

In this chapter we will cover a wealth of information such as knowing when you shouldn't get behind the wheel of a car, how to communicate with other drivers on the road, sharing the road, applying the rules of the road, identifying hazards, child endangerment, securing heavy loads, poor driving conditions, and a few rights and duties as they pertain to pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists. We're figuring a lot of this will probably be a refresher for you, right?

3.1 Knowing When Not To Drive: Internal/Personal Concerns



There are times when a person should not get behind the wheel of a vehicle. Knowing when not to drive is just as important as knowing how to drive. Anger, stress, illness, fatigue, and alcohol and/or drugs can affect your driving. Being able to recognize that you are unfit to drive may save you from getting into an accident. Evaluate your physical health and mental state before getting into your car. If you are under severe tension, emotionally distressed (i.e. depressed, angry, or upset), or otherwise preoccupied with your emotions, thoughts, or personal problems, reconsider driving until you are well enough to concentrate on, and respond to, the demands of the road. Never drive if you are under the effects of drug and/or alcohol.

Stress: Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. (MedlinePlus, 2021). If you're already having these emotions, it is best to not attempt to drive because events on the road may exacerbate these feelings.

Anger: Anger is an emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong. Piloting a 3500lb vehicle feeling this way can lead to "aggressive driving" (a traffic offense) or "road rage" (a criminal offense).

Fatigue: Fatigue has costly effects on the safety, health, and quality of life of the American public. Whether fatigue is caused by sleep restriction due to a new baby waking every couple of hours, a late or long shift at work, hanging out late with friends, or a long and monotonous drive for the holidays – the negative outcomes can be the same. These include

impaired cognition and performance, motor vehicle crashes, workplace accidents, and health consequences. Drowsy driving kills — but is preventable. In 2023 there were 633 deaths from drowsy-driving-related crashes. (NHTSA)

Vision: You need good vision to drive safely. If you cannot see clearly, you cannot judge distances or spot trouble, and you will not be able to make the best judgments. You also need to see peripherally or “out of the corner of your eye” to spot cars coming up beside you while your eyes are on the road.

You may see clearly and still not be able to judge distances. You need good distance judgment, so you know how far you are from other cars. Many people who may see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing clearly at night. Some people see poorly in dim light. Others may have trouble with the glare of headlights.

Hearing: Hearing is more important to driving than many people realize. The sound of horns, a siren, or screeching tires can warn you of danger.

Sometimes you may hear a vehicle but cannot see it, especially if it is in your blind spot. Even worse, imagine playing loud music or wearing earbuds or a headset. In addition to not seeing the car in your blind spot, you can't even hear it. Hence, wearing earphones and headphones makes it difficult to hear other noises while driving. It is against the law to wear earplugs or a headset in both ears while driving. In the same sense, do not turn your stereo so loud that you cannot hear anything outside your vehicle. Vehicle code 27400 says:

A person operating a motor vehicle or bicycle may not wear a headset covering, earplugs in, or earphones covering, resting on, or inserted in, both ears. This prohibition does not apply to any of the following:

- (a) A person operating authorized emergency vehicles, as defined in Section 165.
- (b) A person engaged in the operation of either special construction equipment or equipment for use in the maintenance of any highway.
- (c) A person engaged in the operation of refuse collection equipment who is wearing a safety headset or safety earplugs.
- (d) A person wearing personal hearing protectors in the form of earplugs or molds that are specifically designed to attenuate injurious noise levels. The plugs or molds shall be designed in a manner so as to not inhibit the wearer's ability to hear a siren or horn from an emergency vehicle or a horn from another motor vehicle.
- (e) A person using a prosthetic device that aids the hard of hearing.

Alcohol: Alcohol is a drug. Not many people think of it in this way because it is so widely used and socially acceptable. The reality: alcohol is a poison that affects the central nervous system. It is a depressant that affects the central nervous system. Alcohol affects your body in numerous ways, making driving under its influence very dangerous. It slows your reaction time, blurs your vision, and impairs your ability to think clearly and make good judgments – all of which are critical components of driving.

3.2 Knowing When Not to Drive: External Concerns



The weather, vehicle requirements and financial responsibility are 3 factors that can and will determine whether you get behind the wheel of a car or not. Road and weather conditions can vary greatly and sometimes change suddenly. You could be driving on a beautiful, clear day and suddenly, the clouds could descend upon you and you find yourself in the middle of a heavy storm. At this point, you have to decide whether or not it's safe for you to continue driving. Maybe your vehicle has been making odd sounds lately, or your seat belt indicator light has been blinking. If so, you may want to reconsider that road trip with family and friends in tow. Lastly, if you realized that your car insurance has lapsed because your bank draft failed to go through, you may again have to reconsider whether you should be driving.

Don't take chances in these instances. Make good decisions.

When driving in rain, fog or snow here are a few things to consider:

Braking Distance: Water reduces the friction between your tires and the road. You will need 2 to 10 times as much room to come to a complete stop. At least double your following distance to accommodate for longer braking distance.

Speed: Reduce your speed so you will have more time to react and have more control over the vehicle. If you cannot see more than 100 feet ahead due to heavy rainstorm or snowstorm, you cannot safely drive more than 30 miles per hour. Always drive very slowly through fog, especially if you are only able to see a few feet ahead. Use your low beams, NOT your high beams. High beams will reflect back and cause a glare. The best advice for driving in the fog is DON'T.

Wet Roads: Many road pavements are the most slippery when it first starts to rain or snow because oil and dust have not yet been washed away. Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. Turn on your windshield wipers, headlights, and defroster.

When it come to the condition of your vehicle here are a few things to consider:

Vehicle Requirements Unmet rob you of safe driving. It is your responsibility to make sure that the vehicles you drive are safe to operate. Follow your vehicle owner's manual for routine maintenance. Choose a qualified mechanic and make an appointment with him or her if you notice any difference or change in vehicle performance. Here are a couple things to look at:

Braking system: only your brakes can stop your vehicle. It is very dangerous if they are not working. If you feel your car pull to one side when you stop, hear an unusual noise, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check the brakes.

Tires: if the vehicle bounces, it pulls to one side, or you hear any thumping noise, have a mechanic check it. Your tire pressure should be checked often when tires are cold. Look in your car owner's manual for the right tire pressures or ask for advice at a service station.

When it comes to financial responsibility keep these things in mind:

Driver license/vehicle registration/liability insurance: Financial responsibility (commonly known as insurance) is required on all vehicles operated or parked on California roadways. You must carry evidence of financial responsibility in your vehicle at all times and it must be provided as specified below when:

- - Requested by law enforcement.
 - Renewing vehicle registration.

- The vehicle is involved in a traffic collision.

What Are the Minimum Liability Insurance Requirements for Private Passenger Vehicles (California Insurance Code §11580.1b)?

\$30,000 for injury/death to one person.

\$60,000 for injury/death to more than one person.

\$15,000 for damage to property.

Liability insurance compensates a person other than the policy holder for personal injury or property damage. Comprehensive or collision insurance does not meet vehicle financial responsibility requirements.

The 4 Types of Financial Responsibility available are:

- - - Motor vehicle liability insurance policy.
 - Cash deposit of \$35,000 with DMV. (**NOTE: Starting January 2025 the price increases to \$75,000**)
 - DMV-issued self-insurance certificate.
 - Surety bond for \$75,000 from a company licensed to do business in California.

What Are the Consequences for Driving a Vehicle With Suspended Registration?

In addition to the vehicle registration suspension, you may:

Be cited.

Have your vehicle impounded.

Be personally liable for damages if you are involved in a collision.

3.3 Communication

You have several ways to communicate with other drivers on the road. And since you can't talk directly to them, you must use other methods to communicate. Here are some of the options you have for communication – for making your intentions known or “listening” to other drivers: the horn, headlights, hazard lights / emergency signals, turn signals, and mirrors.

Use your horn:

- Only when necessary to avoid collisions.
- To try to get “eye contact” with other drivers. You may tap your horn to alert another driver who might turn in front of you and cause a collision. On narrow mountain roads, where you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead of your vehicle.

