

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Safe Vehicle Operation

Even the most experienced drivers can be distracted while driving. A defensive driver looks out for the actions of other drivers and anticipates potential problems.

## Lane Markings

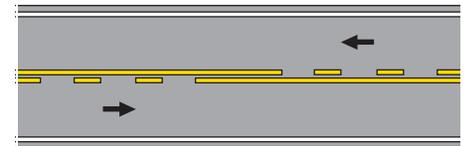
Lane markings separate traffic and alert drivers when it is permissible to pass other vehicles.

### Yellow Lane Markings

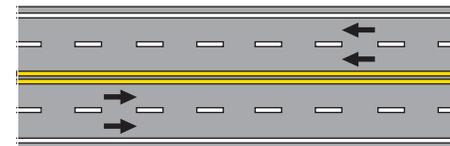
Yellow lane markings separate multiple lanes of traffic going in opposite directions. You may cross a broken yellow line to pass another vehicle when it is safe, but you should not cross a solid yellow line except to turn.



Two-lane road with  
a solid yellow line



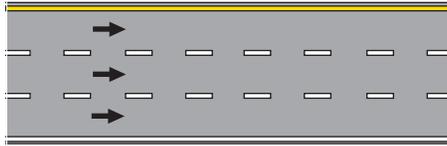
Two-lane road with  
a broken yellow line



Four-lane road with  
a solid yellow line

## White Lane Markings

White lane markings separate multiple lanes of traffic going in the same direction. Most roads with more than two lanes have broken white lines to separate the lanes. You may cross a broken white line when it is safe to change lanes, but you should not cross a solid white line.



Three lanes of traffic  
with broken white lines

## Changing Lanes and Passing Other Vehicles

Only change one lane at a time. When changing lanes to prepare for a turn, you must signal your intention to do so at least 200 feet prior to changing lanes or turning. Your signal distance must be at least 300 feet before the turn if operating a vehicle in a speed zone of at least 50 miles per hour. Do not weave in and out of lanes. This action will greatly increase your risk of an accident. On the highway, slower vehicles should use the right lane. Leave the left-hand lane for faster moving or passing vehicles.

Follow these rules when you are changing lanes:

- Make sure that there is no traffic ahead of you in the lane that you would like to enter
- Check your mirrors for any vehicles that are preparing to pass you
- Briefly turn your head towards the lane that you are entering to make sure that there is no vehicle in your blind spot and that there is sufficient room to move into the adjacent lane
- Use your turn signal to alert other drivers of your intention to change lanes
- Smoothly move into the new driving lane

## Passing Other Vehicles

Follow these rules when you are passing other vehicles:

- Make sure the passing lane is clear of traffic. You must return to the right side of the road no less than 100 feet before any oncoming vehicle
- Check behind and to the left of your vehicle to make sure that another vehicle is not attempting to pass you
- Use your turn signals to alert other drivers of your intention to change lanes
- Move into the passing lane, accelerate and continue to move forward until you can see the vehicle that you are passing in your rearview mirror
- Before returning to the lane in which you were originally driving, use the appropriate turn signal

## When Passing Other Vehicles is Prohibited

It is dangerous and illegal to try to pass other vehicles in the following situations:

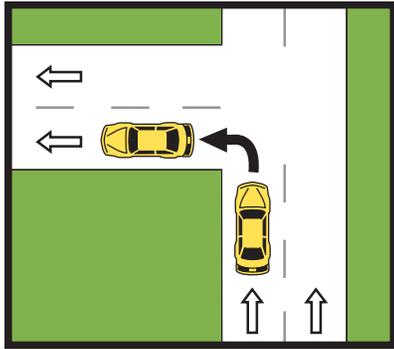
- A solid yellow line is marked on the driver's side of the center line of the road
- A yellow pennant-shaped "No Passing Zone" is posted on the left-hand side of the road, or a white rectangular "Do Not Pass" sign is posted on the right-hand side of the road
- When you are driving on or approaching a curve in the road
- When you are approaching the crest of a hill or grade in the road
- Within 100 feet of an intersection, railroad crossing, bridge, viaduct or tunnel

## When You are Being Passed

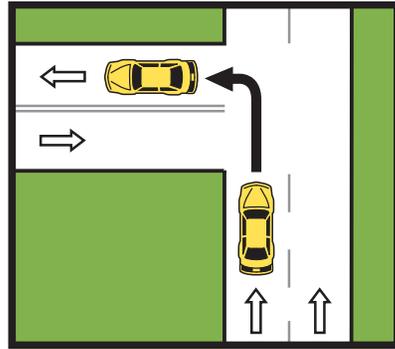
If another vehicle is passing you on the left-hand side of the road, allow the other vehicle to pass safely and do not increase your speed.

## Rules for Safe and Legal Turning

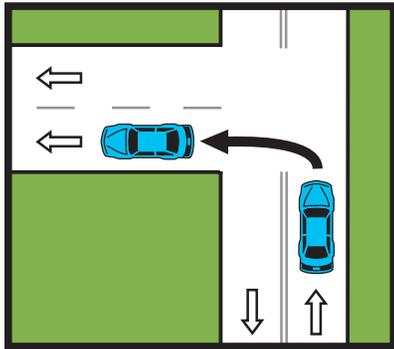
The first rule for a safe and legal turn is to move into the proper lane well before the turn. To turn left, be in the far left lane for your direction of travel. To turn right, be in the far right lane for your direction of travel.



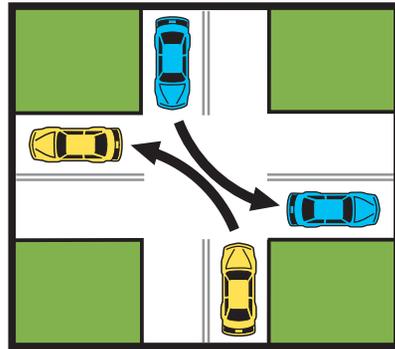
Turning from a one-way road to a one-way road



Turning from a one-way road to a two-way road



Turning from a two-way road to a one-way road



Turning from a two-way road to a two-way road

## Signaling Your Intention to Turn

You must give a proper turn signal at least 200 feet before turning or changing lanes. If the posted speed limit is 50 miles per hour or more, you must give a proper turn signal at least 300 feet before turning or changing lanes.

