Secretary of State



What Every Driver Must Know

Michigan

October 2025

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Introduction



Driving is a privilege and not a right. Drivers must drive responsibly and safely, obey traffic laws, and never drink and drive. Finally, make sure that you and your passengers are properly buckled up – it's the law!

Dear Michigan Motorist:

Today's vehicles are loaded with technology that was unheard of even a decade ago. Systems that warn when you are drifting from your lane, assist you in parallel parking, automatically brake in emergency situations and provide 360 degrees of vision around the vehicle via a camera are becoming standard, even on moderately priced vehicles. As remarkable as these leaps in automotive technology are, the truth is that the most important safety feature in any vehicle remains you as the driver.

Therefore, it is to your benefit to continue improving and expanding your knowledge of traffic laws and safe driving practices. Driving is a privilege. Once you have been issued a driver's license, you have the responsibility to continually demonstrate the skill and knowledge to drive safely.

Whether you have been behind the wheel for decades or are just starting to venture out, driving is a discipline that requires judgment, knowledge, physical and mental self-awareness, and practice. What Every Driver Must Know is an excellent resource for assisting you on this lifelong journey.

Jocelyn Benson
Michigan Secretary of State

Resources

A resource guide is located in the back of this manual. It lists resources, such as websites, online study guides and other materials, and a customer service number for more information about the topics in What Every Driver Must Know.

2023 Michigan crash facts

Before you read further, consider these facts about driving in Michigan from the Michigan State Police Traffic Crash Facts.

- 287,953 traffic crashes were reported, of which 1,021 of those were fatal, and 51,097 resulted in personal injuries.
- Of the 1,021 fatal crashes that occurred in Michigan, 272 (26.6%) were alcohol-involved, with at least one drinking operator, bicyclist, or pedestrian.
- A total of 2,284 crashes resulted from a driver, pedestrian, or bicyclist using a cell phone.
- There were 1,725 people injured and 19 people killed as a result of a vehicle-deer crash. Eleven of the fatalities were motorcyclists.
- Licensed drivers ages 15-20 represented 6.6 percent of Michigan's driving population. The drivers in this age group represented 10.1 percent (49,041) of drivers in all crashes and 8.2 percent (136) of drivers in fatal crashes.
- According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the No. 2 cause of fatal injuries in Michigan for children age 0-14 is motor vehicle crashes.



When you apply for a driver's license or state ID, you have the opportunity to join the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.

Joining the **Michigan Organ Donor Registry** means that upon your death, you agree to become an organ, eye and tissue donor to save up to 8 lives, and potentially heal up to 125 others.

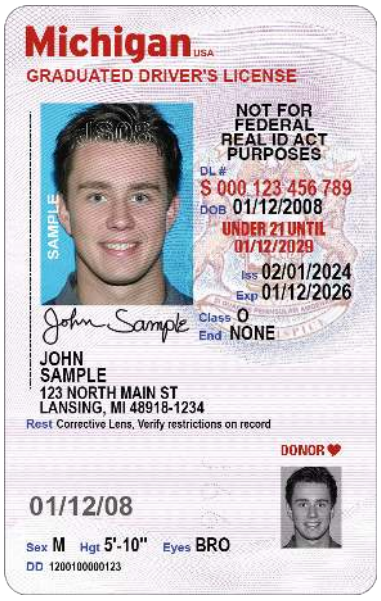
It's important to share your decision with your loved ones.

Note: This registration is a binding, legal document of your generous gift. This is referred to as First person Authorization.

A few facts about organ donation

- Up to 2,500 patients in Michigan are waiting for an organ transplant, and over 100,000 are waiting nationally.
- Most major religions support donation.
- Don't rule yourself out for health reasons. Medical experts decide which organs and tissues, if any, are healthy enough to help others.
- There is no age limit for organ and tissue donation.
- Organ donation is not considered until every effort to save the patient's life has been exhausted.
- There is no cost to the donor or their family.
- A majority of Michiganders – 4.6 million – are registered organ donors.
- For more facts and information, visit golm.org/faqs

Please join the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.



Sign up when you apply in person or online at **Michigan.gov/SOS.**

Chapter 1: Your Driver's License



Did you know that. . . ?

- In 1901, the Michigan Secretary of State became responsible for maintaining records of motor vehicles and drivers operating in the state.
- In 1947, the minimum age to obtain a Michigan driver's license was raised from 14 years to 16 years.
- In 1970, Michigan issued its first motorcycle endorsement to State Rep. Loren Anderson.

Who is a resident?

You must reside in Michigan and have established that you are legally present in the state to be considered a Michigan resident.

Under state law, the Secretary of State cannot issue an original driver's license or state identification card to anyone who is not a legal Michigan resident.

New Michigan residents

If you are a new Michigan resident, you must immediately title and register your vehicle at a Secretary of State office. You will turn in the vehicle's title or proof of ownership from your previous home state. If you have a driver's license or state identification card from another state, you may use it until your Michigan residency is established. Once residency is established, visit a Secretary of State office to apply for a Michigan driver's license or state ID card.

The Secretary of State will contact your previous home state to obtain your driving record, which then becomes part of your Michigan driving record. **If your out-of-state driver's license is suspended or revoked, you must contact your previous state to clear any outstanding issues before your application for a Michigan license will be accepted.**

When your application for a Michigan license is accepted, your out-of-state driver's license will be invalidated and returned to you. Michigan law allows drivers to hold only one valid driver's license at a time.

Licensing requirements

You must meet certain requirements before a Michigan driver's license can be issued. The requirements for obtaining a license vary depending on the type of license, group designator or endorsement needed.

Specialized licenses, such as a chauffeur's license or commercial driver's license, may require additional testing and a background check. Please make sure you have the correct documents before visiting a Secretary of State office to apply for a license.

You will not be issued a Michigan license if:

- You have never been issued a driver's license by any state or country, **AND**
- You have two or more convictions for moving violations on your driving record within three years of the date that you apply for a license.

To apply for a license, there can be no more than one conviction on your driving record within three years of your application date.

Michigan licenses, designators and endorsements

Operator's license: Basic Michigan driver's license.

Chauffeur's license: You must be at least age 16. A chauffeur's license is required if you are employed for the principal purpose of operating a motor vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or more, operating a motor vehicle as a carrier of passengers or as a common or contract carrier of property, or operating a bus or a school bus. You must pass the written chauffeur's test. A commercial driver's license also may be required, depending on the vehicle type or the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating.

Commercial driver's license: Required if you are operating a single vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more, operating a combination vehicle towing a trailer or other vehicles with a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or more when the Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR)is 26,001 pounds or more, operating a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people (including the driver), or carrying hazardous materials in amounts requiring placarding. Written knowledge tests and road tests are required. Group A, Group B and Group C designators, and endorsements T, P, N, H, X and S will be required depending on the type of commercial vehicle operated.

Before you can operate commercial motor vehicles, you must be at least age 18, have been suspension free for 36 months before the date of application and have the appropriate Michigan CDL group designation on your driver's license. Drivers between ages 18 and 21 can operate a commercial vehicle only in Michigan. You must be at least age 21 to drive a vehicle across state lines or to transport hazardous materials in amounts that require placarding. Requirements for testing and obtaining a CDL are available at Michigan.gov/SOS, including a PDF of the Michigan Commercial Driver's License Manual.

Enhanced driver's license: Allows you to re-enter the United States by land or sea from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean without the need to present any additional identity documents. Enhanced licenses and state IDs are also REAL ID compliant.

Graduated driver's license: Level 1 Learner's, Level 2 Intermediate and Level 3 Full licenses are issued as part of Michigan's driver education program for teens under age 18.

Moped license: A valid operator's or chauffeur's license may be used to operate a moped on Michigan roads. You are not eligible for a moped license if your operator's or chauffeur's license is suspended, revoked or denied. Unlicensed teens age 15 or older with parental approval may apply for a moped license at a Secretary of State office. Vision, written knowledge and traffic sign tests will be given. See Chapter 6 for more information about moped licenses and mopeds.

Motorcycle endorsement (CY): A CY endorsement is required to operate a motorcycle on Michigan roads. Successful completion of a motorcycle rider education course or the written knowledge test and motorcycle skills test is required. A motorcycle rider education course is required for teens ages 16-17 and for adults who fail the motorcycle skills test twice.

A restricted motorcycle endorsement (CY 3W restriction) is also issued that allows a rider to operate only three-wheeled motorcycles on Michigan roads. You must successfully complete a three-wheeled motorcycle safety course or the written knowledge test and three-wheel motorcycle skills test to earn a CY 3W restriction.

Recreational Double "R" endorsement: Required for a pickup truck pulling a fifth-wheel trailer designed for recreational living purposes, with a second trailer attached to the rear of the fifth-wheel trailer. A knowledge test is required.

Farmer endorsement: A specialized endorsement used by farming operations to move equipment, livestock and produce. A general knowledge test and a combination vehicles' test may be required.

Michigan and REAL ID

Beginning May 7, 2025, Michigan residents boarding a plane for domestic travel in the United States or entering certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants must present a REAL ID-compliant document.

Some examples of REAL ID-compliant documents include driver's licenses and state IDs issued by states that meet federal REAL ID standards, and valid U.S. passports and passport cards. The Transportation Security Administration has a list of acceptable documents on its website at tsa.gov.

You will know that a Michigan driver's license or state ID card is REAL ID compliant because it has either a star in a gold circle or a star in an image of Michigan printed in the upper right-hand corner. Enhanced licenses and IDs that do not have a star on them are REAL ID compliant and will be printed with a star when renewed or replaced.

Applying for a REAL ID-compliant card is optional. You may not need a REAL ID-compliant license or state ID card if you:

- Do not fly and do not plan to enter certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants.
- Have an acceptable alternative to a state-issued REAL ID-compliant driver's license or state ID card, such as a valid U.S. passport.

There is no extra cost if you apply for a REAL ID when renewing your driver's license or state ID card. If you apply for a REAL ID-compliant card at any other time, a duplicate card fee will be due.

If you choose not to get a REAL ID-compliant card, your standard Michigan license or state ID card will have "Not for Federal Identification" printed on it. Your card remains valid for driving (license), and may be used as identification for cashing checks, renting vehicles, purchasing age-restricted items and entering casinos (license or state ID card).

Moved to Michigan from another state or country

If you have moved to Michigan from another state or country, you should apply for a Michigan license as soon as you have established residency.

You will need to bring the following documents to a Secretary of State office. More information about each of these is found later in Chapter 1.

- Proof of a Social Security number.
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence.
- Proof of your identity.
- Proof of Michigan residency.

After your documents are approved, a vision test will be given.

You also may be required to take a written knowledge test, obtain a temporary instruction permit (TIP) and pass a driving skills test. Other tests may be required depending on the type of license.

If you are from another U.S. state, Canada, Germany or the Republic of Korea (South Korea), you may convert your driver's license to a Michigan license without the written knowledge test, TIP or driving skills test.

If you have an expired foreign driver's license or an out-of-state license that has been expired for at least four years, you must apply for a TIP and pass a driving skills test before a Michigan license may be issued. For more information about obtaining a TIP, please read the section titled Temporary instruction permit in this chapter.

Your photograph will be taken.

A license fee will be due. Fees vary depending on the license type and the addition of any endorsements or group designators. Your new Michigan license should arrive in the mail in about three weeks.

In 1955, Michigan became the FIRST state to require teens under age 18 to take driver education.

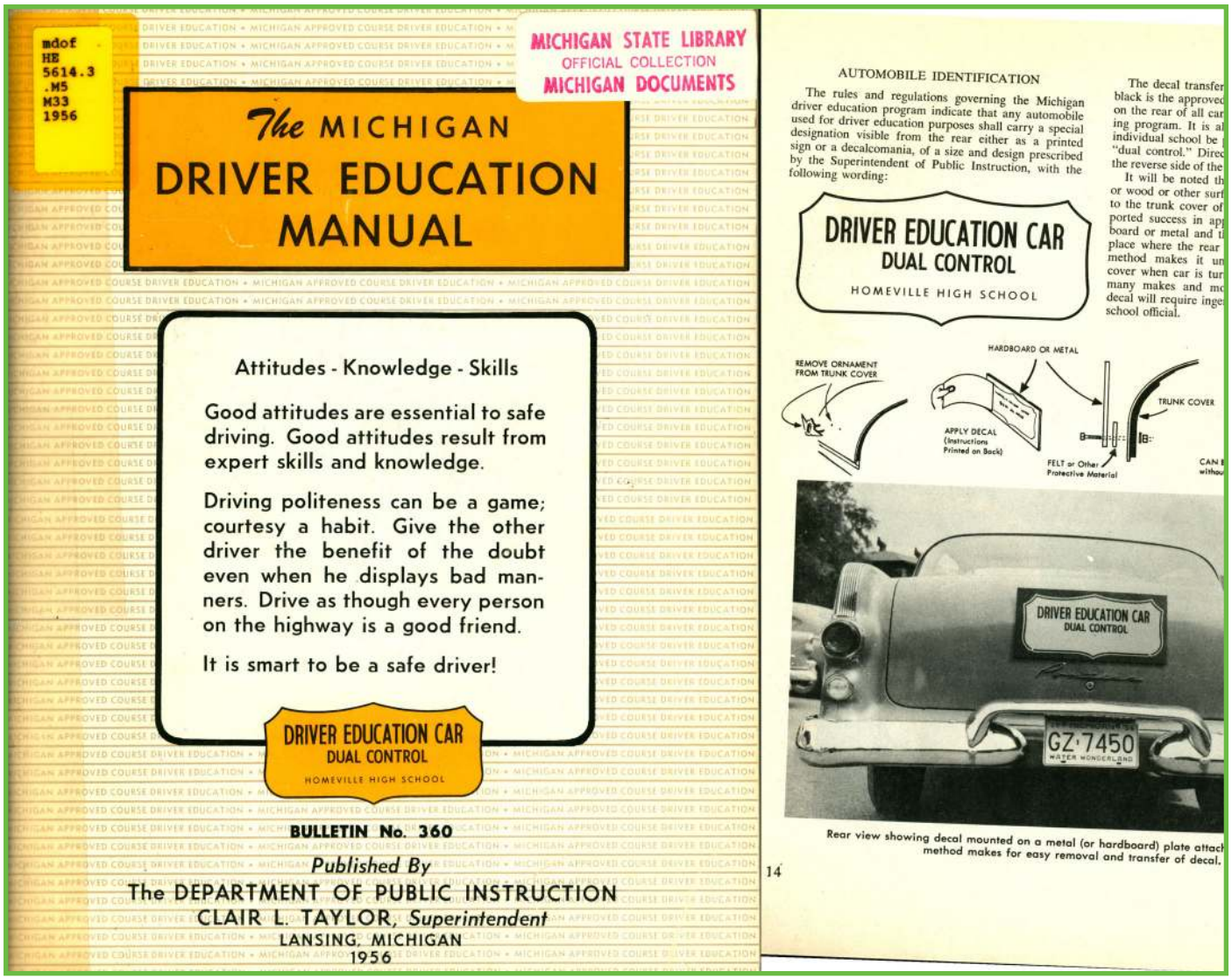
Under 18 – Graduated Driver Licensing

If you are under age 18, you must successfully pass Graduated Driver Licensing. (This requirement is waived if you have had a valid license from another state for more than a year.) Parents and guardians should check with their insurance agent about the appropriate coverage for their teen driver.

Under Graduated Driver Licensing, you must complete two segments of driver education instruction and meet the requirements for each of the three licensing levels. Driving privileges are increased at each new licensing level as you gain greater skill and confidence. GDL ends when you turn age 18.

Driver education Segment 1: To apply, you must be at least 14 years, 8 months and have your parent or guardian's permission to start Segment 1. Segment 1 requires at least 24 hours of classroom instruction, a minimum of six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction, a minimum of four hours of observation time in a training vehicle and a minimum of 70 percent on the Segment 1 state exam.

GDL Level 1 Learner's License: To apply, you must be at least 14 years, 9 months old, visit a Secretary of State office with your parent or legal guardian, pass the vision and health standards, and present the following documents: Segment 1 Certificate of Completion, proof of a valid Social Security number (or a letter of ineligibility), proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence, proof of identity and proof of Michigan residency. (The last four requirements are discussed later in this chapter.)



Michigan driver education in 1956. (Michigan State Library)

Student drivers who are issued a photo license hard card (instead of a paper license) for a GDL Level 1 Learner's License will not need to return to the office for their Level 2 Intermediate License. Their operator's license will be mailed to them upon turning 18.

Once the Level 1 Learner's License is issued, you may only drive with a licensed parent, guardian or designated, licensed adult age 21 or older seated in the front seat next to you. (The designated adult will need a signed letter of authorization from the parent or guardian.) You must keep a driving log that tracks your supervised driving time (and complete a minimum of 50 hours, including 10 hours at night) before taking the driving skills test. Kelsey's Law prohibits you from using a cell phone while driving.

Driver education Segment 2: To apply, you must present a driving log of at least 30 hours of supervised driving time (including a minimum of 2 hours at night) with your parent, guardian or designated adult. You must have held your Level 1 Learner's License for at least three consecutive months.

Segment 2 consists of a minimum of 6 hours of classroom instruction. You must pass the Segment 2 state exam with a minimum of 70 percent.

Driving skills test: To apply, you must be at least age 15 and have completed Segment 2, along with a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving time, including 10 hours at night. You must have held your GDL Level 1 Learner's License for at least six months.

You will need to present your completed driving log, your Level 1 Learner's License, Segment 2 Certificate of Completion along with insurance and registration for the vehicle you will be driving during the test. Driving skills tests are given by driver testing businesses approved by the Secretary of State. More information about the driving skills tests is found later in this chapter.

GDL Level 2 Intermediate License: To apply, you must be at least age 16 and have held your Level 1 Learner's License for at least 6 months. You must have no violations, at-fault crashes or suspensions on your driving record for the 90 days preceding your license application. Teens with the photo license hard card meeting these requirements and who passed the driving skills test will automatically advance to the Level 2 Intermediate License.

Teens with the paper Level 1 Learner's License must visit a Secretary of State office and provide their Level 1 Learner's License, Michigan Driver Education Segment 2 Certificate of Completion, Driving Skills Test Certificate, and other documents verifying the teen's valid Social Security number (or proof of ineligibility), legal presence in the U.S., identity, and Michigan residency as explained in the form Applying for a license or ID card? (SOS-428) available on the Secretary of State website at Michigan.gov/SOS.

Level 2 Intermediate License restrictions prohibit you from driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless one of the following applies: You are accompanied by a parent, guardian or designated, licensed adult age 21 or older, or you are operating the vehicle in the course of your employment or while going to or from employment, or while going to or from an authorized activity.

You may not have more than one passenger under the age of 21 in the vehicle with you at any time unless one of the following applies: Your parent, guardian or a licensed, designated adult age 21 or older is in the vehicle with you, the passengers are members of your immediate family, or you are operating the vehicle in the course of your employment or while going to or from employment, or while going to or from an authorized activity.

Under Kelsey's Law, you may not use a phone while driving, except for emergencies. Violators could face a civil infraction with fines and/or community service.

GDL Level 3 Full License: To be eligible, you must be at least age 17 and have held the Level 2 Intermediate License for at least six months. You must have driven 12 consecutive months without a moving violation, an at-fault crash, a license suspension or a violation of any of the GDL restrictions.

This license is automatically issued at no fee if all requirements are met, and parental authorization was granted. There are no state-imposed license restrictions, although parents or guardians may request to delay advancing their teen to a Level 3 Full License if they feel the teen is not yet ready.

18 and older – never been licensed

If you are age 18 or older and have never been licensed, you must apply for a temporary instruction permit (TIP) at a Secretary of State office and pass a driving skills test administered by a driver testing business.

As part of your application, you will need to present proof of a valid Social Security number, U.S. citizenship or legal presence, identity and Michigan residency (more information follows this section). Your application will proceed quicker if you pre-apply at Michigan.gov/SOS before scheduling your Secretary of State office appointment.

To prepare for the written knowledge and road skills tests, study What Every Driver Must Know and the Driving Skills Test Study Guide available on our website. The written knowledge test is provided at all Secretary of State offices at no charge. You also have the option of taking an online version of the test at home on your own computer or laptop for a $6.50 convenience fee. More information is available on the Secretary of State website. Your TIP will be issued after you pass the written knowledge and vision tests, pay the TIP fee and have your photograph taken. Fees will vary depending on the license type.

You must practice driving with a licensed adult for at least 30 days before taking a driving skills test. After you pass the driving skills test, the results will be sent to the department. Your Michigan driver's license will be processed and should arrive in the mail in about three weeks.