Don't use your horn:

- If a driver or bicyclist is moving slowly, and you want him or her to drive faster or get out of your way. The driver or bicyclist may not be able to safely go faster due to illness, being lost, intoxication, or mechanical problems with the vehicle.
- To alert other drivers that they made a mistake. Your honking may cause them to make more mistakes or to become angry and retaliate.
- Because you may be angry or upset.
- To honk at pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists unless necessary to avoid a collision. Remember that your horn sounds much louder outside a vehicle.

NOTE: Honking your horn may startle other drivers. It is safer to slow down or stop instead of honking your horn.

Use your headlights: When it is cloudy, raining, snowing, or foggy. If weather conditions require you to use your windshield wipers, you are required to turn on your low-beam headlights— it's the law.

- On frosty mornings, when other drivers' windows may be icy or “fogged.”
- Any time conditions (clouds, rain, snow, dust, smoke, fog, etc.) prevent you from seeing other vehicles. Other drivers may have trouble seeing you, too.
- On small country or mountain roads, even on sunny days. This helps other drivers see you and may help you avoid a head-on collision.
- When necessary to get another driver's attention.

Use your emergency signals: If you can see a collision ahead, warn the drivers behind you by turning on your emergency flashers or tapping your brake pedal quickly 3 or 4 times. You can also use the hand signal when slowing and stopping.

Never stop on the road unless necessary for safety or to obey a law. If you need to stop, start braking early as a signal to the cars behind you. If your vehicle breaks down on the

road, make sure that other drivers can see it. If you experience vehicle trouble and need to stop, follow these rules:

Pull off the road away from all traffic, if possible.

If you cannot get completely off the road, stop where people can see you and your vehicle from behind. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.

Turn on your emergency flashers if you are not moving. If your vehicle doesn't have emergency flashers, turn signals may be used instead.

If it is safe, lift the hood to signal an emergency.

Give other drivers plenty of warning. Place emergency flares or triangles 200–300 feet behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers time to change lanes, if necessary. Be very careful when using flares. They may cause fires, especially when used near flammable liquids.

If you do not have emergency flares, follow the rules listed above and stay in your vehicle until help arrives. Be careful for your safety and stay off the road.



Signal your intentions: Always signal when turning left or right, changing lanes, slowing down, or stopping; it lets other drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians know your intentions.

Motor Vehicles, motorcyclists and bicyclists should signal when:

During the last 100 feet before reaching the turning point (left or right turn).

CAUTION! — Even though you signal, do not assume that the space you want to occupy is clear.

Before every lane change. Check your mirrors, look over your shoulder, and check your blind spot before changing lanes.

At least 5 seconds before you change lanes on a freeway.

Before pulling next to the curb or away from the curb.

When you change directions.

Even when you do not see other vehicles. A vehicle you do not see may suddenly appear and hit you.

If you plan to turn beyond an intersection, start signaling when you are in the intersection. If you signal too early, the other driver may think you plan to turn into the intersection and he or she may pull out in front of you.

Mirrors: To anticipate the actions of other road users, learn to scan the road ahead, behind and around the vehicle. Straight ahead is easy, but seeing behind the vehicle and in its blind spots can be challenging. That's where mirrors come in. You'll need to scan these areas every few seconds, as well as before turning or merging lanes. Blind spots may even require you to look over your shoulder to be fully aware of what other drivers are doing.

3.4 Being Courteous / Sharing the Road

As part of being a safe and responsible driver, not only do you need to know and follow the rules of the road; you also need to use common sense, and be thoughtful and courteous to other drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

This means that you share the road responsibly, give the right of way, and do not take actions that can cause trouble or risk for others.

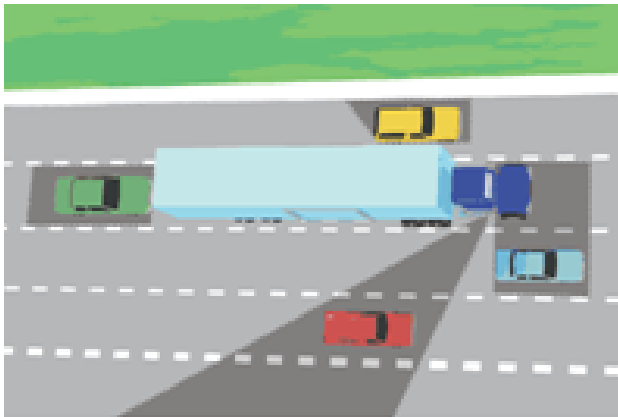
For example, if you tailgate, drive recklessly, pass the stop sign without fully stopping, ignore giving the right of way, or drive too slowly in the fast lane forcing other drivers to pass you on the right, you are not being courteous to other drivers on the road.

Here are a few tips on being a thoughtful and courteous driver:

- Always allow a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you, so you can react to a traffic situation quickly and allow other drivers to maneuver around your car safely when needed.
- Always drive at a safe speed based on the speed limit, flow of traffic, weather, road surface, and traffic situation.
- When entering a freeway or changing lanes, if you can, do not make other drivers brake in order to allow you into their space.
- Research shows that sticking to the middle lane is probably the quickest and safest way to get to your destination. Therefore, drive in the right or middle lane and pass on the left.
- Always signal in advance before turning or changing lanes.

- Fully stop at a stop sign and never run a red light.
- Always give the right of way to pedestrians.
- Do not block intersections.
- Never tailgate or drive recklessly.
- Never succumb to road rage.
- To reduce the chance of having a collision with a large truck (or RV), you must be familiar with their physical capabilities and how they maneuver.

Braking: Large trucks take longer to stop than vehicles traveling at the same speed. The average passenger vehicle traveling at 55 mph can stop within 400 feet. However, a large truck traveling at the same speed can take almost 800 feet to stop. Do not move in front of a large truck and suddenly slow down or stop. The truck driver will not be able to stop quickly enough to avoid crashing into you.



Trucker's Blind Spots - The "No Zone": The shaded areas are the driver's blind spots or No Zones. Passenger vehicle drivers incorrectly assume that a trucker can see the road better because he or she is higher off the road. While truckers do have a better forward view and bigger mirrors, they still have large blind spots and your vehicle can get lost in those blind spots. If you stay in those blind spots, you block the trucker's ability to take evasive action to avoid a dangerous situation. Generally speaking, if you cannot see the truck driver in his or her side mirror, he or she cannot see you. These blind spots are often called the "NO ZONE."

3.5 Knowing And Correctly Applying The Rules Of The Road – Speed

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, speeding was a contributing factor in 28% of all traffic fatalities in the year 2023. **Although there is no Minimum Speed Limit in California, there is a law that requires you to not drive so slowly as to be**

unsafe. It is the Minimum Speed Law and it states: "No person shall drive so slowly or stop on the roadway so as to impede traffic or block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic." You can be cited if you are stopped for doing this. CVC §22400

You should reduce your speed when: traffic is dense; near shopping centers; in parking lots; in downtown areas when brake lights come on several cars ahead; when driving on narrow bridges and in tunnels; when approaching toll plazas; near schools, playgrounds, and on residential streets.

There are **Special Speed Limits** that are to be obeyed even if there are no signs erected.

According to CVC § 22352 The **Prima Facie** limits are as follows and shall be applicable unless changed as authorized in this code and, if so changed, only when signs have been erected giving notice thereof:



railway crossings (15 mph) – CVC 22352 states that (a) (1) When traversing a railway grade crossing, if during the last 100 feet of the approach to the crossing the driver does not have a clear and unobstructed view of the crossing and of any traffic on the railway for a distance of 400 feet in both directions along the railway. This subdivision does not apply in the case of any railway grade crossing where a human flagman is on duty or a clearly visible electrical or mechanical railway crossing signal device is installed but does not then indicate the immediate approach of a railway train or car.



blind intersections (15 mph) – CVC 22352 states that (a) (2) When traversing any intersection of highways if during the last 100 feet of the driver's approach to the intersection the driver does not have a clear and unobstructed view of the intersection and

of any traffic upon all of the highways entering the intersection for a distance of 100 feet along all those highways, except at an intersection protected by stop signs or yield right-of-way signs or controlled by official traffic control signals.



