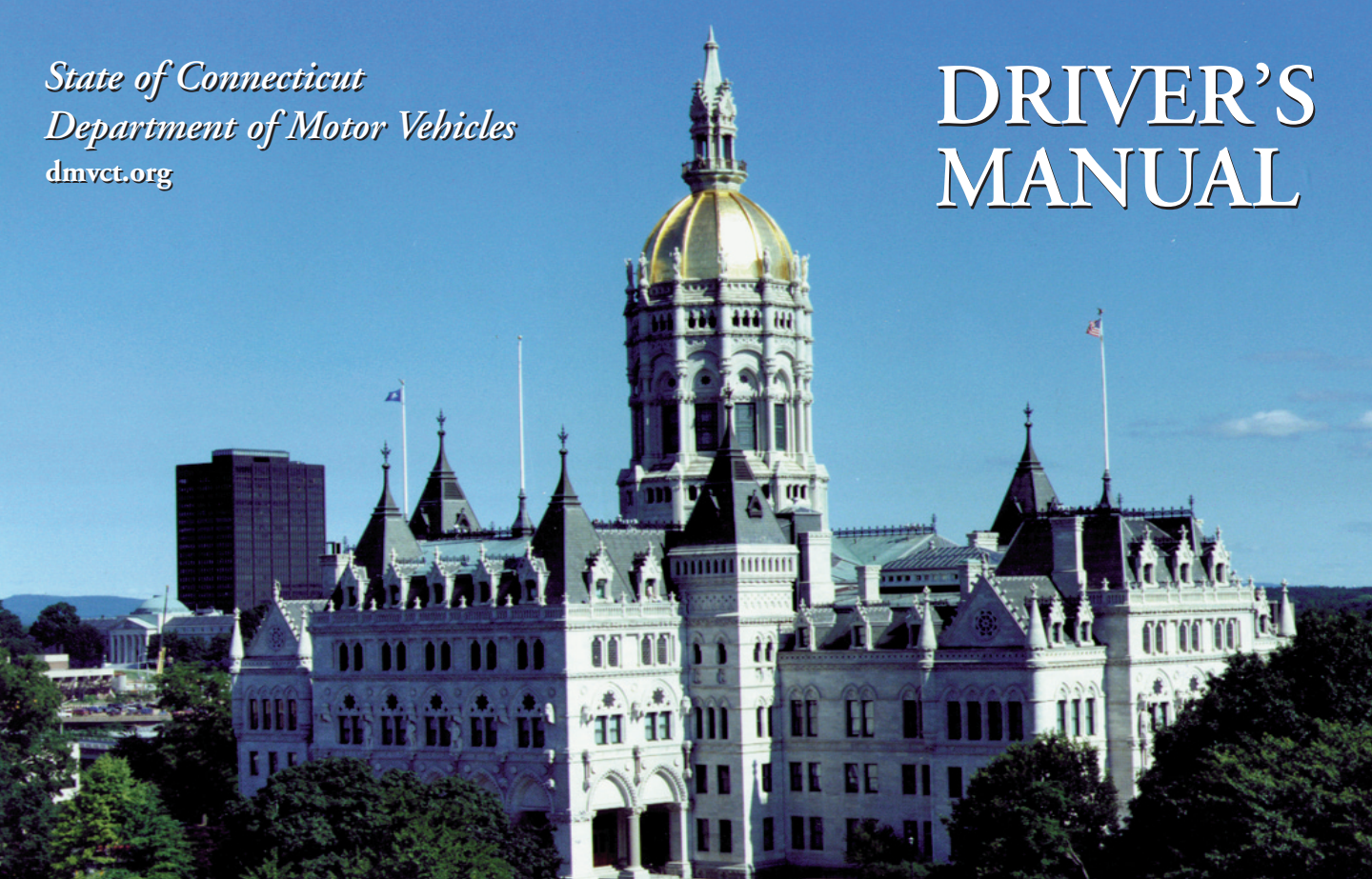


State of Connecticut
Department of Motor Vehicles
dmvct.org

DRIVER'S MANUAL



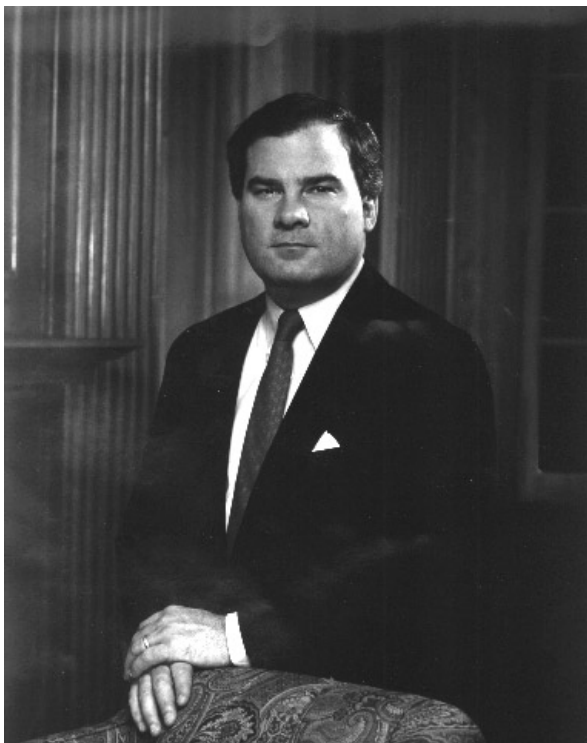
JOHN G. ROWLAND, GOVERNOR

GARY J. DEFILIPPO, COMMISSIONER



Road Signs You Must Know and Recognize

Advice from Governor Rowland

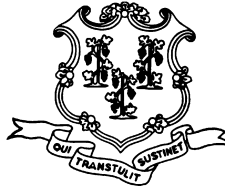


Driving carefully and considerably should be the goal of every motorist in the State of Connecticut. State laws and other responsibilities you have as a driver are explained in this manual. When driving a vehicle in Connecticut, you will be expected to know them.

This information, while necessary for new drivers, can also be helpful to more experienced drivers needing to brush up on operating rules. Some of the significant responsibilities mentioned include the use of seatbelts and child restraints, rules of the road and safe driving tips, what to do in case of emergencies, how to safely operate passenger vehicles around large trucks and never to operate a motor vehicle when you are affected by drugs or alcohol.

Please read this booklet thoroughly, and drive with courtesy and attention so that you help to keep our roads and highways safe for everyone on them.

Sincerely,
John G. Rowland
Governor



Compiled by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, and the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles' Driver's Licensing Committee and Branch Operations Division.

Barbara H. Tannis
Bureau Chief

The purpose of this manual is to provide you with a general familiarity with the principles of safe and lawful operation of a motor vehicle. The contents of this manual are not intended to serve as a precise statement of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut pertaining to the operation of a motor vehicle. Please use the Connecticut General Statutes if you are looking for a particular law.

Message from Commissioner DeFilippo



For many teenagers - the people who use the Driver's Manual most - this is an exciting time. Getting your driver's license is one of those first steps toward independence and becoming an adult. Remember, though, that driving is both a privilege and responsibility. This manual will help you understand just what that means. The rules and common-sense suggestions can also help refresh the memories of parents and others who have been behind the wheel for many years.

Safe roads are important to all motorists, but acting safe on

the road starts with you. This book helps you to learn how to drive in a number of difficult and challenging situations. At the DMV we believe that these suggestions, which are on our written exams and observed on our road tests, give you a sense of the responsibility expected when you get behind the wheel of any vehicle. We expect they will help you to develop skill and confidence in your driving.

Here are a few important reminders. Don't drive recklessly - you endanger yourself and your passengers as well as other cars and pedestrians on the roads. Keep a level head and stay away from trouble when you know it can develop. Always buckle your seat-belt and don't start the vehicle until all your passengers have buckled up. Remember that driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol is dangerous and against state law. Penalties for driving while intoxicated are severe and will be pursued by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The manual has many more specific details and I urge you to read them carefully.

Passing a driving test does not automatically make you a good driver. If you continue to drive safely and benefit from advanced learning, you will earn the respect of others and a reputation as a good driver.

Good Luck and Safe Driving.

Gary J. DeFilippo
Commissioner
Department of Motor Vehicles

William K. Seymour

Editor

Director of Corporate and Public Relations
Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

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Introduction

Connecticut Driver's Manual

The information contained herein is drawn from the experiences of the men and women who conduct the driving tests — the Motor Vehicle Inspectors.

Section 14-36(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes requires an applicant for a Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license to demonstrate that he or she:

is a proper person to operate motor vehicles of the class for which he or she has applied, has sufficient knowledge of the mechanism of the motor vehicles to ensure its safe operation and has satisfactory knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the road.

We expect applicants to be able to safely perform any legal maneuver that we ask and to recognize, understand and react properly to any road sign, marking or situation that is encountered during the skill test. We do not follow specific routes nor must we exclude any roadways (including limited access highways) during the course of a driving test. Driving is a skill and how well you have developed this skill will be the determining factor when the Inspector evaluates your driving test.

This guide is based on the errors recorded on previous road-test evaluation reports of people seeking a driver's license. We hope that you will find this manual useful in avoiding mistakes on your driving test.



<http://dmvct.org>

Chapter 1

A Guide to Passing Your Driving Test

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We test you in the vehicle that you provide. You should be familiar with it. It must have no defective or missing equipment. Applicants should be able to release or apply the parking brake and recognize when it has been applied. You should have learned to operate the windshield wiper and washer, the heater and defroster and know when to use them. You should know how to turn on the headlights and recognize if the parking lights or high beams have been selected. You should be able to operate the horn and each of the other instruments without taking your eyes off the road. You should recognize any warning lights that may be displayed on your instrument panel.

A long-term leased vehicle may be used for driver's testing if the long-term leased vehicle has a Connecticut insurance card identifying the vehicle and the registrant (lease company). Only those long-term leased vehicles that are properly insured may be used for driver's testing.

Under no circumstances may a daily-rental leased vehicle be used for driver's testing.

Getting Ready to Drive

Prior to entering the test vehicle, you should have observed nearby parked cars, people, or objects that could affect your ability to safely put the car in motion. Upon entering the vehicle you should adjust your seat (and steering wheel if adjustable) so that you are sitting

erect behind the wheel with your feet able to easily operate the foot controls. The car windows should be clean and defogged. The inside and outside mirrors should be adjusted to give you a good view to the rear with minimized blind spots. You should fasten and adjust your safety restraints. We expect you to be able to start the vehicle and recognize when it is running.

Basic Driving Skills

The inspector will instruct you to follow certain directions or perform certain maneuvers in order to evaluate specific driving skills. You should be able to follow directions you are given. The brake should be applied before you shift the car into gear from the "park" position. Drivers should accelerate and/or shift smoothly, maintaining good control of the vehicle. The car should be brought up to driving speed in a reasonable amount of time. You should be able to maintain a "space cushion" from the vehicles around you that is appropriate for the speed, road and traffic conditions you are experiencing. Under normal traffic situations, you should be able to bring your vehicle to a stop by smoothly and safely applying your brakes. We expect you to use the turn signals every time it is appropriate and to be able to demonstrate hand signals. You should be aware of other traffic and pedestrians as you make your turn and your speed should be adjusted for the turn. You should have had enough experience and training to enable you to determine what your best course of action should be in a

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particular driving situation. As you should know, drivers must be alert to what is happening around them.

Critical Driving Skills

It is important to know what is an acceptable and proper speed and be able to maintain that speed. We expect you to know what lane you should turn into, drive in, and turn from. You should know when and to whom you must yield the right of way and recognize when it is being yielded to you. We expect you to know when you must stop for a yellow traffic signal and when it is permissible not to stop. We expect you to know that when you are stopped at a stop sign or traffic light, your vehicle should not be moving. You should be able to safely control your car while backing. A skilled driver should be able to park in and exit any style parking space. You should be able to drive or back into a perpendicular parking space from the left or right. You must be able to park next to a curb in front of, behind, or between cars. You should know the proper way to park on a hill.

The Connecticut Driver's License

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle or motor-driven cycle on public roadways in Connecticut is required to have a driver's license. You are required to obtain a Connecticut driver's license if you live here for more than 30 days. The following people can drive with a valid

license (not a learner's permit) from their home state, so long as they are at least 16 years old.

Military - Members of the Armed Forces on active duty or members of foreign military on temporary duty with the Armed Forces, as well as their spouse and children.

Student - Students who are here to further their education and who are considered a non-resident for tuition purposes.

Legal Aliens - Foreign tourists, teachers or business people who hold a valid international license.

You may obtain a driver's license if you:

- Are at least 16 years of age.
- Are able to submit proof of name, age and address.
- Have successfully completed an accredited driver education course if under age 18.
- Have parental/guardian consent if under age 18.
- Have held a Learner's Permit the necessary length of time if under age 18.
- Pass needed driver's license tests.
- Turn in any previously issued driver's license or identification card.
- Have not had your driving privilege suspended, revoked, or denied.
- Are in this country legally.

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- Meet health and fitness standards, including requirements for the type of driver's license desired.

This manual will provide information needed to drive a passenger vehicle. If you want a license to drive a commercial or public service vehicle such as a (truck or bus), you need to read the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) manual. If you want a license to drive a motorcycle, you need to read the Motorcycle License manual.

How Do You Schedule an Appointment for a Driver's License Exam?

To schedule an appointment for a driver's exam, you must complete a Driver's Exam Appointment Application form and pay the required driver's exam fee. You will then be scheduled for a mutually convenient time to take your exam.