Providing your Social Security number

State and federal laws require the Secretary of State to collect Social Security numbers to verify U.S. citizenship or legal presence and to assist in child support collection. A letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration must be presented if you do not have a Social Security number and wish to obtain a driver's license or ID card. The letter can be no more than 60 days old. All Social Security information will be verified.

For questions about Social Security or to replace a lost Social Security card, contact the SSA at 800-772-1213 (voice), 800-325-0778 (TTY) or visit the SSA website at ssa.gov for more information and to request a Social Security card online.

Providing proof of legal presence

To apply for a driver's license or state ID card, valid proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence in the United States must be presented. Some of the documents that may be provided as proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence include a certified copy of your birth certificate with a raised seal issued by a government unit in the United States or U.S. territory, a valid, unexpired U.S. passport or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization, a Permanent Resident Card, or an Employment Authorization Card.

The first and last names and date of birth on the legal presence and identity documents should match. If your current legal name is different from the name on your birth certificate or legal presence document, you must show legal proof of the name change, such as an original marriage license, divorce decree or court order for each time the name was changed.

Providing proof of identity

You must also provide proof of identity when applying for a driver's license or state ID card. Only original documents will be accepted. Photocopies or faxes cannot be used. More than one document may be required.

Out-of-state and Canadian applicants may use their out-of-state or Canadian driver's license as proof of identity (licenses expired for less than four years will be accepted).

Providing proof of residency

Before your driver's license or state ID card application can be processed, you must present proof that you are a Michigan resident. At least two documents are required. Acceptable documents include a utility bill, credit card bill or account statement issued within the last 90 days, pay stub, earnings statement, mortgage, rental or lease agreement, or an insurance policy. Residency documents in a family member's name may be used if the family relationship can be established by other forms of documented proof.

Physical standards

The Secretary of State office staff will ask you a few general health questions as part of the screening process. Your application may be denied pending a reexamination with additional medical information if there is any question about your physical condition and your ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.

Vision and knowledge tests

You will be given a vision test to determine if your vision meets minimum standards. If corrective lenses, such as glasses or contact lenses, are needed to pass the test, your driver's license will indicate you must wear them while driving.

If you fail the vision test, your eye-care specialist must complete a vision statement documenting that you meet the vision standards. Sometimes driving limitations, such as "daylight driving only," will be required based on the vision statement and other information acquired by the Secretary of State.

If you are required to take a knowledge test for your original operator's or chauffeur's license, or a commercial driver's license, arrive at the Secretary of State office at least one hour before closing to allow enough time to complete the test.

If you have difficulty speaking or reading English, office staff will provide a list of available foreign language interpreters. Foreign language interpreters may be used on all written tests, except CDL knowledge tests. Knowledge tests are available in many languages. Contact the Department of State Information Center at 888-SOS-MICH (767-6424) in advance to obtain a list of interpreters. Hearing-impaired customers can request a sign language interpreter or use an interpreter they know.

Temporary instruction permit

A temporary instruction permit (TIP) is valid for 180 days. It allows you to practice driving with a licensed adult before taking the driving skills test. A TIP is issued to people who have never been licensed, who have a foreign license and wish to get a Michigan license, or whose license has been expired for at least four years and wish to reapply.

To apply for a TIP, present the following at your local Secretary of State office:

- Proof of Social Security number.
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence.
- Proof of identity.
- Proof of Michigan residency.

In addition, you must:

- Pass a vision test and meet health standards set by the Secretary of State.
- Pass the written knowledge and road sign tests.
- Pay the TIP fee and have your photograph taken.

After obtaining your TIP:

- Practice driving. You must complete a minimum of 30 days of practice driving on a TIP before taking the driving skills test. You are encouraged to enroll in an adult driver education course before taking the driving skills test. Courses are taught by professional, certified instructors and include supervised driving time on a driving range and the road. Check online for driver education providers in your area. Information about driver education providers is also available on the "New drivers (18 and older)" web page on the Secretary of State website.
- Pass a driving skills test. Information about driver testing businesses is available on the "New drivers (18 and older)" web page on the Secretary of State website. The driving skills test will be given by a driver testing business approved by the Secretary of State.
- Once the department receives the results of your skills test, your license will be processed and mailed.
- You will be issued a temporary operator's permit (TOP) that can be printed from your Department of State MiLogin customer account. The TOP allows you to drive until your new Michigan driver's license arrives in the mail.

In some instances, because of medical conditions or other reasons, restrictions may be placed on your driver's license. If any special licensing conditions

are required, these conditions or restrictions will be printed on the driver's license. **Drivers licensed for the first time are placed on probation for a minimum of three years.**

The motorcycle TIP

The motorcycle temporary instruction permit (TIP) gives new riders an opportunity to practice riding on public roads under the constant supervision of an experienced motorcyclist before taking the motorcycle skills test. The motorcycle TIP is a transitory tool used to obtain the Michigan motorcycle endorsement; it is not meant to be used in place of a motorcycle endorsement. A motorcycle TIP is good for 180 days. Only two motorcycle TIPs will be issued to a rider in a 10-year period.

To apply for a motorcycle TIP, you must:

- Be at least age 16.
- Hold a valid Michigan driver's license.
- Pass the vision test and motorcycle knowledge test.
- Pay the TIP fee.

The motorcycle TIP places certain restrictions on you for your safety. Whenever you ride, you must be under the constant visual supervision of a licensed motorcycle operator who is at least age 18. You are not allowed to ride at night or carry passengers.

Driving skills test

You will need to take a driving skills test if:

- You are applying for a Level 2 Intermediate License under Graduated Driver Licensing.
- You are age 18 or older, have never been licensed and are applying for an original license.
- Your last driver's license has been expired for more than four years.
- You hold a driver's license from a country other than Canada, Germany, or the Republic of Korea (South Korea).

Eligibility requirements for taking a driving skills test differ depending on your age.

If you are younger than age 18, you must have:

- Completed Segment 2 of driver education.
- Your log showing that you have completed at least 50 hours of supervised driving, including 10 hours at night. (Driving logs are available in The Supervised Driving Guide or through the free mobile app RoadReady.)
- Held a Level 1 Learner's License for at least six months.
- Not had any convictions, civil infractions, license suspensions or at-fault crashes during the 90 days immediately preceding your driving skills test and application for your Level 2 Intermediate License.

If you are age 18 or older, you must:

- Obtain a temporary instruction permit before taking a driving skills test. A 30-day practice period may be required.

Driving skills tests are administered by independent driver testing businesses approved by the Secretary of State. Information about driver testing businesses is available on the "New drivers" web pages (for under 18 and for 18 and older) on the Secretary of State website. Be sure to ask the driver testing business you choose about its pricing policies before scheduling your test. The Secretary of State does not set driving skills test fees or pricing policies.

Applicants who are hard of hearing or not fluent in English may use an interpreter during the driving skills test. (Interpreters are not allowed during either the written knowledge tests or the driving skills test for a commercial driver's license.) The interpreter will be required to present photo identification to the examiner and may only interpret the instructions as the examiner gives them. Lists of approved sign language and foreign language interpreters are available through the department. Applicants may also bring their own interpreter. For more information, please call the Department of State Information Center at 888-SOS-MICH (767-6424).

The first part of the driving skills test requires you to pass a series of off-street, closed-course maneuvers followed by an on-road driving skills test. After passing the first part, you must then pass an on-road driving test to receive your driving skills receipt. The driving skills test includes urban, expressway, rural highway and residential driving.

Complete study information is provided in the Driving Skills Test Study Guide available on the Secretary of State website. You should review this study guide thoroughly before taking the driving skills test.

Restricted license due to a health condition

When applying for or renewing a driver's license, you may be asked to provide a Physician's Statement of Examination. A physician's statement is needed for any physical or mental infirmity, impairment, disability or disease that may affect your ability to drive safely. A physician's statement also is required if the Secretary of State has reason to believe you have had a fainting spell, blackout, seizure or other loss of consciousness in the preceding six months. For a chauffeur's license or a commercial driver's license, you must not have had any blackouts, fainting spells or seizures within the last 12 months.

A vision statement may also be requested in some cases. A physician or physician's assistant licensed in Michigan or another state must complete the physician's statement. The physician or physician's assistant must accurately describe your condition, including any disability or illness, and any medications you have been taking. The form must be returned to the Secretary of State Driver Assessment Section where the physician's statement will be reviewed to determine if you meet Michigan's physical and mental standards.

An unrestricted driver's license may be issued if a physician's statement does not indicate a physical or mental impairment is present and if all other standards are met.

If a physician's statement indicates a serious physical or mental condition at the time you renew your driver's license, you will be required to attend a driver reexamination. During the reexamination, your ability to operate a motor vehicle safely will be evaluated. Every effort will be made to help you keep your driver's license and continue to drive safely. If you have such a condition and are renewing your license, please begin the renewal process several weeks before your license expires to allow adequate time for processing.

If a restricted driver's license is issued because of a disability or illness, a periodic driver reexamination may be required.

Probationary license program

New drivers, including teen drivers under Graduated Driver Licensing, are placed on probation for a minimum of three years. The probationary period is a way for the Secretary of State to monitor the driving performance of new drivers. Probation is a separate program from GDL, but works like GDL to encourage new drivers to reduce their crash risk and drive safely.

Changing information on your license

It is important that your driver's license shows your correct name and residential address. If you need to change your name on your driver's license, you must first change your name with the Social Security Administration. Present your proof of name change along with your valid driver's license to the SSA. Allow at least three business days for the SSA website to update before visiting a Secretary of State office. At the office, present your license and proof of the name change, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree or legal name change document. The name change will be processed and a new driver's license will be issued for a fee.

Michigan law requires that your driver's license address corresponds to your residence address, and matches the address on your voter identification card. You may submit a change of address online at Michigan.gov/SOS, at a Secretary of State office or by mail. There is no charge for this service.

A change of address submitted online will update your driver's license or state ID card and your voter registration. You will also have the opportunity to update the address for any vehicle records

connected to your driver's license account. A change of address for other vehicles you may own that are not connected to your driver's license account must be submitted when conducting a vehicle transaction.

You also may submit a change of address by mail. Change-of-address forms are available on the Secretary of State website. Complete the form and mail it to the address provided.

When you submit a change of address in person or by mail, the procedures for updating your voter registration address also will be explained. Your driver's license may be suspended or revoked if you fail to change your address with the Secretary of State.

Renewing your license

Your driver's license is usually valid for four years and expires on your birthday in the year shown on the license. If you are under age 21, your driver's license expires on your 21st birthday.

The Secretary of State sends a renewal notice well in advance of the date your driver's license expires. The renewal notice is sent to the address listed on department records. Do not let your driver's license expire unless you will no longer be driving. Driving without a valid license is illegal.

If you renew your driver's license after its expiration date, you will pay a late fee in addition to the regular renewal fee.

A driver's license will not be renewed if it has been suspended, revoked, or denied. A renewal application also may be denied if you have failed to provide a valid Social Security number or letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration and proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence.

If you are not required to visit a Secretary of State office to renew your driver's license, you may renew it by mail, at Michigan.gov/SOS or at a self-service station. Self-service stations are located at various Secretary of State offices and at other locations such as select Meijer and Kroger stores. Find a self-service station near you at Michigan.gov/SOS.

You must renew your driver's license every 12 years at a Secretary of State office. A vision screening will be given and a new photograph will be taken. Cash, checks and money orders as well as American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa debit and credit cards, and Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Pay are accepted at Secretary of State offices. Make an appointment to visit an office at Michigan.gov/SOS.

The decision to stop driving

Choosing to give up your privilege to drive can be difficult. There are many questions to consider when making this decision. How comfortable do you feel when driving? Do you feel it is becoming too risky to drive? Do you get lost frequently or forget where you are going? Are you worried that your health or medications are adversely affecting your driving? Have you had one or more "close" calls or a serious crash? Your decision is important because it not only involves your independence but your safety and the safety of others on the road.

There are a number of organizations that have publications and resources available to help you decide when it may be time to give up driving. Aging drivers, their families and the professionals who work with them are invited to visit the Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility website at Michigan.gov/AgingDriver.

Developed by a consortium of state and private entities, this website is an online resource for active older drivers, and for those who need to limit their driving and find other transportation choices. Website visitors will find useful information such as how to assess driving skills, transition to driving retirement and identify alternative transportation options in their area. The website includes a PDF of the booklet Michigan's Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families.

When you make the decision to give up driving, return your driver's license to a Secretary of State office and apply for a state ID card.

A state ID card is used in place of the driver's license for identification purposes. Free ID cards are provided to those who are legally blind, drivers 65 or older who voluntarily relinquish their driver's license and drivers whose driving privilege is suspended, revoked or denied due to a physical or mental disability.

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Chapter 2: Your Driving Record



Did you know that . . . ?

- In 1901, the Michigan Secretary of State was given the responsibility of maintaining records of motor vehicles and drivers operating in the state.
- By 1913, Michigan had 60,438 registered motor vehicles, more than 20 times the number eight years earlier. Traffic crashes were on the rise too, although there was no requirement to report them.

Your driving record

Driving is a privilege. Once you obtain a driver's license, you must continually show that you have the skill and knowledge to drive safely or your driver's license may be restricted, suspended or revoked. The Secretary of State has access to information from law enforcement and the courts, including moving violations, crashes and certain drug crimes. Your driving record will include information about civil or criminal moving violations and crashes.

The Secretary of State is also notified of any traffic crashes, convictions and findings of responsibility in other states. Convictions from other states will appear on your Michigan driving record along with any points assessed according to Michigan's point system. You may purchase a copy of your own driving record at any Secretary of State office.

Most convictions stay on your driving record for at least seven years. Certain convictions and licensing actions stay on your driving record for at least 10 years. A conviction for a fatality or for impaired driving remains on your driving record permanently.

Under Michigan's Driver Privacy Protection Act, personal information on your driving record is private and is not released to the general public unless there is a permissible use as prescribed by law. Personal information includes your name, address, driver's license number and similar information. Some examples of permissible uses include insurance rating, automobile recalls and driver verification for car rental companies.

Michigan's point system

Under Michigan law, some traffic violations are civil infractions, while others are misdemeanors or felonies. Depending on the violation and how it is resolved, you may be fined, referred to a special program, or, in the most serious situations, sent to jail. In most cases, if you do not take care of a traffic ticket, your driver's license will be suspended. Any traffic tickets for moving violations received while your license is suspended will result in additional suspensions on your driving record and payment of a reinstatement fee.

Each time you are convicted of a traffic violation, you will have to pay certain court fines and costs. In addition, points may be posted to your driving record.

Each traffic violation has a point value, which is set by law in the Michigan Vehicle Code. Points are placed on your driving record only after you have been convicted of a moving violation. Points placed on your driving record remain there for two years from the date of conviction.

If you have six or more one-point violations, or 12 or more points on your driving record within a two-year

period, you will be required to undergo a driver assessment reexamination.

The system used to post points to your driving record is separate from the points assigned by an insurance company to determine your rate.

If you believe there are extenuating circumstances for the ticket you received, these must be submitted when you appear in court. The Secretary of State cannot set aside a court conviction. The following shows the points for some traffic violations.

Six Points:

- Manslaughter, negligent homicide or other felony involving use of a motor vehicle.
- Operating while intoxicated or operating with any presence of a Schedule 1 drug or cocaine.
- Failing to stop and give identification at the scene of a crash.
- Reckless driving.
- Refusal to take a chemical alcohol test.
- Fleeing or eluding a police officer.
- Failure to yield causing death or injury of emergency responder, construction worker or person operating implements of animal husbandry.
- Moving violation causing injury or death.

Four Points:

- Drag racing.
- Impaired driving.
- Younger than age 21 with any bodily alcohol content.
- 16 mph or more over the legal speed limit.

Three Points:

- Careless driving.
- Disobeying a traffic signal or stop sign or improper passing.
- 11 to 15 mph over the legal speed limit.
- Failure to stop at railroad crossing.
- Failure to stop for a school bus or for disobeying a school crossing guard.

Two Points:

- Six to 10 mph over the legal speed limit.
- Open alcohol container in vehicle.
- All other moving violations of traffic laws.
- Refusal of Preliminary Breath Test by anyone younger than 21.
- Failure to yield/show due caution for emergency vehicles.

Alcohol and drugs



When you drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive,you endanger your life as well as the lives of your passengers and other motorists. Each year, thousands of people are killed or permanently disabled because someone drove under the influence of alcohol or other chemical substances. Michigan takes a strong stand against drivers who abuse substances and drive.



The effects of alcohol are the same whether you drink beer, wine or whiskey. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine and a 1.5-ounce shot of whiskey all contain the same amount of alcohol. Drink a standard serving of any of these and the effects will be the same to your body. Your judgment and self-control will be affected.

Consuming even one drink can impair your ability to drive, slow your reaction time, dull your concentration and cause visual problems. Many people mistakenly believe that coffee, a cold shower, exercise or fresh air can sober them up. The only thing that sobers you up is time.

It is best to never drink and drive. Select a designated driver ahead of time who is not going to drink. You also can ask someone else to give you a ride, call a taxi, use public transportation or seek other assistance.



If someone you know has been drinking or using drugs, do not let them drive. Find a designated driver, call a taxi or insist that the person use public transportation. Never ride with anyone who has been drinking or using drugs. If necessary, take away a person's car keys and offer them a place to sleep. Be sure drivers are completely sober before they get behind the wheel.

Michigan law requires driver's license suspensions for drug convictions, even if you were not driving at the time of the offense. Even the possession, manufacture or distribution of drugs may result in a driver's license suspension. If there are no prior drug violations, your driver's license is suspended for six months.



A restricted license will not be issued during the first 30 days of the suspension. One or more prior drug convictions in seven years means your driver's license will be suspended for one year, and a restricted license will not be issued during the first 60 days of the suspension. The driver's license reinstatement fee is $125. This fee is separate from the reinstatement fee required for any other driving activity.

Marijuana is gaining acceptance as having legitimate medicinal applications and as a recreational drug, as evidenced by trends in state laws permitting its use. Although marijuana may be legal for medicinal or recreational use in some states, it is still not legal, safe or wise to operate a motor vehicle while impaired by marijuana since it tends to distort your perception of time, space and speed.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning reports that in Michigan it is legal to:

- Transport 2.5 ounces or less of marijuana if you are age 21 or older. Not more than 15 grams of marijuana may be in the form of a marijuana concentrate.

But it is illegal to:

- Operate, navigate, or be in physical control of any motor vehicle, aircraft, snowmobile, off-road recreational vehicle, or motorboat while under the influence of marijuana.

- Consume marijuana while operating, navigating, or being in physical control of any motor vehicle, aircraft, snowmobile, off-road recreational vehicle, or motorboat. Drivers and their passengers are prohibited from smoking marijuana within the passenger area of a vehicle upon a public way.

- Transport marijuana into Canada.

Law enforcement officers look for impairment based on driving, personal observations of the driver, and how a driver performs on standardized and non-standardized field sobriety tests. A police officer may request a chemical test if circumstances indicate one is warranted. Refusing to submit to a chemical test will result in a license suspension pursuant to Michigan's implied consent law. Under this law, all drivers are considered to have given consent to the test when they apply for and renew their driver's license.

The penalties for operating under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating under the influence of alcohol. These penalties can include up to 93 days in jail, up to a $500 fine, license suspension, six points on a person's driving record, and more. There are heightened penalties if a driver has minors in the vehicle.

Driver reexaminations



The Secretary of State may conduct a reexamination if there is reason to believe you are unable to operate a motor vehicle safely because of health reasons, or for violating the restrictions on a driver's license, crash involvement or an unsatisfactory driving record.

If you are a probationary driver or in the Graduated Driver Licensing program, you may be required to attend a driver reexamination after only one or two violations.

The purpose of the driver reexamination is to discuss driving performance, determine the appropriate licensing controls to reduce driving risk associated with this performance and encourage improvement. Licensing controls may include restrictions, suspensions, revocations or a combination of these actions.

Michigan law allows for a driver reexamination based on one or more of the following criteria:

- The Secretary of State has reason to believe that you are unfit to drive a motor vehicle or have a physical, visual or mental condition that makes it unsafe for you to operate a motor vehicle.
- Any crash resulting in a fatality where the crash report indicates that you were negligent or had been drinking.
- You have been in three or more traffic crashes resulting in personal injury or property damage over the past two years.
- You have accumulated 12 or more points within a two-year period.
- You have been convicted of violating the restrictions, terms or conditions of your license.