Alleyways (15 mph) – In alleys, when no signs are posted, the speed limit is 15 mph



schools (25 mph, when children are present) – CVC 22352 states that (b) (2) When approaching or passing a school building or the grounds thereof, contiguous to a highway and posted with a standard “SCHOOL” warning sign, while children are going to or leaving the school either during school hours or during the noon recess period. The prima facie limit shall also apply when approaching or passing any school grounds which are not separated from the highway by a fence, gate, or other physical barrier while the grounds are in use by children and the highway is posted with a standard “SCHOOL” warning sign.



residential districts (25 mph) – CVC 22352 states that (b) (1) On any highway other than a state highway, in any business or residence district unless a different speed is determined by local authority under procedures set forth in this code.



business districts (25 mph) – CVC 22352 states that (b) (1) On any highway other than a state highway, in any business or residence district unless a different speed is determined by the local authority under procedures set forth in this code.

All 50 states have a "**Basic speed law**". In California, the Vehicle Code spells it out: CVC § 22350. No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.

However, CVC § 22349 states the **Maximum Speed Limit law** for California. It states that:

(a) Except as provided in Section 22356, no person may drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than 65 miles per hour.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person may drive a vehicle upon a two-lane, undivided highway at a speed greater than 55 miles per hour unless that highway, or a portion thereof, has been posted for a higher speed by the Dept. of Transportation or appropriate local upon the basis of an engineering and traffic survey. For purposes of this subdivision, the following apply:

1. A two-lane, undivided highway is a highway with not more than one through lane of travel in each direction.
2. Passing lanes may not be considered when determining the number of through lanes.

3.6 Knowing And Correctly Applying The Rules Of The Road - Driving In Lanes

Vehicle code 21658 states: Whenever any roadway has been divided into two or more clearly marked lanes for traffic in one direction, the following rules apply:

- (a) A vehicle shall be driven as nearly as practical entirely within a single lane and shall not be moved from the lane until such movement can be made with reasonable safety.
- (b) Official signs may be erected directing slow-moving traffic to use a designated lane or allocating specified lanes to traffic moving in the same direction, and drivers of vehicles shall obey the directions of the traffic device.

Therefore, it is important to choose a lane which is appropriate for what you intend to do next, or one that is the least congested and stay in it.

When driving on roadways of two or more lanes of traffic moving in the same direction stay as close as possible to the middle of the lane. Change lanes only when there is sufficient space between vehicles to safely merge into traffic in the next lane by allowing at least a 4 second gap.

Never drive in the blind spot of another vehicle as they may not see you and change lanes into you. Change lanes one at a time keeping with the flow of traffic so as not to tie up traffic and possibly cause an accident.

When changing lanes, you should check blind spots by turning your head and looking in the lane you want to enter, using your rear-view mirror to check for vehicles directly behind you that may be starting to pass you, and checking the speed of persons ahead and behind in the lane you want to enter to be sure you have time and space to complete the lane change.

Although not illegal, it is not wise to change lanes in an intersection. Vehicle code 22107 states: No person shall turn a vehicle from a direct course or move right or left upon a roadway until such movement can be made with reasonable safety and then only after the giving of an appropriate signal in the manner provided in this chapter in the event any other vehicle may be affected by the movement.

When changing lanes, or turning, or making ANY lateral movement of the car, use the SMOG technique:

S Signal (your intention to move)

M Mirror (check both, rear and side view mirrors for traffic to the rear)

O Over-the-shoulder check (for traffic to the side and slightly behind)

G Go (make your lateral movement)

Accelerate slightly as you change lanes. Remember, since you are moving sideways, you are moving slower than the rest of the traffic.

Intersections: Intersections are a major location for collisions. When approaching an intersection, it is important to determine as far ahead as possible whether the intersection you are approaching is controlled or not, so that you can: anticipate the behavior of cross traffic and pedestrians; anticipate cars stopping ahead; choose the correct lane for turning; and reduce speed as appropriate.

Once you have entered an intersection to pass through it or make a turn do not swerve or stop suddenly because you change your mind as to where you want to go - once you start through, keep going.

When entering "T" intersections, vehicles on the through road have the right of way.

The speed limit is 15 mph at intersections if during the last 100 feet approaching the intersection, you cannot see the other roadways entering the intersection for a distance of at least 100 feet (blind intersection).

3.7 Knowing And Correctly Applying The Rules Of The Road - Turns/Turning

Turns: You should signal during the last 100 feet before turning. On a freeway, you should signal for at least 5 seconds before turning or exiting.

Use your turn signal any time you make a turn, including when:

changing lanes

parking at the curb

turning into your own driveway

Use of electronic turn signals is required unless:

the vehicle is not required to be equipped with turn signals

the signals become inoperable when driving

In these instances, use of hand signals is required. Signal even when you don't see other vehicles around. Be sure your turn signal is turned off after you have completed your lane change so that you will not mislead other drivers.

Turning Right

CVC § 22100 governs the proper procedures for making right-hand turns. It states: Except provided in Section 22100.5 or 22101, the driver of any vehicle intending to turn upon a highway shall do so as follows:

(a) Right Turns. Both the approach for a right-hand turn and a right-hand turn shall be made as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except (1) Upon a highway having three marked lanes for traffic moving in one direction that terminates at an intersecting highway accommodating traffic in both directions, the driver of a vehicle in the middle lane may turn right into any lane lawfully available to traffic moving in that direction upon the roadway being entered. (2) If a right-hand turn is made from a one-way highway at an intersection, a driver shall approach the turn as provided in this subdivision and shall complete the turn in any lane lawfully available to traffic moving in that direction upon the roadway being entered. (3) Upon a highway having an additional lane or lanes marked for a right turn by appropriate signs or markings, the driver of a vehicle may turn right from any lane designated and marked for that turning movement.

(b) Left Turns. The approach for a left turn shall be made as close as practicable to the left-hand edge of the extreme left-hand lane or portion of the roadway lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of travel of the vehicle and, when turning at an intersection, the left turn shall not be made before entering the intersection. After entering the intersection, the left turn shall be made so as to leave the intersection in a lane lawfully available to traffic moving in that direction upon the roadway being entered, except that upon a highway having three marked lanes for traffic moving in one direction that terminates at an intersecting highway accommodating traffic in both directions, the driver of a vehicle in the middle lane may turn left into any lane lawfully available to traffic moving in that direction upon the roadway being entered.

Turning Left: When making a left turn from a two-way street onto a two-way street, you should start from the left most lane, but may end in any lane traveling in the direction you are turning (unless otherwise controlled).

When making a right or left hand turn:

you must scan the intersection and the roadways entering it for pedestrians and bicycles as well as vehicles

be aware of controlled lanes and directional signals and planning your vehicle's position before and after the turn so as to avoid a collision or blocking traffic

if your view is blocked, you must yield and move very slowly until you have good visibility

if there is a bicycle lane, that you must use it to make a right turn, do not enter it more than 200 feet before the turn , and not cut off a bicyclist who has the right-of-way in the bike lane.

U-Turn: Unless otherwise prohibited by a sign, a U-turn is legal at an intersection whenever a traffic stop sign protects you from oncoming traffic.

A U-turn is legal at an intersection with a signal light which is either green or a green arrow unless otherwise prohibited.

When attempting a U-turn at an intersection:

you must be sure it is not prohibited

scan for pedestrians and bicycles as well as other vehicles that may be entering the intersection

you must start the turn from the leftmost lane available to you, or the center turn lane if it exists , but may finish it in any lane

U-turns are to be made from the leftmost lane at an intersection or divided highway where an opening has been provided.

A U turn across a double yellow line is legal unless otherwise prohibited by a sign or other traffic law.

A U turn is legal in a residential district if there is no approaching vehicle within 200 feet unless otherwise prohibited.

A U turn is illegal:

when you cannot clearly see 200 feet in either direction

in front of a fire station

in a business district except at an intersection or through opening in a concrete divider (a business district includes apartments, churches, and schools as well as commercial businesses)

when not safe due to traffic conditions

when there is a NO U TURN sign

NOTE: Chapter 11 will cover more detailed information regarding turns.....stay tuned.

