potentially dangerous materials.

Secure Your Load

Driving with an unsecured load is both against the law and extremely dangerous. Drivers who fail to properly secure their load may face a costly fine and jail time if they cause a crash. According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, roughly 40% of highway litter comes from unsecured loads, which causes hundreds of crashes per year on our roadways. A load must be securely fastened and is only considered secure when nothing can slide, shift, fall, or sift onto the roadway, or become airborne.

To secure the load in your vehicle or trailer:

- Tie it down with rope, netting, or straps.
- Tie large objects directly to your vehicle or trailer.
- Consider covering the entire load with a sturdy tarp or netting.
- Don't overload your vehicle or trailer.
- Always double-check your load to make sure it's secure.
- Don't forget that animals should also be properly secured.

Before you drive, ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any chance of debris or cargo falling or blowing out of my vehicle?
- Is my load secured at the back, sides, and top?
- What would happen to my load if I had to brake suddenly, I hit a bump, or another vehicle hit me?
- Would I want my loaded vehicle driving through my neighborhood?
- Would I feel safe if I were driving behind my vehicle?

Maria's Law

In 2004, a young woman was critically injured on I-405 in Renton when an entertainment center fell from the back of a trailer being pulled by a vehicle in front of her. A 2-by-6-foot piece of particle board flew through her windshield, hitting her in the face. She permanently lost her eyesight and has endured numerous surgeries including complete facial reconstruction.

As a result of this tragic incident and others like it, Washington passed "Maria's Law" in 2005, which made failing to properly secure a load a crime in Washington State. A person who causes an injury or death by failing to secure a load properly can be charged with a gross misdemeanor and can face a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a $5,000 fine. A driver whose unsecured items cause property damage can be charged with a misdemeanor.

You can view a video by the Washington State Patrol about securing your load at the **www.dol.wa.gov** website, under our featured videos. If you see a vehicle driving with an unsecured load, you should stay as far away as possible and call 911 when it is safe for you to do so.

Secure your load as if everyone you love is driving in the car behind you.

Clean Glass Surfaces

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

- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Carry liquid cleaner and a paper or cloth towel so you can clean your windshield whenever it is necessary.
- Keep your window washer bottle full. Use antifreeze wash in areas where the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Keep the inside of your windows clean, especially if anyone has been smoking in the vehicle. Smoking causes a film to build up on the inside glass.
- Clear snow, ice, or frost from *all windows* before driving.
- Do not hang things from your mirror or clutter the windshield with decals. They could block your view.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake, and tail lights clean. Dirt on the lenses can reduce the light by 50 percent.

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

You should always check and adjust your seat and mirrors before you start to drive:

- You may not drive with more than three people in the front seat if it blocks your view or interferes with the control of your vehicle. You should have clear vision in all directions, all controls should be within reach, and at least one-third of the steering wheel should be between your hands.
- Adjust your seat so that you are high enough to clearly see the road. If necessary, use a seat cushion. Do not move the seat so far forward that you cannot easily steer. You should sit so the air bag will hit you in the chest if there is a collision. Also, sit so you can touch the floor below the brake pedal with your feet.
- Adjust your rear view mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view mirror.

Adjust the side mirrors so that you can see a small amount of the side of your vehicle when you lean forward slightly. This will help you see the traffic behind you.

- 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.

Always Use Seat Belts and Child Restraints

In Washington State it is illegal to drive or to be a passenger without properly wearing seat belts or using child safety restraints.

Buckling up correctly is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. Being correctly buckled helps keep you secure in the vehicle; being thrown out is almost always deadly. Regardless of how brief the drive, always fasten your seat belt and make sure all passengers are correctly using seat belts, child safety restraints, or booster seats. Also remember to lock the vehicle's doors. Locking reduces the risk of doors opening during a sudden swerve, braking, or crash.

Specifically, the law states: "Every person sixteen years of age or older operating or riding in a motor vehicle shall wear the safety belt assembly in a properly adjusted and securely fastened manner". (See below for the specific law related to restraining children). The driver can be cited and fined if not properly wearing a seat belt. The driver will also be fined for any passengers under age 16 who are not properly wearing a seat belt or secured in a child safety restraint. Passengers over 16 years are responsible for wearing their seat belts and for paying any fine.

Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. People who are unrestrained when an air bag deploys risk serious injury or death because they will not be properly positioned to benefit from the cushioning that air bags provide. Children in the front seat, whether in safety seats or seat belts, can be injured or killed when the airbag deploys.

- If your vehicle has a two-part seat belt system, be sure to wear and properly adjust both parts. If you have an automatic shoulder belt, be sure to buckle your lap belt as well.
- How to buckle up correctly for the best safety:
  - put the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck.
  - adjust the lap belt across your hip bones **below** your stomach.
  - NEVER put the shoulder belt behind your back or under an arm.

The Occupant Protection law in Washington State is "primary enforcement", meaning a law enforcement officer can stop and cite drivers when they or their passengers are seen to not be wearing their seat belt.

Restraining children – Car crashes are the number one killer of children 1 to 12 years old in the United States. The best way to protect child passengers in the car is to put them in the right seat for them, and use it the right way every time you or others travel with your child.

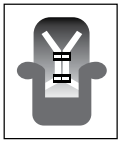
- Select a child safety restraint based on your child's age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it correctly every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions and read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the child safety restraint using the seat belt or LATCH system. Also check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your children in the child safety restraint that is right for them for as long as possible… as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.

Washington's child restraint law requires:

- children under 13 years old are to be transported in the back seat where it is practical to do so.
- children up to their 8th birthday, unless they are 4'9" tall (whichever comes first), must use a child safety restraint. They should not move to a seat belt before they are ready per height and age.
- the restraint system must be used exactly and according to BOTH the safety seat AND vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
- vehicles equipped with lap-only seat belts are exempt from the requirement to use a booster seat for a child weighing more than 40 pounds.
- children 8 years of age or at least 4'9" who wear a seat belt MUST use it correctly (never under the arm or behind the back) or continue to use a child safety restraint.

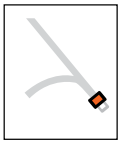
Child safety restraints include:

A REAR-FACING CAR SEAT is the best seat for your young child to use. It has a harness, that in a crash, cradles and moves with your child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.



A FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT has a harness and tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash.

A BOOSTER SEAT positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body.



A SEAT BELT should lie across the hip bones and be snug across the shoulder and chest to restrain the child safely in a crash. It should not rest on the stomach area or across the neck.

For more information about child passenger safety, call:

- The Washington Child Passenger Safety Program Manager at 253-447-3257; or
- The Washington Traffic Safety Commission at: **www.wtsc.wa.gov** or 360-725-9860; or
- The Washington State Safety Restraint Coalition: 1-800-BUCK-L-UP

Additional Requirements

- Any vehicle manufactured after January 1964 and registered in Washington State, must have front lap-type seat belts.
- Passenger vehicles manufactured after January 1968, and trucks and multi-purpose passenger vehicles manufactured after January 1972, must have lap and shoulder belts or a lap belt at all seating positions.
- Vans, motor homes, and vehicles carrying chassis mounted campers manufactured after January 1976, must have seat belts at all seating positions.
- Vehicles 1986 and newer are required to have designated areas for tethering forward facing child restraints.
- Vehicles from December 11, 1989 and newer are required to have lap/shoulder belts in the back seat outboard positions.
- Most vehicles from 1996 and newer have switchable retractors.
- Starting September 1, 2000, most vehicles have tether anchors installed.
- Starting September 1, 2002, child restraints and vehicles equipped with LATCH capability.
- Starting in 2008, all new passenger vehicles are required to have lap/shoulder in all rear seating positions.

Text Talk TICKET

Hang Up & Drive

Tickets For Violators

Washington's cell phone law is in effect—with strict police enforcement. If police see you holding a phone to your ear or texting while driving, they can pull you over. Tickets are costly and could be more if your distracted driving causes a collision.

> **"We will fully enforce this law from day one…in hopes of preventing these needless tragedies."**
>
> State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste

This Law Means:

- No talking on handheld cell phones while driving.
- No texting while driving.
- Teens with intermediate driver licenses or learner permits may not use a wireless device at all while driving, including hands-free devices, unless they're reporting an emergency.

This law is not meant to encourage the use of hands-free devices. **Hands-free devices offer no safety benefit.** Parking your phone is the only safe way to drive.

Pulling to the shoulder to talk on the phone or text is rarely a safe option and should only be done in an emergency.

For more information, go to:
www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/distracteddriving.html

RULES OF THE ROAD

There are traffic rules that say where, when, and how fast you can drive. These rules help 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, pavement markings, and roundabouts. Traffic control also can be provided by law enforcement, highway construction or maintenance personnel, or school crossing guards. You must obey directions from these persons.

If a traffic signal is not working, come to a complete stop, then yield to traffic as if it were a four-way stop. Proceed only when you see it is safe, or when a police officer, fire fighter, or traffic control person directs you.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals are lights that tell you when or where to stop and go. A green light means you can go if it is safe. A yellow light means caution and a red light means stop.

Traffic lights are usually at intersections and are red, yellow, and green, from top to bottom or left to right. There are some intersections and other locations where there are single green, yellow, or red lights. A **green traffic light** means you can go through the intersection. You must yield to emergency vehicles and others as required by law. If you are stopped and the light turns green, you must allow crossing traffic to clear the intersection before you go ahead. If you are turning left, 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. A **green arrow** means you can safely turn in the direction of the arrow. There should be no oncoming or crossing traffic while the arrow is green. When turning right or left, watch for pedestrians or bicyclists crossing in front of your vehicle. You must stop for pedestrians and bicyclists if they are in, or within, one lane of your half of the roadway. Drivers must take all necessary precautions to avoid injury when approaching

users of wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, white canes, and guide dogs or service animals. Drivers who fail to take such precautions may be liable in damages for any injury caused to users of these devices.

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 and proceed with caution. A **yellow arrow** means that the protection of a green arrow is ending and if you are turning in the direction of the arrow, you should prepare to stop and give the right-of-way to oncoming traffic before turning. A **flashing yellow arrow** means left turns are allowed, but you must yield to oncoming traffic including bicyclists and pedestrians.

A steady **red traffic light** means stop. You must wait until the traffic light turns green and there is no crossing traffic before you may move ahead. If you are turning right, you may turn after coming to a full stop if it is safe and if there is no sign prohibiting the turn on a red light. You may also turn left onto a one-way street with traffic moving left after coming to a full stop if there is no sign prohibiting turns on a red light. Be careful of pedestrians and bicyclists crossing in front of your vehicle. A **flashing red** traffic light means the same as a stop sign. You must come to a full stop and then may proceed when it is safe to do so. A **red arrow** means you must stop and you cannot go in the direction of the arrow. You may proceed when the red arrow goes out and a green arrow or light goes on. If you are turning right, you may turn after coming to a full stop if it is safe and if there is no sign prohibiting the turn on a red arrow. You may also turn left onto a one-way street with traffic moving left after coming to a full stop if there is no sign prohibiting turns on a red arrow when it is safe to do so. Drivers will yield to crossing bicyclists and pedestrians.

Traffic Signs

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

information they provide. The inside cover of this guide shows the shape and color of common signs.

Warning signs – These signs are usually yellow with black lettering or symbols and most are diamond shaped. These signs warn you to slow down and be prepared to stop if necessary. They warn you of sharp curves, special situations, speed zones, or hazards ahead. Some common warning signs are shown below.

Warning

Speed Zone Ahead

Workers

Yield Ahead

Stop Ahead

Lane Ends, Merge Left

Advance Warning: Bicycle

Pedestrian Crossing

School Crossing

Divided Highway (Road) Begins

Divided Highway (Road) Ends

Added Lane

Slippery When Wet

Sharp Curve Right

Hill

Speed Zone Ahead

Railroad crossing warning signs – Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to warn drivers to slow down and yield to trains. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Never start to cross until the traffic clears ahead. Wait until there is room on the far side so you will not have to stop on the tracks. It is wise not to shift gears when crossing railroad tracks, just in case you stall. Trains are large and may be moving faster than they look, it can take up to a mile for a train to come to a full stop with 100 cars; trains cannot yield to cars. Be aware that trains can come from opposite directions at the same time. Some common railroad crossing warning signs and signals are:

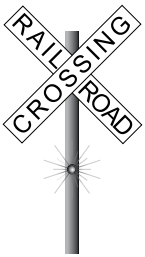
- a round yellow warning sign with an "X" symbol and black "RR" letters is placed along the road before you get to a railroad crossing.
- a white X-shaped sign or "crossbuck" with "Railroad Crossing" on it is located at the railroad crossing. This sign has the same meaning as a "Yield" sign. You must yield to trains crossing the road.

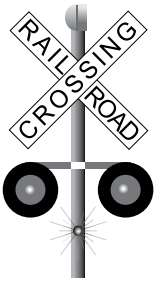
- at some crossings, along with the crossbuck sign, you will see side-by-side red lights that will flash alternately when a train is approaching. When the lights are flashing, you must stop. At some crossings there is also a crossing gate that will lower when a train is coming. Do not drive around the 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 that shows the number of tracks. These signs warn you that 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.

Safety at Railroad Crossings – If you approach a railroad crossing and your vehicle becomes disabled on the crossing, or if you observe an obstruction on the railroad tracks or at the crossing, but no train is approaching or present:

- Immediately call the Emergency Notification System (ENS). The phone number is located on the blue sign attached to the railroad track-crossing gate. Let them know exactly what obstruction is present and your location.
- After you have notified ENS, call 911 and report the issue to your local law enforcement.





Slow Moving Vehicle sign – A reflective orange triangle on the rear of a vehicle means it is traveling less than 25 mph. You may see this decal on construction equipment and in rural areas on farm vehicles, horse drawn wagons, or carriages.

Work area signs – These construction, maintenance, or emergency operations signs are generally diamond or rectangle shaped and orange with black letters or symbols. They warn you that people are working on or near the roadway. These warnings include reduced speed, detour, slow moving vehicles ahead, and poor or suddenly changing road surfaces. In work areas, traffic may be controlled by a person with a sign or flag. You must obey these persons. Motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists must yield to any highway construction personnel, vehicles with flashing yellow lights, or equipment inside a highway construction or maintenance work zone. Fines double

for moving violations in construction areas when workers are present.

Regulatory signs – These signs are square, rectangular, or have a special shape and are usually white, red, or black with black, red, white, or green letters or symbols. They give you information about rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking, and other special situations.

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

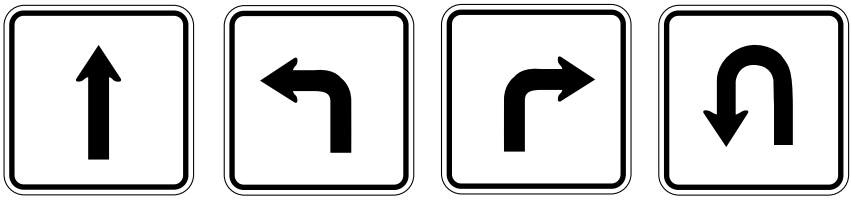
Common types of regulatory signs are:

- *Speed limit signs* – These signs indicate the maximum safe speed allowed or the minimum safe speed required. The maximum limit should be driven only in ideal driving conditions and you must reduce your speed when conditions require it. For example, you should reduce your speed when the roadway is slippery, during rain, snow or 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 is too fast for you, use another road.
- *Variable Speed Limit Signs* – These digital signs post variable speed limits that help warn drivers of backups ahead in an attempt to evenly distribute the flow of traffic. The overhead signs can also quickly close entire lanes and provide warning information to drivers before they reach slower traffic. This advance notification and variable speed

limits helps reduce collisions that cause backups and stop-and-go traffic.

lane closed | lane open | regulatory speed | merge left | merge left or right | merge right

- *Lane use control signs* – These signs tell you where you can go or where you can turn and often use an arrow symbol. These signs can be located on the side of the road or hanging over the lane of travel. Sometimes arrows may be painted on the road as a supplement to the signs.



