

The Colorado

# DRIVER HANDBOOK

What every motorist needs to know about  
driving in the Centennial State



**COLORADO**  
Department of Revenue  
Division of Motor Vehicles



Headed to the DMV?

# SKIP THE TRIP!

THE DMV'S IMPROVED RANGE OF ONLINE SERVICES MAKE IT EASY TO:

-  REQUEST A DRIVER RECORD
-  PAY CITATION (TRAFFIC TICKET)
-  VIEW/SUBMIT A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE (DOT)
-  BEGIN APPLICATION FOR A NEW DRIVER LICENSE OR ID
-  RENEW A DRIVER LICENSE OR ID (IF ELIGIBLE)
-  RENEW VEHICLE REGISTRATION
-  PAY A REINSTATEMENT FEE
-  UPLOAD REINSTATEMENT DOCUMENTS
-  SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
-  MANAGE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION PLAN
-  CHANGE DRIVER LICENSE OR ID ADDRESS
-  ADD/CHANGE RENEWAL REMINDERS
-  UPDATE EMERGENCY CONTACTS
-  CHECK ELIGIBILITY TO RENEW BY MAIL
-  EXCHANGE DRIVER LICENSE OR PERMIT FOR AN ID
-  EXTEND AN EXPIRATION DATE, IF ELIGIBLE
-  SUBMIT A SUBPOENA
-  RESCHEDULE A HEARING



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# COLORADO

## Department of Revenue

Division of Motor Vehicles

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Driver Handbook is to provide you with information on how to become a safer driver.

The Driver Handbook is a summary of the laws, rules and safe driving practices that apply to all who drive a vehicle in Colorado. It is based on current laws, legislation and department policies, and is subject to change. It should not be used as a basis for any legal claims or actions. It is a book of information only and does not supersede Colorado Revised Statutes. Traffic regulations in cities, towns, counties and federal territories may exceed state laws, as long as they do not conflict with state law. Refer to the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) Vehicles and Traffic, Title 42 Common Code book for more information on Colorado motor vehicle laws.

Do not throw away this handbook after you get your license; keep it as a reference or pass it on to another applicant.

#### *Useful online information*

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AFFIDAVIT](#)

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SHEETS](#)

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## OBTAINING A DRIVER LICENSE

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle, motor-driven cycle or moped on Colorado's public streets and highways must be 16 or older and have a valid driver license. If you are a resident of Colorado (i.e. if you own or operate a business in Colorado or have resided within the state continuously for 90 days or have obtained gainful employment within this state), you must obtain a Colorado driver license within 30 days of becoming a resident unless you are serving on active duty in the U.S. military, the dependent of an active duty military member or residing in Colorado for the principal purpose of furthering your education.

**Proof of identity/lawful presence:** To obtain a Colorado driver license, you must prove your identity. If you are a U.S. citizen, a permanent resident or temporarily lawfully present, you must provide proof of citizenship or lawful presence.

**Proof of Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number:** If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, you must provide proof of your Social Security Number. If you are unable to prove lawful presence, you must provide proof of your Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.

**Proof of residency/residential address:** If you are a U.S. citizen, permanent resident or temporarily lawfully present, you must provide proof of your current residential address. If you are unable to prove lawful presence, you must prove historical residency in Colorado and your current residential address.

**Driving record analysis:** Before issuing a new license, the Division of Motor Vehicles determines your eligibility by looking at your driving record and the status of your current license.

**Physical aptitude analysis:** A driver license employee will determine if you have any physical ailment or disability that may affect your driving. A confidential medical examination report is required for many physical ailments or disabilities such as epilepsy or paralysis.

**Vision screening:** Your vision will be tested to determine if you can see well enough to drive safely. The minimum vision standard is 20/40. If the test

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discloses you need corrective lenses to meet the minimum visual standards, your license will show this restriction. If you are unable to meet the established vision standards you will be asked to see a vision specialist for correction and recommendations at your own expense.

**Written test:** This test covers driving knowledge and safety. The test questions cover the contents of this handbook including road signs, driving under the influence, driving rules, safety rules and legal items.

**Note:** Written tests are not given within 30 minutes of an office's scheduled closing time. Please plan your visit with this in mind.

**Instruction permits:** After passing a written test, you are eligible for an instruction permit. An instruction permit allows limited driving privileges for people learning to drive. When you are driving with an instruction permit, you must be accompanied, in the front passenger seat, by a person who is 21 years or older who has a valid Colorado license.

**Driving test:** This test covers practical driving skills and abilities. This is the most important part of the licensing process because it allows you to show that you can drive safely. All drive tests are by appointment only and will not be scheduled within one hour before to the scheduled office closing time. Please check [www.Colorado.gov/DMV](http://www.Colorado.gov/DMV) on whether drive tests are currently available.

### NAME & ADDRESS CHANGES

You have 30 days to notify the DMV of a name or address change.

## MINOR DRIVERS

**Minor instruction permits:** Requirements to obtain and restrictions on an instruction permit vary by age. [Tap here for more information.](#)

**Affidavit of Liability and Guardianship:** If you are under 18, your application must be accompanied by an Affidavit of Liability (DR2460) signed and verified by your parent, stepparent, grandparent with power of attorney, legal guardian, spouse older than 18, or any other responsible adult willing to accept legal liability.

The affidavit must be signed in front of the driver license office employee or a notary public. Whoever signs the affidavit agrees to take legal responsibility for your actions as a driver. If the signer decides to no longer accept responsibility for your driving, that person may withdraw their signature and your permit/license will be canceled.

Minors in foster care are exempt from this requirement, provided certain conditions are met.

[Tap here for more information.](#)

**Application for driver license:** Colorado law requires minors to hold an instruction permit for 12 months before applying for a driver license and to submit a completed and signed driving log showing 50 hours of driving experience (10 of which must have been at night). If younger than 16 and 6 months, you must also complete 6 hours of behind the wheel training with an approved driver education instructor or, if there is not an approved driving school offering at least 20 hours of behind-the-wheel (BTW) training per week within 30 miles of the permit holder's residence, 12 additional hours of driving with your parent/guardian/alternate permit supervisor.

**Passenger restrictions:** While you are younger than 18, you have passenger restrictions based on how long you have held your driver license. For the first six months after your license is issued, you cannot have any passengers under 21, unless a parent or another licensed adult driver is in the vehicle. After 6 months, you may have one passenger younger than 21. After 1 year, you may carry as many passengers as there are seat belts in the vehicle. Siblings and passengers with medical

emergencies are exceptions.

**Curfew:** For your first year as a licensed driver, driving between midnight and 5 a.m. is not permitted unless you are accompanied by an instructor, parent or legal guardian. Exceptions include driving to and from school or work (with a signed statement from school or work), medical emergencies and emancipated minors.

## KEEPING YOUR LICENSE

Having a driver license is a privilege. Protect that privilege by driving with care and consideration for others. Your driving privilege may be suspended, revoked or canceled if you:

- Meet or exceed the minimum point accumulation for suspension.
- Are convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Refuse to be tested for alcohol or drug content.
- Are convicted of failing to report an accident or leaving the scene of an accident without stopping, exchanging information and rendering aid.
- Fail to report an accident to the Division of Motor Vehicles according to the Financial Responsibility Law.
- Give false information on your driver license application.
- Fail to settle a judgment against you as a result of an accident while operating a vehicle.
- Lend your license to someone else or misuse it.
- Alter or deface your license.
- Fail to appear for a re-examination requested by the Division of Motor Vehicles.
- Are convicted of manslaughter as a result of a motor vehicle accident.
- Fail to pay a fine for a traffic violation from this or any other state.
- Fail to register, in Colorado, all vehicles owned within 30 days of becoming a resident.
- Fail to pay ordered child support.
- Fail to provide valid evidence of insurance when requested by a law enforcement officer. Drivers are required to have proof of insurance while operating a vehicle.

## SAFETY BELT LAWS & WRECK TIPS

Colorado law requires a fastened safety belt to be worn in all motor vehicles with a factory-equipped safety-belt system while in operation on public roadways by:

- The driver
- Every front seat passenger
- Every child between 8 and 16 seated in the vehicle

The only exceptions are:

- Emergency personnel
- Passenger buses and school buses
- Farm equipment
- Motorcycles
- Driver of delivery vans on the job
- Anyone carrying a written medical

statement from a physician stating why he or she is not physically or psychologically required to wear safety belts.

The Colorado child passenger protection law requires children to be properly fastened into an appropriate child restraint system. If a parent is not in the motor vehicle, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that each child is properly fastened into one of the following:

- **Children younger than 1 and children who weigh less than 20 pounds:** In a rear-facing child restraint system in a rear seat of the vehicle
- **Children ages 1-3 and children who weigh less than 40 pounds:** In a rear-facing or forward-facing child restraint system
- **Children younger than 8:** In a child restraint system, according to the manufacturer's instructions
- **Children between 8 and 16 years old:** In a safety belt or child restraint system according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Occupants in motor vehicles driven by anyone younger than 18 must be properly restrained or wear seat belts. The number of passengers in vehicles driven by persons younger than 18 must not exceed the number of seat belts.

**Providing insurance information after a wreck:** If you are involved in an accident, you must provide Evidence of Insurance to police at the scene of the accident, or on the counter-report at the police station.

**The duties of occupants of vehicles**

**involved in collisions resulting in personal injury:** If you are a passenger in a vehicle involved in an collision where the driver is physically incapable of reporting the collision you are required to report the collision and, if directed by police, to remain at the scene of the collision until the police arrive. Failure to do so is a Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense.

**Using a mobile telephone while driving:** Colorado law prohibits drivers younger than 18 from using a cellphone while driving, unless it is to contact the police or fire department or it is an emergency. Drivers 18 and older may not use a cell or mobile telephone for text messaging while driving unless it is to contact the police or fire department or it is an emergency.

## DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

**Alcohol and driving:** Driving while impaired by alcohol is one of the greatest factors in roadway crashes and the resulting injuries and fatalities. Every year, tens of thousands of people are killed in alcohol related traffic crashes.

When you drive while impaired you are more likely to take excessive risks such as speeding or turning abruptly. Driving impaired also slows down your reaction times, which means that you will not be able to react quickly enough to avoid a crash.

It is also unlawful for someone to drink from or possess an open container of alcohol while in the passenger area of a motor vehicle that is on a public road.

Alcohol is a depressant drug that reduces brain function, which impairs thinking, reasoning, and muscle coordination. This means that alcohol slows reflexes and reaction times while reducing your ability to make the decisions necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and skills decrease.

The amount of alcohol absorbed in your bloodstream is what causes you to feel the effects of drinking. This is called Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). BAC is identified by a chemical test of blood or breath. A driver with a BAC between 0.05% and 0.07% is presumed to be Driving While Ability is Impaired (DWAI).

A driver with a BAC of 0.08% or greater is presumed to be Driving Under the

Influence (DUI). Commercial vehicle drivers have even more strict BAC standards and penalties.

See the Commercial Drivers Manual at [Colorado.gov/DMV](http://Colorado.gov/DMV).

Alcohol concentration in the body may effect some people more than others, even if they have consumed the same amount of alcohol over the same time period.

A person's BAC depends on several factors:

- Body weight
- The period of time in which the alcohol was consumed
- The amount of time since the last drink was consumed
- Gender

It does not make a difference whether a drink is beer, wine

or liquor. Standard servings of each have the same amount of alcohol.

A standard drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 72-proof distilled spirits, all of which contain the same amount of alcohol; about .6 fluid ounces.

Food can help slow down the absorption of alcohol. Once alcohol is in the blood stream, the body eliminates it through normal bodily processes. Contrary to popular belief, coffee, cold showers and other so-called cures will not make you sober. Only the passage of time will make you sober.

On average, after a person reaches a peak BAC, it will drop by 0.015% per hour. For example, if the person reaches a maximum BAC of 0.15%, it will take about 10 hours to eliminate all of the alcohol.



Police car photo by Scott Davidson, Flickr

**Table 1: Possible Penalties for Drinking and Driving and/or Drugs and Driving for 21 and Older**

Conviction	Presumed by Blood Alcohol Content	Points Toward Suspension	Fine	Jail	Public Service
1st Driving While Ability Impaired (DWAI)	0.05%	8	\$200-\$500	2-180 days	24-48 hours
1st Driving Under the Influence (DUI)	0.08%	Revocation: 9 months	\$600-\$1,000	5-365 days	48-96 hours
2nd DWAI or DUI	0.08%	Revocation: 1 year	\$600- \$1,500	10-365 days	48-120 hours
3rd or subsequent DWAI or DUI		Revocation: 2 years	\$600- \$1,500	60-365 days	48-120 hours

**Driving under the influence while younger than 21:** Any driver younger than 21, convicted of DUI or DWAI, is subject to revocation for the first conviction if they fail to complete a court-ordered evaluation or program. A second or third conviction is a mandatory revocation.

Drivers younger than 21 with a BAC of .02 but less than .08 are subject to a mandatory revocation of their driving privilege.

Anyone younger than 21 who buys or possesses liquor (including beer) is subject to revocation of their driving privilege even if driving is not a factor.

**Cannabis, drugs and driving:** Driving while impaired by drugs and cannabis is illegal and subject to the same penalties as driving while impaired by alcohol.

Besides alcohol, there are many substances that can affect your ability to safely operate a vehicle. This is true for many prescription drugs such as tranquilizers as well as over-the-counter medications for allergies and colds, which can make you drowsy. If you are taking medication, be sure to check the label for warnings about the medication's effects prior to driving. If you are not sure it is safe to take the drug and drive, you should ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), cannabis negatively affects a number of skills required for safe driving, such as:

- Slowing your reaction time and ability to make decisions.
- Impairing coordination, distort perception, and lead to memory loss and difficulty in problem-solving.

Additionally, the CDC says the risk of impaired driving associated with cannabis in combination with alcohol appears to be greater than that for either by itself.

Although cannabis negatively affects many safe-driving skills, and some studies have shown an association between cannabis use and car crashes, the CDC says it is unclear whether cannabis use increases the risk of car crashes. This is because:

- An accurate roadside test doesn't exist.
- Cannabis can remain in your system for days or weeks after last use (depending on frequency of use and the amount consumed).
- Drivers are not always tested for

### *Expressed consent law (C.R.S. 42-4-1301.1)*

The expressed consent law means that when you operate a motor vehicle within the state, you agree to take a chemical test of your blood, breath or urine to determine the alcohol and/or drug content in your blood.