3.8 Knowing And Correctly Applying The Rules Of The Road – Parking

You shall not park, stop, or leave your car standing: **In** an intersection / **On** a marked or unmarked crosswalk / **Within** 15 feet of fire station driveway / **Within** 3 feet of a sidewalk ramp for disabled persons / **On** a freeway, unless due to an emergency, required to do so by a police officer, or is specifically permitted / **In** front of a driveway / **At** a red curb / **In** a tunnel or bridge / **Where** signs say "no parking," / **In** a parking space for disabled persons (without the special placard or license plates) / **In** an area next to a disabled parking space painted with a crosshatched pattern regardless of color / **On** the wrong side of the street / **On** a sidewalk / **In** a traffic lane / **Within** 20 feet of a marked or unmarked crosswalk (*Daylighting* in regards to driving is the term used in these situations / **Within** 15 feet of a fire hydrant: However, there is an **exception to the fire hydrant rule**. CVC 22514 states: No person shall stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle within 15 feet of a fire hydrant except as follows:

(a) **If the vehicle is attended by a licensed driver who is seated in the front seat and who can immediately move such vehicle in case of necessity.**

(b) If the local authority adopts an ordinance or resolution reducing that distance. If the distance is less than 10 feet total length when measured along the curb or edge of the street, the distance shall be indicated by signs or markings.

(c) If the vehicle is owned or operated by a fire department and is clearly marked as a fire department vehicle. / Lastly, you cannot park in a handicapped parking space unless you have a handicap placard or license plate issued to you displayed. You also cannot park in the crosshatch pattern next to a handicapped parking space.

3.9 Knowing And Correctly Applying The Rules Of The Road - Seat Belts

Seat belts: Wearing seat belts is the law. You may not operate your vehicle on public roads/highways or public parking lots (state or federally owned/maintained), unless you and all your passengers are wearing seat belts. Seat belts, both the lap belt and shoulder harness, will increase your chance of survival in most types of collisions. The seat belts must be in good working order. **A parent or legal guardian or driver who transports a child under eight year of age on a highway in a motor vehicle shall properly secure that child in a rear seat in an appropriate child passenger restraint system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.**

You and all passengers must wear a seat belt or, you and/or your passenger(s) may be cited. If the passenger is under 16 years old, you may be cited if he or she is not wearing his or her seat belt.

Always use your seat belts (including the shoulder harness) even if the vehicle is equipped with air bags. You can have shoulder harnesses or seat belts installed in older vehicles. Even if you wear only a lap belt when driving, your chances of living through a collision are twice as high as someone who does not wear a lap belt. If you wear a lap and shoulder belt, your chances are 3 to 4 times higher to live through a collision. If your vehicle is equipped with a separate lap and shoulder belt, you are required to use both the lap and shoulder belts.

Pregnant women should wear the lap belt as low as possible under the abdomen, and the shoulder strap should be placed between the breasts and to the side of the abdomen's bulge.

WARNING: Using seat belts reduces the risk of being thrown from your vehicle in a collision. If you do not install and use a shoulder harness with the seat (lap) belt, serious or fatal injuries may happen in some collisions. Lap-only belts increase the chance of spinal column and abdominal injuries—especially in children. Shoulder harnesses may be available for your vehicle, if it is not already equipped with them.

CVC § 27315 governs the proper use of seat belts. It states that:

(d) (1) A person shall not operate a motor vehicle on a highway unless that person and all passengers 16 years of age or over are properly restrained by a safety belt. This paragraph does not apply to the operator of a taxicab, as defined in Section 27908, when the taxicab is driven on a city street and is engaged in the transportation of a fare-paying passenger. The safety belt requirement established by this paragraph is the minimum safety standard applicable to employees being transported in a motor vehicle. This paragraph does not preempt more stringent or restrictive standards imposed by the Labor Code or another state or federal regulation regarding the transportation of employees in a motor vehicle.

(2) For purposes of this section the phrase, "properly restrained by a safety belt" means that the lower (lap) portion of the belt crosses the hips or upper thighs of the occupant and the upper (shoulder) portion of the belt, if present, crosses the chest in front of the occupant. (e) A person 16 years of age or over shall not be a passenger in a motor vehicle on a highway unless that person is properly restrained by a safety belt. This subdivision does not apply to a passenger in a sleeper berth, as defined in subdivision (x) of Section 1201 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. (f) An owner of a motor vehicle, including an owner or operator of a taxicab, as defined in Section 27908, or a limousine for hire,

operated on a highway shall maintain safety belts in good working order for the use of the occupants of the vehicle. The safety belts shall conform to motor vehicle safety standards established by the United States Department of Transportation. This subdivision, however, does not require installation or maintenance of safety belts if it is not required by the laws of the United States applicable to the vehicle at the time of its initial sale.

CVC § 27360 further states:

(a) Except as provided in Section 27363, **a parent, legal guardian, or driver who transports a child under eight years of age on a highway in a motor vehicle, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 27315, shall properly secure that child in a rear seat in an appropriate child passenger restraint system meeting applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.**

(b) Except as provided in Section 27363, **a parent, legal guardian, or driver who transports a child under two years of age on a highway in a motor vehicle, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 27315, shall properly secure the child in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system** that meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards, unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the child passenger restraint system.

(c) **This section does not apply to a driver if the parent or legal guardian of the child is a passenger in the motor vehicle.**

For purposes of clarifying a highway CVC § 360 says that a “Highway” is a way or place of whatever nature, publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel. Highway includes street.

3.10 Identifying and Responding To Hazards

You cannot prevent hazards on the road, however, you can be prepared for events that may occur. Here are a few things to do when driving:

Where is the green vehicle headed?



Scan: Scanning your surroundings (keeping your eyes moving) helps you to know what's going on around your vehicle at all times. You should scan the road 10–15 seconds ahead of your vehicle so you can see hazards early. Constantly staring at the road right in front of your vehicle is dangerous. As you scan ahead, be alert for vehicles around you. Use your mirrors. Know what is behind you, so you can prepare for what is ahead. Allow enough space between you and the vehicle ahead to give yourself time to react. If you don't take in the whole scene and only look at the middle of the road, you will miss what is happening on the side of the road and behind you. Scanning helps you to see: cars, motorcycles, bicyclists, and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them; signs warning of problems ahead; signs giving you directions. Scanning will also allow you to keep a safe distance around your vehicle. When another driver makes a mistake, you need time to react. Give yourself this reaction time by keeping enough space on all sides of your vehicle. This space will give you room to brake or maneuver if necessary.

The shaded areas are your blind spots.



Changing Lanes: When changing lanes, look into your rear-view mirror for nearby vehicles and over your shoulder to check for blind spots. Blind spots can hide a motorcyclist, a vehicle, or a bicyclist. Watch for things about to happen, like a ball rolling into the street or a vehicle door opening.

Entering Freeway: On the freeway, be ready for changes in traffic condition. 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. Know which lanes are clear so you can use them, if necessary. And remember to not be a tailgater! Many drivers follow too closely (tailgate) and are not able to see as far ahead as they should because the vehicle ahead block their view.

Tailgating

[video width="500" height="auto" poster="https://crossroadadventuratrafficschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/nrsf-driving-skills-tailgating-animation-tn_0.jpg" mp4="https://crossroadadventuratrafficschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/nrsf-driving-skills-tailgating-animation.mp4"][/video]

The more space you allow between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead, the more time you will have to recognize and avoid a hazard. If a vehicle merges in front of you too closely, take your foot off of the accelerator. This gives space between you and the vehicle ahead, without having to slam on your brakes or swerve into another lane. Most rear end collisions are caused by tailgating. To avoid tailgating, use the “3 second rule”: when the vehicle ahead of you passes a certain point, such as a sign, count “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three.” This takes approximately 3 seconds. If you pass the same point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.

There are occasions when you should allow for 4 or more seconds. These are when:

A tailgater is behind you. Allow extra room ahead and do not brake suddenly. Slow down gradually or merge into another lane to prevent a collision with the tailgater!

Driving on slippery roads.

Following motorcyclists or bicyclists on wet or icy roads, metal surfaces (e.g., bridge gratings, railroad tracks, etc.), and gravel. Motorcyclists and bicyclists can fall easily on these surfaces.

The driver behind you wants to pass. Allow room in front of your vehicle so the driver will have space to move in front of you.

Towing a trailer or carrying a heavy load. The extra weight makes it harder to stop.

Following large vehicles that block your view ahead. The extra space allows you to see around the vehicle.

You see a bus, school bus, or a placarded vehicle at railroad crossings. These vehicles must stop at railroad crossings.

Merging onto a freeway.