- *No passing signs* – These signs tell you where passing is not permitted. Passing areas are based on how far you can see ahead. Placement of these signs are considered at locations of unseen hazards such as hills and curves, intersections, driveways, and other places a vehicle may enter the roadway. These signs, along with pavement markings, indicate where you can pass another vehicle, the beginning and ending of a passing zone, or where you may not pass. Where passing is permitted, you may do so only if it is safe. Be aware of road conditions and other vehicles. A triangular No Passing Zone sign can also be used. These signs are yellow or orange and placed on the left side of the roadway.

- *Stop sign* – An eight-sided sign that is red with white letters. You must come to a full stop at a marked stop line, but if none, before entering a marked crosswalk or, if none, at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where the driver has a view of approaching traffic. You must wait until crossing vehicles and pedestrians have cleared and pull forward only when it is safe.
- *Yield sign* – A downward pointing triangle. It is red and white with red letters. It means you must slow down and yield the right-of-way to traffic in the intersection you are crossing or roadway you are entering.
- *Do Not Enter sign* – A square sign with a white horizontal line inside a red ball means you cannot enter. You will see this sign at roadway openings that you should not enter, such as exit ramps where you would be going in the wrong direction, in crossovers on divided roadways, and at numerous locations on one-way streets.
- *Disabled Parking sign* – A rectangular sign with a white background and green lettering, and the international disabled person symbol in white on a blue background marks special parking stalls at businesses and stores. You or your passenger must have and display a disabled person's parking placard or license plate to park in these stalls. There is a $250 fine for parking in stalls without displaying the required placard or plate and for blocking the access aisle next to a space reserved for physically disabled persons.
- *Traction Advisory signs* – A rectangular sign with a white background and black letters. These signs tell you when chains are required. There is a $500 penalty for failing to use chains when required.

Common types of guide signs are:

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

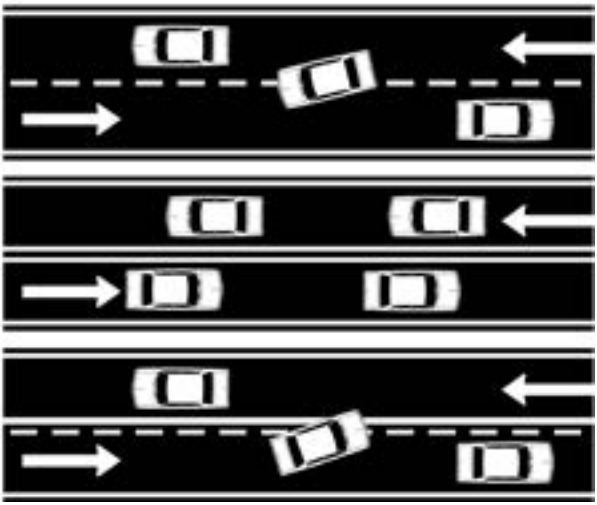
- *Service signs* – These signs are square or rectangular shaped and are blue or brown with white letters or symbols. They show the location of various services such as rest areas, gas stations, campgrounds, or hospitals.
- *Route number signs* – The shape and color of route number signs indicate the type of roadway - interstate, U.S., state, city, or county road.

Pavement Markings

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

Edge and Lane Lines – Solid lines along the side of the road show you where the edge of the road or lane is located.

- *White lane markings* – Solid white lines are used to mark both edges of two-way roads, right edge of one-way roads, and to separate bicycle lanes from other traffic. **You should not drive to the right of the edge line or in the bicycle lane.** A dashed white line between lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to change lanes if it is safe. A solid white line between lanes of traffic means that you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes.
- *Yellow lane markings* – Solid yellow lines mark the left edge of one-way roads and separate traffic moving in opposite directions. A dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to pass if it is safe to do so.



Dashed yellow line – All traffic may pass when safe.

Solid yellow lines – No passing allowed.

One solid, one dashed yellow line – Traffic next to the dashed line may pass when safe.

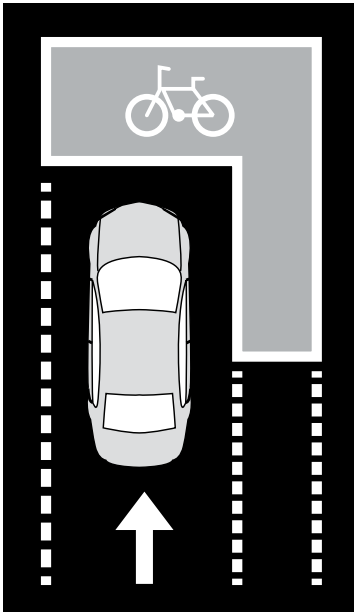
Some passing zones have signs that tell you where passing is permitted and where you cannot pass. Where there is both a solid and a dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic, you may not pass if the solid yellow line is on your side. If the dashed line is on your side you are in the passing zone and may pass if it is safe. You must return to your side before the passing zone ends. Two solid yellow lines between lanes of traffic means neither side can pass. You may cross yellow lane markings, except medians, to turn left if it is safe.

- *Medians* – When a highway is divided into two or more roadways, it is illegal to drive within, over, or across the space. This separation can be an open space, a highway divider, or a median island. It can also be formed either by 18 inch solid yellow pavement markings or by yellow crosshatchings between two solid yellow lines.
- *Crosswalks and stop lines* – When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line or crosswalk, if there is one. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians and bicyclists may cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians and bicyclists in or about to enter a crosswalk. Some crosswalks may also have in-pavement lights that are activated by crossing pedestrians. You must yield when these lights are flashing. Not all crosswalks are marked every intersection is legally

defined as a crosswalk regardless of whether a crosswalk marking is present. Be alert for pedestrians and bicyclists when crossing intersections or turning.

- *Bicycle lanes* – Bicycle lanes are marked with solid white lines and bike symbols. Some bike lanes are further separated from the adjacent motor vehicle travel lane and/or parking lane with a buffer consisting of two solid white lines with diagonal cross-hatching or chevron markings. This buffer is considered part of the bike lane width and should not be encroached on by motorists unless executing a legal turning maneuver after checking that it is safe to do so. Protected bike lanes are further separated from passing traffic by some method of physical protection such as bollards, posts, or planters. Bicycle lanes may be filled with green paint.

- *Bicycle boxes* – Bicycle boxes are pavement markings that are installed at intersections to allow bicyclists a safe way to turn when approaching a red light. Bicycle boxes are green and have an image of a bicyclist. At intersections, they are painted on the pavement before the crosswalk and they cover the entire travel lane. Drivers must stop behind the bicycle box (even when it's empty) and wait for a green light. Bicyclists who are turning left should stop in the bicycle box, move to the left side of the box, signal the turn, and wait for the green light.



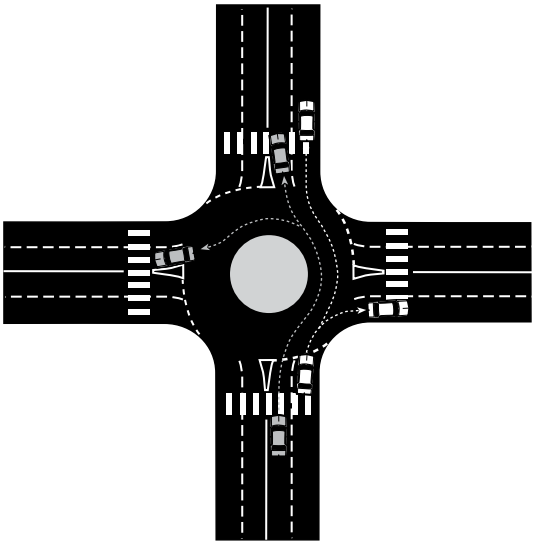
Bicyclists traveling straight or turning right should stay to the right in the bicycle box, in a staggered formation, and wait for the green light. Bicycle boxes can also be used by bicyclists to make a two-stage left turn. A two-stage left turn

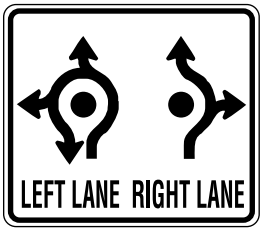
allows bicyclists to make a left turn in two separate steps, rather than crossing multiple lanes of traffic: Step 1: Cross straight through the intersection on the green light and stop in the bicycle box for the road you are turning on-to. Step 2: Wait for the green light and go straight through the intersection.

- *Other traffic control devices* – There are other traffic control devices used to discourage speeding and reduce collisions. These devices have a variety of shapes. If you see speed bumps, curbing that narrows the roadway, or circular islands in intersections, slow down and keep to the right unless otherwise posted.

Roundabouts

A roundabout is an intersection control device with traffic circulating around an island. Approaching vehicles must yield to the traffic in the circle. Always yield to pedestrians and bicyclists who are legally crossing the road. Inside the circle, always drive around the circle to the right.

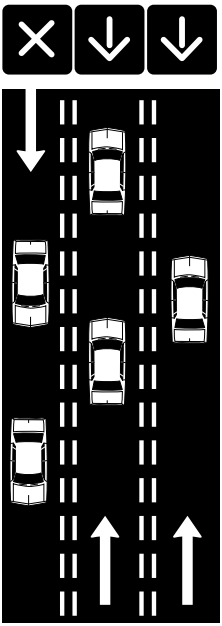




How to drive in a roundabout:

1. Slow down as you approach the intersection; roundabouts are designed for speeds of 15-20 mph.
2. Enter the roundabout when there is a gap in traffic. Once inside, do not stop. Follow directions on signs or pavement markings about which lane to use.
3. You may exit at any street or continue around if you miss your exit.

Reversible Lanes



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

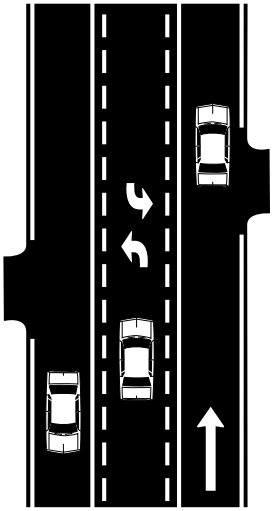
Reserved Lanes

On various roadways, one or more lanes may be reserved for special vehicles. Reserved lanes are marked by signs stating that the lane is reserved for special use. These lanes often have a white diamond posted at the side of the road or painted on the road surface.

- “Transit” or “bus” means the lane is for bus use only.
- “Bicycle” means the lane is reserved for bicyclists.
- “HOV” stands for “High Occupancy Vehicles” and indicates lanes reserved for 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 3” means there must be at least three people in the vehicle.

Two-Way Left Turn Lanes

These shared center lanes are reserved for vehicles making left turns in either direction from or into the roadway (or U turns when they are permitted). These lanes cannot be used for passing and cannot be used for travel further than 300 feet. 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 a solid yellow and dashed yellow lines. Enter the lane only when it is safe to do so.



HOT Lanes & Express Toll Lanes

High occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and Express toll lanes are *high occupancy vehicle (HOV)* lanes for carpools that are also open to solo drivers who choose to pay a toll. Toll rates adjust electronically to ensure that traffic in the HOT or Express lane is free flowing even when the regular lanes are congested. It provides toll-free express trips for buses, vanpools, carpools and motorcycles, while giving solo drivers the option to pay for a faster, more reliable trip.

Those who choose to use the HOT lanes or Express toll lanes as a solo driver must have a *Good To Go!* account. Carpools, vanpools, buses, and motorcycles may also need a *Good To Go!* account to use the toll lanes without charge.

For more information regarding *Good To Go!* accounts, visit **www.mygoodtogo.com**. For more information regarding tolling, including requirements for carpools, vanpools, buses, and motorcycles, visit **www.wsdot.wa.gov/goodtogo/**.

General Rules

General driving – If you back your vehicle, look carefully and move slowly. Drivers do not expect a vehicle to be backing towards them and may not realize it until it is too late. If you miss your turn or exit, do not back up, but go on to the next turn or exit or where you can safely turn around. It is illegal to back up on a shoulder or a freeway.

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

In Washington State it is illegal to give or to seek a ride on any limited access roadway such as a freeway unless otherwise posted. No person seeking a ride may stand on or along a public

highway or street where a vehicle cannot safely stop off the main traveled portion of the roadway.

On a road with two lanes traveling in opposite directions, you must drive on the right side of the road except when you are legally passing another vehicle.

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, if there is a lot of entering or exiting traffic, use the center travel lane.

Unless directed to do so by officials or signs, never drive on the shoulder of the road.

Law Enforcement Stops – Police vehicles attempting to stop drivers will do so by turning on flashing lights and/or a siren.

If a law enforcement officer pulls you over:

- Drive as close as you safely can to the right side of the road, stop and turn off the engine. Do not stop in an intersection or pull into the center median of a highway.
- Limit your movements and those of any passengers.
- Keep your hands on the steering wheel. Passengers should keep their hands in plain view.
- Show your driver license and/or vehicle registration only when requested.
- Stay in your vehicle. DO NOT GET OUT UNLESS REQUESTED.
- If it is dark, turn on the vehicles' interior dome light after stopping and before the officer approaches your vehicle.
- Do not argue with the officer at the scene. Traffic violations and traffic crimes charged against you are decided in court.

Emergency zones – Emergency zones are defined as the adjacent lanes of the roadway 200 feet before and after a stationary emergency vehicle with a siren or flashing lights, tow truck using red lights, emergency assistance vehicle using warning lights, or police vehicle using emergency lights. The fines for traffic infractions issued for speeding in an emergency

zone or improper passing of a designated stationary vehicle are doubled, and the driver license of a person who recklessly endangers a worker or property in an emergency zone is subject to a 60-day suspension.

Passing – On a road with two lanes traveling in the same direction, the left-hand lane is intended to be used for passing slower vehicles. On roads with more than two lanes traveling in the same direction, use the right lane for slower speeds, the middle lanes for higher speeds, and the left-hand lane for passing only. If you pass on the right, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you. Never pass on the shoulder, whether it is paved or not. Other drivers will never expect you to be there and may pull off the road without looking. The shoulder can also be used by pedestrians and bicyclists.

On limited access roadways of three or more lanes in one direction, vehicles towing a trailer or vehicles over ten thousand pounds may not use the left-hand lane unless otherwise posted. However, this does not prevent these vehicles from using the HOV lanes.

Driving on ocean beaches – Driving is allowed on ocean beaches in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. The beach is considered a state highway so all road, vehicle registration, and driver licensing regulations apply. The speed limit is 25 mph and pedestrians and bicyclists have the right-of-way at all times. You may only enter the beach with your vehicle through marked beach approaches and you may only drive on hard-packed sand. Watch for beach closure signs and signs that occasionally prohibit beach driving.

Toll Bridges – Currently tolls are collected when crossing State Route (SR) 520 Bridge in either direction and State Route (SR) 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge when traveling eastbound. When crossing the SR 520 Bridge the tolls are either collected through your *Good To Go!* account or a bill that is sent to the address of the vehicle's owner. SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge is similar, with the additional option of toll booths, allowing drivers to pay cash on site. For more information regarding tolls please visit **www.wsdot.wa.gov**.

Automated Traffic Safety Cameras – Automated traffic safety cameras automatically record one or more images of a motor vehicle at the time it fails to stop when facing a steady red traffic control signal or an activated railroad grade crossing control signal, or exceeds a speed limit in a school speed zone as detected by a speed measuring device.

All locations equipped with traffic cameras will be clearly marked with signs in locations that clearly indicate that you are entering a zone where traffic laws are enforced by an automated traffic safety camera. The camera will only take pictures of the vehicle and license plate while the infraction is occurring.