If a law enforcement officer suspects that you are driving while impaired or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the law enforcement officer can require you to take a chemical test of your blood, breath or urine.

If you refuse to take the test or do not comply with the testing procedure, your driver license will be revoked for one year and you will be required to install an interlock device on any vehicle you drive for two years. If other suspensions or revocations come about from this same incident, they will be added onto the end of the revocation (consecutively).

Because driving under the influence is so dangerous, the penalties for alcohol or drug related violations are very tough and can include jail, fines and suspension of driving privileges. Colorado law does not allow you to plea bargain out of an alcohol or drug related driving offense.

The only sure way to avoid the consequences is not to use alcohol or drugs at all when driving.

use, especially if they have an illegal blood alcohol concentration level because that is enough evidence for a driving-while-impaired charge.

- When tested for substance use following a crash, drivers can have multiple substances in their system, making it hard to know which substance contributed more to the crash.

Alcohol and drugs should not be consumed at the same time. Mixing alcohol and drugs, including prescriptions, often multiplies the substances' effects. For example, when you take allergy or cold medication, one drink could have the same effect as several drinks.

Illegal drugs such as LSD and heroin also affect a person's reflexes, judgment and alertness along with their many other dangerous side effects. These drugs can give a false sense of alertness and self confidence or make you drowsy and unable to react to simple situations.

## **BEFORE YOU DRIVE**

Being a safe driver depends on being able to see clearly, not being overly tired, not driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, being generally healthy, and being emotionally fit to drive.

**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 and reacting in a timely manner. It is important to have your eyes checked every year or two by an eye specialist. If you have a corrective lens restriction on your license, you need to wear glasses or contact lenses while driving.

**Hearing:** Hearing is helpful to safe driving. The sounds of horns, a siren, or screeching tires can warn you of danger. Hearing problems can come on so slowly that you do not notice them.

These problems should be addressed on a regular basis and, per C.R.S. 42-4-1411, it is illegal to wear any type of headphones while you are driving because they can interfere with your hearing.

**Fatigue:** When you are tired, you cannot drive as safely as when you are rested. Your reactions and decision making skills are greatly reduced. Break long driving periods into two-hour segments. If you become drowsy, pull off the road and rest!

**Health:** Many health problems, such as a bad cold, infection or a virus, can affect your driving. Even little problems such as a stiff neck, cough or sore leg can affect your driving. Some conditions can be very dangerous, such as epilepsy, diabetes and heart conditions. Check with your doctor if you think your health condition could affect your driving.

**Emotions:** Emotions can greatly affect safe driving. You may not drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid or angry. Do not give in to road rage.

**Distractions:** A distraction is anything that diverts your attention, even momentarily, from the task of driving. Driving requires your full attention. Before you begin your trip, adjust your seat, mirrors, radio, temperature, and secure any loose objects in the car. Be sure you and everyone else in the vehicle, particularly children, are wearing age-appropriate restraint devices. Do not allow yourself to become distracted by your cellphone, conversations with passengers, noisy children or rubbernecking.

Limit your cellphone use while driving to brief, essential or emergency calls, only. Pull off the road to a safe area for longer cellphone conversations or to control children. Do not attempt to eat or drink, read, smoke, apply makeup, shave or adjust the music while you are driving. In the time it takes to change radio stations, lives may be changed forever.

**Vehicle:** The vehicle you drive impacts your ability to drive safely. Motorists are responsible to ensure the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle in poor operating condition is unsafe, costs more to drive and may prevent you from avoiding an emergency situation, such as a breakdown or collision. Follow your vehicle owner's manual for routine maintenance.

A few simple checks will prevent trouble on the road and ensure your vehicle complies with Colorado motor vehicle laws:

- **Braking system:** If the brakes do not seem to be working properly have a mechanic check them immediately.

- **Lights:** Make sure turn signals, brake lights, tail lights and headlights are operating properly.

- **Windshield and wipers:** Get your windshield replaced if the glass is damaged because damaged glass can break easily or obstruct vision. Windshield wipers keep the rain and snow off the windshield. Make sure they are in good operating condition. If the blades have not been working well, replace them. Keep the windshield clean inside and out, and keep your window washer bottle full. Clear snow, ice or frost from all windows.

- **Tires:** Worn or bald tires can increase your stopping distance, make turning more difficult, can cause hydroplaning at lower speeds when the

road is wet, and increase the chance of having a flat tire. Unbalanced wheels and low tire pressure increase 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 your tires.

- **Steering system:** If the vehicle is hard to turn, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

- **Suspension system:** If the vehicle bounces excessively, keeps bouncing after a bump or after you stop, you may need new shocks or other suspension parts. Have a mechanic check it out.

- **Exhaust system:** Fumes from a leaky exhaust system can cause death in a very short time. Never run the motor in your garage or sit in the car with the motor running, without opening a window. Most exhaust problems are easily heard. Have them repaired.

- **Engine:** A poorly tuned engine may lose power needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, pollutes the air, and could die on you when you are on the road, causing problems for you and other traffic.

- **Horn:** The horn should be checked for operation periodically.

- **Mirrors:** Adjust your rear view mirror and side mirrors before you begin to drive. You should be able to see out the back window with the rear view mirror, and adjust your side mirrors to let you see the lane behind you and most of the lane next to you.

- **Loose objects:** Make sure there are no objects on the rear shelf or back seat that could injure someone during a sudden stop or crash. Ensure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal or accelerator and interfere with your safe driving.

- **Head restraints:** They should be adjusted so the head restraint touches the back of your head.

## BASIC DRIVING

**Starting the engine:** How you start your vehicle will depend on its make and model. Check the vehicle owner's manual for how to start the vehicle. No matter your make and model, your

right foot should be on the brake before starting the vehicle. Check indicator lights and gauges your vehicle to be sure your vehicle needs maintenance.

**Moving the vehicle:** Check for a safe path and check for traffic to the sides and behind. Signal, and if safe, press the accelerator gently with the ball of your foot on the pedal and the heel of your foot on the floor.

**Stopping the vehicle:** Check your mirrors for traffic to the rear of your vehicle. Move your foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal. With steady pressure, press until your vehicle comes to a stop.

**Steering:** The steering wheel is always turned in the direction you want the vehicle to move, whether moving forward or in reverse.

**Hand position:** You have better vehicle control when you place both hands on the outside of the steering wheel, on opposite sides, at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions or the 4 and 8 o'clock positions. Your grip on the steering wheel should be firm but gentle. Use your fingers instead of the palms of your hands and keep your thumbs up along the face of the steering wheel. Never grip the inside of the steering wheel when turning it.

**Backing up:** To safely back up your vehicle, you should:

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

- Place your foot on the brake and shift to reverse.

- Grasp the steering wheel at the 12 o'clock position with your left hand. Place your right arm on the back of the seat and look directly over your shoulder through the rear window.

- Use your mirrors for backing up but keep in mind these mirrors do not show the area immediately behind your vehicle. If you have a rear view camera, use it in addition to checking over your shoulder and using your mirrors.

- Accelerate gently, smoothly and slowly. Your vehicle is much harder to steer while backing up. Steer slightly in the direction the rear of the vehicle should move. If backing up while turning, make quick checks to the front and sides. Continue looking to the rear until coming to a complete stop.

## TRAFFIC CONTROLS

Traffic controls include traffic signals, traffic 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. Traffic lights are usually at intersections and are (from top to bottom) red, yellow, and green. There are intersections and other locations where there are single green, yellow or red lights. If the traffic signal is not operating or is malfunctioning, treat the intersection as a four way stop (C.R.S. 42-4-612 (1)).

**Steady red light:** Stop until a green light appears. After stopping and yielding to pedestrians and other traffic, and if not prohibited by a traffic sign, you may turn right while the light is red. Also, you may turn left on a red light if you are turning from a one-way street onto another one-way street, unless prohibited by a sign.

**Steady yellow light:** A red light is about to appear. Stop unless you are already in the intersection.

**Steady green light:** You may proceed straight through or turn right or left unless a sign prohibits such turns. However, you must yield to any vehicle or pedestrian within the intersection or adjacent crosswalk.

[Illustrations on Page 7](#)

**Red Arrow:** A lighted red arrow means you must stop and may not proceed in the direction indicated by the arrow.

**Green arrow:** A lighted green arrow, by itself or along with a red, green or yellow light means you may make the turn indicated by the arrow. If the green arrow goes off, but the circular green is on, you may still turn after yielding to through vehicles, unless prohibited by a sign or red arrow.

**Yellow arrow:** A lighted red arrow is about to appear. Stop if you are not already in the intersection.

[Illustrations on Page 7](#)

**Flashing yellow arrow:** A flashing yellow arrow indicates the driver turning left should proceed with caution and must yield to oncoming traffic.

The signal will then switch to solid yellow, telling the driver the light is about to turn red and to not enter the intersection if they can stop safely. Finally the signal will turn red indicating the driver must stop.

**Flashing red light:** A flashing red light means the same as a STOP sign. Stop; then proceed only after yielding to pedestrians and other traffic.

**Flashing yellow light:** A flashing yellow light is a warning of a hazard. Slow down and proceed with caution.

[Illustrations on Page 7](#)



**HAWK signals:** High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signals are for pedestrian crossings. When the signal is black you may proceed cautiously. When a pedestrian activates the signal, it will flash yellow, which means you must slow down and be ready to stop. The light will then turn solid yellow to tell the driver to stop if possible. Then the signal will turn to a solid red, indicating the driver must stop. Finally, the signal will flash red, telling you to stop and yield to pedestrians.

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

Traffic signs tell you about traffic rules, hazards, and your current location. They can also give directions and help you to locate services. The shapes and colors of these signs indicates the type of information they provide.

**Regulatory signs:** These signs tell you of laws and regulations that apply at a location. They are black or red on a white background. Failure to obey these signs is a traffic violation.

**Speed limit signs:** These signs indicate the maximum or minimum safe speed

that is allowed. The maximum limits are for ideal conditions and you must reduce your speed when conditions require it.

**Stop signs:** This sign means you must come to a complete stop. Stop at the marked stop line or, if none, at the point just before the intersecting street. If there is a crosswalk, you must come to a complete stop before entering it. You may proceed only after yielding to all pedestrians and vehicles.

**Yield signs:** This sign indicates you must slow or stop to yield to all pedestrians and any vehicle with right of way.

**Do not enter/Wrong way signs:** These signs warn and redirect drivers who are heading the wrong way on streets or freeway ramps. Do not proceed past one of these signs.

**One way signs:** Travel only in the direction indicated by the sign's arrow.

[Illustrations on Page 7](#)

**Lane control signs:** These signs give direction and information about where you can turn and often use an arrow symbol. The signs are along the side of the road or are hanging over the road. Sometimes arrows may be painted on the road.

**Prohibited signs:** These signs indicate you cannot do something, for example, no U-turn or no left turn.

[Illustrations on page 7](#)

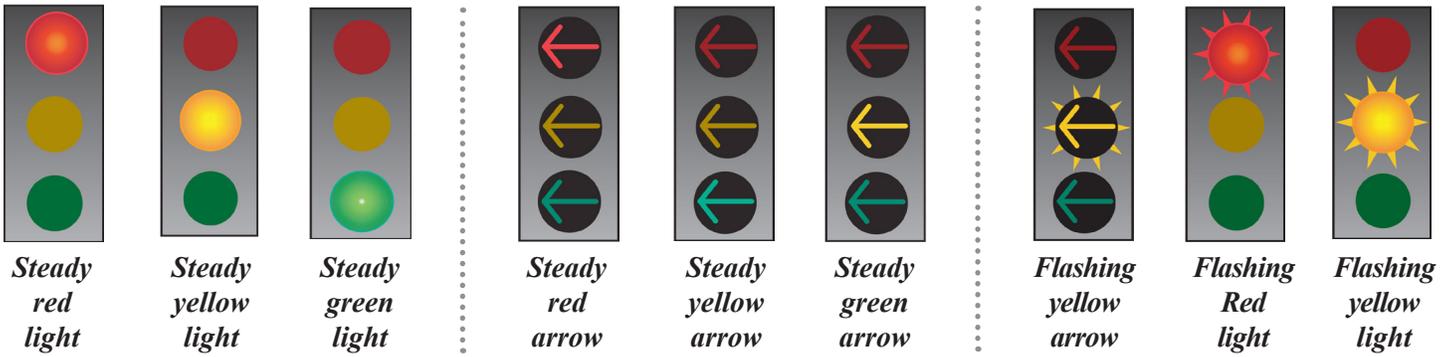
**Warning signs:** These signs are yellow or fluorescent green with black symbols and most are diamond shaped. They may warn you to slow down or be prepared to stop, or may warn you of upcoming intersections, curves, slippery surfaces, merging traffic, etc. For instance, a merging traffic sign warns of vehicles entering from a side street.

[Illustrations on page 7](#)

**Advisory speed signs:** These cautionary signs show the safe speed around curves, corners and off-ramps.

**Railroad crossings:** These signs show information about railroad crossings and can be a variety of shapes. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Never start to cross the tracks until there is enough room for your vehicle to clear the tracks on the other side. Do not shift gears when crossing the railroad tracks in case your vehicle stalls.

