Montana Driver Manual

Schedule your test online:
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Revised June 2016

Dear Fellow Montanan:

As Montanans, we don't think twice about jumping in our vehicles and driving 300 or 400 miles to visit family, watch our kids play sports, or find a stream where the fish are rising. Whatever the reason for our travels, the Montana Driver License Manual provides a wealth of information to help us stay safe on our roads and highways.

In addition to a chapter on driving rules, this manual contains important information on checking your vehicle before a trip, what to do in emergencies, tips for driving safely and staying alert, and when *not* to drive because of fatigue or alcohol and drug use. There's a lot for new drivers to learn and for experienced drivers to remember.

It's often been said that Montana is a small town with long streets. Wherever you're headed, drive carefully and make sure you arrive safely.
Tim Fox
Attorney General

This manual will give you information on safe driving rules and practices to help you become a safe driver. Be sure to read the manual carefully. **Unless you know the information that it contains, you cannot pass the written and road tests.**

This driver manual paraphrases Montana's motor vehicle laws and is not intended to be a complete legal reference. Courts go by the actual language of the Montana Code Annotated, not this text. Further information may be obtained from: a public library, law enforcement agency, or driver examiner; the web site at www.dojmt.gov/driving; or, the Motor Vehicle Division at P.O. Box 201430, Helena, MT 59620-1430 or 1-866-450-8034.

An adapted illustrated driver manual is available from the Office of Public Instruction on their website at http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/DriverEd/ or by calling 1-888-231-9393.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS I
SAVE TIME - GO ONLINE VI
CHAPTER 1 - THE DRIVER LICENSE 1
Driver Licensing Quick Reference 1
*Appointment Scheduling 1
Identification Confirmation 1
Types of Montana Licenses, Permits, and Endorsements 1
Class D Basic Driver License (non-commercial license) 1
Commercial Driver License (CDL) 1
Identification (ID) Card 2
Instruction Permits 2
Motorcycle Endorsement 2
Motorcycle Learner License 2
Who Can Apply for Montana Licenses 3
New Residents 3
Military 3
Veteran Designation 3
Proof of Authorized Presence, Identity, & Residence 4
Proof of Full Legal Name and Date of Birth 4
Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Program 6
Fees/Receipts 8
Driver License Renewal 8
Lost or Destroyed Licenses 8
Change of Address 9
Name Change 9
Driver Exam Stations & Appointments 9
CHAPTER 2 – MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT 10
Trip Planning 10
Check the Vehicle 10
Braking System 10
Lights 10
Windshield and Wipers 11
Tires 11
Steering System 11
Suspension System 11
Exhaust System 11
Engine 11
Loose Objects 11
Horn 11
Motor Vehicle Equipment 12

Headlights & Tail Lights 12
Vehicle Light Distances 12
Turn Signals 13
Brake Lights 13
License Plate Lamp 13
Red Reflectors (rear) 13
Muffler 13
Mirror 13
Brakes and Parking Brakes 13
Horn 13
Parking Lights 13
Windshield and Windshield Wipers 13
Window Tinting and Sun Screening 14
Seatbelts 14
Additional Equipment Required on Certain Vehicles 14
Clearance Lamps and Side Marker Lamps 14
Reflectors 14
Projecting Load Lamp or Flag 14
Special Lighting for Farm Tractors & Implements of Husbandry 14
Spot Lamps & Auxiliary Lamps (Fog Lamps) 14
Additional Brake Requirements 15
Maintenance of Brakes 15
Certain Warning Devices Prohibited 15
Mud Flaps Required 15
Safety Chains 15
Driver Response to Emergency Vehicle Signals 15
Certain Vehicles to Carry Flares or Other Warning Devices 15
Display of Warning Devices When Vehicles Disabled 16
Slow Moving Vehicles 16
Clean All Windows and Glass Surfaces 16
Adjust Seat and Mirrors 17
Safety Belts Required 17
Child Restraints Required 18
CHAPTER 3 – SIGNS, SIGNALS, & MARKINGS 20
Know Signs by Their Shape and Color 20
Signs, Signals, and Road Markings 21
Signs 21
Construction Zone 26
School Zone Safety Standards 27
School Zone 27
School Crossings 27
School Speed Limit 27
Parking and Stopping 27

Fines Doubled in School Zones 27
Traffic Signals 28
Pedestrian Signals 28
Vehicle Signals 29
Roundabouts in Montana 30
Large Vehicles 30
Pedestrians 30
Bicyclists 30
Emergency Vehicles 30
Railroad Crossing Warning Signs/Signals 31
Advance Warning Signs 31
Pavement Markings 31
Railroad Cross Buck Signs 31
Flashing Light Signals 31
Gates 31
Road Markings 32
Pavement Markings 32
Edge and Lane Lines 32
Other Lane Controls 33
No Lane Markings 33
CHAPTER 4 – DRIVING RULES 35
Driver Test for iPad and iPhone 35
General Driving 35
Speed Limits 36
Passing 36
Turning 36
Right Turns 36
Left Turns 36
Turning Around 37
Right-of-Way 37
Pedestrians 37
Intersections 38
Crosswalks 38
Overtaking Vehicles 38
Emergency Vehicles 38
School Buses 38
Funeral Procession 40
Bicyclists & Motorists 40
Same Road – Same Rules – Same Rights 40
Equipment and Lighting Required for Bicycles 42
Parking 42
General Guidelines 42
Parallel Parking 43

Parking on a Hill 43
No Parking Zones....44
Motor Vehicle Insurance....45
Requirements 45
Consequences 45
Self-Insurers 45
Montana Insurance Verification System (MTIVS)....45
CHAPTER 5 – HOW TO DRIVE SAFELY.... 47
Don't Be a Distracted Driver 47
Basic Driving 48
Starting 48
Accelerating....48
Steering 48
Controlling Speed....49
Stopping 49
Seeing Well....49
Scanning 50
Night Driving....53
Communicating....54
Letting Others Know You Are There 54
Letting Others Know What You Are Doing....55
Adjusting Speed....57
Adjusting to Road Conditions 57
Adjusting to Traffic....59
Adjusting to How Well You Can See 61
Sharing Space 62
Space Ahead 62
Space Behind 63
Space to the Side 63
Space to Merge 64
Space to Cross or Enter 64
Space for Passing 64
Space for Slow-Moving Vehicles and Animals 65
Space for Special Situations 66
CHAPTER 6 – PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS 68
Vision, Hearing, & Fatigue 68
Vision....68
Drinking & Driving 69
Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous? 69
If You Drink, When Can You Drive?....69
Alcohol and the Law 70
Report a Drunk Driver 70
Other Drugs & Driving 71