The notice of infraction will be sent in the mail within fourteen days after the owner is determined. Included in the notice will be facts relating to the infraction and images taken by the traffic camera. These infractions are not included in a driving record, and are instead processed as a parking infraction. The maximum fine for any parking infraction is $250.

Ferries

Washington State Ferries (WSF) is part of Washington's highway network, sometimes referred to as the state's "marine highway system." As part of the state highway system, all rules of the road apply and must be followed at all times.

Approaching the Terminal - WSF operates 20 ferry terminals on 10 routes in Washington State and Canada. As you approach the ferry terminal, you may see signs directing you into a designated "ferry holding" lane on the road leading up to the terminal. Other vehicles may already be lined up in this lane to catch the ferry, and the end of the line may be at some distance before you reach the terminal.

If other vehicles have already lined up in the ferry holding lane, do not cut in front of these vehicles—find a safe place to turn around and go to the back of the line. Ferry line-cutting is a traffic offense that can lead to a fine. If you see someone cutting into the ferry line, do not take matters into your own hands and instead contact the HERO Program at 1-877-764-HERO (4376).

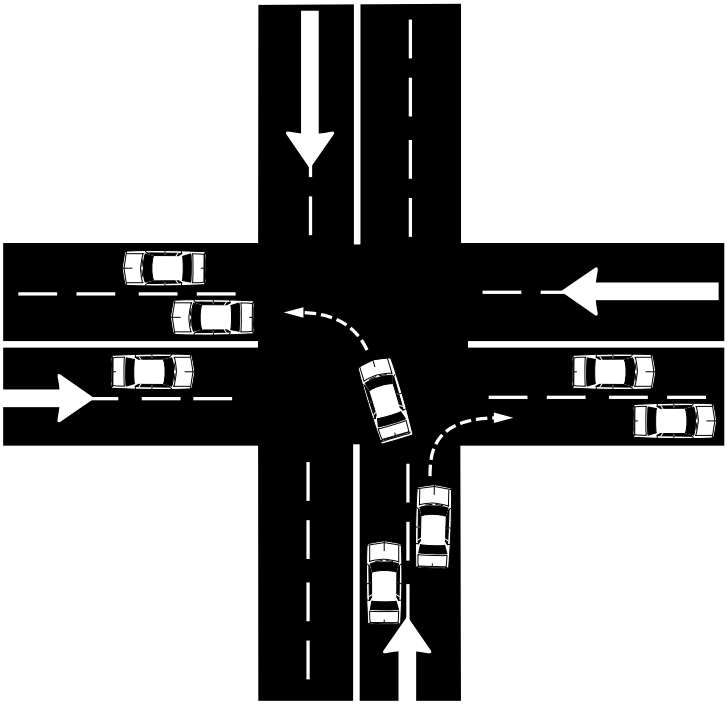
If you are in a ferry holding lane in a residential area, please do not block residential driveways or intersections.

Passengers on bicycles may proceed past cars to the terminal. Terminal layouts vary; bicyclists receive priority loading on most ferries and have a bicycle waiting area in front of motor vehicles.

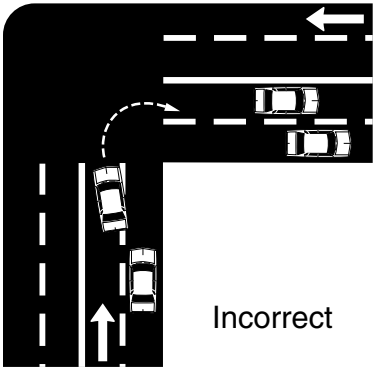
For more information about the WSF system, or for fares and schedules please visit **www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/**.

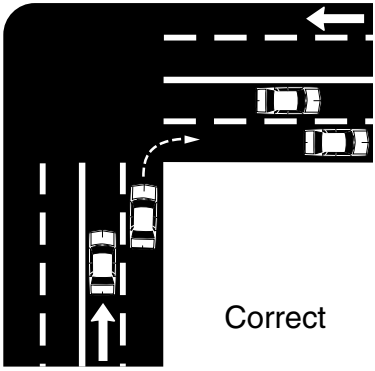
Turning

Turn from the lane that is closest to the direction you want to go and turn into the lane closest to the one you came from. When making turns, go from one lane to the other as directly as possible without crossing lane lines or interfering with traffic. Once you have completed your turn, you can change to another lane if you need to.



- *Right turns* – On right turns avoid moving wide to the left before going into the turn. If you swing wide, the driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or turning left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers who are in the far lane will not expect to see you there.





- *Left turns* – When making a left turn, avoid starting the turn so soon that you are turning on the wrong side of the street. However, be sure to leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you.
- *Multiple lanes turning* – If there are signs or lane markings that allow for two or more turning lanes, stay in your lane during the turn.
- *U Turns* – You should only make a U turn when it is safe. U turns should not be made on any curve or when approaching the crest of a hill when your vehicle cannot be seen by others. Some towns and cities do not allow U turns. Check with local police to be sure.
- *Turns across bicycle lanes* – It is illegal to drive in a bicycle lane.

Low-speed Battery Electric Vehicles

Both Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) and Medium Electric Vehicles (MEV) are electrically powered, four-wheeled vehicles that can be driven on roads. A NEV can reach speeds of 20-25 mph. A MEV can reach speeds of 30-35 mph and is equipped with a roll-cage or a crush-proof body design. Persons operating a NEV or MEV are permitted on roads with a posted speed limit of up to 35 mph, unless banned by local law.

Only San Juan County permits operation on roads with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. NEVs and MEVs are prohibited from operating on streets and highways that are part of the state highway system.

The operator of such vehicles must not cross a roadway with a speed limit in excess of 45 mph unless the crossing occurs at an intersection of approximately 90 degrees. The operator may not cross an uncontrolled intersection of a roadway that is part of the state highway system unless authorized by local authorities.

To drive these, you must have:

- the vehicle registered as NEV or MEV and have plates.
- a valid driver license.
- liability insurance.
- use of seat belts, child restraints, and other safety equipment.

Motorized Foot Scooters (MFS) – Must have handlebars, two ten-inch or smaller wheels, and a gas or electric motor. Operators are not required to hold a driver license, vehicle license, or insurance. State patrol approved reflectors are required if the vehicle is driven at night.

No Endorsement – If you operate any vehicle without having the required endorsement, the vehicle may be impounded.

Operating Golf Carts – A person may operate a golf cart on public roads in approved golf cart zones if they are at least 16 years old and have either completed a driver education course or have previous experience driving as a licensed driver. No person who has a revoked license can operate a golf cart on public roads in golf cart zones. Golf cart zones must be identified by a sign. Golf carts operating in golf cart zones must have seat belts, rearview mirrors, and reflectors. Operators must use the seat belt.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

It is a parking infraction with a minimum penalty of $124 to park a vehicle in an electric vehicle charging station if the vehicle is not connected to the charging equipment. The parking infraction applies to both public and private electric vehicle charging stations.

Right-Of-Way

There will be many times when you will need to slow down or stop your vehicle to allow another vehicle, pedestrian, or bicyclist to continue safely. Even if there are no signs or signals to regulate traffic, there are laws governing who must yield the right-of-way. Infractions for failing to stop or yield the right of way for pedestrian or bicyclist within a crosswalk that is marked with school or playground speed zone signs receive twice the scheduled penalty.

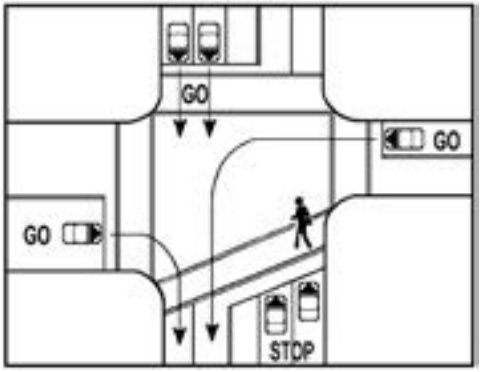
The law says who must *yield* the right-of-way, it does not *give* anyone the right-of-way. Failure to yield right of way is the number one citation in city collisions. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian, on foot or in a wheelchair, a bicyclist, or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

For their own safety pedestrians should walk toward oncoming traffic and off the roadway. You should be ready to yield to pedestrians in case they step into your path. A pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than in a marked crosswalk or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection must yield the right of way to all vehicles on the roadway.

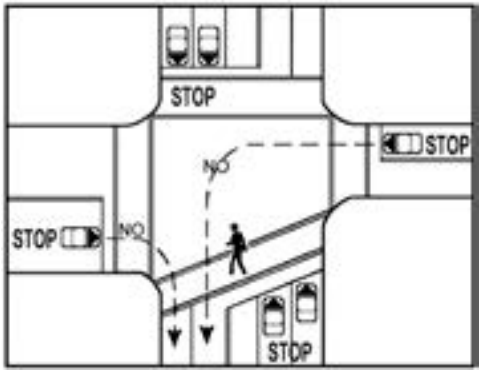
The following right-of-way rules apply at intersections:

- Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right-of-way at crosswalks and intersections, whether the crosswalk is marked or not. Drivers must yield where necessary to avoid striking pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing the road.

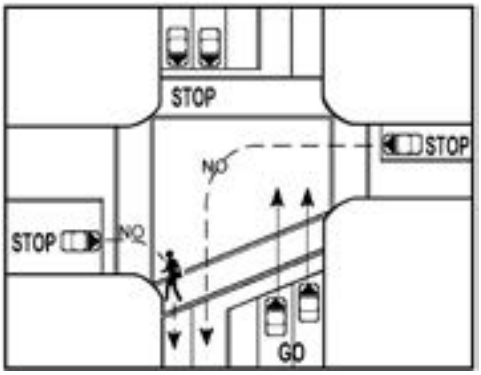
- Drivers must stop if a pedestrian or bicyclist is in their half of the roadway.



- Drivers must stop if a pedestrian or bicyclist is within one lane of their half of the roadway.



- Once the pedestrian or bicyclist is beyond one lane of their half of the roadway, the drivers may go.



- Drivers crossing a sidewalk while entering or exiting a driveway, alley, or parking lot must stop and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists. It is illegal to drive on a sidewalk except to cross it.

- Pedestrians using a guide dog or other service animal or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. It is unlawful to interfere with or distract a service animal. Do not use your horn as it could confuse or frighten the pedestrian or the service animal.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- Drivers entering a roundabout must yield to drivers and bicyclists already in the circle.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign, yield sign, or traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles in the intersection and to those coming from the right. Drivers must follow the rules for yielding to pedestrians and bicyclists in the crosswalk whether or not it is marked.
- At a four-way stop the driver reaching the intersection first, goes first (after coming to a complete stop). If more than one vehicle arrives at the same time, the vehicle on the right goes first.
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley, parking lot, or roadside must yield to vehicles already on the main road.
- Drivers must not enter an intersection unless they can get through it without having to stop. You should wait until traffic ahead clears so you are not blocking the intersection.
- Drivers passing a vehicle going in the same direction must be ready to yield in case the other driver suddenly turns, slows down, or stops.
- You must yield the right-of-way to trains crossing the roadway; trains cannot stop for you.
- You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren, air horn, or a red or blue flashing light. 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. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over. If the light is red, stay where you are. Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle's loudspeaker.

- You must stop for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing whether it is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road or at an intersection you are approaching. You are not required to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing when the stopped school bus is traveling in the opposite direction and the roadway:
  - has three or more marked traffic lanes,
  - is separated by a median, or
  - is separated by a physical barrier.

You should never pass a stopped school bus on the right hand side.

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

The risk of injuring a child crossing the road is increased during the loading and unloading of a school bus. Be alert for children that may try to return to the bus after unloading.

Fines are doubled for anyone that passes a stopped school bus. The penalty for failing to stop for a stopped school bus may not be waived, reduced, or suspended.

- You must yield to any transit vehicle (bus) that has signaled and is pulling back onto the roadway.

Parking

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

- Always park in a designated area if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission or in “park” if it has an automatic transmission.
- Check traffic before you open the door. Get out of the vehicle on the curb side if you can. When opening a vehicle door, drivers and passengers should do the following: (1) Check your rear-view mirror. (2) Check your side-view mirror. (3) Open the door with your far hand (the hand farthest from the door). This is called the “Dutch Reach” method which originated in the Netherlands. It forces your body to turn, which will better allow you to see approaching bicyclists. It also prevents the vehicle door from being opened too fast. This not only protects bicyclists, but can also prevent your door from being damaged or torn off by an approaching motor vehicle. 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.
- It is against the law to leave children under 16 years of age alone in a parked car with the engine running.
- 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.

No parking zones – There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs that may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by colored curb markings. Do not park:

- in an intersection.
- on a crosswalk or sidewalk.

- in a bicycle lane.
- in a construction area if your vehicle will block traffic.
- within 30 feet of a traffic signal, stop sign, or yield sign.
- within 20 feet of a pedestrian safety zone.
- within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- within 50 feet of a railroad crossing.
- more than 12 inches from the curb.
- within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street or within 75 feet of the fire station driveway on the other side of the street.
- within 5 feet of a driveway, alley, private road, or area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk.
- on a bridge or overpass or in a tunnel or underpass.
- on the wrong side of the street.
- in a space marked for the disabled unless you have a disabled license plate or placard.
- on the road side of a parked vehicle (double parking).
- on railroad tracks.
- on the shoulder of the freeway unless you have an emergency.
- wherever there is a sign that says you cannot park.

Other parking restrictions may be indicated by signs or curbs painted:

- white indicates that only short stops are permitted.
- yellow/red indicates a loading zone or some other restriction.

Parking on a Hill

When you park on a hill:

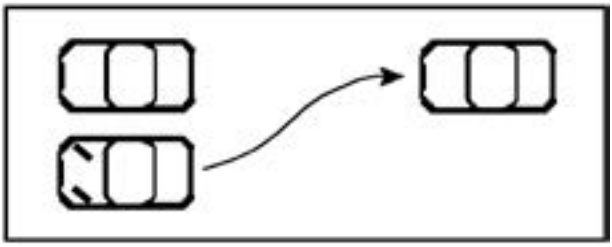
- with a curb and are facing uphill, set your parking brake and turn your steering wheel away from the curb. This way, if your vehicle starts to roll, it will roll into the curb.

- facing downhill, set your parking brake and turn your steering wheel toward the curb.
- and there is no curb, set your parking brake and turn your steering wheel toward the edge of the road. This way, if your vehicle starts to roll, it will roll away from traffic.

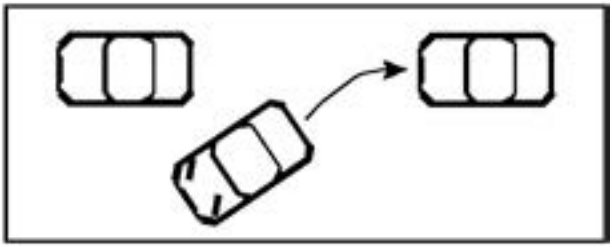
Parallel Parking

When you parallel park, park within 12 inches of the curb. Here are the steps to parallel parking:

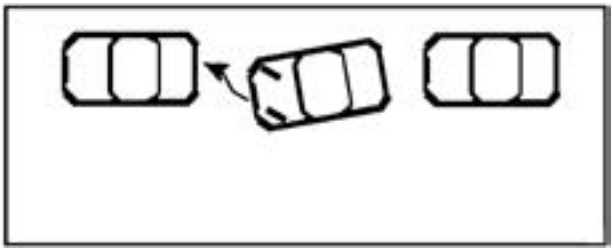
- Stop even with the car ahead. Turn the wheel sharp right and back slowly toward the car behind.



- When clear of the car ahead, turn the wheel sharp left and back slowly to the car behind.



- Turn the wheel sharp right and pull toward the curb in the center of the parking space.



ID2020
WASHINGTON

Washington residents' guide to REAL ID

REAL ID starts on October 1, 2020.
Learn more at www.ID2020WA.com

You may have heard of REAL ID.