**Railroad emergency notification system (ENS):** These blue signs are at

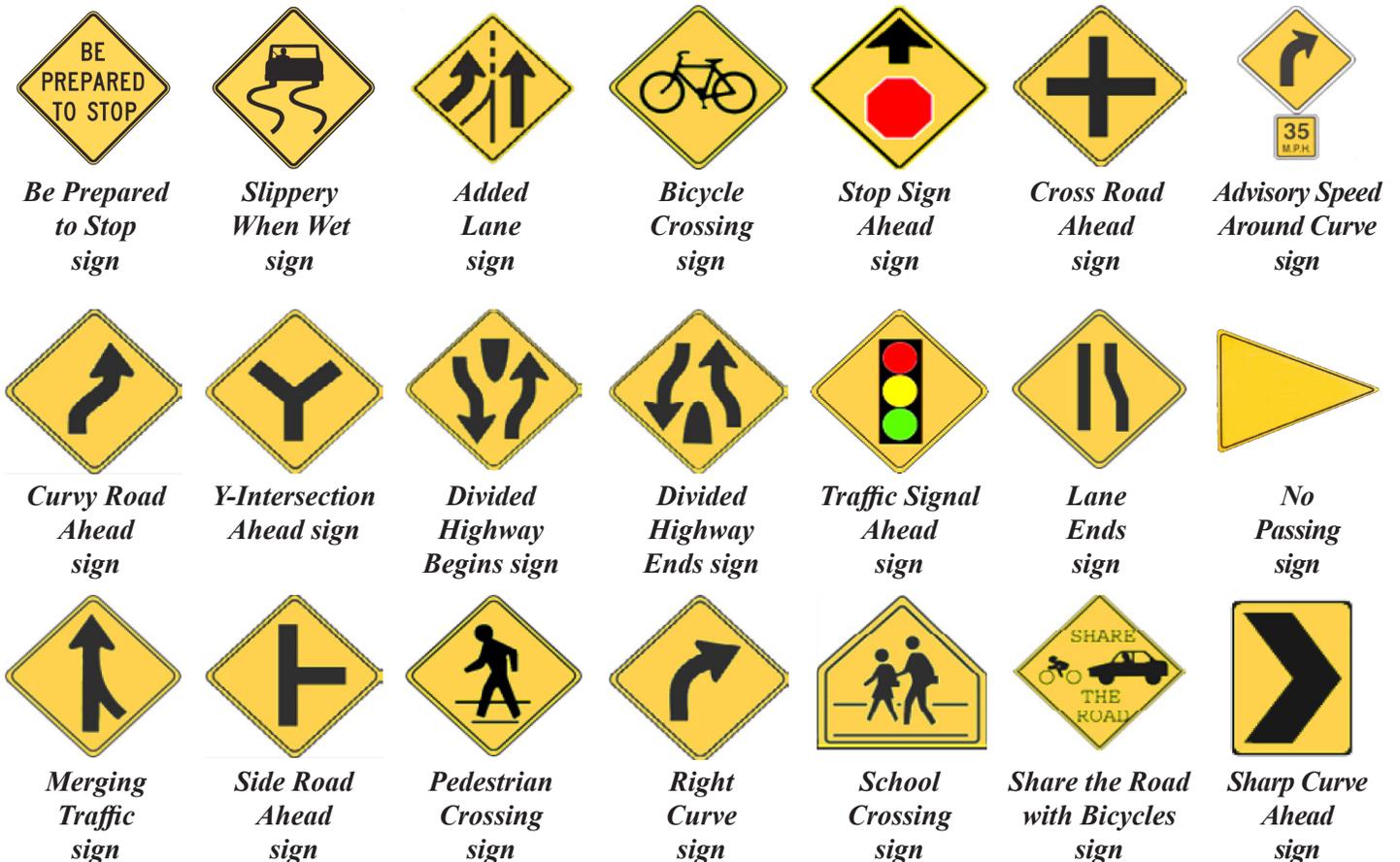


**TRAFFIC SIGNALS**



**REGULATORY SIGNS**

**PROHIBITED SIGNS**



**WARNING SIGNS**



*Advisory Speed Around Curve sign*



*Off Ramp Advisory Speed sign*



*Railroad Crossing sign*



*Railroad Crossing sign (round)*



*Railroad Emergency Notification Systems signs*

## ADVISORY SIGNS



*Work Zone Ahead sign*



*Work Zone Flag Man sign*



*Road Closed Construction Barrier*



*Construction Cone*



*Construction Barrier*

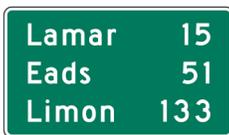


*Construction Tube*



*Construction Barrel*

## WORK ZONE SIGNS, MARKERS



*Guide signs provide directional and mileage information*



*Service signs provide directions to services*



*Route signs and markers let you know which roadway you're on*

## GUIDE SIGNS

## SERVICE SIGNS

## ROUTE SIGNS, MARKERS



*Slow Moving Vehicle marker*



*Disabled Parking signs*

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Colorado DMV offers over 35 online services, so you can #SkipTheTripCO

[myDMV.Colorado.gov](http://myDMV.Colorado.gov)

## SIGNS, MARKERS



every highway-rail grade crossing and provide the public with a telephone number to report problems or emergencies at these railroad locations. Directly below the dispatch number on the ENS sign is a Department of Transportation number that identifies the exact location of the crossing in question.

[Illustrations on Page 8](#)

**Work zone signs:** These signs have an orange background with black letters or symbols. They are used with other traffic control devices or flag persons to help direct traffic safely through work areas and to protect highway workers.

[Illustrations on Page 8](#)

**Guide signs:** These signs have a green background and/or provide directional and mileage information to specific destinations.

**Service/recreation signs:** These signs have blue backgrounds and provide directions to service facilities. Signs with brown backgrounds indicate recreational, historic or cultural areas.

**Route signs and markers:** The shape of the sign indicates the type of roadway: Interstate, U.S., State or County highway.

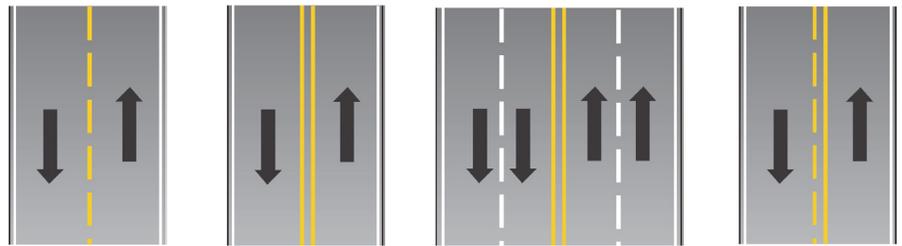
[Illustrations on Page 8](#)

**Slow moving vehicle:** A reflective orange triangle on the rear of a vehicle means it is designed to travel at speeds slower than 25 miles per hour.

**Disabled parking signs:** These signs mark special parking areas for only those vehicles displaying a disabled parking permit. Disabled parking indicators may also appear on the pavement in designated parking spaces.

Crosshatched sections are for van access only and parking is not allowed at any time. In order to park in a disabled parking space, the person who owns the disabled placard must be entering or exiting the vehicle.

If you park illegally in a designated disabled parking spot without a placard or plate, you could be charged with a misdemeanor, and if convicted, subject to a \$350-\$5,000 fine, possible jail time, loss of driving privileges and/or your car being impounded. If you park in one of these spaces with someone else's placard or plate, you will be subject to jail time, loss of driving privileges and towing as well as fines double those

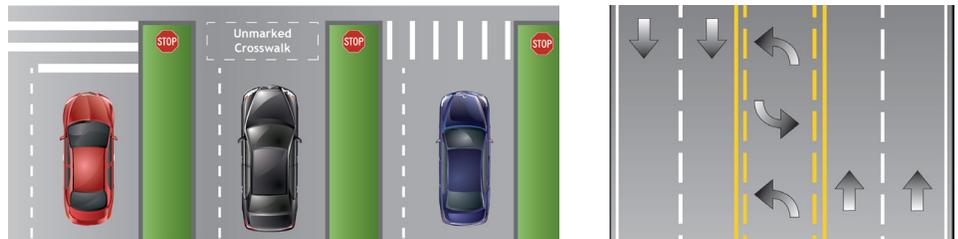


*Broken yellow line*

*Solid yellow lines*

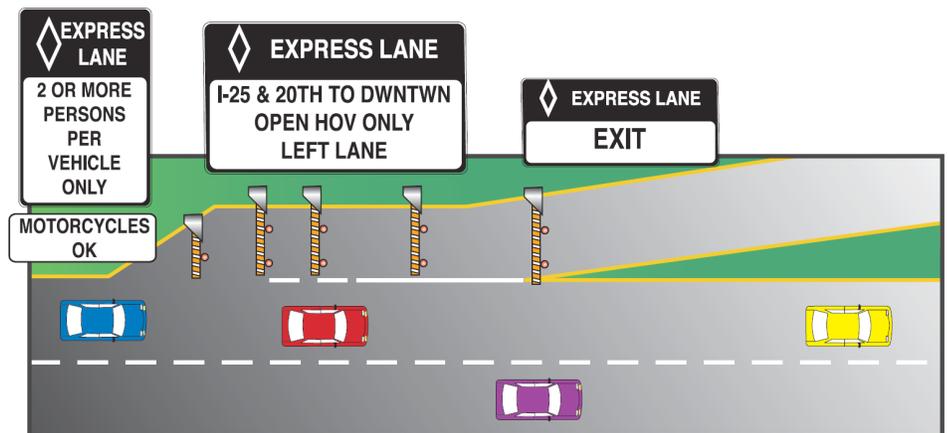
*Double Solid yellow lines*

*Solid & Broken yellow lines*



*Examples of a few of the most common types of crosswalk markings. Please, be aware that there are other types as well.*

*Shared Center Turn lane*



*High Occupancy Vehicle lane*

## PAVEMENT MARKINGS

listed above.

[Illustrations on Page 8](#)

## PAVEMENT MARKINGS

Lines and symbols on the roadway divide lanes, tell you when you may pass other vehicles or change lanes, indicate which lanes to use for turns, define pedestrian walkways, and mark where

you must stop for traffic signals or signs.

**Yellow lines:** Separate traffic moving in opposite directions.

- **Broken yellow line:** Passing is permitted
- **Solid yellow lines:** No passing is permitted.
- **Double solid yellow lines:** Neither side can pass.
- **Solid and broken yellow lines:** You may not pass if the solid yellow line

is on your side. If the broken yellow line is on your side, you may pass if it is safe to do so.

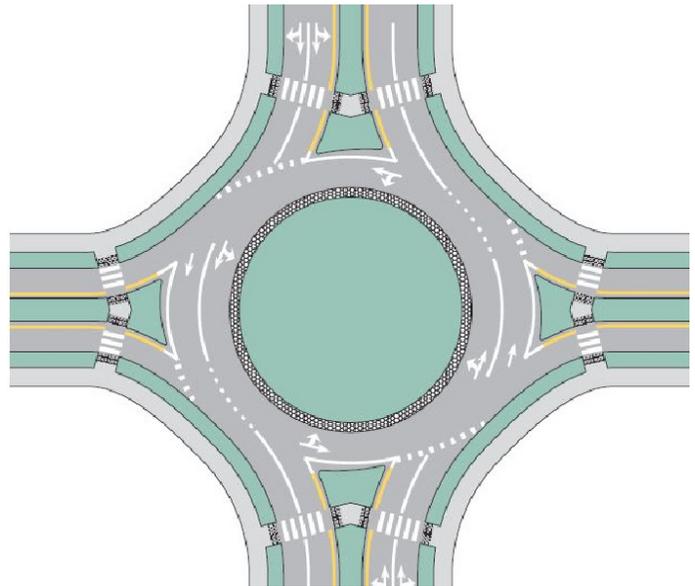
You may cross a solid yellow line for a left turn into an alley, private road or driveway when such movement can be made safely.

**White lines:** Separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction.

- **Broken white line:** You may change lanes if it is safe.
- **Solid white line:** Requires you to stay within the lane and also marks the shoulder of the roadway.

**Crosswalks:** Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians are to cross the roadway. They exist whether the lines are marked or not. You must stop behind the crosswalk to allow any pedestrians to cross, whenever you approach any vehicle from the rear that is stopped at a crosswalk.

[Illustrations on Page 9](#)



*Rotary island/Roundabout lane*

## LANE CONTROLS

As a general rule you must drive your vehicle on the right half of the road. Use only one lane, do not straddle lanes. On roads without marked lanes, drive just to the right of the center of the road. On roadways without designated bicycle lanes, bicycles are generally required to stay to the far right side of the right lane. They may use the entire lane to pass another vehicle, avoid objects in the road, and turn left.

**Restricted lane:** One or more lanes may be restricted for special use. Restricted lanes are marked by signs or pavement markings stating that the lane is restricted for special use. There will be a white diamond painted on the road within the lane, and/or a sign posted at the side of the road which specifies its use. Examples are transit, bus or bicycle lanes.

**High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane:**

These lanes are identified by a white diamond painted on the roadway. Signs will identify the types of vehicles and the number of occupants required per vehicle to use the lane.



**Shared center turn lane:** These center lanes are reserved for turning and are used by vehicles traveling in both directions. You may turn into or from the road using this lane. You may stop in this lane until it is safe to complete the turn. When a street has a shared center turn lane, you may not turn left from any other lane. You are not allowed to use this lane to pass another vehicle.

**Unmarked lane:** When there are no signs or pavement markings to control the use of lanes, drive just to the right of the center of the road.

Do not drive on the shoulder of the road.

The same rules for passing and turning on marked roads apply with unmarked roads.

**Rotary island/Roundabout lane:** Yield to traffic already inside the rotary island. Drive to the right and watch

for directional signs and signals. You must signal before exiting the roundabout.

**Reversible lane:** 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 separated by a barrier or marked by double-broken yellow lines. There may be signs posted by the side of the road or overhead. Sometimes special lights are used.

**Diverging diamond interchange (DDI):** A diverging diamond interchange crosses traffic to the opposite side of the road across an interchange so vehicles have uninterrupted movements onto the freeway ramps. Left-turn movements, which are a typical challenge with standard four-way interchanges, are eliminated with a DDI, which allows for fewer conflicts with other vehicles.

## RIGHT OF WAY

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

The law states who must yield the right-of-way, but it does not give anyone the right-of-way, even if your traffic signal is green. You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers who are already in an intersection you are approaching. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

**Pedestrians:** When driving, you must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians under all conditions. Be particularly watchful for children, senior citizens and blind people. Most blind people are easily recognized by the white cane

they carry and/or by their guide dog. Pedestrians have the right-of-way at all intersections and crosswalks. You must come to a complete stop and let the person pass safely.

**Bicycles:** Bicycles on the road are considered vehicles and have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles.

**Four-way stop:** You must yield the right-of-way to the vehicle that reached the intersection first. When more than one vehicle reaches the intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left must yield the right-of-way and allow the vehicle on the right to go first. Regardless of who has the right of way you are always responsible for avoiding a crash.