You may schedule a driver's exam appointment in person at any full-service DMV Branch Office — or contact the DMV at 1-800-842-8222 (outside the Hartford area) or 263-5700 (within the Hartford area) to request a Driver's Exam Appointment Application form.

You take the test for permits, licenses, or endorsements at any Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) branch office.

What Do You Need to Bring with You?

- Proof of name and date of birth (birth certificate and

two other documents). This is a list of acceptable identification documents. One of the identification documents you use must come from the Primary List. Others can come from the Secondary List.

Primary List:

- Certified Birth Certificate
- Valid Passport
- Military ID or Discharge/Separation Papers
- Certified Adoption Papers
- Valid US/US Territory or Canadian Photo License
- Valid Out of State or Canadian issued learner's permit with photo
- Connecticut Non-Driver ID if original is issued 10/1/97 or later
- Connecticut Pistol Permit with Photo
- Naturalization Certificate

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Secondary List:

- All primary documents
- Parent/Guardian Affidavit (for minors only)
- Baptismal Certificate or Similar Document
- Marriage License
- Foreign Birth Certificate
- Pilots License
- Expired Driver's License
- CT ID card issued by Income Maintenance with Photo
- Connecticut State (DSS) Issued Photo Public Assistance Card
- Employee ID from State or Federal Government with Signature Photograph and/or Physical Description or without DOB
- Social Security card with signature
- Certified School Records
- Court Order
- Divorce Decree
- Expired Passport
- Prison Release Document
- Expired US/US Territory or Canadian Photo License

- Parental consent and proof of completion of an approved driver education course if you are under 18.
- Physical disability requires a favorable medical certificate, to be submitted on the appropriate DMV form.
- The motor vehicle in which you will take your road test (The Department of Motor Vehicles does not furnish the vehicles).
- The registration certificate and the current Connecticut Insurance Identification Card for the vehicle being used for the test.
- You must bring your appointment letter with you, and verification of your Connecticut address as a resident. You may use utility bills, mortgage papers or your DMV appointment letter if mailed to your resident address.
- Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 666(a) (13)], requires that the Social Security Number of any applicant for a driver's license be recorded on the application

A long-term leased vehicle may be used for driver's testing if the long-term leased vehicle has a Connecticut insurance card identifying the vehicle and the registrant (lease company). Only those long-term leased vehicles that are properly insured may be used for driver's testing. Under no circumstances may a daily-rental leased vehicle be used for driver's testing.

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Testing

The knowledge examination will consist of questions taken from all parts of this manual.

The vision test will measure your visual acuity (how clearly you see) and your horizontal vision (how far you can see to either side while looking straight ahead), as well as depth and color perception.

The road test is a behind-the-wheel evaluation of your skills.

Miscellaneous Information About a Driver's License

Your driver's license will expire on your birthday and is valid for 4 years. You may renew the license anytime within four months before it expires. You will need to bring your current license, renewal application form, and applicable fee.

In order to keep your driver's license, you must drive safely at all times. You can lose your license for:

- A conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Refusing to be tested for alcohol or drugs if you are asked to do so by a police officer.
- Leaving the scene of an accident in which you are involved, without identifying yourself.

- Giving false information when you apply for a driver's license.
- Attempting to change the information on your license or using someone else's license when attempting to purchase an alcoholic beverage.
- Failing to appear for a re-examination.
- Failure to comply with DMV requests.
- Using a motor vehicle to commit a felony or causing the death of someone in a motor vehicle accident.
- Letting someone else use your driver's license or identity documents to obtain a license or ID card.
- Failing to appear in court when summoned for a motor vehicle violation, or being convicted in court of a serious violation.
- Other reasons as the DMV may deem necessary.

Chapter 2

Types of Driver's Licenses

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There are several kinds of driver's licenses that the state Department of Motor Vehicles issues. Below is a description of the various kinds.

Learner's Permit. A permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle when instructed by any driver who is at least 20 years of age and who has been licensed to drive a motor vehicle of the same class, without suspension, for at least four years preceding the instruction. The instructor must sit next to the learner, and be alert and ready to take over control of the vehicle. The safe operation of the vehicle is the responsibility of both the instructor and driver. No one between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age may learn to operate a motor vehicle without a learner's permit.

To obtain a Learner's Permit:

- You must be at least 16 years of age and pass the vision and knowledge test.
- You must have the consent of your parent, legal guardian, or certain other persons as listed in Section 14-36(d)(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- You must provide identification: evidence of identity and date of birth, and address verification.
- The permit is valid until you obtain a driver's license or turn 18 years of age, whichever comes first.

- You must not drive on a multiple lane, limited access highway until 60 days after the issuance of your Learner's Permit.

If you are under the instruction of a licensed driving school or secondary school-based driving program, you may operate on a multiple lane, limited access highway starting 30 days from the issuance of your Learner's Permit. Applicants who successfully complete driver education through a commercial driving school or a secondary school must wait 120 days after issuance of the learner's permit before taking the driver exam.

However, applicants who were instructed wholly or in part through a home training program must wait 180 days after issuance of the Learner's Permit before taking the driving exam.

You must complete a five hour course through either a commercial or secondary school covering safe driving practices, including the effects of alcohol and drugs on a person operating a motor vehicle, as well as the penalties for alcohol/drug related motor vehicle violations.

Kinds of Non-Commercial Driver's Licenses

Class 1. Any motor vehicle except a commercial motor vehicle.

Class 2. Any motor vehicle, including a combination of motor vehicle and trailer or trailing unit used exclusively

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for camping or any other recreational purpose regardless of the gross weight of the trailer or trailing unit, except a commercial motor vehicle or an articulated vehicle or any other combination of motor vehicle and trailer where the gross weight of the trailing unit or trailer is more than 10,000 lbs.

Graduated License. The Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, with the help of our Medical Advisory Board (a group of medical doctors who volunteer their time) has developed a Graduated Driver's License program. This licensing program is for the person whose abilities, for whatever reason, have changed since his or her initial licensing. It allows DMV to issue new licenses under this program to drivers who previously would not have qualified for a license. Before a graduated license is issued to a person who has medical/physical conditions, that person must submit favorable medical reports and may be required to pass an on-the-road skills retest with a DMV inspector.

Types of Graduated Drivers' Licenses Available. A graduated license may contain one or more of the following limitations, which will be noted on the license document and operation of a motor vehicle is permitted ONLY:

- During the period of daylight beginning one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise and ending one-half (1/2) hour after sunset.

- When the person is using corrective lenses, not including telescopic lenses, as prescribed by a license optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- On highways that are not limited access highways.
- In a motor vehicle having an automatic transmission.
- In a motor vehicle equipped with external mirrors located on both the left and right sides of the vehicle to reflect to the vehicle operator a view of the highway of at least two hundred (200) feet to the rear.
- In a motor vehicle having special controls or equipment.

For further information, please contact the Medical Qualifications/Graduated License Unit at the Department of Motor Vehicles, 60 State Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06161.

Kinds of Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL)

Class A License – Combination Vehicles. Any combination of vehicles with gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds falls in Class A, providing the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. Most Class A vehicles are trucks such as tractor-trailer or truck and trailer combinations. However, tractor-trailer buses may be found in a few communities. Driving a Class A vehicle requires considerably more skill and knowledge than driving vehicles in classes B and C. Since these skills

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include those required to drive a Class B and C vehicle, a driver who has a Class A license also may drive vehicles in classes B and C.

Class B License – Heavy Straight Vehicles. Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds falls in Class B, or any such vehicle towing another vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. Class B includes straight trucks and large buses, including articulated buses. Safely driving these heavy vehicles requires considerably more knowledge and skill than driving the small trucks and buses found in Class C. Since they include the skills required to drive Class C vehicles, drivers who have qualified for a Class B license may also drive vehicles in Class C.

Class C License – Small Vehicles. Any single vehicle with a GVWR less than 26,001 pounds falls in Group C, or any such vehicle towing another vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. However, vehicles of this size are included in the CDL program only if they are: 1) Designed to carry 16 or more passengers including the driver, or (2) Used to transport hazardous materials in quantities requiring placarding under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 CFR Part 172, subpart F).

There are a great variety of vehicles in Class C. Some other large Class C vehicles may require more skill and knowledge to operate than do the smaller ones. However, the licensing category is based principally on

the type of cargo carried. Because of the seriousness of an accident involving hazardous material or human passengers, the safe operation of even the smaller vehicles in Class C requires special knowledge and the drivers of the vehicles must have a commercial driver's license (CDL).

All commercial drivers who drive certain types of vehicles or haul certain types of cargo must add endorsements to their CDL licenses to show that they have the specialized knowledge required for these operations. There are five kinds of CDL endorsements that may be required, depending on the vehicle or type of cargo.

Double and Triple Trailers [T] – Many drivers who are qualified to drive Class A vehicles may wish to pull double or triple trailers. Research shows that considerable additional knowledge and skill is necessary to safely pull double and triple trailers in various traffic conditions and driving environments. Consequently, adding the endorsement to the licenses of Class A drivers is necessary if they wish to pull double or triple trailers. A special knowledge examination on the problems associated with pulling multiple trailers must be passed.

Tank Vehicle [N] – Drivers of vehicles that are used to haul liquids or gaseous materials in permanent tanks or in portable tanks having a rating capacity of 1,000 gallons or more must have specialized knowledge and skills to drive safely. Liquids in bulk cause driving control problems

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because the cargo is heavy, shifting, and has a high center of gravity. These drivers must add an endorsement to their license showing they have passed a special knowledge examination on the problems posed by large volume liquid cargos.

Passengers [P] – Any driver who wishes to drive a vehicle having a design capacity to carry 16 or more passengers, including the driver, must add a passenger endorsement to their CDL. They must pass a special knowledge examination on safety considerations when transporting passengers and must pass skills tests in a passenger vehicle. The endorsement applies to applicants who wish to drive a bus in any class (A, B, or C).

Hazardous Materials [H] – Any driver, regardless of the class of their vehicle (A, B, or C) who wishes to haul hazardous materials or waste in amounts requiring placards must add a hazardous materials endorsement to their CDL. They must pass a special written examination on how to recognize, handle and transport hazardous materials.

Combination Hazardous Materials and Tank Vehicle [X] – Drivers who haul hazardous materials or hazardous waste in a tank vehicle must add an X endorsement to their CDL, showing that they have passed the special knowledge examinations for both tank vehicles and hazardous materials.

Air Brakes Restriction – Most drivers of heavy commercial vehicles drive trucks or buses equipped with air brakes. Therefore, part of the examination process covers the operation and critical aspects of air brake systems. Many Class A and B vehicles have air brakes. Some Class C vehicles also have air brakes. If a driver cannot pass the Air Brakes knowledge test, or if the driver does not successfully complete the CDL skills tests in a vehicle equipped with air brakes, a restriction must be placed on the applicant's CDL showing that they are not qualified to drive a vehicle with air brakes.

Buckle Up for Safety

Chapter 3

Preparing to Drive

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Your safety and that of the public, depends a lot on what you do before driving, including adjusting the seat and mirrors, using safety belts, checking your vehicle, maintaining a clear view and securing items in and on the vehicle.

Trip Planning

There are ways you can help reduce your driving costs. First, determine your overall transportation needs. For each trip, determine if it is necessary. If so, there may be times you do not need to drive yourself. You might ride with someone else or you could take public transportation if it is available.

The best way to prolong the life of your car and save on fuel is to use it as little as possible. Trip planning can make your life easier and help cut down on your driving. For instance:

- Take public transportation when it is available.
- Avoid driving during heavy traffic. It causes extra wear and tear on you and the vehicle.
- Use carpools or share rides whenever possible.
- Plan, and then combine your trips. Make a list of the things you need and the places you need to go. Go to as many places as possible on any one trip. Try to reduce the number of places you need to go. This will cut down on the number of trips you need to take.

- Call ahead to make sure that they have what you need or that what you are picking up is ready.

By doing these things you can help cut down on the amount of traffic on the road, cut your travel costs and save yourself time and effort.

Check the Vehicle

How safely you can drive starts with the vehicle you are driving. It is the duty of drivers to make certain that the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle that is in bad shape is unsafe and costs more to run than one that is maintained. It can break down or cause a collision. If a vehicle is in bad shape, you might not be able to get out of an emergency situation. A vehicle in good shape can give you an extra safety margin when you need it. You never know when you will need it.

Your vehicle may be required to have an emission inspection at an authorized Inspection Station. If the vehicle does not pass, you will be given 30 days to have the problem fixed and have the emissions rechecked.

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

Braking System. Only your brakes can stop your vehicle. It is very dangerous if they are not working properly. If

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they do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, are emitting an unusual odor, or, the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

Lights. Make sure that turn signals, brake lights, tail lights and head lights are operating properly. These should be checked from the outside of the vehicle. Brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping and turn signals tell them you are turning. An out-of-line headlight can shine where it does not help you and may blind other drivers. If you are having trouble seeing at night or if other drivers are constantly flashing their headlights at you, have a mechanic check the headlights.

Windshield and Wipers. Damaged glass can more easily break in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. Have a damaged windshield replaced. Windshield wipers keep the rain and snow off the windshield. Some vehicles also have wipers for rear windows and headlights. Make sure all wipers are in good operating condition. If the blades are not clearing water well, replace them.

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

and increase the chance of having a flat tire. Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check the vehicle owner's manual or the side of the tires for the proper pressure.