It's a U.S. law established in 2005, requiring all states to comply with new identification standards for air travel and entrance to some federal facilities like military bases.

Here's what Washington residents should remember:

ID2020

That's right, REAL ID starts on October 1, 2020, and **ID2020WA.com** provides all the details you'll need to prepare.

SAFE DRIVING TIPS

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

Starting

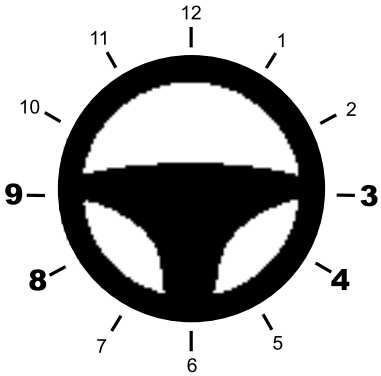
Check the vehicle owner's manual to determine the best way to start the vehicle. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle. If the vehicle has a manual transmission, it must not be in gear. In most vehicles, the clutch must be depressed. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must have the shift selector in "park."

Accelerating

Accelerate gradually and smoothly. Starting too fast can cause your wheels to spin, particularly on slippery surfaces, and cause the vehicle to slide. With a manual-shift vehicle, practice using the clutch and accelerator so the engine does not over-rev or stall when accelerating or shifting gears.

Steering

Place your hands on opposite sides of the steering wheel (left hand between 8 and 9 o'clock and right hand between 3 and 4 o'clock). This position is comfortable and on high-speed roads, allows you to make turns without taking your hands off the wheel. It also positions your hands out of the way of the air bag. Leaning against the door, putting your elbow out the window, or driving with one hand can keep you from reacting quickly in an emergency.



Look well down the road, at least 15 seconds, and look to both sides of the road and the rear, not just at the road in front of your vehicle. Look for traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. Being aware of line-of-sight blockages that may conceal a pedestrian, bicyclist, or another vehicle. A driver can look in, under and around parked cars for feet, wheels, shadows, and movement. When looking far enough ahead, it allows you to see all potential situations before they create a surprise. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

When turning sharp corners, turn the steering wheel using the “hand-over-hand” technique. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous.

Speeding and Speed Limits

Speeding is defined as traveling above the posted speed limit or too fast for conditions. Heavy rain, snow or ice on the roadway, or limited visibility due to fog are a few examples of conditions when you may need to adjust your speed below the posted speed limit to drive safely.

If you speed, you are substantially increasing injury and fatality risk for yourself and for others on the road. Speeding is a factor in nearly 40% of all traffic fatalities in Washington.

The best way to avoid speeding is to know your speed and the speed limit. Check the speedometer often. People are not very good at judging how fast they are going. It is easy to be traveling much faster than you think. This is especially true when you leave high-speed roads and are driving on much slower local roads. Be prepared to accelerate, decelerate, slow down, or stop based on traffic, traffic control devices, or other road conditions.

Obey speed limit signs. They are there for your safety. Speed limits, **unless otherwise posted**, are:

- 20 mph in school zones.
- 25 mph on streets of cities and towns.
- 50 mph on county roads.
- 60 mph on state highways.
- Parts of interstate highways may be posted with higher maximum speeds.

Stopping

Be alert and aware of the traffic conditions around your vehicle and along your intended path of travel. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and usually points to a driver who was not paying attention. Developing an awareness of how to stop safely in traffic is a valuable skill to have. When you brake quickly, you could skid and lose control of your vehicle. You also make it harder for drivers behind you to stop without hitting you.

Try to avoid sudden stops by scanning ahead well in advance, most collisions happen when someone wasn't aware of the changes in traffic around them. The sooner you begin the braking process the more time you have to control the situation. 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.

Seeing Well

Most of what you do while driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well. You must not drive with more than three people in the front seat if it blocks your view or interferes with your control of the vehicle. The single biggest contributor to collisions 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, or when weather conditions diminish your vision, use your headlights.

You must be alert to what is going on around you. Many collisions occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. In many collisions with motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, drivers reported that they were looking but did not see them.

Distracted Driving

Distracted Driving is any activity that takes a person's attention away from the primary task of driving, sometimes referred to as "inattentional blindness." All distractions endanger the driver, passengers, and others who share the road, including pedestrians. Some distractions could include:

- using a personal electronic device
- eating or drinking
- talking to passengers
- grooming
- reading, including maps and navigation systems
- watching a video while driving
- adjusting vehicle controls

While some of these aren't against the law on their own, you should still recognize how these behaviors may impact your driving and could cause you to violate a traffic law.

A law enforcement officer may stop and ticket you for violating the distracted driving law. The minimum fine for violating one or more of these restrictions is $124 and can be more if you cause a crash. Second and all subsequent violations are subject to have the fine doubled.

Dangerously Distracted Driving is when a driver is engaged in any activity not related to the actual operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that interferes with the safe a vehicle on any highway. A law enforcement officer may also include a violation for Dangerously Distracted Driving as secondary action when a driver of a motor vehicle has been stopped for a suspected violation for a separate traffic infraction.

Personal Electronic Devices

Any use of a personal electronic device while driving is especially dangerous. This is why Washington state law restricts the use of personal electronic devices when driving. Personal electronic devices includes, but is not limited to, a cell phone, tablet, laptop, two-way messaging device, or electronic game.

Using a personal electronic device in your hand, both hands, or held to your ear to compose, send, read, view, access, browse, transmit, save, or retrieve email, text messages, instant messages, photographs, or other electronic data while operating a motor vehicle is against the law.

However, these activities may be permissible:

- reporting illegal activity.
- summoning medical or other emergency help.
- preventing injury to a person or property.
- operating an authorized emergency vehicle.
- relaying information between a transit or for-hire operator and that operator's dispatcher using a device permanently affixed to the vehicle.
- using a voice-operated global-positioning or navigation system permanently affixed to the vehicle and that allows the user to send or receive messages without diverting visual attention from the road or engaging the use of either hand.

Other activities that may be permissible are:

- operating a tow truck responding to a disabled vehicle.
- operating a citizen's band or two-way radio, or an amateur radio under a Federal Communications Commission license.

The minimal use of a finger to activate, deactivate, or initiate function of the device is permissible. A "Hands-free" device can also be an acceptable alternative.

Drivers with an Instruction Permit or Intermediate License cannot use any wireless communication device (regardless if hand-held or hands-free) while driving unless in an emergency situation.

Other Distracted Driving Laws

No person is allowed to operate a motor vehicle with equipment capable of receiving a television broadcast when the moving images are visible to the driver while the motor vehicle is on a public road. An exemption is provided for live video of the motor vehicle backing up.

Do not drive with head or earphones that cover or go in your ears. These are illegal in Washington and many other states and make it hard to hear emergency horns or sirens. This law does not apply to motorcyclists wearing a helmet with built-in headsets or earphones or to hands-free cellular phone systems.

Collisions and Roadside Activity

Do not slow down to look at a collision or other roadside activity, as it could result in your own. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. This also can increase congestion. When you pass these roadside activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as soon and as safely, as you can.

You can avoid distracted driving by remembering the "5 Ds." Driving while distracted is:

- Dangerous
- Deceptive

- Destructive
- Disabling
- Deadly

Scanning

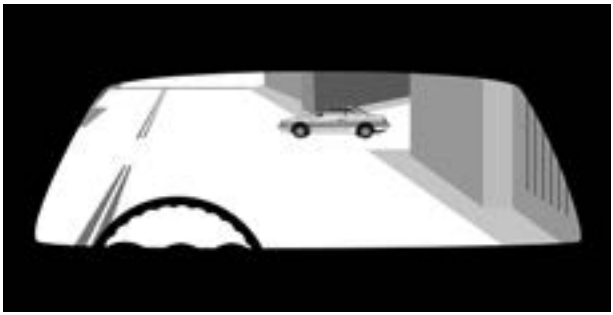
To be a good driver, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind the vehicle. Scanning helps you to see problems ahead, vehicles and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them, signs warning of problems ahead, and signs giving you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

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than 80% of all crashes can be avoided if drivers have one additional second of time to react. The average driver looks only 3-5 seconds ahead of the car. If you scan at least 15 seconds ahead, you are able to gather critical information earlier and respond sooner to problems and hazards.

Look ahead – In order to avoid last minute braking or the need to turn suddenly, 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 along the side of the road. This will also help you to steer straight with less weaving. To give you a clearer picture of what lies ahead of your vehicle, scan for stopped or moving traffic, red or green lights, if the road is curving to the left, right, or cresting a hill.

Safer drivers tend to look at least 15 seconds ahead of their vehicle. Judging space or distances in seconds is important for drivers. The ability to measure distances in seconds will help drivers solve problems from farther away, control their approach to intersections, curves, stopped traffic, traffic controls, judge for gaps, time turns, and help create open space when following others. How far is 15 seconds ahead? It is the distance that your vehicle will travel in 15 seconds.

- In the city look 15 seconds ahead; 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 look 15 seconds ahead; 15 seconds is about four city blocks or a quarter of a mile.

How do you know how many seconds you are looking ahead? Practice judging the space your vehicle will travel in seconds by following these steps:

1. Guess where you think 15 seconds ahead is.
2. Pick out a marker such as a road sign, mailbox, or telephone pole and then spacing counting: one-one-thousand, two-one thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand etc. until you reach the marker.
3. Taking a guess, before you count, helps you develop the ability to make accurate assessments of the space your vehicle will travel in seconds.
4. Accuracy will improve the more you practice this method.

You can be a safer driver by looking well ahead. You can avoid 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. A gradual approach into a stop situation puts you in a win-win situation. You will use the least amount of fuel, you will put the least amount of wear on your tires and braking system, and you have the best opportunity to control the traffic to your rear. Most of all, you will be developing a good habit that will eventually occur even when you don't think about it.

Traffic would flow more smoothly if everyone looked well ahead. Making driving changes before the last moment gives drivers behind you more time to react. The earlier you act, the less often someone behind you has to react quickly to your vehicle. By scanning ahead, you can assess the problems and hazards your intended path of travel may create and choose the best actions, such as changing lanes or adjusting your speed, to achieve the lowest degree of risk.

Look to the sides – As other vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists may cross or enter your path anytime, most often within a four second range, look to the sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings. When a driver gets within four seconds of potential crossing or intersection it is time to evaluate the decision that was made at the 15 second range. There is time for the driver to evaluate whether it is still the best decision for speed control, lane positioning, and communications.

Intersections – Any place where two or more roads come together. They can be any shape, controlled with lights and/or signs or uncontrolled. Every Intersection has a higher potential for collision. Conflicts can occur to the right, left, front, or rear of you. You should actively scan every intersection and be ready to adjust speed, lane position or both before entering that space. Intersections include: cross streets, roundabouts, calming circles, side streets, driveways, and shopping center, or parking lot entrances.

Over 30% of all the crashes that take place in the United States each year occur at intersections Before you enter an intersection, always look to the left and right for vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists. Just because you have the right of way, does not mean that you will be given the right of way. If stopped, look to the left and right before you start moving. If stopped, before crossing an intersection, ensure there is space to cross completely, so that you do not block the intersection if you have to stop.

Before you turn left or right across oncoming traffic, turn on your signal at least 100 feet ahead and look for a safe gap in the traffic. Check the street you are turning into to make sure that no vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists are in or approaching your path. If you are on a street with a bicycle lane, check behind you for oncoming bicyclists and yield to them be-fore making your turn. They may be moving toward you faster than you realize. Be sure you have time to execute the turn safely.

After stopping, you may turn right on red unless prohibited. You may also turn left from a one-way or two-way street into a one-way street unless prohibited.

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs to tell you that no one will be crossing in front of you. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals or signs. 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.

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

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, looking within that 4 second range, when you are near shopping

centers, parking lots, construction areas, busy sidewalks, playgrounds, parks, and schoolyards.

Railroad crossings – As you approach a railroad crossing, slow down and look up and down the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. If you are not sure it is safe to cross the tracks, turn your radio down or off, stop talking, put the window down, and look and listen for a train. Never start to cross until the traffic clears ahead. Wait until there is room on the far side so you will not have to stop on the tracks.

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

Look behind – Besides watching traffic ahead of you, check traffic behind you. You need to check more often when traffic is heavy. This is the only way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast and will give you time to do something about it, like change lanes, tap on the brakes, speed up, or slow down. It is very important to look for vehicles behind you when you change lanes, turn across a bicycle lane, slow down, back up, or are driving down a long or steep hill.

Changing lanes – Before changing lanes, you must check to ensure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. This means you must check for traffic to the side, behind your vehicle, and in your "blind spots" 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.

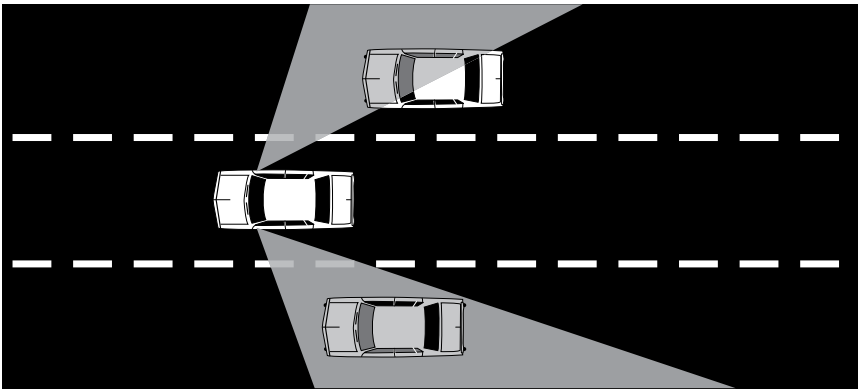
When changing lanes, you should:

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

your mirrors. You must turn your head and look to see vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians in your blind spot.

- check quickly. Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking traffic to the sides, rear, or over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to change lanes, merge, or pull onto the roadway. This method will allow you to keep an eye on vehicles ahead of you at the same time. Check your blind spot for traffic before you change lanes. Look several times, if you need to, but not for too long a period at any one time. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you and in the lane you are entering.
- check the far lane. Be sure to check the far lane, if there is one. 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 motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians that are harder to see than cars and trucks. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from a curb or driveway.

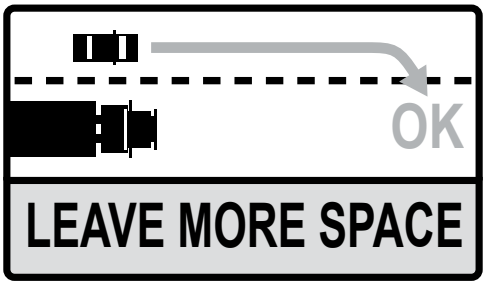
BLIND SPOT



BLIND SPOT

- large trucks, or commercial vehicles, have a longer stopping distance than that of a standard vehicle. It is important that you leave extra space between the commercial vehicle and the merge position of your vehicle in case the commercial

vehicle needs to stop suddenly. Before attempting to merge in front of a commercial vehicle, it is recommended that one car length of space for every 10 miles of speed be used.



Slowing 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 following driver would not expect you to slow down, such as driveways or parking spaces.

Backing up – Backing is performed on a daily basis and often times in crowded areas such as parking lots or busy streets. Here are some tips that will help you.

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects are difficult to see from the driver's seat.
- Place your right arm on the back of the seat and turn around so you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend solely on your rearview or side mirrors to help you see directly behind your vehicle.
- Back slowly, your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing. You must stop before backing across a sidewalk or into a street. Look left, right, and yield to any pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles.
- Whenever possible, use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.

Driving downhill – Check your mirrors when you are going down hills or mountain roads. Vehicles often build up speed going downhill. Be prepared to adjust or slow your speed and be alert for large trucks and buses that may be going too fast.