The safest type of signal is using the lighted signals used in most vehicles. If, however, one or more of these signals is malfunctioning, you may use hand signals. You may not use hand signals on a driving skills test.



Stop or slow

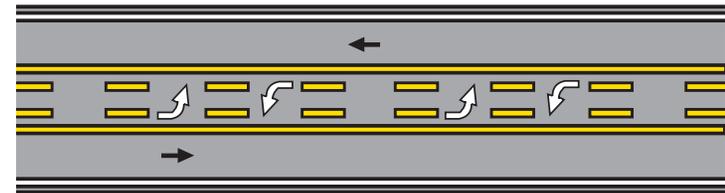
Right turn

Left turn

## Turning Left from Specially-Designated Center Lanes

Busy roads on which there are many places a vehicle may make a left turn often have a center lane designated solely for the left-turning vehicles. Always be aware that vehicles traveling in the opposite direction may be entering the center lane to turn left in front of your vehicle. Never use this type of center lane for passing other vehicles.

Designated center lanes for left turns can usually be identified by a sign with alternate directional arrows state "CENTER LANE ONLY" or with pavement arrows, although some center lanes do not have signs or pavement arrows.



Center turn lane with pavement arrows

## U-Turns

A U-turn is a maneuver in which a driver changes direction by making a 180-degree turn. It is potentially dangerous and should only be undertaken when not prohibited by law. Follow these rules when making a U-turn:

- Always yield right of way to oncoming vehicles and pedestrians
- Never make a U-turn on a curve in the road or when approaching the crest of a hill or grade
- Never make a U-turn on an interstate highway. Instead, proceed to the next exit and re-enter the highway in the opposite direction

One exception where U-turns are permitted and necessary is at an intersection where the left-turn movement is prohibited in the intersection itself, but rather the left-turn is made after the driver proceeds through the intersection and makes a U-turn at an upcoming median opening. These are known as median U-turn intersections and signs are provided to guide drivers.

## Four-Way Stops

The rules for a four-way stop are like those for a two-way stop: stop and look for oncoming traffic, and proceed when it is safe to do so. At a four-way stop, the rule is that the first vehicle to stop at the intersection is the first to proceed through the intersection. However, you may occasionally arrive at a four-way stop sign at the same time as another driver. In such cases the driver to the right has the right of way. However, if there is any doubt which driver has the right of way or if there is the chance of a crash, it is better to yield the right of way to the other driver.

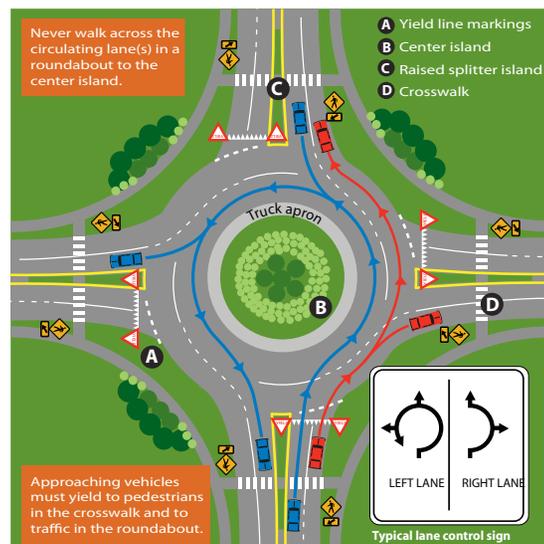
## Roundabouts

A roundabout is a circular intersection in which traffic enters or exits only through right turns and proceeds in a counter-clockwise direction. When approaching a roundabout incoming traffic always yields to the circulating traffic.

For multi-lane roundabouts where the circular roadway has more than one lane, drivers should know which lane they need to be in prior to entering the roundabout. Drivers should not change lanes in the circulatory roadway.

Signs, pavement markings or both are provided to guide drivers to the proper lane in advance of the circulatory roadway.

A traffic circle differs from a roundabout in that it may have clockwise and counter-clockwise traffic. The approaches to the circulatory roadway of traffic circle may also be controlled by stop signs instead of yield signs.



Two-lane roundabout  
(does not reflect all roundabout designs)

## Following Turning Vehicles

When following a driver who has signaled his or her intention to make a turn, or who has slowed down and may be looking to make a turn, you should slow down and be prepared to stop.

## Speed Limits

Indiana law requires drivers to operate vehicles at the posted speed limit.

### Rural Interstate Highway Speed Limits

Rural interstate highways are located outside urban areas with a population of at least 50,000 people. The following speed limit rules apply in these areas:

- Passenger vehicles may not exceed 70 miles per hour or the posted speed limit
- Trucks that have a declared gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 pounds may not exceed 65 miles per hour or the posted speed limit

On a rural state divided highway, vehicles may not exceed 60 miles per hour or the posted speed limit.

### Urban Speed Limits

Urban areas have a population of at least 50,000 people. The following speed limit rules apply in these areas:

- On an urban interstate highway, vehicles may not exceed 55 miles per hour or the posted speed limit
- On a non-divided state highway, vehicles may not exceed 55 miles per hour or the posted speed limit
- On county roads, vehicles may not exceed 55 miles per hour or the posted speed limit
- In most urban residential areas, vehicles may not exceed 30 miles per hour or the posted speed limit
- In alleys, vehicles may not exceed 15 miles per hour or the posted speed limit

## School Zone Speed Limits

If you are driving near a school, you must slow down to the lower, posted speed limit for the school zone. Common hours for school zone speed limits are 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, local authorities may establish lower speed limits for school zones when children are present.