Health **71**
Some health conditions can be very dangerous 71
Emotions **71**
Senior Drivers **72**
Considerations for Senior Citizens 72
To address these age-related issues, please consider the following points. 72
Giving Up Driving 73
CHAPTER 7 – EMERGENCIES, CRASHES, & ENFORCEMENT STOPS 75
Vehicle Emergencies **75**
Brake Failure 75
Tire Blowout 75
Power Failure 75
Headlight Failure 75
Gas Pedal Sticks 75
Drift or Run off the Road 76
Avoiding Collisions **76**
Stopping Quickly 76
Turning Quickly 76
Speeding Up 77
Protect Yourself in Collisions **77**
Hit from the rear 77
Hit from the side 77
Hit from the front 77
Accidents **77**
At the accident scene 77
If someone is injured 78
Report the accident 78
Enforcement Stops **79**
CHAPTER 8 – PENALTIES & DRIVING RECORDS 81
Losing Your License **81**
Your Driving Record **81**
CHAPTER 9 - OTHER SERVICES 82
Voter Registration **82**
Selective Service **82**
Organ & Tissue Donation **82**
Living Will **82**
QUIZ ANSWERS 83
HISTORY OF THE MONTANA LICENSE PLATE 84

SAVE TIME - GO ONLINE

www.dojmt.gov/driving

The Motor Vehicle Division offers several online services for your convenience:

Appointment Scheduling
Online appointment scheduling lets you schedule, view, edit, or cancel an appointment for most driver licensing services at participating locations from the convenience of your computer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Scheduling online also helps you avoid waiting on the phone when Customer Care Center lines are busy.

Vehicle Registration Renewal
Enables customers to renew their vehicle registration online by entering the title number, vehicle identification number (VIN), or vehicle number (found on newer titles). Available to the public.

Vehicle Search
Allows users to instantly search for and view vehicle record information including owner information, title history and registration information. Available to businesses and the public.

Driver History Records
Authorized users can instantly view driver record information by validating their user information and entering the name, driver license number, and birth date of the driver whose record they are requesting. The records do not display the driver's Social Security number, address, or any previous driver license numbers. The service is available to anyone who has a Montana driver license or state-issued identification card. Available to the public and to authorized businesses such as insurance agencies and trucking companies that routinely request large numbers of driving records.

Temporary Registration Permits
Available to Montana vehicle dealers, vehicle services staff in county treasurer offices, and the Title and Registration Bureau.

Fillable Forms & Downloadable Manuals
Over 80 forms and manuals are available at no cost on the MVD forms website. Most forms can be filled out on your computer.

CHAPTER 1 - THE DRIVER LICENSE

► DRIVER LICENSING QUICK REFERENCE

- Drivers must have a valid Montana driver license in possession at all times and motorcycle endorsements are required to operate a motorcycle or motor scooter.
- New residents must apply to convert their valid license within 60 consecutive days (30 consecutive days for commercial).
- Driver license number is a system-generated number.
- Written, vision, and a road test are required for your first license.
- A basic driver license (Class D) is valid for a maximum of four to eight years, typically expiring on the holder's birthday.
- For residents under 21 years old, minimum age for a license is 16 years (15 years with driver education) and is valid until 21st birthday.

Fees: Driver license $5 **per year** until expiration; motorcycle or endorsement $0.50 **per year** until expiration; replacement driver license $10; ID cards over 21, $16; ID cards under 21, $8; see the Commercial Driver License Manual for commercial fees. Pay for a license at your County Treasurer's Office or a Motor Vehicle Driver Exam Station. Full and current fee list available at https://dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/.

- For online scheduling* visit https://dojmt.gov/driving/appointment-scheduling/.
- It is mandatory to have and carry evidence of vehicle liability insurance on the vehicle being operated.

■ *Appointment Scheduling

Some driver exam stations require scheduled appointments. Visit dojmt.gov/driving and click Appointment Scheduling to determine if a station in your area offers this service. If so, you may schedule your appointment online from this site. At participating stations, appointments are required for all services except Montana license renewal and Montana license replacement.

■ Identification Confirmation

Your identity is important. Identity theft is now the top-reported form of crime in the United States. The name and birth date on your application for a driver license or ID card must match the primary document you provide and will be checked with the Social Security Administration. This is to help protect you against fraud. It's important to fix discrepancies now to avoid problems in the future for you and your family. You will need to provide your Social Security number when applying for a Montana driver license or ID card. **Please make sure the full legal name and date of birth you're going to use on your application for a driver license or ID card matches what is on file with the Social Security Administration.**

► TYPES OF MONTANA LICENSES, PERMITS, AND ENDORSEMENTS

■ Class D Basic Driver License (non-commercial license)

A Class D basic driver license allows you to drive any non-commercial vehicle under 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight. In order to obtain your license, you need to pass the vision, written, and road tests. You may not have to test if you hold a valid license from another jurisdiction.

■ Commercial Driver License (CDL)

The operator of a commercial vehicle must have a Montana Commercial Driver License (CDL). To obtain a license, you will need to pass the vision and written tests as well as a road test in the size of vehicle you wish to drive. To prepare for the CDL (Class A, B, or C), you will need to study a copy of the *Commercial Driver License Manual* [https://dojmt.gov/driving/forms/]. If you want to obtain a CDL, there are other requirements listed in the CDL manual.

■ Identification (ID) Card

Any person who is a Montana resident and has a valid driver license from a jurisdiction other than Montana is not eligible for a Montana identification card. You must provide proof of full legal name, authorized presence, address, and birth date (a list of acceptable documents starts on page 4), pay the appropriate fee, and have your photo taken. The card is valid for four or eight years.

■ Instruction Permits

'Instruction Permits' is a general term that includes the following:

- **Traffic Education Permit (TEP)**
  - A TEP allows a student who is enrolled in a state-approved traffic education course* to operate a motor vehicle during the traffic education training, while under the direct supervision of a traffic education instructor. The TEP is only valid for the period in which the student is enrolled in the course.
- **Traffic Education Learner License (TELL)**
  - A TELL may be issued to any person who is at least 14 ½ years of age and who is participating in or successfully completed a traffic education course* approved by the Department of Justice and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. A TELL entitles the licensee to operate a motor vehicle only when accompanied by an approved instructor or licensed parent or guardian.
  - Contact your local high school for details regarding state-approved traffic education courses*.
- **Learner License**
  - The learner license allows a driver to operate a motor vehicle when supervised by another driver, 18 years old or older, who is licensed to drive. If a holder of a learner license is under 18 years of age, the driver supervising must be a parent or legal guardian; or the supervising driver must have permission from the parent or legal guardian and be a licensed driver 18 years of age or older. In all vehicles, the licensed driver must sit in the right front seat.
  - To be eligible for a learner license, the applicant must be at least 16 years of age (without traffic education) or 15 years of age and successfully completed an approved driver education course*. To obtain the learner license, the applicant will be required to present the appropriate documents (identification, authorized presence, proof of Montana residence), pay the licensing fees, and pass the written test and vision test at the driver exam station. If the teenage driver is under the age of 18, he/she must have a consent form signed by a parent/guardian before testing may begin. Signing obligates the parent/guardian to accept financial responsibility for any damage resulting from the minor's operation of a motor vehicle. The licensing receipt is good for one year from the date it is purchased. Learner license permits are issued when the primary written test for the license type is passed and are valid for one year.
  - The learner license must be used for six consecutive months by any new driver under 18 years old.