If you are required to attend a reexamination, a driver analyst will review your driving record and discuss your driving behavior with you. If your license is restricted, suspended or revoked as a result of the reexamination, you will be informed of your appeal rights and license reinstatement information.

A reexamination held due to medical issues may require you to pass several tests, such as vision, written and on-road exams. You may also be required to present your current medical, vision or psychological information.



Check it out!

Michigan.gov/NewDrivers

Driver education
- How to find a certified program
- Segment 1 and Segment 2 expectations

Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL)
- Eligibility and documentation requirements
- Restrictions and violation consequences
- Probationary period

Parents & guardians
- Knowing your role
- Coaching your teen's driving
- Setting rules and limits
- Modeling good driving behavior

Resources
- Teen driving risk awareness
- Publications and forms
- FAQs

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Chapter 3: Voter Registration and State IDs



Did you know that . . . ?

- In 1965, Michigan added the motorist's photograph to the driver's license.
- In 1975, Michigan became the first state in the nation to combine driver licensing and voter registration as part of the same service, known as "Motor Voter."

Voter registration

You must be registered to vote to participate in local, state and federal elections. To register to vote, you must be:

- A resident of Michigan (at the time you register) and of the city or township where you are applying to register to vote for at least 30 days (when you vote).
- A U.S. citizen.
- At least 18 years old when you vote.
- Not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison.

If you are applying for, renewing, or updating information on your driver's license or state ID card, you will be automatically registered to vote unless you are ineligible or you decline registration.

Registering to vote: Except for the 14 days before an election, you may register to vote at your city or township clerk's office, county clerk's office, Secretary of State office, a designated voter-registration agency, online or by mail. During the 14 days prior to and on election day, you may register to vote at your city or township clerk's office.

14-day voter registration: If an election is being held within the next 14 days and you wish to vote in that election:

- You must register to vote at **your city or township clerk's office** up to and on Election Day, and,
- You must provide proof of residency, such as your driver's license, state ID card or other accepted document with your name and current address on it.

If the address on your voter registration application does not match the residential address on file with the Secretary of State, your driver's license or state ID card will be updated to match your voter registration.

Registering to vote online or by mail: You may register to vote online at Michigan.gov/Vote.

A voter registration form may also be downloaded from the website and mailed to your local city or township clerk.

Registered voters: If you move within your city or township, you must change the address on your voter registration. Submit your change of address online at Michigan.gov/SOS. You may also change

your address by mail or at a Secretary of State office. Your city, township or county clerk also can process a change of address. There is no fee.

If you move to another city or township, you must register to vote in that jurisdiction to remain eligible to vote.

If you move out of state, please inform your city, township or county clerk *in writing* that you are moving and to cancel your voter registration.

State identification cards

Under Michigan law, a state identification card is as valid as a driver's license for identification purposes. A state ID card can be issued to any eligible resident, regardless of age. You may not have both a state ID card and a Michigan driver's license unless your license has been restricted, suspended or revoked.

You will need to provide proof of your U.S. citizenship or legal presence, identity, residency and Social Security number (or a letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration issued within the last 60 days). More information about the documents required for obtaining a state ID card is available in Chapter 1 and online at Michigan.gov/SOS.

Your state ID card expires four years from your last birthday. Applicants presenting temporary legal presence documents may be issued a state ID card that expires in less than four years.

If you are not required to renew your state ID card at a Secretary of State office, you may renew it by mail, online at Michigan.gov/SOS or at a self-service station. Self-service stations are located at various Secretary of State offices and other locations such as select Meijer and Kroger stores. Find a self-service station near you at Michigan.gov/SOS.

You must renew your state ID card every 12 years at a Secretary of State office to have a new photograph taken. Cash, checks and money orders as well as American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa debit and credit cards, and Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Pay are accepted at Secretary of State offices. Make an appointment to visit an office at Michigan.gov/SOS.

Free ID cards are provided to those who are legally blind, drivers 65 or older who voluntarily relinquish their driver's license, and drivers whose driving privilege is suspended, revoked or denied because of a physical or mental disability.

State ID cards and REAL ID

Beginning May 7, 2025, Michigan residents boarding a plane for travel in the United States or entering certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants must present a REAL ID-compliant document. Examples include driver's licenses and IDs issued by states that have met the federal REAL ID standards, valid U.S. passports and passport cards. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a list of acceptable documents on its website at tsa.gov and additional information can be found at Michigan.gov/REALID.

Michigan issues state ID cards that are REAL ID compliant. These cards have a star in a gold circle printed in the upper right-hand corner. Enhanced state ID cards that do not have a star on them are REAL ID compliant and will be printed with a star when renewed or replaced.

Applying for a REAL ID-compliant state ID card is optional. Not everyone will need one. For example, minors (children under age 18) do not need a REAL ID-compliant document when flying with a companion in the United States. You may decide not to apply for a REAL ID-compliant ID card if you:

- Do not fly and do not plan to enter certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants.
- Have an acceptable alternative to a state-issued REAL ID-compliant ID card, such as a valid U.S. passport.

If the convenience of having a REAL ID-compliant state ID card is appealing, you may apply for one at any time. If you choose not to get a REAL ID-compliant card, your standard state ID will have "Not for Federal Identification" printed on it, but it remains valid as identification for cashing checks, purchasing age-restricted items and entering casinos.



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Chapter 4: Traffic Laws



Did you know that. . . ?

- In 1904, the speed limit in Saginaw was 8 mph for cars and 10 mph for bicycles.
- In 1922, the Detroit Police Department began keeping traffic crash statistics.
- In 1945, the first chemical test to identify suspected drunken drivers was administered by the Detroit Police Department.

Distracted driving



The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that there are at least 3,400 deaths annually from distracted-driving crashes in which drivers lost focus on the safe control of their vehicles due to manual, visual or cognitive distractions.

While this statistic is significant, it may understate the size of the problem since identifying the distraction and its role in a crash can be difficult.

Most drivers understand the responsibility of getting behind the wheel and avoiding risky behaviors. Distracted drivers who drive "in a careless or negligent manner likely to endanger any person or property" or "in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property" are subject to prosecution under Michigan law.

Using a hand-held phone while driving is illegal in Michigan and this includes reading, texting, or making or answering a call. Exceptions are in place for reporting crashes, crimes or other emergencies. Drivers face a fine of $100 for a first offense and $250 for subsequent violations.

Anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off your driving can be a big problem. Studies show that your brain cannot give full attention to more than one activity at a time. Even seemingly simple tasks such as tuning a radio can be risky, especially in bad weather or heavy traffic. In the estimated quarter of a second it takes the brain to shift attention between two tasks, a car moving at 65 mph covers 24 feet.

Here are some ways you can minimize in-vehicle distractions.

Before driving:

- Designate a front-seat passenger to serve as a co-pilot to help with maps or navigation systems. If you are driving alone, plot out destination routes in advance.
- Be familiar with equipment in the vehicle. Practice performing basic functions such as adjusting the temperature or radio settings without taking your eyes off the road.

- Pre-program your radio stations for easy access and preselect a play-list on your portable device.
- Ensure all children are comfortable and properly buckled up. Teach them the importance of good behavior and remaining buckled up while in a vehicle. Don't underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to them in the car.
- Complete any personal grooming before you start driving or after you reach your destination.

While driving:

- Make driving your priority. A momentary distraction can lead to a crash. Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Avoid using mobile phones, texting devices, and navigation and other electronic systems.
- If you must use a mobile phone, make your call while your vehicle is safely parked. Avoid calling others who are driving.
- Do not take notes, read or look up phone numbers.
- Avoid involved, stressful or confrontational conversations.
- If you must eat, choose easy-to-handle items and make sure drinks are secured in cup holders.
- Take a break if you find yourself "lost in thought" or tired.

Cell phone use prohibited for all drivers - including teens

Michigan's general cell phone law (MCL 257.602b) prohibits *all drivers* from using a cell phone while driving. This means **you cannot hold or use a mobile electronic device**, such as a cell phone or tablet, **while operating a motor vehicle** on a public road, street, highway, or other public venue.

Under this state law, you cannot do the following. This includes but is not limited to:

- Sending or receiving a *telephone call.*
- Sending, receiving, or reading a *text message.*
- Viewing, recording, or transmitting a *video*.
- Accessing, reading, or posting to a *social networking site*.

Emergency exceptions: Drivers (**including all teens**) are allowed to use a mobile device while driving to **text 9-1-1 or call a law enforcement agency, health-care provider, fire department, or other emergency service to report:**

- A medical emergency, traffic crash, serious road hazard, fire, or a situation involving hazardous materials.
- Someone driving in a reckless or unsafe manner, or who appears to be driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- A crime being committed.

Non-emergency exceptions: Kelsey's Law (MCL 257.602c) prohibits **teens with a GDL 1 or GDL 2 from making or receiving non-emergency phone calls.** Under the general cell phone law, teens with a GDL 3 and all other drivers are allowed to use a mobile device within the following parameters:

- A global positioning system (GPS) or navigation feature *as long as information is not entered by hand.*
- A device in a voice-operated or hands-free mode *as long as you do not continue to use your hands to operate it after completing either of the following functions*:
  - Pressing, tapping, or swiping a single button to activate or deactivate a function of the device or to select a name or phone number.
  - Accessing the permanently installed user interfaces of the device that are integrated into the motor vehicle's electronic systems.
- A device, such as a 'dash cam,' used specifically to continuously record or broadcast video inside or outside of the motor vehicle.
- A device that is placed in a mount and used in a manner already exempted.

Buckle up, it's the law!

Click It or Ticket: Under Michigan's seat belt and child-safety restraint laws, a law enforcement officer may stop a vehicle if the driver and occupants are not properly buckled up.

Michigan law requires:

- All front seat passengers to be buckled up (including the driver).
- All passengers younger than age 16 to be buckled up, in all seating positions
- All children younger than age 8 or under 4 feet, 9 inches tall to be in an approved child-safety seat or booster seat in all seating positions.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that seat belts save more than 13,000 lives each year and that buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash.

- Be responsible – make sure all passengers are properly buckled up.
- Even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags, they are not a substitute for wearing a seat belt.
- Everyone in the vehicle will be safer when seat belts are worn correctly – shoulder belt across the middle of the chest away from the neck, with the lap belt worn low across the hips below the stomach.
- Drivers exempt from using a seat belt because of a medical condition must carry a doctor's statement.

Protecting children and teens

Since the Michigan Child Passenger Protection Law was enacted, use of child restraints and safety belts has increased, while deaths and injuries have decreased.

However, too many people still use child-restraint devices improperly. Make certain both the child-safety restraint and your child are properly buckled up before you drive.

Michigan's child passenger safety law mandates that:

- Children are to be properly buckled up in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall. Children must ride in a safety seat until they reach the age requirement or the height requirement, whichever comes first. It is suggested that parents or guardians consider the height requirement rather than the age requirement as a seat belt may not fit a smaller child correctly. Children must be properly secured in the child-restraint system in accordance with the child-restraint and vehicle manufacturer's instructions and federal safety standards.
- Removing a child from a car seat to nurse while the vehicle is moving is prohibited.
- Children younger than age 4 must be positioned in a rear seat if the vehicle is equipped with a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under age 4, the child may be positioned in the child-restraint system in the front seat.
- A child in a rear-facing child-restraint system may only be placed in the front seat if the front passenger air bag is deactivated.
- Anyone under 18 years old is prohibited from riding in the open bed of a pickup truck traveling more than 15 mph. The law allows exceptions for vehicles used by farmers, construction workers, the military, participants in parades and authorized emergency and rescue personnel.

Never hold a child on your lap or buckle a child with another passenger into one seat belt. Always insist children buckle their seat belts before starting the engine.

Assistance with child-safety seat installation is available at many community agencies, such as local public health departments. To find a child passenger safety technician near you visit cert.safekids.org and select Find a Tech.

Avoid buying secondhand seats as they may not meet federal safety standards, may not work properly, may have missing parts or instructions and there is no way of knowing whether the safety

seat has been involved in a crash. Any safety seat involved in a crash should always be replaced. Furthermore, if there is a recall, you may not receive notification.

Children left unattended in vehicles

Under Michigan law, it is illegal to leave children younger than 6 years old unattended in a vehicle if the amount of time or circumstances in which they are left poses an unreasonable risk of harm or injury. Parents or guardians who leave their children in a vehicle under the supervision of someone age 13 or older who is not legally incapacitated are not in violation of the law.

It is **never** safe to leave children or pets alone in a vehicle. Teach children that vehicles are not play areas, keep your vehicle locked when not in use, and make sure children do not have access to keys.

Air bags

Air bags are designed to provide vehicle occupants with extra protection in a crash. Depending on the make and model, today's vehicles may have air bags in a variety of locations, including the steering wheel, dashboard, roof columns and door panels. Sensors within the vehicle determine when an air bag will deploy based on the type and severity of the crash. For the best protection, always wear a seat belt, even in vehicles equipped with air bags. Seat belts remain the best protection in rollover, side impact and rear-end crashes.

- The front passenger air bag must be deactivated if a child in a rear-facing child-restraint system is placed in the front seat.
- Parents or guardians are encouraged to seat all children ages 12 and younger in the rear seat of the vehicle to avoid potential injury from an air bag in the event of a crash.
- It is recommended that drivers sit with at least 10 inches of space between the center of their breastbone and the center of the steering wheel.
- If you are pregnant, it is recommended that you wear your seat belt with the lap portion of the belt correctly positioned over the hips (not the stomach) and the shoulder portion across the chest. Sit as far back as possible from the air bag.

Speed limits

Michigan's Basic Speed Law means you must drive at a "careful and prudent" speed in all driving conditions. Drive at a speed that always allows you to stop within the clear distance ahead. This speed is never faster than the posted speed limit. Depending on conditions, it may be slower than the posted speed limit. Anticipate trouble ahead. Be ready to stop safely.



Watch for and obey regulatory speed signs. The following summarizes some of the standard speed limits defined under the Michigan Vehicle Code.

- 15 mph – In mobile home parks and some municipal parks.
- 25 mph – In platted subdivisions (showing boundaries, streets, easements and other features of surveyed lots) and condominium complexes. Watch for signs when driving through business districts, county, state and federal parks, on roads adjacent to parks and playgrounds, and in school and hospital zones as posted speed limits vary.
- 45 mph – In a work zone if posted. If a work zone is not posted for 45 mph, then the speed limit is the normal speed limit for that area.
- 55 mph – Unless otherwise posted, on all streets that are not designated freeways and on all highways.
- 70 mph maximum/55 mph minimum – On all freeways unless posted otherwise. School buses and trucks are restricted to 65 mph. On freeways with speed limits less than 70 mph, school buses and trucks are restricted to 55 mph.

Construction zones

Warning signs in construction, maintenance or other designated work areas are diamond-shaped with black lettering on an orange or yellow background.

A combination of signs, signals, lighting devices, markings, barricades, routing and hand-signaling devices may be used around road construction, utility work, and maintenance and surveying operations.

Construction and maintenance signs may mean part of a lane, an entire lane or the whole road is blocked. These signs are also used when work is being done adjacent to the roadway, on shoulders or in ditches.

Construction zones can be in place for a short period of time, or last one or more construction seasons. Drivers are made aware of such zones by signs posted in advance.

Watch for warning sign messages and obey them as directed. Drive defensively to avoid problems. Be patient and everyone will travel through the construction zone safely. Look carefully for construction workers or moving equipment.

Construction workers also have the authority to direct traffic in work zones and their directions should be followed even if they conflict with an existing traffic control device.

When going through a designated work area, pay attention to the posted speed limits. For most construction, maintenance or surveying activities, the speed limit is 45 mph unless posted differently. Work zones may limit speeds to 45 mph when workers are present, yet allow traffic to return to the normally posted speed when workers are absent. This allows traffic to move at full speed when safe to do so while requiring motorists to watch for workers and slow down when construction is active in a work zone.

Fines are doubled for all moving violations in work zones. In addition, motorists caught speeding in construction zones face increased points on their driving records.

Under the law, you will be assessed:

- Three points for speeding 10 mph or less over the posted limit.
- Four points for speeding more than 10 mph but not more than 15 mph over the limit.
- Five points for speeding more than 15 mph over the limit.

If you cause the injury or death to any person in a work zone, you may face fines of up to $7,500, and imprisonment of up to 15 years.

Merging in a construction zone

One topic that raises a lot of questions for Michigan drivers is merging in a construction zone. When two or more traffic lanes merge into one in a construction zone, there will be white-and-orange barrels and signs marking the merging lane. Drivers should follow the directions on the signs, instructing them when and how to merge.

Different construction projects may use different merging strategies, depending on the type of project and the amount of traffic. Traffic patterns in the work zone may change as the construction progresses. Pay attention not only to the barrels, signals and lane markings but to any construction workers using signs or hand signals to direct the flow of traffic.

Maintenance vehicles

Michigan law allows state and local road agencies to equip their maintenance vehicles with flashing or oscillating green lights in addition to the traditional amber lights. The green lights will only be activated when road work is taking place. Private contractors are not allowed to display green lights on their vehicles.



Motorists should know that when they see flashing green lights on a local or state maintenance vehicle to slow down and drive with caution.

Green was chosen because the human eye is most sensitive to the green wavelength. This means green lights appear brighter and can be seen from farther away than other colored lights. This makes them ideal for enhanced visibility in inclement conditions such as in snow storms and clouds of road dust.



Emergency vehicles

Yield the right of way to emergency vehicles approaching from any direction with their red and blue lights flashing, rotating or oscillating, and to stopped emergency vehicles with their red, blue or amber lights flashing, rotating or oscillating.

An authorized emergency vehicle includes:

- Ambulances, fire department and police vehicles, privately owned vehicles of volunteer or paid fire fighters if authorized by the chief of an organized fire department, privately owned vehicles of volunteer or paid members of a life-support agency.
- A vehicle owned and operated by a federally recognized, nonprofit, charitable organization that is used exclusively for assistance during an emergency.
- Road service vehicles, such as tow trucks or state-owned safety service patrol vehicles, with a flashing, rotating or oscillating red or amber light, that are clearly marked and readily recognizable as a vehicle used to assist disabled vehicles.

When you see a stopped emergency vehicle:

- The law requires you to slow down at least 10 mph below the posted speed limit and move over a lane if traffic and conditions allow. If you can't move over, slow down and proceed with caution, keeping as much space as possible between you and the stopped emergency vehicle.

Failure to obey the law carries the following penalties:

- Involving authorized emergency vehicles: A civil infraction, unless you injure or kill emergency personnel, then the charge is a felony.
- Involving other authorized vehicles, such as solid waste haulers, utility service vehicles and road maintenance vehicles: A misdemeanor.

When an approaching emergency vehicle has its red and blue lights on and its siren sounding:

- Pull over to the edge of the roadway or highway, clear of intersections and stop.
- Remain there until the emergency vehicle has passed. Stay alert – more than one emergency vehicle may be responding to the call.
- Keep a foot on the brake so the brake lights let emergency vehicle drivers know you have stopped.
- Stay at least 500 feet behind any moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights and sounding a siren.
- Never pass a moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights unless directed to do so by the emergency vehicle driver or a law enforcement officer.

In 1925, the speed limit for school buses on highways was set at 25 mph. In certain situations, traffic was required to halt or slow to 15 mph when a bus was stopped to load or unload students.

School buses

Use extra care around buses and in school zones. Children may dart into the street or out from around parked vehicles. Stop at least 20 feet from a school bus with its red overhead lights flashing; it is picking up or dropping off passengers. It is not necessary to stop for a school bus stopped on the other side of a highway divided by a barrier such as a concrete or grass median, island or other structures that separate the flow of traffic. See Figure 4.1.

Fines for failing to stop for a school bus are double what would normally be assessed for a moving violation. Increased fines and imprisonment may result for violations resulting in injury or death.

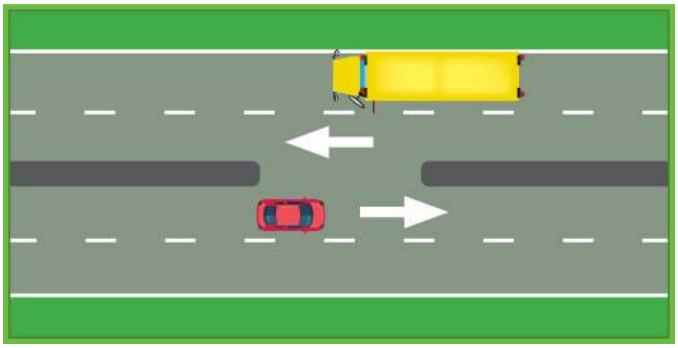


Figure 4.1. Because these roads are divided by a barrier, the red car does not need to stop even though the school bus has its red overhead lights flashing. Vehicles on the same side of the road as the school bus are required to stop.