## Highway Work Zone Speed Limits

Work site speed limits are always at least 10 miles per hour below the maximum established speed limit for the area. Drivers must adhere to the posted speed limit in a work site.

## School Bus Speed Limits

When not driving on an interstate or state highway, the maximum speed limit for a school bus is 40 miles per hour unless the posted speed limit is lower. The maximum speed limit for a school bus on an interstate or highway is 60 miles per hour or the posted speed limit.

## Reduce Speed in Dangerous Conditions

Excessive speed, even when conditions are ideal, is dangerous and increases the likelihood of an accident. Driving at the posted speed limit or in excess of it during the following roadway conditions is even more dangerous:

- Bad weather and poor visibility
- Slick or icy roads
- Driving with worn tires
- Unsafe vehicle conditions
- Impaired physical condition
- Hazardous conditions on road surface

## Braking and Following Distances

The following chart provides an indication of how fast a vehicle travels at 35, 55 and 65 miles per hour.

Speed	35 mph	55 mph	65 mph
<b>Feet traveled in one second</b>	51.3	80.7	95.3
<b>Lanes of traffic crossed in one second</b>	2.6	4	4.7
<b>Seconds to travel a football field</b>	5.8	3.7	3.1

A good rule for drivers to follow is to stay at least two to three seconds behind the vehicle ahead. When following a vehicle, watch for the vehicle ahead to pass a fixed object and estimate how much time elapses before you pass the same object.

Many factors affect a vehicle's ability to stop:

- Weight of vehicle
- Type and condition of brakes
- Type and condition of tires
- Physical condition of pavement
- Slickness of pavement
- Grade of road

## Skidding

Sudden turns, lane changes or hard braking can cause a vehicle to skid. The procedure for correcting a skid is the same for both front-wheel-drive vehicles and rear-wheel-drive vehicles.

If your vehicle begins to lose traction or the rear wheels begin sliding sideways, ease off the gas pedal. Do not make a fast turn away from the direction of the skid and do not steer too far, which could cause a spin.

If your vehicle has conventional brakes, turn the steering wheel in a controlled manner in the direction the rear of the car is sliding. When you regain traction, straighten the vehicle and proceed slowly.

If your vehicle has an anti-lock brake system (ABS), keep your foot on the brake pedal, maintaining firm and continuous pressure while steering normally. Do not pump the brakes. A mechanical sound or noise and vibration or increased resistance in the brake pedal indicates your ABS is working.

## Driving in Uncertain Weather Conditions

### Winter Driving

Driving in winter weather presents a number of dangers due to ice, snow and very cold temperatures. Always clear your windows before driving.

Ice on the roadway is a potentially dangerous condition that can cause a vehicle to lose traction.

Snow, especially when mixed with significant wind, poses a number of problems for drivers. Visibility may be substantially reduced. Watch for drifting snow, particularly in rural areas where only a few inches of snow can cause roads to become impassable. Always watch for icy conditions, too, when there is snowfall on the ground, particularly at intersections, and use your headlights to be seen by other drivers. Be aware that moisture on ramps, bridges and overpasses may occasionally freeze before other sections of the driving roadway. Stay a safe distance behind snowplows.

Always allow your vehicle's engine plenty of time to warm up before driving in very cold conditions. Drive with a full tank of gas so that if stranded, the heater can remain in use for as long as possible. Brush the snow off your headlights and taillights frequently.

Consider carrying a winter survival kit in your vehicle that includes sand or strips of carpet for traction, booster cables, blankets, shovel, flashlight, extra clothing, candles, matches, nonperishable snack food and bottled water.

### Rain

Wet roadway surfaces can be dangerously slick, especially immediately following a rainfall. When you are driving on wet roads, your vehicle is actually traveling on a thin layer of oil, dirt and water (hydroplaning).

Hydroplaning increases with speed and, at a point your tires may be in contact only with the oil, dirt and water. If this happens, there is no friction to brake, speed up, or turn, and a gust of wind, a change of road level, or a slight turn can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

Do not drive on bald or badly worn tires. Slow down when there is heavy rain, standing water or slush on the road. After driving through water puddles, test your brakes by pumping them. Doing so will help to dry them. If the water is deeper than your tire treads, slow down. Use your headlights to be seen by other drivers.

### Fog

Fog can greatly reduce your visibility of other vehicles, pedestrians and traffic signals. Drive cautiously and at reduced speeds. Do not use high headlight beams. Low headlight beams better illuminate the road and objects ahead. If fog closes in completely, and visibility is reduced to near zero, carefully pull off the road as far as possible and stop. Headlights and flashing emergency signals should be used while driving in fog.

### High Winds

Strong winds have a high impact on high-profile vehicles (e.g. vans, sport utility vehicles). Be aware of such conditions and take appropriate action for your safety.

### Flash Flooding

Flash flooding causes more deaths than any other roadway weather event each year. Be especially alert at night or when driving on unfamiliar roads. If you are caught in a storm or come upon a hazardous situation, follow these rules:

- Do not drive around traffic barricades or past road closed signs
- Watch for bridges, culverts and roadbeds that may be washed away or undermined by floodwaters
- Do not drive where water is over the road. The depth of the water is not always obvious and the water may hide washouts
- If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it as soon as possible. Flood waters can rise rapidly and sweep a car and its occupants away

## Driving at Night

Driving at night presents a number of potential problems which can be made worse if you do not have experience driving at night or in dangerous conditions.

### Visibility

Pedestrians, road markings and other vehicles are more difficult to identify and recognize at night. Under nighttime driving conditions, you should reduce normal speed, especially on unfamiliar roads.

The glare of oncoming headlights may also reduce vision. To avoid the effects of glare, do not look directly into the lights of an approaching vehicle, but focus on the right side of the road.

### Fatigue

Drivers are more likely to be tired while driving at night and may have a higher risk for accidents. Avoid driving late at night, if possible, or driving at any time without enough sleep.