Know What Is At Your Side: Any time you come to a place where people may cross or enter your path or a line of traffic meets another, you should look to the left and right sides of your vehicle to make sure no one is coming. Always look to each side of your vehicle at intersections, crosswalks, and railroad crossings. When at intersections look both ways even if other traffic has a red traffic signal light or a stop sign. Look to the left first, since vehicles coming from the left are closer to you than vehicles coming from the right; then look to the right; lastly, take one more look to the left in case there is a pedestrian, bicyclist, or vehicle you did not see the first time. Do not rely on traffic signal lights. Some drivers do not obey traffic signal lights. Before you enter an intersection, look left, right, and ahead for approaching traffic.

To maintain a space cushion on each side of your vehicle:

Do not stay in another driver's blind spot . The other driver may not see your vehicle and could change lanes and hit you.

Avoid driving directly alongside other vehicles on multilane streets with or without traffic in the opposite direction. Another driver might crowd your lane or change lanes without looking and crash into you. Drive either ahead of or behind the other vehicle.

If possible and when safe, make room for vehicles entering freeways even though you have the right-of-way.

At freeway exits, do not drive alongside other vehicles. A driver may decide to exit suddenly or swerve back onto the freeway.

Keep a space between your vehicle and parked vehicles. Someone may step out from between them, a vehicle door may open, or a vehicle may pull out suddenly.

Be careful when driving near motorcyclists or bicyclists. Always leave plenty of room between your vehicle and any motorcyclists or bicyclists.

Know What Is Behind You

It is very important to check behind you before you:

Change lanes. Look over your shoulder to make sure you are not getting in the way of vehicles in the lane you want to enter.

Reduce your speed. Take a quick look in your mirrors. Also, check your mirrors when you are preparing to turn into a side road or driveway and when you are stopping to pull into a parking space.

Drive down a long or steep hill. Watch for large vehicles because they can gather speed very quickly.

Back up. Backing up is always dangerous because it is hard to see behind your vehicle. When you are backing out of a parking space:

Check in front and behind the vehicle before you get in.

Know where your kids are. Make sure they are away from your vehicle and in full view before moving your vehicle.

If other children are nearby, make sure you can see them before backing up.

Do not depend only on your mirrors or only looking out a side window.

Turn and look over your right and left shoulders before you begin backing. As a safety measure, look over your right and left shoulders again while backing.

Back slowly to avoid collisions.

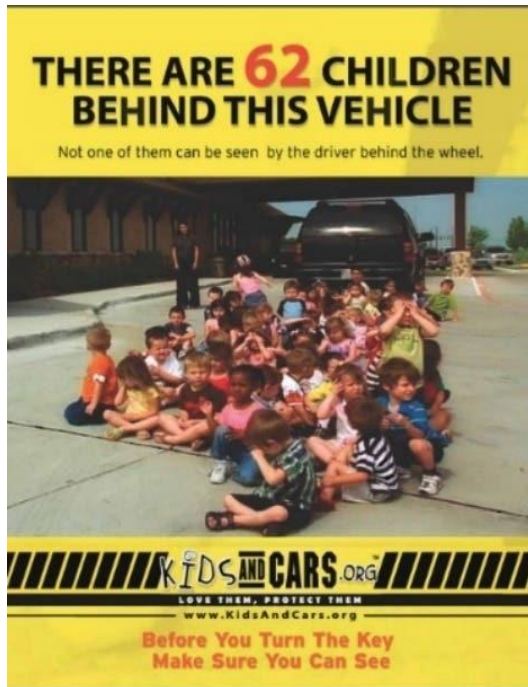
How Well Can You Stop?

If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to stop. Assuming you have good tires, good brakes, and dry pavement:

At 55mph, it takes about 400 feet to react and bring the vehicle to a complete stop.

At 35mph, it takes about 210 feet to react and bring the vehicle to a complete stop.

3.11 Child Endangerment – Back overs



In the U.S., 50 children are backed over EVERY WEEK because a driver could not see them. Rearview cameras can be installed on any vehicle to end these predictable tragedies. (KidsandCars.org)

Check around vehicle prior to entering and leaving

Blindzones... every vehicle has them. A blindzone is the area behind a vehicle where the driver cannot see even when looking back and using their rear and side view mirrors correctly. (Blindzones are also in front of cars but are not as large) :

Average blindzone = 15 to 25 feet

Shorter drivers = larger blindzones

Circumstances surrounding back overs

Backovers take place mainly in driveways and parking lots.

In over 70% of these incidents, a parent or close relative is the driver behind the wheel.

Over 60% of backovers involve a larger vehicle (truck, van, SUV)

Bye-Bye Syndrome™: Children don't want to be left behind when they hear the words 'bye-bye.' Many times children follow behind the person who is leaving. The driver is unaware the

child snuck out, thinking they are still safe inside. The child stands behind the vehicle where they cannot be seen and is backed over.

Contributing Factors

You cannot avoid hitting something you literally cannot see.

Most drivers are unaware of the very large, dangerous blindzone that is found behind ALL vehicles.

Children do not understand the danger of a slow moving vehicle; they believe if they see the vehicle, the driver can see them.

Children do not recognize boundaries (property lines, sidewalks, driveways or parking spaces) and are very impulsive.

Age

The predominant age of backover victims is one-year-old (12-23 months). Toddlers have just started walking/running at this age, testing the limits and trying new things.

Children younger than 5-years-old are at the most risk, but children of all ages can be backed over.

Statistics

On average 232 fatalities and 13,000 injuries occur every year due to back overs.

Thousands of children are seriously injured or killed every year because a driver backing up was not able to see them behind their vehicle. Many elderly people are also backed over by vehicles.

3.12 Child Endangerment - Leaving Young Children In Vehicle Unattended

2022 HOT CAR DEATHS						
Date	City	State	Child sex	Child age	Circumstances	Link
7/11/22	Miami Gardens	FL	M	3 yrs	Unknowingly left	More info
7/11/22	Metane	NC	F	1 yr	Unknowingly left	More info
6/30/22	Danielsville	GA	LNK	1 yr	Left in car	More info
6/28/22	Chesterfield County	VA	M	18 mos	Unknowingly left	More info
6/26/22	Columbus	GA	M	3 yrs	Unknowingly left	More info
6/20/22	Houston	TX	M	5 yrs	Unknowingly left	More info
6/16/22	Pittsburg	PA	M	3 mos	Unknowingly left	More info
5/20/22	Houston	TX	F	10 mos	Unknowingly left	More info
5/19/22	Memphis	TN	LNK	1 yr	Left by child care	More info
5/3/22	Snelville	GA	F	8 mos	Left in car	More info
XX/XX/XX	XXX	TX	X	X	Unknowingly left	Not publicly available

Many states now have safety laws against leaving children and pets unattended in a vehicle. Depending on the state and circumstances, the guilty can be issued a traffic ticket and fined, or, in extreme cases, charged with manslaughter and sentenced to a lengthy jail term. (DMV.org)

Beginning January 1, 2021 the Unattended Children In Motor Vehicle law took affect. It exempts a person from civil or criminal liability for trespassing or damaging a vehicle when rescuing a child who is 6 years old or younger and who is in immediate danger from heat, cold, lack of ventilation, or other dangerous circumstances.

On average, 39 children die every year from heat-related deaths after being trapped inside vehicles. That's one every nine days!! According to KidsAndCars.org, 1,000 children have died in hot cars nationwide since 1990. Even the best of parents or caregivers can unknowingly leave a sleeping baby in a car; and the end result can be injury or even death.


Far too many children have been inadvertently left in vehicles or have gotten into a vehicle on their own. Vehicular heatstroke tragedies change the lives of parents, families, and communities forever.



Kaitlyn's Law

A parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child who is six years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being subject to the supervision of a person who is 12 years of age or older: where there are conditions that present a significant risk to the child's health or safety OR when the vehicle's engine is running or the vehicle's keys are in the ignition, or both.

3.13 Child Endangerment - Releasing Brake/Shifting To Neutral



ROLLAWAY THREAT?

Many cars on the road today lack a brake transmission system interlock, or BTSI, that can prevent a child or adult from unintentionally setting a vehicle in motion. BTSI prevents movement of an automatic transmission from "park" until the brake pedal is pressed.

On vehicles without BTSI, a child can easily shift into neutral or drive without pressing the brake pedal provided the key has been left in the ignition and turned to an on position.