**Uncontrolled intersections:** An uncontrolled intersection is an intersection that does not have control devices such as stop signs or lights. When more than one vehicle reaches an uncontrolled intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left must yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right and allow the vehicle on the right to go first.

**Turning left:** You must yield to all oncoming traffic, unless you have a green arrow or arrived first at a four-way stop.

**Changing lanes and passing:** You must yield the right-of-way to vehicles already occupying the lane you wish to enter or use for passing. Do not change lanes if another vehicle must slow down for you.

**Merging:** You must yield to all vehicles on the roadway you are merging into. Do not merge if another vehicle must slow down for you.

**Backing:** You must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles close enough to be a hazard.

**Narrow mountain roadway:** When vehicles meet on a steep, narrow road which is not wide enough for two vehicles, the vehicle going downhill must yield the right-of-way by backing up to a wider place or by stopping to leave sufficient space for the vehicle going uphill, except where it is more practicable for the vehicle going uphill to return to a wider space or turnout.

**Emergency vehicles:** You must yield the right-of-way to all emergency vehicles using a siren, air horn and/or flashing red, blue or white lights. Where possible, you must pull over to the right edge of the road. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over. If you are approaching an emergency vehicle stopped along the side of the road, leave at least one lane between your vehicle and the emergency vehicle, if possible. If the road has only one lane in your direction of travel or you cannot change lanes, slow down unless directed otherwise by a police officer or emergency personnel or conditions prohibit the lane change. If the road only has one lane on your side, or you cannot change lanes, slow down to a safe speed and use due care and caution as you pass.

**Maintenance vehicles:** You must yield the right-of-way to service vehicles and maintenance equipment engaged in work upon the roads using flashing yellow and blue warning lights. Use extra caution in approaching, overtaking or passing maintenance vehicles. Be especially cautious around snow plows. Their size and speed can create clouds of blowing snow that can conceal the plow.



COLORADO TOURISM BUREAU PHOTO

*Remember to use caution when driving on roads with pronounced curves.*

**School bus:** You must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet before reaching a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing and remain stopped until the lights stop flashing. You must stop whether it is on your side of the road, the opposite side of the road or at an intersection you are approaching. You must remain stopped until the flashing red lights are no longer operating. Watch carefully for children near the school bus and children crossing the roadway before proceeding.

You are not required to stop if there is a median or other physical barrier separating the bus from your vehicle.

**Transit buses:** You must yield right of way to a transit bus if it is signaling to enter a traffic lane and the yield sign on the rear of the bus is illuminated. These yield signs are a warning to drivers behind transit buses that they are required to yield when the bus is entering a traffic lane.

**Road work/Construction zone:** When driving in a work/construction zone, adjust your lane position away from workers, if possible, and be prepared for unexpected events.

For safety reasons, normal speed limits may be reduced in work/construction zones. Any reduced speed limits will be clearly marked. Failure to comply with the speed limit in a work/construction zone can result in double fines.

## SPEED

Many fatal collisions on Colorado highways involve excessive speed. Of all the possible causes of a collision, speeding or driving too fast for conditions is common.

**Limits:** Speed limit signs indicate the maximum speed allowed in ideal conditions. Some roads, such as freeways, have minimum speed limits posted. Driving slower than the speed limit is a traffic violation, unless



200 feet



230 feet



300 feet



5280 feet (line would be 53 inches long)



*Approximate stopping distance at 55 mph*

due to road or weather conditions.

**Reduced speed zones:** Regardless of the posted speed limit, it may be necessary to reduce your speed to keep yourself and others safe. Signs will indicate when a reduced speed limit is in effect. Signs will indicate when the lower speed limit is in effect.

Unless otherwise posted, Colorado speed limits are as follows:

- 20 mph on narrow, winding mountain highways and blind curves
- 25 mph in any business district
- 30 mph in any residence district
- 40 mph on open mountain highways
- 45 mph for vehicles in the business of hauling trash
- 55 mph on urban interstate and highways
- 65-75 mph on designated rural interstate and highways

**Stopping distance:** Be alert so you know when you will have to stop well ahead of time. Stopping suddenly is dangerous and is often the result of a driver who was not paying attention. If you brake too quickly, you could skid, lose control of your vehicle, and/or make it difficult 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, it can be a more gradual and safer stop.

According to the National Safety Council, a lightweight passenger car

traveling 55 mph can stop in about 200 feet. Other vehicles require different stopping distances. The chart at the top of this page shows stopping distances, under ideal conditions.

[See illustration above](#)

## TURNING

Completing a turn properly requires you to signal for an appropriate amount of time prior to the turn, search for hazards, turn into and from the correct lane, and turn in a correct path.

**Signaling:** Failure to signal is a traffic violation. Before making any turn, whether onto another roadway, into a parking lot, into another lane of traffic, or leaving a parked position, it is extremely important that you signal. Your signal lets other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians know your intentions. In urban areas, you must signal continuously for 100 feet before making a turn or lane change. On four-lane highways where the posted speed limit is faster than 40 mph you must signal for 200 feet before making a turn or lane change. Failing to signal is a traffic violation.

If your vehicle's turn signals do not work, you must use hand signals. End your hand signal before starting to turn so that you can complete the turn with both hands on the wheel.

**Turning from the proper lane:** To make a left turn, you must begin in the leftmost lane in your direction of travel. To make a right turn, you

must begin in the right most lane. In locations where turning from more than one lane is permitted, traffic signs, signals, and/or lane markings will clearly indicate correct turning lanes.

**Turning in a correct path:** Begin your turn from the center of an appropriate turning lane. Complete your turn in the center of the correct lane on the new roadway - usually the lane closest to you on your side of the street. In intersections with multiple turn lanes, use the white lines in the intersection to identify the correct path. Avoid short turns (cutting corners), wide turns, late turns and straddling lanes.

**Left turns:** If turning left, you should wait at the stop line or crosswalk until there is a gap in oncoming traffic large enough to allow you to complete your turn. Pulling into the intersection while waiting to turn left blocks the intersection for emergency vehicles, limits visibility for oncoming traffic and puts you in a position to get in a collision if the light changes and oncoming traffic runs the red light while you make your turn. Never turn the front wheels towards the left while you are waiting to turn. If you happen to get rear ended, you would be pushed into oncoming traffic.

**U-turns:** A U-turn is a turn made in a U-shaped course so as to face in the opposite direction on the same roadway. U-turns are forbidden unless they can be made without endangering other traffic and, in some locations marked by signs, are entirely



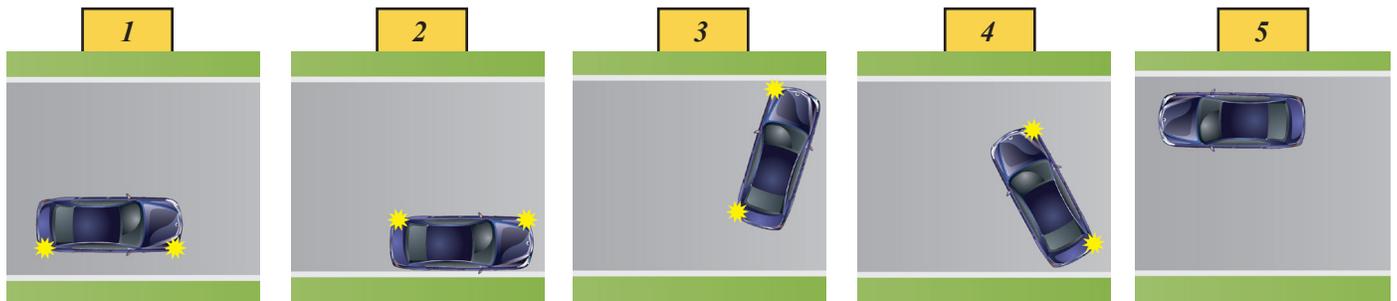
*In urban or metropolitan areas, you must signal continuously for 100 feet (or for three seconds) before making a turn or lane change.*



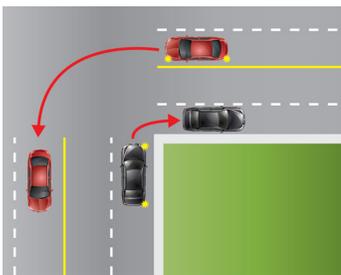
*At speeds above 40 mph you must signal continuously for 200 feet before making a turn or lane change.*

*Extra caution should be used by the drivers of cars A and B when a private drive or side street is near a main intersection. Driver A should not assume that Driver B will yield the right of way. Driver B should not assume that Driver A is turning.*

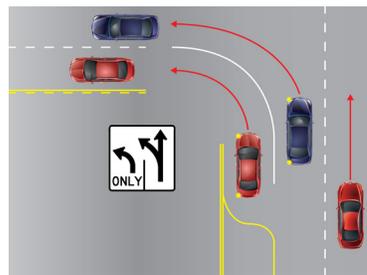
## RIGHT OF WAY



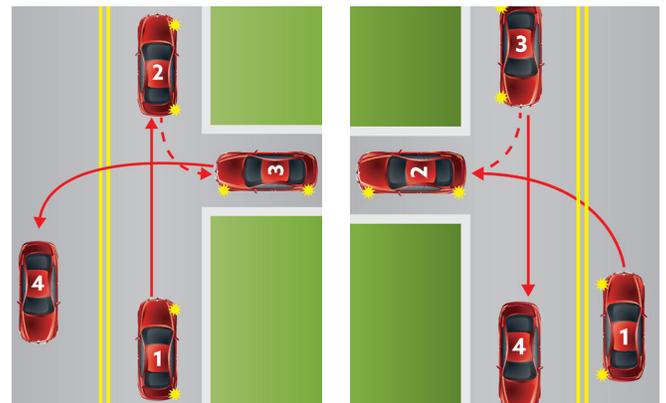
*Three-point turnabout*



*How to conduct left and right turns from a two-way street.*

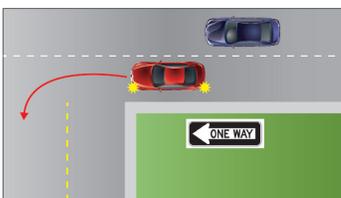


*How to turn from double turn lanes.*

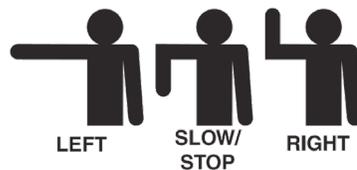


*Reverse two-point turnabout*

*Forward two-point turnabout*



*How to turn from a one-way street on to a two-way street.*



*Hand signals*

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can schedule appointments online at [myDMV.Colorado.gov](http://myDMV.Colorado.gov)



prohibited. If you cannot safely make a U-turn, continue to the next street or turn around area. Never try to make a sudden U-turn in front of traffic traveling in either direction.

**Two-point turnabout:** In this type of turn, a street, alley or driveway is used to reverse the direction you are traveling when it is not practical or possible to drive around a block.

**Reverse two-point turnabout:** Signal your intention to turn right. Stop and check traffic to the sides and rear of the vehicle. Move back until the rear bumper of the vehicle reaches the near edge of the driveway. While backing slowly, steer rapidly all the way to the right. As the vehicle centers in the driveway, straighten the wheels and stop. Shift to drive and check in both directions; if clear, signal and turn left into the proper lane and accelerate.

**Forward two-point turnabout:** Check your mirrors and signal your intention to turn left. Move close to the center of the road and turn into the driveway or alley as near as possible to the right side. Stop as the rear of the vehicle clears the curb or edge of the driveway. Check in all directions for traffic, signal a right turn and shift to reverse. When clear, move back slowly while turning the steering wheel quickly all the way to the right. As the vehicle centers in the nearest lane, straighten the wheels and stop. Then, shift to drive, cancel the right signal and move forward.

**Three-point turnabout:** This type of turnabout is used to reverse direction on a roadway that is too narrow to allow completion of a U-turn and where there is no way to go around the block or utilize a two-point turn. Only use a three-point turnabout on a two-lane roadway.

**To perform a three-point turnabout:** Check the mirrors and activate the right turn signal to communicate your intention to pull off to the right side of the road. Stop on the right side of the road.

Activate your left turn signal for a minimum of three seconds, check traffic and any blind spots. When traffic is clear, turn hard left toward the other side of the road. Stop when you have reached the other side.

Check traffic and blind spots on both sides, then turn the wheel hard right

and reverse to the other side of the road. When traffic is clear, turn hard right to the other side of the road and stop.

Place the vehicle in drive, activate the left turn signal and check traffic and blind spots. When traffic is clear, turn hard left and drive forward into the right lane of traffic heading in the new direction. Make sure your turn signal has canceled. Continue driving straight in the new direction.

[Illustrations on Page 13](#)

## PARKING

There are several locations where it is forbidden to stop or park a vehicle. Among these are:

- On a crosswalk, sidewalk, bridge, elevated structure, railroad tracks or any controlled access highway
- Within 30 feet of a traffic signal, stop sign, railroad crossing or within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
- Within an intersection, tunnel, runaway truck ramp, on/off ramp or blocking a driveway

**Parallel parking:** Stop even with the car ahead. Turn the wheel sharply right and back slowly toward the car behind.

When clear of the car ahead, turn the wheel sharply to the left and back slowly toward the car behind. Turn the wheel sharply right and pull towards the curb in the center of the parking space.

To pull away from a parallel parked position, activate your signal, check your mirrors and blind spots, and pull away when safe.

Where parallel parking is permitted, your vehicle must be within 12 inches of the curb or as close as possible to the outside edge of the shoulder, so that traffic will not be impeded.

Leave the car in park if it has an automatic transmission. Or if it's a standard transmission, leave the vehicle in low gear if headed uphill and in reverse gear if headed downhill. Set the emergency brake and remember to remove the ignition key when leaving the car.

**Downhill:** When you stop your car headed downhill, turn your front wheels toward the curb. Let your vehicle roll slowly until the front tire rests against the curb using it as a block.

**Uphill:** When headed uphill at a curb, turn the front wheels away from the curb and let your vehicle roll backwards slowly until the rear part of the front wheel rests against the curb using it as a block.

**No curb:** When headed uphill with no curb, turn your front wheels to the right so that if your vehicle moves, it will roll off the highway, not into the roadway.