Be prepared to stop driving if you are unable to stay alert or experience any of the following signs of fatigue:

- Trouble focusing your vision
- Having no memory of the last few minutes of your drive
- Beginning to drift out of your lane
- Failing to maintain a constant speed
- Head nodding and feeling as though you are about to fall asleep

If you are feeling drowsy let another person drive or find a safe area to pull over and rest. A driver's effort to stay awake when excessively tired, such as rolling down the windows or turning up the radio are usually ineffective and may give a false sense of alertness.

### Headlights

Drivers must use headlights between sunset and sunrise as well as at any other time in which visibility is less than 500 feet. When headlights are on, lower headlight beams must be used when approaching within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle or when following within 200 feet of the rear of another vehicle.

## Driving on Interstate Highways

Good judgment and timing are needed to merge smoothly with fast-moving traffic on highways. When you enter an interstate on-ramp, stay to the right and increase your speed in the acceleration lane to allow your car to merge with traffic when your path is clear. Drivers already on the interstate should make allowances for those entering. However, drivers entering an interstate must yield the right of way to vehicles on the interstate.

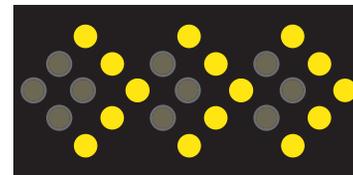
It is unsafe to back up on an interstate highway to reach a missed exit. If you miss an exit, you must drive to the next exit. It is illegal for any vehicle, other than an emergency vehicle or a highway maintenance vehicle, to make a U-turn by crossing the median or crossover of an interstate highway.

Except in the event of an emergency or a disabled vehicle, do not stop or park a vehicle on the shoulder of an interstate highway.

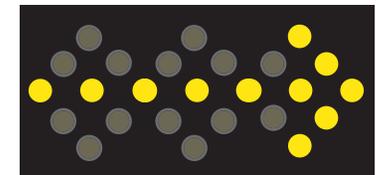
Trucks are restricted to the right lane on sections of interstate with two lanes in one direction and restricted to the right two lanes of interstate with three lanes or more in one direction.

## Work Zones

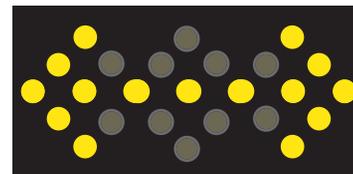
Flashing arrow boards are often used to indicate a detour or "crossover." In these cases, lane markings on the road, traffic cones, barrels or barricades will outline the path the vehicle must follow. A flashing arrow board not indicating a direction either way is a signal to use caution, but does not require a driver to move to another lane.



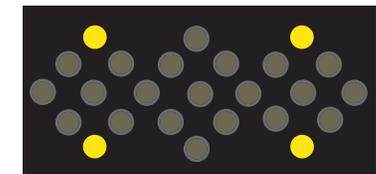
Move or merge right



Move or merge right



Move or merge right or left



Caution

## Flagger Signals

At some work sites, one or more flaggers are posted at each end of the work zone to control traffic flow.

You must stop when a flagger extends a fluorescent orange/red flag in a horizontal position into the line of traffic. You may proceed at a reduced speed only when directed to by the flagger.

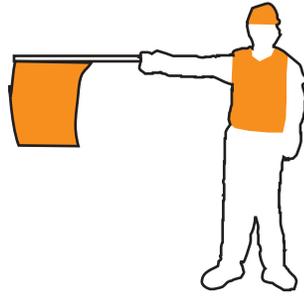
If a flagger uses a signal paddle, you should stop or proceed slowly according to the “STOP” or “SLOW” message displayed on the sign.

In some cases, Automated Flagger Assistance Devices are used to enable the flaggers to be positioned out of the lane of traffic. These devices display a “STOP” or a “SLOW” sign just like the flagger-held sign paddle.

## Automated Flagger Assistance Device Work Zone Safety Driving Tips

Work zones pose dangers both for drivers and for the workers. Be respectful of these dangers and exercise caution whenever traveling in a work zone:

- Stay alert. Look for reduced speed limits, narrow driving lanes and highway workers.
- Pay attention. Work zone signs will state exactly what to expect ahead.
- Merge early. If merging at first sight of signs, traffic will flow more smoothly.
- Slow down. If you are speeding when you approach a work zone you will encounter slowed or stopped traffic within seconds.
- Don't tailgate. Maintain a safe distance on all sides of your vehicle.
- Minimize distractions.
- Plan ahead and expect delays.



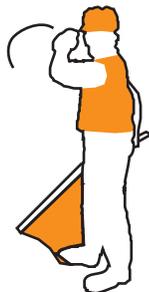
Stop



Stop



Slow



Proceed

## Railroad Crossings

Special signs, signals and pavement markings are used to warn and regulate drivers at railroad crossings, although you should not expect to see all of these devices used at every railroad crossing. Some vehicles are required by law to always stop at railroad crossings not closer than 15 feet or further than 50 feet from the nearest rail. This equipment does not apply to abandoned railroad tracks.

Vehicles that must stop at railroad crossing include:

- All vehicles carrying passengers for hire
- All school buses
- All vehicles carrying explosives or flammable liquids

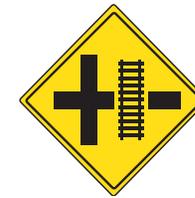
There are a number of warning signs used to alert drivers of a railroad crossing.



Railroad  
Crossing



Railroad  
Crossing



Railroad  
Crossing



Railroad  
Crossing

## Cross Bucks

Cross bucks at a railroad crossing mark the location of the tracks.

When displayed alone, you should treat a cross buck as a yield sign and the decision to stop or cross the tracks is yours. You must stop if there is a train approaching.



When a cross buck is displayed with a stop sign, you must come to a complete stop and proceed over the tracks only after making certain that a train is not approaching. Never assume that because there is only a stop sign posted that a train is not coming.

