

# Louisiana Driver's Guide Classes "D" and "E"



Louisiana Department of Public Safety  
and Corrections

This driver's guide has been prepared in easy-to-read language. It covers the most important points of safe driving and Louisiana's traffic laws. This guide tells how you can earn the privilege of driving and how to keep that privilege. It will help you become and continue to be a safe driver. Necessary information for persons preparing for their driver's license examination is provided in this guide and also is an excellent review for experienced drivers.

A commercial driver's manual should be obtained to prepare for the commercial driver's license examination for classes "A", "B" and "C".

A separate Motorcycle Driver's Guide should be obtained to prepare for a motorcycle endorsement.

### **VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM**

When you make an application for issuance or renewal of a Louisiana driver's license, you may initiate the procedure to register to vote and/or update your voter registration information. Simply make it known to personnel at the Office of Motor Vehicles when you apply for a license. For more information concerning your right to vote, contact your nearest Voter Registrar's Office or visit the website [www.laelections.org](http://www.laelections.org).

### **LITTERING**

Whether accidental or deliberate, littering is against the law. Depending on the nature and severity of the littering, you can face either civil or criminal prosecution. Penalties for conviction range from a \$50 fine plus 8 hours community service picking up litter to a \$5,000 fine, one year driver's license suspension, 30 days in jail AND 100 hours of community service. The driver is responsible for all litter coming from the vehicle's interior or truck bed, and the driver can be cited for littering committed by the passengers in his/her vehicle. To report litterbugs, call 1-888-LITRBUG. For more information concerning Louisiana's litter abatement programs, visit the websites [www.gov.state.la.us/keepabeautiful.htm](http://www.gov.state.la.us/keepabeautiful.htm) and [www.deq.state.la.us/assistance/litter/index/htm](http://www.deq.state.la.us/assistance/litter/index/htm).

*For more information concerning traffic laws and regulations, refer to Louisiana Revised Statutes, Title 32: Highway Regulatory Act or visit the website [www.legis.state.la.us](http://www.legis.state.la.us).*

*For Louisiana alcohol and tobacco laws, refer to Louisiana Revised Statutes, Title 26.*

*For crash data, visit the website [www.lsu.edu](http://www.lsu.edu).*

*For National Traffic Safety programs and issues, visit the website [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).*

*For information concerning the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, visit the website [www.dps.state.la.us](http://www.dps.state.la.us).*

*For general information from the Office of Motor Vehicles, please call 225-925-6146.*

*For policy changes - see website for updates. [www.expresslane.org](http://www.expresslane.org)*

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## ORGAN DONATION

When you get your driver's permit, driver's license or state I.D., you will be asked if you would like to register as an organ and tissue donor. Here is what you need to know to make the decision:

- Every day 18 people die waiting for an organ.
- Every 13 minutes another name is added to the national waiting list.
- Today there are nearly 100,000 people on the national waiting list; almost 1,800 of these are in Louisiana.
- One organ donor can save 9 lives and enhance the lives of up to 50 more through tissue donation.
- Organs and tissues that can be donated include: heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, intestines, corneas, heart valves, skin, veins, tendons, ligaments and bones.
- All major religions approve of organ, eye and tissue donation, and see it as an unselfish act of charity.
- Donation does not prevent an open casket funeral.
- Anyone can potentially be a donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.
- It is illegal to buy or sell organs in the United States.
- It is illegal to distribute organs based on wealth, citizenship, or celebrity status.
- Your decision to donate will not interfere with life-saving medical care.
- There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ, eye and tissue donation.
- Transplantation has more than an 80% success rate, and is not experimental. Organ donation is not a search for a cure- it is the cure!
- Louisiana has a first person consent registry. This allows citizens to make legally binding decisions to be organ donors. Family consent is required only for minors.

For more information call 1.800.521.GIVE or visit:

[www.donatelifela.org](http://www.donatelifela.org), [www.organawareness.org](http://www.organawareness.org), [www.lopa.org](http://www.lopa.org), [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)



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## **Part 1**

### **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Information**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **GETTING A DRIVER'S LICENSE**

Driving is a privilege, not a right!

#### **WHO MUST HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE?**

You must have a Louisiana driver's license if you are a resident of Louisiana and want to drive a motor vehicle on public streets and highways. Always carry your license with you when driving. You are required to show it to any police officer or any officer or agent of the department who may ask to see it.

#### **EXCEPTIONS:**

You do not need a Louisiana driver's license if:

- you are a non-resident and possess a valid license issued by another state. You are permitted to drive in this state for a period of 90 days.
- you are a student and possess both a valid driver's license issued by your home state and a current student ID card.
- you are operating a farm tractor, farm implements, or road machinery temporarily on the highway.
- you are a member of the Armed Forces driving a U.S. government vehicle while on official duty.
- you are a resident member of the Armed Forces or resident military dependent possessing a valid driver's license from your home state.

#### **NEW RESIDENTS**

All applicants for a Louisiana driver's license will be required to take and pass a visual exam administered by the Office of Motor Vehicles personnel at the time of application. New residents have 30 days from the time residence is established to obtain a Louisiana license. In order to make application, you must have a valid Louisiana address.

1. If you have a valid/expired out-of-state picture license, you must:
  - surrender the out-of-state picture license. It is unlawful in Louisiana to have more than one driver's license.
  - provide one primary document (see pages 5 and 6: ID requirements).
  - provide proof of social security number (see page 7: Social Security Requirement).
  - provide proof of insurance on any personal vehicle you may have registered in Louisiana.
2. If you are not in possession of your out of state picture license, you must:
  - submit either a letter of clearance or an official driving record from your last state of license. This letter must include your personal information (name, date of birth, social security number, if applicable) as well as your license number for that state.
  - meet all identification and social security requirements (see page 5-7).

3. Vision testing is required at every issuance. If your license is expired:
  - less than 1 year; only a vision test is required.
  - one (1) year, but less than 2 years; a vision test, written exam and traffic signs exam are required.
  - two (2) or more years; a vision test, written exam, traffic signs exam and road skills (driving) test are required.

### **CLASSES OF LICENSE**

The class of driver's license you will need depends on the type of vehicle you plan to drive and if you are employed for the principal purpose of driving. This manual applies only to class "D" and "E" drivers' licenses.

CLASSES "A", "B", and "C" - Commercial Drivers' Licenses (CDL) are generally required for drivers of large cargo trucks, commercial passenger vehicles or for the commercial transportation of hazardous materials. To determine if you need a class "A", "B", or "C" license, please consult the Commercial Driver's License manual for more information.

CLASS "D" - Permits the operation of any single vehicle used in commerce having a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more but less than 26,001 pounds or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, and not utilized for the transportation of hazardous materials. NOTE: As long as the combined gross vehicle weight rating (truck and trailer) is less than 26,001 pounds, you can operate with Class "D". A class "D" license may be used for transportation of passengers for hire or fee provided the usage thereof does not fall within the definition of vehicles in classes "A", "B", or "C". A class "D" allows for operation of those vehicles in the class "E" category.

CLASS "E" - Permits the operation of any single motor vehicle under 10,001 pounds, recreational vehicles and certain farm use vehicles not defined as commercial vehicles.

\*If you are driving interstate commerce, you must also meet Department of Transportation (DOT) physical standards. This matter should be discussed with your employer.

### **IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT**

You must prove who you are and your date of birth when applying for a Louisiana driver's license. One primary and two secondary documents or two primary documents are required as proof of identification. Photocopies are not acceptable whether notarized or not.

### **ACCEPTABLE PRIMARY DOCUMENTS (ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ONLY ARE ACCEPTED):**

1. Certified copy of birth certificate with raised state/county seal, original certificate of live birth or birth registration card with state/county raised seal.



2. Passport. Foreign passports must be accompanied by appropriately immigration documents.
3. Certificate of Naturalization. (No photocopies)
4. Valid U. S. Military identification card/dependent military identification card.
5. Merchant Mariner's ID with photo (Z card).
6. Native American tribal documents.
7. Permanent Resident Card (I-551).
8. Department of Public Safety and Corrections prison ID card containing photograph, name, race, sex and date of birth.
9. The Office of Homeland Security Refugee travel document (I-571).
10. The Office of Homeland Security Permit to reenter the United States (I-327).
11. Employment authorization document issued by The Office of Homeland Security.
12. Certification of birth abroad issued by the US Department of State.

**ACCEPTABLE SECONDARY DOCUMENTS (ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ONLY ARE ACCEPTED):**

1. Out-of-state driver's license with a photo which clearly identifies the individual. An official copy of driving record from last state of issuance will be required when the applicant has lost his/her out-of-state license.
2. Any foreign driver's license must be accompanied by proper immigration documents.
3. Social Security card or official written documentation from the Social Security Administration verifying the Social Security number.
4. Out-of-state photo identification card issued by a state motor vehicle department.
5. Student I.D. card for a Louisiana college or university when accompanied by a 100% fee paid receipt for the current semester.
6. Adoption papers.
7. High school, college or university diploma.
8. Original or certified copy of a marriage license OR certificate of marriage from a county, parish or city in the U. S. OR original or certified copy of a divorce from a county, parish or city in the U. S.
9. Church Baptismal Certificate.
10. Louisiana voter registration card.
11. Official certified deeds or title to property in Louisiana, including burial plot deeds.
12. Vehicle registration or certificate of title of vehicle in applicant's name.
13. Local utility statements showing name and address of the individual applying OR receipt showing public utilities have been turned on.
14. Insurance policy (health, home, life, auto).
15. One printed payroll stub. Must show the Social Security number of applicant.
16. High school year book - provided the picture clearly identifies applicant as the same.
17. Medicare/Medicaid card or medical eligibility card.
18. Prison release documents or letter from probation officer (denote a PEN number (SID) on fly sheet whenever possible).

19. DD214 (military discharge papers).
20. Selective Service notification to applicant at his address.
21. Original or certified copy of any professional degree, certificate or license.
22. School records OR at least two report cards from separate years.
23. Motor vehicle lien instrument.
24. Any government law enforcement officer's identification or badge.
25. Letter of verification/introduction from another state agency responsible for placement of deprived or handicapped persons.
26. Employment ID with photo provided the photo clearly identifies applicant as same.
27. W-2 forms for two years.
28. Medical Card must be presented for the issuance of duplicate CDL license.
29. Driver's log book may be used as a secondary document on a CDL license.
30. Certificate from the Department of Education for driver's education course completion.
31. Six-Hour Pre-licensing Completion Certification.
32. Completion Certificate from the 38 hour Pre-licensing course.
33. Original "Refugee Resettlement Program" letter with color picture of applicant. The color picture will have the agency director's signature across it and a raised agency seal overlapping. This letter will be valid for 15 days from the issue date.
34. ID card issued by federal, state, or local government agency or entity provided it contains a photo which clearly identifies the individual and information such as name, date of birth, sex, height, and address.

**NOTE: Name on secondary documents should coincide with name on primary document(s).**

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS SEVENTEEN (17) AND UNDER**

The signature of the custodial parent or legal guardian is required for the issuance of **any** license (including first time applications, duplicates and changing restrictions). Identification must be presented by the minor and the parent or guardian. Only the domiciliary parent may sign if joint custody has been awarded.

#### **SOCIAL SECURITY REQUIREMENT**

R.S. 32:409.1 authorizes the collection of the social security number on all drivers' licenses issued in this state. If you do not have an assigned social security number, you must provide an official letter from the Social Security Administration specifying that no number has been assigned or that you are not eligible for issuance of a social security number. In order to comply with the Military Selective Service Act (Act 373 of 2003 Regular Legislative Session - R.S. 32:40:1321(D)(1)), proof of social security is required by all male US citizens or immigrants age 15 to 26 who apply for a license or ID card. Failure to provide proof of SSN may result in denial of issuance.

## **IMMIGRANT ALIENS**

In certain instances, the following documents may be substituted as primary and/or secondary documents depending on your immigration status. For more information, please contact your nearest Office of Motor Vehicles.

- I-551, if issued after 7/97 considered a primary document, Social security verification (see social security requirement) and one secondary document **OR**
- I-551, if issued prior to 7/97 considered a secondary document), one primary document and social security verification (see social security requirement) **OR**
- If you have applied for the I-551 and it has not been received yet, the foreign passport stamped that the I-94 has been surrendered for processing of an I-551, social security verification (see social security requirement) and I-688B, work authorization card. If the stamp date in the passport is less than 9 months old, you are eligible for issuance of a driver's license. If the stamp date is older than 9 months, you are not eligible for issuance.

NOTE: I-151 resident alien cards are no longer acceptable for identification or status.

## **REFUGEES**

You must present the Form I-94 and two secondary documents (see pages 6 & 7). If you have a passport, it should be presented along with your Employment Authorization Card. An original "Refugee Resettlement Program" letter with a color photo is valid for a period of 15 days from the date of issue.

## **NON-IMMIGRANT ALIENS**

You will be required to provide the following:

- Foreign passport with I-94 stamped showing status with INS
- Social security verification (see social security requirement)
- Secondary document

Student non-immigrants (F-1, J-1, M-1) must present the I-20 (lists the school, length of the program and a contact person and phone number of the student representative at the school). Some non-immigrant aliens/refugees may be denied issuance of a driver's license or identification card based on INS status and duration of status. In order to be issued a driver's license or identification card, there must be AT LEAST 180 DAYS remaining on your VISA/I-94 to be considered for issuance. If there is less than 180 days remaining, you will be denied. If you are not a Louisiana resident, you are not eligible for driver's license or identification card.

## **CHOICE OF NAME**

The name on your birth certificate may always be used.

- If your name has been changed by court order, that name may be used upon presentation of a certified copy of the court order.
- Current married name may be used if proven by presentation of a certified copy of the state approved marriage license.
- Out-of-state transfers shall use the name shown on the out-of-state license unless documentation is submitted to support the name change.

**AGE REQUIREMENT (R.S. 32:408)**

Class D - Minimum seventeen (17) years of age.

Class E - Minimum fifteen (15) years of age. Must complete all stages of the graduated licensing program.

Class A, B or C - Minimum age eighteen (18) (travel intra-state only, no hauling of hazardous materials). Minimum age twenty-one (21) to travel interstate or obtain a hazardous materials endorsement.

On January 1, 1998, Louisiana implemented a graduated licensing program. It is known as the R.Y.A.N ACT (Reduce Youth Accidents Now) and was named for a fifteen year old, Ryan Lee, who lost his life in a traffic accident a few short months after being licensed. Remember, if you are a minor making application for a license, a custodial or domiciliary parent, tutor or legal guardian must accompany you and present his/her own identification, sign your application and provide proof that the vehicle to be used for the road skills (driving) test is insured.

**STAGE 1: LEARNER’S PERMIT**

1. Minimum fifteen (15) years of age.
2. Must complete thirty (30) hours classroom instruction and eight (8) hours behind the wheel driving instruction.
3. Must pass vision exam, written test and traffic signs test.
4. Authorized to drive with a licensed adult at least twenty-one (21) years of age or sibling at least eighteen (18) years of age.
5. Must maintain learner’s license for a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days and cannot change to intermediate stage until attainment of sixteenth (16th) birthday.

**Note: Upgrading from Permit to Intermediate (age 16):**

**Effective January 1, 2009, R.S. 32:407(A) requires that no applicant shall be issued a Class E intermediate license unless a signed statement by the parent or legal guardian is provided to the department attesting that the applicant has a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours of behind-the-wheel experience with a licensed adult driver.**

**STAGE 2: INTERMEDIATE LICENSE**

1. Must have completed STAGE 1.
2. Minimum sixteen (16) years of age.
3. Must pass the road skills driving test.
4. Prohibited from driving between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., unless accompanied by a licensed adult at least twenty-one (21) years of age or sibling at least eighteen (18) years of age.
5. Must be maintained until attainment of seventeenth (17) birthday.

**STAGE 3: FULL LICENSE**

1. Must successfully complete STAGES 1 and 2 OR
2. Must be at least seventeen (17) years of age prior to application for first license.

NOTE: Applicants seventeen (17) years of age or above who have not entered the graduated licensing program may apply for full Class E license or a learner’s permit upon completion of a full driver’s education course or a six (6) hour pre-licensing course. An out-of-state applicant sixteen (16) years of age who has had a license or permit for a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days may be eligible to bypass the learner’s permit stage and be issued an intermediate license.

## **PROOF OF INSURANCE**

Any vehicle used upon the highways of Louisiana must be insured by liability insurance or other allowable substitute. You must submit such proof for vehicles you own at the time of license issuance.

## **FEES FOR DRIVER'S LICENSE AND IDENTIFICATION CARD (R.S. 32: 412, 412-1)**

Some offices have an additional local fee ranging from \$.50 to \$3.00. There is an \$8.00 service fee (listed), except for Identification Cards and Duplicate Identification Cards for applicants 60 and older. You can check our web-site ([www.expresslane.org](http://www.expresslane.org)) or call toll free (1-877-DMV-LINE) to verify fees. The term of the license may vary for an immigrant/non-immigrant/refugee with variable INS status.

Type:	Application Fee	Fee	Service Fee	Total	Term
Class D	\$15.00	\$28.50	\$8.00	\$51.50	(4 years)
Class D (In city of N.O.)	\$15.00	36.00	8.00	61.00	(4 years)
Class E	\$15.00	13.50	8.00	36.50	(4 years)
Learner's License	\$15.00	13.50	8.00	36.50	(4 years)
Motorcycle endorsement	\$15.00	8.00	8.00	31.00	(4 years)
Duplicate license	\$15.00	5.00	3.00	28.00	(Remaining term)
Delinquent license fee	\$15.00				
*No delinquent fee for age 70+					
Identification Card	\$10.00	8.00	18.00		(4 years)
ID Card (age 60+)	No fee				(4 years)
Duplicate ID card	\$5.00	8.00	13.00		(Remaining term)

## **LICENSE RENEWALS**

Your driver's license will expire four years from your nearest birthday. Licenses may be renewed anytime within 180 days before the expiration date. You must pass the vision exam and may be required to pass a knowledge test before your license is renewed. Once your license is issued, please check all of your information before leaving the office.

The expiration date for immigrants/non-immigrants/refugees may vary in accordance with INS status. The Louisiana driver's license of members of the armed forces/peace corps and their dependents who serve outside the state of Louisiana shall remain valid for sixty (60) days after discharge, provided the license was valid (not expired, suspended or revoked) upon entrance to service. The license will be considered expired/delinquent on the 61<sup>st</sup> day after discharge. The last license issued and proof of discharge will be accepted to renew the license.

## **RENEWAL BY MAIL, INTERNET OR PHONE**

If you are a Louisiana resident under the age of seventy (70) with a class "D" or "E" license, you may be selected to renew your license by mail/internet/phone. If you are selected, you will receive a renewal invitation and application with instructions. If you choose to renew by mail/internet/phone, a reconstructed driver's license will be mailed to your address.

You do have the option to visit your local Office of Motor Vehicles and renew your license in person. If you do not receive a mail-in renewal invitation, you must visit the local office for renewal issuance.



### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS (R.S. 32:406)**

Whenever you change your residence address, you must have your license corrected within 10 days. Please visit your local motor vehicle office to have the corrected license issued at no charge.

### **CHANGE OF NAME**

You may change your name on your license by presenting to the Office of Motor Vehicles a certified copy of a state approved marriage license, certified birth certificate (if you wish to go back to your birth name), or a certified copy of a court order authorizing a name change. Additional documentation may be required in a given situation. If you change your name between license renewals, a duplicate license will be processed and the fees collected accordingly.

### **DUPLICATE LICENSE (R.S. 32: 412, 413)**

If your license is lost, stolen or destroyed, you may apply for a duplicate at any motor vehicle office. You must apply in person. Proof of identification must be provided in the form of one primary document and one secondary document or three secondary documents. A minor applying for a duplicate must have a custodial or domiciliary parent, tutor or legal guardian physically appear with proper identification to sign the application. In the case of joint custody, only the domiciliary parent may sign for the minor child.

### **LICENSE RESTRICTIONS**

The Office of Motor Vehicles and/or the Court is authorized to impose restrictions on licenses. Any restrictions placed on you to operate a motor vehicle will appear on your driver's license. Any violation of a restriction is a violation of the law and may result in the suspension of your driving privileges.

### **MEDICAL REPORTS REQUIRED**

Every physically handicapped person and persons over the age of 60 applying for a license for the first time must submit a detailed report from a physician and/or vision specialist. The required form must be obtained from the Office of Motor Vehicles. The report will state the severity of any visual or physical condition which might impair your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. The Office of Motor Vehicles may require anyone to submit a medical and/or visual report. You may also be subject to written and/or road skills testing.

### **YOUR DRIVING RECORD**

The Office of Motor Vehicles keeps a public record of all your traffic convictions and accidents for five years. Convictions for DWI are maintained for 10 years. This includes traffic convictions received in other states. If you receive excessive or serious moving violations, you may lose your driving privileges.

### **PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

Any Louisiana resident may apply for an identification card. It is widely accepted as proof of identity, but does not give you the privilege to drive. To get a personal ID card, you must meet the identification requirements (see pages [5-7](#)) and have a valid Louisiana residence address.

### **DRIVER'S LICENSE TESTS**

The following tests may be given when you apply for a driver's license:

- Vision (eye exam)
- Traffic signs and signals
- Knowledge of traffic laws
- Road skills (outside driving test)

You must pass the vision test, traffic signs and knowledge of traffic laws before the road skills test can be administered. Road tests are suspended during rainy or inclement weather.

### VISION TEST

A vision test (eye exam) administered in the motor vehicle office will determine if your vision meets minimum standards (20/40) for safe driving. If you fail, you will be given a vision report which is to be completed by a vision specialist of your choice. If you need corrective lenses in order to pass the vision exam, your license will indicate that you are required to wear them while driving.

### TRAFFIC SIGN TEST

You must know the meaning of standard road signs and traffic signals and be able to identify certain signs by shape, color and/or symbol.

### KNOWLEDGE TEST

You will be given written questions about your responsibility as a driver, including knowledge of laws and safe driving practices. Everything you will need to know is covered in this manual.