BTSI devices have been required on all vehicles sold in the United States only since 2010. To tell if your vehicle is equipped with the safety device, see box below.

HOW SAFE IS YOUR CAR?

- ▶ Park your vehicle on a level surface and set the parking brake.
- ▶ Make sure no one is standing in front of or behind the vehicle.
- ▶ Insert the key in the ignition and turn to the first position (radio will not turn on).
- ▶ Do not touch the brake and see if you shift out of "park."
- ▶ Repeat the fourth step in the next two key positions, including with the engine on.
- ▶ If you can shift from park in any key position without pressing the brake, your vehicle lacks BTSI in all key positions and could pose a rollaway threat.

Whether your vehicle has or doesn't have BTSI, never leave a child unsupervised in a vehicle, don't let children play behind the wheel — especially when keys are in the ignition — and remember to set the parking brake, experts say.

SOURCE: Kidsandcars.org
THOMAS MAXFIELD, DAVID SMITH/JOURNAL & COURIER

Each year hundreds of children are hospitalized or even killed after accidentally setting a car into motion. These tragedies usually take place when a child is left alone inside a vehicle or when a child gets into a vehicle on their own.

Thanks to KidsAndCars.org's leadership, a regulation now requires vehicles to come with a safety feature (BTSI) that prevents the vehicle from being put into gear without the driver's foot on the brake. But, beware, not all vehicles on the road today have this important safety feature.

CAN YOUR VEHICLE BE SHIFTED INTO GEAR WITHOUT YOUR FOOT ON THE BRAKE?

Check your vehicle to see if it can be shifted into gear without your foot on the brake. You want to make sure your vehicle has the "brake transmission shift interlock" (BTSI) feature that works in all key positions.

Get into your car

Put the emergency brake on

Make sure the vehicle is on a flat surface

Make sure no object or person is in front of or behind your vehicle

Put keys in the ignition in off position; turn key one click forward (not to the position where the radio, lights and power windows work)

Attempt to shift vehicle into gear without putting your foot on the brake – if vehicle shifts into gear, then BTSI does not work in that key position and you should be aware that your vehicle can roll if it is inadvertently shifted into gear.

Try this test in all key positions. If vehicle shifts into gear without having the brake peddle depressed, then BEWARE – your vehicle does not have BTSI in all key positions and could roll away.

Most vehicles have BTSI in some positions; but not all. The most common position is the half click forward. (somewhere between ‘off’ and accessory) You would not use this key position during normal operation, but young children find it easily. (KidsandCars.org)

3.14 Child Endangerment - Properly Securing Children

Your child must be secured by either a federally-approved child passenger restraint system or a safety belt depending on his/her height and age.

Children under **2 years old must be secured in a rear-facing** child passenger restraint system unless the child is 40 pounds or more, or 3 feet 4 inches or taller.

Children **under 8 years old must be properly secured** in a federally-approved child passenger restraint system (booster seat).

Per CVC 27363, children under 8 years old may ride in the front seat of a vehicle in a federally approved child passenger restraint system under the following instances:

There is no rear seat.

The rear seats are side-facing jump seats.

The rear seats are rear-facing seats.

The child passenger restraint system cannot be installed properly in the rear seat.

All rear seats are already occupied by children 7 years old or younger.

Medical reasons require the child to not ride in the back seat.

A child may not ride in the front seat of an airbag equipped vehicle if he/she is in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.

Children who are 8 years old or older OR who have reached at least 4 feet 9 inches in height may use a properly secured safety belt meeting federal standards.

NOTE: Child passenger restraint system installation may be checked by contacting local law enforcement agencies and fire departments. As your child grows, check to see if the child passenger restraint system is the right size for your child. (NOTE: The red car seat below is a **FORWARD FACING ONLY** car seat. The smaller car seat on the far right is a **REAR FACING** car seat.)



Car Seat



Booster Seat



Car Seat

3.15 Properly Securing a Heavy Load

Unless your vehicle is part of a commercial fleet governed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, there is no federal law requiring you to tie down loads to your vehicle. But 15 states have already passed laws to impose fines or other penalties for improperly secured loads, and many of those same states ramp up the penalties significantly — sometimes even including jail time — if flying debris from your car causes an accident.

California's law in regards to securing loads to your vehicle states, in CVC § 23114, that (a) Except as provided in Subpart I (commencing with Section 393.100 regarding Commercial Motor Vehicles. See below.) of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations related to hay and straw, a vehicle shall not be driven or moved on any highway unless the vehicle is so constructed, covered, or loaded as to prevent any of its contents or load other than clear water or feathers from live birds from dropping, sifting, leaking, blowing, spilling, or otherwise escaping from the vehicle.

CFR Title 49 §393.100 states: (a) Applicability. The rules in this subpart are applicable to trucks, truck tractors, semitrailers, full trailers, and pole trailers.

(b) Prevention against loss of load. Each commercial motor vehicle must, when transporting cargo on public roads, be loaded, and equipped, and the cargo secured, in

accordance with this subpart to prevent the cargo from leaking, spilling, blowing or falling from the motor vehicle.

(c) Prevention against shifting of load. Cargo must be contained, immobilized or secured in accordance with this subpart to prevent shifting upon or within the vehicle to such an extent that the vehicle's stability or maneuverability is adversely affected.

How to tie down a load: Tie down just about anything that isn't part of your vehicle's body. That includes obvious loads like luggage on the roof, but also things like loose clutter or heavy appliances in the bed of a pickup truck. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "just because an object in the back of a truck is heavy does not mean it can't be ejected from a vehicle — even under everyday circumstances like hitting a pothole or braking sharply."

It is illegal to drive any vehicle with an unsafe, unsecured load that is a safety hazard (CVC §24002(a)). Unsecured loads (ladders, buckets, and loose items in the back of pickup trucks) can cause danger for other motorists, especially motorcycles, when they fall onto the road.

3.16 Poor Driving Conditions

Driving in the Fog: The best advice for driving in the fog is DON'T. You should consider postponing your trip until the fog clears. However, if you must drive, then drive slow, turn on your windshield wipers, and use your low-beam headlights. The light from the high-beam headlights will reflect back and cause glare. Never drive with just your parking or fog lights and increase your following distance and be prepared to stop within the space you can see ahead. Avoid crossing or passing lanes of traffic unless absolutely necessary. Listen for traffic you cannot see. Use your wipers and defroster as necessary for best vision. If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, consider pulling off the roadway, activating your emergency signal lights, and waiting until the weather improves before continuing.

Driving with Sun Glare: Glare from the sun can be very dangerous while driving. Remember to keep the inside and outside of your windshield clean. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working order and your wiper fluid level is full. Wear polarized sunglasses. Maintain enough space between your vehicle and the vehicles around you. Your car visor should be free of anything that would restrict use and be in good working order. Be extra cautious of pedestrians; you may have difficulty seeing them. Lastly, try to avoid driving during sunrise and sunset.

Driving in Darkness: Drive more slowly at night because you cannot see as far ahead and you will have less time to stop for a hazard. Make sure you can stop within the distance lighted by your headlights.



Use your low-beam headlights at night when it rains. Do not drive using only your parking lights.

Use your high-beam headlights whenever possible in open country or dark city streets, as long as it is not illegal. Do not blind other drivers with your high-beam headlights. Dim your lights when necessary. If another driver does not dim his or her lights:

Do not look directly into the oncoming headlights.

Look toward the right edge of your lane.

Watch the oncoming vehicle out of the corner of your eye.

Do not try to “get back” at the other driver by keeping your bright lights on. If you do, both of you may be blinded.

When you drive at night, remember that pedestrians and bicyclists are much harder to see at night; stay alert for them. Motorcycles are also harder to see at night because most have only one taillight. Highway construction can take place at night so reduce your speed in highway construction zones. When you leave a brightly-lit place, drive slowly until your eyes adjust to the darkness. Drive as far to the right as possible when a vehicle with one light drives toward you. It could be a bicyclist or motorcyclist, but it could also be a vehicle with a missing headlight.

Driving in Rain or Snow: Many road pavements are the most slippery when it first starts to rain or snow because oil and dust have not yet washed away. Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. Turn on your windshield wipers, low-beam headlights, and defroster.

In a heavy rainstorm or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead of your vehicle. When you cannot see any farther than 100 feet, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. You may have to stop from time to time to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.