When there are active warning bells, flashing lights, or lights and gates, you must stop and not proceed until the active warning is cancelled or you are directed to proceed by a law enforcement officer or railroad flagman.

## Railroad Crossing Safety Tips

Obey the warning signs. Due to the size of trains, the actual speed of a train can be very deceiving. Under no circumstances should you attempt to race a train to a crossing. It is illegal to drive around a crossing gate that is down.

Avoid stopping or shifting gears while crossing railroad tracks. A driver should never begin to cross railroad tracks unless the tracks can be cleared without stopping. If your vehicle stalls on the tracks, all occupants should immediately leave the vehicle.

Look for the emergency notification sign at the crossing with contact information to call the railroad about a blocked crossing and contact 911 for assistance.

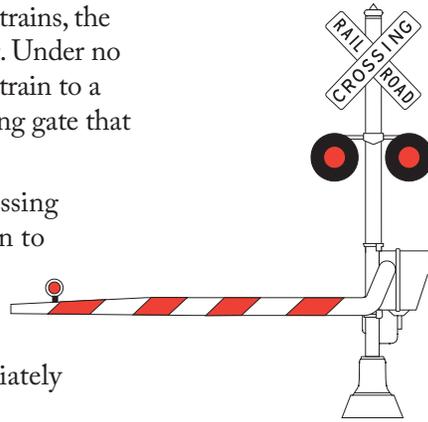
Watch for additional trains. Where there is more than one track, a driver waiting for the track to clear must make sure another train is not coming on the other track once the first train has cleared. Be careful that a train is not proceeding in the opposite direction behind the first train.

Be aware of 'local quiet zones' where locomotive horns are not sounded by approaching trains at some gated crossings.

Be aware that some trains operate on tracks in the middle of streets. In those cases, traffic signals flash red in all directions to indicate the presence of an approaching train. Drivers should treat this indication like any other crossing warning.

Trains cannot stop quickly.

Do not pass another vehicle within 100 feet of a railroad crossing.



Railroad crossing gate

## Sharing the Road with Tractor-Trailers

To reduce the chance of an accident with a tractor-trailer, be familiar with the braking ability, blind spots and maneuverability.

### Braking

A tractor-trailer will take longer to stop than a car traveling at the same speed; therefore, you should not make a sudden lane change or stop in front of a tractor-trailer. The average passenger car traveling at 55 miles per hour can stop in approximately 130 to 140 feet, or about half the length of a football field. A fully loaded tractor-trailer with hot brakes may take more than 400 feet to come to a complete stop, or more than the length of a football field.

### Turning

With any turning vehicle, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels and the longer the vehicle is, the greater the difference will be. Tractor-trailer drivers often swing out as the first step in making a tight turn. When following a tractor-trailer, watch its turn signals before trying to pass, especially to the right. If the tractor-trailer appears to be moving to the left, wait a moment to check and see which way the driver is signaling and watch for a right turn.

### Blind Spots

Many drivers falsely assume that a tractor-trailer driver can see the road better because he or she sits twice as high as the driver of a car. While tractor-trailer drivers do have a better forward view and bigger mirrors, they still have serious blind spots in which a car can completely disappear from view. Blind spots for the tractor-trailer driver will be up to 20 feet in front of the cab, on either side of the trailer, alongside the cab and up to 200 feet behind the vehicle.

Drivers lingering in the blind spots on the sides and in the rear hamper a tractor-trailer driver's ability to take evasive action to avoid a dangerous situation.

### Maneuverability

Tractor-trailers are designed to carry products long distances but are not designed to be as maneuverable as cars. Tractor-trailers weigh more, have longer stopping and accelerating distances, and have a wider turning radius. On multi-lane highways, tractor-trailers stay in the center lane to help the flow of local traffic on and off the highway.

Staying in the middle lane also increases the tractor-trailer driver's options if he or she has to switch lanes in order to avoid a dangerous situation or an accident.

## Tips for Sharing the Road with Tractor-Trailers

- **Do not cut off a tractor-trailer in traffic or on the highway to reach an exit or turn.** Cutting into the open space in front of a tractor-trailer removes the tractor-trailer driver's cushion of safety. Trying to beat a tractor-trailer to a single-lane construction zone creates a particularly dangerous situation. Take a moment to slow down and exit behind a tractor-trailer. It will only take you a few extra seconds and will greatly reduce the risk of an accident.
- **Do not linger alongside a tractor-trailer when passing.** Always pass a tractor-trailer completely and always on the left side. If you linger when passing the tractor-trailer, your position makes it impossible for the tractor-trailer driver to take evasive action if an obstacle appears in the road ahead.
- **Do not follow too closely or tailgate.** When following behind a tractor-trailer, if you cannot see the tractor-trailer driver's rearview mirrors, the tractor-trailer driver cannot see you. Tailgating a tractor-trailer is dangerous because you take away your own cushion of safety if the tractor-trailer stops quickly. In addition, if the vehicle you are following hits something in the road, you will have no time to react before it hits the front of your car.
- **Never underestimate the size and speed of an approaching truck.** Because of its large size, a tractor-trailer often appears to be traveling at a slower speed than it is. A substantial number of collisions involving a car and a tractor-trailer take place at intersections, because the driver of the car did not realize how close the tractor-trailer was or how quickly it was approaching.

## Sharing the Road with Other Vehicles

### Emergency Vehicles

Ambulances and police vehicles, fire and rescue vehicles are permitted to display a red flashing light and drivers must obey the following rules:

- Yield the right of way to these vehicles
- Always listen for sirens on these vehicles and yield the right of way; the siren is usually heard before the emergency vehicle is in view
- Slow down, pull to the right of the road and stop until an emergency vehicle passes

When you see a stationary emergency vehicle with flashing lights, you must slow down and move into a lane that is not adjacent to the emergency vehicle, if it is possible to do so safely. If it is not possible to do so safely, you must slow down and proceed with caution.