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

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

Exhaust System. The exhaust system helps reduce the noise from the engine, helps cool the hot gases coming from running the engine, and moves these gases to the rear of the vehicle. Gases from a leaky exhaust can cause death inside a vehicle in a very short time. Never run the motor in a closed garage. If you sit in a vehicle with the motor running for a long time, open a window. Some exhaust leaks are easily heard but many are not. This is why it is important to have the exhaust system checked periodically.

Engine. A poorly running engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, pollutes the air and could

Connecticut Driver's Manual

die on you when you are on the road causing you and traffic a problem. Follow the procedures recommended in the owner's manual for maintenance.

Loose Objects. Make sure that there are no loose objects in the vehicle that could hit someone in the event of a sudden stop or crash. Make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal and prevent you from stopping the vehicle.

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

Clean Glass Surfaces

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

- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see. Carry liquid cleaner and a paper or cloth towel so you can clean your windshield whenever it is necessary.
- Keep your window washer bottle full. Use antifreeze wash in areas where the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Keep the inside of your windows clean, especially if anyone has been smoking in the vehicle. Smoking causes a film to build up on the inside glass.

- Clear snow, ice or frost from all windows before driving. Make sure you clean the front, sides and back.
- Do not hang things from your mirror or clutter up the windshield with decal's. They could block your view.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can reduce the light by 50%.

Adjust Seat and Mirrors

You should always check your seat and mirrors before you start to drive. Make any adjustments to the seat and mirrors before you drive off. For instance:

- Adjust your seat so that you are high enough to clearly see the road. If necessary, use a seat cushion. Do not move the seat so far forward that you cannot easily steer.
- Adjust your rear view mirror and side mirrors. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view mirror and to the sides with the side mirrors. A good adjustment for the side mirrors is to set them so that when you lean forward slightly, you can see just the side of your vehicle.
- If you have a day/night mirror, make sure it is set for the time of day you are driving.
- Head restraints are designed to prevent whip-lash if you are hit from behind. They should be adjusted so the head restraint contacts the back of your head.

Chapter 4

Safety Belts and Child Restraints

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Before you drive away, always fasten your safety belts and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints. Connecticut has a mandatory seat-belt law. Also remember to lock the vehicle's doors.

It is important that you and your passengers use safety belts. Studies have shown that if you are in an accident while using safety belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. In Connecticut, it is illegal to drive or to be a front-seat passenger, without wearing safety belts.

If your vehicle has a two-part safety belt system, be sure to wear both the lap-belt and the shoulder-belt. Wearing either part alone greatly reduces your protection. If you have an automatic shoulder belt, be sure to buckle your lap belt as well. Otherwise, in a collision you could slide out of the belt and be hurt or killed.

In addition to protecting you from injury as a driver, safety belts help you keep control of the vehicle. If you are struck from the side or make a quick turn, the force could push you sideways. You cannot steer the vehicle if you are not behind the wheel.

State law requires that safety belts must be worn even if



the vehicle is equipped with air bags. While air bags are good protection against hitting the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield, they do not protect you if you are hit from the side or rear or if the vehicle rolls over. And, an air bag will not keep you behind the wheel in these situations.

State law requires children to wear proper child restraint and safety systems while riding in a vehicle. Any child under age 4 and weighing less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint system that conforms to all applicable federal motor vehicle standards. Children under 4 years-old and weighing more than 40 pounds must use an approved child restraint system or a seat safety belt. All children must ride securely buckled in the back seat of vehicles equipped with passenger-side airbags. Drivers found violating these laws face penalties, including fines and license suspension.

The law also requires that the operator as well as any front seat passenger shall wear seat belts. In addition to complying with state laws requiring child restraint systems in vehicles, drivers must ensure that any passenger between 4 and 16 years old is wearing a seat belt.

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Misconceptions Still Exist

Some people still have “bad information” about using safety belts. For example,

- *“Safety belts can trap you inside a car.”*

It takes less than a second to undo a safety belt.

Crashes where a vehicle catches fire or sinks in deep water and you are “trapped” seldom happen. Even if they do, a safety belt may keep you from being “knocked out”. Your chance to escape will be better if you are conscious.

- *“Safety belts are good on long trips, but I do not need them if I am driving around town.”*

Over half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Many of them occur on roads posted at less than 45 mph.

- *“Some people are thrown clear in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch.”*

Your chances of not being killed in an accident are much better if you stay inside the vehicle. Safety belts can keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle and into the path of another one.



- *“If I get hit from the side, I am better off being thrown across the car; away from the crash point.”*

When a vehicle is struck from the side, it will move sideways. Everything in the vehicle that is not fastened down, including the passengers, will slide toward the point of crash, not away from it.

- *“At slow speeds, I can brace myself.”*

Even at 25 mph, the force of a head-on crash is the same as pedaling a bicycle full-speed into a brick wall or diving off a three-story building onto the sidewalk. No one can “brace” for that impact.

Obey Posted Speed Limits

Chapter 5

Rules of the Road

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There are traffic rules that say where, when and how fast you can drive. These rules help to keep traffic moving safely. Rules of the road include traffic control devices, right-of-ways, and parking rules.

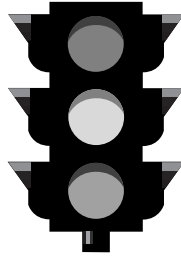
Traffic Control Devices

Traffic control devices include traffic signals, signs and pavement markings. Traffic control also can be provided by law enforcement, highway personnel or school crossing guards. You must obey directions from these persons.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals are lights that tell you when or where to stop and go. A **GREEN** light means you can go if it is safe. A **YELLOW** light means caution and a **RED** light means stop. Traffic lights are usually at intersections and are green, yellow and red, from bottom to top, when together. There are some intersections and other locations where there are single green, yellow or red lights.

A steady **GREEN** traffic light means you can go through the intersection. You must yield to emergency vehicles and others as required by law. If you are stopped and then the light turns green, you must allow crossing traffic to clear the intersection before you go ahead. A **GREEN** arrow means you can safely turn in the direction of the



arrow. There should be no on-coming or crossing traffic while the arrow is green. If you are turning left, a steady green traffic light means you may turn but only when safe to do so. Oncoming traffic has the right-of-way. Be alert for signs that prohibit left turns. When turning right or left, watch for pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle.

A steady **YELLOW** traffic light means the traffic light is about to change to red. You must stop if it is safe to do so. If you are in the intersection when the yellow light comes on, do not stop but continue through the intersection. A flashing **YELLOW** traffic light means slow down and proceed with caution. A **YELLOW** arrow means that the protection of a green arrow is ending and if you are turning in the direction of the arrow, you should prepare to stop and give the right of way to oncoming traffic before turning.

A steady **RED** traffic light means stop. In some locations, there may be a small, very bright blinking light in the middle of the red light. This device is to alert you of the red light and that you must stop. You must wait until the traffic light turns green and there is no crossing traffic before you may move ahead. If you are turning right, you may turn after coming to a full stop, if it is safe to do so and if there is no sign prohibiting the turn on a red light. Be careful of pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle. A flashing

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RED traffic light means the same as a stop sign. You must come to a full stop and then may proceed when it is safe to do so. A **RED** arrow means you must stop and you cannot go in the direction of the arrow. You may proceed when the red arrow goes out and a green arrow or light goes on.

Traffic Signs

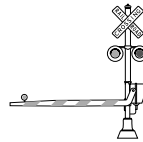
Traffic signs tell you about traffic rules, hazards, where you are, how to get where you are going and where services are located. The shape and color of these signs give clues to the type of information they provide.

Warning Signs. These signs are usually yellow with black lettering or symbols and most are diamond shaped. These signs warn you to slow down and be prepared to stop if necessary. It warns you that a special situation or a hazard is ahead. Some common warning signs are shown.

Railroad Crossing Warning Signs. Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to warn drivers. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Never start to cross if there is not room for your vehicle on the far side and if you will have to stop on the tracks. Wait until there is room for your vehicle on the far side. It is wise not to shift



gears when crossing railroad tracks, just in case you might stall. Remember that trains are large and may be moving faster than they look. Some common railroad crossing warning signs and signals are shown in the illustrations below.



- A round yellow warning sign with an "X" symbol and black "RR" letters is placed along the road before you get to a railroad crossing.
- A white, X-shaped sign or "crossbuck" with "Railroad Crossing" on it is located at the railroad crossing. This sign has the same meaning as a "Yield" sign. You must yield to crossing trains.
- At some crossings, along with the crossbuck sign, you will see side-by-side lights that will flash alternately when a train is approaching. When the lights are flashing, you must stop. At some crossings there is also a crossing gate that will lower when a train is coming. Do not drive around the gate. Some crossings also have a bell or a horn that will sound. Do not cross until the bell or horn has stopped.

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■ Crossings with more than one train track will often post a sign that shows the number of tracks. These signs warn you that there is more than one track and there may be more than one train crossing. Not all crossings with more than one train track will have these signs so it is important to check for more than one track before crossing.

■ **Work Area Signs.** These construction, maintenance or emergency operations signs are generally diamond or rectangular shaped, orange with black letters or symbols and warn you that people are working on or near the roadway. These warnings include reduced speed, detours, slow moving construction equipment and poor or suddenly changing road surfaces. In work areas, traffic may be controlled by a person with a sign or flag. You must obey these persons.



Regulatory Signs

These signs are square, rectangular, or have a special shape and are usually white, red or black with black, red, white or green letters or symbols. They give you informa-



tion about rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking and other special situations.

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

Common types of regulatory signs are:

■ **Speed Limit Signs.** These signs indicate the maximum safe speed allowed or the minimum safe speed required. The maximum limit should be driven only in ideal driving conditions and you must reduce your speed when conditions require it. For example, you should reduce your speed when the roadway is slippery, during rain, snow, icy conditions, or when it is foggy and difficult to see clearly down the road. Some high speed roads have minimum speed limits and you are required to travel at least this fast so as not to be a hazard to other drivers. If the minimum posted speed is too fast for you, you should use another road.



■ **Lane Use Control Signs.** These signs tell you where you can go, where you can turn and often use an arrow symbol. These signs can be located on the

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side of the road or hanging over the lane of travel. Sometimes arrows may be painted on the road as a supplement to the signs.

■ **No Passing Signs.** These signs tell you where passing is not permitted. Passing areas are based on how far you can see ahead. They consider unseen hazards such as hills and curves, intersections, driveways and other places a vehicle may enter the roadway. These signs, along with pavement markings, indicate where you can pass another vehicle, the beginning and ending of a passing zone or where you may not pass. Where it is permitted to pass, you may do so only if it is safe. Be aware of road conditions and other vehicles.



■ **Stop Sign.** A stop sign has eight sides and is red with white letters. You must come to a full stop at a stop sign or stop line, if one is present. You must wait until crossing vehicles and pedestrians have cleared and pull forward only when it is safe to do so.



■ **Yield Sign.** A yield sign is a downward pointing triangle. It is red and white with red letters. It means you must slow down and yield the right-of-way to traffic in the intersection you are crossing or roadway you are entering.

■ **Do Not Enter Sign.** A square sign with a white horizontal line inside a red ball means you cannot enter. You will see this sign at roadway openings that you should not enter such as exit ramps where you would be going in the wrong direction, in crossovers on divided roadways and at numerous locations on one-way streets.



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

Common Types of Guide Signs

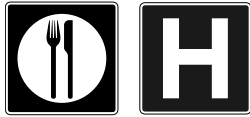
These are signs that direct a motorist somewhere. Listed below are some that you will find frequently along the road.

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



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- **Service Signs.** These signs are square or rectangular shaped and are blue with white letters or symbols.



They show the location of various services such as rest areas, gas stations, campgrounds or hospitals.

- **Route Number Signs.** The shape and color of route number signs indicate the type of roadway: interstate, U.S., state, city or county road. When planning a trip, use a road map to determine your route. During the trip, follow the route signs to prevent you from getting lost.

Pavement Markings

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

Edge and Lane Lines

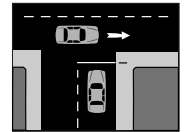
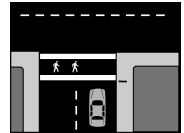
Solid lines along the side of the road show you where the edge of the road is located.

- **White lane marking** – Multiple lanes of travel in the same direction are separated by white lane markings. A dashed white line between lanes of traffic means that



you may cross it to change lanes if it is safe to do so. A solid white line between lanes of traffic means that you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes.

- **Crosswalks and stop lines** – When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line or if there is one, a crosswalk. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians may cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians in or about to enter a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked. Be alert for pedestrians when crossing intersections.



- **Yellow lane markings** – Lines separating traffic moving in opposite directions are yellow. A dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to pass if it safe to do so. Some passing zones have signs that tell you where passing is per-



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mitted and where you cannot pass. Where there is both a solid and a dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic, you may not pass if the solid yellow line is on your side. If the dashed line is on your side, you may pass if it is safe to do so. Two solid yellow lines between lanes of traffic means neither side can pass. You may cross a solid yellow line to turn into a drive way if it safe to do so.

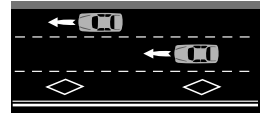
Reversible Lanes

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

Reserved Lanes

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

- "Transit" or "bus" means the lane is for bus use only.
- "Bicycle" means the lane is reserved for bicycles.
- "HOV" stands for "High Occupancy Vehicles" and a diamond-shaped marker indicates lanes reserved for vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs say how many people must be in the vehicle.