School bus signals

When the YELLOW hazard lights are flashing, proceed with caution.



When the YELLOW overhead lights are flashing, be prepared to stop.



When the RED overhead lights are flashing, stop at least 20 feet from the school bus. Remain stopped until the flashing red lights are turned off or the bus resumes its travels.



The National Conference to Develop Minimum Standards made a recommendation in 1939 to paint school buses "national school bus yellow." In 1951, Michigan passed the School Bus Color Law, requiring that all new buses be painted National School Bus Chrome Yellow for greater uniformity and visibility.

Right of way

Many different traffic situations require you to yield the right of way to other vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

Right of way when turning

You must yield to other vehicles when:

- Making a right turn, including at a red light.
- Making a left turn, whether you are turning left out of your driveway or from an alley, or completing a left turn on a green light in an intersection.
- Making a left turn on a red light (See Figures 4.2 and 4.3)

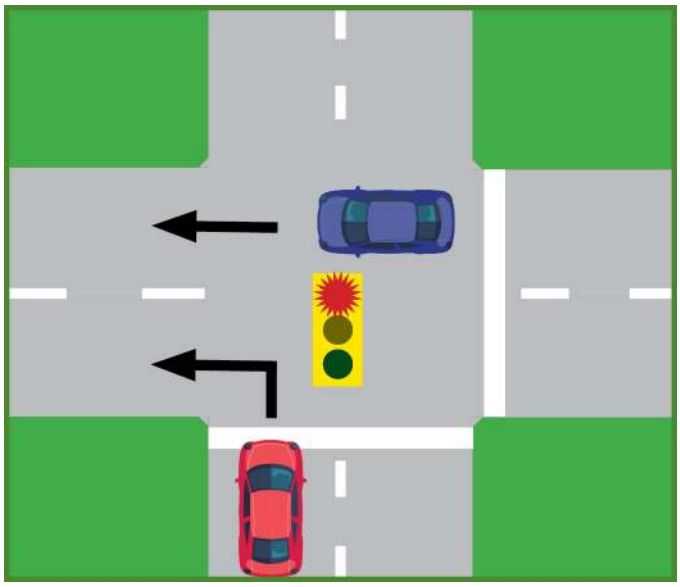


Figure 4.2. When making a left turn on red from a one-way street onto another one-way street, you must first come to a complete stop and check for traffic approaching from the right before turning.

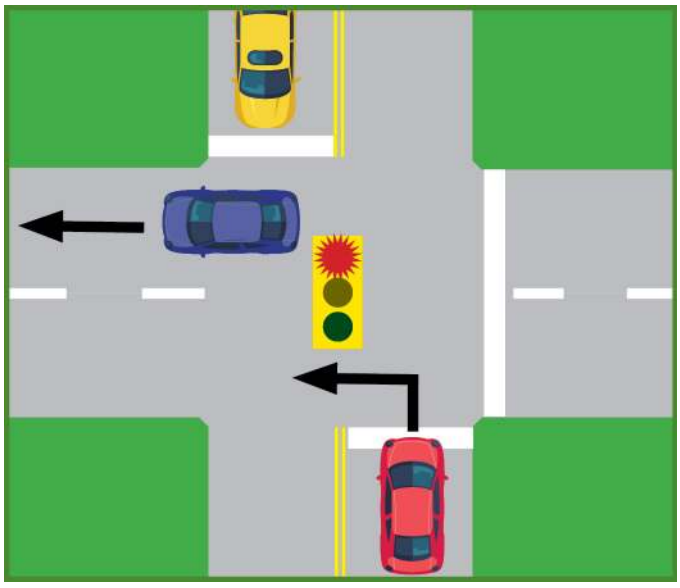


Figure 4.3. When turning left from a two-way street onto a one-way street at a red light, you must come to a full stop, scan for vehicles approaching from the right, and yield the right of way to any vehicles opposite you that are turning right at the intersection.

Right of way at intersections

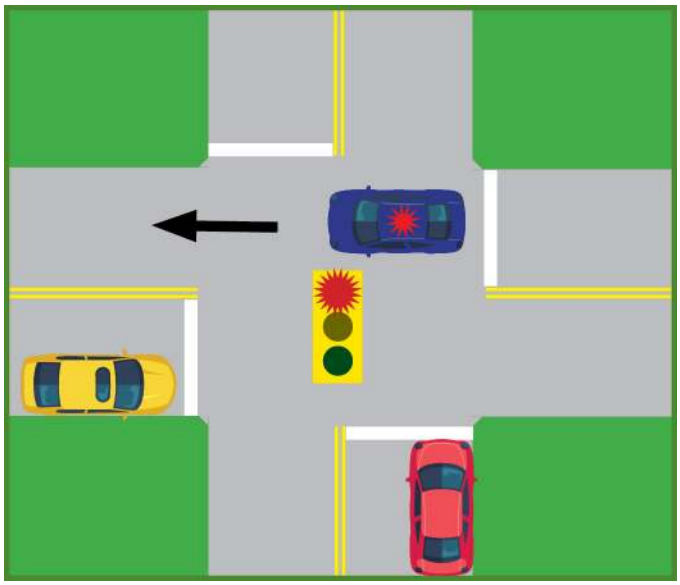
You must yield to other vehicles when:

- You are approaching or stopped at an intersection and the light has just turned green. If vehicles are still in the intersection when the light changes, you must yield to them before proceeding.
- You are making a left turn at an intersection. When the light is green, you may turn once all oncoming traffic has cleared. If you are still in the intersection when the light turns red, complete your turn as quickly and safely as possible.
- The intersection has a stop sign or a flashing red signal. You must come to a complete stop and check for traffic before proceeding. If there are no traffic control devices, stop at the stop line or crosswalk. If there is no stop line or crosswalk, stop at a point that allows you to see all approaching traffic without having to pull into the intersection.
- You reach a four-way stop intersection with a stop sign at each corner of the intersection. The driver who arrived at the intersection and stopped first has the right of way through the intersection. If two or more vehicles reached the intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left should yield to the vehicle on its right.
- You reach an intersection with a malfunctioning traffic signal. Come to a complete stop and yield to vehicles already at the intersection. Yield to the vehicle on your right if you both reach the intersection at the same time.
- You reach an intersection with a flashing yellow arrow. Yield to traffic before completing your turn.
- At a T-intersection without any signals or signs, yield the right of way to vehicles on the through road.

Be prepared to yield

- When approaching a YIELD sign. Slow down, check for traffic and be prepared to stop.
- Whenever you see workers in highway construction or maintenance areas. You also must proceed with caution and be ready to yield whenever you are approaching or passing a stopped waste collection, utility service or road maintenance vehicle with its lights flashing.

- When an emergency vehicle is approaching with its red or blue lights flashing, rotating or oscillating and its siren or other audible device sounding, immediately drive to a position parallel to and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway, clear of an intersection, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed or an officer signals that it is clear to proceed.



- To through traffic when approaching a MERGE sign. Adjust your speed as necessary to merge safely.

Right of way and pedestrians

As a driver, you must yield:

- To a pedestrian in a marked crosswalk, at an intersection or midblock.
- To a pedestrian in the crosswalk, even if your traffic light is green.
- To children near or in a school zone crosswalk when school is in session. Be especially cautious as children may unexpectedly dart out into the street.
- To pedestrians with disabilities, including physical, hearing and visual disabilities.
- When turning at any intersection. This includes all turns, whether or not there are lights or traffic control devices present.
- When stopping at an intersection with a stop sign or a flashing red light.
- At an intersection with a flashing yellow light.
- To a pedestrian in an unmarked crosswalk on the driver's side of the roadway when no traffic control devices are present.
- To a pedestrian who enters a crosswalk before the signal has changed.
- To a pedestrian crossing the street from an alley, driveway, building or private road.

Right of way and funerals

- Funeral processions have the right of way over all other vehicles, except for fire trucks, ambulances and police vehicles.
- Vehicles in the funeral procession must display the florescent orange flag with the appropriate religious symbol (for example, a cross, a star of David or the crescent and star).
- It is a civil infraction to cut through a funeral procession.
- Drivers should be appropriately respectful of funeral processions but they are not required to pull over should they see a funeral procession on the road.

Passing on the left

- Use caution when passing another vehicle or bicyclist.
- On a two-lane highway, you should have a clear, unobstructed view of the left lane, and any traffic in that lane should be far enough away to provide you with the distance and time needed to pass safely.

- Once you have started passing a vehicle, do not cut back into the right-hand lane until you can see the entire vehicle you are passing in your rearview mirror.
- You must return to your lane before you get within 200 feet of any oncoming vehicles.
- Remember to allow extra room for passing when pulling a trailer.
- Do not pass more than one vehicle at a time or follow too closely when another vehicle is passing slower traffic.
- When preparing to pass another vehicle by using the center lane of a three-lane road, always use extreme caution. Approaching vehicles may also be preparing to pass. If you and an approaching vehicle move into the center lane at the same time, a serious crash could occur. Using this lane for passing or merging is prohibited if the center lane is marked for left turns only.

If you are being passed by another vehicle, do not increase your speed or race the driver who is passing you. Allow the other driver to complete the passing maneuver safely.

Passing on the right

Passing a vehicle on the right is allowed but don't drive on the shoulder or off the road to do so. Passing on the right should only be done in certain circumstances.

- When there is enough room on a two-lane road and the vehicle you want to pass is turning left.
- On a one-way street with more than one lane.
- On a roadway with two or more lanes in each direction.
- At an intersection or point in the road specifically widened for the purposes of passing.

When passing is prohibited

Don't pass when:

- A solid yellow line is on your side of the center of the road.
- "Do Not Pass" or "No Passing Zone" signs are posted.
- You are approaching a hill or curve that prevents you from seeing oncoming traffic clearly.



- You are within 100 feet of an intersection or railroad crossing.
- Your view is blocked within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct or tunnel.
- Oncoming traffic is close enough that trying to pass would place you and other vehicles in danger of crashing.
- You can't see clearly ahead.
- The center lane of a three-lane road is marked for left turns only.
- A vehicle has stopped at a crosswalk or intersection to allow a pedestrian to cross.
- In a construction zone posted with no-passing signs.
- A school bus has stopped to load or unload passengers and its red lights are flashing.

Lane usage

Like most of the world, U.S. motorists drive on the right side of the road. But there's more to it than simply staying to the right.

You must drive in the right-hand lane except when:

- Passing a vehicle in front of you.
- Stopped vehicles, a crash or other obstacles make it necessary for you to cross the center line. You must yield to any oncoming traffic before leaving your lane.
- The road is divided into three or more marked traffic lanes.
- On a one-way street with two or more lanes of traffic.
- Directed to move into the left lane by traffic control signs and signals on a multiple lane highway with traffic traveling in both directions.
- Crossing the center line to make a left turn into or from an alley, private road or driveway.
- Approaching a stopped emergency vehicle. Make sure it is safe to pass before pulling out around the emergency vehicle.
- Road construction is near or blocking the right lane or right shoulder.

When driving on an interstate highway or full-access controlled freeway, you must drive in the right-hand lane. **Exceptions for driving in the left lane are made for the following situations**:

- Traffic conditions or congestion make it impossible to drive in the right lane.
- Weather conditions make it necessary to drive in the left lane.
- There is an obstacle or hazard in the right lane.
- You must change lanes to yield to emergency or construction vehicles.
- There is no traffic immediately behind or in front of you in the left lane.

Remember that . . .

- Slow vehicles must use the right lane except when passing or making a left turn.
- Weaving from lane to lane to speed through traffic is illegal.
- Only emergency vehicles and law enforcement using their lights and sirens are allowed to drive against the flow of traffic.
- It is illegal to drive across median strips and through barriers.
- If a road's cut-through is paved and there are no signs prohibiting its use, you may make a left turn using the cut-through.
- You must enter or leave controlled-access roads only at designated and posted entrances and exits.

Turning

Always use your turn signal when turning.

Before turn signals became standard equipment on every automobile, drivers used hand signals to indicate a turn or a stop. Today these hand signals are used primarily by motorcyclists, scooter and moped riders, and bicyclists. See Figure 4.4.



Figure 4.4. Hand signals for left turn, right turn, and stop.

Right turns

- Turn from the correct lane and use your signal.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians, emergency vehicles or other traffic at the intersection.
- Make sure traffic is clear on your left before turning.

- Follow the general curve of the curb as you make your right turn. Do not stray into other lanes.
- Be aware that trucks and buses need more space to make a right turn.
- When multiple right-turn lanes are present, complete your turn by entering the lane that corresponds to your turn lane. See Figure 4.5.

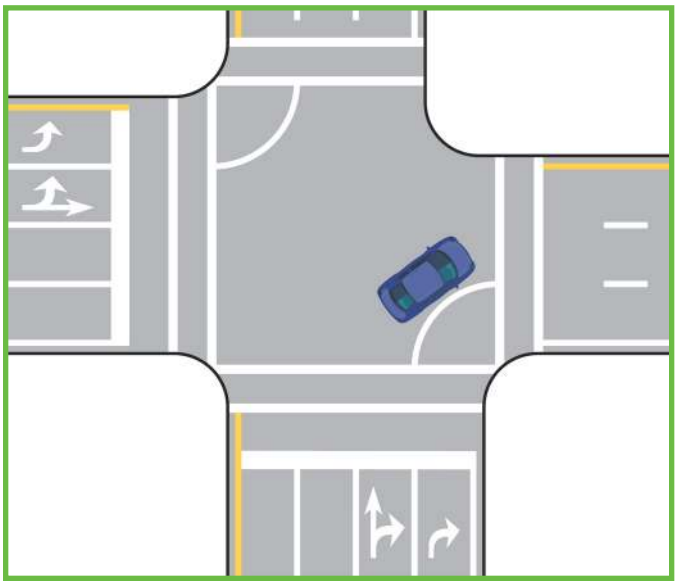


Figure 4.5. After checking for pedestrians and bicyclists, the blue car may complete its right turn. It should remain in the lane corresponding to its turn lane. If it moves into another lane while turning, it could cut off traffic in that lane and cause a crash.

Left turns

- Turn from the correct lane and use your signal.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency vehicles or other traffic at the intersection.
- Keep your front wheels pointed straight ahead until you start your turn.
- When multiple left-turn lanes are present, complete your turn by entering the lane that corresponds to your turn lane.
- Check for **all** approaching traffic. See figures 4.6 and 4.7.

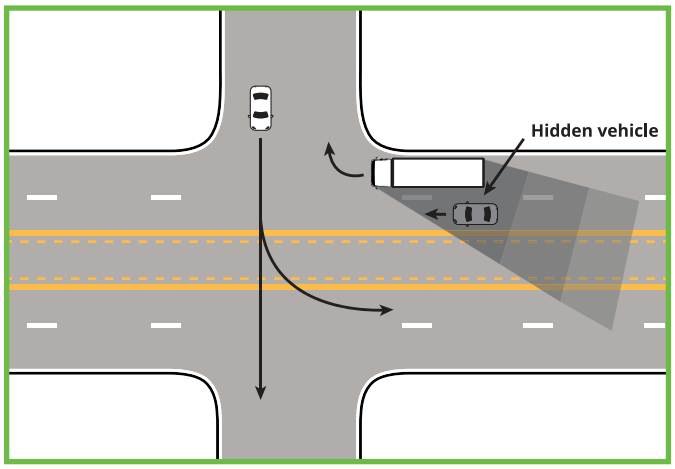


Figure 4.6.

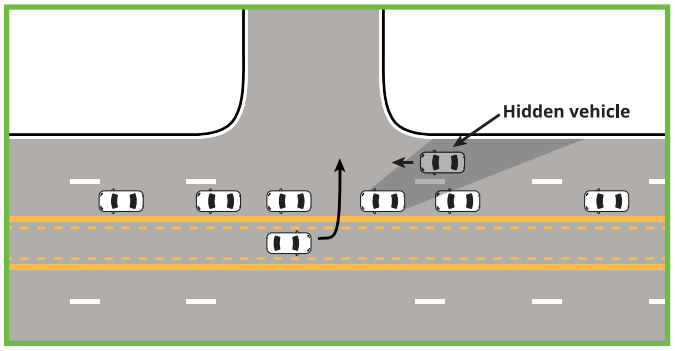


Figure 4.7.

Figures 4.6 and 4.7. Would you spot the hidden vehicle if you were the driver? Always look carefully for vehicles that may be concealed behind or alongside other vehicles. Take special care to watch for motorcyclists, scooter riders and bicyclists as their smaller sizes can make it easy to miss them in traffic.

Changing lanes

- **Left lane:** Look for traffic behind you and on your left with a head check, turn on your left-turn signal and carefully move into the left lane.
- **Right lane:** Look for traffic behind you and on your right, turn on your right-turn signal and carefully move into the right lane.

Roundabouts

A roundabout is a circular intersection where entering traffic yields to vehicles traveling counterclockwise around a central island. Vehicles entering from each leg of the intersection must yield to traffic approaching from the left. This includes any bicyclists or pedestrians who are present. Vehicles exit the roundabout by making a right turn onto the desired road.



Approaching a roundabout:

- Look for roadside signs and pavement markings to direct you into the correct lane before entering.
- Slow down and stay to the right of the roundabout's center island.
- As you approach the yield line, look to your left.
- When an appropriate gap in traffic appears, enter the roundabout and merge with the flow of the other vehicles.
- Never make a left turn to enter a roundabout; this will place you in front of oncoming traffic.

Traveling in a roundabout:

- Always stay to the right of the center island.
- Vehicles in the roundabout have the right of way.
- Do not stop unless it is the only way to safely avoid a collision or other danger.
- If an emergency vehicle is heard or seen approaching, do not stop. Leave the roundabout at the nearest exit, pull over to the right and stop, allowing the emergency vehicle to pass.
- Avoid changing lanes. Move into the lane you need before entering the roundabout.
- Give special consideration to trucks, trailers and other large vehicles. Avoid passing or driving next to large vehicles, as they may need more than one lane to navigate through the roundabout.
- Refrain from passing other vehicles, bicycles and mopeds.
- When entering or exiting a roundabout, watch for pedestrians crossing the street.

Exiting a roundabout:

- Maintain a slow speed. If you miss your exit, drive around the roundabout to your exit again.
- Indicate your exit by using your turn signal.
- Do not accelerate until you are past the pedestrian crossing at the exit.

Railroad crossings

Traffic control systems for railroad crossings include all signs, signals, markings and illuminated devices that permit safe and efficient movement of both rail and roadway traffic.

When approaching any railroad crossing, slow down and look both ways. Trains can take a mile or more to stop, and an approaching train is closer and moving faster than it appears. It could be fatal to ignore a signal or try to cross in front of a train.

Whether you are on foot, on a bicycle or in a vehicle, cross railroad tracks only at designated crossings. Never walk down or stop on the tracks; it is illegal and dangerous.

Railroad crossing advance warning sign

This sign warns of a railroad crossing ahead. If a train is coming, all vehicles must stop no more than 50 feet or less than 15 feet from the tracks. Trains overhang the tracks by at least three feet on each side and may have cargo that extends even farther.



When you see devices that warn of railroad crossings and possible oncoming trains:

- Slow down and be ready to stop.

- If there is a stop sign at the crossing, you must stop whether or not a train is in sight.
- Be aware that, unless clearly marked otherwise, school buses, vehicles carrying passengers for hire, gasoline trucks and other vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop and make sure no train is coming, even if there is no stop sign or railroad crossing signal.

Passive railroad crossing control systems

Railroad crossings with passive control systems do not have flashing lights or gates to warn of approaching trains. Instead, they use advance warning signs, pavement markings and crossbuck signs with yield or stop signs located just before or at the railroad tracks to alert drivers to look for trains.

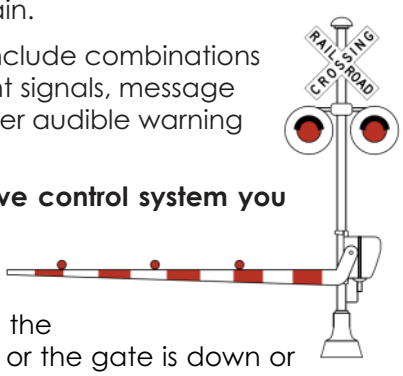


Slow down or stop as necessary and yield to any rail traffic. Do not cross without checking the track in both directions for a train. Make sure all tracks are clear before proceeding and never race a train in an attempt to cross ahead of it.