If you drive in snowy areas, carry the correct number of chains and be sure they will fit your drive wheels. Learn how to put the chains on before you need to use them.

Flooded Roadways: Excessive water on a roadway may cause flooding. This can happen gradually or suddenly. Flooding is dangerous and can be life threatening. It is important to understand the risks of water on the roadway. Some of the dangers of a flooded roadway include:

The vehicle being swept off the road.

Floating debris and unseen hazards.

The roadway collapsing.

Vehicle malfunction (e.g. stalled engine or brake failure).

Electrocution if accompanied by fallen power lines.

It is best to find an alternate route if you encounter a flooded roadway. It may not be possible to determine the depth of the flood by looking; it may be deep and too dangerous to cross. If you have no other option but to drive through a flooded roadway, be sure to drive slowly. Once you have safely navigated through the water, slowly and carefully check your brakes to ensure that they function correctly.

3.17 Rights and Duties - Pedestrians Related to Traffic Laws/Traffic Safety

When it comes to pedestrians and traffic laws and their safety, it must be understood that as drivers we must respect the right of way of pedestrians. Vehicle Code 467 states that: (a) A “pedestrian” is a person who is afoot or who is using any of the following: (1) A means of conveyance propelled by human power other than a bicycle. (2) An electric personal assistive mobility device. (b) “Pedestrian” includes a person who is operating a self-propelled wheelchair, motorized tricycle, or motorized quadricycle and, by reason of physical disability, is otherwise unable to move about as a pedestrian, as specified in subdivision (a).

Pedestrian safety is a serious issue. In 2023 there were 7,314 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes. (NHTSA)

Here are some important things to keep in mind when driving near pedestrians:

Pedestrians may be at risk walking near hybrid and electric vehicles because these vehicles are virtually silent while operating. Use extra caution when driving near pedestrians.

Respect the right-of-way of pedestrians. Always stop for any pedestrian crossing at corners or other crosswalks, even if the crosswalk is in the middle of the block, at corners with or without traffic signal lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted lines.

Do not pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk. A pedestrian you cannot see may be crossing the street. Stop and proceed when all pedestrians have crossed the street.

Do not drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it to enter or exit a driveway or alley. When crossing, yield to all pedestrians.

Do not stop in a crosswalk. You will place pedestrians in danger.

Remember, if a pedestrian makes eye contact with you, he or she is ready to cross the street. Yield to the pedestrian.

Allow older pedestrians, disabled pedestrians, and pedestrians with young children sufficient time to cross the street.

Obey signs pertaining to pedestrians. For example:



IMPORTANT: Blind pedestrians rely on the sound of your vehicle to become aware of your vehicle's presence, and the sound of the pedestrian signal to know when they are able to

safely cross the street. It is important that you stop your vehicle within 5 feet of the crosswalk. Drivers of hybrid or electric vehicles must remain especially aware that the lack of engine noise may cause a blind pedestrian to assume there is not a vehicle nearby. Follow this cue: When a blind person pulls in his or her cane and steps away from the intersection, this gesture usually means for you to go.

Crosswalks

Vehicle Code 275 states that a “Crosswalk” is either: (a) That portion of a roadway included within the prolongation or connection of the boundary lines of sidewalks at intersections where the intersecting roadways meet at approximately right angles, except the prolongation of such lines from an alley across a street. (b) Any portion of a roadway distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, there shall not be a crosswalk where local authorities have placed signs indicating no crossing.

A crosswalk is the part of the roadway set aside for pedestrian traffic. Most intersections have a pedestrian crosswalk whether or not lines are painted on the street. Most crosswalks are located at corners, but they can also be located in the middle of the block. Before turning a corner, watch for pedestrians about to cross the street. **Pedestrians have the right-of-way in marked or unmarked crosswalks.** Although pedestrians have the right-of-way, they also must abide by the rules of the road. A pedestrian should not suddenly leave a curb, or other place of safety, and cross into the path of a vehicle as this creates an immediate hazard. Furthermore, a pedestrian must not stop unnecessarily or delay traffic while in a crosswalk.

If you approach a crosswalk while driving, you are required to exercise caution and reduce your speed to safeguard the safety of the pedestrian. You may need to stop to ensure the safety of the pedestrian, per CVC §21950 which states: (a) The driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked crosswalk or within any unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, except as otherwise provided in this chapter. (b) This section does not relieve a pedestrian from the duty of using due care for his or her safety. No pedestrian may suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle that is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard. No pedestrian may unnecessarily stop or delay traffic while in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. (c) The driver of a vehicle approaching a pedestrian within any marked or unmarked crosswalk shall exercise all due care and shall reduce the speed of the vehicle or take any other action relating to the operation of the vehicle as necessary to safeguard the safety of the pedestrian. (d) Subdivision (b) does not relieve a driver of a vehicle from the

duty of exercising due care for the safety of any pedestrian within any marked crosswalk or within any unmarked crosswalk at an intersection.

Crosswalks are often marked with white lines. Yellow crosswalk lines may be painted at school crossings. Most often, crosswalks in residential areas are not marked.

Some crosswalks have flashing lights to warn you that pedestrians may be crossing. Look for pedestrians and be prepared to stop, whether or not the lights are flashing.

Intersections

Vehicle Code 365 states:

An "intersection" is the area embraced within the prolongations of the lateral curb lines, or, if none, then the lateral boundary lines of the roadways, of two highways which join one another at approximately right angles or the area within which vehicles traveling upon different highways joining at any other angle may come in conflict.

In layman's terms, an intersection is any place where one line of roadway meets another roadway. Intersections include cross streets, side streets, alleys, freeway entrances, and any other location where vehicles traveling on different highways or roads join each other.

Driving through an intersection is one of the most complex traffic situations motorists encounter. Intersection collisions account for more than 45% of all reported crashes and 21% of fatalities according to the Federal Highway Administration.

At intersections without "STOP" or "YIELD" signs, slow down and be ready to stop. Yield to traffic and pedestrians already in the intersection or just entering the intersection. Also, yield to the vehicle or bicycle that arrives first, or to the vehicle or bicycle on your right if it reaches the intersection at the same time as you.

At "T" intersections without "STOP" or "YIELD" signs, yield to traffic and pedestrians on the through road. They have the right-of-way.

When you turn left, give the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching that are close enough to be dangerous. Also, look for motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Safety suggestion: While waiting to turn left, keep your wheels pointed straight ahead until it is safe to start your turn. If your wheels are pointed to the left, and a vehicle hits you from behind, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic.

When you turn right, be sure to check for pedestrians who want to cross the street and bicyclists riding next to you.

On divided highways or highways with several lanes, watch for vehicles coming in any lane you cross. Turn either left or right only when it is safe.

When there are “STOP” signs at all corners, stop first and then follow the rules listed above.

If you have parked on the side of the road or are leaving a parking lot, etc., yield to traffic before reentering the road.

No Sidewalks??

Vehicle code 21956 states: No pedestrian may walk upon any roadway outside a business or residence district otherwise than close to his/her **left-hand edge** of the roadway. In simpler terms: when there are no sidewalks, walk facing oncoming traffic.

3.18 Rights and Duties - Drivers Related to Pedestrians, Bicycles, and Motorcycles

Americans are increasingly choosing walking, running, and bicycling to stay active, run errands, and as an alternative to the daily drive to work—particularly when warmer weather arrives. Regrettably, as more people are leaving their cars and trucks behind, pedestrian and cyclist deaths in motor vehicle-related crashes have increased. Whichever mode of transportation you use — behind the wheel, on a bike, or on foot — you have a responsibility to share the road so we can all safely get to where we’re going. No one—no driver, bicyclist, or pedestrian—has sole rights to the road. It is a shared space where we all have rights and responsibilities.

Drivers and Bicyclists: For drivers, sharing the road begins with understanding that bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as you.

CVC § 21760 states (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the Three Feet for Safety Act.

(b) The driver of a motor vehicle overtaking and passing a bicycle that is proceeding in the same direction on a highway shall pass in compliance with the requirements of this article applicable to overtaking and passing a vehicle, and shall do so at a safe distance that does not interfere with the safe operation of the overtaken bicycle, having due regard for the size and speed of the motor vehicle and the bicycle, traffic conditions, weather, visibility, and the surface and width of the highway.