Shared Center Lane

These center lanes are reserved for making left turns (or u-turns when they are permitted) but can be used by vehicles traveling in both directions. On the pavement, left-turn arrows for traffic in one direction alternate with left-turn arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by a solid yellow and dashed yellow lines. In some areas, the shared center lane becomes a "reversible lane" during rush hours. Be sure you can enter the lane before you do so and then only if it is safe to do so.

General Rules

When there are no signs or markings to control the use of lanes, there are rules that indicate which lane is to be used. These rules cover general driving, passing and turning.

General Driving. Never back a vehicle in any travel lane

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except to parallel park. It is illegal and unsafe to do so. Drivers do not expect a vehicle to be backing towards them and may not realize it until it is too late. If you miss your turn or exit do not back up but go on to where you can safely turn around. Do not stop in travel lanes for any reason (confusion, breakdown, letting out a passenger). Keep moving until you can safely pull off the road.

On a road with two or more lanes traveling in the same direction, stay in the right lane except to pass. On a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction, if there is a lot of entering or exiting traffic, use the center travel lane. Unless told to do so by officials, never drive on the shoulder of the road.

Passing. On multi-lane roads, the left-most lane is intended to be used for passing slower vehicles. If you pass on the right, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you. Never pass on the shoulder, whether it is paved or not. Other drivers will never expect you to be there and may pull off the road without looking.

Turning. Where there are no signs or lane markings to control turning, you should turn from the lane that is closest to the direction you want to go and turn into the lane closest to the one you came from. This way, you will cross the fewest lanes of traffic. When making turns, go from one lane to the other as directly as possible without crossing lane lines or interfering with traffic. Once you have

completed your turn, you can change to another lane if you need to.

- **Right turns.** On right turns, avoid swinging wide to the left before turning to make the turn. If you swing wide, the driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or going to turn left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers who are in the far lane will not expect to see you there.
- **Left turns.** When making a left turn, avoid cutting the corner so sharply that you run into someone approaching from the left. However, be sure to leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you.
- **Multiple lanes turning.** If there are signs or lane markings that allow for two or more turning lanes, stay in your lane during the turn.

Right-of-Way

Where vehicles or pedestrians are likely to meet one another and there are no signs or signals to regulate traffic, there are rules on who must yield the right-of-way. These rules tell who goes first and who must wait in different traffic situations.

The law says who must yield the right of way; it does not give anyone the right-of-way. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle,

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regardless of the circumstances.

The following right-of-way rules apply:

- Drivers must yield the right of way at all times to pedestrians who are in a marked or unmarked crosswalk.
- Pedestrians using a guide dog or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. Do not use your horn as it could confuse or frighten the pedestrian.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming vehicles going straight-ahead.
- Drivers entering a traffic circle or rotary must yield to drivers already in the circle.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign, yield sign or traffic signal, drivers must yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- At a 4-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first, goes first (after coming to a complete stop). If more than one vehicle arrives at the same time, the vehicle on the right, goes.
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley or roadside must yield to vehicles already on the main road.
- Drivers may not enter an intersection unless they can get through it without having to stop. You should wait until traffic ahead clears so that you are not blocking

the intersection.

- Drivers overtaking a vehicle traveling in the same direction must yield to that vehicle, even if the vehicle is slowing or coming to a stop.
- You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance or other emergency vehicle using a siren, air horn or a red or blue flashing light. Pull over to the right edge of the road or as near to the right as possible when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction. Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle's loudspeaker. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over.
- You must stop for a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing whether it is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road or at an intersection you are approaching. You are not required to stop if the bus is traveling towards you and the roadway is separated by a median or other physical barrier. After the school bus red lights have stopped flashing, watch for children along the side of the road and do not proceed until they have completely left the roadway and it is safe to proceed.
- You must yield the right-of-way to trains crossing the roadway.

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Parking

Drivers are responsible for making sure that their vehicle is not a hazard when it is parked. Whenever you park, be sure it is in a place that is: (1) Far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic and (2) Visible to vehicles approaching from either direction.

- Always park in a designated area if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission or in “park” if it has an automatic transmission.
- Check traffic before you open the door. Get out of the vehicle on the curb side if you can. If you have to use the street side, check traffic before you get out. Shut the door as soon as you can after getting out.
- Never leave the ignition keys in a parked vehicle. It is a good habit to lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle.
- If you must park on a roadway, park your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can.
- When you park on a hill, turn your wheels sharply towards the side of the road or curb. This way, if your vehicle starts to roll downhill, it will roll away from traffic.

No-Parking Zones

There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs that may prohibit or limit parking. Some parking restrictions are indicated by colored curb markings. Do not park:

- In an intersection.
- On a crosswalk or sidewalk.
- In a construction area if your vehicle will block traffic.
- Within 25 feet of a stop sign.
- Within 25 feet of a pedestrian safety zone.
- Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- More than 1 foot from the curb.
- Blocking a driveway, alley, private road or area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk.
- On a bridge or overpass or in a tunnel or underpass.
- On the wrong side of the street.
- In a space marked for the handicapped, unless you have a handicap license plate, tag or sticker.
- On the road side of a parked vehicle (double parking).
- On railroad tracks.
- Wherever a sign says you cannot park.



Chapter 6

Safe Driving Tips

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

Basic Driving

Starting. Check the vehicle owner's manual for how to best start the vehicle. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle. If the vehicle has a manual transmission, it must not be in gear and in some vehicles the clutch must be depressed. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park."

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

Steering. Both hands should be placed on opposite sides of the steering wheel (i.e., left hand between 8 and 10 o'clock and right hand between 2 and 4 o'clock). This position is comfortable and on high speed roads it allows you to make turns without taking your hands off the wheel.

Look both well down the road and on both sides of the road, not at the road just in front of your vehicle. Look for

traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

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

Speeding. The best way not to speed is to know how fast you are going. Check the speedometer often. People are not very good at judging how fast they are going. It is easy to be traveling much faster than you think. This is especially true when you leave high speed roads and are driving on much slower local roads. Follow the speed limit signs. They are there for your safety.

Stopping. Be alert so that you know when you will have to stop well ahead of time. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and usually points to a driver who was not paying attention. When you brake quickly, you could skid and lose control of your vehicle. You also make it harder for drivers behind you to stop without hitting you.

Try to avoid panic stops by seeing events well in advance. By slowing down or changing lanes, you may not have to stop at all and if you do, you can make a more gradual and safer stop.

Seeing Well. Most of what you do in driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well.

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The single biggest contributor to crashes is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides and behind your vehicle and be alert for unexpected events. At night and at other times when it's hard to see, you must use your headlights.

You must be alert to what is going on around you. Many crashes occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. Do not take your eyes off the road for more than a few seconds at any one time. If you need to look at a map, pull safely off the road before you try to look at it. Do not try to read the map while you are driving. In many crashes with motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians, drivers reported that they looked but did not see them.

If you have a cellular phone or CB radio, avoid using it when the vehicle is in motion. Even with "hands free" equipment, conversing on a phone or radio takes your attention away from driving and can cause you to be less likely to notice a dangerous situation.

Do not drive with head or earphones that cover or go in both ears. These are illegal in many states and make it too hard to hear emergency horns or sirens.

Do not slow down just to look -rubbernecking- at: a crash, someone getting a ticket or other roadside activity. This could cause you to be in a crash. If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle ahead that has slowed or stopped. Rubbernecking also can increase congestion. When you pass these roadside

activities, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as soon and as safely as you can.

Scanning

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

Look Ahead. In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn, you should look well down the road. By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel, help keep traffic moving at a steady pace and allow yourself time to better see around your vehicle and along side the road. Looking well down the road will also help you to steer straighter with less weaving. Safer drivers tend to look at least 12 seconds ahead of their vehicle. How far is this? It is the distance that your vehicle will travel in 12 seconds.

In the city, 12 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, you should try to look at least one block ahead. On the highway, 12 seconds is about four city blocks or a quarter of a mile.

How do you know how many seconds you are looking ahead? Here is how to figure how far ahead you are looking.

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1. Find a non-moving object like a sign or telephone pole near the road about as far ahead as you are looking.
2. Start counting: one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, etc., until you reach the object.
3. The number of seconds you have counted is the number of seconds ahead that you were looking.

You can be a safer driver by looking well ahead. You can avoid the need to stop or turn quickly. The less you have to stop or turn quickly, the less likely you are to run into someone or have someone run into you.

By looking well ahead, you can save on fuel. Every time you have to stop quickly, it takes time and fuel to get your vehicle back up to speed. Drivers who look ahead, can slow down gradually or change lanes and avoid unnecessary braking that leads to lower miles-per-gallon.

Traffic would flow more smoothly if everyone looked well ahead. Making driving changes before the last moment gives drivers behind you more time to react. The earlier you act, the less often someone behind you has to react quickly to your vehicle. By seeing needed driving changes early, you can drive more safely and that helps drivers behind you drive more safely too. It also keeps traffic moving at a steady pace.

Look to the Sides. As other vehicles or pedestrians may cross or enter your path anytime, you should look to the

sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings.

Intersections. Intersections are any place where traffic merges or crosses. They include: cross streets, side streets, driveways and shopping center or parking lot entrances. Before you enter an intersection, look to both the left and right for approaching vehicles and/or crossing pedestrians. If stopped, look to both the left and right just before you start moving. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure the path is clear all the way through the intersection and you will not block it if you have to stop.

Before you turn left across oncoming traffic, look for a safe gap in the traffic. Look to the street you are turning into to make sure that no vehicles or pedestrians are in your path, leaving you stranded in the path of oncoming traffic. Look one more time in the direction of oncoming traffic before you turn.

Before turning right, make sure that there is no traffic approaching from your left and no oncoming traffic turning left into your path. Do not begin your turn without checking for pedestrians crossing where you will be turning. You may turn right, after stopping, on red unless prohibited.

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs to tell you that no one will be crossing in front of you. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals or signs. At an intersection, look left and right, even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign.

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This is especially important just after the light has turned green. This is when people on the cross street are most likely to hurry through the intersection before the light changes to red. Others who may not stop are individuals who have been drinking or other reckless drivers.

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

Whenever there is a lot of activity along the side of the road, there is a good chance that someone will cross or enter the road. Therefore, it is very important to look to the sides when you are near shopping centers and parking lots, construction areas, busy sidewalks and playgrounds and school yards.

Railroad Crossings. As you approach any railroad crossing slow down and look up and down the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. Do not assume that a train is not coming even if you have never seen one at that crossing before. Assuming that a train is not coming is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings. Make sure there is room for our vehicle on the far side before you cross the tracks.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the pass-

ing train is well down the track before starting to cross. Another train may be hidden by the one that just passed.

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

Changing Lanes. Whenever you want to change lanes, you must check that there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. This means you must check for traffic to the side and behind your vehicle before you change lanes. Changing lanes includes: changing from one lane to another, merging onto a roadway from an entrance ramp and entering the roadway from the curb or shoulder. When changing lanes, you should:

- **Look in your rear-view and side mirrors.** Make sure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. Make sure that nobody is about to pass you.
- **Look over your shoulder in the direction you plan to move.** Be sure no one is near the rear corners of your vehicle. These areas are called “blind spots” because you cannot see them through your mirrors. You must turn your head and look to see vehicles in your blind spot.

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■ **Check quickly.** Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking traffic to the sides, rear or over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to change lanes, merge or pull onto the roadway. This way you can keep an eye on vehicles ahead of you at the same time. Check over your shoulder just before you change lanes for traffic in your blind spot. Look several times if you need to so as not to look for too long a period at any one time. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you and in the lane you are entering.

■ **Check the far lane.** Be sure to check the far lane, if there is one, as someone in that lane may be planning to move into the same lane you want to enter.

Other Road Users. Remember that there are other road users such as motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians that are harder to see than are cars and trucks. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from the curb or driveway.

Slow Down. You must check behind your vehicle whenever you slow down. This is very important when you slow down quickly or at points where a following driver would not expect you to slow down, such as private driveways or parking spaces.

When You Back Up. It is hard for you to see behind your vehicle. Try to do as little backing as possible. In a shopping center, try to find a parking space you can drive through, so you can drive forward when you leave. Where backing is necessary, here are some hints that will help you back your vehicle safely.

■ Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.

■ Place your right arm on the back of the seat and turn around so that you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors as you can not see directly behind your vehicle.

■ Back slowly, your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing.

■ Whenever possible use a person outside the vehicle to help you back.

Going Down a Long or Steep Hill. Check your mirrors when you are going down hills or mountains. Vehicles often build up speed going down a steep grade. Be alert for large trucks and buses that may be going too fast.

Using Your Lights

It is much harder to see at night. Here are some things you can do that will help you see better:

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Use your high beams whenever there are no oncoming vehicles. High beams let you see twice as far as low beams. It is important to use high beams on unfamiliar roads, in construction areas or where there may be people along the side of the road.

- Dim your high beams whenever you come within about a one block distance of an oncoming vehicle.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle or when in heavy traffic.
- Use the low beams in fog or when it is snowing or raining hard. Light from high beams will reflect back, causing glare and making it more difficult to see ahead. Some vehicles have fog lights that you also should use under these conditions.
- Do not drive at any time with only your parking lights on. Parking lights are for parking only.

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

Communicating

Crashes often happen because one driver does not see another driver, or when one driver does something the other driver does not expect. It is important that drivers let other road users know they are there and what they plan to do.