[Illustrations on Page 15](#)

## FREEWAY DRIVING

High-speed roadways like freeways can be dangerous due to the speeds at which people are driving. It's important to be aware of your surroundings at all times when driving, especially on freeways.

**Entering the freeway:** High-speed roadways generally have acceleration ramps so you can build up speed. When entering a freeway from an on-ramp, try to increase your speed to match freeway traffic.

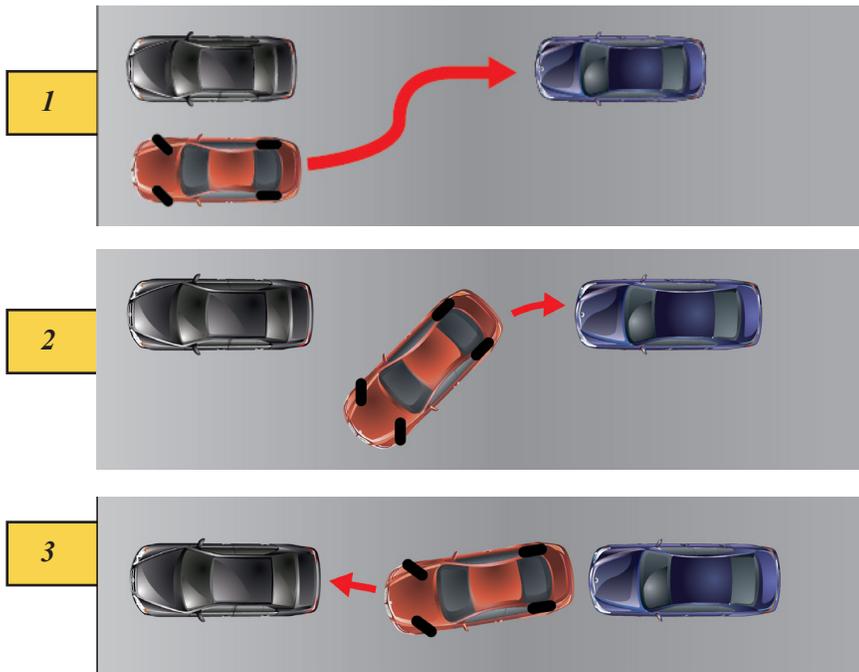
Before entering a highway from a side entrance ramp, signal properly, look for an opening in traffic, accelerate to the speed of traffic and merge into traffic when it is safe.

Do not merge into traffic until the solid white line has ended. Do not stop in the acceleration lane unless absolutely necessary. Remember, you must yield the right-of-way to freeway traffic.

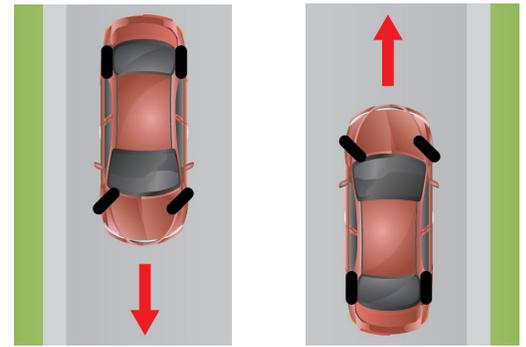
Some freeway entrance ramps have traffic signals which regulate the release of vehicles onto the freeway to allow easier merging and a smoother traffic flow. On metered ramps, you will be required to stop and wait to be released on a green light to enter the freeway.

**Freeway driving:** Freeway driving is different from driving on a regular street or highway mainly because the highways are designed to move a greater volume of traffic at faster speeds.

- Drive in the rightmost lane when you moving at less than the normal speed.
- Move out of the right lane when approaching a merge area, if you can do so safely.
- Observe traffic ahead of, around and behind you. Be aware of vehicles traveling in your blind spots.
- Plan ahead, use directional and guidance signs
- Signal at least 200 feet before you change lanes, avoiding frequent

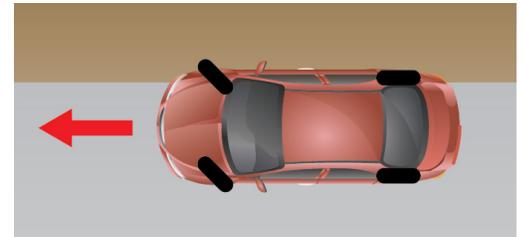


*Parallel Parking*



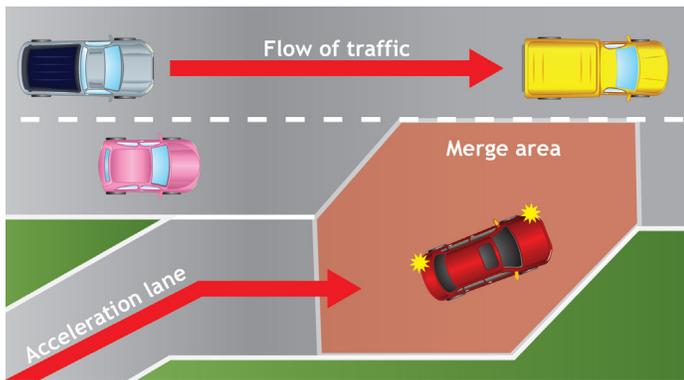
*Downhill parking*

*Uphill parking*

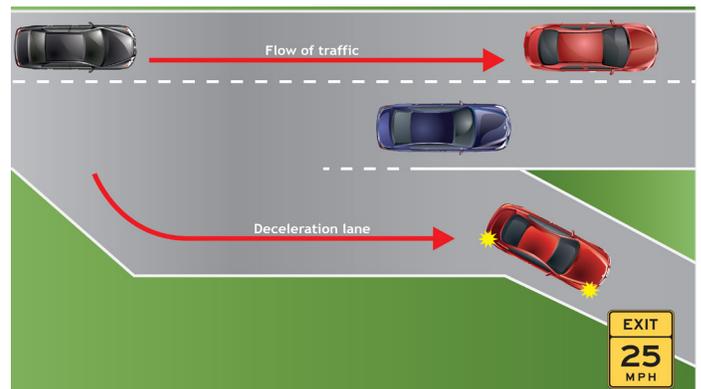


*No Curb parking*

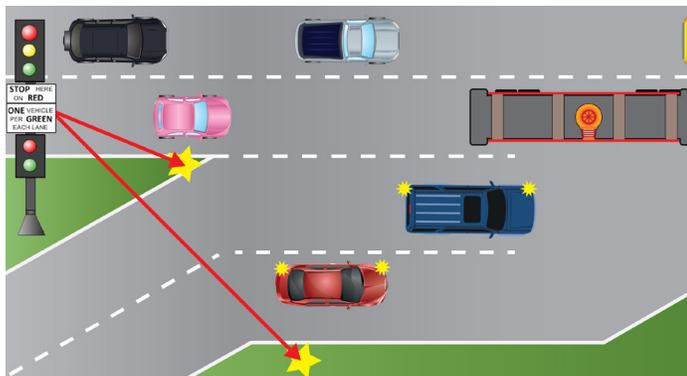
**PARKING**



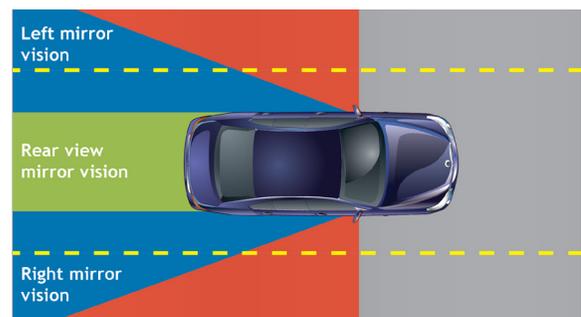
*Entering a freeway*



*Exiting a freeway*

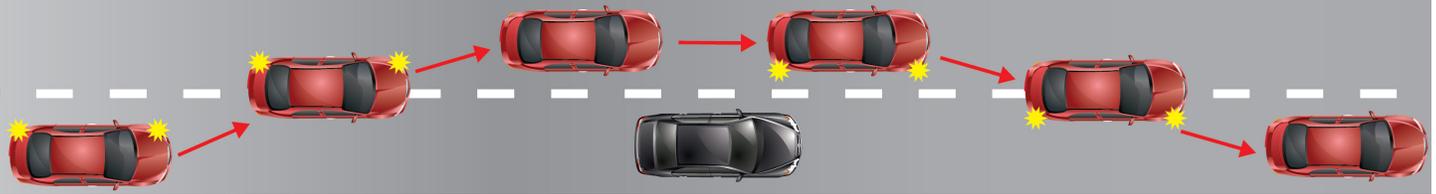


*Ramp meters*



*Blind spots*

**FREEWAY DRIVING**



*How to change lanes while passing another vehicle*

lane changes.

- Do not drive across, over or within any median or island.

**Leaving the freeway:** When exiting the freeway, use the deceleration lane, which is designed to allow you to slow down before reaching the exit ramp. Activate your turn signal 200 feet before the beginning of the deceleration lane. Maintain your speed until you enter the deceleration lane, then slow down to the speed advised for the exit ramp.

Remember these important tips when exiting a freeway:

- Do not slow down while you are on the freeway
- Slow down after turning into the deceleration lane
- Do not make a last second turnoff
- Check the posted safe speed for the exit ramp

[Illustration on Page 15](#)

## CHANGING LANES

**Changing lanes includes:** changing from one lane to another, passing another vehicle, merging onto a roadway from an entrance ramp and entering the roadway from the curb or shoulder. You must check for possible hazards or vehicles in the lane you want to enter. This means you must check for traffic ahead, to the side and behind your vehicle before you change lanes.

Be aware of any blind spots, which are areas slightly to the sides and the rear of your vehicle that you can not see in your rear view or side view mirrors.

When changing lanes, you should:

- Activate your turn signal. Leave it active for a minimum of 3 seconds before leaving your lane.
- Check for possible hazards or vehicles in the lane you want to enter.
  - Check traffic ahead
  - Use your mirrors to check for traffic behind your vehicle.
  - Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot, which is the area slightly to the rear and side of your vehicle that you cannot see in your mirrors.
- When it is safe, move into the new lane.
- Deactivate your turn signal within 3 seconds of completing the lane change

[See illustration above](#)

## PASSING

Signs and road markings indicate areas where you are and are not allowed to pass another vehicle. Typically, you should pass on the left. Passing on the right is permitted on one way streets and on roadways with two or more lanes of travel in each direction. At no time should a pass be made by driving off the pavement of the main traveled portion of a roadway.

Before deciding to pass another vehicle, judge whether you will have enough time and room to pass safely by observing the traffic ahead, beside, and behind you. If you have enough time and space to pass, begin by making a lane change, as directed above. Accelerate past the car you wish to pass. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you passed in the rearview mirror, make another lane change back into your previous lane.

Do not count on being able to pass several vehicles at once. To be safe, only pass one vehicle at a time.

Do not pass:

- If you cannot safely return to the right-hand side before coming within 200 feet of an oncoming vehicle, including a bicyclist in the oncoming lane or shoulder.
- If you cannot safely return to the right-hand side before a solid yellow line begins.
  - On a curve or hill where your view is obstructed
  - Within 100 feet of an intersection, or railroad crossing
  - Within 100 feet of any bridge, viaduct, or tunnel when your view is obstructed
  - A bicyclist unless you can allow a minimum three-foot buffer zone between your vehicle, including mirrors, and the bicyclist. If passing a bicyclist you can briefly cross a solid yellow when there is no oncoming traffic and you have a clear view ahead.

## HILLS AND CURVES

Hills and curves can hide obstructions in the road, even on roads you are familiar with. Be prepared to stop when approaching a curve or hill that obscures your view of the road.

If you cannot see over the top of a hill, slow down to an appropriate speed until you crest the hill and regain sight of the roadway.

Always slow down before entering a curve. If you go

too fast through a curve, your tires will not be able to grip the road and your vehicle will skid. Begin your acceleration only after reaching the middle of the curve.

## NIGHT DRIVING

Normally, driving between dawn and dusk is more hazardous than driving during daylight hours. This is due to limited visibility, the limited area illuminated by your headlights and the blinding effect of headlights with fog lights. Colorado law requires you to drive with your headlights on from sunset to sunrise or when visibility is less than 1,000 feet.

Parking lights must be illuminated on any vehicle parked alongside the roadway, whether attended or not, from sunset to sunrise or whenever visibility is less than 1,000 feet.

Tips for driving at night:

- Use your high beam lights when driving in rural areas and on open highways away from urban and metropolitan areas.
- If you are driving with your high beam lights on or your low beam lights with fog lights on, you must dim them before coming within 500 feet of any oncoming vehicle so the oncoming driver is not blinded by the glare.
- When following another vehicle, you must use your low beam lights, with your fog lights off, if you are within 200 feet of the vehicle

ahead of you.

- Never look directly into an approaching car's headlights. As the car draws near, look to the right edge of your lane and track the position of the oncoming car out of the corner of your eye.

- Use your low beam lights and/or fog lights when driving through fog at night. Using high beam lights is like shining your lights on a mirror

- Be alert to vehicles, particularly darker vehicles, traveling after sunset without their headlights on.

## BAD WEATHER

Weather conditions can significantly affect how your vehicle drives. During bad weather, such as rain, fog, ice, high winds and dust, slow your speed and drive at a speed that is safe for conditions and use your driving lights if visibility is poor. When roads are wet, the water mixes with oil, grease, and exhaust particles on the roadway, and they may become very slippery. Weather conditions affect all vehicles including, front wheel drive, sport utility, four-wheel drive and all-wheel drive vehicles.

Hydroplaning is a natural phenomenon whereby water forms a very thin film on the highway. This film is strong enough to support your vehicle. Your tires may have absolutely no contact with the roadway. This is extremely dangerous as you will have little or

no control of your vehicle. A vehicle may hydroplane at speeds as low as 50 mph in water 1/8 inch deep. If the highway is wet or icy, do not use cruise control. If your cruise control is being used and the roads get wet or ice up, immediately turn off the cruise control to allow your vehicle to slow down.