Active railroad crossing control systems

Active railroad control systems inform road users of the presence of a train.

These systems may include combinations of gates, flashing-light signals, message signs and bells or other audible warning devices.



No matter what active control system you encounter:

- Stop when the bells are ringing, the lights are flashing, or the gate is down or in motion.
- Do not drive through, around or under any activated railroad crossing system.
- Once the train has passed, do not proceed until the gates are raised, signals stop flashing, bells stop ringing and you are sure that all tracks are clear.

Trains and vehicles DO NOT MIX: Grade crossing safety tips

- Never stop on railroad tracks.
- Always expect a train at any crossing.
- Always look both ways down the tracks.
- Avoid changing gears while crossing railroad tracks.
- When there is snow on the road, proceed over tracks with enough speed to prevent you from becoming stuck at the railroad crossing.
- When approaching a crossing where nearby traffic signals may have caused vehicles to back up near the crossing, never cross the tracks unless there is enough space for your vehicle to completely clear the far side of the tracks by at least 6 feet.

If you are stuck on the tracks

Once railroad crossing lights and gates are activated, or you hear the horn of an approaching train, you have about 20 seconds before the train arrives. If you remember these few tips, you may prevent a tragedy at a railroad crossing.

- If the crossing gates **are activated**, or a train is clearly approaching, ***IMMEDIATELY*** get everyone out of the vehicle and as far away from the tracks as possible. Call 911.
- If crossing lights or gates are NOT ACTIVATED, or there is no train in sight, get everyone out of the vehicle and as far away from the tracks as possible. Call the railroad's emergency number listed on the blue Emergency Notification Sign posted near the crossing. Report the problem and provide the crossing identification number shown

on the Emergency Notification Sign (six digits and one letter). Railroad officials may be able to slow, stop or divert an approaching train. Then call 911.

What is an Emergency Notification System sign?

An Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign, posted at or near a highway-rail grade crossing, lists a telephone number along with the crossing's US DOT number and is used to notify the railroad of an emergency or a warning device malfunction.

Parking

You know that familiar movie scene in which an expensive sports car is parked on a grassy hill sloping down toward a pond and the car suddenly rolls into the water! What's that about? A bad parking job, that's what!

Whenever you park:

- Always turn off the engine.
- Set the parking brake. Do not rely on the transmission to hold your vehicle in place.
- Take the keys and lock your vehicle.



When exiting your vehicle after parking:

- Watch for bicycles, motorcycles, mopeds or other vehicles that might be passing.
- Check the mirrors for traffic that may not see you before opening the door. Use your right hand to open the door, so you will automatically look over your left shoulder for oncoming cyclists and pedestrians.
- When returning to your vehicle, face oncoming traffic as you approach the driver's side.

Parking on a hill

- Turn wheels toward the curb when parking downhill.
- Turn the wheels away from the curb when parking uphill.
- If there is no curb, turn the wheels so that the vehicle will not roll into traffic.
- Always use the parking brake. The transmission is not designed to be used as a brake.

Parallel parking

Even though there are vehicles that will automatically parallel park themselves, knowing how to perform this tricky parking maneuver is still a good skill to master.

- Select a parking space on the passenger side of your vehicle.
- Signal when approaching the space and check your mirrors for traffic behind you.
- Pull along side of the vehicle that is parked directly ahead of your parking space. There should be 2-5 feet between your vehicle and the parked vehicle.
- Brake, shift into reverse and check for traffic approaching from behind.
- Release the brake and slowly back up, repeatedly checking your mirrors for traffic. Look over your right shoulder to help in positioning your vehicle.
- As you start to back up, turn the steering wheel to the right to start angling the rear of your vehicle into the parking space.
- Once the rear of the vehicle is mostly in the space, start turning in the other direction to straighten out. Making this "S" turn should place your vehicle directly into the parking space.
- Adjust the vehicle's position as needed to center it in the space. Do not park more than 6-12 inches from the curb.
- Check for traffic before opening your door.

Disability parking

Disability parking spaces are reserved for people with disabilities. Disabilities are not always apparent, so even if people are not using a cane or wheelchair, that does not mean they are abusing the privilege of disability parking.

Free parking is provided only to vehicles displaying a disability placard with a yellow free-parking sticker. The requirements for obtaining a free-parking sticker are more narrowly defined than for a disability license plate or placard.

To park in a disability parking space:

- You or your passenger must have a qualifying disability. This is defined as blindness or any condition that significantly limits a person's ability to walk or that requires a wheelchair, walker, crutch or other assistive device. The disability may be temporary or permanent.
- You must have a disability license plate or parking placard.

Never park in a disability parking space if none of the vehicle's occupants are disabled or if the person with the disability is not accompanying you into the store.

Van-accessible disability parking



Van-accessible parking spaces are wider than standard parking spaces. This provides room for the van's wheelchair lift and ramp, allowing the person with a disability to easily exit and enter the vehicle. For this reason, it is extremely important **not to park on the blue-striped area** of the van-accessible parking space. Doing so may prevent the person with a disability from getting in or out of the vehicle. It is also important to not block the ramp or curb cuts used by people with disabilities.

Parking violations

Communities may pass parking ordinances for local streets that are stricter than state law. Signs will be posted at the city limits.

The owner of a vehicle parked illegally is responsible for any parking tickets. If the vehicle is being leased, the person leasing it is responsible. The following is a partial list of "no parking laws."

Never park:





- Where "no stopping," "no standing," "no parking" or "no parking at any time" signs are posted.
- Within 500 feet of a fire or a crash.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- Within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street or, when marked, within 75 feet of the driveway on the other side of the street.
- Within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing.
- In front of any driveway, alley, theater, emergency exit or fire escape.
- Next to a road where you block the view of drivers turning at an intersection.
- More than 12 inches from the curb. This means the curb should never be more than a foot from your parked vehicle.
- Against the flow of traffic.
- Within 30 feet of a stop sign, traffic light or flashing beacon, including a warning sign.
- In a lane of a highway outside city or village limits if there is a highway shoulder.
- On or under a bridge (unless otherwise posted), on an overpass or in a tunnel.

- On a sidewalk, or in front of a public or private driveway.
- Within an intersection, crosswalk or designated bike lane.
- Within 20 feet of a marked crosswalk or 15 feet of an intersection if there is no crosswalk.
- On the street-side of a legally parked vehicle (double parking).
- So that you obstruct delivery of mail to a rural mailbox.
- At a transit stop.

Notes

Chapter 5: Signs, Pavement Markings and Signals

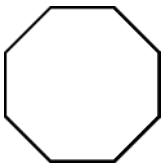
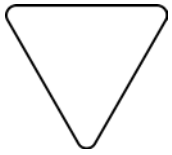
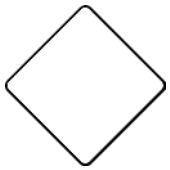
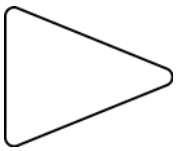
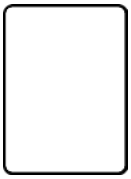
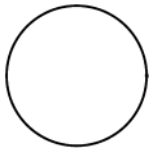


Did you know that . . . ?

- In 1915, the first stop sign was used in Detroit.
- In 1917, Michigan painted the first center line on a state highway, the Marquette-to-Negaunee Road.
- In 1920, the first four-way traffic signal with red, yellow and green lights was used at Woodward Avenue and Fort Street in Detroit.

Traffic signs

A traffic sign's shape gives you a clue as to its meaning and purpose. Learn to recognize these nine basic shapes and what they mean.

Octagon  STOP	**Triangle**  YIELD	**Diamond**  WARNING
Pentagon  SCHOOL	**Pennant**  WARNING/NO PASSING	**Horizontal rectangle**  DIRECTIONS
Vertical rectangle  LAW	**Round**  RAILROAD CROSSING	**Crossbuck**  RAILROAD CROSSING

Route markers

Federal, state, and county road systems



Interstate freeway sign



U.S. highway sign



State highway sign



County route marker

Traffic sign colors

A traffic sign's color also carries meaning. Knowing the colors of basic traffic signs will make you a more informed driver.

Red: Stop/prohibited/forbidden

Blue: Service/hospitality

Green: Directions/guidance

Yellow: Caution/general warning

Orange: Caution for construction or maintenance

Black: Regulatory/legally allowed or prohibited

White: Regulatory/legally allowed or prohibited

Fluorescent yellow-green: School, pedestrian or bicycle caution

Fluorescent pink: Incident, emergency, or unplanned event

Brown: Recreation/cultural interest

Regulatory signs

Regulatory signs tell you about specific laws. These signs regulate the speed and movement of traffic. They are usually rectangular and have a color pattern of white and black, red, white and black, or red and white.







In 1912, William B. Bachman, Wolverine Auto Club of Michigan tour chairman, made plans for the group to travel 271 miles to the second annual Indianapolis Memorial Day Race. Problems arose when the confetti that was tossed onto the roads by the lead car to mark the route was blown around by the wind. The 35 cars following the wind-tossed paper trails ended up all over northern Indiana and southern Michigan. By 1920, Mr. Bachman had painted colored bands on 2,000 miles of utility poles to designate road routes to solve the confetti problem, developing the precursor to a national system of uniform road signage.

Traffic sign challenge

Can you identify the following signs? Think about the sign's shape and colors. (Answers are on the next page.)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Traffic sign challenge answers

1. **Incident Ahead.** An emergency or other unplanned event has disrupted traffic. These warning and guide signs will assist you in driving around or through the affected area.

2. **Gas Pump.** Indicates the location of gas stations.

3. **Exit.** Indicates where the exit from the freeway is located.

4. **Bridge Ices Before Road.** Cautions that a bridge can be icy, even if roads are clear.

5. **One Way.** Traffic flow is the same direction in all lanes.

6. **Speed Limit 50.** Regulates that the legal speed limit on a stretch of road is 50 mph.

7. **Yellowstone National Park.** Brown-colored signs Inform you about the location of a cultural or recreational place of interest.

8. **School Children Present.** School children are in the area. Drive carefully and obey directions given by a school crossing guard.

9. **Brookfield/Onondaga.** Informs you of the direction to take to reach a location, in this case the communities of Brookfield and Onondaga.

10. **Reserved parking with wheelchair symbol.** Parking is reserved for people with disabilities.

11. **State Route Marker.** State highway M-32.

12. **Parking Permitted.** Two-hour parking is allowed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

13. **Stop Sign.** Come to a complete stop and yield to traffic and pedestrians before proceeding.

14. **Yield.** Yield the right of way. Slow down and let vehicles crossing your path go by.

15. **No Turn On Red.** Prohibits turning on a red light.

16. **No Right Turn.** Right turns are prohibited.

17. **No U Turn.** U-turns are prohibited.

18. **Left Turn Lanes.** Regulates which lanes allow left turns.

19. **Center Lane Left Turn Only.** Regulates that the center lane of traffic is designated for left turns only.

20. **Do Not Pass.** Prohibits passing.

21. **Pass With Care.** This sign follows the Do Not Pass sign. It is on the right side of the road and marks the end of a no-passing zone. Pass when it is safe to do so.

22. **Keep Left.** Traffic should pass only to the left-hand side of a roadway feature or obstruction.

23. **Do Not Enter.** You are not allowed to enter areas where this sign is posted.

24. **Authorized Vehicles Only.** Only law enforcement, emergency or maintenance vehicles may legally use the emergency crossover. Never drive across the median or emergency crossover of a freeway. To change directions, drive to the next exit, get off and re-enter the freeway in the other direction.

25. **Wrong Way.** You have entered a lane of oncoming traffic. Get out the safest and quickest way possible.

26. **No Trucks Allowed.** Trucks are not allowed to drive in areas where this sign is posted.

27. **RR Crossbuck.** A railroad crossing consisting of three train tracks is ahead.

28. **Rest Area.** Indicates accommodations that have restrooms for the public.

29. **School Crossing.** A school crossing for children is ahead. Drive carefully and obey directions given by a school crossing guard.

30. **Slow-Moving Vehicle.** The orange triangle is mounted on the back of vehicles that do not move faster than 25 mph, such as Amish buggies, farm combines, and other large agricultural and industrial vehicles. Drive with caution around them.

31. **Road Turns Left.** The road turns or curves sharply to the left.

32. **Road Curves Ahead.** The road curves sharply to the left and then to the right.

33. **Winding Curve Ahead, Limit Speed.** A winding curve is ahead; limit your speed to 35 mph.

34. **RR.** A railroad crossing is ahead.

35. **Watch for Bicyclists.** Bicyclists may be in the area; drive carefully.

36. **Watch for Pedestrians.** Pedestrians may be in the area, drive carefully.

37. **Obstacle in Roadway.** A traffic island or obstruction is ahead. Drive to either side.

38. **Maximum Height Allowed.** The maximum clearance under a bridge or other structure is 12 feet, 6 inches.

39. **Exit 25 mph.** The speed to exit should not exceed 25 mph.

40. **No Passing Zone.** Located on the left side of the roadway, this yellow pennant cautions you to refrain from passing because conditions make passing hazardous.

41. **Intersection Ahead.** A road intersects your road; watch for cross traffic.

42. **Side Road Ahead.** A side road intersects with your road from the right; watch for traffic.

43. **Roundabout Ahead.** A roundabout is ahead.

44. **Road Work Ahead.** This orange sign indicates that construction or maintenance crews are working in the area; drive with care.

45. **Stop Ahead.** A stop sign is posted ahead.

46. **Yield Ahead.** A yield sign is posted ahead.

47. **Merging Traffic.** Traffic merges from the right.

48. **Lane Ends Merge Left.** The right lane is ending; merge left. Yield right of way to traffic in the left lane.

49. **Divided Highway Ends.** The divided highway is ending and will turn into two lanes of traffic.

50. **Two-Way Traffic.** Two-way traffic begins; keep to the right.

51. **Hill.** A steep downslope is ahead. All vehicles, especially large trucks, should take precautions to make sure their brakes are working properly and gear down if necessary.

52. **Slippery When Wet.** Road conditions become slippery in bad weather; drive carefully.

53. **Right Lane Ends.** The right lane is ending in 500 feet; prepare to merge left.

54. **Bicyclists and Pedestrians.** A bicycle and pedestrian crossing is near; drive carefully.

Pavement markings

Pavement markings are white or yellow and warn, regulate and inform drivers.

White lines

White lines separate traffic lanes moving in the same direction.

Broken white lines

On roads that have more than one lane moving in one direction, broken white lines separate traffic lanes. Do not straddle the broken white lines or cross the double yellow line. See Figure 5.1.

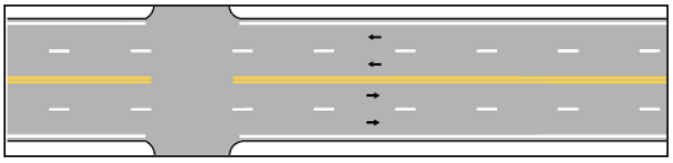


Figure 5.1
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-2 (A), pg. 541)

Solid white lines

Solid white lines mark the right edge of the road. Often called fog lines, these lines help you stay on the road at night or in bad weather. It is illegal to cross solid white lines when passing. Solid white lines also are used to separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. Do not cross a solid white line. These white lines may designate sharp curves, freeway acceleration and deceleration lanes, and other parts of the road where lane changes are considered dangerous. See Figure 5.2.

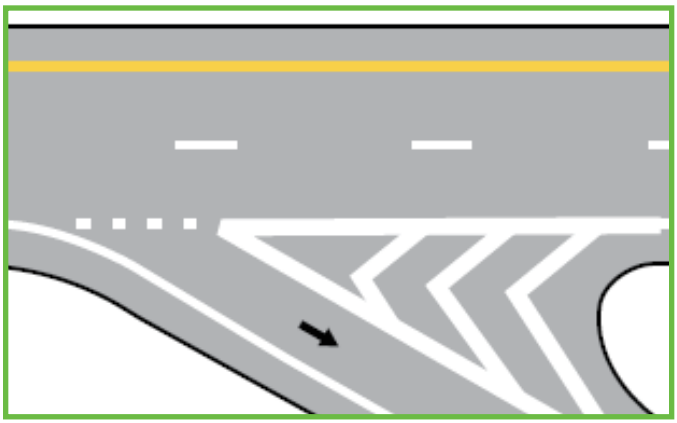


Figure 5.2
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-8, pg. 548)

Double solid white lines

A double solid white line is used to show a travel path where driving in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line but crossing the line is prohibited. See Figure 5.3.

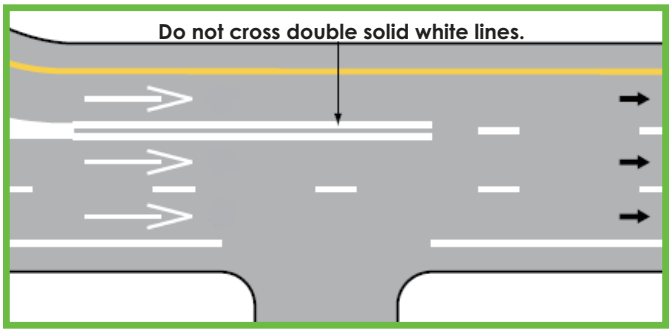


Figure 5.3.
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-8, pg. 548)

Lines to help separate and protect

Traffic conditions can be quite diverse. Buses and trucks have specific speed limit restrictions, mopeds and bicycles have restraints as to which roads they may use, and allowances must be made for pedestrians in all cases. Certain line markings have the job of ensuring that vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians share the road safely.

Crosswalk lines

Solid white lines mark many pedestrian crosswalks. They are painted all the way across the pavement. Crosswalks are also indicated by white stripes placed on the road in the direction of traffic. Crosswalks are placed at intersections and sometimes between intersections. Stop your vehicle behind the crosswalk line. See Figure 5.4.

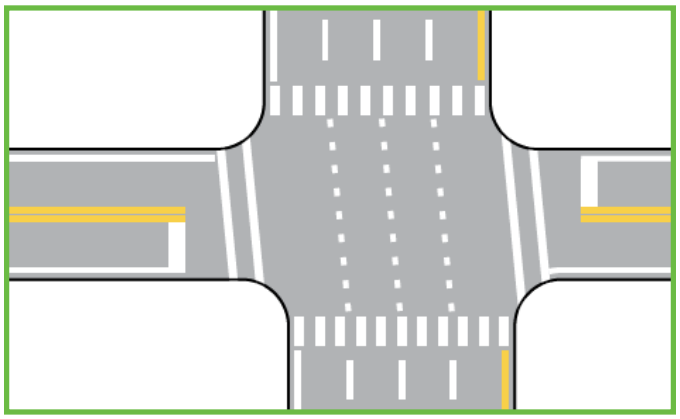


Figure 5.4.
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-13 A, pg. 564)

Stop lines

Stop lines are wide white lines painted across a traffic lane that mark where you must stop your vehicle at intersections. This keeps the vehicle out of the way of pedestrians and cross traffic. If there are no stop lines or crosswalks, stop the vehicle before entering the intersection. Whether or not there is a stop line, make sure you are able to see traffic from all directions before proceeding. Can you identify the stop lines in Figure 5.4?

Directional arrows

Directional arrows are wide white arrows painted down the center of the traffic lane. For example, in Figure 5.5, only right turns are permitted in the lane farthest to the right. The next lane permits either right turns or straight travel through the intersection. It is illegal to make a right turn from the remaining two lanes. Always check for traffic and pedestrians before proceeding or completing your turn.

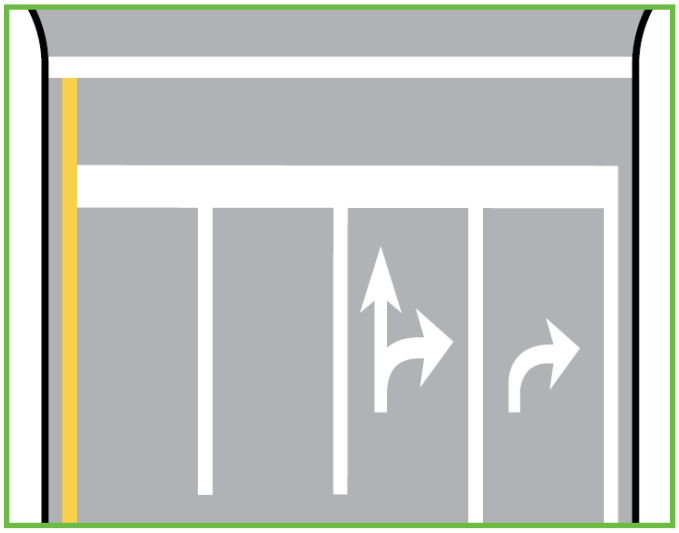
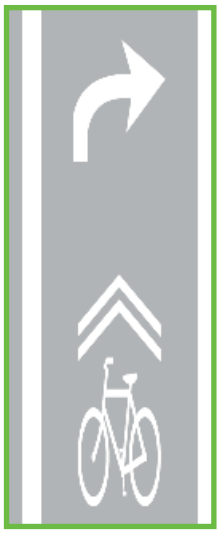


Figure 5.5
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-13 B, pg. 564)

Bicycle lanes

A bicycle lane is labeled with special pavement markings and signs and is reserved **exclusively for bicyclists**. A green bicycle lane indicates a potential point of conflict between cars and bicycles, usually intersections and driveways. Watch for bicyclists and take extra care when turning at green bicycle lanes. It is illegal to use these lanes for driving, passing, making right turns, parking, or as a pull-over to wait for someone or make a delivery.