Letting Others Know You Are There

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

Use Headlights. Besides helping you to see at night, headlights help other people see you. If needed, flick your headlights to alert other road users you are there. Remember to turn on your headlights whenever you have trouble seeing others. If you have trouble seeing them, they may be having trouble seeing you.

- On rainy, snowy or foggy days, it is sometimes hard for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. Remember, if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights. It's the law.
- Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. Even if you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.

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- Whenever driving and lights are necessary, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked vehicles only.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming towards you may have trouble seeing your vehicle. Your headlights will help them see you.

Use Your Horn. People cannot see you unless they are looking your way. Your horn can get their attention. Use it whenever it will help prevent an accident. If there is no immediate danger, a light tap on the horn should be all you need. Give your horn a light tap:

- When a person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your lane of travel.
- When you are passing a driver who starts to turn into your lane.
- When a driver is not paying attention or may have trouble seeing you.
- When coming to a place where you cannot see what is ahead - like a steep hill, a sharp curve or exiting a narrow alley.

If there is danger, do not be afraid to sound a SHARP BLAST on your horn. Do this:

- When a child or older person is about to walk, run or ride into the street.
- When another vehicle is in danger of hitting you.

- When you have lost control of your vehicle and are moving towards someone.

When Not to Use Your Horn. There are several occasions when you should not use your horn. They include:

- Encouraging someone to drive faster or get out of the way.
- Apprising other drivers of an error.
- Greeting a friend.
- Around blind pedestrians.
- When approaching horses.

Use Emergency Signals. If your vehicle breaks down on a highway, make sure that other drivers can see it. All too often crashes occur because a driver did not see a stalled vehicle until it was too late to stop. If available, use your 2-way radio or telephone to notify authorities that your vehicle or someone else has broken down. Many roadways have signs that tell you the CB channel or telephone number to call in an emergency. If you are having vehicle trouble:

- Get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic if at all possible.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.
- Try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle if you cannot get your vehicle off the

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roadway. (Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.)

- Try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.
- If you do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand by the side of the road where you are safe from traffic and wave traffic around your vehicle. Use a white cloth if you have one.
- Never stand in the roadway. Do not try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- Lift the hood or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror or door handle to signal an emergency.

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

- Try to avoid driving on either side and slightly to the rear of another vehicle. You will be in his/her blind spot. Either speed up or drop back so the other driver can see your vehicle more easily.
- When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can. The longer you stay there, the longer you are in danger of him/her turning into you.
- Never stay along side a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots and it is hard for drivers of large vehicles to see you.

Letting Others Know What You Are Doing

Generally other drivers expect you to keep doing what you are doing. You must warn them when you are going to change direction or slow down. This will give them time to react if needed, or at least not to be surprised by what you do.

Signal When You Change Direction. Signaling gives other drivers time to react to your moves. You should use your turn signals before you change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic or park.

- Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.
- Signal as early as you can. Try and signal at least three seconds before you make your move.
- Be careful that you do not signal too early. If there are streets, driveways or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.
- If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where they are and they might pull into your path.

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- After you have made a turn or lane change, make sure your turn signal is off. After small turns, the signals may not turn off by themselves. Turn it off if it has not clicked off by itself. If you don't, others might think you plan to turn again.

Signal When You Slow Down

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

Signal when you slow down to:

- Turn off a roadway which does not have separate turn or exit lanes.
- Park or turn just before an intersection.
- Follow traffic that expects you to continue to the intersection.
- Avoid something in the road or stopped or slowing traffic that a driver behind you cannot see.

Adjusting Speed

The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow or stop. For example, stopping at 60 mph does not take twice the distance it takes at 30 mph as one

might think, but over three times the distance. Driving safely means adjusting your speed for road and traffic conditions, how well you can see and obeying speed limits.

Adjusting to Road Conditions

There are various road conditions where to be safe you must slow down. For example, you must slow down before a sharp curve, when the roadway is slippery and when there is standing water on the road. The only contact your vehicle has with the road is through the tires. How good a grip the tires have with the road depends on the type and condition of the tires and the type and condition of the road surface.

Many drivers do not pay enough attention to the condition of their tires or to the condition of the roadway. It is important that the tires be in good condition and have enough air in them. See the vehicle owner's manual for correct tire pressure.

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

Curves

A vehicle can travel much faster in a straight line than it can in a curve. It is easy to go too fast in a curve. If you go too fast, then the tires will not be able to grip the road

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and the vehicle will skid. Always slow down before you enter the curve so you do not have to brake in the curve. Braking in a curve can cause the vehicle to skid.

Slippery Roads

Slow down at the first sign of rain, snow or sleet. These all make the roadway slippery. When the road is slippery, the vehicle's tires do not grip as well as they do on a dry road. How slow should you go? On a wet road you should reduce your speed about 10 mph. On packed snow you should cut your speed in half. Use snow tires or chains when the road has snow on it. On ice, you must slow to a crawl. It is very dangerous to drive on ice.

If at all possible, do not drive when the roads are icy. In some areas where there is a lot of icy weather, special studded tires are allowed. Because these tires can cause road damage, they are not allowed in many areas or on certain roads. Studded tires are permitted in Connecticut from November 15th through April 30th. Some road surfaces are slippery at certain times or places. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- On cold, wet days shady spots can be icy. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Overpasses and other types of bridges can have icy spots. The pavement on bridges can be icy even when other pavement is not. This is because bridges do not have earth underneath them to help insulate

them against the cold and thus can be colder and icy than other roadways.

- When the temperature is around the freezing point, ice can become wet. This makes it more slippery than at temperatures well below freezing.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, pavement can be very slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes the oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. The road is more slippery until the oil is washed off.

Water on the Roadway

When it is raining or the road is wet, most tires have good traction up to about 35 mph. However as you go faster, your tires will start to ride up on the water, like water skis. This is called "hydroplaning." In a heavy rain, your tires can lose all traction with the road at about 50 mph. Bald or badly worn tires will lose traction at much lower speeds. The best way to keep from hydroplaning is to slow down in the rain or when the road is wet.

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

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

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Adjusting to Traffic

Vehicles moving in the same direction at the same speed cannot hit one another. Crashes involving two or more vehicles often happen when drivers go faster or slower than other vehicles on the road.

Keep Pace with Traffic – If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for a collision. The vehicle you are passing may change lanes suddenly or on a two-lane road, an oncoming vehicle may appear suddenly. Slow down and keep pace with other traffic. Speeding does not save more than a few minutes an hour.

Going much slower than other vehicles can be just as bad as speeding. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to pass you. If vehicles are piled-up behind you, pull over when safe to do so and let them pass. You should either drive faster or consider using roads with slower speeds.

Entering into Traffic – When you merge with traffic, try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. High-speed roadways generally have ramps to give you time to build-up your speed. Use the ramp to reach the speed of other vehicles before you pull onto the road. Do not drive to the end of the ramp and stop or you will not have enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If they are watching

the traffic on the main road, you may be hit from the rear. If you have to wait for space to enter a roadway, slow down on the ramp so you have some room to speed-up before you have to merge.

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

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

- Watch for large trucks and small under-powered cars on steep grades or when they are entering traffic. They can lose speed on long or steep hills and it takes longer for these vehicles to get up to speed when they enter traffic.
- Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles and roadway maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. These vehicles should have a slow-moving vehicle decal (an orange triangle) on the back.

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Trouble Spots - Wherever people or traffic gather, your room to maneuver is limited. You need to lower your speed to have time to react in a crowded space. Here are some of the places where you may need to slow down:

- **Shopping centers, parking lots and downtown areas.** These are busy areas with vehicles and people stopping, starting and moving in different directions.
- **Rush Hours.** Rush hours often have heavy traffic and drivers that always seem to be in a hurry.
- **Narrow bridges and tunnels.** Vehicles approaching each other are closer together.
- **Toll plazas.** Vehicles are changing lanes and preparing to stop and then speeding-up again when leaving the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- **Schools, playgrounds and residential streets.** These areas often have children present. Always be alert for children crossing the street or running or riding into the street without looking.
- **Railroad crossings.** You need to make sure that there are no trains coming and that you have room to cross. Some crossings are bumpy so you need to slow down to safely cross.

How Well Can You See?

If something is in your path and you need to stop, you need to see it in time to be able to stop. It takes much

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

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

If you cannot see 400 feet ahead, it means you may not be driving safely at 50 mph. If you cannot see 200 feet ahead, you may not be driving safely at 30 mph. By the time you see an object in your path, it may be too late to stop without hitting it.

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

- **Darkness.** It is harder to see at night. You must be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead with your headlights. Your headlights will let you see about 400 feet ahead. You should drive at a speed that allows you to stop within this distance or about 50 mph.
- **Rain, Fog or Snow.** In a very heavy rain, snowstorm or thick fog, you may not be able to see much more than 200 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to

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see well enough to drive. If this happens, pull off the road in a safe place and wait until it clears.

- **Hills and Curves.** You may not know what is on the other side of a hill or just around a curve, even if you have driven the road many times. If a vehicle is stalled on the road just over a hill or around a curve, you must be able to stop. Whenever you come to a hill or curve where you cannot see over or around, adjust your speed so you can stop if necessary.
- **Parked Vehicles.** Vehicles parked along the side of the road may block your view. People may be ready to get out of a vehicle or walk out from between parked vehicles. Give parked vehicles as much room as you can.
- **Sight-Distance Rule.** Drive at a speed where you can always safely stop. To tell if you are driving too fast for conditions, use the “four-second sight distance rule.” Pick out a stationary object as far ahead as you can clearly see (e.g. a sign or a telephone pole). Start counting “one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand.” If you reach the object before you finish saying “four-one-thousand,” you need to slow down. You are going too fast for your sight-distance. You must not drive faster than the distance you can see. If you do, you are not safe and could injure or kill yourself or others.

- **Headlights.** You should also use the “four-second sight distance rule” at night to make sure you are not “over-driving your headlights.”

Speed Limits

You must comply with speed limits. They are based on the design of the road, and the type of vehicles that use them. They take into account things you cannot see, such as side roads and driveways where people may pull out suddenly, and the amount of traffic that uses the road.

Remember, speed limits are posted for ideal conditions. If the road is wet or icy, if you cannot see well or if traffic is heavy, then you must slow down. Even if you are driving under the posted speed limit, you can get a ticket for traveling too fast under these conditions.

Sharing Space

You always must share the road with others. The more distance you keep between yourself and everyone else, the more time you have to react. This space is like a safety cushion. The more you have, the safer it can be. This section describes how to make sure you have enough space around you when you drive.

Space Ahead

Rear-end crashes are very common. They are caused from drivers following too closely to be able to stop before

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hitting the vehicle ahead when it suddenly stops. There is an easy way to tell if you are following too closely. It is called the “two-second rule” and it works at any speed.

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

There are situations where you need more space in front of your vehicle. In the following situations, you may need a four-second following distance to be safe.

- **On Slippery Roads.** Because you need more distance to stop your vehicle on slippery roads, you must leave more space in front of you. If the vehicle ahead suddenly stops, you will need the extra distance to stop safely.
- **When the Driver Behind You Wants to Pass.** Slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle. Slowing also will allow the pass to be completed sooner.
- **When Following Motorcycles.** If the motorcycle should fall, you need extra distance to avoid the rider.

The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, gravel roads or metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings or streetcar or railroad tracks.

- **When Following Drivers Who Cannot See You.** The drivers of trucks, buses, vans or vehicles pulling campers or trailers may not be able to see you when you are directly behind them. They could stop suddenly without knowing you are there. Large vehicles also block your view of the road ahead. Falling back allows you more room to see ahead.
- **When You Have a Heavy Load or Are Pulling a Trailer.** The extra weight increases your stopping distance.
- **When It Is Hard for You to See.** When it is hard for you to see ahead because of darkness or bad weather, you need to increase your following distance.
- **When Being Followed Closely.** If you are being followed closely, pull to the right and allow the vehicle behind you to pass.
- **When Following Emergency Vehicles.** Police vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks need more room to operate.
- **When Approaching Railroad Crossings.** Leave extra room for vehicles required to come to a stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses or vehicles carrying hazardous materials.

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- **When Stopped on a Hill or Incline.** Leave extra space when stopped on a hill or incline. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

Space Behind

It is not always easy to maintain a safe distance behind your vehicle. However, you can help keep the driver at a safe distance by keeping a steady speed and signaling in advance when you have to slow down or turn.

- **Stopping to Pick Up or Let Off Passengers.** Try to find a safe place out of traffic to stop.
- **Parallel Parking.** If you want to parallel park and there is traffic coming behind you, put on your turn signal, pull next to the space and allow following vehicles to pass before you park.
- **Driving Slowly.** When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other vehicles, pull to the side of the road when safe to do so and let them pass. There are “turnout” areas on some two lane roads you can use. Other two lane roads sometimes have “passing lanes.”
- **Being Tailgated.** Every now and then you may find yourself being followed closely or “tailgated” by another driver. If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the road ahead is

clear then reduce speed slowly. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater. It increases your risk of being hit from behind.

Space to the Side

You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes.

- Avoid driving next to other vehicles on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead or drop back of the other vehicle.
- Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. On a two lane road, this means not crowding the center line. In general, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.
- Make room for vehicles entering on a roadway that has two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.
- Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle, or from between vehicles, or a parked vehicle could pull out.
- Give extra space to pedestrians or bicycles, especially children. They can move into your path quickly and without warning. Do not share a lane with a pedestrian

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or bicyclist. Wait until it is safe to pass in the adjoining lane.