Use Your Lights

By law, your vehicle's headlights must be turned on from a half hour after sunset until a half hour before sunrise. Lights must also be on any time conditions make it difficult to see people or other vehicles. 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 of an oncoming vehicle.
- use your low beams when following 300 feet or less behind another vehicle.
- 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 difficult to see ahead. Some vehicles have fog lights that you should also use under these conditions.

If a vehicle comes toward you with high beams on, look away from the headlights and toward the right side of the road until the car has passed. This will keep you from being blinded by the other vehicle's headlights and allow you to see enough of the edge of the road to stay on course. Do not try to "get back" at the other driver by keeping your bright lights on. If you do, both of you may be blinded.

Letting Others Know You Are There

Collisions often happen because one driver does not see another driver or when one driver does something the other driver does not expect. It is important that drivers let other road users know they are there and what they plan to do. Communicate your intentions by using your headlights, brake lights, horn, emergency signals, lane position, and vehicle speed.

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

Use headlights – Besides helping you to see at night, headlights help other people see you. Turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing others.

- On rainy, snowy, or foggy days, it can be difficult for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. Remember, if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights.
- Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. Even if you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.
- Whenever driving and lights are necessary, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked vehicles only.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming toward you may have trouble seeing your vehicle.
- If you stop along the road at night, turn on your emergency flashers and leave your low beams on.

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 collision. If there is no immediate danger, a light tap on the horn should be all you need. Give your horn a light tap:

- when a person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your lane of travel.
- when you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane.
- when a driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you.
- when coming to a place where you cannot see what is ahead, like 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 a child or older person is about to walk, run, or ride into the street.

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

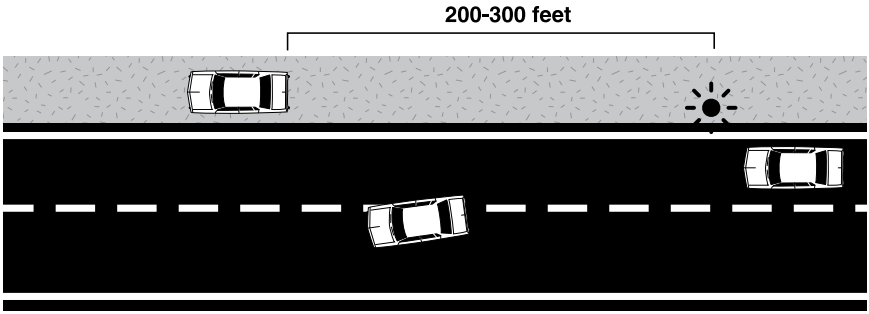
When not to use your horn – There are several occasions when you should not use your horn. They include:

- encouraging someone to drive faster or get out of the way.
- letting other drivers know of an error.
- greeting a friend.
- around blind pedestrians.
- passing bicyclists.
- when approaching horses.

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

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

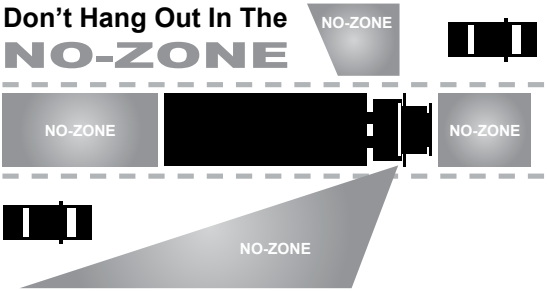
- get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic, if possible.
- turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble. At night, leave your headlights on.
- try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle, if you cannot get your vehicle off the roadway (do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve).
- try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares 200 to 300 feet behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.



- if you do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand by the side of the road where you are safe from traffic and wave traffic around your vehicle.
- never stand in the roadway. Do not try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- lift the hood or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror, or door handle to signal an emergency.

Stay out of the blind spot – Drive your vehicle where others can see you. Do not drive in another vehicle's blind spot.

- Avoid driving on either side of another vehicle and do not tailgate. You will be in the driver's blind spot. Speed up or drop back so the other driver can see your vehicle more easily.
- When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can. The longer you stay there, the longer you are in danger of that vehicle turning into you.
- Never stay beside a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots.



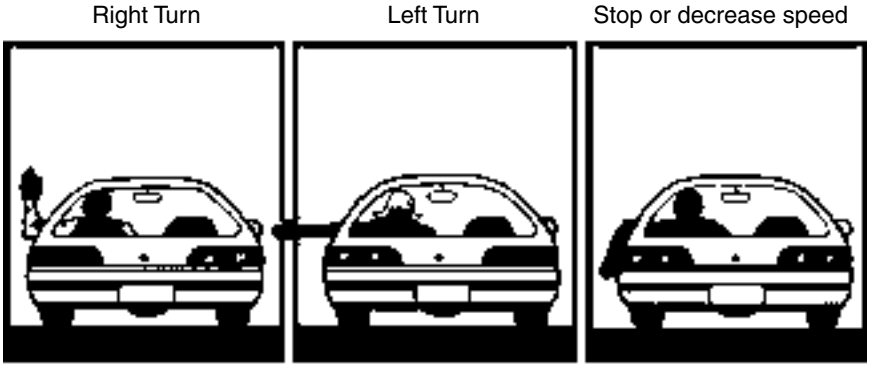
Share the Road Safely with Trucks

Letting 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 alert other drivers of your intentions and give them time to react, if needed.

Signal when you change direction – Signaling gives other drivers time to react to your moves. Use your turn signals before you change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic, or park.

- Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.
- Signal at least 100 feet before you make your move.
- If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where they are and they might pull into your path.
- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. After small turns, the signal may not turn off. If the signal did not turn off automatically after you completed your turn, turn it off manually. If you do not, others might think you plan to turn again.
- Use hand signals when other drivers cannot see signal lights.



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

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. Following traffic expects you to continue to the intersection.
- to avoid something in the road, stopped traffic, or slowing vehicles that a driver behind you cannot see.

Adjusting to Road Conditions

The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow, or stop. For example, at 60 mph it may take you three times as far to stop as it takes to stop at 30 mph. Driving safely means obeying speed limits and adjusting for road and traffic conditions.

There are various road conditions when you must slow down to be safe. For example, you must 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. The quality of the tire's traction with the road depends on the type and condition of the tires and 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 are in good condition and has enough air. See the vehicle owner's manual for correct tire pressure.

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

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

Slippery roads – Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow, or sleet. These weather conditions create additional hazards and risks on the roadway. When the road is slippery, the vehicle's tires do not grip as well as they do on a dry road. On a wet road, you should reduce your speed about 10 mph. On packed snow, you should cut your speed in half. Use snow tires or chains when the road has snow on it and any time it is required on posted signs. On ice, you must slow to a crawl. It is very dangerous to drive on ice.

If possible, do not drive when the roads are icy. In Washington, studded tires are legal during winter months. Tires that have retractable studs may be used year-round, but the studs:

- can only be used between November 1 and March 31.
- must retract to below the wear bar of the tire when disengaged.

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

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

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. Bald or badly worn tires will lose traction at much lower speeds. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down when the road is wet.

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

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

Adjusting to Traffic

Collisions involving two or more vehicles often happen when drivers go faster or slower than other vehicles on the road. Depending on the conditions of the roadway, reduce risk and avoid hazards by creating time and space around your vehicle by controlling your speed, adjusting lane position, and using best possible communication options such as turn signals, headlights, or hand signals, if necessary.

Keep pace with traffic – If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. The vehicle you are passing may change lanes suddenly, or on a two-lane road, an oncoming vehicle may appear suddenly. Slow down and keep pace with other traffic.

Going much slower than other vehicles can be as hazardous as speeding. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to pass you.

Either drive faster or consider using another road with slower speeds. If you are driving a slow moving vehicle on a two-lane road where it is unsafe to pass, and five or more vehicles are in

a line behind you, you must pull over and stop when safe to let them pass.

Entering into traffic – When you merge with traffic, signal, and enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. High-speed roadways generally have ramps to give you time to build up your speed for merging into traffic. Do not drive to the end of the ramp and stop or you will not have enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Additionally, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop and 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.

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

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

- Watch for large trucks and small underpowered cars on steep grades or entering traffic. They can lose speed on long or steep hills 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. These vehicles should have a slow-moving vehicle decal (an orange triangle) on the back.

Trouble spots – Wherever people or traffic gathers, room to maneuver is limited. Here are some of the places where you may need to slow down:

- *shopping centers, parking lots, and downtown areas* – These are busy areas with vehicles and people stopping, starting, and moving in different directions.
- *rush hours* – Heavier commute times often have heavy traffic and drivers that always seem to be in a hurry.

- *narrow bridges and tunnels* – Vehicles approaching each other are closer together.
- *toll plazas* – Vehicles are changing lanes and preparing to stop, then speed up again when leaving the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- *schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential streets* – These areas often have children present. Always be alert for children crossing the street, running, or riding into the street without looking.
- *railroad crossings* – Always treat railroad crossings with caution; trains often can't be heard as they approach. Never go around activated crossing arms, even if you've seen a train pass in one direction, and never try to "outrun" an oncoming train, they are heavy and can't stop as quickly as vehicles can.
- *work zones* – Slow down and pay attention to orange warning signs, expect slowdowns or stopped traffic and obey directions from flaggers. Most work zone crashes are due to speeding, following too closely or distracted driving. Traffic fines are double in the work zones and recklessly endangering workers, other motorists or property in a work zone could lead to a 60-day license suspension.

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 further to stop than many people think. If you have good tires and brakes and dry pavement:

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

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

Darkness – It is harder to see at night. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see 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 or about 50 mph.

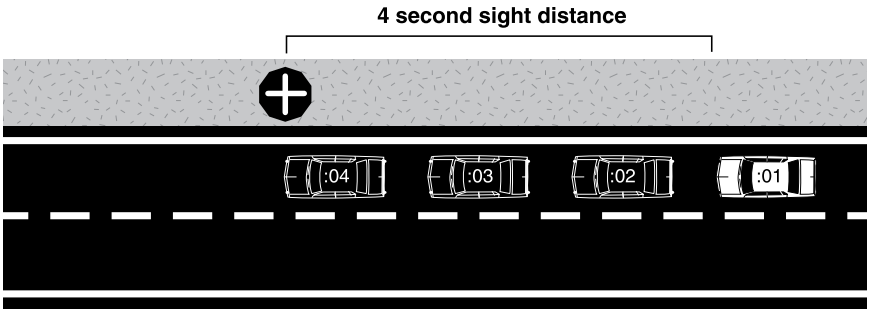
Rain, fog, or snow – In a very heavy rain, snowstorm, or thick fog, you may not be able to see much more than 200 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to see well enough to drive. If this happens,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

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

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.

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 (such as a sign or a telephone pole). Start counting: one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand. If you reach the object before you finish saying four-one-thousand, you need to slow down. You are going too fast for your sight distance. The Four-Second Sight Distance Rule allows you to cope with a countless number of dangerous moments drivers operate in and out of on a continual basis.

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 types of vehicles that use them. They take into account things you cannot see, such as side roads and driveways where people may pull out suddenly, and the amount of traffic that uses the road.

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

Keep Right Except to Pass

On roadways with multiple lanes going in the same direction, the law requires you to keep right except to pass. Travelling in the far left lane when you're not passing is dangerous. It frustrates other drivers and may contribute to "road rage" and aggressive driving behavior.

Sharing 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 in an emergency. This space is like a safety cushion. The more you have, the safer it can be. This section describes how to make sure you have enough space around you when you drive.

Space Ahead

Rear-end collisions are very common. If you follow too closely and the vehicle in front of you slows or stops suddenly, you may not have enough time to avoid a collision. If you are driving at 30 mph or less, a following time of two to three seconds may be enough to stop safely. However, at higher speeds, the best rule to use is the four-second rule. Maintaining a following time of four seconds improves your line of sight, allows more time to avoid hazards or risks, and gives an idea of path of travel problems that may arise from other vehicles, weather conditions, or unforeseen emergencies or situations.

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

There are situations where you need more space in front of your vehicle. In the following situations, you may need a longer following distance 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 will allow the pass to be completed sooner.
- *when following motorcyclists or bicyclists* – If the motorcycle or bicycle rider should fall, you need extra distance to avoid the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, gravel roads, or metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings, or streetcar 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. 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* – When it is hard for you to see ahead because of darkness, bad weather, or large vehicles, you need to increase your following distance.
- *when followed closely* – When being followed closely, you should try to allow extra room. You will then be able to stop without being hit from behind.
- *when following emergency vehicles* – Police vehicles, ambulances, and fire trucks need additional room to operate. Do not follow closer than 500 feet to a fire truck.
- *when approaching railroad crossings* – Leave extra room behind vehicles required to stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses, or vehicles carrying hazardous materials.
- *when stopped on a hill or incline* – Leave extra space when stopped on a hill or incline. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

Space Behind

To maintain a safe distance behind your vehicle, be aware of the vehicle behind you, if it is following closer than 4 seconds, and whether or not the vehicle is closing in. Additionally, keep a steady speed, and signal in advance of turning.

- *Stopping to pick up or let off passengers* –Find a safe place, out of traffic, to stop.
- *Parallel parking* – If you want to parallel park and there is traffic behind you, put on your turn signal, pull next to the space, and allow following vehicles to pass before you park.

- *Driving slowly* – When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other vehicles, pull to the side of the road when 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.
- *Being tailgated* – If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the road ahead is clear then reduce speed slowly. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater. Doing that increases your risk of a collision from behind.

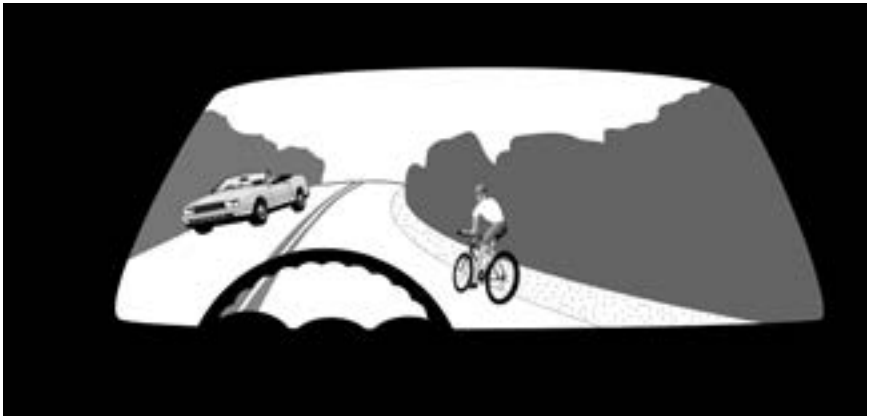
Space to the Side

You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes. Be ready to adjust your speed and position, if necessary.

- Avoid driving next to other vehicles, especially large trucks, on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead, drop back behind the other vehicle, or change lanes. Always check your blind spot when changing lanes. A vehicle occupying your blind spot creates risk. If road or traffic conditions on one side of your vehicle changes, check the opposite side in case you need to respond quickly to a new hazard or risk.
- Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. On a two-lane road, this means not crowding the centerline. Generally, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.
- Make room for vehicles entering a roadway that has two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.
- Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle, from between vehicles, or a parked vehicle could pull out.
- Use caution when approaching a stopped tow truck or roadside assistance, emergency, or police vehicle that is using flashing lights or sirens. On highways with at

least four lanes, two of which are for traffic moving in one direction, change lanes or move away from the stopped vehicle, if it is safe to do so. On highways with less than four lanes, slow down, and pass to the left, if it is safe to do so. To reduce risk, choose a lane with the most open space to the left and right of your vehicle.

- Give extra space to pedestrians or 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.
- Split the difference between two hazards. For example, steer a middle course between oncoming and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the dangerous side. For example, if the oncoming vehicle is a tractor-trailer, leave a little more room on the side that the truck will pass.
- When possible, take potential hazards one at a time. For example, if you are overtaking a bicycle and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down and let the vehicle pass first so that you can give extra room to the bicycle rider.