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

- Ease your foot off the gas pedal
- Keep the steering wheel straight
- Do not try to stop or turn until your tires are gripping the road again

An increasing number of new vehicles are equipped with rear fog lights. These lights help to reduce rear-end collisions in severe weather conditions. If your vehicle is equipped with rear fog lights use them while driving in heavy fog, rain or similar weather conditions. Be sure to switch them off once the conditions clear.

## SNOW AND ICE

Streets and highways covered with snow, snowpack or ice are extremely hazardous. They are most hazardous when the snow or ice begins to melt. The slush or wet surface acts as a lubricant and traction is reduced. Overpasses, bridges, shaded areas and snow packed portions of the road can be icy even when other pavement is not. If you begin to skid, let up on the accelerator and turn the front

### *Simple precautions to follow for seasonal driving*

- Make sure your tires have good tread for adequate traction. In winter, chains, snow tires or an alternative traction device are preferable (However, remember that even chains and snow tires will slip on slick pavement).

- Make sure your brakes are in good condition and properly adjusted so that the braking power of each wheel is uniform.

- **If you have anti-lock brakes:** If you begin to skid, let up on the accelerator and turn the front wheels in the direction of the skid.

- **If you don't have anti-lock brakes (threshold braking):** In slippery conditions, pump the brakes just hard enough to not lock the wheels, release and apply the brakes the same way again.

- Keep the windows clear by making certain the defrosters and windshield wipers are working properly. Use a good window scraper to remove all ice, snow and frost even if you are just traveling a short distance. Fogging or condensation of moisture on the inside of the windshield can quickly be

removed by opening a window.

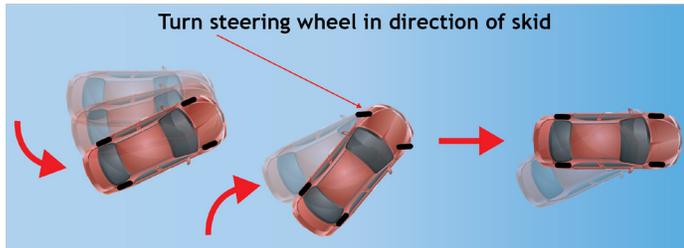
- Be alert for snow plows and sanding trucks. They use flashing yellow and blue lights as a warning for you to use extreme caution when approaching or passing them.

- Maintain an extra large space between you and the car ahead, especially when driving in conditions that affect stopping distance such as snow and ice.

- Start gradually by using a low gear and accelerating gently.

wheels in the direction of the skid.

Drivers should exercise additional care when approaching, overtaking or passing a snowplow or other snow-removal equipment displaying flashing yellow lights and engaging in snow and ice removal and control. It is illegal to pass a city-, county- or state-operated snowplow that is performing its service with its yellow lights flashing, and is driving in tandem with one or more other such snow plows.



*How to steer when skidding*

## MOUNTAIN DRIVING

Mountain driving can be very different from normal driving conditions. Some hazards you should be aware of are steep hills, changing weather, wildlife and rocks in the roadway.

Remember to use lower gears to control speeds when drive down steep hills or mountains.

Be prepared for intersections hidden by trees, brush, or crops and for animals on or near the roadway. If your vehicle experiences difficulty traveling up steep roadways, pull off the road at the first place you may do so safely, or stay in the right lane to allow other vehicles to pass.

For information on traction and chain laws, please visit [the Colorado Department of Transportation's website](#).

## RURAL DRIVING

When driving in rural areas, there are a number of special situations that require your attention. Watch for driveways, farm equipment, unmarked railroad crossings and narrow or poorly surfaced bridges. Some intersections may be hidden by trees, brush and crops. Animals often wander along the roadway.

Use extra care and slower speeds when driving on gravel or dirt roads because the road surface reduces tire traction.

The road surface can be affected by loose gravel, slippery conditions after rain or snow, ruts in the driving lanes and washboard conditions. When approaching oncoming vehicles, watch for soft shoulders or the absence of shoulders.

## CONSTRUCTION ZONES

Every year drivers face highway construction and maintenance projects, which are designed to improve the efficiency and safety of our transportation systems.

Every construction or maintenance project creates a work zone with equipment, workers and, in some cases, daily changes to the routes. Signs, cones and other warning devices are placed before construction projects and hazards so that they can warn you about the changing conditions. These changes and additions require you to stay alert and focused at all times while driving.

Large construction projects can have complex work zones with flaggers, portable concrete barriers, complicated directional signing and reduced speed limits to safely direct you through the work zone.

Reduced speed limits are critical because they give drivers more time to understand and react to the information and allow more time to safely drive through the complex assortment of devices, workers and equipment.

Unfortunately, there is no way to completely separate drivers from these work zone hazards, which places the construction crews at risk. Not only are these workers dealing with construction dangers associated with heavy equipment, excavation, power lines and other activities but they are constantly on guard for vehicles that may stray into the work area.

Your safety, your passenger's safety, and the safety of these workers depends on you.

Increased police enforcement is routinely added to construction projects. To ensure drivers understand the importance of complying with work zone signs and directions, the fines are doubled.

Remember when driving on Colorado's highways, if you encounter a work zone, for your own safety and the safety of the workers:

- Pay attention, use extra caution and stay focused on the driving task.
- Obey construction signs, including work zone speed limit signs, and flagger instructions.
- Watch the vehicle in front of you – most work zone crashes are rear-end collisions due to an inattentive driver.
- Drive calmly and avoid aggressive drivers.
- Require all applicants to fasten their seatbelt or be properly secured in a child restraint system.

### ***FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY***

**C.R.S. 42-4-1008(1):** "The driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard for the speed of such vehicles and the traffic upon and the condition of the highway."

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS

Everything that is contained in this manual is for the purpose of eliminating driver error. If you obey every highway rule and regulation, your chances of being involved in collisions will be greatly reduced. However, you can't be certain that other drivers are following every rule and regulation.

It is important that you become a defensive driver. Defensive driving is driving to protect yourself and others from dangerous and unexpected driving situations as well as everyday driving.

**Steering:** Keep both hands on the steering wheel. The most effective hand position is eight-o'clock and four-o'clock.

When turning corners, use the "hand-over-hand" or grip and slide method. Do not turn the wheel with the palm of your hand or let it slide through your fingers after making a turn.

**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. Always look left, right and left again when turning, driving through or entering an intersection. Scanning helps you see problems ahead, such as vehicles and people that may be in the road or on the shoulder, warning signs of problems ahead and signs giving you directions.

**Look ahead:** In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn abruptly, you should look down the road at least 10 seconds ahead of your vehicle (city – one block, open road – half a mile). By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel and help keep traffic moving at a steady pace.

**Look to the sides:** As other vehicles or pedestrians may cross or enter your path at any time, you should look to both sides to watch for potential trouble.

**Look behind:** You must check traffic behind you. This is the only way to know if someone is following too closely or coming up too quickly, and it will give you time to do something about it. You need to check more often when traffic is heavy. It is very important to look behind you when you change lanes, slow down, back up, exit an intersection or drive down a long or steep hill.

**Following another vehicle:** Remember to stay aware of the vehicle in front of you and to maintain an adequate distance between your vehicle and their's.

**Three-second rule:** Under normal conditions, use the three-second rule. Watch the car ahead of you; when it passes a reference point (such as a mile marker, sign or telephone pole) then count "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three." If you pass the reference point before you finish counting, you are following too closely.

It is also important to consider weather, road conditions, the amount of traffic and time of day. If the road is slick, the stopping distance required is greatly increased.

**Adjusting to traffic:** Keep pace with traffic in a reasonable and prudent manner. If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for collision.

Driving considerably slower than other vehicles can be just as risky as speeding. Driving too slowly can make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to try to pass you. Remember to obey all posted speed limits.

**Trouble spots:** Wherever people or traffic gather, your time and room to maneuver is limited.

These areas require slower speeds and increased observation:

- Shopping centers
- Rush hour traffic
- Schools
- Narrow bridges
- Playgrounds
- Toll plazas
- Residential streets

## SHARING THE ROAD

Sharing the road means getting along, not ahead.

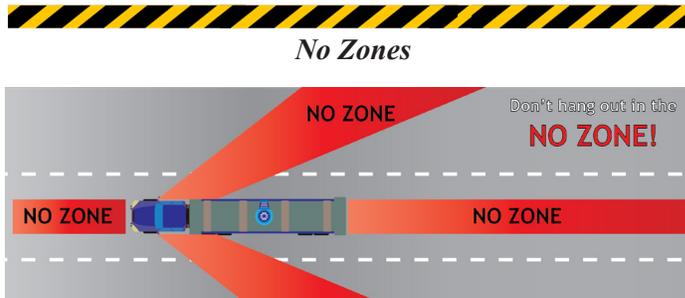
A courteous, alert and knowledgeable driver will make the highways safer for all. Bicycles, motorcycles, buses, trucks and truck tractors each have different operating characteristics. Let's share the road safely with all Coloradans.

**Large trucks and buses:** Due to their size and weight, large trucks and buses present different problems to motorists who share the highway with them. A loaded truck with good tires and properly adjusted brakes traveling at 55 mph on a clear, dry roadway requires a minimum of 290 feet to come to a complete stop.

Trucks/buses require more room than automobiles to execute turns, make lane changes and perform other driving maneuvers.

Trucks/buses have blind spots called "No Zones," which are areas around trucks/buses where cars either disappear into blind spots or are so close that they restrict the truck or bus driver's ability to stop or maneuver safely. Vehicles traveling in both types of No Zones greatly increase the potential for a crash.

[See illustration below](#)



**DID YOU**

**KNOW?**

You can pay a traffic ticket online at [myDMV.Colorado.gov](http://myDMV.Colorado.gov)

Tap here MORE INFO

Points to remember:

- **Backing:** Do not pass or stop close to a truck/bus that is preparing to or is backing up, as the trailer will hide objects in the No Zone.
- **Passing:** Maintain a constant speed when passing and reentering the lane in front of trucks or buses, since they require longer distances to slow down than cars. Do not pull in front of a truck or bus until you can see both headlights on the front of the vehicle in your rear view mirror.
- **Rear blind spots:** Trucks/buses have large blind spots behind them. If you tailgate, not only do you make it impossible for the driver to see you, but you also cut off your own view of traffic.
- **Side blind spots:** Trucks/buses have much larger blind spots on both sides than cars. If the truck or bus driver needs to make an emergency maneuver or change lanes, they will not be able to see you and a collision could result.
- **Wide turns:** Because of their size, trucks/buses often need to move to the left lane to make right turns. Cutting in between the truck/bus and the curb or shoulder increases the possibility of a crash.
- **Runaway truck ramps:** Occasionally trucks/buses lose their ability to brake. In order to prevent serious accidents from occurring due to out-of-control vehicles, runaway truck ramps have been built. Never park on the ramp or even in the entrance. It's illegal and invites disaster. You may be depriving a truck or bus driver of the chance to survive by denying access to the runaway ramp. One indication of a runaway truck/bus is smoke coming from the brakes. Get out of the way and/or do not get in front of the truck/bus.

Bus-related tips include:

- Buses make frequent stops
- Avoid being caught behind the bus by making safe lane changes
- If you are passing a stopped bus use care as the bus may start to move out into your lane of traffic
- Buses have the right of way when leaving a drop off location and merging into traffic.



*Crossbuck and railroad signs*



*Emergency Notification Systems sign*

## RAILROAD CROSSING

When approaching a railroad crossing, be cautious because a train can arrive at any time, day or night. Obey all warning devices, lights, gates and signs. Do not drive onto a crossing until you are sure the tracks are clear, especially when there are multiple tracks. There may be a second train.

Do not misjudge the train's speed and distance. Because of its large size, a train appears to be moving much slower than you think. The average freight train traveling at 55 mph requires approximately one mile to stop.

**Advance warning signs:** A railroad crossing is ahead. The warning sign is at a sufficient distance to allow you to stop (if necessary) before reaching the crossing.

**Pavement markings:** Consists of an "R X R" and a stop line and may be painted on the pavement in front of a crossing. Always stay behind the painted stop line while waiting for a passing train.

**Quiet Zone signs:** Crossings in designated quiet zones will have a "No Train Horn" sign posted below the Advance Warning signs. Train horns do not blow at these crossings. The flashing lights and gates warn you of an approaching train.

**Crossbuck signs:** These signs should be treated the same as a yield sign. If there is more than one track, a sign below the Crossbuck indicates the number of tracks at this crossing.

Commercial buses and trucks carrying hazardous materials are required to stop at most railroad crossings. Be prepared to stop if you are following one of these vehicles approaching a crossing.

[See illustration above](#)

**Flashing light signals:** Always stop when the lights flash. Do not attempt to cross until the lights have stopped flashing.

**Gates:** Gates are used with flashing light signals at certain crossings. Do not

cross until the gates are raised and the lights have stopped flashing.

Never stop on the tracks. Stopping on the tracks is illegal and very dangerous. Before you cross be sure there is plenty of room on the other side to completely clear the tracks and not become trapped. If your vehicle stalls on a crossing, get everyone out and far away immediately, even if you do not see a train approaching. Call the phone number on the blue Emergency Notification Sign located near the crossbuck sign or contact local law enforcement.

**Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign:** All public highway-rail grade crossings have BLUE colored Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs that provide a 24/7/365 telephone number to call for reporting problems or emergencies at railroad crossing locations. The ENS signs are typically located on the railroad crossing posts below the crossbuck. The ENS signs are for emergencies that would require stopping a train due to an obstruction or any other problem at or near the crossing. By providing the DOT (X-ING) crossing number located on the sign, the railroad dispatcher knows exactly where the crossing is and can quickly notify trains moving in that direction to stop prior to the crossing or location of the problem when possible.

[See illustration above](#)

## LIGHT RAIL

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) has Light Rail Vehicles (LRV) in its mass-transit fleet in the Denver Metropolitan area. Clean, quiet and reliable, light rail is safe, proven technology – but it requires additional attention from pedestrians and motorists.

In some areas, LRVs will operate on streets in the same way as other

motor vehicles, and will have the same rights and responsibilities as other motorists. In other areas (such as on Stout and California streets in downtown Denver) LRVs will operate in the opposite direction from other traffic. The LRVs will be governed by all traffic signals and signs when operating on the streets.