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

Space to Merge

Anytime you want to merge with other traffic, you need a gap of about four seconds. If you move into the middle of a four second gap, both you and the vehicle that is now behind you have a two-second following distance. You need a four-second gap whenever you change lanes, enter a roadway or when your lane merges with another travel lane.

- Do not try to merge into a gap that is too small. A small gap can quickly become even smaller. Enter a gap that gives you a big enough space cushion to be safe.

- If you want to cross several lanes, take them one at a time. Like going up or down stairs one step at a time, it is safest and easiest to merge one lane at a time. It is very difficult to determine that all the lanes are free and safe to cross. If you wait until all the lanes were clear, you can tie up traffic and even cause a crash.

Space to Cross or Enter

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

- When you cross traffic, you need room to get all the way across. Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough for your vehicle. Do not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle is sticking into traffic.
- If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while stuck across a lane that has oncoming vehicles coming towards you.
- Even if you have the green light, do not start across the intersection if there are vehicles blocking your way. If you are caught in the intersection when the light changes to red you will block other traffic. You can get a ticket for blocking an intersection.

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- Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. For example, do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn after they pass your vehicle or may have forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles as their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn and then go if it is safe to do so.
- When you cross railroad tracks, make sure you can cross without having to stop on the tracks.

Space to Pass

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

Oncoming Vehicles

At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10 second gap in oncoming traffic and sight-distance to pass. You must judge whether you will have enough space to pass safely.

At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1600 feet or about one-third of a mile to pass safely. It

is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance. They do not seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A vehicle that is far away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can actually see that it is coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are not sure, wait to pass until you are sure that there is enough space.

Before you return to the driving lane, be sure to leave enough room between yourself and the vehicle you have passed. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rear-view mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

Hills and Curves

You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile or about 10 seconds ahead. Anytime your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume that there is an oncoming vehicle just out of sight. Therefore you should treat a curve or a hill as you do an oncoming vehicle. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.

Intersections

It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people, vehicles or trains can be blocked by the vehicle you are passing. Also, drivers turning

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right into the approaching lane will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.

Lane Restrictions

Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane. You might lose your space for passing because of:

- People or bicyclists near the road,
- A narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width, or
- A patch of ice, pot hole or something on the road.

Space to Return

Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do not count on other drivers to make room for you.

Railroad Grade Crossing

Do not pass if there is a railroad grade crossing ahead.

Space for Special Situations

There are certain drivers and other road users you should give extra room. Some are listed here.

Those Who Cannot See You

Anyone who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. Those who could have trouble seeing you include:

- Drivers at intersections or driveways whose view is blocked by buildings, trees or other vehicles.
- Drivers backing into the roadway or backing into or pulling out of parking spaces.
- Drivers whose windows are covered with snow or ice or are steamed-up.
- Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or with their hats pulled down.

People Who Are Distracted

Even when others can see you, allow extra room or be extra cautious if you think they may be distracted. People who may be distracted include:

- Delivery persons.
- Construction workers.
- Children or drivers who are not paying attention to their driving.

People Who May Be Confused

People who are confused may cause an unsafe situation. People who may be confused include:

- Tourists or others who do not seem to know where they are going.
- Drivers who slow down for what seems like no reason.
- Drivers looking for street signs or house numbers.

Driving Comes with Responsibilities

Chapter 7

Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

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Aggressive driving, which can evolve into violent behavior known as "road rage," can cause many serious problems on our highways, including deaths of drivers and passengers. New and veteran drivers must be aware of both aggressive driving and road rage and know how to deal with each when they occur. In particular, aggressive driving can occur sometimes without us even knowing it, yet it affects others with whom we share the road. It has been called a volatile and volcanic mix of emotion and thinking that seems tragically well suited for expression in motor vehicles.

Most of us know that driving is a privilege and comes with responsibilities. One of those is self-control. Here are some recent examples of what happened when self-control, caution and responsibility were disregarded:

- A man is shot with a crossbow on the side of a highway and dies after he and another motorist pulled over and argued over his allegedly refusing to move from the fast lane.
- A passenger dies when his Chevy Blazer rolls over, throwing him into the backseat. The accident followed an incident in which a passenger in his vehicle and one in another car exchanged insults with each other because one vehicle refused to let the other pass. Soon they were chasing each other and ram-

ming each other's vehicles, causing the rollover.

- A young college student was shot to death when he could not disarm the loud anti-theft alarm in his jeep.

Reasons for Aggressive Driving

Those are just a few examples of the incidents that unfortunately and needlessly occur on our roads daily. Experts across the country have been studying the issue of aggressive driving and road rage.

There are a number of different reasons for the increase of incidents:

- Increased traffic congestion on roads.
- Parents who teach children that getting angry at other motorists and behaving aggressively toward them while on the road is permissible.
- A general decline in courtesy and civility.
- More youths today with vehicles, but not possessing the maturity to drive them responsibly and with caution during tense situations.
- Conflicts from other areas of our lives that ride with us in the car: family issues, marital problems, resentments from the job, difficulties with authority and feeling controlled by others.

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- A sense of "territory" that leads us to presume that we own the space around us and our vehicle. When another vehicle invades that space in a way we dislike, we have an increased and unfounded tendency today to strike back.
- A sense that as vehicles have become safer to drive we are immune from danger in them, even at high speeds.
- Vehicles are often seen as "extensions" of ourselves and that ease of operation gives us the false sense that we control all aspects of the vehicle, including mechanical functioning of the car as we operate it carelessly.

How to Avoid Conflict on the Road

There are solutions to these problems, but most of them come from within each of us. Here are some helpful tips to remember:

- Often another driver's aggressive driving makes one feel compelled to retaliate. However, it is best to leave punishment to the police. Call the police to report any instances of aggressive driving when you arrive at your destination.
- Don't compete on the road. Driving is not a contest. Let others who are racing pass you. Although it is difficult to say, let aggressive drivers have their acci-

dents elsewhere.

- If another driver does something to anger you, talk to your passengers about it rather than use your vehicle as a weapon to retaliate.
- If you get angry easily and feel you do not have the best frame of mind while driving, consider postponing the trip until you feel better, have a friend drive or call a taxi.
- Give an aggressive driver the benefit of the doubt - it is possible or likely he or she made a mistake from fatigue or failing to pay attention, but did not intentionally set out to cause a problem for you.

Motorists would be well advised to keep their cool in traffic. Be patient and courteous to other drivers, and correct unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger, infuriate, or antagonize other motorists.

Behaviors That Can Cause Trouble

Be aware of the behaviors that have resulted in violence in the past:

Lane Blocking. Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle wanting to pass.

Tailgating. Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in

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front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations begin when one driver tailgates another.

Signal Lights. Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention to do so, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off.

Gestures. If you want to waive to another driver, please use all of your fingers, not just one. Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten.

Horn. Use your horn sparingly. If you must get someone's attention in a non-emergency situation, tap your horn lightly. Think twice before using your horn to say "hello" to a pedestrian. The driver in front of you may think you are honking at him. Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green. A stressed-out motorist on edge, may be set off. Various kinds of violence begins with a driver honking the horn.

Failure to Turn. In most areas, right-hand turns are allowed after a stop at a red light. Avoid the right-hand lane if you are not turning right.

Parking. Do not take more than one parking space and do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped. Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle. When parallel parking, do not tap the other vehicles with your own. Look before backing up.

Headlights. Keep headlights on low beam, except

where unlighted conditions require the use of high beams. Dim your lights for oncoming traffic; don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson." Don't approach a vehicle from the rear with high beams and dim your lights as soon as a passing vehicle is alongside.

Merging. When traffic permits, move out of the right-hand lane of a multi-lane highway to allow vehicles to enter from the on-ramps.

Blocking Traffic. If you are pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over when you have the opportunity so that motorists behind you can pass. Also, do not block the road while talking to a pedestrian on the sidewalk. This behavior has resulted in violence from angry motorists.

Car Phones. Don't let the car or cell phone become distractions - keep your eyes and attention on the road. These phones can be great for security and convenience, but bad for safety. Talking on the phone while driving contributes to inattentiveness, which causes many accidents. Some of them are fatal for drivers, passengers and pedestrians. In addition, car-phone users are widely perceived as causing a traffic hazard. If you must talk on the phone while in the car, consider pulling over for a few minutes.

Alarms. If you have an anti-theft alarm on your vehicle, learn how to turn it off quickly. When buying an alarm,

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select one that turns off after a short period of time.

Eye Contact. If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. This can be seen as a challenging gesture and can incite the other driver to violence. Get out of the way and do not acknowledge the other driver. If a motorist pursues you, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station, convenience store, or other public and well-lit location where you can get help.

Program for Repeat Offenders

DMV also has a program for repeat offenders who commit traffic violations with a moving vehicle. It is called the Driver Retraining program and it covers the principles of motor vehicle operation, how attitude contributed to the behavior found in aggressive driving and the need to practice safe-driving behavior.

Motorists between 16 and 24 years old who have two or more moving violations or suspended license convictions are required to attend and successfully pass a driver retraining program. A motorist who is older than 24 years old and who has three or more such convictions is required to attend and successfully pass a driver retraining program.

**When Driving Around Trucks
Avoid The No-Zone**

Chapter 8

Sharing the Road with Trucks

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Everybody depends on trucks for everything we eat, wear, or use. A truck brought you the car you are driving, the fuel to run it, and the parts and accessories that keep it in good condition. Safely sharing the road with trucks is an essential part of driving and is every bit as important as sharing the road with other car drivers.

Truck Drivers Are Human

Like anybody else, truck drivers want to avoid being involved in crashes. If you make a mistake, the truck driver will try to avoid a crash. However, an evasive maneuver in a truck can result in the truck driver crashing even though you get away unscathed. Do you want that? We don't think so and we hope this information will help you to avoid such situations.

- Trucks accelerate more slowly than cars.
- Trucks need more room to maneuver safely.
- In a panic stop, trucks need more stopping distance.
- Because trucks are higher than they are wide, it is harder for the truck driver to safely take evasive action.
- Avoid the No-Zone around trucks.

Safe Passing

- Don't take needless chances to pass a truck. Always make sure you have room to complete your pass without having to resort to excessive speed.

- Check traffic to both front and rear. Signal and change lanes when it is safe and legal to do so. Pass only where it is safe - never where you will have to complete your pass in a no-passing zone.
- When you do pass, complete the pass as promptly as traffic conditions permit. If you linger alongside the cab, you may be in a position where the truck driver cannot see you in the mirrors. If the truck driver has to change lanes for any reason, your car could be involved in a crash because you were in a position where the truck driver could not see you.
- Signal and return to the right lane when you can see the front of the truck in your inside mirror. After passing, keep your speed up. Passing a vehicle and then slowing down is both dangerous and irritating.
- Avoid pulling in front of a truck when traffic may stop or slow down. By doing so you take away the truck driver's margin of safety and risk causing a crash. The trucking industry stresses the importance of safe following distance.
- If a truck passes you, help the truck driver to pass safely by slowing down slightly to shorten the time required to pass. Never speed up. That is dangerous and illegal.
- When you meet a truck going the other way, keep as far to the right as you safely can for a greater margin of safety and to minimize wind turbulence.

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Safe Following

If you follow a truck closely, you are driving blind. You can't see around the truck and the truck driver can't see you in the mirrors. Never follow a truck at a time interval of less than 2 seconds. To check your following distance; pick a landmark on the side of the road. When the rear of the truck passes that point count -1001, 1002 at a normal rate. If you pass the same point before you have finished counting 1002, you are following the truck too close.

If you edge out to the left to see if there is room to pass, you may find yourself face-to-face with an oncoming vehicle that you could have seen if you had been following at a safe distance.

You may hit a pothole or debris that the truck has safely passed over.

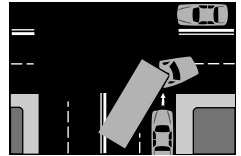
Because of more brakes and more tires in contact with the road, a truck can slow or stop more quickly than a car in some cases. If you are following too closely, you may be unable to avoid a rear-end collision with the truck.

Never use your high-beams when following a truck at night. The glare in the large side mirrors can blind the truck driver.

Avoid stopping too close behind a truck on an upgrade. If the truck rolls back when starting up, your car could be damaged. Also if you stop a little to either side of the truck, the truck driver will be able to see your car in the mirrors.

Right Turns

Did you ever feel the back of your car go up over the curb when making a right turn? On every vehicle, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the shorter the path followed by the rear wheels. This is called off-track.



Off-track occurs on both left and right turns, but presents a greater safety problem on right turns where a truck driver may have to first move to the left so the rear wheels won't jump the curb.

Resist the temptation to pass on the right of a truck which is approaching an intersection. If the truck driver makes a right turn, you could be caught between the truck and the curb.

Blind Spots

Every vehicle has blind spots around it where the driver cannot see from behind the wheel. At DMV we say Avoid the No-Zone, these zones of blind spots. The area may vary somewhat due to the size of the vehicle and the use of additional mirrors. The areas are:

- Directly behind the body. This may extend for 60 feet or more to the rear.
- The right side of the cab from the rear tractor wheels outward and around in front of the vehicle.

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- The immediate left of the cab, some of which can be observed if the driver has the opportunity to turn and look.