(FHWA/MUTCD: Section of Figure 9E-9 (B), pg. 1102)

Shared lane markings

Shared lane markings (figure to the right) alert road users about the proper lane positioning and traffic flow to ensure safety. If you see a shared lane marking, watch for bicyclists and give them the space, courtesy and respect they deserve as legal road users.

Yellow lines

Yellow lines separate traffic lanes moving in opposite directions. They include solid, broken and center-lane lines.



Broken yellow lines

A single broken yellow line usually marks the center line of a two-way roadway where a vehicle may pass if it is safe to do so.

Solid yellow lines

If a solid yellow line is on your side of the center line, do not cross it to pass. See Figure 5.6. On a four-lane divided roadway or a one-way road, a solid yellow line usually marks the left edge of the pavement. A double solid yellow line down the middle of a two-lane roadway means that passing is not allowed for vehicles traveling in either direction. There are some situations in which crossing a double yellow line is permitted, such as when turning into a driveway, onto a crossroad, or accessing a parking spot.

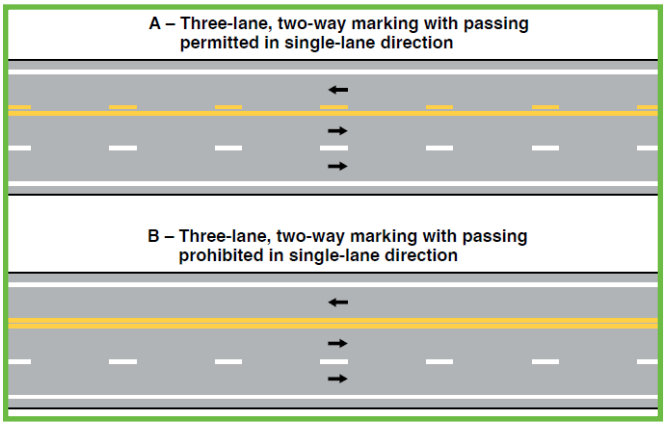


Figure 5.6.
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 3B-3, pg. 542)

Left turn only center lane

A left turn only center lane helps traffic flow smoothly by providing a designated lane for left turns. Each outside edge of the left turn only center lane is marked with a solid yellow line with broken yellow lines on the inside edges. See Figure 5.7.

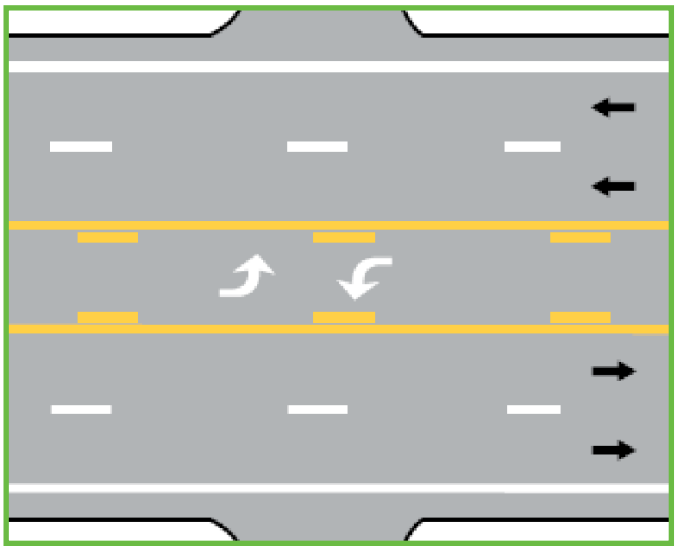


Figure 5.7. Left turns must be made from within the left-turn-only center lane and may be made from either direction. Using this lane to pass other vehicles or as a merge lane is illegal and dangerous.
(FHWA/MUTCD Figure 3B-7, pg. 547)

Michigan Lefts

What is a Michigan Left? Michigan Lefts, also known as indirect left turns, are a type of turn that have been part of Michigan's road system since the late 1960s. Intersections that have Michigan Lefts do not allow traditional left-turn movements. Instead, to turn left, a person must drive straight through the intersection, or turn right, then make a U-turn at a median crossover.

Are Michigan Lefts one lane or two? A single-lane Michigan Left is designed for one vehicle to turn at a time. While some crossovers may appear to be wide enough to fit multiple passenger vehicles side-by-side, that extra room is actually there to accommodate larger vehicles, like tractor trailers and recreational vehicles, that need a wider turning radius.

A multi-lane Michigan Left is designed for two vehicles to turn at a time. Pavement markings, such as arrows, ONLY lettering, and white solid lines, indicate that both lanes may be used to turn. An unmarked median crossover should always be treated as a single-lane crossover.

How to drive a Michigan Left: See Figure 5.8. Highway A traffic is prohibited from making a direct left turn onto Highway B at the intersection. Instead, drivers must continue past the intersection and turn left into the median crossover. When traffic clears, the driver will make a left turn onto Highway A and continue straight or move to the far-right lane and turn right onto Highway B.

Highway B traffic is prohibited from making a direct left turn onto Highway A at the intersection. Instead, drivers must turn right onto Highway A, move to the far-left lane and turn left into the median crossover. When traffic clears, the driver will make a left turn onto Highway A and continue straight.

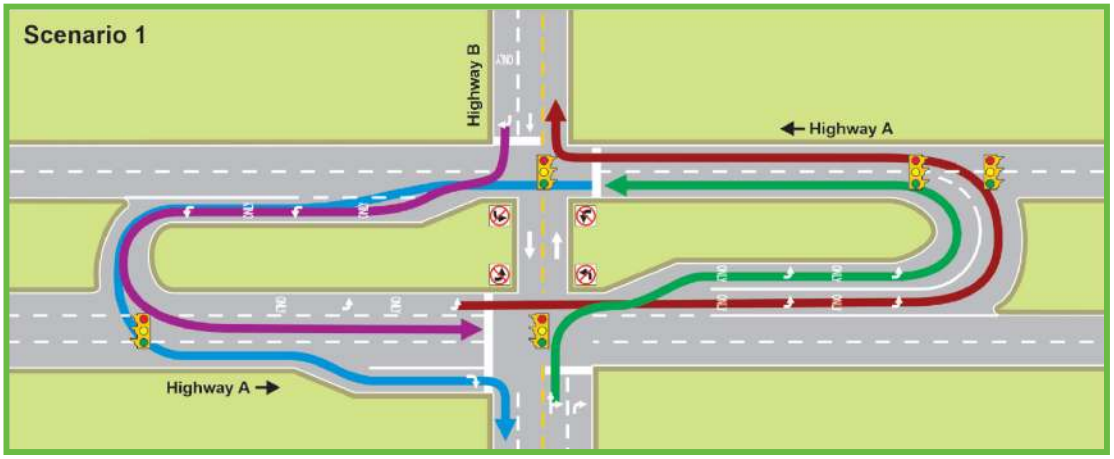


Figure 5.8. When drivers are prohibited from making a left turn at an intersection, they must circumvent the intersection and use the appropriate median crossover to complete their turn.
(MDOT "Michigan Lefts," brochure - 9/23)

Yield lines

Yield lines are typically found at roundabout intersections and mid-block crosswalks to help regulate the flow of traffic. When yielding to traffic or pedestrians, make sure to stop behind the yield lines. There are two types of yield lines.

White triangular symbols

White triangles painted across a traffic lane indicate you should be ready to stop and yield to pedestrians. See Figure 5.9.

Dashed white lines

Dashed white lines painted across a traffic lane in a roundabout indicate the edge of the roundabout's circular lane. See Figure 5.10.

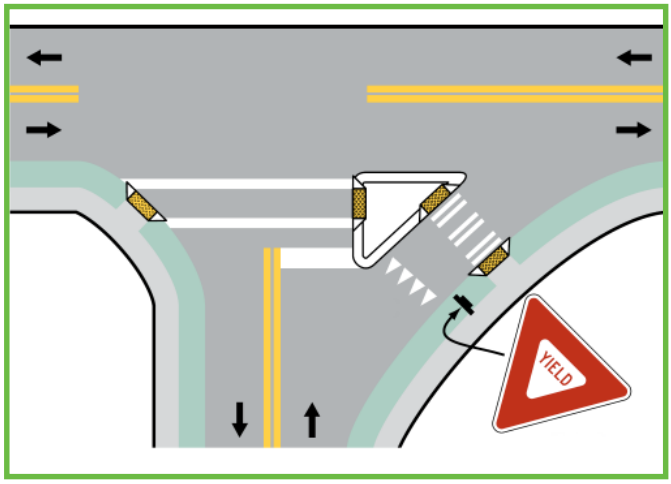


Figure 5.9. The white triangles indicate where to stop to yield to pedestrians. The accompanying sign reminds you to be prepared to yield for pedestrians.
(FHWA/MUTCD, Figure 3B-16 (A), pg. 574)

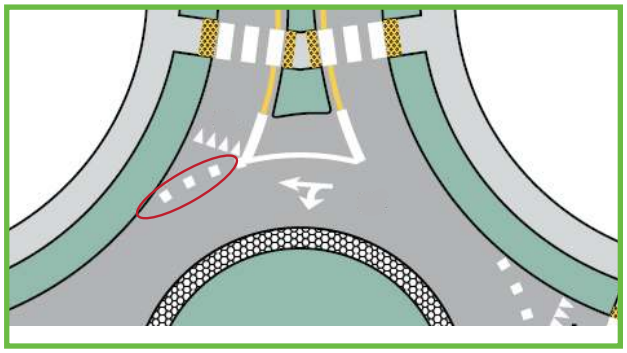
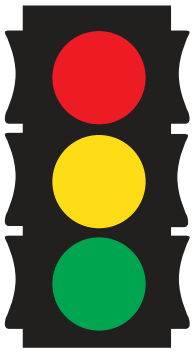


Figure 5.10. The dashed lines indicate the edge of the roundabout's circular traffic lane. Exercise caution and look for vehicles when entering a roundabout.
(FHWA/MUTCD, Figure 3D-2, pg. 597)

Traffic signals

Traffic signals regulate the flow of traffic. It is illegal to drive across public or private property, such as a store parking lot, to avoid a traffic-control device. Combinations of traffic signals, signs, pavement markings and other traffic-control devices can be found at intersections and railroad crossings, in school zones, and at highway construction and maintenance operations.

Red light means stop. It is at the top of a traffic signal in Michigan. Stop your vehicle behind the crosswalk or stop line.



Yellow light means the signal is about to turn red. **You are required to stop on a yellow light**. If you cannot stop safely, do not speed up but drive cautiously through the intersection.

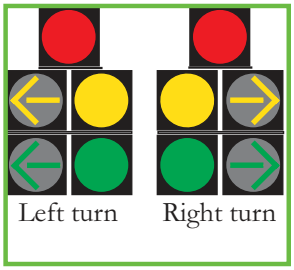
Green light means proceed with caution after checking for pedestrians and vehicles.

If a traffic signal is not working, and there are no law enforcement officers or other traffic signal devices present to control the flow of traffic, come to a complete stop and yield to vehicles already at the intersection. Yield to vehicles on your right if you both reach the intersection at the same time.

The 5-section-head signal

The 5-section-head signal or "doghouse signal" controls left or right turns at intersections. This type of signal has red, green and yellow lights along with a yellow and a green turn arrow.

When the green arrow is lit, turning drivers have a "protected turn," meaning all oncoming or conflicting traffic is stopped. When the green light is lit, you may complete your turn when oncoming traffic has cleared.



When either the yellow light or yellow arrow is lit, the signal is about to change to red and you must stop if you haven't already entered the intersection or cannot safely stop. If you have already entered the intersection, complete your turn with caution after making sure traffic is clear.

When the red light is activated, you must come to a complete stop. Check for cross traffic and pedestrians before proceeding when the light turns green or when turning right on red.

Flashing red light

A flashing red light means come to a full stop. Proceed when the road is clear.



Flashing yellow light

A flashing yellow light means proceed carefully through the intersection. Scan across traffic in both directions.



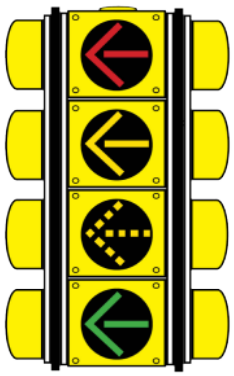
Steady green arrow

A steady green arrow means that traffic coming toward you is stopped and you may proceed with caution in the direction of the arrow. Yield the right of way to pedestrians in the intersection.



Flashing yellow arrow left-turn signal head

Research from the Federal Highway Administration shows that by reconfiguring the signal arrows used for left turns, traffic moves more efficiently through intersections and the chances for crashes are reduced. The flashing yellow arrow left-turn signal head uses four separate lenses to manage traffic.



A solid red arrow means you must stop. You cannot turn until the signal changes.

A solid yellow arrow warns you that the left turn signal is about to change to red. If you are approaching the intersection, you must stop. However, if you are already within the intersection and there is no conflicting traffic present, you may complete your left turn.

A flashing yellow arrow allows you to turn left when the oncoming traffic, which has a green light, is clear. Be sure that there is an adequate gap in the traffic and that there are no pedestrians or bicyclists crossing before making your turn.

A solid green arrow indicates that oncoming traffic is stopped and you may turn left. Proceed with caution, always check for and yield to people in the crosswalk. At intersections with vehicle-detection cameras or in-pavement sensors, this sequence may be skipped if there are no left-turning vehicles present.

Pedestrian signals

Pedestrian signals are used to control the movement of people at specific crossing points along the road or at an intersection. Some pedestrian signals may have audible or visual countdowns indicating how much time is left before the signal changes.

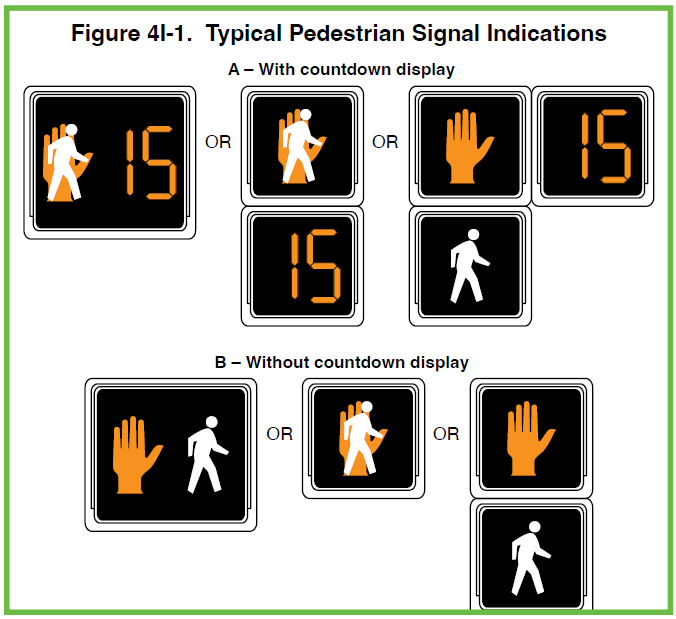


Figure 5.11. Crosswalks.
(FHWA/MUTCD: Figure 4I-1, pg. 718)

The white symbol of a walking person or the word "WALK" indicate that traffic must yield and pedestrians may cross. The signal will begin flashing when the time to cross safely is nearing its end. Any pedestrians in the crosswalk at that time should complete their crossing. The words "DONT WALK" or the red upraised hand means do not cross the roadway. If you are a driver, always yield to pedestrians.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

A Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon is a crossing device that alerts drivers to the presence of pedestrians. There are six steps to the signal sequence.

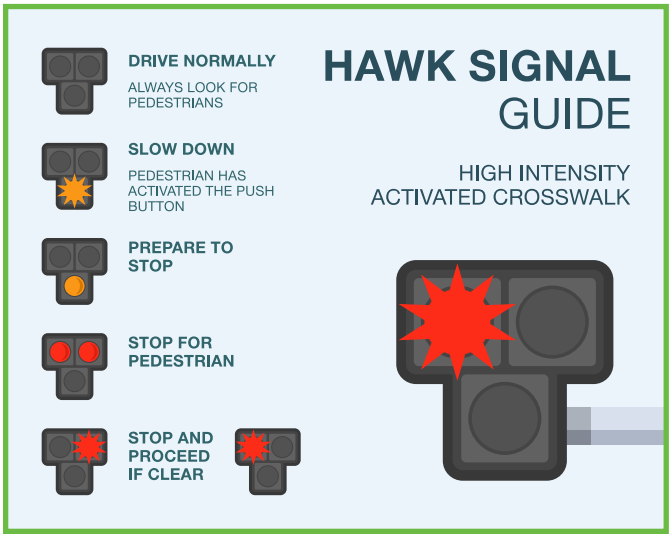


Figure 5.12. The Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.

Notes

Chapter 6: Sharing the Road



Did you know that. . . ?

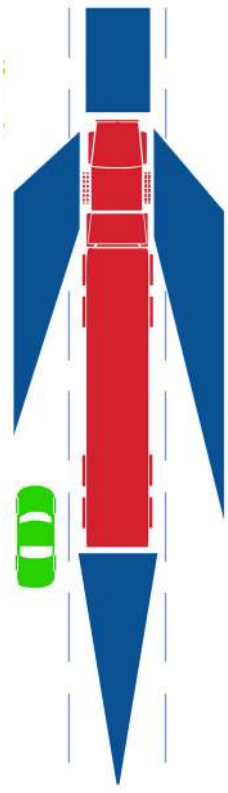
- In 1927, the Ford Motor Company produced its fifteen millionth Model T.
- In 1939, the 3-M Corporation introduced reflective sheeting for roadside signs.
- In 1942, the Willow Run and Detroit Industrial Expressway, the nation's first four-lane divided highway, was completed. Nearly 42,000 Detroit-area motorists used it daily to commute to the Ypsilanti bomber factory.

Commercial vehicles

Commercial vehicles are big. Their size and weight make it much more difficult for them to maneuver quickly. In the event of a crash with a commercial vehicle, the occupants of a car are much more likely to sustain injuries or fatalities.

Commercial vehicles cannot stop or maneuver as quickly or easily as a passenger vehicle. A passenger vehicle traveling at 55 mph can stop in about 130 feet. A commercial vehicle traveling at the same speed takes about 400 feet to stop.

Commercial vehicle drivers may not be able to see traffic directly in front of, alongside of, or close behind their vehicles. Large commercial trucks have blind spots or "no zones" (identified in blue in the image to the right). "No zones" are spaces in which motorists should not linger because they are not readily visible to the commercial driver. By hanging out in a commercial vehicle's "no zones," you are essentially hidden from the truck driver's view and this increases the chances that the truck could hit you when it is changing lanes or turning. For visibility and safety when traveling at night, use your low beams when following a truck or bus.



Michigan Center for Truck Safety: Truck "blind spots."

Keep a safe distance behind a commercial vehicle. Do not draft off of it. Following a commercial vehicle too closely greatly increases the chances of a rear-end collision. When you drive right behind a commercial vehicle, the driver cannot see you, and you are severely limited as to what you can see on the road ahead. Extend the distance between your vehicle and a commercial vehicle even more as weather or road conditions deteriorate.

Commercial vehicles need room to make right turns. They may swing wide to the left to safely negotiate a right turn. When you see a commercial vehicle with its right-turn signal on at an intersection, know that the truck is going to make a wide right turn. The white stopping lines on the pavement are there for a reason. If you stop past the line, a commercial vehicle may not be able to complete its turn without hitting you.

Never cross behind a commercial vehicle that is preparing to back up or is backing up. Remember, most trailers are eight-and-a-half feet wide and can hide a car from view, preventing the truck driver from seeing your vehicle.