*Note: Online traffic education courses are not approved.

■ Motorcycle Endorsement

A motorcycle endorsement is necessary to operate a motorcycle or any motorized two-wheel or three-wheel vehicle, classified as a motorcycle, on public roadways. To be eligible for a motorcycle endorsement you must hold or be eligible for a basic driver license. You must pay the licensing fee and pass the vision, written and road tests. To prepare for the written test, you will need to study the *Motorcycle Operator Manual* [https://dojmt.gov/driving/forms/]. The road test may be waived if you have successfully completed and passed a Montana Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) course in the past year, and provide a Montana MSF certificate upon application. Find out more at motorcycle.msun.edu and learn how to be a safe, responsible rider. You may also call 1-800-922-2453 for more information. The written and road tests may be waived if you are converting an out-of-state license with a motorcycle endorsement.

■ Motorcycle Learner License

A motorcycle learner license is obtained by paying the licensing fee and passing the motorcycle written test. The motorcycle learner license is valid for one year. Licensees must have immediate possession of their motorcycle learner license and be under the immediate and proximate supervision of a licensed driver who has a motorcycle endorsement.

► WHO CAN APPLY FOR MONTANA LICENSES

You *cannot* apply for, be issued, or retain a Montana driver license if you are suspended or revoked in any other state or jurisdiction.

You *can* obtain a driver license if you:

Are 18 years of age or older:

- are able to submit acceptable documentation to prove:
  - Authorized Presence (see page 4)
  - Identity (see page 4)
  - Residency (see page 6)
- pass the required driver license tests
- turn in any other driver licenses
- pass the needed medical requirements for the type of driver license desired
- have not been found by a court to be mentally incompetent, alcoholic, or a habitual user of illegal drugs

Are under 18 years of age:

- are 16 years old -OR- are 15 years old and successfully complete a state-approved traffic education program (online courses are not approved)
- have parental/guardian consent for licensure and accepting financial responsibility
- are able to submit acceptable documentation to prove:
  - Authorized Presence (see page 4)
  - Identity (see page 4)
  - Residency (see page 6)

Note: Refer to the Graduated Driver License section on page 6 of this manual for complete requirements.

■ New Residents

If you move to Montana from another state and establish a permanent residence here, you must obtain a Montana driver license (if you have a commercial driver license, refer to the *Commercial Driver License Manual* [https://dojmt.gov/driving/forms/]). If you have a valid driver license issued by the jurisdiction you moved from, you can use it for up to 60 consecutive days, after which you must surrender it and qualify for a Montana license. Out-of-state drivers who hold a valid out-of-state license, and have it in their immediate possession, may exchange their basic driver license for a Montana driver license without a written or road test. Applicants who may lack functional ability to safely operate a motor vehicle on the highway may be required to complete written and road tests. You may have only one valid driver license, issued by any licensing jurisdiction, at any time.

■ Military

Active duty military personnel and their dependents may retain their valid out-of-state license and drive in Montana **unless** they become gainfully employed. If employment is secured, a Montana license must be obtained. Military personnel who present an active duty military card and who otherwise meet Montana driver licensing requirements will be issued a driver license with a standard license term, typically eight years, and the notation for military exemption on the back of the license: “Valid for 30 days after honorable discharge.” Once the military exemption has been added to the driver license, the holder may apply to renew the driver license outside the usual “six months before and up to three months after” renewal window. A licensee who has a military exemption may apply to renew that license at any time throughout their ongoing military service. Those who have the military exemption may drive on that license for up to 30 days after honorable separation from the military. These persons must renew their license during the 30-day grace period to avoid penalty of testing; they must also present DD214 papers showing honorable discharge. You may have only one valid driver license issued by any licensing jurisdiction at any time.

■ Veteran Designation

Starting January 1, 2014: If you’re a veteran and want the designation on your driver license or ID card, contact your Montana Veterans Affairs Division for details, or visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/#military-personnel

► PROOF OF AUTHORIZED PRESENCE, IDENTITY, & RESIDENCE

All applicants for a Montana driver license or identification (ID) card must provide the required documents from each of the following three categories. For a current list of acceptable documents, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/required-docs

1. PROOF OF AUTHORIZED PRESENCE

Applicants for a Montana driver license or ID card must provide proof that their presence in the United States is authorized under federal law – that is, they must prove that they are either a U.S. citizen or legally authorized to be in the U.S.

Per MCA 61-5-105, in order to issue a Montana driver license or ID card to a foreign national, their authorized presence in the U.S. will be verified using the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system (see www.uscis.gov/save). A driver license issued to a person who is a foreign national and whose presence in the U.S. is temporarily authorized must expire no later than the expiration date of the official document issued to the person by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Below is a list of acceptable documentation:

- an original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a U.S. jurisdiction. (To obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate, contact VitalChek [www.vitalchek.com] or, for Montana birth certificates, the Office of Vital Statistics [www.dphhs.mt.gov].)
- a certification from the U.S. Department of State or a U.S. embassy of the birth abroad of a U.S. citizen (Consular Report of Birth Abroad, form FS-240 or Certification of Report of Birth, form DS-1350)
- a valid, unexpired passport issued by the U.S. Department of State
- a valid, unexpired passport card, issued by the U.S. Department of State
- a valid, unexpired passport issued by a jurisdiction other than the U.S. with:
  - an attached U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) record of arrival and departure (form I-94) (same name with an unexpired endorsement of the nonimmigrant status)
    OR
  - an unexpired permanent resident I-551 stamp
- a valid, unexpired certificate of naturalization (form N-550, N-570 or N-578)
- a valid, unexpired certificate of citizenship (form N-560, N-561 or N-645)
- a valid, unexpired Northern Mariana card (form I-551) with “Northern Mariana” imprinted instead of “permanent resident”
- a valid, unexpired American Indian card (form I-551) with “American Indian” imprinted instead of “permanent resident”
- a valid, unexpired U.S. Citizen identification card (form I-179 or I-197)
- a valid, unexpired permanent resident card (form I-551)
- a valid, unexpired temporary resident identification card (form I-688)
- a valid, unexpired U.S. re-entry permit (form I-327)
- a valid, unexpired refugee travel document (form I-571)
- a valid, unexpired employment authorization card (form I-688A, I-688B or I-766)
- a valid, unexpired record of arrival and departure, stamped “refugee” (form I-94) without a valid passport but stamped “refugee” with a photo affixed
- a digital identification card issued to the applicant by a federally recognized Native American Tribe whose reservation is located in Montana, that contains a digitized image of the applicant, the applicant’s date of birth and tribal enrollment number

2. PROOF OF IDENTITY

If you are applying for a Montana ID card or driver license, you will need to bring in the following documentation to prove FULL LEGAL NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, and MONTANA RESIDENCE:

■ Proof of Full Legal Name and Date of Birth

You must provide **two** documents—either two primary documents, or one primary and one secondary document listed—to an examiner at a Montana driver license station to show proof of Full Legal Name and Date of Birth.