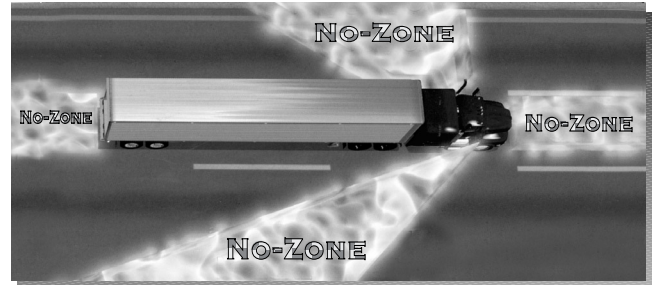
Backing

Truck drivers often must back from the street into a loading area. If you see a truck driver attempting to back, stop and give him/her a chance to do so safely. Never attempt to drive around a backing truck. You are likely to get out of the truck driver's field of view and may be needlessly involved in a crash.

Other Hints

- If a truck driver slows, stops, signals and changes lanes, you may be sure there is a good reason for it. Be alert. Slow down and hold your position. Don't attempt to pass until you are certain it is safe to do so.
- If you are approaching the entrance ramp to a highway, allow entering traffic to merge safely. When on the ramp, check for a gap in the main flows of traffic that will allow you to merge safely. Never go all the way across several lanes of traffic from an on-ramp.
- Some trucks are required by law to stop at railroad crossings. Be alert and allow the truck driver to stop and to resume travel safely if no train is approaching.

The No-Zone



Chapter 9

Be in Shape to Drive

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Driving safely is not always easy. In fact it is one of the most complex things that people do. It also is one of the few things we do regularly that can injure or kill us. It is worth the effort to be a careful driver.



Being a safe driver takes a lot of skill and judgment. This task is even more difficult when you are just learning to drive. Driving can easily take every ability you have. If anything happens so you are not up to your ability, you may not be a safe driver. Your ability to be a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving while on drugs, being generally healthy and being emotionally fit to drive. In other words, being in “shape” to drive safely.

Vision And Hearing

Vision. Good vision is a must for safe driving. You drive based on what you see. If you cannot see clearly, you will have trouble identifying traffic and road conditions, spotting potential trouble or reacting in a timely manner. Vision is so important that Connecticut requires that you pass a vision test before you get a driver's license. This test measures that you have at least 20/40 corrected vision.

Other important aspects of vision are:

- **Side Vision.** You need to see “out the corner of your eye.” This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you cannot focus on things to the side, you also must use your side mirrors and glance to the side if necessary.
- **Judging Distances and Speeds.** Even if you can see clearly, you still may not be able to judge distances or speeds very well. In fact you are not alone, many people have problems judging distances and speeds. It takes a lot of practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important in knowing how far you are from other vehicles and judging safe gaps when merging and when passing on two lane roads, or when judging the speed of a train before crossing tracks safely.
- **Night Vision.** Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing at night. It is more difficult for everyone to see at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially with the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don't drive more than is necessary and be very careful when you do.

Because seeing well is so important to safe driving, you should have your eyes checked every year or two by an

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eye specialist. You may never know you have poor vision unless your eyes are tested. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, remember to:

- Always wear them when you drive, even if it is only to run down to the corner. If your driver's license says you must wear corrective lenses, you do not and you happen to be stopped, you could get a ticket.
- Try to keep an extra pair of glasses in your vehicle. If your regular glasses are broken or lost, you can use the spare pair to drive safely. This also can be helpful if you do not wear glasses all the time as it is easy to misplace them.
- Avoid using dark glasses or tinted contact lenses at night, even if you think they help with glare. The problem is that they cut down the light that you need to see clearly.

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

Fatigue

You cannot drive as safely when you are tired as when you are rested. You do not see as well, nor are you as alert. It takes you more time to make decisions and you do not always make good decisions. You can be more irritable and can get upset more easily. When you are tired you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash, injuring or killing yourself or others. There are things you can do to help from getting tired on a long trip.

- Try to get a normal night's sleep before you leave.
- Do not leave on a trip if you are already tired. Plan your trips so you can leave when you are rested.
- Do not take any medicine that can make you drowsy.
- Eat lightly. Do not eat a large meal before you leave. Some people get sleepy after they eat a big meal.
- Take breaks. Stop every hour or so or when you need to. Walk around, get some fresh air and have some coffee, soda or juice. The few minutes spent on a rest break can save your life. Plan for plenty of time to complete your trip safely.
- Try not to drive late at night when you are normally asleep. Your body thinks it is time to go to sleep and will try to do so.
- Never drive if you are sleepy. It is better to stop and sleep for a few hours than to take a chance you can

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stay awake. If possible switch driving tasks with another driver so you can sleep while they drive.

Drinking and Driving

Alcohol is involved in more than 40 percent of the traffic crashes in which someone is killed. If you drink alcohol, even a little, your chances of being in an accident are much greater than if you did not drink any alcohol.

No one can drink alcohol and drive safely, even if you have been driving for many years. New drivers are more affected by alcohol than experienced drivers because they are still learning to drive.

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



Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. Alcohol goes from your stomach into your blood and to all parts of your body. Alcohol affects those areas of your brain that control judgment and skill. This is one reason why drinking alcohol is so dangerous; it affects your judgment. Good judgment is important to driving but in this case, judgment helps you to know when to stop drinking. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. It is a little like a sunburn, by the time you feel it, it is already too late.

Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces

your ability to see clearly and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and your skills decrease. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds and the movement of other vehicles. You will also have trouble controlling your vehicle.

If You Drink, When Can You Drive?

The best advice is if you drink alcohol: Do not drive. Even one drink of alcohol can affect your driving. With two or more drinks in your bloodstream you are impaired and could be arrested. In Connecticut, people under 21 years old could be considered impaired after having only one drink of alcohol.

An alcohol drink is 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor (one shot glass) straight or with a mixer, 12 oz. of beer (a regular size can, bottle, mug or glass) or a 5 oz. glass of wine. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and are the same as having several normal drinks.

So even if you have spread out your drinks, you should stop drinking at least one hour before you have to drive. There is no way to sober up quickly. Coffee, fresh air, exercise or cold showers will not help. Time is the only thing that will sober you up.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more persons and agree which one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group being a "designated driver." Use public transportation or a cab if available.

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There are ways to slow down the effects of drinking alcohol. The best is to increase the amount of time between drinks. Another is to eat before and while you are drinking. Food slows down how fast alcohol gets into your blood. Starchy foods like potato chips, pretzels, bread and crackers are best. Remember, food only slows when the alcohol gets into your blood, it will not keep you from getting drunk.

Alcohol and the Law

Connecticut law provides strict penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol. Penalties are imposed by the courts and by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. If you are arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, you will be requested to submit to a blood, breath or urine test of your blood alcohol content (BAC). If you fail this test, your operator's license will be suspended for at least 90 days, possibly more depending on the number of DUI offenses on your driving record and your BAC. If you refuse to take a test, your operator's license will be suspended for at least six months, possibly more, depending on the number of DUI offenses on your driving record and your BAC. These penalties, imposed by the Commissioner under the law known as "Administrative Per Se", are in addition to any penalties imposed by the court if, as a result of your arrest, you are convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol (known as "DUI").

In addition, if you are under 21 years of age, you are subject to another law known as "zero tolerance." This law provides penalties for driving with any measurable amount

of alcohol in your blood, defined as two hundredths of one per cent (.02%) or more. If you are placed under arrest for DUI you may be requested to submit to testing. If your test results are .02 or higher, the police will make a report to the Commissioner, and your driver's license will be suspended for 90 days. If you refuse to take a test under such circumstances, your driver's license will be suspended for 6 months. Once again, these penalties applicable to drivers under 21 years of age are in addition to penalties imposed by the court as a result of conviction of the offense, or offenses, for which a driver has been arrested.

Other Drugs and Driving

Besides alcohol, there are many other drugs that can affect a person's ability to drive safely. These drugs can have effects like those of alcohol, or even worse. This is true of many prescription drugs and even many of the drugs you can buy without a prescription. Drugs taken for headaches, colds, hay fever or other allergies or those to calm nerves can make a person drowsy and affect their driving. Pep pills, "uppers" and diet pills can make a driver feel more alert for a short time. Later however, they can cause a person to be nervous, dizzy, unable to concentrate and they can affect your vision. Other prescription drugs can affect your reflexes, judgement, vision and alertness in ways similar to alcohol.

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

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about any side effects.

Never drink alcohol while you are taking other drugs. These drugs could multiply the effects of alcohol or have additional effects of their own. These effects not only reduce your ability to be a safe driver but could cause serious health problems, even death.

Illegal drugs are not good for your health and effect your ability to be a safe driver. For example, studies have shown that people who use marijuana make more mistakes, have more trouble adjusting to glare and get arrested for traffic violations more than other drivers.

Health

Many health problems can affect your driving — a bad cold, infection or virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not feeling well and need to go somewhere, let someone else drive.

Even though a person may have certain medical/physical conditions, that person may still be able to drive a motor vehicle safely, when those conditions are controlled or monitored by a physician. Some of the conditions are epilepsy/seizures, insulin dependent diabetes, vision impairments, cardiac, psychiatric, or any other type of condition, impairment or disability, loss of use of or loss of limb, that may interfere with a persons ability to control and drive a motor vehicle safely. Information regarding health standards should be directed to the Medical Qualifications Unit, which will advise as to the medical information that may be filed depending upon a per-

son's condition. It is recommended that any person having a medical/physical condition or impairment or disability, prior to applying for their first Connecticut license, whether new driver or new resident, call the Medical Qualifications Unit for information.

Health standards are more stringent for the holder of a commercial driver license (CDL) or the holder of a license to operate a vehicle for hire (taxi, livery vehicle, bus, school bus, etc.)

Emotions

Emotions can have a great affect on your driving safely. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry or depressed.

- If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary take a short walk, but stay off the road until you have calmed down.
- If you are worried, down or are upset about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some find listening to the radio helps.
- If you are impatient, give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early. If you have plenty of time, you may not tend to speed or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or cause a crash. Don't be impatient to wait for a train to cross in front of you. Driving around lowered gates or trying to beat the train can be fatal.

Chapter 10

Special Information

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All drivers sooner or later will find themselves in an emergency situation. As careful as you are, there are situations that could cause a problem for you. If you are prepared you may be able to prevent any serious outcomes.

Vehicle Emergencies

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

Brake Failure. If your brakes stop working:

- Pump the brake pedal several times. This will often build up enough brake pressure to allow you to stop.
- If that does not work, use the parking brake. Pull on the parking brake handle slowly so you will not lock the rear wheels and cause a skid. Be ready to release the brake if the vehicle does start to skid.
- If that does not work, start shifting to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure the vehicle is off the roadway. Do not drive the vehicle without brakes.

Tire Blowout. If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- Hold the steering wheel tightly and keep the vehicle going straight.

- Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal and use the brakes lightly.
- Do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place.

Power Failure. If the engine dies while you are driving:

- Keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Be aware that the steering may be difficult to turn, but you can turn it.
- Pull off the roadway. The brakes will still work but you may have to push very hard on the brake pedal.

Headlight Failure. If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Try the headlight switch a few times.
- If that does not work, put on the emergency flashers, turn signals or fog lights if you have them.
- Pull off the road as soon as possible.

Gas Pedal Sticks. If the motor keeps going faster and faster:

- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Quickly shift to neutral.
- Pull off the road when safe to do so.
- Turn off the engine.

Avoiding Collisions

When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. In some cases they do act, but they

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do something that does not help to reduce the chance of the collision. There almost always is something you can do to avoid the crash or reduce the impact of the crash. In avoiding a collision, drivers have three options: stop, turn or speed up.

Stopping Quickly

Many newer vehicles have an ABS (Antilock Braking System). Be sure to read the vehicle owner's manual on how to use the ABS. The ABS system will allow you stop without skidding. In general, if you need to stop quickly:

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

If you must stop quickly and you do not have an antilock braking system (ABS):

- You can cause the vehicle to go into a skid if you brake too hard.
- Apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking them.
- If the brakes lock-up, you will feel the vehicle start to skid. Quickly let up on the brake pedal.

- As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, push down on the brake pedal again. Keep doing this until the vehicle has stopped.

Turning Quickly

In most cases, you can turn the vehicle quicker than you can stop it. You should consider turning in order to avoid a collision.

Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel. Once you have turned away or changed lanes, you must be ready to keep the vehicle under control. Some drivers steer away from one collision only to end up in another. Always steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go.

With ABS – One aspect of having ABS, is that you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn and stop or slow down.

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

Remember that generally it is better to run off the road than to crash head-on into another vehicle.

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Speeding Up

Sometimes it is best or necessary to speed up to avoid a collision. This may happen when another vehicle is about to hit you from the side or from behind and there is room to the front of you to get out of danger. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

Dealing with Skids

Any road that is safe under normal conditions can be dangerous when it is wet or has snow or ice on it. High speeds under normal conditions also increase the possibility of a skid if you must turn or stop suddenly. Skids are caused when the tires can no longer grip the road. As you cannot control a vehicle when it is skidding, it is best not to cause your vehicle to skid in the first place. Skids are caused by drivers traveling too fast for conditions.

If your vehicle begins to skid

- **Stay off the brake.** Until the vehicle slows, your brakes will not work and could cause you to skid more.
- **Steer.** Turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. As soon as the vehicle begins to straighten out, turn the steering wheel back the other way. If you do not do so, your vehicle may swing around in the other direction and you could start a new skid.

- **Continue to steer.** Continue to correct your steering, left and right, until the vehicle is again moving down the road under your control.

Protect Yourself In Collisions

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

Hit From the Rear. If your vehicle is hit from the rear, your body will be thrown backwards. Press yourself against the back of your seat and put your head against the head restraint. Be ready to apply your brakes so that you will not be pushed into another vehicle.