Space to Merge

Anytime you want to merge with other traffic, you need a gap of about four seconds. If you move into the middle of a four-second gap, both you and the vehicle behind you have a two-second following distance. You need a 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 small gap. A small gap can quickly become smaller and dangerous due to the lack of space if the driver in front needs to stop or slow down.
- If you want to move over 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.
- When other traffic is trying to merge into your lane, move to another lane to give them space when it is safe.

Space to Cross or Enter

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

- 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 is sticking into traffic.
- If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be waiting for a path to clear while stuck across a lane that has vehicles coming toward you.
- Even if you have a green light, do not start across an intersection if there are vehicles blocking your way. If caught in the intersection when the light changes to red, you will block traffic. You can get a ticket for blocking an intersection.
- Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. For example, do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn after they pass your vehicle or may have

forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles because their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn, then proceed.

- When you cross railroad tracks, ensure you can cross without stopping on the tracks.

Space to Pass

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to pass safely. Do not count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once. Be safe. Generally, only pass one vehicle at a time.

- *Oncoming vehicles* – At a speed of 55 mph, you need about ten seconds to pass another vehicle. That means you need a ten-second gap in oncoming traffic and sight-distance to pass. You must judge whether you will have enough space to pass safely. When passing another vehicle on a two-lane roadway, you must return to the right side of the roadway when there is enough room between you and the vehicle you have passed.

At 55 mph, you and an oncoming vehicle will travel over 800 feet in ten seconds. That means you need over 1600 feet or about one-third of a mile to pass safely. It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance. They do not seem to be coming as fast as they really are.

A vehicle that is far away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can actually see that it is coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are in doubt, wait to pass until you are sure that there is enough space.

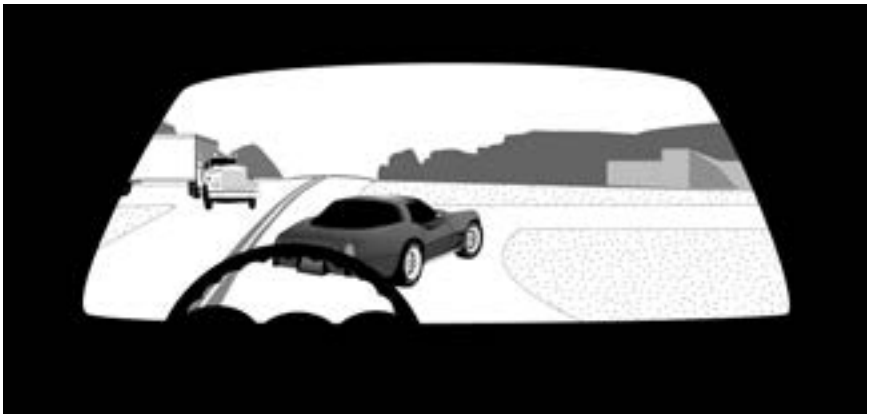
- *Hills and curves* – You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile or about 15 seconds ahead. Assume there is an oncoming vehicle out of sight if your view is blocked by a curve or a hill in the roadway. Do not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.

- *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 passing, your view of people, vehicles, or trains can be blocked by the vehicle you are passing. 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.

Large trucks, buses, and vehicles pulling trailers swing wide and sometimes must cross the centerline to make turns. Do not crowd the intersection or attempt to pass these vehicles, especially on the right side.

- *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 walking or bicycling on the road or shoulder.
  - a narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width.
  - ice, a pothole, or something on the road.



- *Space to return* – Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do not count on other drivers to make room for you.
- *Railroad grade crossing* – Do not pass if there is a railroad grade crossing ahead.

When 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 rearview mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

Space for Bicyclists

The safety of bicyclists on the road is a responsibility shared by both motorists and bicyclists. All bicyclists have the same rights, duties, and responsibilities of a motor vehicle driver. Motorists and riders who do not obey traffic laws can be ticketed.

Sharing the road with bicyclists – Every year, over 38,000 bicyclists are killed or injured in the United States. It is essential that motorists understand their responsibility to do their part for safety on the road. A driver who seriously injures or kills a vulnerable road user (pedestrian or bicyclist) may be subject to civil as well as criminal penalties.

- Drivers must stop for bicyclists crossing in a painted or unpainted crosswalk when the bicyclist is within one lane of their half of the roadway (See diagram under Right-of-Way).
- Drivers crossing a sidewalk must yield to bicyclists on the sidewalk. Bicyclists riding on a sidewalk or in a crosswalk have the same rights and duties as a pedestrian.
- Bicycle lanes are marked with solid white lines. Drivers must yield to bicyclists in a bicycle lane. Do not drive in a bicycle lane except when making a turn or when you need to cross the bicycle lane to park near the curb. Never park in a bicycle lane.
- At intersections, drivers must yield to bicycle riders, the same as you would for any motorist.
- Allow at least three feet of space between any portion of the vehicle and the bicycle when overtaking or passing a bicyclist.
- Pass to the left of a pedestrian or bicyclist that is on the right hand shoulder or bicycle lane at a distance that will clearly avoid coming into contact with them. Until you are safely

clear of the bicyclist, do not return to the right side of the road.

- Do not drive on the left side of the roadway when you see an approaching pedestrian or bicyclist if the width or condition of the roadway, shoulder, or bicycle lane makes it unsafe.
- If parked at a curb, look before you open any door in the path of a car, bicyclist, or pedestrian.

Drivers must take responsibility for knowing the laws that apply to bicyclists and for operating their vehicles safely. In addition to state law, the following safety tips will help motorists prevent injuries and collisions with bicyclists.

Look for bicyclists – Scan intersections before entering or turning and yield to bicyclists when necessary. When changing lanes, making turns, or when backing, motorists need to check carefully for bicyclists out of their normal range of view. Use the "Dutch Reach" (see above under Parking) to position yourself to look back before opening the door.

Create a safety buffer with space – Do not attempt to share a lane with the bicyclist. Follow the bicyclist and wait for a safe opportunity to pass. If there is more than one lane for traffic proceeding in the same direction, move the vehicle to the lane to the immediate left, if the lane is available and moving into the lane is reasonably safe. The higher the speed limit the more important this additional space is. When calculating passing space, remember to think about projecting mirrors, loads, and other potential hazards that are part of your overall vehicle space.

Create a safety buffer with time – Recognize that a bicyclist may be traveling faster or slower than you estimate or may need to change position in the lane to avoid a hazard you can't see. By leaving extra space you also create time in which you can react safely and avoid seriously injuring or killing someone.

Think before you pass – If you are about to make a right turn, do not pass a bicyclist immediately before the turn; slow down and let the bicyclist clear the intersection before making your turn rather than cutting in front of the rider. Be careful after you have passed a bicyclist. Do not slow down or stop quickly. A

motor vehicle's brakes are more powerful than a bicycle's, and if you stop suddenly you could cause a crash.

Bicyclist Responsibilities

A bicycle is defined in Washington as every device propelled solely by human power upon which a person or persons may ride, having two tandem wheels either of which is sixteen inches or more in diameter, or three wheels, any of which is more than twenty inches in diameter. State bicycle laws also apply to people riding an electric-assisted bicycle. Electric-assisted bicycles are defined as bicycles that can be operated with pedals, but also have an electric motor capable of propelling the bike not more than 20 mph on level ground. It is essential that bicyclists understand their responsibilities to do their part for safety on the road.

- Bicyclists may use the shoulders of freeways and other highways, except where signs say it is illegal.
- Bicyclists must use hand signals before turning.
- Bicycles can only be used to carry the number of people for which it is designed.
- Bicyclists operating on a roadway at a rate of speed less than the normal flow of traffic must ride as near to the right of the roadway as is safe. Lane positioning for safety is in the rider's judgment, and a bicyclist may legally use the full lane. Riders may move left before and during turns, or when passing another bicyclist or vehicle. Riders on a one-way road, other than a freeway, may ride as near to the left side of the road as is safe.
- When riding on a two-lane road where it is unsafe to pass, and five or more vehicles are in a line behind you, bicyclists must pull over and stop when, in the rider's judgment, it is safe to let vehicles pass.
- Bicyclists have the *choice* to ride on the roadway, on the shoulder of a road, in a bicycle lane, or on a sidewalk where it is legal to do so. Bicyclists must yield to pedestrians on sidewalks or in crosswalks. Use an audible signal to warn pedestrians before passing. Local agencies may prohibit bicycling on some sections of sidewalks.

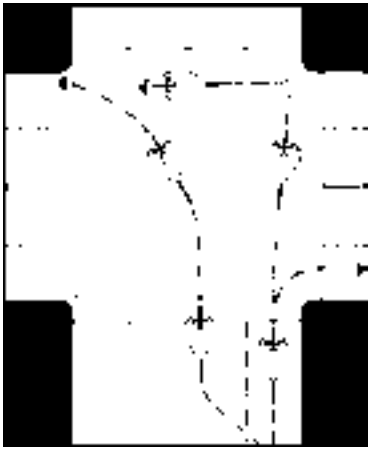
- Bicyclists must not hold onto or be pulled by any other vehicle.
- Bicyclists may ride in groups on designated bicycle paths and lanes. On public roads, they may ride either single file or in pairs.
- Bicyclists cannot carry packages unless the rider can keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times.
- When riding at night, the bicycle must have a steady white headlight visible for 500 feet and a red reflector visible for 600 feet to the rear. A flashing taillight or a steady red taillight may be used in addition to the red reflector.
- Every bicycle must be equipped with a brake that makes the wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

In addition to state law, the following safety tips will help motorists and cyclists prevent injuries and collisions.

- *Teach your children* – Parents are responsible for teaching their children about traffic and bicycle safety. Children have trouble judging the speed and distance of moving cars and they lack a sense of danger. Remind them how important it is to always look out for themselves and their own safety. Teach them to always be aware of their surroundings.
- *Make sure your bike is safe* – Pedals, seat, handlebars, tires, and brakes should be in good condition and work properly. Your bike should be the right size for you. Bike shops can help make sure your bike fits you and is safe.
- *Obey all traffic laws* – Traffic law violations cause most bicycle/motorist collisions. By following traffic laws, bicyclists help tell drivers where they are going and when. Drivers should take responsibility for knowing the laws that apply to bicyclists.
- *Wear a bicycle helmet* – CPSC, Snell, or ATSM approved helmets are recommended for all riders. Some cities and counties in Washington have a local ordinance mandating helmet use. In some locations this applies only to children, in other places it also applies to adults. Helmets can only do

their job if they fit and are properly adjusted. If you can push your helmet off your head without unbuckling it, adjust it. Always get a new helmet if yours has been in a crash.

- *Enhance your visibility* – Make eye contact with drivers at intersections. If you have a helmet-mounted light you can use it to attract a driver's attention at night by moving your head. Consider applying reflective tape to your helmet and bike. Wearing reflective strips at your knees and ankles provides additional night-time visibility for drivers.
- *Ride predictably and defensively* – Avoid weaving in and out of the "parking lane." Leave about three feet between yourself and parked cars so that an opened door will not block your path.
- *Scan the road for hazards* – Watch out for wet or icy surfaces, low-light areas, slotted storm drains, potholes, pavement cracks running parallel to your lane of travel, and train tracks. Ride at speeds appropriate for conditions and allow for additional braking time needed in wet or icy conditions.. Always yield to pedestrians and vehicle traffic before entering or crossing a roadway.
- *Be responsible for yourself* – When riding in a group, watch out for yourself instead of simply following the rider in front of you.
- *Never ride against traffic* – Motorists do not look for, or expect, bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the roadway.
- *Ride in a straight line* – Whenever possible, ride in a straight line and to the right of traffic but about the width of a car door away from parked cars.
- *Do not pass on the right* – Do not pass on the right side of vehicles in traffic at intersections. Motorists turning right may not look for, or see, a bicycle passing on the right.
- *Watch for cars pulling out* – Even though you look a driver in the eye, the driver might not see you and may pull out in front of you.



- *Turning* – When turning left, a bicyclist can turn from the left lane or the left turn lane or, the rider can stay in the right lane, cross the street, and stop at the right corner, then proceed in the new direction of travel. with traffic or when the light turns green.

- *Scan the road behind you* – Even if you use rear view mirrors, learn to ride and look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving.
- *Keep both hands ready to brake* – To stop in time, you will need both hands. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain or on a wet road. Your brakes may not work properly when wet, and tires skid more easily.
- *Watch for dogs* – The spinning of your wheels and feet attracts Dogs. If a dog starts to chase you, ignore it or, using a firm, loud voice, yell "NO!" If the dog does not stop, get off your bike and put it between you and the dog.

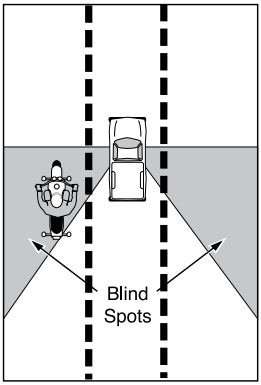
Sharing the Road with Motorcycles

At times, the experience of having a mix of cars, trucks, motorcycles, bicyclists, and pedestrians using the roadway complicates driving and increases hazards for everyone. The keys to minimizing those hazards are courtesy, respect for the rights of others, and a heightened awareness of potential problems. Caution and awareness on your part may save others from serious injury or death.

Motorcyclist Responsibilities

Motorcycle riders have the same rights and responsibilities as other highway users and they must obey the same traffic laws.

Motorcycles are smaller and harder to see than cars. They are easily hidden in a car's blind spot. Because it may be hard to judge the distance to motorcyclists, or to tell how fast they are moving. Be alert to their presence and be extra cautious.



Approximately one-half of all motorcycle crashes involve another motor vehicle, so it is important to practice safe driving in order to help avoid collisions. Here are situations that call for special attention when motorcyclists are around.

- *Left turns* – Cars turning left in front of an oncoming motorcyclist may cause serious car/motorcycle crashes. Drivers may fail to see a motorcycle rider in the traffic scene or a driver may fail to judge the speed of an oncoming motorcycle. As a driver, look left, look right, and then look left again. Look twice! Make sure you see the motorcyclist and know their speed before you make a left turn.
- *Turn signals* – Most motorcycles do not have turn signals that turn off automatically. At times, motorcycle riders may forget to switch the signal off. Before you make a turn in front of a motorcycle with a signal flashing, be sure the motorcycle is turning and not continuing straight into your path.
- *Lanes* – Motorcyclists are entitled to the same full lane width as all other vehicles. Good motorcycle riders are constantly changing positions within the lane so they can see and be seen, and to avoid objects in the road. Never move into the same lane alongside a motorcyclist, even if the lane is wide and the motorcyclist is riding far to one side.
- *Bad weather* – Weather conditions and slippery surfaces can be serious problems for motorcyclists. Allow even more following room when it is raining or the road surface is slick.
- *Road surface* – Bumpy road surfaces and irregularities that do not affect other vehicles can create problems for motorcyclists. Gravel, debris, pavement seams, small animals, potholes and even manhole covers may force a motorcyclist to change speed or lane position.

- *Visibility* – Always make a visual check for motorcyclists by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic or an intersection. Motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot or missed in a quick look due to their smaller size. Always use turn signals and brake lights to signal your intentions for turning, changing lanes, merging, slowing and stopping. This allows the motorcyclist to anticipate traffic flow and adjust to a safe lane position. Allow more than four seconds following distance between your vehicle and the motorcycle. This allows you and the motorcyclist enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.
- *Passing* – Motorcyclists may overtake and pass a pedestrian or bicyclist that is occupying the same lane; provided that the motorcyclist passes to the left with at least three feet of clear passing distance to clearly avoid coming into contact with the pedestrian or bicyclist and does not return to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken pedestrian or bicyclist

Large Vehicles

Safely sharing the road with large trucks and buses requires knowledge of their special limitations. Generally speaking, the bigger they are:

- the bigger their blind spots.
- the more room they need to turn or change lanes.
- the longer it takes them to stop.
- the longer it takes them to pass.
- the more likely you're going to be the loser in a collision.