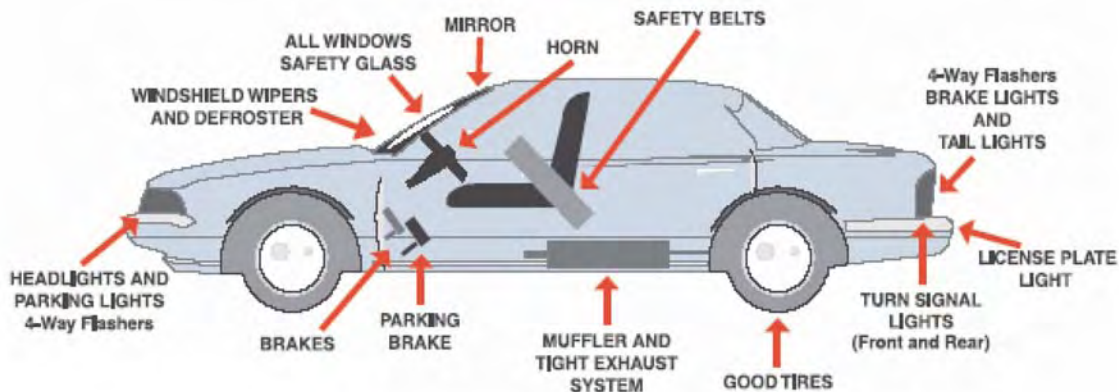
### ROAD SKILLS (DRIVING) TEST

For road skills (driving) tests administered at the Office of Motor Vehicles, you will be required to provide the vehicle used in testing. The vehicle must be in safe driving condition, pass a safety inspection, and have a valid inspection sticker, current license plate and registration. In addition, you must present proof of liability insurance on the vehicle being used for the test.

NOTE: Louisiana law allows Third Party Testers to administer road skills tests for Class “D” and “E” licenses. Testers/Examiners must be certified through the Office of Motor Vehicles. For more information, check our web-site ([www.expresslane.org](http://www.expresslane.org)) or call 1-877-DMV-LINE.

REMEMBER, road skills (driving) tests administered at the Office of Motor Vehicles are suspended during rainy or inclement weather!

### EXAMINER CANNOT GIVE DRIVING TEST UNLESS YOUR CAR IS SAFETY INSPECTED AND LEGALLY EQUIPPED!



SAFETY BELTS  
MUST BE INSTALLED  
AT THE TIME OF SALE  
ON ALL MODELS  
LATER THAN 1964

Note: **Speedometer must be operative.**

The following driving skills are most important as they will demonstrate your ability to safely operate your vehicle in ordinary traffic conditions. You will be graded on:

- backing
- keeping in lane
- turning
- following other vehicles
- yielding right of way
- parking between cars
- attention to driving
- response to signs & signals
- approach to corner
- use of signals

The examiner will direct you to make certain stops, starts, turns and so forth during the test. You will not be asked to do anything contrary to motor vehicle laws or safe driving practices. Points will be deducted for driving errors throughout the test.

You may be failed for any of the following:

- Violation of any traffic law
- Any dangerous action/incident
- Lack of cooperation or refusal to perform
- Accident
- Various or repeated minor mistakes

Upon completion of the road skills (driving) test, you will be advised of your errors and what maneuvers you need to improve, if any. If you fail the test and you don't currently have a permit, you may be issued one so you can practice. You can return at a later date for another test.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND TITLE**

Louisiana law requires that motor vehicles be titled and registered. You can apply for the title, registration and license plate at any Office of Motor Vehicles.

#### **NEW VEHICLES**

When you buy a new vehicle from a Louisiana dealer, the dealer will provide an assigned certificate of origin and notarized invoice. In most cases, the dealer will collect the taxes and fees and submit them with the proper documents to obtain your title and license. The dealer will issue a 60-day temporary cardboard plate which must be clearly visible from the rear of your car.

#### **USED VEHICLES**

If you buy a used vehicle, the certificate of title must be signed over to you by the previous owner or dealer. The seller is required by law to deliver a properly assigned certificate of title to the buyer at the time of sale or delivery of the vehicle. If a lien is shown on the certificate of title, be certain that it has been released by an authorized agent of the lienholder.

You have five days from the date of sale to apply for a title in your name. You will need to present the following:

- Previous owner's title, assigned to you and notarized.
- Notarized bill of sale. If the title has a place to enter the selling price of the vehicle, a separate bill of sale is not required.
- A declaration of liability insurance.
- Sales tax, title and license transfer fees.
- Odometer statement, if vehicle is less than 10 years old (required by Federal Government).  
Note: Some titles have the odometer statement incorporated in the assignment of the title.
- Mortgage document, if applicable.

#### **NEW RESIDENTS**

If you are a new Louisiana resident, you must immediately title and register the vehicles you own. You can do this at any Motor Vehicle Office. You will need your out-of-state title and registration certificate. If your title is held by an out-of-state lienholder, you should obtain a photocopy of the title and present it when you apply for the Louisiana license plate.

You will be required to pay 4% use tax (state) and any applicable city-parish tax on the current value of your vehicle. Credit is allowed for the percentage of taxes paid to other states which allow similar credit to Louisiana. Proof of sales tax payment may be required.

#### **PROOF OF INSURANCE**

Any vehicle used upon the highways of Louisiana must be insured. When you apply for a license plate for any motor vehicle, you must have proof of the required liability insurance or other allowable substitute. If you provide false information about your insurance coverage, your vehicle registration may be suspended. You may also be fined by the court and jailed.

Proof of insurance must be maintained in the vehicle when the vehicle is operational and must be presented any time a law enforcement officer requests that such proof be provided. If you are unable to provide the proof upon request, the vehicle's license plate will be seized and the vehicle may be impounded. You will have three (3) calendar days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, to provide the proof at a Motor Vehicle office.

The office location at which you may retrieve your license plate will be identified on the notice of violation issued to you by the law enforcement officer. If you do not provide the office with proof of insurance within the three (3) calendar day period, your license plate will be destroyed and you will be required to pay all necessary fees to have your vehicle re-registered.

**When a vehicle is taken off the road, the license plate must be removed and surrendered to the Office of Motor Vehicles before the insurance is canceled.** Penalties will be assessed if the license plate is not surrendered prior to the insurance cancellation.

### **REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

When you receive your license plate, you will be given a registration certificate. This certificate must be kept in the vehicle or carried by anyone driving the vehicle. Duplicate registrations can be purchased at any Motor Vehicle Office.

### **RENEWALS**

Registration renewal applications are mailed to your last recorded address. Any errors you find on the application or any change of an address should be reported to the Office of Motor Vehicles.

You can mail your renewal application and avoid waiting in line. Make your check or money order payable to the Department of Public Safety for the amount shown and mail it in with your renewal form. You may be eligible to renew your registration by internet or phone. If you are eligible, instructions will be printed on the renewal invitation.

**Renewal notices are sent out as a courtesy; however, it is still the owner's responsibility to maintain current registration.**

Your vehicle license plate expires on the last day of the month in the year indicated on your registration certificate. You may renew your license plate in person 60 days prior to expiration.

### **FEES**

Generally, the license plate fee for private passenger automobiles, vans, and sport utility vehicles is \$10.00 per year for vehicles with a value of \$10,000.00 or less, plus \$1.00 per year per \$1,000.00 of value over \$10,000.00. Automobile plates are issued for a 2-year period. The license plate fee for private minimum-use pickup trucks (6000 lbs or less) is \$10.00 per year. Truck plates are issued for a 4-year period. For specific fee information on commercial vehicles, motorcycles, special license plates, license plate transfers, etc., contact your local Office of Motor Vehicles.

The fee to issue a title is \$18.50. Most transactions are subject to a service fee of \$8.00. Some offices have an additional local fee ranging from \$2.00 to \$3.00. Please visit our web-site ([www.expresslane.org](http://www.expresslane.org)) or your local Motor Vehicle office for verification.



## **MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION STICKER**

Every automobile, truck, trailer, boat trailer and motorcycle operated on the highways of this state must have a current motor vehicle inspection sticker. Authorized motor vehicle inspection stations display an orange colored sign with the words - "LOUISIANA MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION STATION".

The City of New Orleans, the City of Kenner and the City of Westwego have their own inspection program. If you are a resident in one of these areas, you must obtain an inspection sticker from that city.

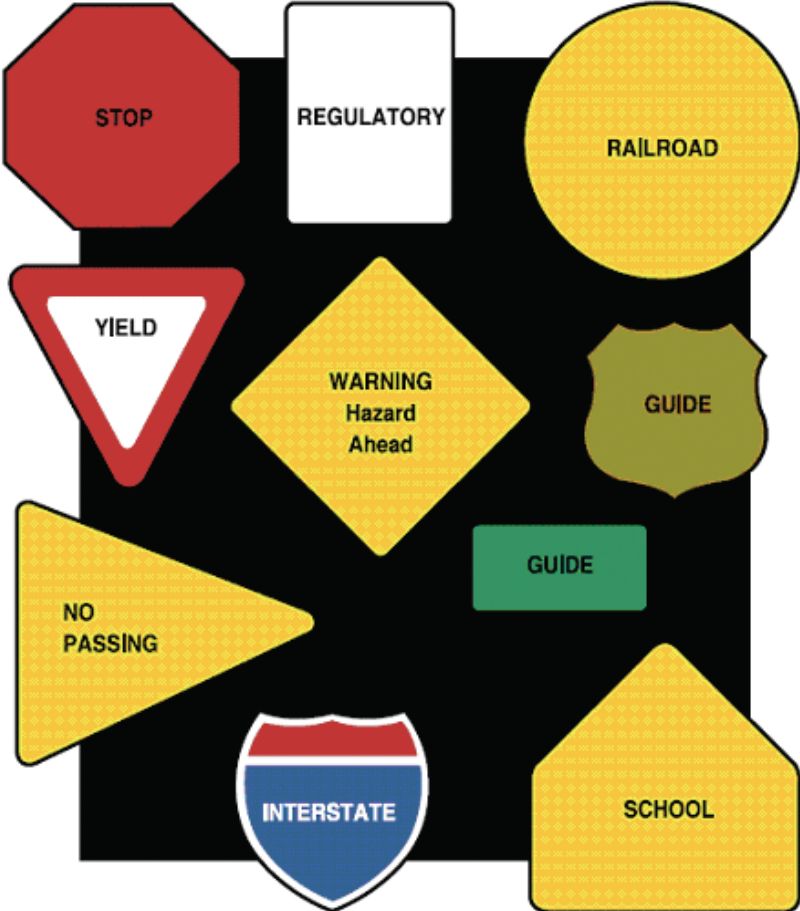
**Part II**  
**Traffic Laws and Safe Driving Practices**

**CHAPTER 3**  
**SIGNS, TRAFFIC LIGHTS, AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS**

Traffic signs, signals and pavement markings are necessary to regulate traffic. You must be able to recognize them immediately, and in the case of regulatory signs, obey them.

**TRAFFIC SIGNS**

A sign’s shape can tell you something about what it means before you are close enough to read it. You must know the following shapes and what they mean.



Some common signs and their meanings are:



This sign means that you must stop completely. Give the right of way to pedestrians in your path and to all cross traffic before proceeding.

You must stop before:

1. A marked or unmarked crosswalk.
2. A stop line.
3. Before entering the intersection.



This sign means that you don't have the right of way. It tells you to slow down, so you can stop quickly if you must. It also means you must give the right of way to:

1. Traffic in the intersection.
2. All traffic close enough to be dangerous.
3. Pedestrians crossing in your path.



This sign indicates a one-way roadway with traffic coming against you. You must not enter from the direction you are traveling.



You've made a wrong turn and entered a lane of oncoming traffic. Correct your position in the safest possible way.



This indicates a one-way street. Traffic flows only in the direction shown by the arrow.



When you are approaching a point where two roadways come together, but you are not required to merge an additional lane begins. Watch for traffic in the new lane.



Be prepared for a stop sign ahead.



Be prepared for a yield sign ahead.



Two-lane narrow bridge ahead. Approach with caution.



These two signs are used together and mean just what they say: DO NOT PASS. The yellow pendant will be on the left side of the road.



This sign directs traffic to the right of an obstruction.



Speed limit 40. This is the maximum speed you can travel under ideal conditions.



A red circle with a line through it always means DO NOT. You must not make a left turn at this intersection.



Don't turn around:

1. in the middle of the street.
2. in an intersection.





Left lane must turn left, right lane may turn left or go straight. No right turn is allowed.



Must turn left.



No turns from this lane.



Traffic in the left lane must turn left.



Enter this lane only to make a left turn. Passing in this lane is prohibited. You must not cross the intersection in this lane.

The following signs are diamond shaped, yellow with black letters. They alert you to a possible dangerous condition ahead.



Prepare for a curve to the right. Slow down.



There is a gradual curve to the right, then to the left. Check your speed.



Prepare for a sharp turn to the right. Slow to recommended safe speed.



The road ahead turns sharply to the right, then to the left. Slow to the recommended safe speed.



Other traffic may be moving into your lane. Be ready to change your speed and lane to allow the other motorist to merge safely with the main traffic.



Another road crosses the highway ahead. Be alert for cross traffic.



A side road enters the highway ahead.



The right lane ends ahead. All traffic must merge into the left lane.



You are approaching a traffic light that you cannot see yet. You should start to slow down at this point.



You are leaving a separated roadway and entering a two-way roadway. It also reminds drivers that they are on a two-way road.



The road ahead had two-way traffic. Watch for oncoming cars. The drivers may not have seen the sign on their side.



You are nearing a point where two-way traffic is separated by a center strip. Keep to the right.



Vehicles or vehicles with loads higher than the clearance shown cannot go under the structure ahead.



When wet this section of the highway is more slippery than other roads. Slow down.



This sign warns of hills where special care must be taken. Reduce speed before you start down.

## PEDESTRIAN WARNING



You will see this sign near a school building or grounds. It warns you to slow down, drive with extreme caution and watch for children.



You must yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk. Immediately ahead is a location where people on foot often cross. Use caution, drive more slowly, and watch both sides of the street.



This sign means that a school crosswalk for children is immediately ahead. Slow down and be prepared to stop. The horizontal lines shown on a pedestrian's sign mean that the sign is directly at the crosswalk. Signs without horizontal lines give advance warning of a crosswalk just ahead.



This sign means that the highway is an emergency evacuation route.



## SIGNS IN CONSTRUCTION AREAS

Orange warning signs tell you that workers, machinery and barricades are just ahead. You may need to slow down and change lanes.



## CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE DEVICES

Various traffic control devices are used in construction and maintenance work areas to direct drivers or pedestrians safely through the work zone and to provide for the safety of the highway workers. The most commonly used traffic control devices are signs, barricades, drums, cones, tubes, flashing arrow panels and flag persons. Orange is the basic color for these devices.

## CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE SIGNS

Construction and maintenance signs are used to notify drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in or near work areas. Most signs in work areas are diamond shaped. A few signs are rectangular.



**Flagger Ahead**

Indicates a flag-person is ahead to control traffic. Slow down and be prepared to stop.



**Workers Ahead**

Indicates that workers are performing maintenance on the roadway. Reduce speed and adjust lane position away from workers.

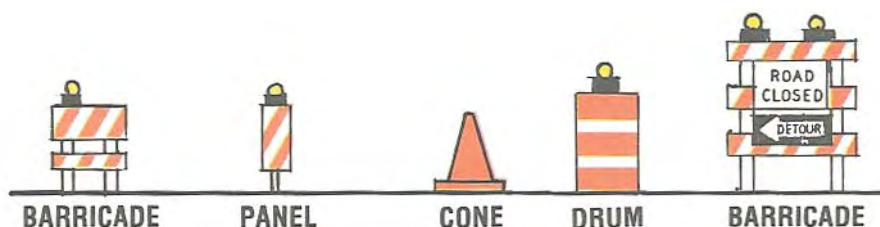


**Low Shoulder**

Indicates sharp drop from the pavement edge to the shoulder. If you must leave the pavement, slow down and steer firmly.

## CHANNELIZING DEVICES

Barricades, vertical panels, drums, cones and tubes are the most commonly used devices to alert drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in highway and street work areas and to guide drivers safely through the work zone. At night they are often equipped with flashing or steady burn lights.



The diagonal stripes on the barricade or vertical panel guide the driver toward the direction in which traffic is to pass. Stripes sloping downward to the right mean the driver should bear to the right. Conversely, stripes sloping downward to the left mean bear to the left.



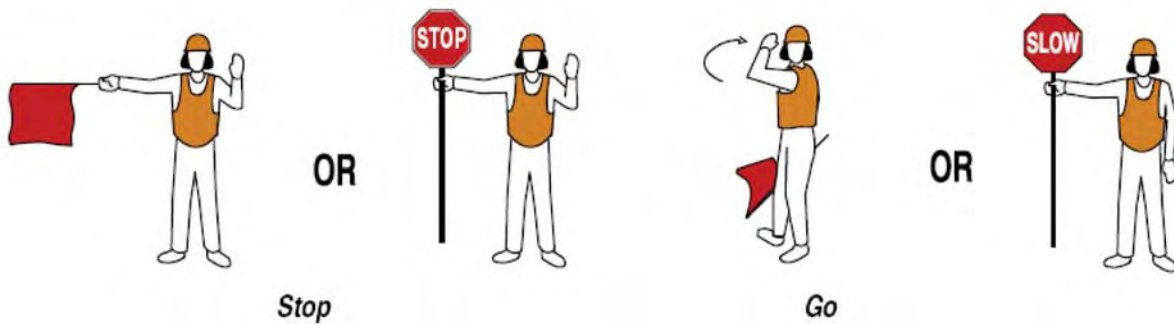
**FLASHING ARROW PANELS**

Large flashing or sequential arrow panels may be used in work zones both day and night to guide drivers into certain traffic lanes and to inform them that part of the road or street ahead is closed.



**FLAG PERSONS**

Flag persons are often provided in highway and street work zones to stop, slow or guide traffic safely through the area. Flag persons wear orange vests, shirts or jackets and use red flags or stop/slow paddles to direct the traffic through work zones.



**TRAFFIC SIGNALS**

Traffic lights control the movement of vehicles at intersections. If a traffic light is not functioning at an intersection, rules for a 4-way stop will apply. It is against the law to drive across public or private property to avoid a traffic light or any other traffic control device.



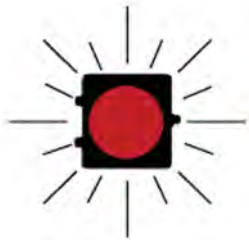
**Red Light** - a red light means that you must come to a complete stop before entering a crosswalk or intersection, and remain stopped until the light turns green. You may turn right on red after stop, except when it is prohibited by a posted sign. You must yield to pedestrians and all vehicles (including bicycles) when making such a turn.



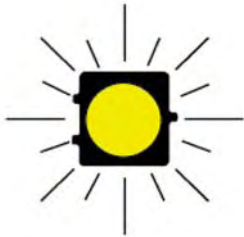
**Yellow Light** - a yellow light warns you that the light is about to turn red. **Slow down and stop.** Don't try to beat the light.



**Green Light** - a green light lets you drive through the intersection or turn, except where turns are not allowed. **Never move ahead on a green light until the intersection is clear of all cross traffic and pedestrians.**



**A flashing red light means** that you must come to a complete **stop**. It is used at dangerous intersections. You may proceed when the road is clear.



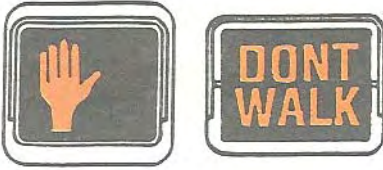
**A flashing yellow light means** caution. Slow down, look and proceed accordingly.



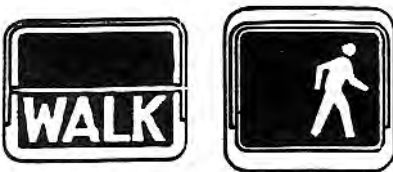
**A green arrow** means that you may turn in the direction shown by the arrow.

## PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

Pedestrian signals are special types of traffic signals used only to control pedestrian movements.



**DONT WALK.** A steady signal means the pedestrians must not enter the roadway towards the signal. A flashing "DONT WALK" signal means that pedestrians may not start to cross the roadway but those already crossing may continue to the nearest sidewalk, traffic island or safety zone.



**WALK.** A steady signal means that pedestrians may cross the roadway towards the signal. A flashing "WALK" signal is sometimes used to indicate that there is a possible conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.

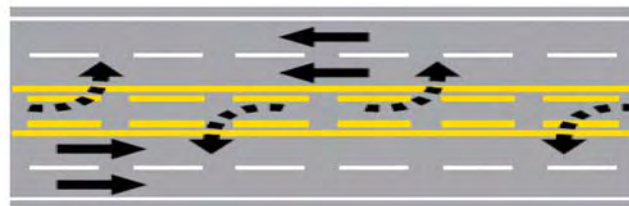
## CENTER LINES

Yellow center lines are used to separate traffic in opposite directions.

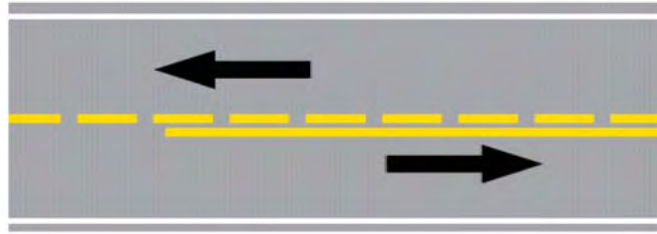
A Single Broken Yellow Line is used to mark the centerline where there are only two lanes of traffic. You must drive to the right of the centerline. When it is safe, you may cross this line to turn or pass another vehicle.



Double Solid Yellow Lines are used to mark the center of the roadway when there are four or more lanes of traffic. You may not cross these lines to pass. You may cross these lines to make a turn.

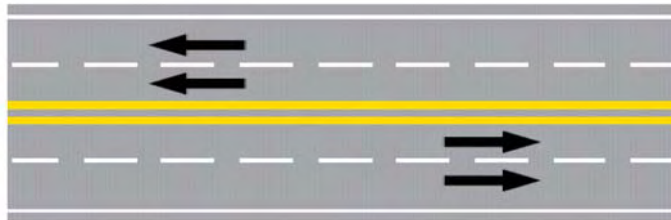


A No Passing Line is a single solid yellow line used on two-lane roads to indicate zones where passing is prohibited. You may cross this line to make a turn.