Hit From the Side. If your vehicle is hit from the side, your body will be thrown towards the side that is hit. Air bags will not help in this situation. Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

Hit From the Front. If your vehicle is about to be hit from the front it is important to try and have a “glancing blow” rather than being struck head on. This means that if a collision is going to happen, you should try to turn the vehi-

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cle. At worst, you hit with a glancing blow. You might miss it. If your vehicle has an air bag, it will inflate. It also will deflate following the crash, so be ready to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else. You must use your lap and shoulder belts to keep you behind the wheel and to protect you if your vehicle has a second crash.

Crashes

Do not stop at an accident unless you are involved or if emergency help has not yet arrived. Keep your attention on your driving and keep moving, watching for people who might be in or near the road. Never drive to the scene of an accident, fire or other disaster just to look. You may block the way for police, firefighters, ambulances, tow trucks and other rescue vehicles.

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

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

At the Accident Scene:

- Stop your vehicle at or near the accident site. If your vehicle can move, get it off the road so that it does not block traffic or cause another crash.
- Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes. You could be struck by another vehicle.
- Turn off the ignition of wrecked vehicles. Do not smoke around wrecked vehicles. Fuel could have spilled and fire is a real danger.
- If there are power lines down with wires in the road, do not go near them.
- Make sure that other traffic will not be involved in the crash. Use flares or other warning devices to alert traffic of the accident.

If Someone Is Injured:

- Get help. Make sure the police and emergency medical or rescue squad have been called. If there is a fire, tell this to the police when they are called.
- Do not move the injured unless they are in a burning vehicle or in other immediate danger of being hit by another vehicle. Moving a person can make their injuries worse.
- First help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Check for breathing then check for bleeding.

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- If there is bleeding, apply pressure directly on the wound with your hand or with a cloth. Even severe bleeding can almost always be stopped or slowed by putting pressure on the wound.
- Do not give injured persons anything to drink, not even water.
- To help prevent an injured person from going into shock, cover them with a blanket or coat to keep them warm.

Report the Accident:

- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the accident and any witnesses including injured persons.
- Exchange information with other drivers involved in the crash; name, address, driver's license number, vehicle information (license plate, make, model and year of vehicle) and insurance company and policy number if available.
- Record any damage to the vehicles involved in the crash.
- Provide information to the police or other emergency officials if requested.
- Should the accident involve a parked vehicle, try to find the owner. If you cannot, leave a note in a place where it can be seen with information on how

the owner can reach you and the date and time of the accident.

- You must report the accident to police if there is an injury, a death, or property damage.

Sharing the Road with Horses and Bicycles

When you approach a horse on a public highway, you must reduce your speed, perhaps even stop if necessary, to avoid striking, endangering or frightening a horse.

Under Connecticut law, a bicycle is considered a vehicle with the same rights and responsibilities as cars and other vehicles on the road. Courtesy, predictability and watchfulness are important factors when sharing the road with bicycles. The most common crashes in which the motorist is at fault typically occur when the motorist fails to yield the right of way to the cyclist. These crashes occur when the motorist turns left into the path of an oncoming cyclist; passes and cuts right into the path of a cyclist; enters the roadway from a driveway, stop sign, or red light or passes a cyclist at an unsafe distance and strikes the cyclist from the side or behind.

A child's field of vision is much narrower than an adult's, and children have a hard time judging the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. They also have difficulty judging where sound is coming from. Children often dart out into the street without stopping or looking, they are easily distracted. Their

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motor skills are still developing and they may not be able to operate their bicycles in a straight line. When children turn looking for cars behind them, they may unintentionally swerve farther left out into the travel lane or into oncoming traffic. Children, and many adults, get a false sense of personal safety when biking on sidewalks. Use extra caution when turning in and out of driveways and at intersections cut by sidewalks. Always expect the unexpected.

Telephone Numbers to Reach DMV

In the Greater Hartford area: 263-5700
Outside Greater Hartford
(within Connecticut only): (800) 842-8222

Pre-recorded information is available 24 hours a day.
Agents are available:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday	8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Directions to DMV Branch Offices Where Driver Testing is Done

Bridgeport Branch Office 1825 East Main Street

From I-95 North/South: Take exit 27a (Routes 25 & 8 connector). Take exit 5 (Boston Avenue). Take a left at the end of the exit. Take a left onto East Main Street. DMV is on the left at the end of the block.

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Danbury Branch Office 25 Tamarack Road

From I-84 East: Take exit 5. At the end of the ramp, go straight down the hill and past one traffic light. Stay on North Street. At the fourth light turn right onto Hayestown Road. At the next traffic light, turn right onto Tamarack Road. DMV is on the left.

From I-84 West: Take exit 6. Go to the end of the ramp. Turn right and proceed to the next traffic light. Turn right onto Hayestown Road. Turn right at the next traffic light onto Tamarack Road. DMV is on the left.

Enfield Branch Office 4 Pearson Way

From I-91 South: Take exit 48 and a left off of the exit onto Elm Street. Continue on Elm Street to a fork in the road. Bear left at the fork. At the second traffic light, turn right. Turn left onto Pearson Way. The DMV is the second building on the right.

From I-91 North: Take exit 48 and a right off of the exit onto Elm Street. Continue on Elm Street to a fork in the road. Bear left at the fork. At the second traffic light, turn right. Turn left onto Pearson Way. The DMV is the second building on the right.

From Route 5 South: Take a left onto Route 220 (Elm Street). Go under the I-91 overpass. Continue on Elm Street to a fork in the road. Bear left at the fork. At the second traffic light, turn right. Take a left onto Pearson Way. DMV is the second building on the right.

Hamden Branch Office 1985 State Street

From I-91 North: Take exit 5. At the traffic light proceed straight on State Street. DMV is approximately 3 miles on the right.

From I-91 South: Take exit 10. Take the first exit off the ramp (exit 1). Take a right off of the exit to the traffic light. At the traffic light, take a right onto State Street. DMV is approximately 3 miles on the left.

From Route 15 North: Take exit 62. At the end of the exit take a left onto Dixwell Avenue. Go three tenths of a mile to Route 5 (State Street). Take a right onto State Street. DMV is approximately 3 miles on the left.

From Route 15 South: Take exit 63 (Bishop Street). Turn left at the end of the ramp. Take a left at the first traffic light (Bishop Street, Route 22). Take a right at the second light (State Street/Route 5). DMV is five miles on the left.

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New Britain Branch Office

85 North Mountain Road

From I-84 East: Take exit 34 (Crooked Street). Take a left off of the exit. At the second traffic light take a right onto Route 372 East. Travel 1 mile. Take a left onto North Mountain Road. The DMV is approximately one tenth of a mile up on the right.

From I-84 West: Take exit 34 (Crooked Street). Take a right off of the exit. At the next traffic light, take a right onto Route 372 East. Travel 1 mile. Take a left onto North Mountain Road. The DMV is approximately one tenth of a mile up on the right.

Norwalk Branch Office

540 Main Avenue

From Merritt Parkway North: Take exit 40B, Main Ave, Route 7 North Danbury. Take a right at the end of the exit. The DMV is approximately one mile on the right.

From Merritt Parkway South: Take exit 40B, Route 7 North Danbury. Take a right off of the exit. DMV is approximately one mile on the right.

From I-95 North or South: Take exit 15, Route 7 Danbury/Norwalk. At the end of the expressway, turn right. DMV is approximately 1/4 of a mile straight ahead.

From Route 7 South (Danbury): At the Junction of Route 33, bear right staying on Route 7. DMV is approximately two miles on the left.

Norwich Branch Office

173 Salem Turnpike

From Route 395 North: Take exit 80W and a right off of the exit onto Route 82. Go underneath the overpass and take your first right after the traffic light into the State of Connecticut complex.

From Route 395 South: Take exit 80 and a right off of the exit onto Route 82. Take your first right before the traffic light into the State of Connecticut complex.

Old Saybrook Branch Office

7 Custom Drive

From I-95 North: Take exit 66. Take a left off of the exit onto Route 166. DMV is 1/4 of a mile on the left.

From I-95 South: Take exit 66. Take a right onto Route 166. DMV is one tenth of a mile on the left.

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Waterbury Branch Office **2210 Thomaston Avenue**

From I-84 East and West: Take exit 20 to Route 8 North. Take Route 8 North to exit 36. Turn right onto Huntington Avenue. At the second light, turn left onto Thomaston Avenue. DMV is on the right (approximately 2 miles).

From Route 8 North: Take exit 36. Turn right onto Huntington Avenue. At the second light, turn left onto Thomaston Avenue. DMV is on the right (approximately 2 miles).

From Route 8 South: Take exit 36. Turn left onto Huntington Avenue. At the 3rd light, turn left onto Thomaston Avenue. DMV is on the right (approximately 2 miles).

Wethersfield Branch Office **60 State Street**

From I-84 West: Take exit 57 onto Rte.15 South. Take exit 86 onto I-91 South. Follow I-91 South to exit 26 (Marsh Street exit). Take a right off the exit. Follow signs to the DMV.

From I-84 East: Take exit 52 onto I-91 South. Follow I-91 South to exit 26 (Marsh Street exit). Take a right off of the exit and follow signs to the DMV.

From I-91 South: Take exit 26 (Marsh Street exit). Take a right off of the exit and follow signs to the DMV.

From I-91 North: Take exit 25-26 (Old Wethersfield). Turn left at the end of the exit and follow signs to the DMV.

Willimantic Branch Office **1557 West Main Street**

From Route 66 East: Follow Route 66 (Willimantic Road/Columbia Avenue). Take a left onto Route 32 East. DMV is approximately 1/4 of a mile on the right.

From Route 66 and 32 West: Follow routes 66, 32 through Willimantic Center. Bear right, remaining on Route 32, which is Main Street. DMV is approximately 1/4 of a mile on the right.

From Route 32 South: Follow Route 32 South. Continue past routes 6/66 overpass. DMV is one mile on the left.

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Winsted Satellite Office (Northwestern)

151 Torrington Avenue

From Route 44 East: Follow Route 44 East through downtown Winsted. Take a right at the first traffic light after Saint James Episcopal Church. DMV is approximately two miles on the left after the Emissions Station.

From Route 44 West: Follow Route 44 West into Winsted. Take a left at Dairy Queen (Torrington Road). DMV is approximately two miles on the left after the Emissions Station.

From Route 8 South: Take exit 46 (Pine Woods Road). Take a right off the exit to a stop sign. Take a right at the stop sign. DMV is on the right.

From Route 8 North: Take exit 46 (Pine Woods Road). Take a left off the exit to a stop sign. Take a right. DMV is on the right.

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Road Signs



"T"
Intersection



"Y"
Intersection



Added Lane
(From Right)



Bike
Crossing



Cattle
Crossing



Cross
Roads



Divided
Highway
Ends



Divided
Highway



Equestrian
Crossing



Farm
Machinery
Crossing



Fire Station



Handicapped
Crossing



Hill



Keep Left



Keep Right



Left Curve



Left or
Through



Left
Reverse
Curve

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Road Signs



Left
Reverse
Turn



Left Turn
Only



Left Turn



Low
Vehicle
Clearance



Merging
Traffic
(From Right)



Narrow
Bridge



No
Bicycles



No
Hitchhiking



No Parking



No
Pedestrians



No U-Turn



One Way
Traffic



Pavement
Ends



Pedestrian
Crossing



Playground



Right
Curve



Right or
Through



Right
Reverse
Curve

Road Signs



Right
Reverse
Turn



Right Turn
Only



Road
Narrows
(From Right)



School
Crossing



School
Zone



Side Road
(Left Angle)



Side Road
(Left)



Side Road
(Right)



Signal
Ahead



Slippery
When Wet



Snowmobile
Crossing



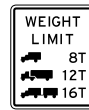
Stop
Ahead



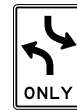
Tow Away
Zone



Truck
Crossing



Truck
Weight
Limit



Two Way
Left Turn
Lane

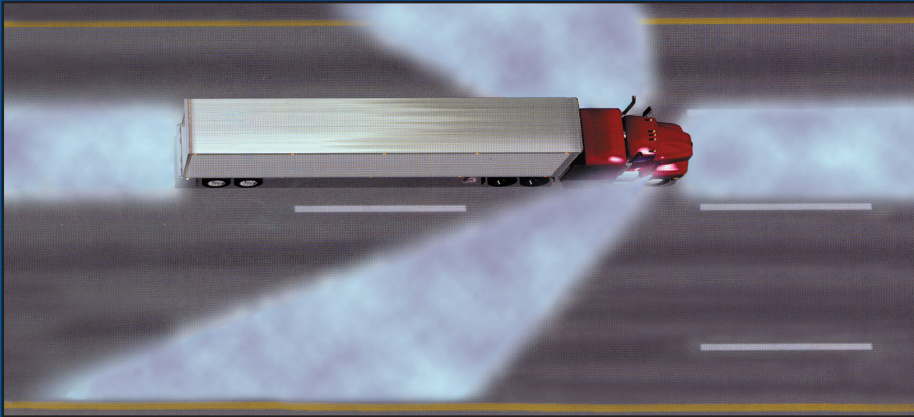


Two Way
Traffic



Winding
Road

DON'T HANG IN THE NO-ZONE.





BUY THE SOUND PLATE

**HELP TO PRESERVE LONG ISLAND SOUND,
CONNECTICUT'S TREASURED RESOURCE**