**Driver safety tips:** Each light rail car weighs up to 40 tons and can't stop quickly. Remember these important tips while driving in a light rail area:

- Never turn in front of an approaching LRV.
- Never turn across a set of light rail tracks without checking in all directions.
- Watch for people getting on and off a stopped LRV.
- Be especially alert in light rail areas as nearby buildings and foliage can make it difficult for motorists to see them.

■ The light rail crossing areas for motorists can have regular traffic lights. Some have warning lights and some have gates with railroad type traffic arms. All these signals mean the same thing: Stop! Do not cross the tracks.

■ Never drive around traffic gates, even if a LRV has just passed. Another vehicle may be coming from the other direction.

■ Be aware of your vehicle height. Overhead wires are a standard height of 18 feet, 6 inches above the center of the tracks. Always assume a wire hanging from the overhead catenary is electrified so never touch the wire or anything it is touching.

Pay particular attention to special traffic warning signs in connection with light rail.

If you find a wire hanging from the overhead or if you think any safety devices are malfunctioning, please call RTD at 303-299-6000 and report the situation.

## SCHOOL BUSES

Caution should be exercised when driving near school buses, especially in neighborhoods and school zones, as these areas are likely to have students boarding, disembarking and crossing roads.



Common light rail warning signs



SCHOOL BUSES WITH OVERHEAD  
**Red and Yellow Lights**  
(With or Without Bus Stop Signs)

- ▶ Yellow lights are flashing: Prepare to stop
- ▶ Red lights are flashing: Stop no closer than 20 feet from the bus
- ▶ Red lights turned off: Proceed



SCHOOL BUSES WITH OVERHEAD  
**Red Lights**  
(With or Without Bus Stop Signs)

- ▶ Red lights are flashing and bus is stopped: Stop no closer than 20 feet from the bus
- ▶ When red lights are turned off: Proceed



ALL SCHOOL BUSES  
**Yellow Lights**  
▶ Yellow hazard warning lights are flashing: Proceed with caution



School bus lights and what you should do

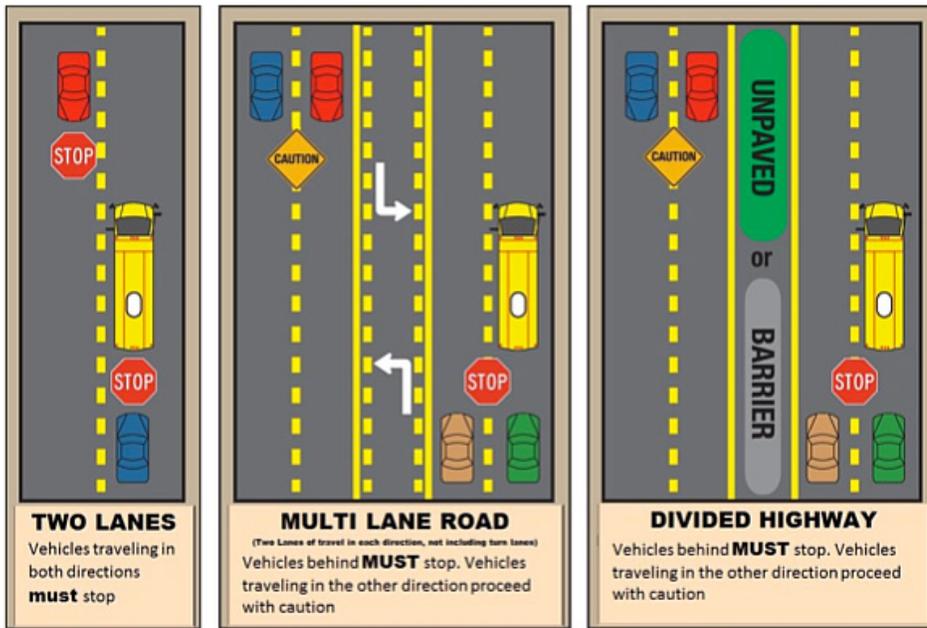
Please note, it is unlawful to:

- Pass in any marked no-passing zones.
- Exceed the posted speed limit when passing.
- Pass a school bus with flashing red lights and stop arm extended.
- Pass within 100 feet of any intersection.
- Pass within 100 feet of any railroad crossing.
- Pass on any hill, curve or bridge where vision is obstructed.

Always be alert for students on or near the roadway when a school bus is stopped.

If a school bus is displaying alternating flashing red light signals, visible from the front or rear, you must stop immediately before reaching the bus. Do not proceed until the flashing red lights stop.

If you are traveling on a divided highway having four or more lanes with a median separating the traffic, it is only necessary for the vehicles traveling in both lanes behind the



### Multi-lane roads and school buses

school bus to stop, and not the traffic traveling in the opposite direction.

If you are traveling on a two-lane roadway, traffic in both directions are required to stop. If you are traveling on a four-lane roadway without a median, traffic in both directions are required to stop.

If you are traveling on a highway having five or more lanes and having a shared center turn lane, it is only required for the vehicle in both lanes behind the school bus to come to a complete stop. In this case, vehicles traveling in the opposite direction are not legally required to stop.

Violating school bus traffic laws is considered a class-one or class-two misdemeanor offense. Drivers can be fined up to \$300, with a mandatory court appearance and six points on a driver's license. A second offense within a five-year period has a fine up to \$1,000.

#### Overhead Amber Warning Lights:

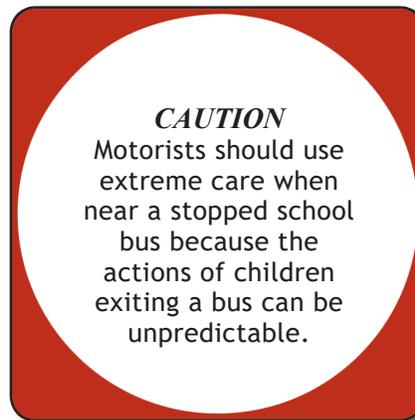
When a school bus is about to stop and load or unload children, the bus driver activates amber warning lights. The amber warning lights will stay on until the bus door opens.

**Overhead Red STOP Lights/STOP Arm:** When the bus driver opens the bus door, the red STOP lights and STOP arm activates.

Stop and remain stopped until the bus driver retracts the stop arm and deactivates the red warning lights.

Vehicles must stop no less than 20 feet from the front or rear bumper of the school bus.

**You Must Stop:** Not stopping when approaching or overtaking a school bus which has stop lights on and the stop arm extended is unlawful.



## BICYCLES

Bicycles are considered vehicles when on roadways. Bicyclists are required and expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorized vehicles. Bicyclists have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as motorists. Respect for each other will aid in the smooth flow of traffic.

Bicyclists may not be easily seen in

traffic. You must be alert, check for bicyclists, and be extra careful when approaching them. Just as motorists have different levels of skill, bicyclists also have varying levels of skills. A skillful bicyclist rides predictably and holds a steady line. An unskillful bicyclist may swerve unpredictably, ignore traffic signs and signals, and ride without a light at night. If you see an unskillful bicyclist, be ready for sudden movements.

As a driver, you must:

- Yield to bicyclists in intersections as you would for pedestrians and other vehicles.
- Yield right of way when a bicycle path or bike lane intersects a road. Do not stop, park or drive on a designated bicycle path or lane unless you are entering or leaving an alley or driveway, performing official duties, directed by a police officer, or an emergency situation exists.
- Allow as much space as possible and slow down when approaching or passing a bicyclist.

■ You should slow down and let the cyclist clear the intersection before making your turn.

■ Avoid slowing down or stopping quickly. A motor vehicle's brakes are more powerful than a bicycle's and you could cause a crash.

■ Avoid sounding your horn close to bicyclists unless there is a chance of a crash. Sounding your horn to alert your presence may startle bicyclists and cause them to steer into your path and crash.

■ Watch carefully for bicyclists entering your lane. Be especially careful if you see children riding bikes on the sidewalk. They may come onto the road.

■ Avoid turning sharply in front of a bicyclist and do not force a bicyclist off the road.

■ Although bicyclists are required to ride in the direction of traffic, you should look for them riding anywhere on the roadway.

■ Be particularly careful around bicyclists when the roadway is wet or covered with sand or gravel. These conditions affect bicycles much more than vehicles.

■ Cooperate with bicyclists. They are required to use hand signals, as shown, when turning and stopping.

However, keep in mind that bicyclists may be unable to signal if road or traffic conditions require them to keep both hands on the handlebars. Look for other clues of a bicyclist's intent, such as turning his or her head or looking over his or her shoulder before changing lane position.

- When parked on the street, check to the sides and rear for bicyclists before you open your vehicle door.
- You should check for bicyclists in your path before backing. Be especially cautious near schools or residential areas where bicyclists may be present.

A share-the-road attitude is the best policy to promote safe highways in Colorado.

As a driver, remember to look for cyclists at the right side of the lane or on the shoulder and then look again. Make sure you see the cyclist and know their speed before you make your left turn.

Bicycles travel in the same direction as motor vehicles and are entitled to the full lane when traveling at the normal speed of traffic. Similar to pedestrians, bicyclists have the potential to be seriously injured if struck by a motorized vehicle. Complying with the laws impacting their movement helps everyone be safer on the road. Here are some tips for sharing the road with bicyclists:

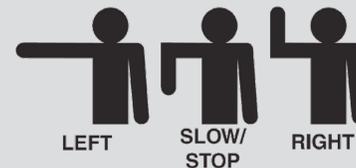
- On a multi-lane, one-way street, know that a bicyclist can ride to the right or the left side of the roadway.
- Don't startle a bicyclist by honking your horn.
- Bicyclists may ride two abreast as long as they are not impeding the normal and reasonable movement of traffic.
- While turning at a red light, come to a complete stop and look for bicyclists approaching from behind or next to your vehicle; making a left turn from the opposite side of the street; or as part of the oncoming traffic.
- Before opening your car door, look for oncoming bicyclists to avoid hitting them.
- Stay out of bike lanes unless turning, entering or leaving another road, driveway or alley.
- Impeding bicycle traffic in bike lanes forces bicyclists to ride into the travel lanes which can cause collisions.
- Only pass a bicyclist if you are able to give at least three feet clear space between the farthest edge of your vehicle and the bicyclist. If you are unable to give three feet, slow down and remain behind the bicyclist until it is safe to pass. Motorists can cross a center line when passing a bicyclist if the oncoming lane is clear and they don't interfere with any other traffic.
- Be aware that bicyclists may ride in the center of the travel lane for more visibility and safety when the road is too narrow for bikes and cars to ride safely side by side, or when they're dodging obstacles such as opening car doors, broken glass, drainage grates and other obstructions.
- Look for bicycle hand signals while driving near a bicyclist.

[See illustration above](#)

### Hand signals for bicyclists

Bicyclists are required to use hand signals to communicate turns unless the hand is needed in the control or operation of the bicycle.

- For a right turn, extend the right arm straight out to the right or left arm upward from the elbow



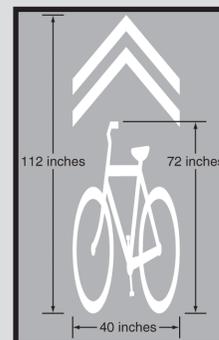
- For a left

turn, extend the left arm directly out to the left

- If slowing or stopping, drop the left arm down at the elbow

### Sharrows

Some streets have shared lane markings or "sharrow" painted on them reminding drivers that bicyclists may ride in the center of the lane. However, bicyclists are allowed to "take the lane" under numerous conditions.



### More bicycle info

[Follow me](#)

For specific Colorado Bicycle laws, see the [Statewide Bicycle Manual](#).

## MOTORCYCLES

Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other drivers. However, it may be more difficult to see them.

Motorcycles are entitled to the same full lane width as other vehicles. Motorcyclists constantly change position within their lane so they can see, be seen and avoid road hazards. Also, be aware that strong winds can unexpectedly move a motorcycle out of its lane. There are some additional situations and conditions you need to be aware of so you can safely share the road with motorcycles:

Motorcycles are smaller, harder to see and can move faster and stop quicker than expected. Their control is more easily hampered by road defects and debris. You

should watch for bicycles and motorcycles, use extra caution when driving around either and adjust your location by increasing your following distance.

**Avoiding Collisions:** Drivers of vehicles can help to prevent collisions with bicyclists by knowing the most common causes of motorist-bicyclist collisions and how to avoid them. Five common errors that can cause a motorist-bicyclist collision include:

Cause of collision	How to prevent
Motorist turning left in front of an oncoming bicyclist	Look for oncoming bicyclists riding on the shoulder or edge of the lane before turning
Motorist or bicyclist running a stop sign or stop signal	Stop first, then proceed into intersection yielding to others
Motorist opening a vehicle door without looking behind for a passing bicyclist	Always check behind you before opening a door into the roadway
Bicyclist riding the wrong way against traffic, toward the motorist	Ride bicycles in the same direction as traffic
Motorist pulling out from a driveway and failing to see a bicyclist on road or sidewalk	Check both directions when crossing a sidewalk, bike path, or road

## PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable users of our roadways. They are people who are standing, walking, running or using a cane or wheelchair on public streets, highways, and private property. As a driver, it is your responsibility to watch out for pedestrians as your vehicle is a heavy object that can cause serious injuries or death. Pedestrians have the right-of-way at all intersections and crosswalks. Drivers must come to a complete stop and let the person pass safely. Here are some more things to remember about pedestrians:

- Before exiting your parked car, look for pedestrians that may be approaching the side of the vehicle.
- Yield to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks whether the crosswalk is marked or not.
- Look for pedestrians at all intersections, especially if you are making a right or left turn.
- While turning at a red light, make sure you are in the correct lane and come to a complete stop. Check for pedestrians and traffic in all directions to make sure your path is clear.
- Do not stop with any portion of your vehicle overhanging the cross walk area.
- Watch for pedestrians entering or exiting their cars while passing a row of parked vehicles.
- Drive extra cautiously around schools, parks, parking lots and special events where pedestrians are likely to

be present.

- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk as the driver may be stopping for pedestrians that you can't see.
- Check blind spots and mirrors while backing your car out of a parking space or driveway.

## CARELESS/RECKLESS DRIVING

Sharing the road is important not only for your safety and the safety of others, it is the law.

**Aggressive driving:** Aggressive driving is defined as any behind-the-wheel behavior that places others and/or property in danger through willful action without regard to safety.