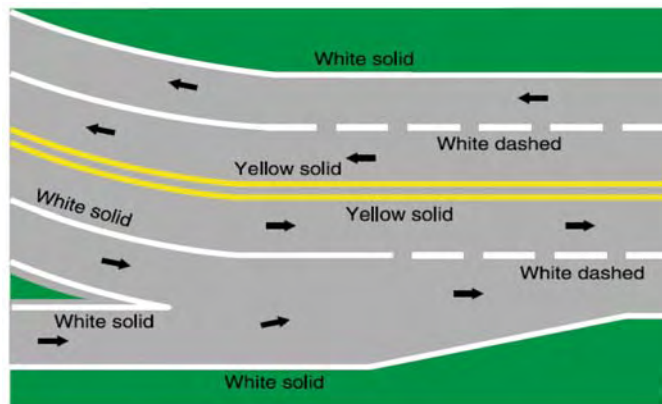


### LANE MARKINGS

White lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. You are required to drive between these lane lines.



Single Solid White Lines indicate that movement from lane to lane is hazardous. The wider the line, the greater the hazard. You may cross a solid white line **only with great care**. Single Dashed White Lane Lines may be crossed when you can do so safely.



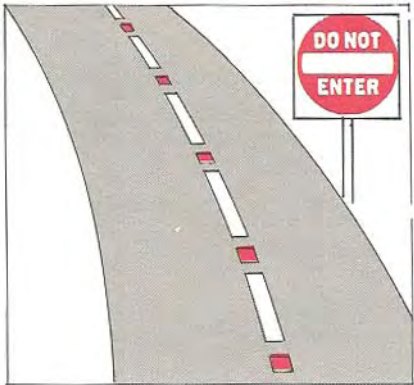
White edge lines are used along the right edge of the roadway. Yellow edge lines may be along the left edge of the roadway on divided streets and highways.



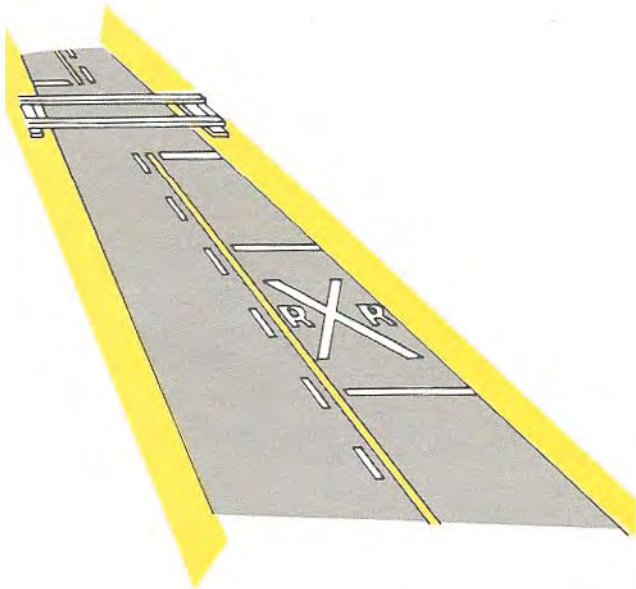
Double solid white lines separate two lanes of traffic going in the same direction. Crossing a double solid line is prohibited. Most commonly seen on interstates.



Red Pavement Marking or reflectors indicate a roadway that must not be entered.

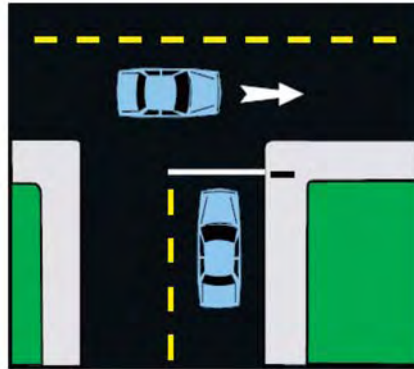


Railroad Crossing Markings are white markings painted in the traffic lane before railroad crossings. The pavement is marked with a large "X" and two "R's". A solid yellow center line extends the entire distance to prevent passing, and a white stop line is painted across the traffic lane.

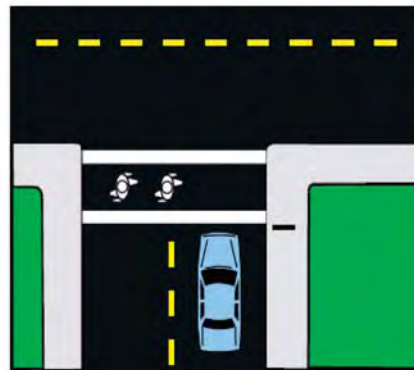




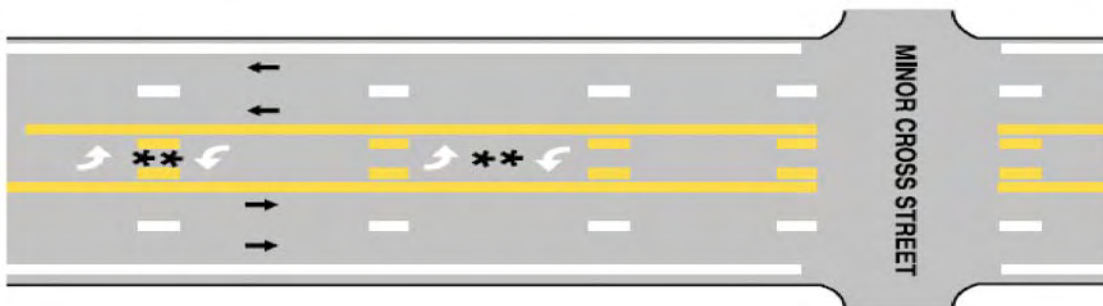
Stop Lines are solid white lines painted across the traffic lanes at intersections and pedestrian crosswalks indicating the exact place at which to stop.



Crosswalk lines are normally two solid white lines painted across the traffic lanes. However, diagonal or longitudinal lines are sometimes added for increased visibility. When pedestrians are in these crosswalks, they have the right of way over motor vehicles. **You must stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.** Crosswalks are sometimes located in the middle of the block; in this case a pedestrian crossing sign may also be used.



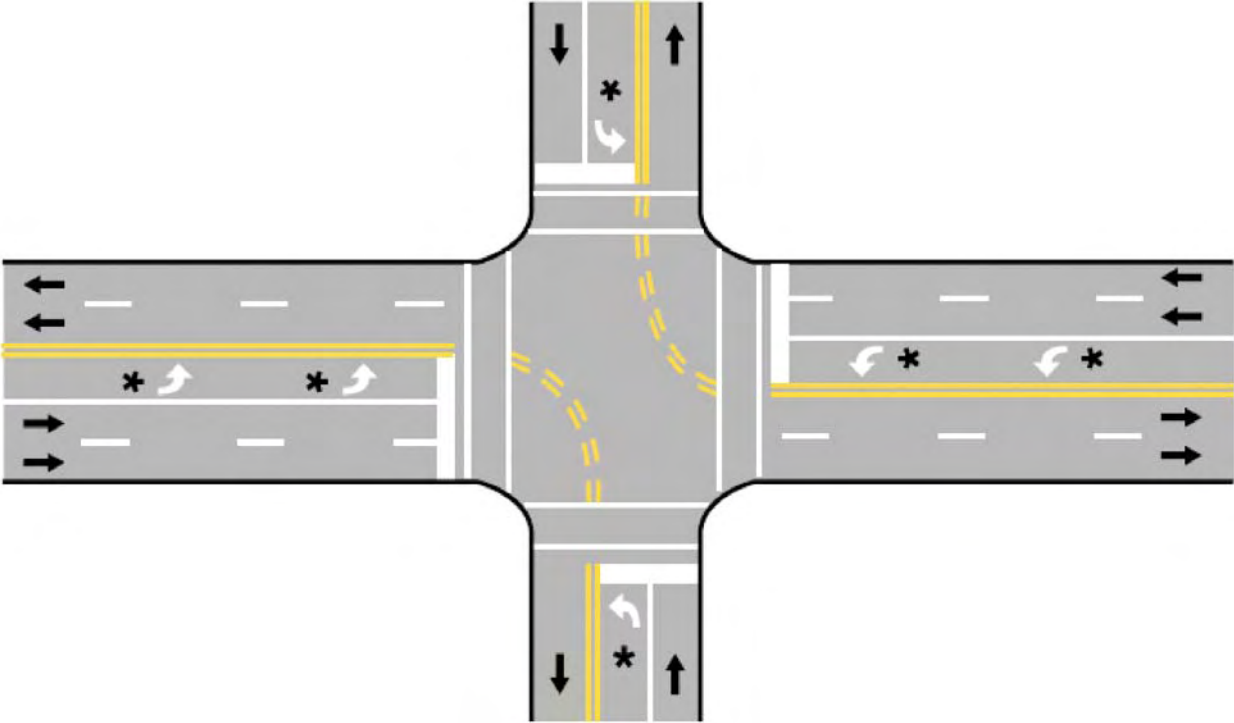
Two-Way Left Turn Channelization Markings are a combination of solid yellow and dashed yellow lines in the center of a roadway. The designated center lane may be used by vehicles traveling in either direction. For left turn maneuvers ONLY. The lane must NEVER be used for passing.



Directional Markings are white arrows or words painted in the traffic lane to indicate the direction in which you must go. You must move **only in the direction indicated by the arrow**. Where arrows indicate more than one direction, you may choose any direction indicated.

If you discover that you are in lane that requires you to turn, and you wish to go straight ahead, keep in mind:

- Other drivers will not expect you to suddenly change lanes.
- Drivers behind you will not expect a sudden stop.
- If you stop and wait for a chance to change lanes you are blocking traffic. You must go ahead and make the turn. Drive around the block and return to the street you want. Then continue your trip safely without creating a hazardous situation.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **BASIC DRIVING AND SAFETY**

Driving habits are formed because the same physical actions are required over and over again. Your tendency to reduce these required actions results in the formation of “bad” driving habits. The topics covered may not be in the Highway Regulatory Law, but they can help improve your driving skills.

#### **ENTERING AND STARTING YOUR VEHICLE**

Before entering your vehicle:

- Look around for any obstacle that might interfere with safe driving. Walk around your vehicle. You may need to move a child’s tricycle or some other object.
- Notice a child standing or playing near your vehicle.
- Check your tires. Make sure they are not low or flat and that tread is not worn away.
- Make certain there are no leaks under the car.
- Make certain the mirrors, directional signals, head, tail and brake lights are clean and not broken.

#### **GETTING READY TO DRIVE**

Before starting your engine:

- Make sure all windows are clean. Remove anything blocking your view.
- Adjust the seat so you can reach the pedals and controls safely.
- Adjust the seat and head restraint for comfort.
- Adjust the inside and outside rear view mirrors.
- Make sure all doors are fully closed and locked.
- Make sure your car is in park or neutral gear.
- Make sure you and passenger/s are correctly belted.
- Check gauges to assure they work and accurately reflect engine conditions.
- Make sure the windshield wipers work; there is sufficient cleaning fluid in reservoir.
- Make sure you are mentally and physically ready to drive.

Never move your car until you have looked around for pedestrians and oncoming traffic. Then signal and move into traffic when safe.

When you back up, turn your head and look back. Don’t just look into the rear view mirror.

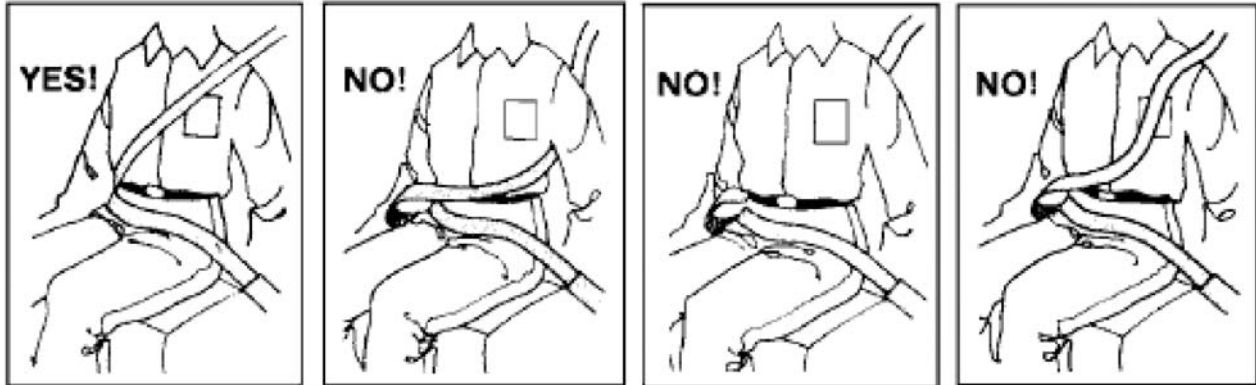
NOTE: Never turn your vehicle’s ignition to the “lock” position while it is still in motion. This will cause the steering to lock if you try to turn the steering wheel, and you will lose control of your vehicle.

#### **USE OF SAFETY BELTS**

**“BUCKLE UP, IT’S LOUISIANA LAW!”**

Louisiana has a mandatory safety belt use law which requires the driver and all front seat passengers in cars, vans and pickup trucks to be properly buckled.

The smartest thing you can do before starting your car is to buckle your lap and shoulder belts. Your chances of surviving a collision are three to four times greater if you are wearing your seat belt and shoulder strap.



Keep in mind these reasons for wearing safety belts:

- They keep you from being thrown from your car. Your chances of surviving a crash are much greater if you stay in the car.
- There is much less chance of being knocked unconscious or seriously injured. If there is danger from fire or water, you can get out quickly.
- Safety belts keep you in a position so you can control the car. The first impact in a crash frequently throws the driver from behind the wheel and the vehicle is out of control.



- If you are pregnant, you and your unborn child are much safer if you wear a lap and shoulder belt. By protecting yourself from injury, you protect your unborn child.
- Properly buckled safety belts prevent you and your passengers from being thrown about inside the car. This reduces the chance of serious injury and death by 60% to 80%.
- A seat belt is the your best defense against a drunk driver.

## **SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES**

It's as simple as that. Wearing your seat belt is the smartest move you can make to prevent injury or death. Just look at the facts:

- 80% of deaths occur in cars traveling less than 40 miles an hour.
- 75% of crashes occur within 25 miles of home.
- Your chances of being killed are 25 times greater if you're thrown from the car.
- Non-belted fatalities have been recorded at as low as 12 m. p. h.
- Once every ten years each of us can expect to be in a car crash.
- There's less than one-half of one percent chance of being trapped in a burning or submerged car.
- The force of impact at 10 m. p. h. is equal to the force of a 200 pound bag of cement dropped from a first story window.

There is no good reason not to use your seat belt. From infants to adults, everyone in your vehicle needs to be secured. Lap belts should be buckled snugly across your hips and lower part of your abdomen. The shoulder belt should not be quite so tight.

**Young Children.** Louisiana Child Passenger Restraint law requires that all children must be properly restrained and secured in an age- or size-appropriate passenger restraint system which meets the applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards in effect.

The law requiring safety seat belts for children is determined by weight and age as follows:

- Birth or less than 20 lbs at any age - rear facing, infant in federally approved car seat
- 1-4 years, at least 20 lbs but less than 40 lbs - forward facing, federally approved car seat
- 4-6 years, at least 40 lbs but less than 60 lbs - booster seat with restraints
- 6 years, more than 60 lbs - booster seat with restraints or seat belts
- Booster seats are an appropriate option for a child of any age.
- A child that falls into more than one category for age or weight must choose the more protective category.
- A child 6 years or younger or under 60 lbs may not be transported in the front seat of a vehicle with an active airbag.

**NEVER HOLD A CHILD ON YOUR LAP OR BUCKLE YOURSELF AND A CHILD INTO A SINGLE SAFETY BELT. YOU ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD ONTO EVEN A SMALL CHILD IN CRASHES OR SUDDEN STOPS. NEVER ALLOW A CHILD TO RIDE STANDING ON A SEAT.** The middle of the back seat in a passenger car is safer than the front seat. For more information on safety-approved child restraint devices, contact your local Safety Council, hospital, doctor's office, State Police Troop or Louisiana Highway Safety Council ([www.dps.state.la.us/tiger](http://www.dps.state.la.us/tiger)).

## **VEHICLE CONDITION**

Any defect which may affect the safe operation of the vehicle should be corrected as soon as possible. If the engine coolant, engine oil, battery water, tire pressure and condition, and vehicle lamps have not been checked in the previous week, you should check them or have them checked at a service station.

- Tires - Bumps, cuts or bad tread can cause blowouts. Your tire air pressure should be checked often. It is not safe to drive on tires with less than 1/16 inch of tread.
- Brakes - If your car pulls to one side when stopping, have your brakes checked. After driving through water, pump your brakes gently to test them and dry them out.
- Know your braking system and how it operates. Is your vehicle equipped with manual (standard) brakes or an anti-lock brake system (ABS)? More information on each system is available on page 71.
- Brake lights - If your brake lights are not working, someone may crash into your car from behind. Have someone help you check them.
- Tail lights - Check them often to be sure they are all working. They warn other drivers in the dark and help prevent accidents.
- Headlights - Keep your lights clean. Make sure your bright lights and dim lights are working and are in alignment.
- Fog lights - Make sure they are functional.
- Steering - If the steering wheel moves 2 inches or more without moving the car, it has too much play.

### **DRIVING UNDER STRESS**

Any stress situation can effect your driving. Even mild emotional feelings can affect your driving ability. Emotions are hard to control and they can make you temporarily accident prone.

If you are worried, nervous, angry, frustrated or depressed, let someone else drive. You may become impulsive and aggressive and take risks you normally wouldn't. You should avoid driving when you are not emotionally prepared to handle the additional stress that driving can cause.

### **DRIVER FATIGUE**

Driving is work. It is tiring. It takes a person in good physical, mental and emotional condition to be a good driver. When you are tired, you can't drive as well as you do when you are rested. It's up to you to decide when you are too tired to drive.

Driver fatigue can kill. Motorists should not push themselves to the point of not being physically and mentally alert at all times. A driver should rest every two hours and not drive longer than six or eight hours a day.

Fatigue can often affect you in several ways. It slows your reaction time. There is a loss in your concentration and attention. Your eyes become tired, so you do not see what you would ordinarily see. Extreme fatigue may lead to moments of dozing behind the wheel. Driving under these conditions can be disastrous.

You have many ways of fighting fatigue. Take a break (at a rest area if on the interstate). Have a cup of coffee. Chew gum. Listen to the radio. Let some fresh air into your car.



Boredom is common to motorists on long trips, especially when driving on an interstate highway. It can lead to what is called “highway hypnosis.” That is, your senses become dulled, your eyes become fixed on the road and you are not alert to traffic situations around you.

To keep from getting tired on a long trip:

- Be well rested before you start.
- Don’t take any drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Try not to drive late at night when you are used to sleeping.
- Take regular rest stops, even if you are not tired.
- Keep moving your eyes. Look at objects near and far, left and right.
- Roll your window down and get some fresh air.
- Keep your car’s interior cool.

If nothing seems to help you stay awake, get off the highway and take a short nap. This could save your life.

## **DROWSY DRIVING**

### **How To Prevent Drowsy Driving**

- Begin your journey well rested.
- Avoid driving during late night and early morning hours, which are the body’s natural sleep times.
- Set realistic travel goals about the time it will take to reach your destination.
- Eat healthy meals. Avoid foods high in fat and sugar, which can contribute to fatigue.
- Avoid using alcohol or drugs.
- Share the driving. Switch drivers about every two hours, even if you don’t feel tired.
- Take regular breaks. Stop every two hours to stretch.
- Drink water, juice, or a soft drink low in sugar and caffeine. Sugar and caffeine promote short-term alertness but may increase drowsiness over longer periods of time.
- Keep the inside of your vehicle at a cool temperature.
- Listen to radio talk shows rather than music. The discussion format will help keep you alert.

### **Warning Signs Of Drowsy Driving**

- Inability to recall the last few miles traveled.
- Having disconnected or wandering thoughts.
- Having difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open.
- Feeling as though your head is very heavy.
- Drifting from the lane in which you are driving.
- Yawning repeatedly.
- Tailgating other vehicles.
- Missing traffic signs.

## **DEFENSIVE DRIVING**

- Driving defensively means not only taking responsibility for yourself and your actions, but also keeping an eye on “the other guy.” The National Safety Council suggests the following guidelines to help reduce your risks on the road:

- Don't start the engine without securing each passenger in the car, including children and pets. Safety belts save thousands of lives each year! Lock all doors.
- Remember that driving too fast or too slow can increase the likelihood of collisions.
- Don't kid yourself. If you plan to drink, designate a driver who won't drink. Alcohol is a factor in almost half of all fatal motor vehicle crashes.
- Be alert! If you notice that a car is straddling the center line, weaving, making wide turns, stopping abruptly or responding slowly to traffic signals, the driver may be impaired.
- Avoid an impaired driver by turning right at the nearest corner or exiting at the nearest exit. If it appears that an oncoming car is crossing into your lane, pull over to the roadside, sound the horn and flash your lights.
- Notify the police immediately after seeing a motorist who is driving suspiciously.
- Follow the rules of the road. Don't contest the "right of way" or try to race another car during a merge. Be respectful of other motorists.
- While driving, be cautious, aware and responsible.

### **AGGRESSIVE DRIVING**

Aggressive driving is a traffic offense or combination of offenses such as following too closely, speeding, unsafe lane changes, failure to signal intent to change lanes and other forms of negligent or inconsiderate driving.

Aggressive drivers can be dangerous drivers. They put themselves and others at risk with their unsafe driving. Speeding, running red lights and stop signs, pulling in front of trucks too quickly when passing and making frequent lane changes, especially in the blind spots of trucks, can create dangerous and potentially fatal situations on the road. These situations can lead to road rage not only for the aggressive driver, but also for others sharing the road.