(c) A driver of a motor vehicle shall not overtake or pass a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on a highway at a distance of less than three feet between any part of the motor vehicle and any part of the bicycle or its operator. The driver of a motor vehicle overtaking or passing a bicycle that is proceeding in the same direction and in the same lane of travel shall, if another lane of traffic proceeding in the same direction is available, make a lane

change into another available lane with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, if practicable and not prohibited by law, before overtaking or passing the bicycle.

(d) If the driver of a motor vehicle is unable to comply with subdivision (c), due to traffic or roadway conditions, the driver shall slow to a speed that is reasonable and prudent, and may pass only when doing so would not endanger the safety of the operator of the bicycle, taking into account the size and speed of the motor vehicle and bicycle, traffic conditions, weather, visibility, and surface and width of the highway.

(e) (1) A violation of subdivision (b), (c), or (d) is an infraction punishable by a fine of thirty-five dollars (\$35).

(2) If a collision occurs between a motor vehicle and a bicycle causing bodily injury to the operator of the bicycle, and the driver of the motor vehicle is found to be in violation of subdivision (b), (c), or (d), a two-hundred-twenty-dollar (\$220) fine shall be imposed on that driver.

Treat bicyclists as you would other drivers and be as aware of them in traffic as you are of vehicles. Pass bicyclists as you would vehicles—when it's safe to move over into an adjacent lane. Give them sufficient room. Do not pass too closely. In addition, starting on January 1, 2024, the law allows cyclists to cross an intersection when a walk sign is on.

Remember to look for bikes where vehicles do not appear. For example, before making a right hand turn at an intersection, make sure a bicyclist isn't approaching from the right rear of your vehicle.

Drivers and Pedestrians: Pedestrians have rights on the road, too, particularly in crosswalks. Always slow down and be prepared to yield to pedestrians when they're in a crosswalk. Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk, as there may be people crossing whom you can't see. And be extra cautious when backing up across sidewalks or in parking lots.

Bicyclists and Pedestrians: Rights, and Responsibilities: By law, drivers must share the road with cyclists and pedestrians. But bicyclists and pedestrians have responsibilities, too. Ride and walk with safety in mind.

Just like vehicle drivers, bicyclists must obey street signs, signals, and road markings. Always ride with traffic. Ride defensively, assuming others cannot see you. Ride attentively by never allowing yourself to be distracted by music, an electronic device, or anything else that takes your eyes off the road. Finally, avoid riding on sidewalks when possible. That protects pedestrians using the sidewalks. It also protects bicyclists because sidewalks can

end abruptly, forcing them into traffic unexpectedly. If you must ride on the sidewalk do so with extra caution.

Here are a few more rules from the California Vehicle Code, and reminders, regarding bicyclists:

Bicyclists must ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except under any of the following situations: (1) When overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle proceeding in the same direction. (2) When preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway. (3) When reasonably necessary to avoid conditions (including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or substandard width lanes) that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge, subject to the provisions of Section 21656. For purposes of this section, a “substandard width lane” is a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and a vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane. (4) When approaching a place where a right turn is authorized. (b) Any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway of a highway, which highway carries traffic in one direction only and has two or more marked traffic lanes, may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of that roadway as practicable.

CVC §21202

A bicycle lane is marked by a solid white line along either side of the street that is at least 4 feet from curb. This line will usually be a broken line near corners of intersections. The words BIKE LANE are painted in white on the pavement at various locations in this lane.

Bicyclists are required to use bicycle lanes when they are present on a roadway. However, they may exit these lanes to pass, make turns, or avoid a collision. CVC §21208

Bicyclists should be especially alert at intersections. Most of the accidents involving bicyclists that occur at intersections are due to the motorist’s failure to see and yield to cyclists. Be alert for motorists pulling out, crossing, turning left or turning right in front of you.

Bicyclists must obey all traffic signals and signs.

Bicyclists make a left and right hand turns in the same way that drivers do, using the same turn lanes as other traffic.

Bicyclists must use hand signals before they change lanes, turn, or stop. Bicyclists are permitted to signal a right-hand turn by extending their right arm horizontally or extending their left arm bent upward at the elbow. A left hand turn is to be indicated by extending one’s left arm out horizontally. A stop is indicated by extending the left hand down.

It is illegal to ride a bicycle under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Bicyclists may request to have a chemical test of blood, urine, breath to determine the alcohol or drug content. A conviction of a violation of this section shall be punishable by a fine of not more than \$250. CVC §21200.5

Bicycles are required to have a front light but only are required to have a red reflector or red solid or flashing light to the rear. CVC §21201.

Regarding further lighting, CVC §21201 specifically states: A bicycle operated during darkness upon a highway, a sidewalk where bicycle operation is not prohibited by the local jurisdiction, or a bikeway, as defined in Section 890.4 of the Streets and Highway Code (See below), shall be equipped with...(2) a red reflector or a solid or flashing red light with a built-in reflector on the rear that shall be visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful upper beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle. (3) A white or yellow reflector on each pedal, shoe, or ankle visible from the front and rear of the bicycle from a distance of 200 feet. (4) A white or yellow reflector on each side forward of the center of the bicycle, and a white or red reflector on each side to the rear of the center of the bicycle, except that bicycles that are equipped with reflectorized tires on the front and the rear need not be equipped with these side reflectors. The reflectors and reflectorized tires shall be of a type meeting requirements established by the department. (e) A lamp or lamp combination, emitting a white light, attached to the operator and visible from a distance of 300 feet in front and from the sides of the bicycle, may be used in lieu of the lamp required by paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) which states: A lamp emitting a white light that, while the bicycle is in motion, illuminates the highway, sidewalk, or bikeway in front of the bicyclist and is visible from a distance of 300 feet in front and from the sides of the bicycles.

Persons under 18 years of age are required to wear approved safety helmets whenever they are riding a bicycle (or as a passenger on one) on a street, bikeway, or other public path or trail. CVC §21212

Bicyclists are not out of place on the roadway— they are part of the normal traffic flow and share the road with other drivers.

Vehicles must not drive in a bike lane unless they are turning right at a corner or other entrance such as a driveway, or to exit such a corner or entrance.

Make sure to check your blind spots before turning or making lane changes. Bicycles and motorcycles are small and can easily be hidden in your blind spots.

When making a right turn under these circumstances, you must enter the bike lane to start your turn, but no sooner than 200 feet from point at which you will make your turn. Watch for bicycles before entering the bicycle lane.

Drivers must be careful when driving close to bicyclists. Allow a minimum of **three feet** of space between the side of your vehicle and the bicycle when passing. CVC §21760

When you want to pass a vehicle or bicycle going in your direction, pass on the left.

You may park in a bike lane unless otherwise posted.

Motorcyclists: Don't forget to look out for motorcyclists. Most drivers understand that motorcycles are motor vehicles and should be treated as such. But it's especially important for motorists to understand the safety challenges faced by motorcyclists such as size and visibility, and motorcycle riding practices like downshifting and weaving to know how to anticipate and respond to them. Motorcyclists must also obey their state's helmets laws, as well as all other rules of the road.

CVC §27803 addresses California's motorcycle helmet laws. It states: (a) A driver and any passenger shall wear a safety helmet meeting requirements established pursuant to Section 27802 (See below) when riding on a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle. (b) It is unlawful to operate a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle if the driver or any passenger is not wearing a safety helmet as required by subdivision (a). (c) It is unlawful to ride as a passenger on a motorcycle, motor-driven cycles, or motorized bicycle if the driver or any passenger is not wearing a safety helmet as required by subdivision (a). (d) This section applies to persons who are riding on motorcycles, motor-driven cycles, or motorized bicycles operated on the highways. (e) For the purposes of this section, "wear a safety helmet" or "wearing a safety helmet" means having a safety helmet meeting the requirements of Section 27802 on the person's head that is fastened with the helmet straps and that is of a size that fits the wearing person's head securely without excessive lateral or vertical movement. (f) This section does not apply to a person operating, or riding as a passenger in, a fully enclosed three-wheeled motor vehicle that is not less than seven feet in length and not less than four feet in width, and has an unladen weight of 900 pounds or more, if the vehicle meets or exceeds all of the requirements of this code, the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and the rules and regulations adopted by the United States Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.