When you are near large vehicles on the road, pay special attention to the following:

- *Snow plows* – Use extra caution when you encounter snow removal equipment; snowplow blades force snow up and off the road, potentially causing blizzard-like conditions and reduced visibility for drivers following too closely.

- *Blind spots* – Stay out of blind spots. If you are following a large vehicle and you cannot see the driver's mirrors, then the driver cannot see you either. There are blind spots behind and on each side of large vehicles.

Avoid driving alongside large vehicles for prolonged periods.

- *Visibility* – Large vehicles can block your vision of the road ahead. When following large vehicles, adjust your following distance so you can see most of the roadway ahead.
- *Speeding up and stopping* – Large vehicles cannot gain speed or stop as quickly as smaller vehicles can. For example, it takes a loaded truck with properly adjusted brakes 450 feet to come to a complete stop when traveling 55 mph on a dry road. Allow extra space for large vehicles to speed up or stop. The operators of these vehicles adjust the space between their vehicles and the vehicles ahead to allow for a safe following distance. When passing them, be sure to allow for this increased safety zone when returning to your lane of travel.
- *Turning space* – When making sharp turns, large vehicles sometimes require more than one lane to complete the turn. Be sure to allow enough room for these vehicles to safely complete their turns. When turning right, these drivers may angle into the left lane so they can make the right turn without running over the curb or hitting something. Do not try to squeeze by on the right side when a large vehicle is making a turn. This is a frequent cause of collisions involving large vehicles.
- *Hazardous Materials* – Avoid driving near vehicles carrying hazardous materials. These vehicles will be placarded to identify what they are carrying. All vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop at all railroad crossings, so be prepared to stop if you are following one.
- *Long, Steep Grades* – When traveling up or down steep grades, large vehicles travel slowly. On four-lane roads, they will use the right lane. Be prepared to encounter slow vehicles in the right lane, and do not park in or near "escape" or "runaway" ramps. These ramps should only be used to stop vehicles whose brakes have failed.

Space for Special Situations

There are certain drivers and other road users you should give extra room. 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 whose view is blocked by buildings, trees, or other vehicles.
- drivers backing into the roadway, or backing into or out of parking spaces.
- drivers whose windows are covered with snow or ice or are steamed-up.
- pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or with their hats pulled down.
- pedestrians who are walking in the same direction as traffic flow. Since they have their back to you, they cannot see you.
- pedestrians or bicyclists crossing the street where another driver has stopped.
- bicyclists riding behind others.

People who are distracted – Even when others can see you, allow extra room and 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.
- pedestrians using electronic devices.

People who may be confused – People who are confused, and/or your response to them may cause an unsafe situation. These people may include:

- tourists or others who do not seem to know where they are going.
- drivers, motorcyclists, or bicyclists slowing for no apparent reason. Remember that they may be able to see something you can't see from your lane position.

- drivers, motorcyclists, or bicyclists looking for street signs or house numbers.

Drivers in trouble – If another driver makes a mistake in passing you, do not make it worse. Slow down and let them return to the drive lane safely. If another driver needs to suddenly change lanes, slow down and let them merge. These actions will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

Avoiding Run-Off-the-Road Collisions

Nearly 44% of all fatal collisions involve a vehicle that left the roadway. The most common contributing factors in fatal or serious injury run-off-the-road collisions were speeding, impairment from drugs or alcohol, inattention or distracted driving, crossing the centerline and falling asleep or fatigue. Speeding and impairment remain the most frequent contributors in run-off-the-road collisions, even though their numbers are declining.

Speeding was involved in more than half of run-off-the-road fatalities and in just under half of serious injuries reported. Impairment contributed to more than half of run-off-the-road fatalities and a portion of serious injuries. Impairment is under reported in serious injury collisions, compared to fatalities where impairment is confirmed by toxicology.

Over 90% of fatal and serious injury run-off-the-road collisions involve only one vehicle. Once a vehicle left the roadway, the most common occurrences in fatal and serious injury collisions were:

- Overturn
- Hit tree
- Ran into ditch
- Hit utility pole
- Ran over embankment
- Hit earth bank, hit guardrail
- Hit fence or hit parked car

You can reduce the likelihood of a run-off-the-road collision by following the speed limit, avoiding distractions, and not driving when you're impaired or fatigued.

New numbers mean better security for you!

Starting September 2018, newly-issued Washington driver licenses and ID cards will have a new number.

It uses random letters and numbers rather than your name and birthdate to protect your personal information.

If you already have a license or ID, you will get a new number when you renew or replace it.

dol.wa.gov

IN SHAPE TO DRIVE

Driving safely is not easy. In fact, it is one of the most complex things that people do. Driving is 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 great deal of skill and judgment. This task is even more difficult when you are just learning to drive. The first six months of driving for any novice driver, regardless of age, are the most critical because the new driver is more likely to be involved in a crash due to lack of experience.

Driving requires the individual to utilize mental, visual, and physical abilities to safely operate a vehicle. If anything happens resulting in an impairment of your abilities, you may not be a safe driver.

Mental and visual abilities are necessary when judging gaps in traffic and other functions necessary to make rapid and appropriate maneuver decisions. Physical abilities, including flexibility of the neck and torso, are important when using best possible vision for safety hazards before turning, backing, changing lanes, or merging. This includes strength in your extremities and the stamina needed for effective control of the vehicle under normal and emergency response conditions.

Your ability to be a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and being emotionally fit to drive. You are responsible for 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 the law requires that you pass a vision test before you get a driver license. If the test shows your eyesight doesn't meet the licensing standard without glasses,

your license may have a restriction for corrective lenses. We may require you to get an examination by an eye care specialist and submit a Visual Examination Report.

Other important aspects of vision are:

- *side vision* – You need to see out of the corner of your eye. This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you cannot focus on things to the side, you must also use your side mirrors 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 distance or speed well. You are not alone, many people have this problem. It takes practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important in knowing how far you are from other vehicles, judging safe gaps when merging, when passing on two-lane roads, or when judging the speed of a train before crossing tracks safely.
- *night vision* – It is more difficult to see at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially with the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don't drive more than is necessary and be very careful when you do.

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

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

- always wear them when you drive, even if you are only going down the street. If your driver license says you must wear corrective lenses and you get stopped without them, you could get a ticket.
- 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 also can be helpful if you do not wear glasses all the time because misplacing them is easy.

- avoid using dark glasses or tinted contact lenses at night, even if you think they help with glare. They will also cut down the light that you need to see clearly.

Hearing

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

Fatigue

When you drive while drowsy or tired, you do not see as well, nor are you as alert. It takes more time to make decisions and your ability to react to situations is greatly diminished. You can be more irritable and easily upset. When you are tired, you also increase the risk of falling asleep behind the wheel. Resulting collisions could cause major injury or death to yourself and others.

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

- Try to get a normal night's sleep before you leave.
- Do not leave on a trip if you are already tired. Plan your trips so you can leave when you are rested.
- Do not take any medicine that can make you drowsy.
- Eat lightly. Do not eat a large meal before you leave. Some people get sleepy after they eat a big meal.
- Take breaks. Stop every hour or so or when you need to. Walk around, get some fresh air, and have some coffee, soda, water, or juice. A few minutes spent on a rest break can save your life. Plan your trip with plenty of time for breaks to complete your trip safely.

- Try not to drive late at night when you are normally asleep. Your body thinks it is time to go to sleep and will try to do so.
- Never drive if you are sleepy. It is better to stop and sleep for a few hours than to risk your life or others. If possible, switch driving tasks with another driver so you can sleep while they drive.

Drinking Alcohol and Driving

Alcohol is involved in about 40% of the traffic collisions in which someone is killed. If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chances of being in a collision are much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol. No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if you have been driving for many years.

Because drinking alcohol and driving is so dangerous, the penalties are very tough. People who drive after drinking alcohol risk heavy fines, higher insurance rates, loss of license, and even jail sentences.

Why Is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all skills you need to drive safely. Alcohol is a drug that depresses the central nervous system. As a depressant, alcohol slows the activity of the brain and the spinal cord. Initially, the drinker experiences the depressant action of the alcohol in reduced tension and lowered inhibitions. These feelings can frequently be observed in drinkers as they become more active, talkative, loud, and as they begin to do and say things that are not a part of their normal behavior pattern. If enough alcohol is consumed, the results can progress to drowsiness, sleep, unconsciousness, and, eventually, death. Unlike most food, alcohol does not have to be digested. Once swallowed, it is absorbed directly into the blood stream through the walls of the stomach and small intestine, usually within 20 - 40 minutes. If there is food in the stomach, this absorption process may be slowed.

As a drug, alcohol is a depressant, which will affect your driving skills in the following ways:

- *Judgment* – Your decision making process is much slower, ability to recall past events or learned knowledge is diminished, and your decisions may be faulty.
- *Vision* – Your vision becomes impaired, depth perception becomes distorted, and the pupils of the eyes react more slowly to variations in light.
- *Concentration* – Focusing on driving and adjusting to road, weather, and traffic conditions becomes more difficult.
- *Understanding* – Your comprehension level as to what is happening around you will suffer. You may not realize what you are doing.
- *Feelings (senses)* – Your feelings are suppressed; you don't feel speed so you won't realize that you are speeding.
- *Reaction time* – Coordination deteriorates, it will take you longer to react and move your foot from the gas pedal to the brake. A slower reaction time can be the difference between arriving safely and not arriving at all.

When You Drink, Can You Drive?

Any amount of alcohol is too much when it comes to driving. Do not drive if you drink alcohol. Even one drink of alcohol can affect your driving. With one or more drinks in your bloodstream, you are *impaired* and may be arrested.

Not all drinks contain equal amounts of alcohol. The alcoholic content of any one drink depends upon both the type and amount of liquor it contains. Some drinks, contain more alcohol than others do. The alcoholic content of some beverages is stated in terms of proof, a number that is actually double its alcoholic content or percentage. A typical alcoholic drink is 1 1/2 oz. of 80-proof liquor (one shot glass) straight or with a mixer, 12 oz. of beer (a regular size can, bottle, mug, or glass), or a 5 oz. glass of wine. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and maybe the same as having several normal drinks.

Very small quantities of alcohol are eliminated through sweat, breath, and urine. The body disposes of most alcohol through oxidation (burning) in the liver. The oxidation takes place at a constant rate and nothing can be done to slow down or accelerate the process. It continues until all of the alcohol has been burned; in other words, only time will "sober up" a person. It takes about one hour for your body to get rid of each drink.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more persons and agree that one of you will not drink alcohol. You can take turns being a "designated driver," use public transportation, use a cab or ride hailing service, or walk.

The consequences of the use of alcohol can be disastrous. About 40% of all the traffic deaths occur in crashes in which a drinking driver is involved

Marijuana

The risks of smoking marijuana are different from those associated with the consumption of marijuana-infused foods. Inhaling any kind of smoke harms your lungs. Consuming marijuana-infused foods can also be dangerous because it takes longer to feel the effects. It's easier to have too much because the effects are delayed.

Road traffic arrest and fatality data indicates that after alcohol, marijuana is the most frequently detected psychoactive substance among driving populations. Marijuana has been shown to impair performance on driving tasks and on driving courses for up to 5 hours. Decreased car handling performance, slower reaction times, impaired time and distance estimation, inability to maintain headway, subjective sleepiness, motor coordination, and impaired ability to focus have all been reported.

Marijuana may particularly impair monotonous and prolonged driving. Decision times to evaluate situations and determine appropriate responses increase. Mixing alcohol and marijuana may produce greater impairments than either drug on its own.

Other Drugs

Besides alcohol and marijuana, many other drugs can affect a person's ability to drive safely. These drugs can have effects like those of alcohol or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs and even many over-the-counter (OTC) drugs you can buy without a prescription. Drugs taken for headaches, colds, hay fever, or other allergies or those to calm nerves can make a person drowsy and affect their driving ability. Pep pills, "uppers", energy drinks, and diet pills can make a driver feel more alert for a short time. Later, however, they can cause a person to be nervous, dizzy, unable to concentrate, and can affect your vision. Other prescription drugs can affect your reflexes, judgment, vision, and alertness in ways similar to alcohol. If you are arrested or convicted of driving under the influence of drugs, the penalties are the same as for any alcohol violation.

If you are driving, check the label before you take a drug for warnings about possible after-effects. If you are not sure it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Many drugs multiply the effects of alcohol or have other side effects. You should read the warnings on your medicine or talk to your pharmacist before you drink and use medicine at the same time. This combination not only affects your ability to be a safe driver but could cause serious health problems, even death.

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

Over-the-counter medications, such as certain cough suppressants, sleep aids, and antihistamines, can be abused for their effects. This typically means taking doses higher than recommended or combining OTC medications with alcohol, or with illicit or prescription drugs. Either practice can have dangerous results, depending on the medications involved. Some contain aspirin or acetaminophen, which can be toxic to the liver at high doses. Others, when taken for their "hallucinogenic" properties, can cause confusion, psychosis, coma, and even death.

Driving after taking drugs can be just as deadly as alcohol. Drugs may cause you to become sleepy and keep you from thinking or acting appropriately while driving. Mixing drugs and alcohol can cause a compounded effect, which means that the effects of the drug multiply to become more than 1+1.

Alcohol/Drugs and the Law

Driving under the influence (DUI) refers to operating a motor vehicle while affected by alcohol, drugs, or both. This includes both legal and illegal drugs, including prescription medication and over-the-counter drugs.

Motor vehicle incidents involving drunk or drugged driving cost our state thousands of dollars each year in serious injuries, property damage, medical costs, lost work time, and death. This does not include the emotional toll taken on friends and families of both those charged with DUI and the innocent victims.

Driving under the influence of any drug or alcohol, can result in an arrest. Blood alcohol content (BAC) is the percentage of alcohol in your blood and is usually determined by a breath, or blood test

- You can be arrested for DUI with BAC and THC/marijuana levels lower than the legal limit if you are driving and impaired due to alcohol and/or drugs.
- You can be arrested for driving with BAC of .08 or more or a THC/marijuana level of 5.00 nanograms per milliliter of blood or higher.
- If you are under 21, you also can be arrested for a BAC of .02 or more or a THC/marijuana level of more than 0.00 nanograms per milliliter of blood.

When a child under age 13 is present in the car of a parent/legal custodian/guardian being arrested for a drug- or alcohol-related driving offense, the arresting law enforcement officer must promptly notify child protective services. If there is a child that is 16 or younger in the car, the driver will also face additional ignition interlock requirements.

A bicyclist under the influence may be transported by a law enforcement officer or released to a competent person. The officer is not required to transport the bicyclist. The officer may impound the bicycle if the officer determines that impoundment is necessary to reduce a threat to public safety, and there are no reasonable alternatives to impoundment. The bicycle may be picked up when the bicyclist is no longer under the influence and must be released without a fee. Bicycles unclaimed after 30 days may be sold or disposed of.

The Implied Consent Law means that when you operate a motor vehicle, you have agreed to take a breath test to determine the alcohol content of your blood. If a police or traffic officer asks you to take a BAC breath test, you must do so. You will lose your driver license for at least one year if you refuse to take a BAC breath test.

In addition, a law enforcement officer may obtain a person's blood to test for alcohol, marijuana, or any drug, pursuant to a search warrant, a valid waiver of the warrant requirement when exigent circumstances exist, or under any other authority of law.