#### **To keep control of your driving, you should.....**

- Allow plenty of time for trips.
- Understand that you cannot control traffic, only react to it.
- Be polite and courteous.
- Alter schedule to avoid driving during peak roadway congestion periods.
- If running late, call ahead so you can relax.
- Avoid driving when angry, upset or overly tired.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt.
- Relax and remain aware of your posture. Sit back in your seat and don't clench your teeth.

#### **When confronted by an aggressive driver, you should.....**

- Avoid eye contact.
- Stay calm and relaxed.
- Make every attempt to get out of the way safely. Don't escalate the situation.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to hold your position in the traffic lane.
- Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- Keep anger from building by not letting other drivers or situations get to you.
- Emotionally and mentally disconnect from the situation.

If the aggressive driver persists:

Do not stop and try to solve it on the side of the road. Drive to a police station or to a public place where witnesses are readily available. Most people don't want to cause trouble when others can see them. Above all, don't drive home if someone is following you.

## **ROAD RAGE**

Road rage is a criminal offense. This occurs when a traffic incident escalates into a far more serious situation. For example, a person becomes so angry about an aggressive driving incident that he or she overreacts and responds with some type of violence. The violent acts may range from a physical confrontation to an assault with a motor vehicle or possibly a weapon.

It is feelings of anger experienced by people driving in difficult conditions that often lead to violent behavior. Driving is the most dangerous thing we do on a routine basis. It is emotionally challenging because unexpected things happen constantly. Emotional intelligence is a critical factor in safe driving.

### **Actions Associated With Road Rage**

- Blowing the horn
- Pursuing another vehicle
- Flashing head lights
- Forcing a car off the road
- Forcing a car to pull over
- Verbal abuse and/or "sign" language
- Bumping into another car
- Tailgating
- Threatening another driver
- Braking or slowing suddenly
- Damaging another vehicle intentionally
- Deliberate obstruction
- Physically assaulting another driver
- Cutting off or swerving in front

### **How To Avoid Road Rage**

- Be Calm.
- Stay alert.
- Keep a good distance.
- Avoid tailgating.
- Don't speed.
- Allow adequate time for your trip.
- Create a relaxing and comfortable environment in your car.
- Behave cooperatively in traffic situations.
- If you do happen to catch sight of aggressive driving, stay away and contact the authorities when you get a chance.

When someone cuts you off by mistake, be calm. Always stay alert. Keep your eyes open for other drivers and stay away from aggressive motorists instead of irritating them even more. Keep a good distance between your car and the one in front of you. Tailgating is a very common cause of crashes and can be avoided by simply moving to the right lane and letting the faster driver pass. Try to avoid following other cars closely because you never know when the guy in front of you will slam on the brakes and stop. Don't speed. Respect the speed limits. Driving fast will only get you to your destination a mere few minutes earlier. Driving at more controlled speeds will provide you with longer reaction time to change lanes, take an exit or stop your vehicle - leading to less aggressive behavior.



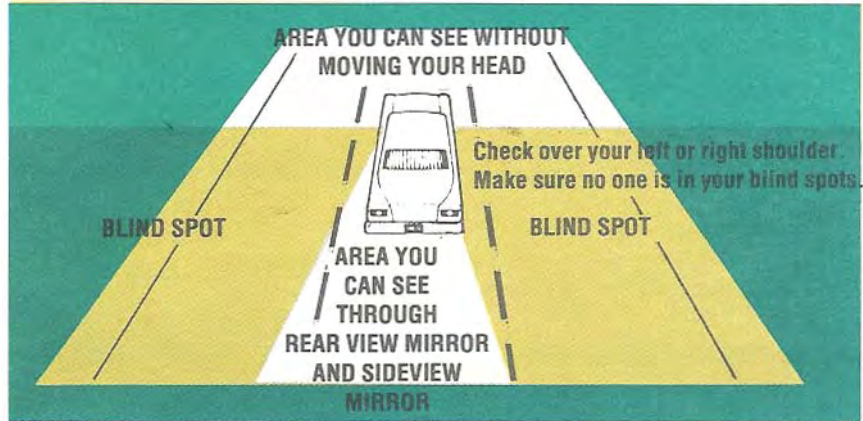
### **LOOKING AHEAD**

In order to avoid last second moves, a driver needs to look far enough ahead to see things early. A common mistake drivers make is looking right in front of the car instead of down the road. Looking 10 to 15 seconds ahead will allow time to prepare for traffic conditions. It also makes it easier to keep your car on a steady path.

Take in the whole scene. Keep your eyes moving. Look to the sides and behind. Watch for things about to happen. Check your rear view mirrors often. Always know the position of other vehicles near you. Train yourself to observe signs and signals - not just look at them.

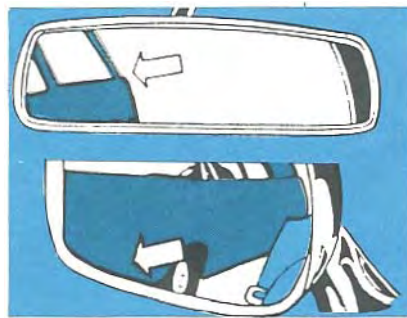
### **REAR VIEW MIRRORS**

It is very important for your rear view mirrors to be in the correct position. You need to see as much as possible of the traffic behind you as well as those in your blind spot. When you are driving, you have two blind spot areas to the left and right back sides of your car. If another vehicle is driving in one of your blind spots, you won't see it unless you turn your head.



You cannot get rid of these blind spots, but you can make them smaller by adjusting your mirrors. To get the smallest possible blind spot at the right side of the car, turn your inside mirror so you can see the edge of your right rear window post.

To make sure your mirrors are in the correct position, let a car pass you on the left. As it passes out of view in your inside mirror, you should see its front bumper in your outside mirror. Even with properly adjusted mirrors, always turn your head and check your blind spots when you want to turn or change lanes. Remember, driving in someone else's blind spot is just as dangerous as not checking your own. Either drop back or pass, but don't stay in the other driver's blind spot.



## BLIND SPOTS

Remember:

- No matter what kind of car you have or how well adjusted your mirrors are, you will still have blind spots.
- Every vehicle has blind spots. Generally, the larger the vehicle, the larger the blind spots.
- Don't ride in another driver's blind spot.
- Don't let any neck or shoulder stiffness prevent you from looking left or right to check for blind spots.
- Don't trust your mirrors.
- Practice flexibility exercises.
- The best way to compensate for blind spots is to turn and glance over either shoulder.

## KEEPING A SPACE CUSHION

A cushion of space ahead, behind and to the sides gives you some distance to avoid the mistakes of other drivers.

Rear-end crashes usually occur because of drivers following too closely. If your rear view mirror shows another vehicle is too close to you, realize you are dealing with an unsafe driver. You should still keep a safe following distance behind the vehicle ahead of you. In case of a rear-end crash, this may prevent you from being pushed into the vehicle ahead.

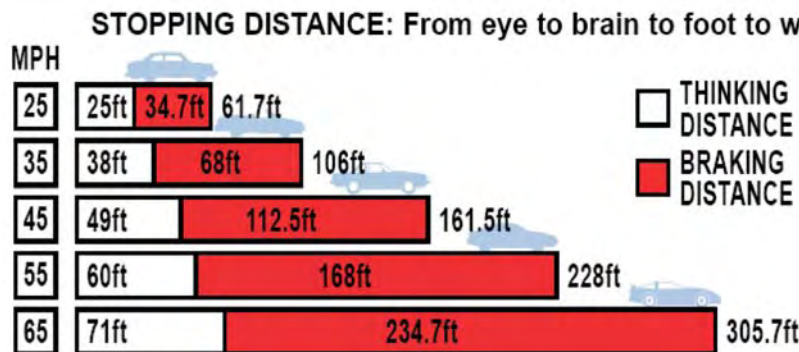
If you are being followed too closely (tailgated), slow down and encourage the driver behind you to pass. If this fails, pull over, stop and let the tail-gater pass. Keep your doors locked. Keep a space cushion to the side to have room to react to sudden moves toward you by other vehicles.

- Avoid driving alongside other cars on multi-lane streets.
- Drive in the center of your lane to keep space between you and oncoming cars.
- Make room for vehicles entering interstate highways. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.

## STOPPING DISTANCES

There is no simple way to tell exactly how long it will take you to stop at a certain speed. Your stopping distance depends on:

- Your own reaction time
- Weather and road conditions
- The weight of the vehicle
- The condition of the brakes
- The type and condition of the tires
- The chart gives an **estimated** number of feet your car will travel on dry pavement from the time you see danger until you come to a stop.



## FOLLOWING DISTANCES

Since most people have trouble judging distances, the “2-second rule” makes it easier for you. You can use it at any speed.

- Choose some object ahead of the vehicle in front of you, such as a sign, pole or a tree.
- As the vehicle in front passes the object, begin counting two (2) seconds (one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two)
- If it takes less than two (2) seconds for your car to pass the checkpoint, you are following too close.

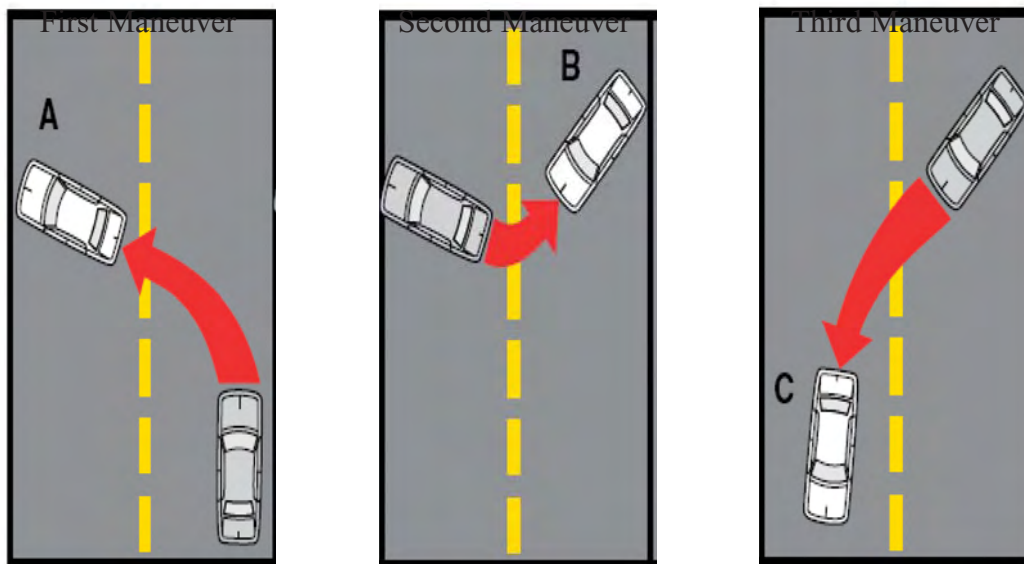


During bad weather or when driving on wet pavement, increase the rule to four (4) seconds. If another vehicle moves into the space between your car and the one ahead, drop back to a safe following distance.

### TURNING AROUND ON NARROW STREET

Try to avoid turning around on a busy street. It is better to circle an entire city block. However if you are on a narrow street when traffic conditions are light, and you find it necessary to turn around, here are the steps you should follow:

- Stop close to the right edge of the pavement.
- Look over your left shoulder and check traffic behind you. Do not depend on your rear view mirror alone; be sure that the street is clear both ahead and behind.
- Signal for a left turn. Then, follow the numbered steps in the drawing.



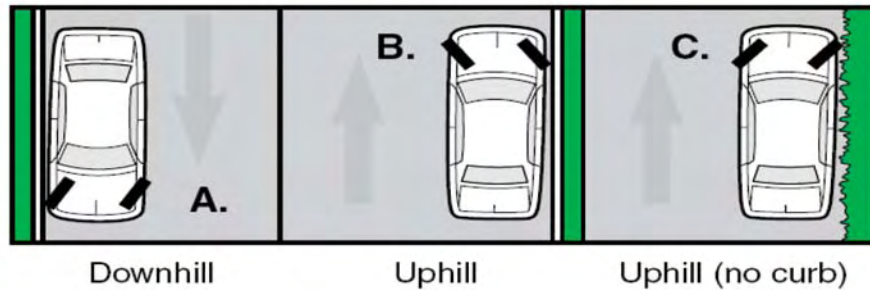
If you must turn around, the proper way to do it is by making the “three-point” or “Y” turn shown here. (A) Turn all the way to left side of the street, exercising due caution. (B) Back toward opposite side of street, turning your car toward the direction you want to go. (C) Pull your car into proper lane and continue on your way.

### PARKING ON HILLS

When parking on a hill, you must make sure your car does not roll into traffic if the brakes do not hold. Always set the emergency brake. Shift to **park**, **reverse**, or **low gear**. If you park where there is a curb:

- Facing downhill, turn your wheels toward the curb and shift into **reverse** or **park**.
- Facing uphill, turn your wheels away from the curb and shift into **low gear** or **park**.

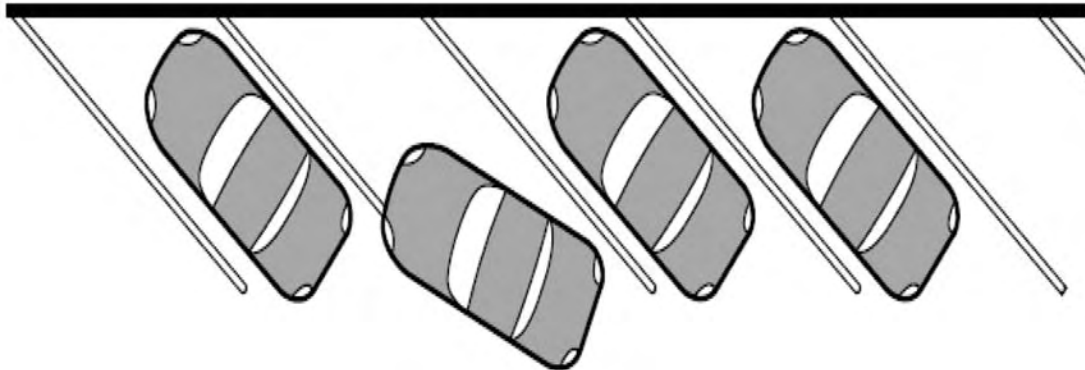
If there are no curbs, turn your wheels toward the edge of the road, whether facing uphill or downhill.



The above diagram indicates three parking situations. You should turn your wheels in a different way for each one, for safety's sake. Study the position of the wheels and notice where your car will roll if the brakes should give away.

### ANGLE PARKING

Keep safe clearance. Drive forward into space, with equal space on each side between lines.



Angle parking is often used in parking lots, shopping centers, and sometimes at curbs. When you enter an angle parking space:

- Watch for traffic both ahead and behind.
- Signal and begin slowing down.
- Make sure the rear of your car will clear any parked car.
- Steer sharply into the parking space. Then straighten the wheels, centering your car in the parking space.
- Shift to **park** or **reverse** and apply the parking brake.

Before backing out of an angle parking space:

- Walk around to make sure nothing is in your way.
- Move your car back slowly because it is hard to see oncoming traffic. Be sure traffic is clear in the lane where you are backing.
- Tap the horn to warn pedestrians nearby.
- When you can see past the tops of the cars parked next to you, stop and look again. Look back and to each side for other drivers.
- Remember that the front of your car will swing opposite to the direction of your turn.
- Back slowly while turning until your left front wheel passes the rear bumper of the car parked on your left.
- Straighten the wheels as your car comes back into the lane of traffic.

## PARALLEL PARKING

Step 1: Signal, stop parallel to the front car (about 18 inches from it), with rear bumpers even.

Step 2: Back slowly, turning steering wheel sharply to the right until your car is about a 45 degree angle with the street. Straighten front wheels and back slowly.

Step 3: When front bumper is even with other car's back bumper, turn wheels sharply and rapidly to left. Back slowly to car behind you without touching it.

Step 4: Turn steering wheel sharply to the right and slowly pull forward. Center car in space.

Front and rear bumpers should not be closer than two feet from the other vehicles when in parked position unless the street is otherwise marked.

## PASSING PARKED CARS

When driving past parked cars, watch for cars turning out in front of you. Look for clues such as:

- Smoke coming from tail pipe.
- Red brake lights on, turning signal flashing, or white backing lights on.
- At parallel parking areas, front wheels turning out.

Always watch for a car door being opened in front of you. If anyone is sitting in a car, expect them to open the door. Watch for pedestrians or bicycles trying to cross the road between parked cars. Be especially watchful for children.



## SAFETY TIPS ON PASSING

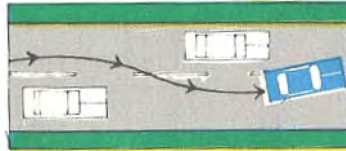
Do not pull up closely behind the vehicle you intend to pass (especially a large truck or bus). Your vision may be obstructed.



Follow a safe distance until you can see far enough ahead to insure safe passing. Make certain no car is passing you; check your left or right rear “blind spot.” Signal your intention to pass to any vehicle following you. It is safe practice to tap the horn lightly to avoid surprising the overtaken driver. After passing and before returning to the proper lane, be sure there is ample clearance. An accepted rule is to wait until you see the other car in your rear view mirror.

When you are about to be overtaken and passed, make it as safe and easy as possible for the other driver. Slow your speed a little and, if on a two-lane highway, move over to the right as far as you safely can.

Weaving from lane to lane in an attempt to move faster than the traffic flow is the sign of an immature driver - and is very dangerous.



## **BACKING**

Check behind your vehicle before backing. Do not depend on your mirrors. Turn your head and body so you can see where you are backing. Place your hand at the top of the steering wheel and back slowly. Always be prepared to stop.

### **Backing straight or to the right**



To start:

- Have your hand on top of the wheel.
- Turn your body as indicated by diagram.
- Turn steering wheel in the direction of the turn.

### **Backing to the left**



To start:

- Have your hand on top of the wheel.
- Turn your body as indicated by diagram.
- Turn steering wheel in the direction of the turn.

The best way to increase visibility when backing up is to:

- Turn your head and look out the rear window.

Remember when backing:

- Do not depend on your mirrors.
- Before backing, it is a good idea to walk around the car to make sure a child, pet, object, etc. is not in the way.

## **DRIVING ON WET PAVEMENT**

Road surfaces are most slippery immediately after the rain begins to fall. This is because the oil and grease on the pavement have not yet been washed away. Driving on a road covered with oil and water can be like driving on ice. You should reduce your speed, use extra caution and allow twice the normal following distance.

Losing control of your car on wet pavement is a frightening experience. Unfortunately, it can happen unless you take preventive measures.

You can prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves. If you find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. For cars without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as “steering into the skid,” will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. If your car has an anti-lock brake system (ABS), brake firmly as you “steer into the skid.” Be ready to look and steer in the direction you want to go. Be prepared to counter-steer after the initial correction is made.

## **HYDROPLANING**

Prolonged or heavy rain will cause a layer of water on the road surface. At speeds up to 35 miles per hour, tires with good tread will “wipe” the water from the road surface much like a windshield wiper cleans the windshield. As speed increases, the water cannot be removed fast enough and the tires start to ride up on the layer of water much like water skis. This is called “hydroplaning.”

Partial hydroplaning starts at about 35 miles per hour, and increases with speed until (at 55 m.p.h.) the tires may lose all contact with the pavement. When this happens, you lose traction, and you cannot brake, accelerate or turn. To recover, keep your wheels straight and reduce your speed. This will allow the tires and the road to regain contact.

How to prevent hydroplaning:

- Reduce speed and drive slowly on wet roadways.
- Have tires inflated to recommended air pressure.
- Be sure you have good tire tread, which helps water escape quickly through the grooves of the tire. All-weather tires are good.
- Steer around water when possible.
- If you hear a slushing sound from the tires, especially when changing directions, slow down.

## **STEERING WHEEL LOCKING DEVICES**

### **Be Cautious - With Vehicles with Steering-Lock Devices**

Never turn your ignition key to the lock position while the vehicle is in motion. That will cause the steering to lock and, quite possibly, loss of control of the vehicle.



## Steering Lock Operation

***The transmission Park System*** - Park. Shift the transmission into the "park" position. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

***The Two-Hand Button System*** - Park. This system requires two hands. Depress button below the steering column. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

***The Lever System*** - Park. Depress lever located near the ignition. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

***The One-Hand Button System*** - Park. Depress button located near the ignition. Turn the key to LOCK and remove.

***The Push-in System*** - Park. Turn key to OFF, push in. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

***The Turn and Remove System*** - Park. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

## NIGHT DRIVING

No one can see as well at night as they can in the daylight. The glare of oncoming headlights can reduce your vision to near zero. A dirty windshield increases glare and obscures the road, signs and other motorists.

Many drivers wait too long to turn on their headlights in the evening. Louisiana law requires that your headlights (not just parking lights) be on between sunset and sunrise. You are required by law to use lower headlight beams, not your "bright lights", when approaching within 500 feet of or following within 200 feet of another vehicle. In addition, headlights are required when moisture in the air or precipitation necessitates the use of windshield wipers and when weather conditions are unfavorable.



*DIM LIGHTS WHEN MEETING OR OVERTAKING*



The law further requires that your headlights be on when driving in weather conditions that make it difficult for other people to see your vehicle clearly from a distance of 500 feet.

Some vehicles have front fog lights and these may be used under hazardous weather conditions. Front fog lights have a distinct flat, low reach yet wide beam pattern designed to show up the edges of a roadway more efficiently than low beam is able to achieve alone. Other vehicles have rear fog lights. A rear fog light is red; due to the higher luminance level of this light, your vehicle can be

recognized sooner. A rear fog light must only be used in a dense fog or similar hazardous condition that results in seriously reduced visibility. You should switch off the fog lights when the visibility improves.

Driving at night can be made safest if you follow these rules:

- Keep your windshield and windows clean, inside and out.
- Be certain that all lights on the vehicles are operating properly.
- Reduce your speed so that you can stop within the distance you can see ahead.
- Use lower beam when approaching other cars so you won't blind the other driver.
- If a stubborn driver refuses to dim the lights, look to the right edge of the road as a guide and slow down.