Privately-owned vehicles with flashing blue lights are used by volunteer firefighters responding to an alarm. You must yield the right of way to these vehicles.

Privately-owned vehicles with flashing green lights are used by certified emergency medical technicians responding to emergencies. You must yield the right of way to these vehicles.

## School Buses

Busse that transport students to or from school must meet the following requirements:

- Be painted chrome-yellow and display the words "School Bus" between the warning signal lamps on the front and rear of the vehicle in black letters, at least eight inches high
- Display two amber lights in front and rear to warn drivers that the bus is slowing down to stop to load or unload students, and two red lights in front and rear to indicate that the bus is stopped to load or unload students
- Be equipped with amber turn signals
- Be equipped with a stop arm which extends at least 18 inches from the side of the bus body. It will also include a red octagonal stop sign with white letters to be extended while the bus is stopped on the roadway for the purpose of loading or unloading students



A school bus driver must load and unload students as close to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway as possible.

School buses are equipped with both amber and red flashing lights. When the school bus driver activates the amber lights, he or she is warning other drivers that the bus is slowing and is going to load or unload children. Once the bus stops, the red lights and stop arm will be activated.

You must stop when you approach a school bus with flashing red lights activated and stop arm extended. If you are driving on a roadway divided by a barrier or unimproved median, you are required to stop only if you are traveling in the same direction as the school bus.

Disregarding a school bus stop arm can be considered reckless driving, a Class B Misdemeanor, and is punishable by up to 180 days in jail and a maximum fine of \$1,000.

Before crossing a railroad track, all school buses must stop no more than 50 feet and not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail. While stopped, the driver of the school bus must:

- Listen through an open window or door
- Look in both directions along the track for an approaching train or other equipment and for signals indicating the approach of a train or other on-track equipment
- Not proceed until it can be done safely

After stopping and once it is deemed safe to proceed, the school bus shall cross the tracks without manually shifting gears.

Take note that school buses stop at railroad crossings. There have been an increased number of rear-end collisions involving school buses stopped at railroad crossings.

School authorities may give permission in writing for a school bus to be used for transporting students for certain non-school functions, as prescribed by law.

A special purpose bus can be registered by public school corporations and private schools for transportation of students to extracurricular events. If a van, station wagon or bus is transporting six or more people to extracurricular events it must have a body change to Special Purpose and must be inspected by the Indiana State Police.

## Motorcycles and Motor Driven Cycles

Motorcyclists and motor driven cyclists must be provided the same considerations as other drivers. Allow all motor vehicle operators the width of a full lane.

Although it may seem as though there is enough room in the traffic lane for more than one motor vehicle, it is important to consider that motorcycles and motor driven cycles may need the full use of the lane to maneuver safely and avoid potential hazards that are unseen by other motor vehicle operators.

The smaller profile of motorcycles and motor driven cycles can make it more difficult to judge their speed and distance. These vehicles can also stop much more quickly than other motor vehicles. Because of their size, motorcycles and motor driven cycles can be hidden in a vehicle's blind spot or missed in a quick shoulder check. Always check your mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections. Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows other vehicle operators to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.

Do not assume that a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle or motor driven cycle means they are turning soon. These vehicle types have signals that are usually not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcyclist or motor driven cyclist is going to take action before you proceed.

Road conditions, which are minor annoyances to drivers of larger vehicles, pose major hazards to motorcyclists. Motorcyclists and motor driven cyclists may change speed or adjust their position within a lane suddenly in reaction to road and traffic conditions, such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings and grooved pavement. Allow at least three or four seconds when following a motorcycle so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.

## Bicycles

Drivers must routinely share the roadway with bicyclists. On most roadways, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other roadway users. Drivers should observe the following guidelines when sharing the roadway with bicyclists:

- Drivers may pass a bicyclist when there is a safe amount of room beside the bicyclist (three-foot minimum) and when there is no danger from oncoming traffic
- Drivers must yield the right of way to a bicyclist just as they would to another vehicle

- Bicyclists are prohibited on limited-access highways, expressways and certain other marked roadways
- A bicyclist is not required to ride in a designated bike lane because they have the right to use either the bike lane or the travel lane
- Avoid turning across the path of a bicyclist
- When a motorist is turning left and there is a bicyclist entering the intersection from the opposite direction, the driver should wait for the bicyclist to pass before making the turn
- If a motorist is sharing the left turn lane with a bicyclist, stay behind the cyclist until he or she has safely completed the left turn
- If a motorist is turning right and a bicyclist is approaching on the right, let the bicyclist go through the intersection first before making a right turn

After parking and before opening vehicle doors, a motorist should first check for bicyclists.

## Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle paths and lanes shall be used exclusively for the operation of bicycles unless:

- Signage specifies joint use with pedestrians
- The driver is on official duty, such as delivering mail

Other rules for drivers or operators of any vehicle include:

- Do not drive in or park in bicycle paths or lanes, or place the vehicle in such a manner as to impede bicycle traffic on such path or lane
- Yield the right of way to an individual operating a bicycle on a designated bicycle path or lane
- Do not move into a bicycle path or lane in preparation for a turn
- Cross a bicycle path or lane only when turning or when entering or leaving an alley, driveway or private road

## Sharrows

Sharrow markings are pavement markings of a bike with two arrows above it and are intended to help bicyclists position themselves away from parked cars and to alert other road users to expect bicyclists to occupy travel lanes.



Sharrow Markings

## Slow Moving Vehicles

Certain slow moving farm vehicles, construction equipment and vehicles drawn by animals may share roadways. You should use care when approaching and passing these vehicles. Be alert for the special emblem that the driver must place on the rear of the slow moving vehicle.

A rider of a horse or horse-drawn vehicle has the same rights and responsibilities of a motor vehicle driver when riding on a public highway. Approach a rider with caution and be alert for any hand signals used by a horseback rider or the driver of a horse-drawn vehicle.