Some penalties for driving while impaired come just from being arrested:

- If it is your first arrest within seven years, you are 21 or older, and the breath or blood test result shows a BAC of .08 or more, or a THC/marijuana level of 5.00 nanograms per milliliter of blood or higher, your license will be suspended for 90 days. If you are under the age of 21 and have .02 BAC or a THC/marijuana level of more than 0.00 nanograms per milliliter of blood your license will be suspended for 90 days. You may be able to get a restricted license to operate vehicles equipped with an ignition interlock device.
- If it is your first arrest and you refuse to take a breath test, your license will be revoked for one year.
- If you have been arrested more than once within the past seven years, your license will be revoked for two years. If you are under 21 your license will be revoked for one year or until age 21, whichever is longer.

In all of these cases, and before the penalties go into effect, you may request a hearing from the Department of Licensing.

Restricted Driver Licenses

If your driving privilege in Washington is currently suspended or revoked, you may be eligible for a temporary restricted driver license. After applying for a Restricted Driver License, a specialist will evaluate your driving record and determine which of the following types of license you qualify for.

- *Ignition Interlock License (IIL)* – Allows you to drive vehicles equipped with an ignition interlock device while your driving privilege is suspended or revoked for a drug or alcohol-related offense.
- *Occupational/Restricted Driver License (ORL)* – Allows you to drive to work, school, court ordered services, continuing healthcare, continuing support of a dependent, or employment programs.

Both restricted licenses may be restricted to certain times of the day, specific areas, days of the week, or vehicles that can be driven. Applications are accepted at your local driver licensing offices, and will require a non-refundable fee to apply. To help determine requirements and eligibility visit our website at **www.dol.wa.gov**.

Alcohol/Drug-related offenses appear on your driving record for life. If found guilty in court of driving impaired and it is your first conviction, you may be fined up to $5,000 plus court costs and other penalties. You could also be sentenced from 1 to 365 days in jail and your license could be suspended or revoked for 90 days to two years. Prior convictions of alcohol violations can result in other penalties, including 150 days of home detention and license suspension or revocation of up to four years.

Other possible penalties include:

- required proof of insurance (filing an SR22),
- license reapplication, knowledge and skill testing, and the appropriate reissue fee,
- seizure and loss of your vehicle, and

- use of an ignition interlock device for up to 10 or more years. An additional six months will be required if you have a passenger under 16 at the time of arrest. A DUI that has been reduced to reckless driving and/or convictions of negligent driving in the first degree may carry a six month ignition interlock requirement.

Under the "Open Container Law" it is a traffic infraction:

- to drink any alcoholic beverage or consume marijuana in any manner in a motor vehicle upon a highway.
- for a person in a motor vehicle upon a highway to possess any container with an alcoholic beverage if the container has been opened or a seal broken or the contents partially removed.
- to incorrectly label the original container of an alcoholic beverage or marijuana or place an alcoholic beverage or marijuana in a container labeled as containing a nonalcoholic beverage or non-marijuana substance or to be in possession of such a container.
- for the registered owner or driver to keep an open container of an alcoholic beverage or marijuana in a vehicle on a highway, unless it is in an area not normally occupied by the driver or passengers. The container cannot be kept in any accessible storage compartment.

There are certain exceptions which apply to the living quarters of motor homes and campers.

Probationary Licenses

If convicted of driving or being in physical control of a vehicle while under the influence or are granted a deferred prosecution, a probationary license will be required for five years. In addition to regular licensing fees, the probationary license fee is collected at issuance and again at time of renewal.

Deferred Prosecution

When charged with DUI, and if you suffer from alcoholism, drug addiction, or mental problems, you may be eligible for deferred prosecution. You can only use the deferred prosecution program once in your lifetime.

If eligible, your DUI conviction is postponed while you complete an approved alcohol/drug or mental health program. You also have to meet certain licensing and court-ordered requirements which can include use of an ignition interlock, proof of liability insurance, and other requirements. When you have completed your treatment and have met all court ordered requirements, the DUI charges are dismissed.

Juvenile Alcohol/Drug/Firearms Violations

If you are age 13 through 17 and convicted of a first alcohol or firearm violation, or age 13 through 20 and convicted of a first drug violation, your driving privilege will be revoked for one year or until age 17, whichever is longer.

For a second offense your driving privilege will be revoked for two years, or until age 18, whichever is longer.

You will not be able to obtain a license/ instruction permit or take driver education during the revocation period. When you are eligible to reinstate your driving privilege, you must take the written and drive tests. You will also need to pay a reissue fee in addition to the usual testing and licensing fees. Parental consent will be needed if you are still under age 18.

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.

These conditions can be very dangerous while driving:

- *Epilepsy* – As long as it is under medical control, epilepsy generally is not dangerous. In Washington, you may drive if you are under the care of a doctor and have been taking your medication and have not had a seizure for six 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 also might be a good idea to have someone else drive for you during times when your doctor is adjusting your insulin dosage. If you have diabetes, you should have your eyes checked regularly for possible night blindness or other vision problems.
- *Heart condition* – People with heart disease, high blood pressure or circulation problems, or those in danger of a blackout, fainting, or a heart attack, should not get behind the wheel. If you are being treated by a doctor for a heart condition, ask if the condition could affect your driving ability.

Emotions

Emotions can affect 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, depressed, or upset about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some find listening to the radio helps.
- If you are impatient, allow extra time for your trip. By leaving a few minutes early, instead of speeding to your destination, you may avoid a speeding ticket and reduce your chances of a collision.

Road Rage

Today, heavy traffic and tight schedules are the norm. Some drivers take their anger out on the roadways, endangering themselves and others.

When you see other drivers around you acting or reacting in anger, distance yourself from the situation, physically and mentally. Don't make eye contact. Body movements and gestures can provoke an angry response from another driver. Slow down, move over, or do whatever you safely can, to put yourself out of danger. Your courtesy may encourage the same from other drivers.

If you feel you are being followed or harassed by another driver, seek help. Exit only in an area where there are other people and open businesses around you. If you have a cellular phone, use it to call the police.

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

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 rear wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if the vehicle does start to skid.
- if that does not work, start shifting to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure the vehicle is off the roadway. Do not drive the vehicle without brakes.

Tire Blowout

If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- hold the steering wheel tightly and keep the vehicle going straight.
- slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal and use the brakes lightly.
- do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place.

Power Failure

If the engine stalls while you are driving:

- keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Be aware that the steering wheel may be difficult to turn, but you can turn it with more effort.
- 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

The motor 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.

Avoiding Collisions

When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. There is usually something you can do to avoid the crash or reduce the impact of the crash. In avoiding a collision, drivers have three options: stop, turn, or speed up.

Stopping Quickly

Many newer vehicles have an antilock braking system (ABS). Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. The ABS system allows you to stop without skidding.

With ABS – If you have ABS and must stop quickly:

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

Without ABS – If you *do not* have ABS and must stop quickly:

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

Turning Quickly

You should consider turning in order to avoid a collision. In most cases, you can turn the vehicle quicker than you can stop it. 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 – If you have ABS, you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn and stop or slow down.

Without ABS – If you do not have ABS, you must use a different procedure to turn quickly. You should step on the brake pedal, then let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle, put more weight on the front tires, and allow for a quicker turn. Do not lock up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle wheels start to skid.

Generally, it is better to run off the road than to collide head-on into another vehicle.

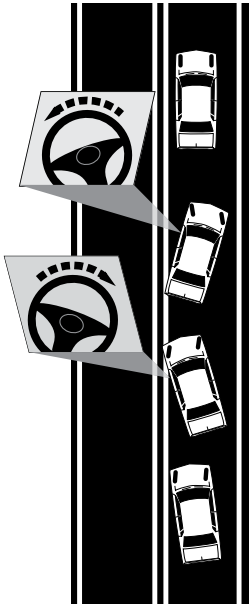
Speeding Up

Sometimes it is best, or necessary, to speed up to avoid a collision. This may happen when another vehicle is about to hit you from the side or from behind and there is room to the front 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 turn or stop suddenly. 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 avoid skidding in the first place. Skids are caused by drivers traveling too fast for conditions.

If your vehicle begins to skid:



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

Protecting Yourself in Collisions

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

- *Hit from the rear* – If your vehicle is hit from the rear, your body will be thrown 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 towards the side that is hit. Air bags will not help in this situation. Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.
- *Hit from the front* – If your vehicle is about to be hit from the front, it is important to try and have a glancing blow, rather than being struck head-on. This means that if a collision is going to happen, you should try to turn the vehicle. At worst, you hit with a glancing blow. You might miss it. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It also will deflate following the crash, so be ready to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else. You must use your lap and shoulder belts to keep you behind the wheel and to protect you if your vehicle has a second collision.

Collisions

Do not stop at a collision unless you are involved or if emergency help has not yet arrived. Keep your attention on your driving and keep moving, watching for people who might be in or near the road. Never drive to the scene of a collision, fire, or other disaster, just to look. You may block the way for police, firefighters, ambulances, tow trucks, and other rescue vehicles. You must obey all lawful orders given by police, firefighters, and other persons authorized to direct traffic at the scene. It is against the law to drive over a fire hose. Doing this can damage the hose, injure firefighters or hinder their efforts.

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

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

At the Collision Scene

- For all collisions that only damage a vehicle or other property, the driver must move the vehicle off the road, freeway, shoulder or median to an exit ramp shoulder, frontage road, cross street or other suitable location as soon as it is possible to do so.
- For all other collisions, stop your vehicle at or near the collision site. If you can move your vehicle, get it off the road so that it does not block traffic or cause another collision.
- 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 that other traffic will not be involved in the collision. Use flares or other warning devices to alert traffic of the collision.

If Someone Is Injured

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

Reporting the Collision

- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the collision and any witnesses, including injured persons.
- Exchange information with other drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, or pedestrians involved in the crash, including: 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 the vehicles involved in the collision.
- Provide information to the police or other emergency officials if requested.

- Should the collision involve a parked vehicle, try to find the owner. If you cannot, leave a note in a place where it can be seen with information on how the owner can reach you and the date and time of the collision.
- If the collision results in an injury, death, or property damage of $1,000 or more to one person's property and a report is not made by a law enforcement officer, you must complete a Collision Report form within four days. To get a report form, go to **www.wsp.wa.gov/driver/collision-records/** or call 360-570-2355.

Emergency Notification System (ENS)

Every railroad grade crossing has an emergency dispatch number for contacting the railroad to report problems with the crossing, tracks, or train travel.

The ENS number is typically located on a blue sign on the railroad crossing posts or the metal control box near the tracks. This sign also contains a USDOT number that identifies the railroad grade crossing's physical location so emergency crews or railroad personnel can respond.

By providing the USDOT number, the dispatchers will know exactly where the grade crossing is and can notify trains moving in that direction to either come to a stop, or be placed on an a speed restriction.

VEHICLE LICENSING

Registration

You must register your vehicle with us if you are a resident of Washington State and own and operate a vehicle on public roadways. If you are a new resident, you must register your vehicle within 30 days of becoming a resident.

If you are a resident here and purchase a vehicle in another state with the intention of driving it on a Washington roadway, you must register your vehicle immediately.

In parts of Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties, most vehicles that are 5-25 years old must pass an emissions test every two years, even if the vehicle is certified in another state. Go to **www.emissiontestwa.com** for information on vehicle emissions testing and to locate an emissions test station. By phone, you can call 1-800-272-3780 for emissions information in King and Snohomish Counties. ***Note:*** *Emissions testing in Washington State will no longer be required as of January 1, 2020.*

What You Need to Bring

To title and register your vehicle, bring the following to a vehicle licensing office.

- The current Certificate of Ownership (title) and registration for your vehicle. If your title has been lost, you must apply for a duplicate from the state of issuance. If the title is issued by another state and the lien holder retains it, you must provide a copy of the current title to get a Washington registration.
- The personal identification of all registered owners.
- An odometer reading on a secure odometer form, if your vehicle is less than ten years old.
- Scale weight slip for trucks, trailers (except travel), and propane-powered vehicles, if not shown on the previous title or registration.

- Cash, personal check, cashier's check, money order or certain credit/debit cards are accepted. We accept the following cards: American Express, Discover credit, VISA and MasterCard credit and debit cards.

When registering a vehicle, all registered owners of the vehicle must present an unexpired driver license unless they:

- are a Washington resident who does not operate a motor vehicle on public roads.
- have a driver license that is lost, stolen, confiscated, suspended, or revoked.
- are a licensee who is:
  - out of the area, state, or country.
  - incarcerated.
  - a divorcee who was not awarded the vehicle.
  - deceased.
- are exempt from driver licensing requirements. This applies to:
  - anyone in the Armed Forces.
  - any nonresident who is at least 16 with a valid driver license issued from their home state or country.
  - anyone operating special highway-construction equipment, a farm tractor, or a locomotive on rails.

Certificate of Ownership (Title)

We will issue a Certificate of Ownership (title) for vehicles, including mopeds, mobile homes, campers, trailers, certain electric vehicles, and off-road vehicles. Snowmobiles are not titled in Washington, but they are required to be registered annually.

The title shows the registered and legal owner(s). Keep it in a safe place, but not in the vehicle.

When ownership is transferred, the title must be signed and dated by all of the owners and then given to the purchaser. The purchaser must transfer ownership within 15 days to avoid

penalty fees. If the vehicle is sold by a dealer, the transfer is the dealer's responsibility.

Report of Sale

When a vehicle is sold or traded to a private party or dealer, the owner must report the sale within five days. The Report of Sale is the upper portion of newer certificates of ownership or is available at any Washington vehicle licensing office or on our website.

You can take a Report of Sale to any Washington vehicle licensing office to file it immediately for a small service fee, or you can file it electronically at **www.dol.wa.gov**. File a properly completed Report of Sale within five days of selling, trading, gifting, or disposing of your vehicle in any way. This can help protect you from certain civil liabilities if the new owner does not transfer the title.

Vehicle License Plates

License plates must be displayed on both the front and rear of motor vehicles registered in Washington. License renewal month and year tabs are required only on rear plates.

Personalized License Plates – Prior to submitting your application for personalized license plates, verify the plate you want is available by going to our website **www.dol.wa.gov.**

Specialty License Plates – A variety of license plates representing sports teams, colleges, military, and other special interests are available. Go to **www.dol.wa.gov/vehicleregistration/specialdesign.html** to view the latest designs.

Disabled Parking Privileges – You may get temporary or permanent disabled parking privileges and an identification card if you have a disability that limits or impairs your ability to walk. To apply, both you and your physician must complete the Disabled Person's Parking Privileges Application form, available at any vehicle or driver licensing office or on our website at **www.dol.wa.gov**. Most vehicle licensing offices can process your application.

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

License express

Regulatory Signs

Speed Limit
(55 mph)

Yield

No U Turn

Stop

Do Not Enter

Do Not Pass

Wrong Way

Keep Right
(except to pass)

Slower Traffic
Keep Right

Disabled Parking

No Right Turn

School:
Speed Limit 20 mph
When Children
Are Present

Work Area Signs

Detour

Flagger

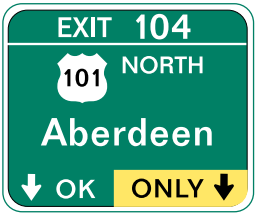
Service Signs

Hospital

Phone

Destination Signs

City and Mileage



Exit Only/ Optional Exit

Are you a 16 to 25 year old getting your first driver license?

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people 16 to 25. More than 100 young people die **every year** on Washington's roads.

The statistics are alarming:

- Drivers aged 16 to 25 have the highest crash rate and the highest rates of speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving of any other age group.
- In fatal crashes, male drivers outnumber female drivers by roughly 3 to 1.
- 16 to 17 year old female drivers involved in fatal collisions were more than twice as likely to have been driving distracted as their male counterparts.

Do your part to turn these alarming stats around:

- Slow down
- Always drive sober
- Don't text and drive

For more information go to:
www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/teens.html

TARGET ZERO

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

2000-520-400 (R/1/19)WA