### **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

Pedestrians occasionally use highways to walk along or cross. Pedestrians have the right of way when they are in a marked crosswalk, when crossing an intersection with a green traffic signal or walk signal, and over a vehicle making a right hand turn on red.

Pedestrians should always walk facing traffic when possible and should never enter a roadway without checking for oncoming traffic. Many pedestrians, especially young children, do not follow the law or use safe crossing practices. When you see people walking or standing along a road, or children playing near a roadway, you should slow down. Always allow pedestrians as much room as safely possible, and be alert for sudden movement by pedestrians into the path of your vehicle.

The faster a vehicle is traveling, the less likely it is that a driver can stop in time to avoid hitting a pedestrian. The majority of pedestrian crashes occur at locations other than intersections, where vehicle speeds are not enforced.

### **PEDESTRIANS WHO ARE BLIND**

Pedestrians using guide dogs or white canes with or without a red tip must be given the right of way at all times. These pedestrians are partially or totally blind, so be especially careful when turning corners or backing up.





Here are some suggestions for helping pedestrians who are blind:

- Don't stop your car more than five feet from the crosswalk. The blind pedestrian uses the sound of your engine as a guide, so drive up to the crosswalk to allow the person to hear you.
- Don't give the blind pedestrian verbal directions. The blind pedestrian listens to all traffic sounds before deciding to cross the street.
- Don't wait too long for the blind pedestrian to cross the street. If the person takes a step back and pulls in his or her cane, that's a definite sign that you should go.
- Don't turn right on red without looking first. Look for any pedestrian or other traffic first before starting your turn.
- Stop at all crosswalks where pedestrians are waiting.
- Don't stop in the middle of a crosswalk. This forces the blind pedestrian to go around your car and into traffic outside of the crosswalk.
- Don't block any sidewalk.
- Don't honk at a blind person. The blind person has no idea who you are honking at and may be scared by the noise.



## **CELLULAR PHONES**

The increase in the use of cellular phones is becoming a hazard on our highways. Drivers who use their cellular phones while operating a motor vehicle pose a serious threat to themselves and other drivers.

- Use your cellular phone only in emergencies. If possible, have a passenger make the call.
- If you must make a call, pull safely off the road and stop before making the call.
- Do not take notes or look up telephone numbers while driving.
- Do not use a hand-held cellular phone while driving. Get a model with voice-activated controls and hands-free operation.
- Let your voice mail answer incoming calls.
- If you must use your cellular telephone, keep your conversations short. Do not use cellular telephones for social conversations.

## **SHARING THE ROAD WITH BICYCLES**

Louisiana Revised Statute 32:199: All children under the age of 12, when operating a bicycle or is a passenger on a bicycle, must wear an approved helmet with head straps when on a public highway, bicycle path or other public right-of-way.

Bicycling is a healthy form of recreation for many people, while for others it is an important form of transportation. Bicycles have the same rights to use public roads as automobiles and must follow the same traffic laws as other vehicles.

Many drivers find it hard to know how to react to bicyclists riding in the street. For the safety of both drivers and bicyclists the following precautions should be taken while driving and bicycling.

## **Driving Safely near Bicyclists**

### **Approaching and passing bicyclists:**

- Increase following distances behind bicyclists because bicycle-stopping distances are shorter than automobiles.
- Be aware that bicyclists not traveling in the extreme right of the lane may be trying to avoid gravel, debris, bad pavement, sewer grates and other obstacles.
- Be cautious of bicyclists moving legally into the center of the lane because of road hazards or into the left lane because of a left turn.
- Avoid passing between a bicyclist and an oncoming car on a two-way roadway. Slow down and allow oncoming vehicles to pass. Then move to the left to allow plenty of room to pass the bicyclist safely.
- A three foot distance must be present between the passing automobile and slower traveling bicyclists.
- Give bicyclists the entire lane when they are passing parked cars. They need the space to avoid opening doors.
- Use caution when passing bicyclists because the air current created by a passing automobile may cause bicyclists to have an accident.
- If you are pulling a trailer, allow for extra passing room when passing bicyclists.
- Extra caution should be used when motorist are near bicyclists in wet, windy, or icy weather.

### **Turning near bicyclists:**

- Drivers who are turning left must wait until oncoming bicyclists pass. Accidents occur when turning drivers do not notice the bicyclists in the flow of traffic or misjudge their speed.
- Do not swing in front of a bicyclist to make a right turn. Making a right turn after overtaking a bicyclist is also a cause of accidents. Drivers should slow down and stay behind the bicyclist, or LOOK ONCE, THEN AGAIN. MAKE SURE YOU SEE THE BICYCLE AND KNOW ITS SPEED BEFORE YOU TURN.
- Speeds of bicycles are hard to judge; they can vary from under 10 mph to over 35 mph. Good communication and eye contact between auto drivers and bicyclists are needed to prevent accidents.

### **Watch for bicyclists and use caution in hazardous conditions:**

- When opening your car door into traffic, look first for bicyclists.
- Railroad crossings can cause bicyclists to slow down and possible zigzag in order to cross the tracks.
- Metal or grated surfaces may cause a bicycle to be less stable than a car. Bicyclists should slow down and move to the center of the lane to allow room for handling the uneven surface. Drivers should be prepared for the reaction of a bicyclist who is less experienced and may swerve to correct for the new surface.
- Long open highways and bridges, trucks creating windblasts can move a bicyclist out of his or her path of travel.

- Children on bicycles may not be aware of their surroundings. Drivers should be aware that the children may make sudden movements or change direction.
- Especially in Louisiana, inclement weather conditions create high winds and slippery surfaces that can cause extreme problems for bicyclists. Because these conditions create stability problems for all vehicles, drivers should allow more following distance for bicyclists.

### **Bicycling Safety:**

- Always wear a helmet.
- Use hand signals and eye contact to communicate your actions with other drivers on the road.
- Obey the instructions of official traffic control signals and signs. Stop at stop signs and for stoplights just like a motor vehicle.
- Ride on the right hand side of the road with traffic. If you are making a left hand turn, ride on the left side of the turn lane. You may ride in center of lane to avoid hazards.
- Be predictable by riding in a straight line and following traffic laws.
- Yield to pedestrians on crosswalks and on sidewalks.
- When riding at night, bicycles must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector visible from the rear.
- Carry no more persons than the number for which the bicycle is designed and equipped.
- Two cyclists may ride side-by-side, but it is safer to ride in a single file line.



### **SHARING THE ROAD WITH MOTORCYCLES**

Today's motorcycle riders are friends, relatives, and neighbors, but many car drivers still have not adjusted to motorcycles appearing in traffic. Traveling by motorcycle is appealing to some people; they are fuel and space efficient and can be just plain fun to ride. But there is a flip side. Motorcyclists are more vulnerable to injury than a car driver if involved in an accident. Research shows that over two-thirds of the car/motorcycle accidents are the results of a car driver turning in front of a motorcyclist. Motorcyclists and cars need to mix in traffic without causing harm to each other.

Motorcycles present a narrow silhouette and are usually much shorter in length than an automobile. The small profile of the motorcycle may make it appear farther away and traveling slower than it actually is. Because it is difficult to judge the motorcycle's distance and speed, car drivers need to take a second look, and then a third. Its small size also makes it more difficult to spot in traffic than another car. Some motorcyclists take advantage of their small size and maneuverability. They may cut between cars and put themselves in places where drivers cannot see them. Be alert for a motorcycle to appear unexpectedly.

Because of a motorcycle's size, its position within a lane of traffic will change as traffic conditions change. The motorcyclist should position himself in the lane to see and be seen. Often this means

riding in the left portion of the traffic lane to allow a better view of traffic and road situations. It also makes the motorcycle more visible to other traffic. However, as traffic and road conditions change, the rider may move. This move could be to the center of the lane or even to the right side to avoid traffic or to be seen by others on the road.

Most drivers take for granted the ability of their automobile to handle minor road hazards such as potholes, strong winds or railroad tracks. Minor problems for the four-wheeled vehicle can be major problems for motorcycles. The cyclist will change position within the lane to increase the distance from potential hazards. These lateral movements sometimes occur suddenly. Motorists need to be alert for these sudden changes in position and direction, and drive accordingly. Respect the vehicle space of a motorcycle and its position in traffic. Motorcycles are allowed the full width of a lane in which to maneuver. Refrain from sharing a lane with a motorcycle. It restricts the rider's ability to avoid hazardous situations.

Because a motorcycle has the right to a full traffic lane, pass it just as you would another car. Don't pass too fast or too close. The wind blast of large, fast moving vehicles can blow a motorcycle out of control.

Intersections are the most likely places for car/motorcycle collisions to occur. This usually is the result of a car driver NOT SEEING the motorcycle and turning into the motorcycle's path. Misinterpreting a cyclist's intentions can also lead to problems. A cyclist will change lane position to prepare for upcoming traffic conditions. The cyclist will move to one side of the lane in preparation for a turn or possibly to move away from a hazard unseen by other motorists. Do not assume the cyclist's intention until the maneuver is unmistakably started, such as a turn into an intersection or driveway. Also, turn signals do not automatically shut off on a motorcycle and cyclists occasionally forget to cancel them after a turn is completed. Make sure you know what the cyclist is going to do BEFORE you move into the motorcycle's path.

When driving behind a motorcycle, allow at least a four (4)-second following distance. This provides the cyclist enough room to maneuver or stop in an emergency. Due to its vulnerable nature and the difficulty motorists have in judging a motorcycle's speed and distance, space between the two vehicles should be increased to avoid sudden braking. Both cyclists and drivers are more likely to make incorrect decisions if there is not enough stopping distance or ability to see and react to conditions. This leads to accidents. A cyclist's chances of injury are greater if forced to avoid obstacles ahead, as well as a driver following too closely. Remember that tailgating a motorcycle in your car is comparable to an 18-wheeler tailgating you!

The single headlight and single tail light of a motorcycle can blend into the lights of other vehicles. This can cause you to misjudge distance.

Always dim your headlights for a motorcycle just as required for other vehicles.



## SHARING THE ROAD WITH BIG TRUCKS

It takes special driving skills and knowledge to drive safely around big trucks. You cannot drive around the big truck the way you drive around other vehicles. The most important tip is to give a wide clearance (berth) to the big truck. It is known that collisions between large trucks and lighter vehicles frequently result in death in the driver or occupants of the “other vehicles.”

Those big trucks are different because they have a much longer stopping distance than other vehicles, and longer still on wet roads. The ability of the truck driver to control the truck during emergency braking is very limited. Also, truck drivers cannot see you nearly as well as you can see the truck, and if there is a crash, **YOU LOSE**.

Drivers of smaller vehicles need to practice the following safety tips:

- As a general rule, keep as much space as possible between your vehicle and large trucks.
- Do not cut in front of a truck just because you see open space there. That space is the truck’s cushion of safety because of its longer stopping distance. If you have to stop suddenly, it will be very difficult for the truck to avoid hitting you. Also, if the truck has a long hood, the driver may not be able to see you at all.
- Do not linger alongside a truck; you may be in the trucker’s blind spot. The size and configuration of many trucks, especially those with trailers, create large blind spots for the truck driver. If you cannot see a truck driver’s face in one of his mirrors, the truck driver cannot see you and probably does not know that you are there.
- If you are following a truck and cannot see the truck’s side mirrors, you are driving too close. The driver cannot see you, so back off.
- Always give trucks plenty of room when they are turning. The relationship between the cab, mirrors, and trailer change constantly during a turn, creating varying blind spots. Also, trucks need extra space to turn because of their size.

Remember, trucks don’t drive like cars. Generally speaking, the bigger the truck is:

- The bigger its blind spots.
- The more room it needs to maneuver.
- The longer it takes to stop.
- The longer it takes to pass it.
- The more likely you’re going to be the loser in a collision.

Avoid the **NO-ZONE**. Just like automobiles, the first rule of safety with trucks is **SEE AND BE SEEN**. Large trucks have blind spots, or No-Zones, around the front, back and sides of the truck. Watch out! A truck could even turn into you, because these No-Zones make it difficult for the driver to see. So, don’t hang out in the No-Zones. Remember, **if you can’t see the truck driver in the truck’s mirror, the truck driver can’t see you**.

### Following trucks

In good road and weather conditions you should leave a gap of at least four to five (4-5) seconds between your vehicle and the truck in front of you, and an even longer gap when conditions are poor. This will prevent road spray picked up by the truck’s wheels affecting your visibility. The truck may also block your view of the road ahead, so hanging back will increase your field of vision and give you more stopping distance if the truck brakes suddenly to avoid a hazard you can’t see.

Because of the size of trucks, another driver's view of you may be restricted. At intersections and in slow traffic, ensure you stay far enough away for other drivers to see you.

When following at night, keep your headlights on low beam. The truck's many side mirrors will reflect high beam lights right into the driver's eyes.

**Passing**

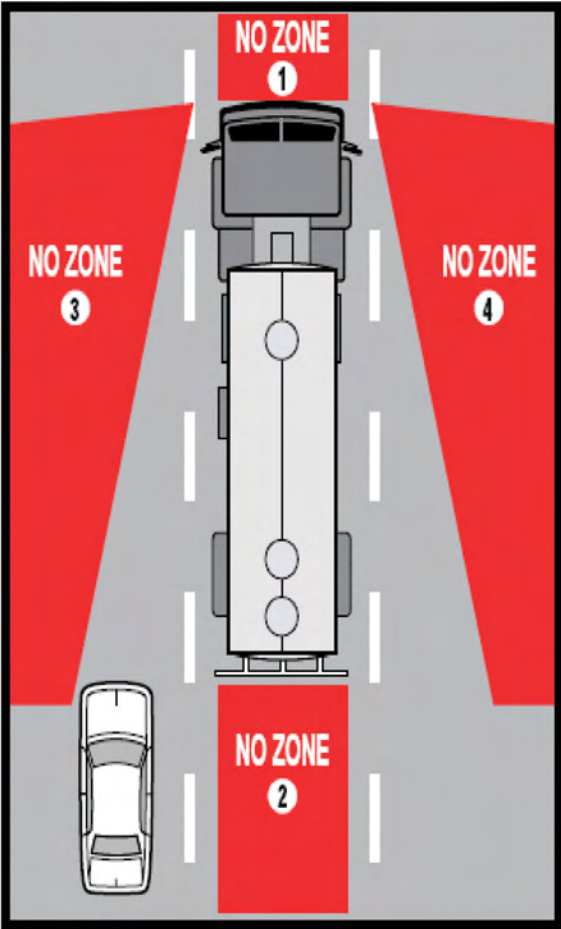
If you are passing a truck, always pass on the left side, and make sure to allow plenty of room before switching back in front of the truck. Never, ever cut in front of a large truck.

**Merging Courtesy**

When traveling in the right lane, courtesy dictates that you move over to allow a truck to merge. Be careful when pulling behind a truck which has just entered the highway; it takes a lot longer for a large truck to get up to speed.

**Avoid Squeeze Play**

Be careful of trucks making wide right turns. If you try to get between the truck and the curb, you'll be caught in a squeeze and can suffer a serious accident. In some instances, truck drivers need to swing wide to the left in order to safely negotiate a right turn, especially in urban areas. They can't see cars directly behind or beside them. Cutting in between the truck and the curb increases the possibility of a crash. So pay attention to truck signals, and give truck drivers lots of room to maneuver.





## CHAPTER 5 TRAFFIC LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### GENERAL

You are required to obey all traffic laws when driving a vehicle upon a street or highway.

### POLICE OFFICERS

You must obey all lawful orders and directions of a police officer. Here are some ways to improve your traffic stop experience:

- Invoke the “Golden Rule” and treat the officer the way you would like to be treated.
- Remember that you are required to cooperate with all reasonable requests that law enforcement personnel make.
- If an officer signals for you to stop, remain calm and pull over safely.
- Be prepared to produce your driver’s license, vehicle registration certificate, and proof of insurance.
- Remain in the vehicle unless the officer tells you otherwise.
- Keep your hands visible.
- If you are stopped by a non-uniformed officer in an unmarked vehicle, you can ask the officer for identification.
- If you believe the reason for the stop is vague or unclear, you can ask the officer for details.
- If you are uncomfortable about stopping because an area is deserted or not well-lit, explain this to the officer and ask if you can proceed to a more populated or better illuminated place.
- Procedural questions and complaints about an officer’s treatment of you can be forwarded to the officer’s supervisor.

### TRAFFIC CONTROL

You must operate your vehicle as indicated by traffic signs, and pavement markings. **When a traffic-control signal is not functioning at an intersection, the intersection shall revert to an all-way or four-way stop.**

### CONTROL OF VEHICLES

It is unlawful to negligently fail to maintain reasonable and proper control of your vehicle.

### SPEED

Excessive speed is often the factor that turns a minor incident into a fatal crash. The laws of physics tell us that crash severity increases disproportionately with vehicle speed. A frontal impact at 35 mph, for example, is one-third more violent than one at 30 mph. When driving at 75 mph, you have little chance of living through a crash. Driving at such a speed during bad weather or at night means you are over driving your headlights. Since your stopping distance is greater than your visibility, you’re gambling that you can stop quickly in an emergency. You can’t. Furthermore, you are breaking the law since 70 mph is the *maximum* speed limit in Louisiana.

The General Speed Law is that you must not drive at a speed greater than is reasonable. You must drive at a safe, appropriate speed depending on the area in which you are driving, the road and traffic conditions, light and weather conditions.



## **SPEED LIMITS**

- You must not drive faster than the posted maximum limit.
- You must not drive slower than the posted minimum limit.
- While driving within the posted speed limit, you must not drive so slowly that you hold back other traffic.

Reduced speed limits are required in the following areas:

- On streets near schools and playgrounds and at locations marked with a “school crossing” sign when children are present.
- On streets in residential or business areas.

While excessive speed is a main factor in crashes, driving too slowly is also dangerous. Motorists tend to get impatient with another motorist who is driving too slowly and take unnecessary chances to get around him. Minimum speeds are posted for many highways.

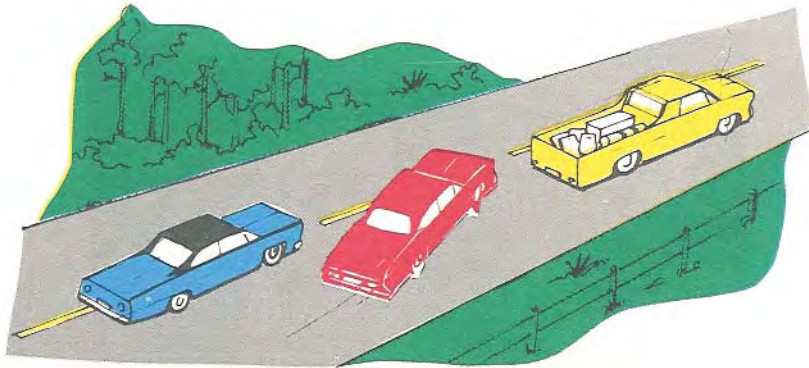
## **DRAG RACING**

It is unlawful to participate in any race, speed contest or speed exhibition of any kind on a public street or road in this state. Drag racing is defined as the operation of two or more vehicles from a point side by side at accelerating speeds in a competitive attempt to out distance each other.

## **LANE CHANGING**

Never move from one lane to another until you are certain that you can do so safely. Proper lane changing rules are:

- Check your rear view and side mirrors.
- Look over your shoulder to make sure no one is in your blind spot.
- Check for other drivers who may also be moving into the same lane.
- Signal your intentions to other drivers.



Before changing lanes, look carefully behind you - someone may be passing you.

## **PASSING ON THE LEFT**

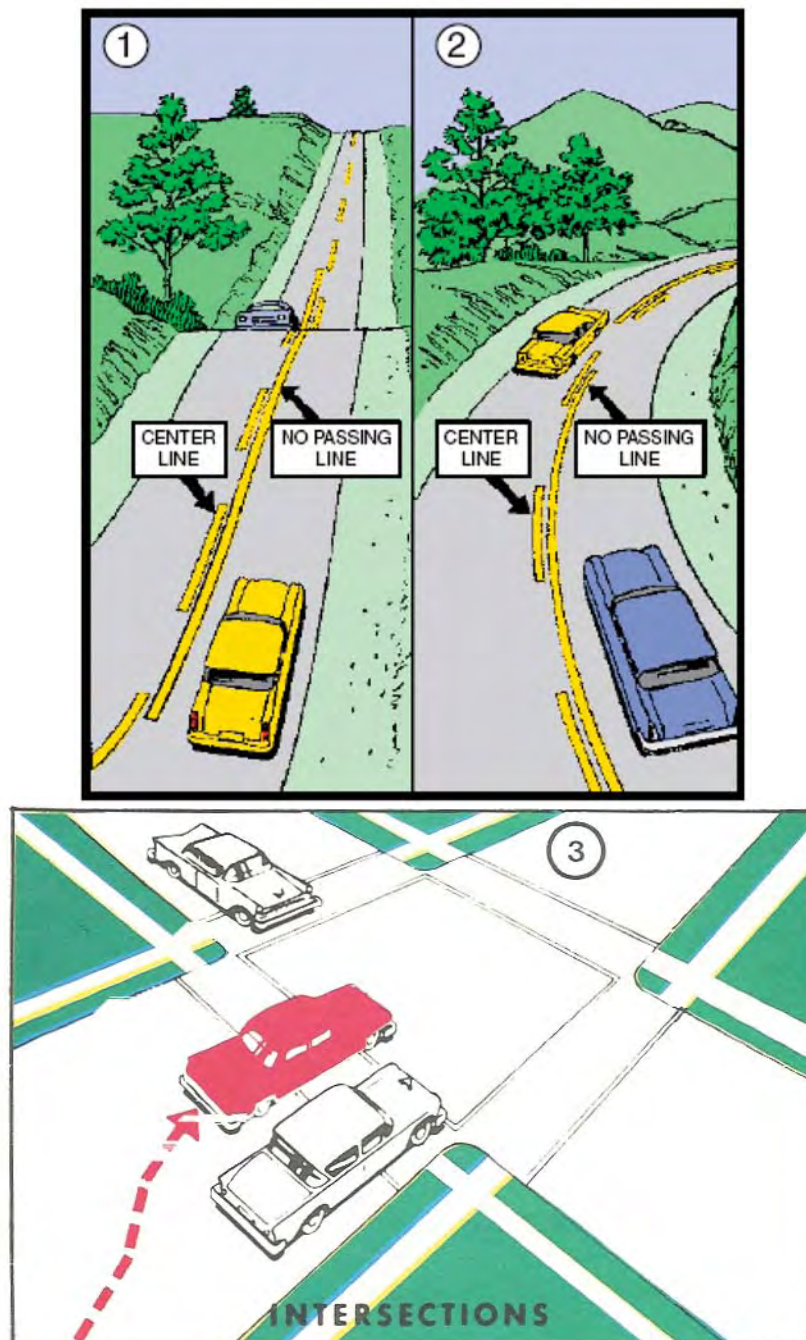
Pass only when you won't interfere with oncoming traffic or the vehicle being passed. You must not cause another driver to slow or pull over in order for you to complete your pass. You might complete a passing maneuver before coming within 100 feet of any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction. It is against the law to pass another vehicle when:

- Your view is blocked by a hill or a curve.
- There is a solid yellow line in your lane.
- You are within one hundred feet of an intersection or a railroad crossing.
- You are within one hundred feet of a bridge or tunnel.