Slow Moving Vehicle

## Stationary Utility, Maintenance and Solid Waste Vehicles

When you see stationary utility, maintenance and solid waste vehicles that are displaying alternating flashing amber lights, you should slow down and move into a lane that is not adjacent to the vehicle if it is possible to do so safely. If you are traveling on a highway having at least four lanes with not less than two lanes proceeding in your direction of travel, you must slow down and move into a lane that is not adjacent to the vehicle if it is possible to do so safely. If it is not possible to change lanes safely, you must slow down to 10 miles per hour below the posted speed limit and proceed with caution.

## Traffic Control Officers and Official Processions

Because of special events, traffic congestion or other reasons, a law enforcement officer may direct traffic at an intersection. A law enforcement officer's command may be different from a traffic signal or sign. In such a case, the law enforcement officer's command is the one that must be obeyed.

Official processions, such as a funeral procession, have the right of way regardless of a traffic signal that indicates otherwise.

## Parking and Reversing

Follow these procedures to parallel park in an empty space that has vehicles parked in front of it and behind it:

1. Signal your intention to park
2. Position your vehicle parallel with the vehicle parked in front of the empty space and maintain at least two feet from this vehicle. Align your rear bumper with the rear bumper of the vehicle parked in front of the empty space **(Figure A)**
3. Reverse slowly until the front of the vehicle is even with the front door of the parallel car. Turn the wheel sharply to the right and reverse slowly until the vehicle is at a 45-degree angle, and reverse **(Figure B)**
4. When the front of your vehicle passes the rear of the parallel car, turn your steering wheel to the left sharply, then gradually, while backing into the space **(Figure C)**
5. Straighten your vehicle's wheels and pull forward in the space **(Figure D)**

When you park facing downhill, turn your vehicle's wheels toward the curb.

When you park facing uphill, turn your vehicle's wheels away from the curb.

If there is no curb, turn your vehicle's wheels away from the street.

Use your turn signal when entering traffic from a parking space. Be sure to look in both directions and double-check for cars and pedestrians when backing out of a parking place.

### Illegal Parking Areas

Parking in the following common areas is prohibited:

- Highways (unless indicated otherwise)
- Within intersections or on pedestrian crosswalks
- On sidewalks or in front of any driveway
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or in fire lanes
- Bridges or other elevated structures, such as on a highway or a tunnel
- Adjacent to yellow curbs
- Beside another parked vehicle

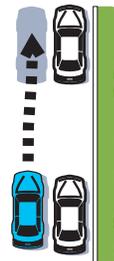


Figure A



Figure B



Figure C



Figure D

## Reversing

Reversing is more difficult than driving forward because your field of vision is blocked by the vehicle itself, and it is more difficult to control your speed and direction.

To reverse, turn your body to the right to look through the back window. Never use only the rearview mirror for reversing. Go slowly, watching carefully in all directions. Never back into an intersection in order to turn around.

## Pedestrian Safety

Crosswalks or a pedestrian signal indicate that pedestrians are nearby. Follow these rules or guidelines when pedestrians are in the vicinity:

- Always yield the right of way to pedestrians
- Do not make a turn that causes a pedestrian to stop, slow down or make some other special effort to avoid a collision
- If children are in the vicinity, take special care because children are not fully aware of the dangers of traffic
- Be respectful of others who have difficulty in crossing streets, such as elderly persons or persons with a visual disability

### Blind Pedestrians

Traveling aids for a person who is blind are often a white cane or a trained guide dog. Independent travel for people with visual disabilities involves some risk that can be greatly reduced when drivers are aware of the use and meaning of a white cane or guide dog. Drivers must always yield the right of way to persons who are blind.

## Seat Belts and Child Safety Restraints

Seat belts and child safety restraints such as car seats save thousands of lives each year and improve the chances of surviving an accident.

### Seat Belts

Indiana law requires a driver and all passengers to use seat belts at all times when a vehicle is in operation. Operators of buses are also required to use a seat belt.

A seat belt must be used even in a vehicle with one or more air bags. Air bags are designed to work in tandem with seat belts to slow down the vehicle's occupants in the event of a collision. Failure to use a seat belt could result in injury to the occupants from the air bag.

## Seat Belt Exceptions

The following are examples of when it is not required to wear seat belts:

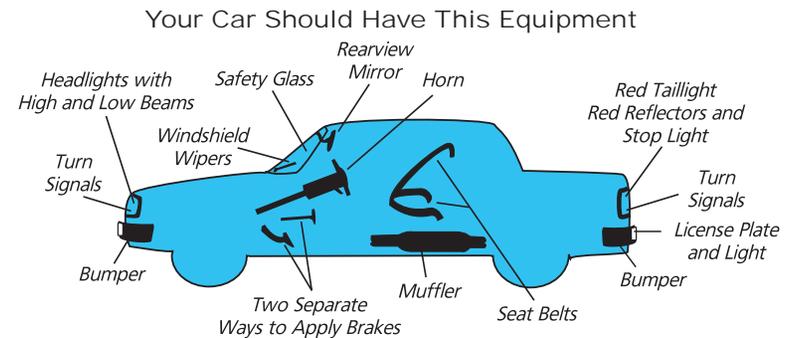
- Drivers or passengers who should not wear a seat belt for medical reasons provided he or she has written documentation of the medical reasons from a physician
- A child who is required to be restrained by a child restraint system
- Traveling in a commercial or United States Postal Service vehicle that makes frequent stops for the purpose of pickup or delivery of goods and services
- A rural carrier of the United States Postal Service and is operating a vehicle while serving a rural postal route
- A newspaper motor route carrier or newspaper bundle hauler who stops to make deliveries from a vehicle
- A driver examiner designated and appointed under IC 9-14-2-3 and is conducting an examination of an applicant for a permit or license under IC 9-24-10-4
- An occupant of a farm truck being used on a farm in connection with agricultural pursuits that are usual and normal to the farming operations
- An occupant of a motor vehicle participating in a parade
- An occupant of the living quarters area of a recreational vehicle
- An occupant of the treatment area of an ambulance
- An occupant of the sleeping area of a tractor
- An occupant, other than the operator, of a municipal waste collection and transportation vehicle
- An occupant, other than the operator, of a truck on a construction site
- A passenger, other than the operator, in a cab of a Class A recovery vehicle or a Class B recovery vehicle who is being transported in the cab because the motor vehicle of the passenger is being towed by the recovery vehicle
- An occupant, other than the operator, of motor vehicle being used by a public utility in an emergency

## Child Safety Restraints

Child passengers younger than eight years of age are required by law to be properly secured in a child restraint system such as a child car seat or booster seat.