Primary Documents can include:

- a color photo driver license or identification card, not expired for more than four years, issued by a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction
- a certified birth certificate issued by a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction

Note: a certified birth certificate typically has the registrar's unique seal (e.g., raised, embossed, impressed or multi-colored), the registrar's signature and the date the certificate was filed with the registrar's office

- a certification from the U.S. Department of State or a U.S. embassy of the birth abroad of a U.S. citizen (Consular Report of Birth Abroad, form FS-240 or Certification of Report of Birth, form DS-1350)
- a digital identification card issued to the applicant by a federally recognized Indian tribe whose reservation is located in Montana, that contains the applicant's digitized image, date of birth and tribal enrollment number
- an unexpired military identification card issued by the U.S. Department of Defense (active duty, reserve, retired personnel or dependent of active duty personnel) that contains a color photo or digitized image of the applicant and the applicant's date of birth
- a valid, unexpired passport issued by the U.S. Department of State
- a valid, unexpired passport card issued by the U.S. Department of State
- a valid, unexpired passport issued by a jurisdiction other than the U.S. and either:
  - an attached U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) record of arrival and departure, form I-94 (same name with an unexpired endorsement of the nonimmigrant status) or
  - an unexpired resident permanent resident I-551 stamp
- one of the following valid, unexpired documents issued by the USCIS:
  - certificate of naturalization, form N-550, N-570 or N-578
  - certificate of citizenship, form N-560, N-561 or N-645
  - Northern Mariana card, form I-551 with "Northern Mariana" imprinted instead of "permanent resident"
  - American Indian card, form I-551 with "American Indian" imprinted instead of "permanent resident"
  - U.S. citizen identification card, form I-179 or I-197
  - permanent resident card, form I-551
  - temporary resident identification card, form I-688
  - U.S. re-entry permit, form I-327
  - refugee travel document, form I-571
  - employment authorization card, form I-688A, I-688B or I-766, or
  - record of arrival and departure, stamped "refugee", form I-94 without a valid passport but stamped "refugee" with a photo affixed
- a U.S. or Canadian-issued instruction, learner's driving permit or receipt of driver license or permit, if it is current and contains the applicant's photo and date of birth
- a prison inmate identification card issued to the applicant by the Montana Department of Corrections that contains a photo or digitized image of the applicant and the applicant's date of birth and adult offender number
- an emergency identification photo issued and certified by the driver licensing authority of a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction that includes the applicant's name and date of birth - not acceptable for mail renewals or mail duplicate

Secondary Documents can include:

- a second primary document
- an original U.S. social security card or Canadian social insurance card
- a certified copy of a marriage certificate or license issued by a government jurisdiction
- a U.S. or Canadian driver license or identification card that has been expired for more than one year but not more than five years
- a current U.S. or Canadian government jurisdiction employee photo identification card
- a U.S. or Canadian driver license or identification card that is current but does not have a color photograph
- a certified copy of a court order or judgment from a U.S. or Canadian court of competent jurisdiction containing the applicant's full legal name and date of birth
- any USCIS document approved as a primary document, but that is not expired for more than one year
- a certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a jurisdiction other than by a state, territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a province or territory of Canada
- a certification of release of discharge issued by the U.S. Department of Defense
- a Medicare, Medicaid or health insurance card with the applicant's name and individual Medicare, Medicaid or health insurance identification number
- an unexpired, color photo firearm or concealed weapon permit issued by a chief of police in an organized, full-time police department or the county sheriff in a local jurisdiction within the U.S.
- a current pilot's license issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

- a certified copy of school records or a transcript containing the applicant's full name and, preferably, date of birth and issued by an elementary, secondary or postsecondary school
- a certificate of completion of a Montana department-approved traffic or driver education course containing the applicant's name and date of birth
- a current school photo identification card with the student's name and student identification number
- a certified copy, fax or photocopy of a certified copy of the birth certificate of the applicant's child, if the certificate lists the applicant's name and date of birth as parent

3. PROOF OF MONTANA RESIDENCE

Upon original application for a driver license or identification card, an applicant must present evidence of the applicant's Montana residence address. If the applicant does not receive mail at the residence or street address, a Montana post office box or mailing address also must be provided. The department accepts the following documents as evidence of a Montana residence address, provided the document shows the applicant's name and Montana residence address as it appears on the driver license application. (Bring in one of the following documents to prove your residential address.)

- any primary or secondary document as listed in Administrative Rules of Montana 23.3.131
- a U.S. or Montana income tax return for the previous year
- a Montana voter registration card
- a receipt for personal or real property taxes paid within the last year to the state of Montana or a Montana county
- a current automobile or life insurance policy or statement
- a certified copy of school records issued by the school the applicant is attending or attended within four months of the application
- a written statement from the applicant's parent, guardian or adult child that the applicant resides at the same address as the parent, guardian or adult child, along with a copy of a document permitted under this rule that shows the Montana residential address of the applicant's parent, guardian or adult child
- the original copy of a rental agreement or rent payment receipt signed by the landlord or rental agent that includes the applicant's name and residential address
- home mortgage or equity loan papers showing the applicant's name and residential address – a rural address will be accepted when there is no other physical address
- any of the following, dated or issued not more than four months prior to application:
  - a payroll check or payroll check stub
  - a bank statement
  - a utility bill or utility hook-up order
  - canceled mail addressed to the applicant
- if the applicant is homeless, a descriptive address of the location where the applicant actually resides, e.g., "under the west end of the East Street bridge." The applicant must also provide a separate mailing address and present a written statement from a social service agency on the agency's letterhead verifying the applicant's homeless status and the descriptive address given by the applicant

► GRADUATED DRIVER LICENSING (GDL) PROGRAM

The Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) program is a three-step progressive program that allows new drivers under 18 to develop and improve their driving skills in the safest environment possible. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for teenagers because teens lack driving experience. All new drivers – even honor roll students and "good kids" – are likelier than experienced drivers to be involved in crashes due to driver errors, scanning, and speed. The GDL program limits the number of passengers and driving in the dark, which helps reduce the crash risk for teen drivers.

Each step is designed to progressively increase the skills, privileges, and responsibilities of a new driver. The GDL program includes an instruction permit, first-year restricted license, and full-privilege driver license.
A person cannot apply for, be issued, or retain a Montana driver license if he/she is suspended or revoked in any other state or jurisdiction.