### PASSING ON THE RIGHT

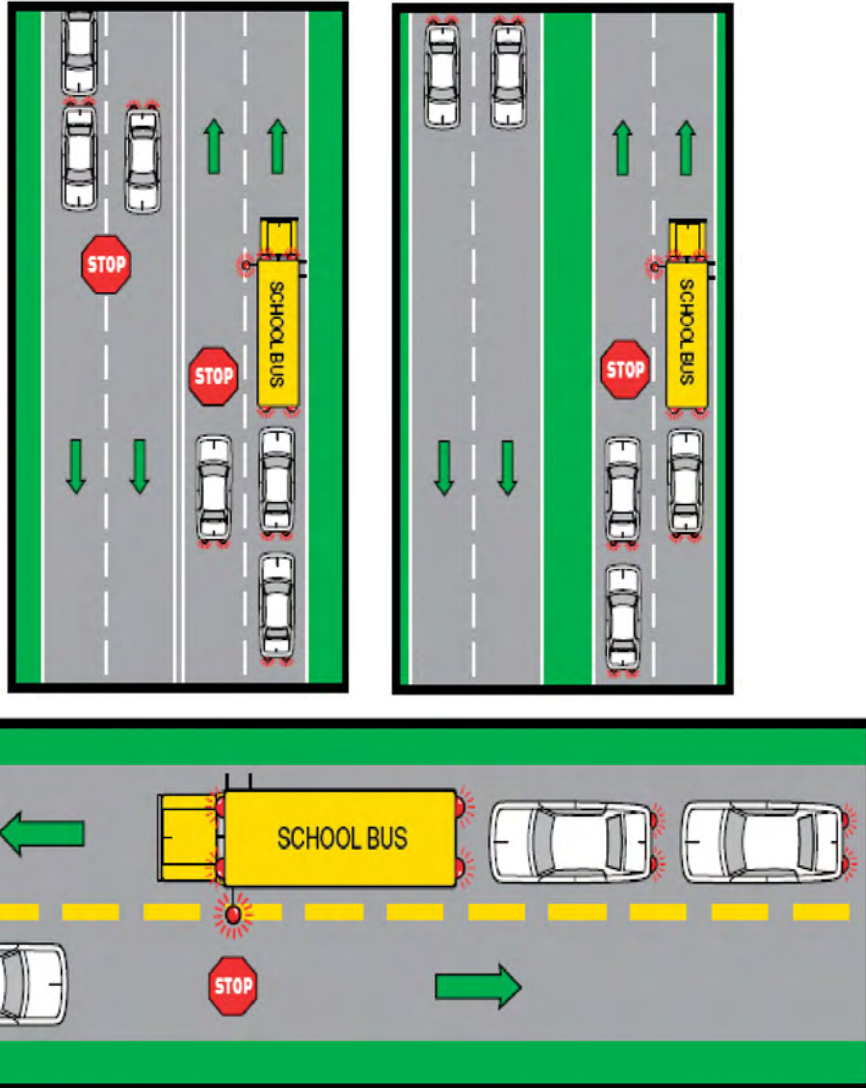
You may pass to the right of another vehicle if there are two or more lanes for traffic moving in the same direction. You may never pass to the right of another vehicle by driving off the roadway onto the shoulder of the road. Remember, passing on the right can be dangerous if the other driver does not see you and decides to change lanes.

### DO NOT PASS IN THESE SITUATIONS



## STOPPED SCHOOL BUSES

**You must stop** at least thirty feet from a stopped school bus that is loading or unloading children. This is required by law whether you are meeting the bus or traveling behind it. You do not have to stop when the bus is stopped in a loading zone completely off the roadway and where the pedestrians are not allowed to cross the roadway.



When a school bus is stopped in opposite lanes on a roadway separated by a ditch, grassy median, elevated concrete barrier or any obstacle that prevents traffic from driving thereon, you are not required to stop. Drivers must stop for a stopped school bus when traveling on four lane or five lane roadways which are not separated by any barriers. When you have stopped, you must not proceed until the bus moves again or the visual warning signals are no longer in use.

## DRIVING ON DIVIDED HIGHWAYS

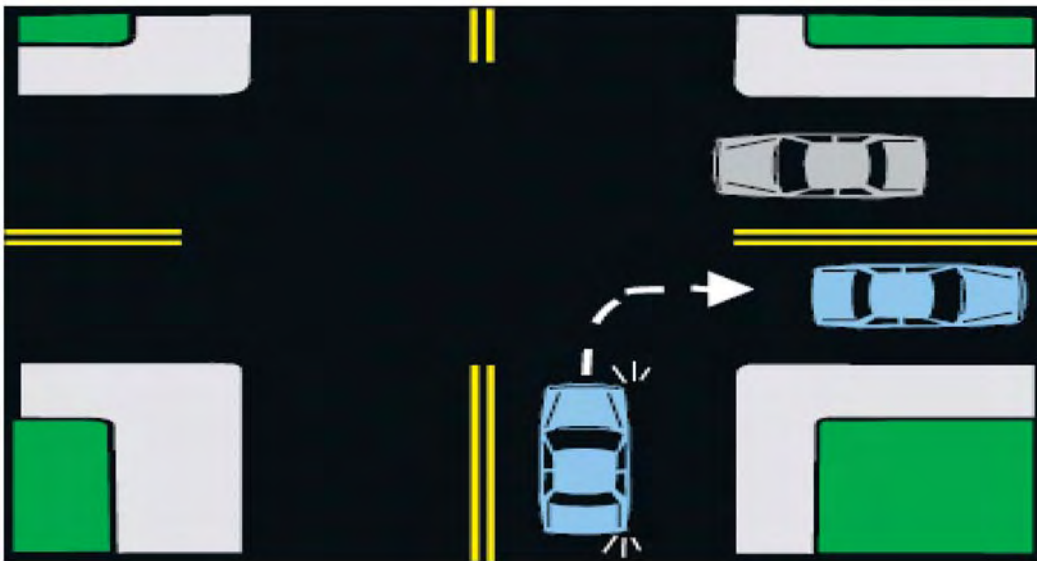
When a highway is divided into two roadways by a median or barrier, you must not drive across the median or barrier except when an approved cross-over is provided. You cannot cross the painted continuous centerline of any multiple highway except for the purpose of making a turn.

## RULES FOR TURNING

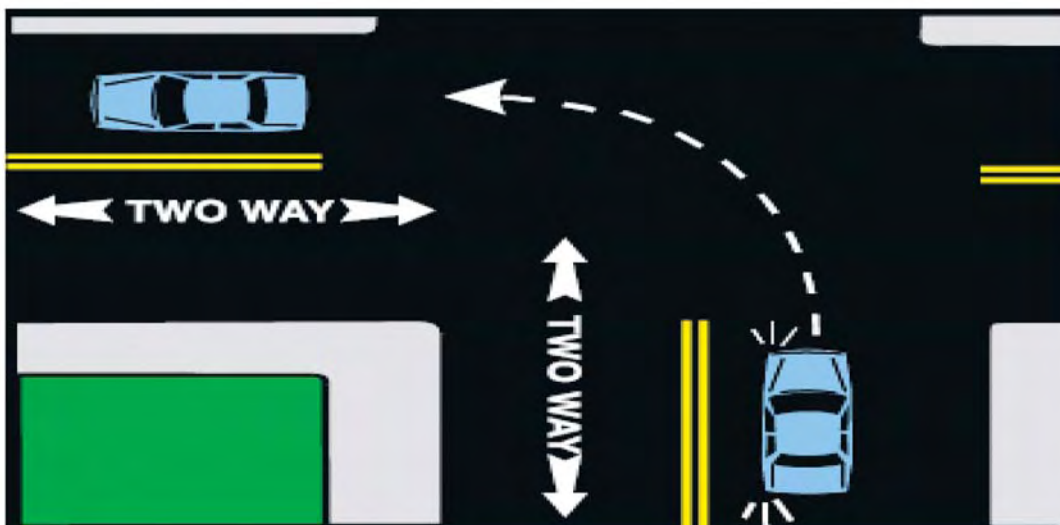
The rules for making safe, courteous and legal turns are as follows:

- Prepare for the turn well in advance.
- Look around you to see where other vehicles (or pedestrians) are and be sure it is safe to turn.
- Signal first and then move into the proper lane. The law requires that you signal and get into the proper lane at least 100 feet before making a turn.
- Slow down before making turns and always finish your turn in the proper lane.

Steps 1 through 4 give the proper method for making a **right turn**.



Steps 1 through 4 give the proper method for making a **left turn**.





## LEFT TURN - TWO VEHICLES

If you meet another driver at an intersection and both of you signal left turns, be extra careful. When safe, each driver should turn to the left of the center of the intersection. If you must stop before making a left turn, keep your wheels straight so that if you are struck from the rear you won't be shoved into the oncoming traffic lane.

At 4-way intersections, some lanes are marked as left turn lanes. When such a lane is marked, you may ONLY turn left from this lane. More than one lane may be designated as "left turn only" lanes.

## WHERE YOU MAY NOT TURN AROUND

Do not attempt to turn around while on a hill or in a curve where your vehicle can not be seen by other drivers approaching from either direction within 500 feet.

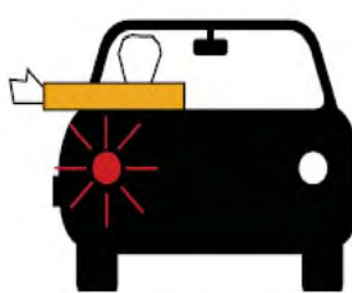
## SIGNALING

If you do not signal your intention, other drivers will not be prepared for your move. You must always give a signal to tell other drivers when you plan to turn, change lanes, slow down or stop. You can use either mechanical signal lights or the left arm.

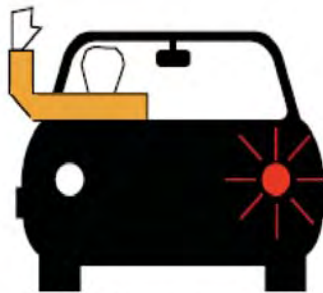
A right or left turn signal must be given continuously for not less than 100 feet before making the turn. A greater distance is suggested when driving at faster speeds or in heavy traffic.

The left turn signal should always be used when driving from a curbside parallel parking space into the flow of traffic or moving to the left lane to pass.

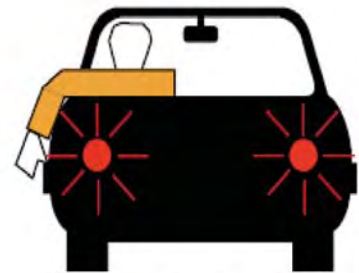
It is illegal to flash your turn signals on just one side of a parked or disabled vehicle OR as a signal to another vehicle to pass you.



Left Turn



Right Turn



Stop Or Slow

Arm straight is for a left turn.

Arm bent up is for a right turn.

Arm bent downward is for slowing down or stopping.

## RIGHT OF WAY

The following right-of-way rules are an aid to safe and smooth traffic flow. They apply to all users of the road, including bicyclists, but YOU SHOULD NEVER INSIST ON TAKING THE RIGHT OF WAY. If other drivers or pedestrians are not following the rules, let them have the right-of-way even if it belongs to you.

- At controlled intersections and 4-way stop intersections - (Remember, if a traffic light has malfunctioned, the intersection becomes a 4-way stop intersection.) When two vehicles approach an intersection at the same time, the driver on the left must yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.
- At yield sign intersections - slow down to a reasonable speed and stop if required. Proceed ahead only when you can do so without interfering with approaching traffic.
- Left turns - the driver making a left turn must yield the right-of-way to oncoming traffic, including bicyclists.

You must yield the right-of-way:

- To emergency vehicles that are sounding a siren and flashing warning lights. Pull over to the right edge of the roadway clear of intersections and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed. Watch for other emergency vehicles. This applies to traffic in both directions.
- To pedestrians legally crossing the roadway on which you are driving (in crosswalks, marked or unmarked).

## **PARKING**

When parallel parked, the vehicle's right wheels must be within 18 inches of the right-hand curb of the street. When parking and leaving a vehicle unattended, stop the motor, remove the key, lock the ignition, and set the brake.

Getting out of your car on the street side can be dangerous. Always look carefully for other vehicles (especially bicycles) that might be passing. The drivers may not see you in time to keep from hitting your open door or you.

It is against the law to park:

- On a sidewalk.
- In front of a driveway.
- In an intersection.
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or within 50 feet of a railroad crossing.
- Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection.
- Within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street, or within 75 feet of the driveway on the other side of the street.
- Beside a parallel parked vehicle (double parking).
- On a bridge, overpass or in any tunnel.
- At any place where official signs prohibit parking.



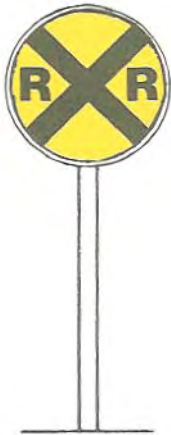
## RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING

Louisiana law requires that the driver of any motor vehicle must stop within 50 feet but no less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of a railroad crossing when:

- A signal device is flashing and a train is approaching.
- A crossing gate is lowered.
- A train gives a warning signal and is an immediate hazard due to its speed or nearness to the crossing.
- A train is approaching so close as to create an immediate hazard.

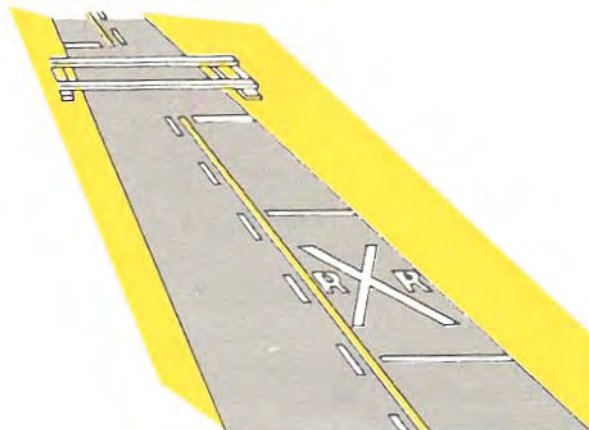
After stopping, the driver shall not proceed to cross the tracks until he can do so safely. Railroad grade crossings are marked with warning devices for your protection. Watch for and respect these devices.

Louisiana law prohibits any driver from stopping a vehicle on railroad tracks. Never get trapped on a crossing. If your vehicle is in a line of vehicles approaching a railroad grade crossing, you should not attempt to cross the tracks unless you are certain that your vehicle can safely cross to the other side of the tracks. If your vehicle becomes pinned between two vehicles or stalls in the path of an oncoming train, get out and move in the direction toward the approaching train away from the tracks.



**Advanced warning** signs tell you to look, listen and slow down. You may have to stop. Watch for vehicles that must stop at railroad crossings. Drivers of vehicles carrying passengers for hire, school buses or trucks, or any vehicle carrying explosives or flammable liquids must stop at railroad crossings. **DO NOT PASS THEM** unless it is legal to do so and there are no unsafe conditions. You should have a clear view of the tracks.

**Railroad cross markings** are white markings painted in the traffic lane before railroad crossings. The pavement is marked with a large “X” and two “R’s”. This is a no passing zone.





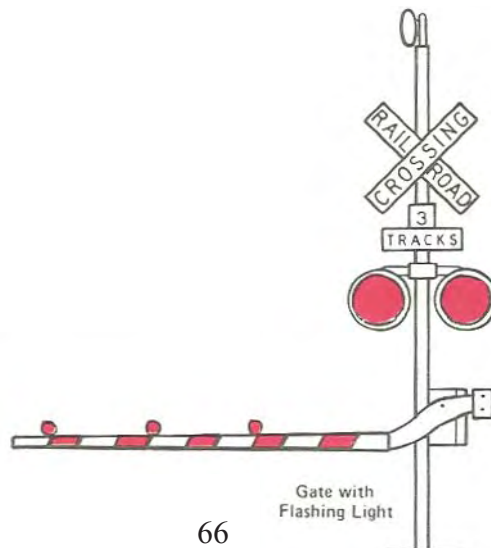
**Railroad cross buck** signs will be found at most crossings. The driver should slow down and be prepared to stop upon seeing a train. If there is more than one track, a sign below the cross buck indicates the number of tracks.



**Flashing light signals** are used with cross buck signs at many railroad crossings. Always stop when the lights are flashing because a train is coming from the other direction. Always look both ways as you approach a railroad crossing, even if the warning lights are not flashing. They may not be working. Never shift gears on the crossing. If your vehicle has a manual transmission, shift before reaching the tracks and do not change gears while crossing the tracks.



**Gates** are used with flashing signals at certain crossings. Stop when the light begins flashing and before the gates are lowered. Remain stopped until the gates are raised. Never drive around the gates. It's against the law to drive through or around any crossing gate at a railroad crossing.



**Expect a train on any track at any time.** Be cautious at a railroad crossing anytime of day or night. Be especially careful when visibility is low, or when the tracks may be hidden from view by trees, hills, buildings, etc. Do not cross tracks until you are sure no train is coming.

**TRACK FACTS:**

Fact #1: You can not judge the distance and speed of an oncoming train.

Fact #2: Railroad tracks, trestles, bridges and railroad yards are private property.

Fact #3: A train can appear on any track at any time.

**OTHER LAWS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

**Backing up** is not permitted on any shoulder or roadway of any controlled-access highway. It is also prohibited at any other place unless it can be done safely without interfering with traffic.

It is against the law **for more than three persons to occupy the front seat of a moving vehicle.** You must not drive a vehicle that is overloaded with passengers or any other thing that will obstruct your view in any direction or interfere with your control of the vehicle.

No person or persons **under the age of twelve years shall be permitted to be a passenger in the open bed of a truck.**

**Having non-transparent material** affixed to the front windshield or front side-windows is illegal, unless prescribed by a physician.

**Riding in a house trailer** is not allowed while it is being moved upon a highway in this state.

**Following emergency vehicles** responding to call closer than 500 feet is unlawful. You must not follow into and park within the block where the emergency vehicle has stopped.

**Do not cross** any unprotected fire department hoses unless consent is given by an official of the fire department.

**Wearing of headphones** (headset, headphone, or listening devise other than a hearing aid) in both ears is prohibited. Wearing of headphones (headset, headphone, or listening device) in one ear alone is allowed.

It is illegal to **lend** your driver's license to another person, to **alter** your driver's license in any manner, to **provide false information** in obtaining your driver's license, to **have more than one driver's license** in your possession, to fail or refuse to surrender your driver's license to the department if demanded, and to **permit any unlawful use of driver's license issued.**

**Theft of motor vehicle fuel** is a crime punishable by fine, loss of license, and possible jail.

**Littering, whether accidental or deliberate,** is against the law. Depending on the nature and severity of the littering, you can face either civil or criminal prosecution, with penalties for conviction ranging from \$50 plus 8 hours community service picking up litter, all the way to a \$5,000 fine, one year driver's license suspension, 30 days in jail AND 100 hours of community service. The driver is responsible for all litter coming from the vehicle's interior or truck bed, and the driver can be cited for littering committed by the passengers in his/her vehicle.

Louisiana law requires you have your **headlights on (low beam) when your windshield wipers** are required.

**Louisiana's "Move It, Move It, Move It - Steer It Clear"** campaign is an attempt to make the public aware of your responsibility to remove vehicles from the roadway to the nearest soft shoulder. In accordance with Louisiana law, no person driving or in charge of any motor vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the motor, locking the ignition, removing the key, and effectively setting the brake. Removal of vehicles from the roadway will play a great role in reducing traffic congestion and reduce the chances of secondary crashes.

Operators below age 17 are **prohibited from driving between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.**, unless accompanied by a licensed parent, guardian, or adult at least 21 years of age or sibling 18 years of age.

**Traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles.** Every person riding a bicycle is given the same rights and must follow the same rules and regulations that are given to those driving an automobile. (R.S. 32:194)

**Riding on bicycles.** When riding a bicycle, the rider must ride upon a seat that is attached to the bicycle. The number of people on the bicycle shall not be greater than the intended number of people the bicycle is designed to carry. The person controlling the bicycle must have at least one hand on the handlebars at all times. (R.S. 32:195)

**Clinging to vehicles.** No person riding a bicycle shall attach himself or the bicycle to any vehicle while on public roadways. (R.S. 32:196)

**Riding on roadways and bicycle paths.** All bicyclists must ride as near to the right side of the roadway as safely as possible while exercising caution when passing stationary vehicles or vehicles traveling in the same direction. Bicyclists must not ride more than two abreast except on roadways set aside for exclusive bicycle use. (R.S. 32:197)

**Bicycle seats and restraining seats.** Children under the age of twelve must wear approved helmets when operating a bicycle or riding as a passenger. A child's helmet must fit properly and be fastened securely on the child's head with the straps of the helmet. Children who weigh less than forty pounds or are less than forty inches in height must be properly seated and secured in an approved restraining seat to be a passenger upon a bicycle. (R.S. 32:199B)

Please note the **INTERNATIONAL SYMBOLS FOR THE DISABLED**. These symbols mean that a parking space is especially reserved for a person(s) who is disabled. Practice driving courtesy. Give handicapped citizens a break. Never use one of these spaces unless you are lawfully entitled to it.