When merging onto the freeway, commercial vehicles may not be able to move over, so match the flow of traffic as closely as possible, pick your spot and go. When exiting the freeway, leave space between you and the vehicle in front of you. Plan your move early and always signal your intentions as soon as possible.

Passing a commercial vehicle safely

Passing a commercial vehicle, especially the larger vehicles, requires forethought to avoid making mistakes that could be costly to you, the truck driver and other motorists.

- Signal intended lane changes or turns well in advance. Never cut off a commercial vehicle, force it to slow down or stop suddenly.
- Pass commercial vehicles on the left side and maintain a consistent speed when passing.
- As you pass, be sure you can see the entire cab of the truck in your rearview mirror before signaling and pulling back into the lane.
- Keep yourself visible to the commercial vehicle driver as you pass. Allow enough time and distance to pass safely.
- Keep both hands on the steering wheel. Commercial vehicles create strong air flow and draft when traveling at high speeds.
- When following a commercial vehicle, observe its turn signals before attempting to pass it. Be especially careful with trucks pulling a trailer. Often, a driver must swing out to the left or right before making a turn. The driver may not see you and could force you off the road.
- Avoid passing or driving next to trucks in roundabouts.
- Slow down if a truck or bus is passing you, especially during bad weather. Splash or spray from their tires can reduce visibility. Start your wipers before the vehicle passes.

Slow-moving vehicles



Slow-moving vehicles are those that cannot travel faster than 25 mph. Examples include Amish buggies, farm machinery such as combines and tractors pulling trailers or wagons, and industrial and construction equipment. "Four-wheelers" and golf carts are not considered slow-moving vehicles.

A slow-moving vehicle will have an orange triangle mounted on the back to warn motorists of the vehicle's limited speed. Do not get impatient if behind a slow-moving vehicle. The driver will usually try to pull over to the side whenever possible to prevent traffic back-ups.

When following a horse and rider or a horse-drawn buggy, reduce your speed to 15-20 mph and maintain a safe distance of at least 20 feet between your vehicle and the rider or buggy so as not to spook the horse. Pass with caution when safe to do so. Never honk the horn or rev the engine, as loud noises can startle horses.

Pedestrians

Always yield the right of way to pedestrians. This includes people walking, jogging, hiking, skateboarding, pushing strollers, etc. You must take every precaution to avoid a collision with a pedestrian.

Watch for pedestrians when entering a street from a driveway or alley, at stop signs, traffic signals, roundabouts, crosswalks and intersections. Pedestrians may also cross in the middle of a block, even if there is a crosswalk nearby.

Even if you have a green light, you must yield to people crossing the street or intersection.

Never attempt to pass another vehicle that has stopped for a pedestrian. Be especially cautious when a large truck or bus is stopped because its large size may block a pedestrian from your view.

If a street does not have a sidewalk, pedestrians should face oncoming traffic if they choose to walk along the road's edge. Keep an eye out for pedestrians on both sides of the road.

Make extra allowances for the elderly, the young and people with disabilities. They may require a little more time to cross a street.

You are required by law to stop or yield the right of way for a pedestrian with a white cane or guide dog. Avoid honking your horn or revving the engine; these noises are distracting and cover important audible cues used by people with visual impairments.

Michigan law also requires drivers to stop at the marked crosswalk limit line or before entering the intersection if no limit line exists. Never block a crosswalk. Not only does it make it difficult for people with visual and other mobility challenges to navigate, it creates an unsafe environment for pedestrians crossing the street.

Mid-block crosswalks provide pedestrians with safe crossing along roadways at places other than intersections. A yield line is sometimes used to indicate the location where drivers should stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk. See Figure 6.1.

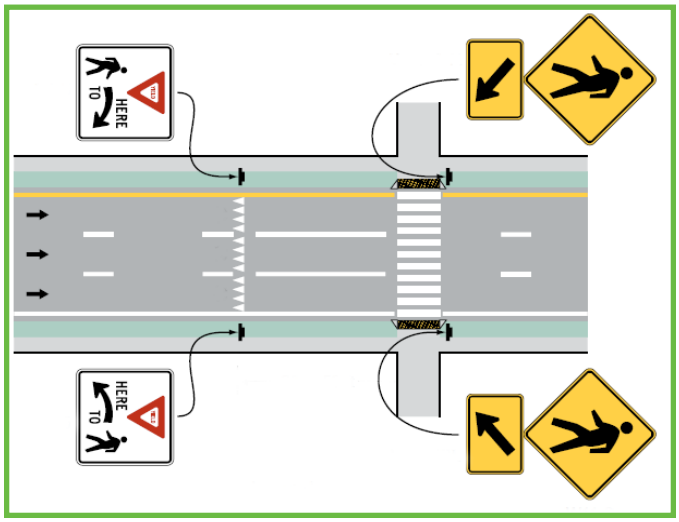


Figure 6.1.
(FHWA/MUTCD, Figure 3B-16 (B), pg. 574)

Children

Pay close attention around parked cars, near school zones, playgrounds and parks where children are likely to be present. Children are unpredictable and can dart out into the street unexpectedly.

Motorcycles, scooters, mopeds and bicycles

When sharing the road with motorcycles, scooters, mopeds or bicycles, it is important to understand the special characteristics and limitations of these vehicles.

While their smaller size makes these two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles economical to operate, it also makes it difficult to see them and to accurately judge their speed and distance. This puts them at a disadvantage in traffic. Any crash between a larger vehicle and a motorcycle, scooter, moped or bicycle almost always injures or kills the operator of the smaller vehicle. Keep the following points in mind when sharing the road with motorcycles, scooters and bicycles:

- Always treat motorcyclists and scooter, moped and bicycle riders with courtesy. Give them room. Pass them as you would any other vehicle – when it is safe and legal to move over into an adjacent lane. Remember that motorcycle, scooter, moped and bicycle riders are allowed to share a lane.

- Intersections are one of the highest risk locations for crashes between vehicles and motorcycles, scooters and bicycles. For example, motorists frequently respond to police after a crash that they did not even see the motorcyclist.

- Exercise extreme caution when making a left turn at an intersection. Be alert for possible oncoming motorcyclists, scooter operators or bicyclists. Left turns present a higher risk for crashes because it is easy for you to misjudge their speed and distance because of their smaller profile. Always assume motorcyclists and other small vehicles are closer than they appear and wait for them to pass before turning.

- Tailgating is illegal. Leave at least 3 or 4 seconds of travel space between your vehicle and a motorcyclist, scooter operator or bicyclist. They can usually stop in shorter distances than a car and may have to swerve suddenly, slow down or change lanes to avoid or adjust to obstacles such as potholes, pavement transitions or railroad crossings.

- A fast moving vehicle creates a lot of airflow and draft. Be mindful that your vehicle's "wind blast" can startle or even push a motorcyclist, scooter

operator or bicyclist off balance, increasing the chances of a crash.

- Check for turn signals or hand signals from a motorcyclist, scooter operator or bicyclist. Additionally, if the vehicle moves to the left or right side of a lane, if the operator turns to check for traffic or begins to lean or tilt the vehicle, it is likely the rider is planning to turn.



- Look carefully because the single headlight or taillight on a motorcycle, scooter, moped or bicycle can blend into the lights of other vehicles.
- Before changing lanes, check to see if a motorcyclist, scooter operator or bicyclist is in your blind spot or in the space where you plan to move. After you pass, look again before you move back into the other lane. Make sure you can see the rider clearly in your rearview mirror. Many crashes happen because motorists failed to check their blind spots and did not see the rider.
- When parking your vehicle, check your mirrors before opening your door. Use your right hand to open the door, so you will automatically look over your left shoulder for oncoming cyclists and pedestrians. Opening a vehicle door in the path of approaching traffic, including motorcycles, scooters and bicycles is dangerous and illegal.

Specifically about motorcyclists

It is illegal for motorists to drive beside motorcyclists or pass them in the same lane. Pass by using an adjacent lane when it is legal and safe to do so. Always look out for motorcyclists when driving, especially at intersections and on busy city streets, which is where most vehicle-motorcycle crashes occur.

Motorcyclists operating vehicles with engine sizes of 125cc or greater are legally allowed to drive on freeways and limited-access highways. Be aware that motorcyclists make up the mix of vehicles on freeways and highways in addition to suburban and urban roadways.

- A motorcyclist's single headlight and smaller profile in traffic can distort a motorist's perception of the motorcyclist's true speed and distance, making it appear that the motorist has more time to complete their turn or lane change than they really do. This risk increases in adverse weather conditions and at night when vision is limited.
- Motorcyclists frequently use engine braking and downshifting, techniques used with manual transmissions that slow down the vehicle without activating the brake lights. To be safe, keep extra space between you and a motorcyclist, especially on city streets.



As a motorist, use your horn judiciously. Avoid horn blasts that may startle riders and put them at an increased risk of a crash.

Moped or scooter?

According to Michigan law, a moped is defined as a motor vehicle that:

- Has two or three wheels and is equipped with an engine that does not exceed 100 cc piston displacement,
- Cannot propel itself at a speed greater than 30 mph on a level surface, and,
- Has a power drive system that does not require the operator to shift gears.

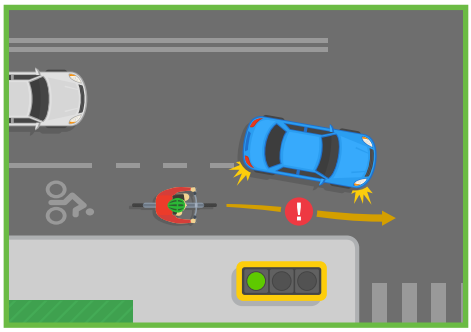
"Scooter" is a generic term for two-wheeled vehicles that applies to mopeds and to higher-powered machines that do not fit the definition of a moped.

Bicyclists

Bicyclists may legally ride on Michigan roads, except limited access freeways. They may ride anywhere in the lane as long as they are riding with traffic. Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists.

Obey all lane markings.

Look for bicyclists riding from behind on the road shoulder or in a bike lane before turning right at an intersection, into a driveway or pulling off the road. As appropriate, yield and allow them to pass before turning.



Do not use the bicycle lane as a right-turn lane. Do not overtake a bicyclist and turn right unless it is safe to do so.

Michigan law requires that you leave at least 3 feet of space between your vehicle and a bicyclist when passing. If this is impractical, pass at a safe distance and at a safe speed. This may require you to use another lane or wait for an opportunity to safely pass. You may pass a bicyclist in a no-passing zone as long as it is safe to do so. Some cities have stricter laws requiring a 5-foot passing distance.

After passing, don't return to your lane until well clear of the bicycle or other vulnerable roadway users. Large vehicles and vehicles towing oversized loads should allow even more space and time when passing a bicyclist.

Bicyclists are not required to use a bicycle lane and may leave a bicycle lane to turn left or to avoid hazards.

Be aware that low-riding, three-wheeled recumbent cyclists and three-wheeled super-recumbent handcycle riders also use Michigan roadways. These bikes are almost always equipped with rear view mirrors and many riders use tall orange flags for additional visibility, but these cycles can be difficult to see due to their low profiles.

Autocycles

An autocycle is a motorcycle that has safety belts, a roll bar or roll hoops, a steering wheel and other equipment required on a motorcycle. It has three wheels and is not equipped with a straddle seat.

Because of its smaller profile, give an autocycle the same respect as motorcycles and other small vehicles on the road. As with motorcycles, scooters, mopeds and bicycles, be especially watchful for autocycles at intersections, in busy traffic and when turning.

Notes

Chapter 7: Emergencies and Special Situations



Did you know that . . . ?

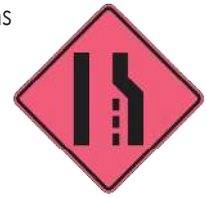
- In 1930, Fisher Body introduced the slanted windshield to reduce glare from the lights of oncoming traffic at night.
- In 1955, Ford Motor Co. announced that seat belts would be offered as a factory-installed option.
- In 1974, the first mass-produced air bags were offered as an option in some Cadillacs and Buicks.

Safe driving

Safe driving involves more than learning the basics of operating a vehicle and memorizing the rules of the road. Safe driving also requires good judgment and reflexes, experience, patience and common sense. It is your best defense as a driver.

If you are a young teen driver, you may feel uncertain about your skill behind the wheel. Your understanding and judgment may not be as well developed as an experienced driver's. As you practice driving, first on the driver education range, then with your parents, guardians or another designated licensed adult 21 or older, and later, once you are licensed to drive without supervision, your skill and confidence will grow.







If you are a middle-aged driver, you may have become complacent about your driving ability after years of driving. However, driving on "autopilot" may actually leave you vulnerable on the road because you are not really attuned to your driving environment and its potential risks.

If you are an older driver, you have years of experience but may face difficulties brought about by health and aging challenges. Research indicates older drivers can improve their driving ability through additional training, enabling them to maintain their driver's license while driving safely. AAA RoadWise Driver and AARP Driver Safety programs both offer in-person and online driver refresher courses. To find the testing and refresher courses nearest you, visit Michigan.gov/AgingDriver.

Aggressive driving

Aggressive drivers run stop signs and red lights, speed, tailgate, weave their vehicles in and out of traffic, pass on the right when it is not legal to do so and may make improper hand gestures. They sometimes yell at you, honk their horns or flash their headlights.

If you respond equally, the situation can get out of control and escalate into road rage, in which a weapon or the vehicle itself is used to assault the other driver.

The exact number of traffic crashes caused by aggressive drivers is unknown, but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has estimated 66 percent of all traffic fatalities are caused by aggressive driving behaviors.

Are you an aggressive driver? Do you:

- **Merge improperly?** Failing to merge smoothly disrupts the flow of traffic. Always try to merge smoothly when entering the expressway or turning from one road to another. If you see other drivers making an ill-advised merge or turn, slow down and give them room. Getting angry will not help and your anger could adversely affect your judgment, resulting in a crash. A driver may be wrong, but how important is it to prove you are right? Do not risk injury or death because you feel you have been wronged when driving. It is much wiser to back off and allow the driver to merge.

- **Drive slowly in the left lane?** Use all lanes properly and obey the speed limit. If you are using the left-hand lane to pass slower traffic and someone tailgates you, move back into the right-hand lane when it is safe to do so and allow the faster traffic to move ahead. Driving in the left-hand lane and allowing traffic to build up behind you increases the chances aggressive drivers may take careless risks attempting to get around you.

- **Tailgate?** This is another aggressive-driver trait. If other drivers tailgate you, pull over and let them pass. It is better to have these unsafe drivers in front where you can see them rather than having them driving on your rear bumper.

- **Make inappropriate gestures?** Never gesture at other drivers when you become angry. If another driver is gesturing to you when you have made a driving error, let him or her know you are sorry. Everyone makes mistakes. Returning gestures or becoming angry will not correct your mistake. It will only serve to make both of you angrier and increase the risk of confrontation or a traffic crash.

Always remember that safe driving is affected by your driving attitude and your ability to control your stress and anger. Do not let an aggressive driver's behaviors provoke you to the point where you feel compelled to react in kind.

If confronted by an aggressive driver, attempt to get out of the way, avoid eye contact and ignore gestures or verbal attacks. If safe to do so, call the police and report the aggressive driver.

If an aggressive driver is involved in a crash farther down the road, stop a safe distance from the crash scene, wait for the police to arrive and report the driving behavior witnessed.

Take care at intersections

Crashes at intersections result in more traffic fatalities and serious injuries than on any other portion of the road. Being alert and cautious at intersections will help keep you safe.

Intersections

- As you approach an intersection, check for oncoming and cross traffic, other highway users, pedestrians, signals, signs and pavement markings, the condition of the roadway and areas of limited visibility.

- Be alert for vehicles and pedestrians that may disregard a traffic signal or other traffic control device and proceed through an intersection without stopping or yielding the right of way. Anytime you are not sure what other drivers are going to do, be safe and let them go first.

- Keep alert and look twice for smaller vehicles approaching an intersection, such as motorcycles, bicycles and mopeds. Because of their size, it may be difficult to judge their speed and distance. Protect these riders by being courteous and allowing them to clear the intersection safely.

- Be especially cautious if you cannot see the road or traffic clearly at an intersection because of trees, buildings, piles of snow or other obstructions. Edge forward slowly until you can see past whatever is blocking your view. Once the intersection is clear or traffic signals indicate you may proceed, continue driving with care.

Freeway driving

Freeway traffic flows in the same direction and does not have stops or intersections. Pedestrians, small motorcycles of 124 cc or less, mopeds, bicycles, all-terrain vehicles and slow-moving vehicles are not allowed on freeways.

- An entrance ramp allows traffic to enter the freeway. Often, an exit ramp will be next to the entrance ramp. Look for "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signs and speed limit signs.

The entrance ramp usually merges into an acceleration lane allowing you to increase your speed to match freeway traffic speed.

- Signal and check for freeway traffic by using the vehicle's rearview and side-view mirrors and quick glances over your shoulder. Choose a safe space to enter and then merge into traffic, yielding the right of way to vehicles on the freeway. Do not count on other drivers to let you in.

- On a two-lane freeway, drive in the right lane except when passing, exiting to the left, allowing another vehicle to merge onto the freeway, when the lanes are heavily congested with traffic or when emergency vehicles or construction workers are on the shoulders.

- On a freeway with three or more lanes of travel in the same direction, you may drive in any lane. However, if driving at or near the minimum speed limit, stay in the lane with the slower moving traffic.

- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are used during peak hours of operation, such as rush hour, and vehicles must have two or more occupants to use the HOV lane. Outside of designated hours, HOV lanes are open to all motorists. Motorcycles may use them at any time.

- Merge signs are placed near freeway entrances to alert you to traffic entering the freeway. Always watch for vehicles merging onto the freeway. Adjusting your speed or moving safely into another lane will allow drivers to enter the freeway smoothly and safely.

- Always watch for drivers who suddenly slow down when approaching an exit or swerve into the exit lane unexpectedly.

- Never stop on a freeway except for an emergency. If you must stop, turn on the emergency hazard flashers, slow down gradually and pull all the way off the pavement as soon as safely possible.

A word about merging

Few topics of discussion get motorists' blood boiling quicker than the proper way to merge. What is proper and legal? How should you merge? Merging onto a freeway entails fast-moving traffic, and, if the roadway is also congested, say at rush hour, merging can be all the more difficult.

Here's what state law says about merging: "When a vehicle approaches the intersection of a highway from an intersecting highway or street which is intended to be, and is constructed as, a merging highway or street, and is plainly marked at the intersection with appropriate merge signs, the vehicle shall yield right of way to a vehicle so close as to constitute an immediate hazard on the highway about to be entered and shall adjust its speed so as to enable it to merge safely with the through traffic." MCL.257.649(7).

Got it?

Translation: If you are the vehicle merging onto (in this case) the freeway, you are the one who must adjust speed and placement so as to merge safely and avoid a crash with traffic already on the freeway. This applies whether you are entering a freeway or exiting the freeway and merging into a lane of traffic.

Leaving a freeway

- Most freeway exits have a special deceleration lane to slow down in when exiting the freeway. Watch for exit ramp signs that indicate which lane to use when exiting the freeway. Make sure to check for traffic and use your turn signal to let other drivers know that you are moving over into the exit-ramp lane.

- Avoid slowing down on a freeway when exiting. Wait until you are fully in the deceleration lane before reducing your speed and then slow down gradually. Many ramps have sharp curves, so it is important to obey the posted exit ramp speed limit.

- If you miss your exit ramp, never back up, turn around or use a median crossover. Instead, drive to the next exit. Get back on the freeway and return to the exit you want. Never use the crossover lane in the median. It is only for emergency and Michigan Department of Transportation vehicles.

Freeway fatigue

- One of the greatest dangers in freeway driving is fatigue. On long trips you can become sleepy or hypnotized by the constant hum of the wind, tires

and engine. If necessary, let someone else drive.

- Do not rely on coffee or "stay awake" drugs. If you feel tired, stop and take a 10-minute break at least every two hours. Pull off the highway at the next exit. Find a motel or rest area and relax.

- If you must drive, keep shifting your eyes from one area of the road to another. Check your mirrors. Look at objects near and far, left and right.

Cruise control

- Cruise control is best suited for use in rural areas where there is not much traffic.

- Set the cruise control at or below the posted speed limit. This steady pace saves gasoline and allows for acceleration to pass slower moving vehicles without blocking the left lane for extended periods.

- Acceleration does not cancel the cruise control setting – depressing the brake pedal will.

- Using cruise control in heavy traffic, near large numbers of exit and entrance ramps or when roads are slippery from rain, snow or ice is not recommended. This could require the constant resetting of the cruise control to the point you are distracted, increasing your risk of being involved in a crash. Most vehicle manufacturers do not recommend using cruise control when towing heavy loads.