GDL Step 1: Instruction Permit – Driving With Supervision

Requirements:

- Supervised Driving Practice:
  - Teen drivers must acquire at least 50 hours of supervised driving experience, including 10 hours at night during a minimum of six months.
  - A driver with a TELL permit must be supervised by a licensed parent or guardian.
  - A driver with a Learner License must be supervised by a licensed parent or guardian, or a licensed adult driver who is authorized by the parent or guardian.
- Seatbelt Use: Everyone in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt.
- No Alcohol or Drug Use: The teen driver must not receive any traffic violations or alcohol/drug offenses in the six-month period before advancing to GDL Step 2: First-Year Restricted License.
- Permit Prerequisites:
  - The teen driver must:
    - Pass the required driver license written test.
    - Turn in any other driver licenses.
    - Pass the needed medical requirements for the type of driver license desired.
    - Have not been found by a court to be mentally incompetent, alcoholic, or a habitual user of illegal drugs.
- Permit Types and Age Requirements:
    1. A teenager may obtain a **Traffic Education Learner License (TELL)** as early as age 14 ½ years old **only if** he/she is participating in or has successfully completed a state-approved traffic education program (online courses are not approved).
    2. A teenager may obtain a **learner license** from a driver exam station if he/she is 16 years old **OR** is 15 years old and successfully completes a state-approved traffic education program (online courses are not approved).
    - A teenager under 18 must hold a learner license for a minimum of six consecutive months before applying for a First-Year Restricted License.
    - The learner license is valid for up to one year.

GDL Step 2: First-Year Restricted License

Once all of the requirements of GDL Step 1 are satisfied, the teenager may obtain a First-Year Restricted License. To do this, the teenager will need to pay for all associated fees and bring all required documents, including the completed "Graduated Driver Licensing Parent Certification" form, to the driver exam station (see https://dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/). Initially, the driver license will show a restriction code on the front and back. This restriction will remain on the driver license for one year. A teenager's highest lifetime crash risk is in the first months of solo driving and first 1000 miles. Restrictions on night driving and passengers help reduce risk.

Restrictions of the First-Year Restricted License:

- Seatbelts Required: Everyone in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt.
- Night Driving: Fatal crashes are more likely to occur at night for all ages, but the risk is highest for teenagers.
  - Teenage drivers with a restricted driver license may not drive between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. There are limited exceptions to this rule, including:
    - emergencies, farm-related activities, travel to and from school, church, or work and specific, parent-authorized purposes; and
    - law enforcement officials may contact the parent/guardian of the teen driver to verify the purpose for which he/she is authorized to drive between the time restrictions.
- Passengers: Crash risk increases when teens drive with teen passengers.
  - One passenger: For the first six months, unless supervised by a licensed adult driver, a teenage driver may have only one unrelated passenger under the age of 18 in the vehicle.
  - More passengers: For the second six months, unless supervised by a licensed adult driver, a teenage driver may have three unrelated passengers under the age of 18 in the vehicle.

Penalties for any Step 2 First-Year Restricted License violations

If a restricted driver violates any of the license restrictions, he/she will be penalized.

- First Offense: Between 20 to 60 hours of community service.
- Second Offense: Suspension of the teenager's driver license for six months.

GDL Step 3: Full-Privilege Driver License

The First-Year Restricted License restrictions automatically end on the date indicated on the back of the teenager's driver license, or when the individual turns 18 years old, whichever occurs first. Once the teenager reaches Step 3, his/her driver license confers full privileges.

► FEES/RECEIPTS

The length of time a driver license will be valid determines the fees you will pay. The length of a driver license depends on several factors including:

- If you are under the age of 21, your license expires on your 21st birthday.
- If you are between the ages of 21 and 75, your license expires on your birthday eight years or less after the date of issuance or on your 75th birthday, whichever occurs first.
- If you are 75 years of age or older, your license expires on your birthday four years or less after the date of issuance.
- A foreign national's license expires on the expiration of their legal presence documents.

The fees for a Montana license and/or identification card are*:

- Any Class D basic license or a learner license listed.....$5.00 **per year**
- Motorcycle endorsement.....$0.50 **per year**
- Mail renewal notification fee.....$0.50
- Identification (ID) card for residents 21 and older.....$16.00
- Identification (ID) card for residents under 21.....$8.00
- Replacement License $10.00

*Fees in this manual are subject to change. For a current and complete list of fees, go online to https://dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/ or call 1-866-450-8034.

Driver license receipts are valid for one year. For those testing, the receipt allows the applicant three attempts within that year to successfully pass all required examinations. **Receipts are not renewable. If the licensing process is not completed within one year, the applicant will need to re-apply and start the licensing process over.**

► DRIVER LICENSE RENEWAL

You may renew your license up to six months before the expiration date of your license. If your license has expired it is not valid for operation of a motor vehicle; however, a renewal may be completed within three months after the expiration without retesting. Your privilege to drive ends when your license expires if you do not renew it. If you are found driving after the expiration date, you are driving in violation of the law and you could receive a citation.

If your license is more than three months expired, you must reapply as a new driver. You will need to provide acceptable documentation to prove identity, residency and authorized presence; you will also be required to pass all applicable licensing tests. Also, make sure the full legal name and date of birth you're going to use on your application for a driver license or ID card matches what is on file with the Social Security Administration.

In order to renew your driver license, you must present the proper identification (the list starts on page 4), pay the appropriate fee, make a personal appearance at an exam station, pass the vision test, and have a new photo taken. Applicants who may lack functional ability to safely operate a motor vehicle on the highway may be required to complete written and road tests.

A person may not apply for, be issued, or retain a Montana driver license if he/she is suspended or revoked in Montana or any other state and/or jurisdiction.

► LOST OR DESTROYED LICENSES

If your license is lost or destroyed, you may apply for a replacement at your local licensing station. You will be required to pay a $10 fee and present the proper identification (the list starts on page 4) to verify your full legal name and date of birth. This identification is needed not only to establish your identity, but also to ensure no one else obtains a replacement license in your name.

► CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To make sure your driver license is kept current, you must notify the Driver License Bureau of the Department of Justice within 10 days of any change of address. Forms for this purpose can be obtained at https://dojmt.gov/driving/forms/, from most county treasurers, a Montana Highway Patrol trooper, or any driver license examiner. This is important, as the licensing authority may wish to contact you regarding your driver license at any time. If they are unable to contact you, you could lose your driving privilege because you were not aware of orders or requirements that affect your privilege to drive.