## CHAPTER 6 INTERSTATE DRIVING

Traffic on an interstate normally moves safely and smoothly because there are fewer places for the type of problems that could cause crashes. However, the crashes that do happen are usually serious. As a driver, you need to know and follow some basic rules and practices to make interstate driving as safe as possible.

### PLANNING AHEAD

Since interstate entrances and exits are far apart, you should plan your route in advance. Use a map and know exactly where you will enter and exit the interstate. Also, make sure your vehicle is in good working condition. Since there are few service stations along interstate highways, you could find yourself in serious trouble if you run out of gas or have a breakdown. Before you leave, check your gas, water, oil and tires. Don't forget to check your spare tire.

### GENERAL INTERSTATE DRIVING

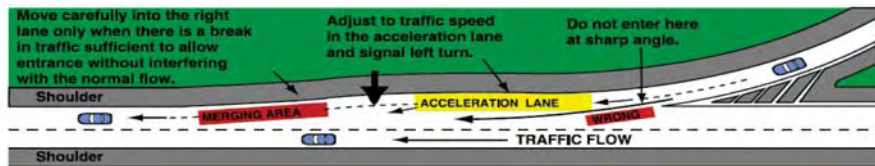
Be ready for changes in traffic conditions. Watch for signals from other drivers. Expect merging vehicles at on ramps and interchanges. Be prepared for rapid changes in road conditions and traffic flow.

As you look ahead, think about what will (or might) happen on the road. Be alert for vehicles on either side, to the front and to the rear. Use your mirrors. Leave enough space between you and the vehicle ahead for safe stops. Always leave yourself an out. Mistakes cause crashes. To protect yourself, know which lanes are clear so you can use them if you need to.

### ENTERING

Whenever you enter traffic, signal and be sure you have enough space to enter safely. You have to share space with traffic already on the road and must know how much space you need to merge with traffic and pass other cars.

Enter the interstate at or near the speed of traffic. Remember that the *maximum* speed allowed is 70 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. You should not drive slower than the posted minimum speed on the interstate unless the weather or road conditions demand slower speed. Always try to drive at a steady speed.



Begin checking traffic while on the entrance ramp. **Do not move slowly to the end of the entrance ramp and stop.** Start your turn signal to warn other drivers. Look for a gap in the approaching traffic. Then, adjust your speed to meet that gap. As you merge, make sure you are traveling the same speed as other traffic. **Do not stop before merging with interstate traffic unless it is absolutely necessary. Interstate traffic has the right of way. You can't always count on other drivers either seeing you or moving over to give you space to enter.**

## SPACE TO MERGE

When you merge into traffic, you need a gap of four seconds. That will give both you and the car you merge in front of a two-second following distance. Don't try to squeeze into a gap that is too small. Leave yourself a big enough space cushion. Watch for vehicles around you. Use your mirrors and turn signals. Turn your head to look quickly to the side before changing lanes. It is a good idea to leave three seconds of space between you and the vehicle ahead. Make sure you can stop safely if you must.

At some interstate entrances, there is a short acceleration lane. With heavy traffic you are more likely to see cars stopped and waiting for a large enough gap in traffic. This situation is dangerous because of the risk of rear-end collisions and the need for fast acceleration to enter traffic. To enter traffic from a full stop, you will need about a full block to get up to the speed of the other vehicles on the interstate highway.

## RIGHT-HAND LANE

Avoid unnecessary lane changing. Stay in the right-hand lane unless overtaking and passing, making an exit to the left, or letting another vehicle enter. However, you may drive in any lane of an interstate having three or more lanes in one direction.

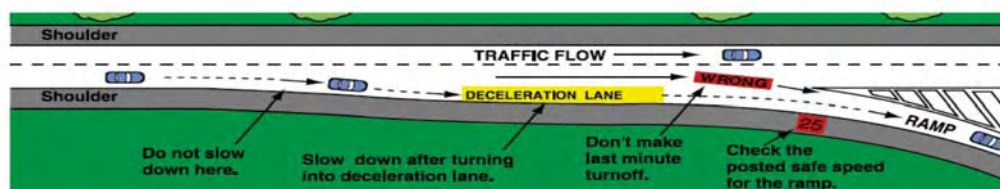
When you approach most entrance points, you will see a "merge" sign. This sign warns you to be ready to adjust your speed or to move into the left lane, if possible. This will let other drivers enter traffic smoothly and safely.

The right-hand lane is also a place where some drivers slow down for an exit, even though this is dangerous. When you see an exit sign, be alert for drivers who suddenly slow or who swerve into an exit at the last second.

Don't follow the vehicle in front of you too closely. Always keep at least two seconds space cushion between you and the vehicle ahead. When the weather is bad or the pavement is slick, you should double that time. Rear-end collisions are the most frequent type of crashes on the interstates.

## EXITING

One of the main reasons for planning ahead is to know exactly where you want to leave the interstate. Look ahead for signs telling you about the exit you want and the lane you must use. Approximately a mile before your exit, check to make sure you are in the correct lane to make the exit. Change lanes one at a time until you are in the proper lane to safely make the exit. Signal your intention for approximately five seconds and make sure you are at the proper speed for leaving the traffic lane - not too fast so you won't lose control and not too slow so the flow of traffic can still move freely.



If you miss your exit, **do not stop, do not back up!** It is against the law and is one of the most dangerous things you can do on an interstate highway. Go on to the next exit, get back on the interstate and return to the exit you want.

Most interstate exits have a special lane for you to use to slow down before you reach the exit. Never slow down on the interstate itself. Wait until you are fully in the deceleration lane, and then reduce your speed to the posted ramp speed. Be aware of two-way traffic ahead after your exit from the interstate.

### **WEATHER CHANGES**

A sudden change in the weather calls for a change in driving. For your safety, it is important that you adjust your speed to the weather conditions. When driving in a heavy downpour or in fog, slow down and turn on your low beam headlights.

If the fog is so dense that it impairs your vision, you should not drive at all. If you must drive, slow down and drive to the nearest place where it is possible for you to get off the highway and stop. You are risking your life by creeping along at 10 to 20 miles per hour on the highway.

Be prepared for an emergency stop. Red tail-lights may be a vehicle that is stopped on the roadway or just barely moving. Be aware that vehicles coming up behind you may be driving too fast. Tap your brakes to make these drivers aware of your vehicle.



## CHAPTER 7 DRIVING EMERGENCIES

When you are driving a vehicle, things can happen very fast. You may have very little time to react, so you must know how to handle emergencies when they happen.

### TEENAGE DRIVERS

Teenagers not only have a higher crash rate than other age groups, their crashes are different. The combination of inexperience behind the wheel and immaturity produces a pattern of fatal crashes among 16-year-old drivers that includes the highest percentage of crashes involving speeding, single-vehicle crashes, crashes due to driver (teenager) error and occupancy. According to statistics, teenage drivers lack maturity and experience in driving. Teenagers are more willing to take risks and less likely to use safety belts. They are more likely to underestimate the dangers associated with hazardous situations and less able to cope with such dangers. With these things in mind, most states have developed a Graduated Licensing Program (GLP) in an effort to reduce teenage deaths on the highway.

### AVOIDING COLLISIONS

In a few seconds that you have before a possible crash, try not to panic. Reacting properly and quickly can avoid crashes or at least minimize the damage.

Know your vehicle and its braking system! If you have a manual (disc) brake system, do not brake hard and hold. This locks the wheels and puts the car into a skid. To stop quickly in an emergency, you should pump the brake.

1. Push the brake pedal hard.
2. As the car begins to skid, quickly let up on the brake. Then quickly push down again.

Use this quick pumping action until the car is stopped.

If you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS), when the brakes are pressed hard the ABS pumps the brakes up to 30 times/sec. This occurs in an alternating pattern, left front/right rear and right front/left rear. This system helps you maintain control and stop the car in a straight line rather than spinning out of control. ABS does not stop the car faster. It enables you to stop it where you want to.

**Turning quickly** may be your only chance in avoiding a crash. If a crash looks probable, turn away from it even if it means leaving the road. Drive (rather than skid) off the road. Choose to hit something that will give way (such as brush or shrubs) rather than something hard. If you have to hit anything, try to make it a glancing blow. A sideswipe, for example, is better than a head-on crash. Never cross over into the oncoming traffic lane. The other driver may swerve back into his own lane.

Sometimes you may need to **speed up quickly** to avoid a crash. This may be the case when another car is about to hit you from the side or from behind. If your car has a manual shift, shift quickly into a lower gear and push the gas pedal to the floor. In any case, you may have only seconds to decide and act.

**Oncoming car in your lane:**

If you see a car coming toward you in your lane:

1. Blow your horn and flash your lights to warn the other driver, if you have time.
2. Brake fast, but don't lock your wheels and lose control.
3. If the other driver keeps coming and a crash is probable, steer off the road to the **right** shoulder or ditch. **Do not drive into the left lane.**

**Overtaking vehicle in danger:**

If another vehicle is attempting to overtake and pass you but cannot complete passing because of oncoming traffic, you must act quickly to help avoid a crash.

1. If the passing vehicle continues to attempt to pass, you can help by slowing your vehicle and moving as far to the right as you can with safety.
2. If the other driver definitely cannot complete the pass and must drop back, increase your speed so that he can move in behind you.
3. If the right shoulder is safe and a crash is almost certain, move quickly onto the shoulder to allow the passing car to move into your lane. (In either case, be certain of the intentions of the driver of the passing vehicle before you change your speed.)

**PROTECTING YOURSELF IN A CRASH**

You may not always be able to avoid a crash. If you are about to be hit, here are some tips on how to protect yourself.

**Rear Collisions:**

If you are about to be hit from the rear:

1. Be ready to apply your brake so you won't be pushed into the car ahead.
2. Brace yourself between the steering wheel and the seat back.
3. Press the back of your head firmly against the head rest.

**Side Collisions:**

If you are about to be hit from the side:

1. Keep a tight grip on the steering wheel. This may keep you from being thrown against the side of the car.
2. Get ready to steer quickly so that if you spin around you can try to regain control of the car.

**Head-on Collision:**

If you are about to be hit from the front:

1. Use your arms and hands to protect your face if you are wearing your seat belt and shoulder strap.
2. If you are not using your shoulder strap, throw yourself across the seat to keep from hitting the steering wheel or windshield.

### **Stalled on railroad tracks:**

If your vehicle is stalled on a railroad track and there is immediate danger of an approaching train, don't try any last minute heroics to make it. Get all passengers and yourself out and walk quickly alongside the tracks in the direction toward the approaching train so that you will not be struck by debris when your vehicle is hit. If danger is not immediate, and you are certain there is time, you may move your vehicle off the tracks.

## **OTHER VEHICLE EMERGENCIES**

### **Skids:**

Most skids happen when you try to turn or stop suddenly on slippery pavement. If the rear of your car starts to slide, don't use your brakes. Steer in the direction in which the rear end of your car is skidding. To steer out of a skid:

1. Take your foot off the gas pedal.
2. Turn your front wheels only enough to keep them going straight down the road. If the rear of your car is skidding to the right, turn the front wheels to the right. Turn left for a skid to the left.
3. Be careful not to over steer. Your car may start to skid the other way. Again turn your wheels in the direction of the skid. You can feel when the car is back under control. Then straighten the wheels.

### **CAUTION:**

Different types of braking and steering systems and vehicles with 4-wheel drive or front-wheel drive respond in different ways. If your car begins to skid due to wet or icy conditions:

- let off the gas
- do not brake!!
- simply look and steer in the direction you want to go.
- be prepared to counter steer after making the initial steering corrections.



Try not to use your brakes during a side skid. If necessary, pump them lightly.

### **Running off the pavement:**

If your wheels should slip off the edge of the road, do not try to turn back onto the pavement right away. This could cause you to swerve into the lane of oncoming traffic. You should stay on the shoulder:

1. Slow down by using your brakes gently.
2. If there is no drop-off from the pavement, steer back easily onto the road.
3. If the shoulder is much lower than the pavement:
  - Slow to a very slow speed (10 mph)
  - Look for traffic coming in both directions
  - Turn your wheels sharply back onto the pavement

**Tire blowout:**

The most important rule is - don't panic and don't slam on the brakes. You should:

1. Hold the steering wheel firmly and keep your car in the same lane. There may be a strong pull to the right or left.
2. Let your car slow down. Don't use the brakes until you have slowed to a safer speed, (around 30 mph).

Then brake gently and pull all the way off the road into a safe area.

**Gas pedal sticks:**

If your gas pedal sticks, keep your eyes on the road:

1. Put the gear shift in neutral.
2. Try to free the pedal with your foot. Have your passenger try to free it if you can't.
3. Turn the ignition off. (Use care not to lock the steering wheel locking mechanism. Vehicle with power steering and brakes will require much more effort to control)
4. Put on the brakes. Pull off the road into a safe area.

**Brakes fail:**

At the first sign of trouble, try not to panic. Do not put your parking brake on suddenly. This could cause you to lose control of your vehicle! Instead, work your vehicle into the right lane and then toward the shoulder or, if possible, toward an exit. If it is necessary to change lanes, do so smoothly and carefully, watching your mirrors and the traffic around you.

1. Let the car slow down gradually by taking your foot off the gas pedal. Simply steer your vehicle as it slows and shift the car into a lower gear to let the engine help the car slow.
2. Shift into neutral and gradually apply the hand brake until the vehicle stops. If that brake has also failed, direct the car onto a soft shoulder or rub the wheel against a curb which will help the car slow down.
3. Do not attempt to drive your vehicle, no matter how slowly, without brakes! Call for help.

**Loss of a wheel:**

This is a rather uncommon emergency, but if it should happen, use the same procedure as for a tire blowout. The warning signs are a thumping noise and/or pulling to one side. Once stopped, you will be unable to move the vehicle; it must be towed.

**Overheating:**

If steam begins to come from under the hood, your cooling system is boiling. You should pull to the side of the road and turn off the engine. Do not open the radiator cap.

**Fire:**

Most vehicle fires occur as a result of an overheated engine, an electrical short, a fuel leak or an oil leak. Any burning odor should be immediately investigated. If smoke comes from under the hood:

1. Drive off the road clear of traffic and stop.
2. Turn off the engine and all electrical switches.
3. Get all passengers out of and away from the vehicle. Poisonous fumes may fill the vehicle.

4. If the fire is small, use a chemical fire extinguisher, dirt, mud, sand or clothing to smother the fire. Do not use water on gasoline, oil or an electrical fire.
5. If a large gasoline or oil fire develops, you may not be able to fight it. Don't try, seek assistance.

### **Dead Battery:**

If your car has a dead battery, be very careful if you "jump start" it from another car's battery. Either battery could possibly explode and cause you injury. Here are some helpful hints:

1. Take off the vent caps from both batteries. Put a cloth over the open vent wells.
2. Turn off lights, heater and radio.
3. Connect the positive post of the **dead** battery to the positive post of the **live** battery.
4. Then connect the negative post of the **live** battery to the negative post of the **dead** battery or to the engine block or frame.

Make sure the two cars are not touching. Then, start the car giving the jump. After letting it run a few minutes, start the other car. Take off the cables in the opposite order and put the vent caps back on. Safely discard the cloth used to cover the vent wells.

If you get battery acid on your skin, eyes, or car, wash it off immediately with water. NEVER light a match or smoke a cigarette near a battery. The fumes from the battery can cause an explosion.

### **Breakdowns:**

At the first sign of car trouble, gently and smoothly take your foot off the accelerator. Do not brake hard or suddenly. Carefully work your vehicle toward the side of the road. If you are on an interstate, try to reach an exit. Signal your intentions to drivers behind you. If it is necessary to change lanes, watch your mirrors and the traffic around you closely.

Once off the road, make your car visible. Put reflectorized triangles behind your vehicle to alert other drivers or use your emergency flashers. If it is dark, turn on the interior dome light or, if you have flares, put them at least 100 feet behind your car.

Do not try to flag down other vehicles. Raise your hood and tie something white to the radio antenna or hang it out a window so police officers or tow truck operators will know help is needed.

Don't stand behind or next to your vehicle. If the car is in the roadway, stand away from the vehicle and wait for help to arrive.

If your car is safely out of traffic, wait inside the vehicle with the doors locked. Use your cellular phone to call for help. If someone stops and offers to help, open the window slightly and ask them to call the police.

Watch for a uniformed police officer or other emergency personnel. All interstate highways and major roads are patrolled regularly. Also, some highways have special "call-boxes" for roadside assistance.

It is inadvisable to walk on an interstate, especially during inclement weather. However, if you can reach a source of help on foot without jeopardizing your physical or personal safety, try the direct approach by walking, but keep as far from traffic as possible.



### **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:**

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be deadly. Carbon monoxide is gas given off from a vehicle's exhaust system. It can seep into a car if there are holes in the exhaust system. Your car may take in this gas from cars in traffic jams. It may build up when the engine is running in closed spaces such as a garage. Because carbon monoxide does not have an odor, you can be affected without knowing it. It can make you sleepy. Early symptoms include: yawning, dizziness and upset stomach. If any of these occur, suspect carbon monoxide poisoning and get fresh air immediately.

### **TRAFFIC CRASHES**

One in every eight drivers will be involved in a motor vehicle crash this year, according to the National Safety Council.

#### **Accidents:**

If you are involved in a traffic crash resulting in injury, death or property damage, you are required to:

1. Stop your vehicle immediately if it is clear and safe. Do not leave the scene of the crash without identifying yourself.
  - Have someone warn approaching traffic to prevent further damage.
  - Make sure to turn off the ignitions of the vehicles involved.
2. Make a first aid check of all persons involved in the crash.
  - Call the police and ask for an ambulance if needed. If in doubt, assume that an ambulance is needed.
3. Gather the names of all persons in the motor vehicles and people who witnessed the crash. Drivers must give their name, address and vehicle license number and if requested, display their driver's license to any person involved in the accident.
  - If you damage an unattended vehicle or property, you must notify the police and attempt to locate the owner. Leave your name, address and telephone number on a note where the owner will be sure to see it.
4. Make a quick diagram of where the vehicle occupants were seated and indicate the vehicle's direction of travel and lane. Also note the date, time and weather conditions.
5. Notify your insurance company as soon as practical. Give complete information about the accident. See your doctor as soon as possible if you are shaken up.



If you are not trained in first aid, remember that there are only a few things that you can do:

1. Summon help.
2. Try to help the injured where they lie in order of their needs. Keep them warm.
3. To stop bleeding, place a clean cloth over the wound.
4. If a person has stopped breathing, give first aid if you know how.
5. Do not move the injured person unless there is immediate life threatening danger. Movement could cause more injury.
6. Ask a walking injured person to sit or lie down on his back. If the person is bleeding from the lower part of the face or jaw, turn him on his side. Do not give fluids.
7. You should not try to take an injured person to the hospital yourself unless there is no way to get help. With serious injuries, improper movement may be harmful.

#### **Unattended motor vehicles:**

Louisiana's "Move It, Move It, Move It - Steer It Clear" campaign is an attempt to make you aware of your responsibility to remove vehicles from the roadway to the nearest soft shoulder. In accordance with Louisiana law, no person driving or in charge of any motor vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the motor, locking the ignition, removing the key, and effectively setting the brake. Removal of vehicles from the roadway will play a great role in reducing traffic congestion and reduce the chances of secondary crashes.

#### **APPROACH OF AN AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLE**

If you are approached by an authorized emergency vehicle (police car, ambulance, fire truck, etc.) making use of audible or visual signals, you will always yield the right-of-way and immediately drive to a position parallel to the right-hand edge or curb and remain stopped until that vehicle has passed.

When driving on an interstate with two or more lanes traveling in the same direction as the emergency vehicle, slow to a speed of twenty-five miles per hour until it is safe to proceed at the posted speed limit and merge into the lane farthest from the emergency vehicle.

When driving on a two-lane road, slow to a speed of twenty-five miles per hour or the posted speed, whichever is lower, until it is safe to proceed at the posted speed limit.

## CHAPTER 8 DRIVING OFFENSES

Driving under the influence of alcohol or certain drugs is a crime. According to the National Safety Council, every 33 minutes someone dies in an alcohol-related crash. Drunk driving is the leading single cause of death among young people in the age range from 16 to 24.

### ALCOHOL

When alcohol enters your stomach, it goes into your blood and to all parts of your body. It reaches your brain in about 20 minutes. In your brain, alcohol affects those parts that control your judgment and skill. Here are some things you should know about alcohol:

- Alcohol is a depressant, not a stimulant. It has anesthetic effects on the brain which “goes to sleep.” It slows normal reflexes, interferes with judgment, reduces alertness and impairs vision. If you feel stimulated after drinking, it is simply because your inhibitions are lowered, causing loss of caution and self-control. In large enough quantities, acute alcohol poisoning can result in a coma or death.
- It doesn’t matter whether you drink beer, wine, whiskey or any other alcoholic beverages; it’s the amount of alcohol that enters your blood that causes the problem.
- Alcohol can affect you differently at different times. A small amount on an empty stomach will affect you more rapidly than it would if you had recently eaten a quantity of food. Many other factors affect the rate at which alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream: alcohol content, potency and type of beverage, rate of consumption, gender, physical fitness, emotional state and rate of metabolism and elimination.
- Once the alcohol enters your blood, there is nothing you can do to lessen the effect. Black coffee, exercise or a cold shower will **not** sober you up. Alcohol is burned up by your liver and eliminated from your body through your kidneys and lungs. This process takes time.

If you have been drinking alcoholic beverages, you are in no condition to drive. You have placed yourself in a position where you might injure or kill yourself or some innocent person(s). Remember that alcohol:

- Reduces the ability to judge speeds, distances and angles.
- Encourages the driver to take foolish risks and break laws.
- Impairs concentration. You may forget to fasten a seatbelt, turn on headlights, use turn signals, observe stop signs, etc.
- Slows reaction time in stopping and turning.
- Limits vision; eyes become blurred and can’t focus.
- Reduces ability to judge one’s own condition.
- Causes sleepiness.
- Increases anger towards other drivers.