**Aggressive vs. reckless:** Driving assertively to enter a freeway or changing lanes to protect yourself from another motorist encroaching on your lane is acceptable, but at what point does assertive driving become aggressive or reckless? The line is defined by your intent as a motorist.

If a law enforcement officer notes your actions as endangering another person or property (including the other motorist's vehicle) you can be charged under Colorado's reckless driving statute (42-4-1401) and if convicted, up to eight points can be assessed against your driving record.

A single act, such as tailgating another driver, passing on the shoulder or running a red light could be seen by a law enforcement officer as aggressive if the officer believes the action is willful and places others in danger. A combination of acts, such as speeding, cutting off other vehicles, swerving toward another motorist, honking, flashing headlights, yelling and using inappropriate hand gestures can also be considered aggressive driving.

Some acts, such as displaying a weapon at another motorist, bumping or ramming another vehicle or high speed pursuit of a vehicle can result in criminal charges beyond a reckless driving charge.

**Protecting yourself from aggressive drivers:** To protect yourself from an aggressive driver, don't engage with that driver. Don't attempt to match an aggressive act and avoid eye contact. Even if you've unintentionally made a mistake that made the other driver angry, back off, give way to the other driver and let the aggressive driver go. A few seconds engaged with an aggressive driver could change your life, or the lives of the loved ones riding with you – forever.

**Reporting aggressive drivers:** Dial \*CSP (\*277) to report aggressive drivers. The Colorado State Patrol has set aside a special cellphone number for motorists and bicyclists to use in reporting aggressive drivers. The call will be handled by the state patrol trooper closest to the caller, or will be referred to a participating local law enforcement agency. There is no charge for the call.

**Could I become an aggressive driver?:** Anyone is capable of becoming an aggressive driver. Some drivers may be more likely to become aggressive. Here is a series of questions to determine whether you have a greater potential to become aggressive behind the wheel. Take a few minutes to ask yourself these questions, and be honest with yourself.

Do you:

- Mentally condemn other drivers as incompetent

or stupid?

- Make negative comments about other drivers to those riding with you?
- Close up space to stop other motorists from merging or changing lanes?
- Prevent another driver from passing?
- Tailgate a driver to get them to speed up or get out of your way?
- Angrily speed past another driver?
- Run a stop sign, red light or other traffic control device out of frustration or anger?
- Honk or yell at someone to express your anger or frustration?
- Make an obscene gesture at another driver?
- Pursue another vehicle to express your anger?
- Deliberately bump or ram another vehicle?
- Exit your vehicle to teach the other driver a lesson through either a verbal exchange or physical confrontation?
- Think about physically attacking another driver?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, even just a couple, you may be at risk to become an aggressive driver.

### ***TIPS FOR NOT BECOMING AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER***

Leave early for any trip. Too frequently people don't allow enough time to get where they want on time! Play music that you like, but not so loud that you can't hear emergency vehicles. Keep cool. Don't transfer the anger you may feel from other situations into your driving. Let people merge, even if they've done something reckless. Why make their problem your problem?

## **THE DRIVE TEST**

You may or may not be able to schedule a drive test at a Colorado driver license office. As a result of the 2019-2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the DMV has ceased in-office drive tests. This is likely to change and you are encouraged to visit the [DMV website](#) to see if we are currently offering drive tests.

Drive tests may also be taken at state-approved, certified commercial driving schools. The [DMV's website](#) has a list of driver education schools that are certified as third-party testers.

If you take the drive test at a driver license office, you must provide a legally licensed vehicle to use for the test. If you take the drive test at a state approved certified commercial driving school, the school may provide a vehicle for you to drive to take the test, or it may require for you to provide a legally licensed vehicle to use for the test. If you

provide the vehicle, you must show evidence of insurance and registration for that vehicle. Regardless of who provides the vehicle, the examiner will check the vehicle for safety including brake lights, turn signals, seat belts, the windshield and tires. Examiners will also check whether the vehicle's doors and windows open from inside the automobile. For safety reasons, only the driver and the examiner are allowed in the vehicle during the test.

The drive test measures your skill and knowledge of legal and safe driving practices. You will not be tricked or asked to do anything illegal. You may question the examiner before the test begins. After that, any unnecessary talking will only hamper the test. You will be scored during the entire test.

The drive test will be administered using guidelines from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). The skills measured will be an assessment of all three of the following categories:

**Perceptual:** The ability to interpret the traffic environment in a way that permits proper vehicle operation.

**Perceptual-motor:** The ability to couple driving responses with traffic stimuli. (See, know what to do, and do it.)

**Attention sharing:** The ability to carry out two or more performances simultaneously. (Steer, control speed and watch.)

Your driving test score will be based upon how well you perform the following maneuvers:

- Left and right turns
- Stopping at intersections
- Through intersections
- Lane changes in traffic
- General driving behavior
- Merging into and leaving traffic

Specific maneuvers have grading factors that are associated with the performance requirements. These are:

**Lane selection:** Enters/exits traffic from proper lane, approaches intersections in proper lane, ends maneuver in proper lane

**Lane management:** Remaining entirely within the turning lane, keeps both hands on the wheel, uses approved method of steering control (hand-over-hand or push-pull-slide), choose the correct portion of the lane for making your turn (When turning right, always turn right from the right-most portion of your lane. When turning left, always turn left from the left-most portion of your lane.), after completing the turn ensures the vehicle is centered in the appropriate lane, finish of maneuver, starts/finishes turns in proper lane, does not encroach over lane markings or drag wheels over curbs

**Signals:** Activates signal continuously during not less than the last 100 feet traveled by the vehicle before turning in urban areas and 200 feet on all 4-lane highways. When turning or making a lane change cancel your signal within 3 seconds of completion of the maneuver

**Speed control:** Smooth deceleration, does not impede traffic, adjusts speed to react to traffic or conditions, maintains steady speed during lane change, approaches intersection at a speed which allows the turn to be made without stopping or braking during the turn

**Stopping:** Comes to a complete stop, no forward motion

of the vehicle. Does not encroach over stop line, crosswalk, keeps vehicle wheels pointed straight ahead while stopped, does not turn wheels until actually beginning to make the turn and maintains an adequate distance between vehicles (rear wheels of the vehicle ahead of you should be visible)

**Acceleration:** Accelerates smoothly without jerking, doesn't lug engine, coast, impede traffic, clash gears or stall vehicle

**Searching:** Observes the traffic environment, looks over shoulder before changing lanes, uses mirrors, scans for traffic when approaching an intersection, looks left, right, left prior to entering intersections, looks behind after each turn.

**General driving behavior:** Steering, braking, acceleration, searching, lane usage; and obeying all traffic laws, signs and signals.

If you fail the drive test, you must wait at least one day before another exam will be given.

## EMERGENCIES

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

**Avoiding collisions:** When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. In some cases, they act, but do something that does not reduce the chance of the collision. There almost always is something you can do to avoid the crash, or reduce the results of the crash.

In avoiding a collision, drivers have three options:

- Stop or slow down
- Speed up
- Turn

**Stopping quickly:** Most vehicles have Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) that will help you stop without skidding. Be sure to read the vehicle owners manual on how to use the ABS.

In general, if you need to stop quickly:

■ **With ABS:** 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.

■ **Without 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. Slightly let up on the brake pedal. As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, squeeze 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. Step on the brake pedal, but then let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle some, the brake should be released before making an evasive turn. Do not lock up the front wheels while braking or turn so sharply that the vehicle can only plow ahead. Another consideration is that generally it is better to run off the road than to crash head-on into another vehicle.

**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.

## 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. The following section notes some possible vehicle failures and what you can do if they happen.

**Brake failure:** 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 starts to skid. If that does not work, shift to lower gears and look for a safe place to slow to a stop. Make sure the car is off the roadway. Don't drive the vehicle without brakes.

**Tire blowout:** Hold the steering wheel tightly, and keep the vehicle going straight. Slow 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:** 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:** 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.

**Jammed gas pedal:** Keep your eyes on the road. Quickly shift to neutral. Pull off the road when safe to do so. Turn off the engine.

**Driving off the pavement:** If your right wheels run off the pavement edge, do not use your brakes. Do not pull sharply back onto the pavement. Take your foot off the accelerator, steer straight ahead, straddling the pavement edge, until the car has almost stopped. Then turn and guide your car back onto the road.

**Animals:** There may be occasions when an animal suddenly runs in front of your vehicle. Small animals such as rabbits, dogs or cats seldom cause severe property damage to vehicles, but present a hazard if a motorist takes evasive action that results in losing control of the vehicle.

Big game animals, mostly deer, are large enough to cause damage to a motor vehicle. However, the size of these

animals may cause the motorist to take drastic evasive action to prevent a collision. This may result in a more serious crash than if the vehicle collided with the animal. Regretfully, the safest alternative may be hitting the animal. Concentrate on retaining control of the vehicle before, during, and after the collision with the animal.

About 90% of deer-vehicle crashes occur between dusk and dawn throughout the year. Big game animals can appear in metropolitan areas as well as both rural and mountainous regions. If there are animals near the roadway, slow down and proceed with extreme caution.

**Crashes:** In the event of a crash you should:

- Stop immediately
- Check for injuries and where practical render reasonable assistance
- Call the police and emergency personnel.

Exchange name, address, phone numbers, registration and insurance information

**If under accident alert status:** If alcohol and drugs are not involved, there are no injuries and all vehicles are still drivable, exchange name, address, phone numbers, registration and insurance

information. You must file an accident report with the police within 24 hours.

If an accident involves a parked car and you cannot find the owner, call the police and leave a note in a place that the owner of the car can find it.

**Move It Law:** State law requires motorists involved in a minor accident on a divided highway to move their vehicles off the highway when:

- The vehicle is drivable
- No drugs or alcohol are involved *and*
- There are no injuries

Once at a safe location, drivers can notify law enforcement and exchange information. Police and insurance companies will not penalize you for moving your car off the road.

**Move Over Law:** When you see stopped emergency vehicles on highways with activated blue or red lights in an adjacent lane, you must move over one lane, if you can do so safely. If it is not safe or you are traveling on a road that is one lane in each direction, you must slow down. Colorado's Move Over law protects law enforcement, fire, maintenance, other emergency personnel, tow truck drivers and you.

**First aid:** Good Samaritan laws were

developed to encourage people to help others in emergency situations. They require that the "Good Samaritan use common sense and a reasonable level of skill, not to exceed the scope of the individual's training in emergency situations." They assume each person would do best to save a life or prevent further injury.

When you respond to an emergency and act as a reasonable and prudent person would under the same conditions, Good Samaritan immunity generally prevails. This legal immunity protects you, as a rescuer, from being sued and found financially responsible for the victims' injury.

For example, a reasonable and prudent person would:

- Move a victim only if the victim's life was endangered
- Ask a conscious victim for permission before giving care
- Check the victim for life-threatening emergencies before providing further care
- Summon professional help to the scene by calling the local emergency number or the operator
- Continue to provide care until more highly trained personnel arrive

*Be Someone's Hero — Say Yes to Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation*



Colorado



Sign up or remove your name from the Donor Registry by visiting [www.DonateLifeColorado.org](http://www.DonateLifeColorado.org).

**Donate Life Colorado Organ and Tissue Donor Registry:** Signing up as an organ, eye and tissue donor means you have made the decision to donate your organs, eyes and tissues at the time of your death. In Colorado, there are nearly 2,000 people waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant and thousands more in need of lifesaving and healing. You too can be someone's hero by saying Yes and joining the Donate Life Colorado Organ and Tissue Donor Registry.

When applying for or renewing a Colorado driver license, permit or ID, you will be asked two important questions regarding organ and tissue donation.

■ **Would you like to sign up as an organ, eye and tissue donor?**

If you say Yes, a heart with a "Y" will appear on the front of your license, permit or ID. Your name will automatically be added to the Donate Life Colorado Organ and Tissue Donor Registry.

The registry is managed by Donor Alliance, a non-profit, federally-designated organ and

tissue recovery agency, and is accessible only to authorized donation personnel.

Just one donor can save up to 8 lives through organ donation and save and heal more than 75 lives through eye and tissue donation.

Anyone – regardless of age, lifestyle or medical condition – can sign up as a donor.

■ **Would you like to make a donation to the Emily Keyes-John W. Buckner Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Fund?**

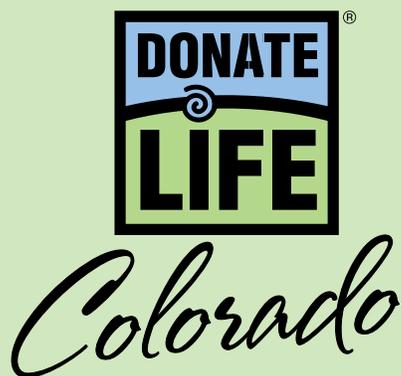
Another way for you to support organ and tissue donation is to make a voluntary contribution to the Emily Keyes-John W. Buckner Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Fund. The fund was created in 1996 by the Colorado State Legislature to increase awareness about organ and tissue donation in Colorado. Your contributions to the fund go directly to public outreach and education surrounding organ and tissue donation. Informational brochures are available at all Colorado driver license offices. For more information, call 303-329-4747 or 888-868-4747 or visit [www.DonateLifeColorado.org](http://www.DonateLifeColorado.org).



**CONNOR  
ARVADA, CO  
Heart recipient**

# ♥ Saying Yes to Donation Can Save a Life Like Connor's.

Connor was just 13 when he received his new heart thanks to his heroic donor. Say yes to organ, eye and tissue donation and discuss your decision with your family.



- » **Nearly 2,000 people in Colorado** are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant.
- » **Every 10 minutes** someone is added to the national transplant waiting list.
- » **Just one donor** can save up to eight lives through organ donation and save and heal more than 75 lives through eye and tissue donation.
- » **Your decision to be a donor will not affect medical care.** Doctors and nurses caring for you before death are not involved in the donation process.
- » **Anyone - regardless of age or medical condition - can register as a donor.** Patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hepatitis can potentially save and heal lives through donation.

Learn more and register at [DonateLifeColorado.org](http://DonateLifeColorado.org)

Next time you need to go to the DMV,



Consider skipping the trip and

visit [myDMV.Colorado.gov](https://myDMV.Colorado.gov)