## Passenger Air Bags

The explosive power of air bags has killed children and elderly adults less than five feet tall. If a car is equipped with an air bag on the passenger side, the National Safety Council recommends putting children younger than 12 years of age in the back seat.



## Telecommunication Devices

A person may not use a telecommunications device to type, transmit or read a text message or an electronic mail message while operating a moving motor vehicle unless the device is used in conjunction with hands-free or voice-operated technology, or unless the device is used to call 911 to report a bona fide emergency.

## Truck Equipment Requirements

\*\* The following information is only a brief, general guide for vehicles that are subject to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulation (FMCSR) and carrying loads that extend beyond the confines of the vehicle. If you have questions or concerns about operating a vehicle that requires a CDL to operate, please refer to the CDL Manual.

Vehicles transporting loads which extend further than four feet beyond the rear of the motor vehicle, or that have tailboards or tailgates extending further than four feet beyond the vehicle, must have the following projections visible:

- One red lamp must be mounted at the extreme rear end of the vehicle's load between sunset and sunrise. The red lamp must be mounted and visible from both sides and the rear at a distance of 500 feet.
- One red flag must be mounted at the extreme rear end of vehicle's load between sunrise and sunset. The red flag must be mounted, not less than 12 square inches and visible from both sides and the rear of the vehicle.

### Vehicular Hazard Warning Flashing Lamps

Every bus, truck and tractor-trailer must be equipped with a signaling system. In addition to signaling turning movements, these vehicles must have a switch or combination of switches that cause the two front turn signals and the two rear signals to flash simultaneously as a vehicular traffic signal warning. The signal must be capable of flashing simultaneously with the ignition on or off.

### Emergency Equipment

Except for lightweight vehicles, every bus, truck, tractor-trailer and every driven vehicle in a tow operation must have the following equipment:

- A fire extinguisher that is properly filled and located so that it is readily accessible for use. It must be securely mounted on the vehicle and must be designed and maintained to permit visual determination of whether it is fully charged.
- A power unit that is used to transport hazardous materials, equipped with a fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 10-B: C or more
- A power unit that is not used to transport hazardous materials must be equipped with either a fire extinguisher having an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 5-B: C or more; or two fire extinguishers, each of which has an Underwriters' Laboratories rating of 4-B: C or more
- At least one spare fuse or other overload protection device if the devices used are not of a reset type, for each kind and size used

### Warning Devices for Stopped Vehicles

A driver of a truck, bus or tractor-trailer that is disabled on a traveled roadway or its shoulder must display three bi-directional emergency reflective triangles that conform to the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 125, or at least six fuses or three liquid-burning flares.

Place a lighted flare or fuse, lighted red electric lantern or portable red emergency reflector on the traffic side of the vehicle in the direction of the nearest approaching traffic.

Place one device approximately 100 feet from your vehicle toward approaching traffic. Place one device approximately 100 feet from your vehicle in the opposite direction. Place each device in the center of the traffic lane occupied by the disabled vehicle and one at the traffic side of the vehicle.

If your vehicle is disabled on a divided highway, the device must be 200 feet from your vehicle. If your vehicle is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, hill crest or other area where driver's view of your vehicle may be blocked, place the device at least 500 feet from your vehicle.

During daylight hours, use bi-directional emergency reflective triangles or red flags in place of flares, reflectors or electric lanterns. Under these conditions, no flare is required on the traffic side of the disabled vehicle.

### Size Limitations for Commercial Vehicles Without a Special Permit

Maximum width	8 feet, 6 inches
Maximum height of any vehicle	13 feet, 6 inches
Maximum length of any single vehicle	40 feet
Maximum length of two-vehicle combination	60 feet
Maximum length of three-vehicle combination	65 feet
Maximum length of any recreational vehicle	45 feet
Maximum length of a semi-trailer	28 feet, 6 inches
Maximum length of any tractor trailer, semi-trailer combination	28 feet, 6 inches
Maximum distance allowed between coupled or towed vehicle	15 feet

## Maximum Weight Limits

You may not move any vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross weight over 80,000 pounds on any highway without a special permit. Vehicle weight must be distributed within the following limits:

<b>Maximum individual axle weight/tandem</b>	20,000 pounds
<b>Maximum wheel weight</b>	800 pounds per inch width of tire rim
<b>Maximum axle weight</b>	34,000 pounds

The Federal Bridge Formula may restrict gross weight on vehicles with shorter wheelbases. Overweight trucks may be impounded by law enforcement.

Before moving loads on public highways that exceed the size and weight limits described above, you must secure a special permit from the Indiana Department of Revenue for state-maintained routes, and from local authorities for routes that are not maintained by the state.

It is illegal to operate any vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight greater than that posted by the local road authority on any road, bridge or structure having jurisdiction in that area. This includes locally established “frost” laws.

## Required Lighting Equipment

Every truck and bus must have two headlamps, one rear white license plate lamp, two red tail-lamps and at least one red stop-lamp. To show vehicle width at night, every truck or bus that is 80 inches in width or wider must have four clearance lamps; one amber lamp at each side of the front, and one red lamp at each side of the rear.