► NAME CHANGE

To change the legal name on your license with the Montana Motor Vehicle Division, you need to **complete the appropriate application and present one of the following documents:**

- a certified copy of the applicant's marriage certificate from the issuing government jurisdiction
- a certified copy of a decree or judgment granting a name change from a court of competent jurisdiction
- a certified copy of a divorce decree or dissolution of marriage granted the applicant that specifies the change of name required
- a certified copy of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), certificate of naturalization (Forms N-550, N-570) issued to the applicant

Also, make sure the full legal name and date of birth you're going to use on your application matches what is on file with the Social Security Administration.

► DRIVER EXAM STATIONS & APPOINTMENTS

For the locations and hours of Montana's driver exam stations, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving and click Driver Exam Stations.

All driver exam stations require scheduled appointments. To schedule your appointment online, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/appointments

CHAPTER 1 QUIZ

1. If you move, you must report your change of address to the Driver License Bureau within:

A. 2 weeks
B. 15 days
C. 10 days
D. 1 month

2. When signing for their child under 18 years of age, parents are indicating that:

A. Their child has passed a driver education course.
B. Their child is a careful driver.
C. They are affirming their child's correct date of birth.
D. They are accepting financial responsibility for any damage that results from the minor operating a motor vehicle.

3. What is the earliest a Montana driver license can be renewed prior to the license expiration date?

A. 3 months
B. 6 months
C. 9 months
D. 12 months

CHAPTER 2 – MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

It is up to you to decide if you are physically and/or mentally capable of driving safely. Before you drive, make sure that your trip is needed. If you drive, your safety and that of the public depends a lot on what you do before driving, including adjusting your seat and mirrors, using safety belts, checking your vehicle, maintaining a clear view, and securing the vehicle.

► TRIP PLANNING

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

- Take public transportation when it is available.
- Avoid driving during heavy traffic. It causes extra wear and tear on you and the vehicle.
- Use car pools or share rides whenever possible.
- Plan and then combine your errands; this will cut down on the number of trips you need to take. Make a list of the things you need and the places you need to go. Go to as many places as possible on any one trip. Take the shortest distance between places. Try to reduce the number of places you need to go.
- Call ahead to make sure that they have what you need or that what you are picking up is ready.

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

► CHECK THE VEHICLE

How safely you can drive starts with the vehicle you are driving, and how good of shape it is in. It is the duty of drivers to make certain that the vehicles they drive are safe to operate. A vehicle that is in bad shape is unsafe and costs more to run than one that is maintained; it can break down or cause a collision. However, if a vehicle is in good shape, it can give you an extra safety margin when you need it; and, you never know when you will need it.

You should follow your vehicle owner's manual for routine maintenance. Some you can do yourself, some need to be done by a qualified mechanic.

A few simple checks will prevent trouble on the road.

■ Braking System

Only your brakes can stop your vehicle properly. It is very dangerous if they are not in good working order. When your brakes are making a lot of noise, smell funny, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

■ Lights

Make sure that turn signals, brake lights, taillights, and headlamps are operating properly. These should be checked from outside the vehicle. Brake lights tell other road users that you are stopping, and turn signals tell them you are turning. Driving with headlights on all the time helps other drivers see your vehicle during the day and at night.

An out-of-line headlight can shine where it does not help you and may blind other drivers. If you are having trouble seeing at night, or other drivers are flashing their headlights at you frequently, have a mechanic check the headlights.

■ Windshield and Wipers

Keep your windshield clear so you can focus on the road ahead. Damaged glass blocks your view of the road and can more easily break in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. Have the windshield replaced if the glass is damaged.

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. **Remove snow and ice from all windows before you drive to clear your view of the road.**

■ Tires

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

Worn tires can cause hydroplaning and increase the chance of having a blow out during a trip. Check the tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the proper pressure.

Check the tread with a penny. Stick the penny into the tread "head" first. If the tread does not come at least to Abraham Lincoln's head, the tire is unsafe and you need to replace it.

■ Steering System

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

■ Suspension System

Your suspension keeps your vehicle balanced, helps you control your vehicle, and provides a comfortable ride over varying road surfaces. If the vehicle bounces a lot, 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

The exhaust system helps remove toxic gases from the engine, helps reduce the noise from the engine, and helps cool the hot gases coming from running the engine. Fumes from a leaky exhaust can cause death in a very short time. It can also make you drowsy while driving. Never run the motor in your garage. Never sit in the car with the motor running without opening a window.

Luckily, most exhaust problems are leaks, which are easily heard; have them fixed.

■ Engine

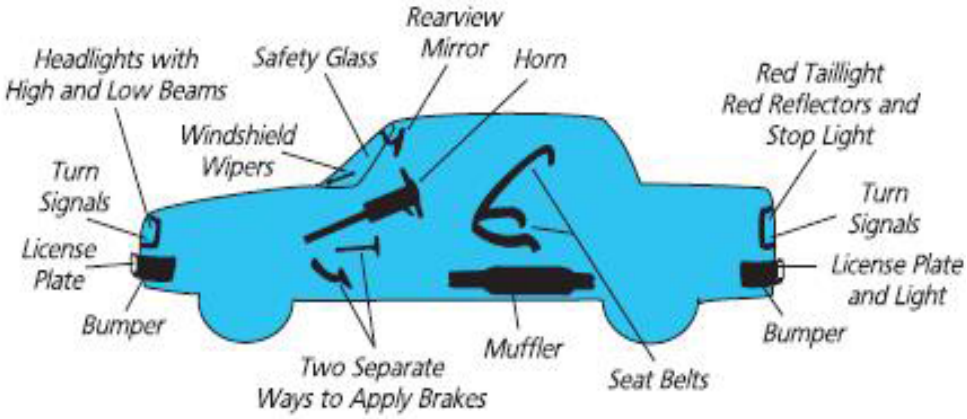
A poorly tuned engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, pollutes the air, and could die on you when you are on the road, causing you and other traffic a problem. Follow the procedures recommended in the owner's manual for maintenance.

■ Loose Objects

Make sure that there are no packages or other objects on the rear shelf or back seat that could hit someone on the head in the event of a sudden stop or crash. Make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal so that you could not slow or stop the vehicle.

■ Horn

The horn may not seem like it would be important for safety, but as a warning device it could save your life. It only should be used as a warning to others.



► MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

Montana law requires that certain equipment be installed on all motor vehicles and that certain vehicles, such as larger trucks and trailers, have lighting and other equipment not needed on passenger cars. The equipment that is required on every vehicle is listed below, followed by a listing for each type of vehicle that requires special or additional equipment.

When the law specifies a level of performance for the equipment (the distance lights must be visible, etc.), that level is listed. For more detailed information on topics such as the equipment location on the vehicle or specific installation requirements, refer to Montana Code Annotated (MCA) Title 61, chapter 9. Generally, copies of Montana law are also available for reference in each county courthouse and most libraries.

■ Headlights & Tail Lights

Drive with headlights on for safety and so other vehicles can see you.

Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956, must emit white or amber light to the front and red or amber light to the rear, visible for 500 feet. Headlights and tail lights may not be tinted, covered by, or treated with a tinted or colored material, substance, system, or component unless part of the original or optional equipment is in compliance with federal manufacturers' regulations.

Headlights should be capable of illuminating persons or vehicles for a distance of 350 feet on high beam and 100 feet on low beam. High beam must be dimmed when meeting other vehicles at 1000 feet and when overtaking other vehicles at 500 feet. Head lamps are required to be in use at all times from a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise and any other times when, due to weather or blowing dust, visibility is less than 500 feet.

■ Vehicle Light Distances

1000 feet	Dim high beam headlights when meeting other cars
500 feet	Turn off high beam headlights when 500 feet behind other vehicles
500 feet	Turn on headlights if you can't see 500 feet ahead
500 feet	Tail lights distance
350 feet	High beam (brights) headlight distance
300 feet	Brake light distance in sunlight
300 feet	Turn signal distance in sunlight
100 feet	Low beam (dim) headlight distance
50 feet	License plate light

■ Turn Signals

Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956, must emit a white or amber light to the front and red or amber light to the rear, visible for 300 feet in the sunlight. A vehicle must be equipped with turn signals (signal lamps) when the distance from the center of the steering post to the vehicle's left outside limit is more than 24 inches, or when the distance from the steering post to the rear limit of the vehicle or load is more than 14 feet.

■ Brake Lights

Brake lights (stop lamps) indicate a vehicle is slowing or stopping. Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956, must emit a red or amber light visible for 300 feet in normal sunlight.

■ License Plate Lamp

Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956, must emit white light to illuminate the license plate for 50 feet to the rear. License plate lighting that is not original manufacturer's equipment is prohibited.

■ Red Reflectors (rear)

Must be visible at night when in front of high beam headlights for all distances between 50 and 300 feet.

■ Muffler

Must prevent excessive or unusual noise.

■ Mirror

Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1956, must provide 200 foot visibility to rear of the vehicle.

■ Brakes and Parking Brakes

Must control the movement, stop and hold of the vehicle under all conditions of loading and on any grade incident to its operation.

■ Horn

Must provide warning audible for 200 feet.

■ Parking Lights

During the time head lamps are required, any vehicle which is parked or stopped on a roadway must be equipped with and display parking lights which must display a white or amber light to the front and a red light to the rear, visible for a distance of 500 feet.

Note: Flashing, blinking, sequential, rotating, or pulsating lights (other than turn signals) are prohibited except for emergency or authorized vehicles. Undercarriage decorative lighting that rotates, flashes, oscillates or displays a color for use by police or emergency vehicles is prohibited.

■ Windshield and Windshield Wipers

A front windshield with safety glass (if manufactured after January 1, 1956) is required in motor vehicles. Windshields must be in good condition so as not to obstruct the driver's view. Materials that restrict the driver's view may not be attached to any window.

Windshield wipers are required and must be in good working order to clear rain, snow, or other moisture from the windshield.

■ Window Tinting and Sun Screening

Montana law applies strict standards for tinting and sun screening. You may want to check with your local examiner, county treasurer, or any law enforcement officer.

■ Seatbelts

Vehicles manufactured between January 1, 1965, and January 1, 1968, must have seatbelts for the left and right front seats. Vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1968 must have seatbelts for every designated seat.

Seatbelts must always be in good working condition. **No person may drive a motor vehicle in Montana unless each occupant is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt.**

► ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED ON CERTAIN VEHICLES

■ Clearance Lamps and Side Marker Lamps

If over 80 inches in width, every bus or truck, and every trailer or semi trailer in excess of 3000 pounds GVW must have on the front and rear two clearance lamps, one at each side.

Every truck tractor must have on the front two clearance lamps, one at each side.

Every pole trailer in excess of 3000 pounds GVW shall have on each side one clearance lamp.

Any vehicle manufactured after January 1, 1956 shall be equipped with two tail lamps mounted on the rear, except motorcycles, motor-driven cycles, quadricycles and truck tractors.

Clearance lamps on the front or side of the vehicle shall display an amber light, and clearance lamps mounted on the rear of the vehicle shall display a red light. All clearance lamps shall be visible for 500 feet when required.

■ Reflectors

Every vehicle, whatever its size, must have on the rear: two reflectors and a stop light, in addition to the clearance lamps required; have reflectors with, or in combination with, clearance lamps which shall reflect the same color as the required clearance lamp. Required reflectors shall be visible at all distances between 600 feet through 1000 feet from the vehicle when illuminated by upper beam headlamps. Every truck or bus, whatever its size, must be equipped with two clearance lamps, reflectors, and a stoplight.

■ Projecting Load Lamp or Flag

Whenever any load extends four feet or more beyond the body of the vehicle, there shall be, during the time head-lamps are required, a red light visible for 500 feet attached to the extreme rear end of the load. At all other times there shall be a red flag, not less than 12 inches square.

■ Special Lighting for Farm Tractors & Implements of Husbandry

During the time head lamps are required, any farm tractor or implement of husbandry, moved on the highway, must display a white light to the front, visible for at least 500 feet and a red light to the rear, visible for 500 feet. These lamps shall be mounted so as to indicate the extreme left projection of the vehicle.

■ Spot Lamps & Auxiliary Lamps (Fog Lamps)

Any vehicle may be equipped with (not to exceed two) spot and/or auxiliary (fog) lamps. Spot lamps must be turned off when approaching another moving vehicle from either direction, and fog lamps may be used with lower head lamp beams if they do not project a beam stronger than the low beam head lamp.

■ Additional Brake Requirements

Every trailer, semi trailer and pole trailer equipped with air or vacuum brakes, or which has a gross weight in excess of 3000 pounds, must have “break-away” brakes, which are activated if the vehicle is separated from the towing vehicle.

■ Maintenance of Brakes

All brakes shall be maintained in good working order and shall be adjusted to operate on all wheels equally.

■ Certain Warning Devices Prohibited

No vehicle shall be equipped with, nor shall any person use upon a vehicle, any siren, whistle, or bell, except as permitted for authorized emergency vehicles.

■ Mud Flaps Required

Trucks, buses, truck trailers, trailers/semi trailers, or pole trailers, or vehicles of 8000 pounds or less GVW shall have fenders, splash aprons, or flaps on the rear most wheels or set of wheels, that extend down to a point not more than 20 inches above the surface of the highway, when the vehicle is empty.

■ Safety Chains

Every trailer, semi trailer or pole trailer of 3000 pounds GVW or less must have on the front a steel chain or cable, which shall be fastened securely to the towing unit. Such chain or cable shall be no less than 1/4 inch in diameter.