If an oncoming vehicle is in your lane

- If there is time, tap the horn to warn the other driver.

- Brake hard, but do not lock the wheels if your vehicle does not have anti-lock brakes.

- Look for an escape route on the right edge of the road.

- Try not to go to the left since the other driver may see you and return to his or her proper lane.

- Try an emergency stop in your lane only if there is enough room and you cannot pull off the road.

- If you cannot stop before hitting another vehicle, try to steer around it. Do not turn more than needed to avoid a crash.

Bad weather

Preventive maintenance prior to the winter season is the best way to ensure safe travel. Regularly check fluid levels such as power steering, brake, windshield washer and oil.

Make sure the antifreeze is strong enough to prevent freezing of the engine and fresh enough to prevent rust. In cold weather, you may also want to change the windshield washer fluid to one containing an antifreeze agent.

Leave extra time and drive more slowly when it is foggy, raining or snowing, and conditions are hazardous. Allow greater following distance in bad weather. In cold weather, bridges and underpasses freeze before the road does.

Rain and fog



When it begins to rain, the roads are most slippery during the first half hour. This is because oil dropped from passing vehicles has not been washed away. Be especially cautious at intersections where oil deposits may be heavier. Slow down and allow at least twice the normal following distance.

Brakes may become wet after driving through deep water or during heavy rain. Test them, as they may pull to one side or the other, or they may not hold at all. Slow down and gently push on the brake pedal until the brakes work properly again.

When your tires ride on top of the water on a wet road, you are hydroplaning, which can result in a loss of control. Worn tires, low tire pressure or driving too fast contribute to hydroplaning.

If a flooded road is blocked off by safety barricades, do not drive around them. The barricades are there because it is unsafe for vehicles. There may be debris or power lines in the water or the road may have been washed away. If there are no barricades in place at a flooded road, consider finding an alternate route. If you do try to drive through, do so with extreme caution. In addition to the hazards already mentioned, deep water can damage your vehicle's engine.

Drive slowly in fog. Turn on the low-beam headlights and be prepared to stop quickly.

If fog becomes so thick that you cannot see at all, pull off the road. Turn on the four-way emergency flashers and wait for the fog to lift.



Ice, snow and other slippery conditions

Remember when driving on ice and snow, drive slowly. Driving in snow and ice requires extra attention. In cold weather, be alert and listen for snowmobiles, watch for trail or crosswalk signs along the roadway and be prepared to stop. You will not have the same stopping power in slippery conditions as you will when road conditions are dry and clear.

- When driving on snow or a slippery road, slow down gradually.
- Test your vehicle's brakes lightly to get a feel for the road. Most skids happen when a driver tries to turn too quickly or stops suddenly on slippery pavement.
- To prevent a skid in vehicles with standard brakes, use steady pressure on the brakes without locking them. This method allows the wheels to turn, maintaining steering control.
- If the vehicle has full anti-lock brakes, maintain brake pressure and steer.

If your vehicle begins skidding

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Turn the front wheels only enough to keep them pointed in the direction you want to go and no farther.
- Be prepared for a secondary skid in the opposite direction.
- Again, turn the wheels in the direction you want to go. Then straighten the wheels to bring the vehicle under control.

Braking

How and when you use your brakes will depend on the road and traffic conditions and the type of brakes on your vehicle.

- Under normal conditions, you apply a steady, firm push on the brake pedal to slow and stop your vehicle.
- In extreme conditions, such as on snow, ice or in an emergency stop on dry pavement, how you brake depends on your braking system.
- With anti-lock brakes, apply the brake with hard, firm pressure from the start and maintain this pressure until you have stopped. You may feel or hear vibrations or pulsations, this is normal.
- In a vehicle without anti-lock brakes, apply the brakes just hard enough to not lock the wheels. If the wheels do lock, release pressure and apply the brakes again. This method of braking is sometimes referred to as "threshold" or "controlled" braking.

Stopping distances

Your stopping distance can be affected by fatigue, how well you pay attention, the type and weight of your vehicle, the condition of your tires and brakes, the type of road surface and the weather.

- To estimate how much time and space you have for stopping on either dry or wet pavement, follow this general rule. A 3- to 4-second following distance is required. When the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a sign or any other stationary point, calculate the time it takes you to reach the same spot by counting "one-thousand one, one-thousand two, one-thousand three." You are following too closely if you pass the mark before you finish counting for 3 seconds. When speeds are increased, or during adverse driving conditions, increase your following distance up to 6 seconds or more if necessary.

- Wet pavement requires more stopping time and space. To make a smooth stop, increase pressure on the brake pedal gradually and just before you stop, reduce the pressure.

- Look down the road 20-30 seconds. This rule means always look ahead of the vehicle to spot potential hazards and avoid last-second reactions. This defensive driving technique and higher-level visual and anticipatory driving skill will assist you in staying safer on the road.

- Anticipate problems ahead and be prepared to react in time. Keep a safe distance behind another vehicle. Under poor or slippery driving conditions, allow even more time to stop.

Driving at night

Nighttime driving is hazardous because your visibility is reduced.

- Headlights must be turned on one half-hour after sunset until one half-hour before sunrise and at other times when visibility is reduced. Use your low beams when it is foggy, raining or snowing during the day. If you are having trouble seeing other vehicles, they will have trouble seeing you. Turn on your headlights whenever you are in doubt.

- Headlights must be on any time there is not enough daylight to see people and vehicles clearly at 500 feet. It is illegal to use only parking lights when headlights are required.

- You should be able to stop within the clear distance you can see ahead. When driving at night, it is critical to drive within the range of your headlights.

- It is illegal to use or even flash high-beam headlights within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle. Also, dim your lights for pedestrians and cyclists.

- If oncoming drivers do not dim their headlights, keep your eyes on the right edge of the road ahead. Do not look directly into oncoming headlights. The glare may blind you for several seconds. A dirty windshield will make headlight glare worse.

- Do not use high beams when behind other vehicles. Bright lights shining in their rearview mirrors can be distracting.



Emergency situations

Knowing how to handle the unexpected and being prepared for emergencies when you are driving is the best defense for safeguarding lives and property.

During the five-year period from 2014 to 2018, about 10 percent of all pedestrian-related traffic crash fatalities involved a roadside emergency. Generally, the safest thing to do if you are involved in a roadside emergency is to stay in your car, with your seat belt

buckled, until help arrives. For more information, visit Michigan.gov/StayInYourCar.

Crashes

Whether you are stopping at the scene of a crash to provide help or are involved in one yourself, it is important to understand your responsibilities.

If you are involved in a crash, do not drive away. Leaving the scene of a crash is against the law and punishable by fines, jail time or both. Penalties for fleeing increase if alcohol was involved or if the crash resulted in injuries or fatalities.

Help secure medical aid for the injured.

Vehicles involved in crashes that do not result in serious injury or death shall be moved from the main roadway by the driver or a passenger with a valid driver's license if the vehicle can be driven and it is safe to do so. Select a safe location, such as the shoulder, median, or a parking lot near the crash site.

Exchange names, addresses, driver's license numbers, registration and insurance information with the other drivers involved in the crash.

Notify the police if there are injuries or property damage exceeding $1,000.

Vehicle – deer crashes

About 60,000 vehicle-deer crashes happen in Michigan each year and officials suspect that as many as half are unreported. Vehicle-deer crashes are costly. The average crash results in $2,100 in damages, usually to the vehicle's front end. Annual costs for these crashes statewide are estimated at $130 million. If you hit a deer, report it to local law enforcement, the county sheriff's office, Michigan State Police or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. They can provide a permit to keep it.

Your best defense against deer

- Stay aware, awake, alert and sober.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are your best defense in any collision.
- Be especially alert in fall and spring, but remember that vehicle-deer crashes can occur at any time of the year.
- Watch for deer crossing signs.
- Slow down if you see one deer. Deer frequently travel in groups. Chances are there are others nearby.
- Be especially alert for deer at dawn and dusk.
- Do not rely on gimmicks. Deer whistles, flashing your high-beam headlights or honking your horn will not deter deer.

If a vehicle-deer crash is unavoidable



- Do not veer for deer; stay in your lane.
- Brake firmly.
- Hold onto the steering wheel with both hands.
- Come to a controlled stop.
- Steer your vehicle well off the roadway.

Driving requires you to plan ahead to stay safe

- Keep your vehicle in good working condition.
- Make sure you have enough gas to get to your destination.
- Tell people your route and estimated arrival time at your beginning and ending stops.
- Check for clean headlights, taillights and brake lights. Make sure all lights and turn signals work properly. You can be ticketed for defective or missing equipment.
- Clean the windshield and windows.
- Make sure your tires are properly inflated and check them for any damage or wear.
- Check in front and behind the vehicle for objects, animals or people in your path.
- Have your vehicle identification number etched on the car window and main parts to help prevent it from being stolen for parts.
- Alarms and interlocks to prevent other kinds of car theft can also discourage amateur carjackers.

Before starting the engine

- Make sure you are seated comfortably in the driver's seat.
- Make sure you and all passengers are properly buckled up.
- Check mirrors and look again for anything in your path.
- Most cars have at least two blind spots, areas to the left and right rear of the vehicle that you cannot see with your sideview mirrors. Adjust the inside rearview mirror so you can see the center of the road and any traffic behind the vehicle.
- To minimize blind spots, adjust the left and right outside mirrors to see the edges of the vehicle when seated in a normal driving position.
- An alternate adjustment method can further reduce blind spots. While seated in the driver seat, lean left to touch your head to the driver side window; adjust the left outside mirror to barely show the rear edge of the vehicle. Then lean right to position your head above the center console or in line with the rearview mirror; adjust the right outside mirror to barely show the rear edge of the vehicle.

Do not take risks

- Never turn the ignition to the "lock" position while your vehicle is in motion or the steering will lock. Once the steering locks, if you try to turn the steering wheel, you will lose control of the vehicle.
- When driving, keep doors and windows locked. Stay alert for danger. If available, take freeways rather than streets through high-crime areas.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Is there a police or fire station, service station or other business open nearby if you should need help?
- Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
- Never leave keys in the car or ignition.
- Close a sunroof at night and in high-risk areas.
- Do not get out to fix a flat tire. Try to drive slowly to a service station or store with a well-lighted parking lot and telephone for service.
- Choose the safest route to any destination.
- Park as close to that destination as possible.
- When returning to your car, have your keys ready, be aware of your surroundings and of people who appear to be in the wrong place, seem suspect or whose demeanor makes you uncomfortable. Before entering the car, check the interior for possible intruders.

If you are approached or threatened while in your car

- If someone acting suspiciously approaches your vehicle, try to drive away or sound the horn.

- Stay inside the locked car.
- If you are in trouble, call for assistance on your mobile phone. Use of a mobile phone while driving to report emergencies is allowed under Michigan law.
- If a carjacker wants the vehicle, give it up without a fight. A car can be replaced but personal safety is priceless. Stay calm. Get a good description of the carjacker.

If your car becomes disabled

Pull as far off the traveled portion of the roadway as possible. Activate your four-way emergency lights and stay inside your vehicle with your seat belt securely fastened. It is recommended that a professional with the proper training and equipment assist with your disabled vehicle to keep you and your occupants in the vehicle safe.

If you must leave your vehicle, be extremely aware of passing traffic and walk directly to a safe location, far away from the traveled portion of the roadway. Remember that it is dangerous and illegal for a pedestrian to walk on the freeway.

If you are pulled over

If a law enforcement officer signals you to pull over, pull off on the right side of the road as soon as it is safe to do so and stop. The officer may want you to move your vehicle to a different location for safety's sake. Stay calm, maintain your composure, follow the officer's orders and do not make any movements or take any actions that could escalate the situation.

Stay in your car with your seat belt on. Turn on the interior lights if it is dusk or dark outside. Open your window. Keep both hands empty and in plain sight on the steering wheel. Ask your passengers to keep silent and keep their hands clearly visible and empty.

Do not appear angry, confrontational or accusatory. Speak with the same respect you expect in return. Take your license, registration and insurance card out only when the officer asks for them. Let the officer know where these items are located before you retrieve them.

The officer should inform you of the reason for the stop. In some cases, the officer may ask you to exit your vehicle. Do not argue about the reason for the stop or if you are issued a ticket. If you believe the officer's conduct was inappropriate, cooperate with any directions you are given and follow up with a call to the officer's supervisor. If you feel the stop or the ticket is inappropriate, discuss the matter with the court, not the officer.

After the stop, make sure you and your passengers are safely buckled up. Check for traffic and pedestrians before driving away. Use your turn signal and follow all laws when pulling onto the road. The officer may remain with lights activated until you have safely left.

In conclusion

Putting into practice the information found in this manual is a good step toward becoming a better informed driver. Concentrate on your driving. A momentary distraction can lead to a crash. Keep your attention on the road and remember these tips to help keep safe:

- Drive defensively and stay alert to what others around you are doing.
- Obey all traffic control devices and traffic laws.
- Always obey a law enforcement officer's orders. An officer's directions take priority over other traffic control devices.
- Be courteous to others.
- Use your turn signals.
- Avoid looking at any one thing for more than a few seconds.
- Drive cautiously and increase your following distance at night, during bad weather, rush hour, during maneuvers such as lane changes and when approaching intersections.
- Do not drive when you are tired.

Notes

Safe Driving Knowledge Test



Did you know that . . . ?

- On July 1, 1919, Michigan issued its first driver's license to Michigan Governor Albert Sleeper.
- In 1934, the Automobile Club of Michigan worked with school systems to develop the nation's first high school driver education class.

Following is a sample safe driving knowledge test. Can you answer all 10 questions correctly? (The answers are found in "Resources.")

1. **City driving is more dangerous than expressway driving because of the:**

   a. Lower speed limits.

   b. Narrower driving lanes.

   c. Cross traffic and pedestrians.

   d. Worse road conditions in bad weather.

2. **You come to an intersection with a flashing red light. You must:**

   a. Slow down and drive carefully through the intersection.

   b. Turn either right or left since the road is blocked ahead.

   c. Stop at the intersection and wait for a flashing green light.

   d. Stop at the intersection, then proceed as traffic allows.

3. **You are driving in the right lane on an expressway. You should probably move into the left lane when:**

   a. Traffic is heavy but moving steadily.

   b. The weather is bad and roads are slippery.

   c. Traffic is slow in your lane and cars are in the left lane.

   d. Traffic is light and cars are merging onto the expressway from the right.

4. **Before turning left, it is important to:**

   a. Sound your horn.

   b. Yield to oncoming vehicles.

   c. Swing to the right side of your lane.

   d. Wait until oncoming traffic has a red light.

5. **When entering an expressway behind several other vehicles, it is MOST important to:**

   a. Keep your eyes on the vehicle in back of you.

   b. Adjust the position and speed of your vehicle to the flow of traffic.

   c. Stay as close as possible to the vehicle in front of you.

   d. Cancel your turn signal.

6. **To reduce the effects of headlight glare at night, you should look:**

   a. Straight ahead.

   b. Over your shoulder.

   c. At the center of the road.

   d. To the right edge of the road.

7. **You are coming to an intersection with a yellow flashing light. You should:**

   a. Stop and wait for the light to change.

   b. Make a U-turn; the intersection is closed.

   c. Drive carefully through the intersection.

   d. Prepare to stop; the light is about to turn red.

8. **When changing lanes, you can check your blind spot by:**

   a. Using the inside rearview mirror.

   b. Using the outside rearview mirror.

   c. Using both inside and outside rearview mirrors.

   d. Turning your head and looking over your shoulder.

9. **When approaching a work zone with a "Where Workers Present 45" sign, drivers should:**

   a. Slow down immediately.

   b. Drive at a safe speed for conditions (up to the posted speed limit), watch for construction workers and slow down to 45 mph or lower where workers are present.

   c. Merge to the right lane.

   d. All of the above.

10. **While driving on a two-lane road without bicycle lanes, you encounter a bicyclist traveling in the same direction. What is the safest way to pass the bicyclist?**

    a. Slow down and wait until there is no traffic approaching, then pass the bicyclist leaving him or her sufficient space.

    b. Continue driving straight, it is the bicyclist's responsibility to get out of your way.

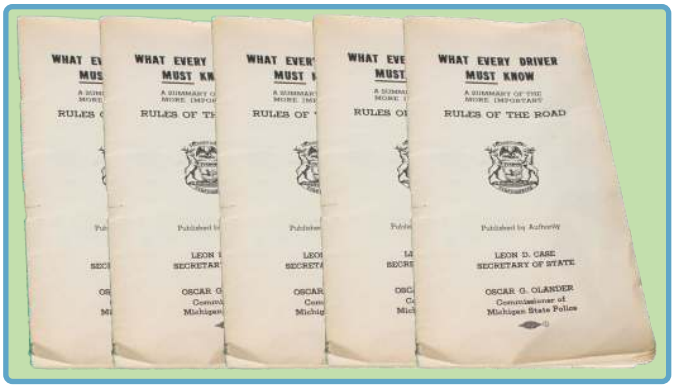
    c. Do not pass the bicyclist until you come to a traffic signal or stop sign.

    d. Honk to let the bicyclist know you are about to pass.

Notes

Notes

Resources



Did you know that . . . ?

- In 1937, the first copy of **What Every Driver Must Know** rolled off the presses under Secretary of State Leon D. Case.
- In 1938, a million copies of **What Every Driver Must Know** were printed and Michigan was recognized nationally as the first state to produce traffic law instructions specifically for drivers.

Answers to the safe driving knowledge test:

1 (c); 2 (d); 3 (d); 4 (b); 5 (b); 6 (d); 7 (c); 8 (d); 9 (b); 10 (a)

Resources

The following resources will provide you with some additional information about topics in What Every Driver Must Know. Customer service is also available by calling 888-SOS-MICH (767-6424).

Websites

- **What Every Driver Must Know**: Additional information for many of the topics in What Every Driver Must Know is available on the Secretary of State website at Michigan.gov/SOS.
- **Aging Drivers**: An excellent resource for older drivers, their families and the professionals who care for them is the Safe Drivers Smart Options website at Michigan.gov/AgingDriver.
- **Motorcycles:** To find a motorcycle safety class near you, visit Michigan.gov/Motorcycling. Information about motorcycle endorsements and registering a motorcycle are available at Michigan.gov/SOS. For information about the motorcycle skills test, visit Michigan.gov/MotorcycleTest.
- **Signs, pavement markings, signals and traffic laws:** More information is on the Michigan State Police website at Michigan.gov/MSP and the Michigan Department of Transportation website at Michigan.gov/MDOT.
- **Voter Registration/Voting**: Information about voting and elections in Michigan is available at Michigan.gov/Elections. The Michigan Voter Information Center is at Michigan.gov/Vote.

Resource materials

The following materials are available via search at Michigan.gov/SOS:

- Driving Skills Test Study Guide (SOS–360)
- Know the rules/Blue spaces (SOS–386)
- Michigan Commercial Driver License Manual (TS–004)
- Michigan Motorcycle Operator Manual (SOS–116)
- Michigan's Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families (SOS–194)
- The Supervised Driving Guide (SOS–191)

Credits

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- Michigan State Library
- Michigan Center for Truck Safety
- U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration; Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 11th edition, December 2023

Notes

Notes

Secretary of State online services

Save time by going online to Michigan.gov/SOS. You can renew your standard or enhanced driver's license or state ID, renew your vehicle or watercraft registration, change your address or order a replacement license plate. Many other online services are also available.

Social media

X – X.com/MichSOS

Facebook – Facebook.com/MichiganSOS

Instagram – Instagram.com/MichiganSOS

YouTube – YouTube.com/MichSOSOffice

Accommodations for people with disabilities and non-native speakers

Individuals with a disability will find Secretary of State offices in compliance with standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation or have been denied services, call 888-SOS-MICH (767-6424). Hard-of-hearing and deaf customers should contact the Michigan Relay Center at 711.

Original driver's license tests are available in many foreign languages in electronic, paper, or audio formats. The written driver's license knowledge test is also available online (and is taken at home using a computer or laptop) for a $6.50 convenience fee.

If you have questions or need more information about any service offered by the Secretary of State, call the Michigan Department of State Information Center at 888-SOS-MICH (767-6424).

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  (And don't forget your Recreation Passport)
- Renew watercraft
- Replace a vehicle registration or title
- Replace a tab
- Replace a license plate

Driver's license and state ID

- Renew or replace a standard driver's license or state ID
- Renew or replace an enhanced driver's license or state ID
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More services

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- Replace your organ donor heart sticker
- Update your telephone number and email address
- Update your emergency contact information