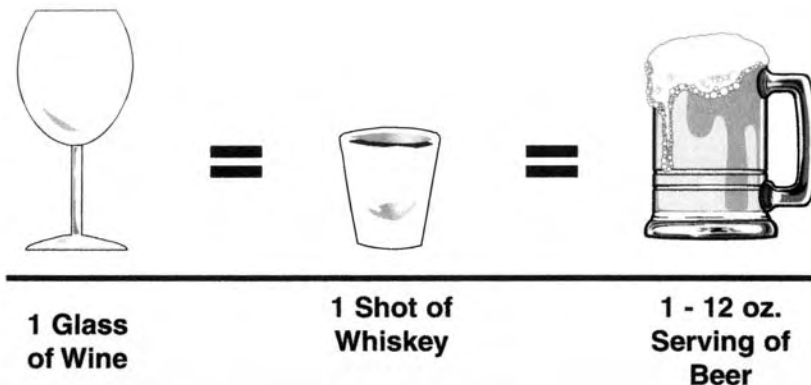
The **brain is most dramatically affected** by alcohol. Initially, you may become more relaxed and less concerned with minor irritation - one of the positive effects of alcohol for many people. Physically, a feeling of warmth can be caused by the dilation of capillaries beneath the surface of the skin, resulting in a feeling termed “flushed.” This is caused by internal heat moving to the surface, but actually, the body’s temperature is being lowered. Blood is being transferred from the vital organs to the extremities, which makes alcohol dangerous for snake bite, shock or overexposure to cold. In hot weather, the result could be a heat stroke.

As the level of intoxication increases, coordination and vision become impaired. The ability to think and learn is altered because of effects on cells in the outer layer of the brain. An unsteadiness or inability to stand or walk can follow. In small amounts, alcohol can have a tranquilizing effect, but in large amounts it can depress the highly-developed brain centers which store learned behavior. The ability to think in relation to the overall picture is reduced. Alcohol can disturb sleep patterns. An alcoholic blackout occurs when information is not stored properly in the brain, causing a complete memory loss the next morning.

### **BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION**

What does blood alcohol concentration (BAC) measure? BAC describes the concentration of alcohol in a person's blood expressed as weight per unit of volume. For example, at 0.10% BAC, there is a concentration of 100 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood. For most legal purposes, however, a blood sample is not necessary to determine a person's BAC. It can be measured much more simply by analyzing exhaled breath (such as using a breathalyzer).

**The body can process 0.015% of alcohol per hour. If your blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.20% at 2:00 a.m., it will be more than 0.10% at 8:00 a.m. and still 0.05% at noon the following day!**



**You cannot hide drunk driving.** A trained police officer will notice a driver who has been drinking. Some tell-tale signs are:

- Speeding. A drinking driver often thinks he can drive safely at high speeds.
- Weaving. Even though a driver may stay in his lane, he may have trouble steering straight.
- Slow driving. A drinking driver may be overly cautious and drive slower than normal traffic.
- Jerking motion. A drinking driver often may have short mental lapses and not keep a steady speed on a clear road.
- Quick stop. A drinking driver may make sudden stops at a traffic sign or light rather than easing up to it.



**PENALTY FOR DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI):**

Your first conviction could **cost you \$4,500** (court costs, fines, lawyer fees, etc.)

1<sup>st</sup> DWI conviction - MAXIMUM Penalties

- A criminal record
- Six months in jail
- \$1,000 fine plus court costs
- Loss of driver's license for 365 days

2<sup>nd</sup> DWI conviction - MAXIMUM Penalties

- A criminal record
- Six months in jail with 48 hours mandatory jail time
- \$1,000 fine plus court costs
- Loss of driver's license for two years

3<sup>rd</sup> DWI conviction - MAXIMUM Penalties (R.S. 14.98)

- A felony criminal record
- 1-5 years in prison with 30 days mandatory jail time
- \$2,000 fine plus court costs
- Loss of driver's license for three years
- Auto may be seized and sold
- Six weeks inpatient and 12 months outpatient substance abuse treatment
- Home incarceration for remainder of sentence

4<sup>th</sup> DWI conviction - MAXIMUM Penalties (R.S. 14:98)

- A felony criminal record
- 30 years in prison with 30 days mandatory jail time
- \$5,000 fine plus court costs
- Loss of driver's license for three years
- Auto may be seized and sold
- Six weeks inpatient and 12 months outpatient substance abuse treatment
- Five years home incarceration

**NOTE:** With a felony record, you can't vote. You may be restricted from pursuing a career in military, dentistry, engineering, insurance, law, medicine, and public accounting. Some auto insurance companies will not sell you auto insurance!

In addition to the penalties listed, proof of future financial responsibility must be filed and maintained for three years from the date of conviction. The court also has the authority to require participation in community service work, driver improvement programs, and substance abuse treatment - all at your expense!

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**If you are driving while intoxicated and cause a crash that results in the death of another person**, your conviction can result in a jail term of up to 20 years. You'll lose your driver's license, a great deal of money, and the privileges of citizenship. You'll face being sued by the deceased person's relatives for amounts that could easily exceed your insurance coverage. Most important, you'll have to live the rest of your life **knowing that you killed another human being**.

## **DRUGS**

Driving while using drugs (e.g., amphetamines, tranquilizers and barbiturates) can be hazardous (and possibly lethal) because of drowsiness, reduced coordination and poor judgment or risk taking. It can take hours to wear off, and if the drugs are combined with alcohol, the effects can be exaggerated and increased dramatically. *Louisiana law provides the same penalty for driving under the influence of drugs as it does for alcohol.*

## **MARIJUANA**

Whereas the effects of a single drink will diminish over an hour, it takes five to six hours for the effects of smoking one marijuana cigarette to wear off, making the combination of marijuana and alcohol especially dangerous. It can affect your eyesight, and with some users, marijuana interferes with the ability to judge time, speed and distance. It can make the simplest task seem hopelessly confusing.

## **VEHICULAR HOMICIDE**

Under R.S. 14:32.1, vehicular homicide is the killing of a human by an operator of any motor vehicle, aircraft, watercraft, or other means of conveyance, whether or not there is any intent to cause death or great bodily harm. Penalties include fines of not less than \$2,000 nor more than \$15,000 and imprisonment for not less than five years nor more than 30 years. At least one year jail time will be mandatory.

## **VEHICLE NEGLIGENT INJURY**

Under R.S. 14:39.1, vehicle negligent injury is inflicting any injury by an operator of any motor vehicle, aircraft, water-craft, or other means of conveyance when the offender is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or the offender's blood alcohol concentration is 0.08% or more. Penalties include fines of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

## **FIRST DEGREE VEHICLE NEGLIGENT INJURY**

Under R.S. 14:39.2, first degree vehicle negligent injury is inflicting of serious bodily injury by an operator of any motor vehicle, aircraft, water-craft, or other means of conveyance when the offender is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or the offender's blood alcohol concentration is 0.08% or more. Penalties include fines of not more than \$2,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years, or both.

## **RECKLESS DRIVING**

If you operate a vehicle in a criminally negligent or reckless manner, you are committing a crime punishable by a fine and jail.

## **HIT AND RUN DRIVING**

If you are involved in or cause an accident, you are required by law to stop, identify yourself and render reasonable aid. Failure to do so may result in a fine and time in jail.

## **FLIGHT FROM AN OFFICER**

A motor vehicle driver who refuses to stop, knowing a police officer has given a signal for him to stop, has committed a crime punishable by a fine and time in jail.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PER SE (SUBMIT OR REFUSE ALCOHOL ANALYSIS TEST)**

Louisiana law states that when you drive a motor vehicle upon the highways of this state, you are deemed to have given your consent to a test for the purpose of determining the alcoholic content of your blood and the presence of any abused or illegal controlled dangerous substance. The test will be administered at the discretion of a law enforcement officer who has reason to believe you were driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. At the time, the officer will advise you of both your criminal and civil rights as they relate to your arrest and to the chemical test.

If you refuse to submit to the test, your driving privileges will be suspended for 365 days on your first offense. If it is a second or subsequent offense, your driving privileges will be suspended for 730 days. In addition, before you can have your driving privileges reinstated, you must file proof of future financial responsibility by submitting an SR-22 or \$30,000.00 in cash or security.

If you submit to the test and you are 21 years of age or older, and the test results show a BAC level of 0.08% or more, your driving privileges will be suspended for 90 days. If you submit to the test and you are under 21 years of age, and the test results show a BAC level of 0.02% or more, your driving privileges will be suspended for 180 days. These are the specified penalties for first offense. If it is a second or subsequent offense, your driving privileges will be suspended for 365 days.

### **LOSING YOUR DRIVING PRIVILEGES**

The following is a list of various violations for which your driving privileges will be suspended:

- Conviction of driving while intoxicated (DWI).
- Failure to stop for a school bus loading or unloading children.
- Manslaughter or negligent homicide resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle.
- Any felony committed while operating a motor vehicle.
- Failure to stop and render assistance at an accident, in which you were involved, that results in the injury or death of a person.
- Three convictions of reckless driving committed within a 12 month period.
- Unlawful use of a driver's license.
- Making a false statement or concealing a material fact on an application for a driver's license.
- Failure to answer a traffic law charge.
- Driving in violation of a driver's license restriction.
- Refusal to take alcohol analysis test when arrested for DWI, or after submitting to the test where the results show a BAC level of 0.08% or more for those 21 years of age or older or 0.02 % or more for those younger than 21 years of age.
- Failure to comply with the financial responsibility law when required.
- Committing an offense in another state which, if committed in this state, would be grounds for suspension or revocation.
- Altering information on the license.
- Driving with a suspended driver's license.
- Using a text messaging communication device while operating a motor vehicle.
- Using a wireless/cellular communication device while operating a school bus.
- Using a wireless/cellular communication device while operating a motor vehicle if the driver holds a Class 'E' learners or intermediate operator's license, or is under the age of 18, or has been issued a first time operator's license that is within one year from the original issue date, excluding out of state transfers.

The surrender of an individual's actual driver's license will not be required to begin the period of suspension and/or disqualification. The suspension and/or disqualification dates can be given upon receipt of the individual's most current operator's license (in-state or out-of-state), upon expiration of the operator's license, on the date a statement of non-possession is received, after the expiration date the prior suspension or disqualification, or 30 days after the date of the notice of suspension, depending upon the individual record.

EACH conviction of driving under suspension will cause your suspension period to be extended for one year. Driving while your license is suspended will be cause for arrest, a court fine and/or time in jail. Upon expiration of any suspension period, a reinstatement fee will be required before your driving privileges can be reinstated.



**CHAPTER 9**  
**GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CLASS D “CHAUFFEUR’S” LICENSE**

Class “D” Chauffeur’s Driver’s License permits the operation of any single vehicle used in commerce if the vehicle has a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 or more pounds but less than 26,001, or any combination of vehicles if the vehicles have a combined gross weight rating of 10,001, or more pounds but less than 26,001 pounds inclusive of a towed unit with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds and not utilized in the transportation of hazardous materials. A class “D” license may be used for transportation of passengers for hire or fee provided the usage thereof does not fall within the definition of vehicles in classes “A”, “B”, or “C”. A class “D” license allows for operation of those vehicles in the class “E” category. You must be at least 17 years of age to obtain a Class “D” license.

**VEHICLE SIZE**

**Maximum width:**

- 8 feet for most vehicles. The load will not project more than 6 inches beyond the width of the body.
- 8 feet 6 inches for buses.

**Maximum height:**

- 13 feet 6 inches for all vehicles. (Some overpasses or other structures have clearance of **less** than 13’6”).

**Maximum length:**

- 40 feet for any single vehicle (including the load).
- 65 feet for truck-tractor and trailer combination

These limits do not apply to auto carriers, trailers hauling poles or pilings, or trailers hauling logs when operating during daylight hours.

**LOADS**

**Securing loads:**

- Contents must not be allowed to drop, shift, leak or otherwise escape.
- The load must be securely fastened so the covering or load does not come loose, or in any manner become a hazard to other motorists.

A load must not extend more than 4 feet to the front of the vehicle or more than 8 feet beyond the rear of the vehicle except poles, pilings and logs may project 15 feet beyond the rearmost part of the trailer.

If a load extends four or more feet past the bed or body of any vehicle, a red flag 12 inches square must be attached to the extreme rear of the load during daylight hours. The entire area of the flag must be visible. At night, a red light must be attached to the extreme rear of the load and visible for at least 500 feet to the sides and rear.

## **DRIVING**

Maximum speed for any vehicle in Louisiana is 70 mph except:

- When pulling or towing another motor vehicle the speed limit is 45 mph.
- School buses are limited to 35 mph when frequently stopping to load or unload children.
- Where a lower speed limit is posted.

## **FOLLOWING DISTANCE**

On rural highways outside business or residential areas, drivers of motor trucks must not follow within 400 feet of one another except to pass.

Also, high beam headlights must be dimmed no less than 500 feet from oncoming traffic and 200 feet of a vehicle being followed.

## **COASTING**

You must not let your vehicle coast downhill with the clutch disengaged or the gear in neutral.

## **RAILROAD STOPS**

You must stop within 50 feet but not closer than 15 feet from the nearest rail. You may not change gears until you have completely crossed over the tracks. This will not apply to street-rail crossings within a business or residential district.

## **EQUIPMENT**

**Fire Extinguisher:** Vehicles transporting passengers for hire must be equipped with at least a 2-BC fire extinguisher, completely filled and in working condition.

Tow trucks must be equipped with at least one 4-BC fire extinguisher capable of extinguishing flammable liquid fires, completely filled and in working condition.

Motor vehicles transporting explosives must be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher with a rating of at least 10-BC, completely filled and in working condition.

**Fenders and Mudguards:** Every truck must have a device (“mud flap”) to minimize the spray or splash of water or mud or loose road surface material to the rear.

**Warning equipment:** Freight carrying vehicles and passenger buses must carry:

- Three (3) flares, three (3) electric red lanterns OR three (3) red portable reflectors.
- Two (2) 12-inch square red cloth flags with standards.

Trucks carrying explosives, flammable liquids, compressed gases, or using compressed gas as a fuel must use red electric lanterns or red emergency reflectors only. Flares or fuses are not allowed. This equipment is to be used immediately any time the vehicle breaks down. One signal must be placed 100 feet behind and 100 feet forward of the truck. Each of these two signals must be in the center of the lane or shoulder. The third signal must be on the traffic side of the truck 10 feet to the front or rear.

## **TRAILERS AND TOWED VEHICLES**

When towing another vehicle, the draw bar or other connection will be of sufficient strength to pull all towed weight and will not exceed 15 feet. Exception: Distance can exceed 15 feet when transporting poles, pipes, machinery or other objects which cannot be readily dismembered.

## **MIRRORS**

A rear view mirror must reflect a view of the highway for a distance of 200 feet to the rear, regardless of the load of the vehicle.

## **LIGHTS**

No motor vehicle will be driven when any of the required lamps or reflectors are obscured by the tailboard, by any part of the load, by dirt or otherwise.

Tail lights must be visible for 1000 feet to the rear.

Reflectors must be visible from 600 feet.

Clearance lights must be visible from 500 feet.

## **BRAKES**

All trailers or semi-trailers with a gross vehicle weight rating of 3000 pounds or more must be equipped with brakes adequate to stop and hold it.

Care should be used to avoid excessive use of brakes on long downgrades. Drivers should use engine compression as the principal means of controlling speed on long grades. If your brakes should fail on a level road, you should downshift and use engine compression to slow down.

## **AIR BRAKES**

Air brakes use compressed air to make the brakes work. You can apply all the braking force you need to each of the wheels of a heavy vehicle. Air brakes are a safe way of stopping large vehicles if the brakes are well maintained and used properly. Air brake systems are three braking systems combined: the service brake system, the parking brake system, and the emergency brake system.

- The service brake system applies and releases the brakes when you use the brake pedal during normal driving.
- The parking brake system applies and releases the parking brakes when you use the parking brake control.
- The emergency brake system uses part of the service and parking brake's system to stop the vehicle in the event of a brake system failure.

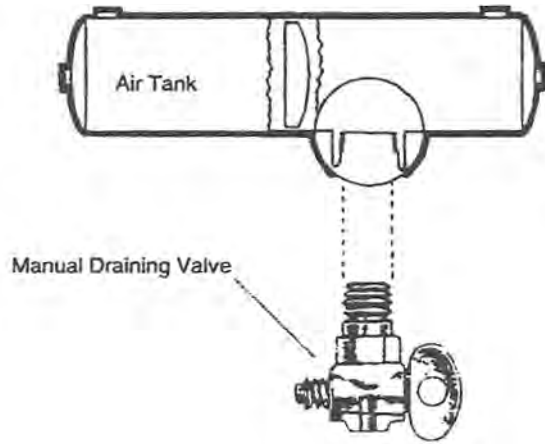
## **PARTS OF AN AIR BRAKE SYSTEM**

Air Compressor: Pumps air into the air storage tanks (reservoirs).

Air Compressor Governor: Controls when the air compressor will pump air into the air storage tanks.

Air Storage Tanks: Used to hold compressed air.

- Air Tank Drains (two types):
1. Manual - operated by turning a quarter turn or by pulling a cable. You must drain the tanks yourself at the end of each day of driving.
  2. Automatic - the water and oil is automatically expelled. They may be equipped for manual draining as well.
- Safety Valve: Protects the tank and the rest of the system from too much pressure. The valve is usually set to open at 150 psi. If the safety valve releases air, something is wrong.
- Brake Pedal: You put on the brakes by pushing down the brake pedal. Pushing the pedal down harder applies more air pressure. Letting up on the brake pedal reduces the air pressure and releases the brakes. Pressing and releasing the pedal unnecessarily can let air out faster than the compressor can replace it. If the pressure gets too low the brakes won't work.
- Supply Pressure Gauges: All vehicles equipped with air brakes have a pressure gauge connected to the air tank. These gauges tell you how much pressure is in the air tanks.
- Application Pressure Gauge: This gauge shows how much air pressure you are applying to the brakes. (This gauge is not on all vehicles.)
- Low Air Pressure Warning: A low air pressure warning signal is required on vehicles with air brakes. A warning signal you can see must come on before the air pressure in the tanks falls below 60 psi. (Or one half the compressor governor cutout pressure on older vehicles). The warning is usually a red light. A buzzer may also come on.
- Spring Brakes: All trucks must be equipped with emergency brakes and parking brakes. They must be held on by mechanical force. Spring brakes are usually used to meet these needs. When driving, powerful springs are held back by air pressure. If the air pressure is removed, the springs put on the brakes.
- Parking Brake Controls: In newer vehicles with air brakes, you engage the parking brakes using a **diamond shaped, yellow, push-pull control knob**. You pull the knob out to put the parking brakes (spring brakes) on, and push it in to release them. On older vehicles, the parking brakes may be controlled by a lever. Use the parking brakes whenever you park. NEVER PUSH THE BRAKE PEDAL DOWN WHEN THE SPRING BRAKES ARE ON. If you do, the brakes could be damaged.



## INSPECTING THE AIR BRAKE SYSTEM

The following three part air brake check must be performed:

- Step 1: With the engine running, build the air pressure to governed cut-out (100-125 psi). Shut off the engine, chock your wheels, if necessary, release the tractor protection valve and/or parking brake (push in), fully apply the foot brake and hold it for one minute. Check the air gauge to see if the air pressure drops more than three (3) pounds in one minute (single vehicle).
- Step 2: Turn the key to the “on” position (**without** starting the engine). Begin fanning off the air pressure by rapidly applying and releasing the foot brake. Low air warning devices (buzzer, light, and flag) should activate before air pressure drops below 60 psi.
- Step 3: Continue to fan off the air pressure. At approximately 20-40 psi, the parking brake valve should close (pop out).

In addition to the three part air brake check, the following items must be inspected prior to operating a vehicle equipped with air brakes:

- Air compressor drive belt (if compressor is belt driven).
- Manual slack adjusters on S-cam brakes.
- Brake drums (or discs), linings, and hoses.
- Rate of air pressure buildup (with engine at operating RPM, the pressure should build from 85 to 100 psi within 45 seconds or manufacturer’s specifications).
- Air compressor governor cut-in and cut-out pressures.
- Test parking brake.
- Test service brakes.

## USING THE AIR BRAKES

Emergency Stops:

You should brake so you can steer and so your vehicle stays in a straight line. Use one of the following two methods:

1. Controlled braking - Put on the brakes as hard as you can **without** locking the wheels (do not turn the steering wheel while doing this).
2. Stab braking - a) Press the brake pedal as hard as you can.  
b) Release the brakes when the wheels lock up.  
c) As soon as the wheels start rolling, put on the brakes fully again.

Stopping Distance: With hydraulic brakes (used on cars and light/medium trucks), the brakes work instantly. With air brakes, it takes a little time (one half second or more) for the air to flow through the lines to the brakes. Thus, the total stopping distance for vehicles with air brake systems is made up of **four** different factors.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Perception Distance} \\ + \text{Reaction Distance} \\ + \text{Brake Lag Distance} \\ + \text{Effective Braking Distance} \\ = \text{Total Stopping Distance} \end{array}$$

Example: The air brake lag distance at 55 mph on dry pavement adds about 32 feet. So at 55mph for an average driver under **good** traction and brake conditions, the total stopping distance is over 300 feet. This is longer than a football field.

Low Air Pressure Warning: If the low air pressure warning comes on, **stop and safely park your vehicle as soon as possible**.

Brake Fading or Failure: Brakes can fade or fail from excessive heat caused by using them too much and not relying on the engine braking effect or improper adjustment.

Parking Brakes: Any time you park, use the parking brakes unless:  
1. The brakes are very hot (from having come down a steep grade).  
2. The brakes are very wet in freezing temperatures.

Note: For more complete and detailed information about air brakes, please refer to the Louisiana Driver's Manual for Commercial Vehicle Driver Licensing.