■ Certain Vehicles to Carry Flares or Other Warning Devices

Every truck of one ton capacity or larger, passenger bus and truck tractor must be equipped with at least three flares, or three red electric lanterns, or three portable red reflectors. All must be capable of being seen at a distance of not less than 600 feet under normal atmospheric conditions at night. Reflectors used must display a minimum of 24 square inches of reflective surface and at least three red fuses (if red reflectors or red lanterns are not carried) and two red cloth flags at least 12 inches square with standards to support and display such flags.

Note: Vehicles transporting explosives, flammable liquids, compressed gases, or using compressed gases as a fuel may not carry any warning device, which produces a signal by flame.

As an alternative to the equipment required above, three emergency reflective triangles conforming to USDOT Motor Vehicles Safety Standard 125 may be carried.

■ Display of Warning Devices When Vehicles Disabled

Whenever any truck, passenger bus, tractor, trailer, semi trailer or pole trailer is disabled on the highway or shoulder of the highway when lighted lamps are required, the following warning devices shall be displayed:

A warning device as previously described shall be immediately placed at the traffic side of the vehicle in the direction of approaching traffic. Then place warning devices as follows:

- 1 - 100 feet (200 feet if divided highway) in back of the vehicle in the center of the lane occupied by the vehicle;
- 1 - 100 feet in the front of the vehicle (same direction if divided highway) in the center of the same lane; and
- 1 - at the traffic side of the vehicle not less than 10 feet, in the direction of nearest approaching traffic.

Whenever any of the above vehicles is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, hill or other obstruction to view, the warning signal in that direction shall be placed no less than 500 feet from the vehicle and so as to afford ample warning to approaching traffic.

Whenever any of the above vehicles is disabled on a roadway when the above warning devices are not required, the driver shall display two red flags in the lane occupied by the disabled vehicle or at a distance of 100 feet to the front and rear of the vehicle.

Whenever any motor vehicle transporting explosives, flammable liquid or compressed gas, or any vehicle using compressed gas as fuel, is disabled at any time or place mentioned above, the driver shall immediately display one red electric lantern or portable red emergency reflector at the traffic side of the vehicle, one red electric lantern or portable red reflector 100 feet to the front and one red electric lantern or portable red reflector 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by the disabled vehicle.

Flares, fuses or signals produced by flame shall NOT be used as warning devices for vehicles transporting explosives, flammable liquids or compressed gases or vehicles using compressed gas as fuel.

■ Slow Moving Vehicles

Any slow-moving vehicle or equipment, animal-drawn vehicle, or road construction or maintenance machinery normally operating at or under 25 miles per hour must display an emblem on the rear of the vehicle as described below, except for road construction or maintenance machinery engaged in actual construction or maintenance work and guarded by a flagger or warning signs.

The emblem is a triangle of fluorescent yellow-orange color with a base of 14” and 14” in height. The triangle must have a border with reflective red stripes one and three-quarters inches wide and be mounted in the center of the rear of the vehicle at a height of three to five feet above the roadway.

On a two-lane highway when the slow-moving vehicle does not leave a clear lane for overtaking traffic and passing vehicles, the slow-moving vehicle must, at the first safe opportunity, with sufficient room for turnout, pull over to allow other vehicles to pass.

► CLEAN ALL WINDOWS AND GLASS SURFACES

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

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

- Do not hang things from your mirror or clutter up the windshield with decals. They could block your view.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can cut the lights' effectiveness by 50%.

► ADJUST SEAT AND MIRRORS

You should always check your seat and mirrors before you start to drive. Many vehicles have multiple drivers who are different sizes.

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

► SAFETY BELTS REQUIRED

(MCA 61-9-419; 61-13-103)

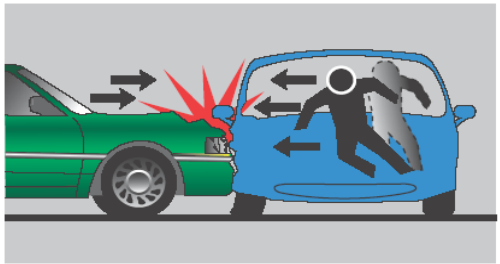
No person may drive a motor vehicle in Montana unless each occupant is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt. Montana law places responsibility on the driver to ensure each occupant is properly buckled or in a child safety seat. **A driver who violates the law will be fined $20.**

Buckle up – every trip, every time – even on short trips at low speeds. Before you drive away, always fasten your safety belt and make sure all your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints at all times. Also, remember to lock the vehicle's doors.

It is imperative that you and your passengers use safety belts. Studies have shown that if you are in a crash and are using safety belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. A quick click is all it takes to save lives and promote life-saving habits.

Here are more reasons to wear a safety belt, from the Montana Department of Transportation's Buckle Up Montana website:

- At just 30 mph, a person not wearing a seat belt in a crash has the same experience as falling from a 3-story building or getting rammed by a 3.5 ton elephant.
- There are actually three collisions in every crash: the vehicle collision; the human collision; and the internal collision (inside your body).
- You're not the only one who will get hurt if you're not wearing your seatbelt in a crash. Unbuckled bodies can collide at crash force into other people in the same vehicle, seriously injuring or even killing them.
- For many serious injuries, the first hour of care is critical. However, response time is greater in rural areas due to factors such as distance and geography. If you are seriously injured, will EMTs reach you in time? If you buckle up, you are less likely to suffer a serious injury and you have a much better chance of surviving until EMTs reach you.



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

Exceptions to the seatbelt law include:

- If the vehicle was manufactured prior to January 1, 1968.
- If an occupant has a written statement **with them** from a physician that he/she is unable to wear a seatbelt for medical reasons.
- If you are an operator of a vehicle licensed as special mobile equipment (vehicle not designated or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property and incidentally operated or moved over the highways, including farm tractors, road construction, or maintenance machinery, ditch digging apparatus, concrete mixers, and other such vehicles that are within the general terms of MCA 61-1-104).
- If a child 6 years old and weighing less than 60 pounds is a passenger in a motor vehicle, that motor vehicle must be equipped with one child safety restraint for each child in the vehicle and each child must be properly restrained.
- If you make frequent stops with a motor vehicle in your official job duties, you may be exempted by the Department of Justice. See Form MVDSE-1 (https://dojmt.gov/driving/forms/).

► CHILD RESTRAINTS REQUIRED

(MCA 61-9-419 & 61-9-420; 61-13-103)

Babies and children up to age 6 and 60 pounds must be buckled in a child safety seat. Booster seats are recommended for older children until the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fits properly, which is usually when children are about 4'9" tall. Remember to lock the vehicle's doors.

Air bags are only part of a total occupant protection system. If children must ride in the front seat of an airbag-equipped car, they should be secured in a child safety seat using the car's seatbelt system or a booster seat using the car's lap and shoulder belt system. The vehicle's seat should be moved back as far as possible from the active airbag. This will hold children in place for air bag protection in a frontal crash, while protecting them against side, rear, and rollover collisions. **Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front passenger seat with an active air bag. Whenever possible, children under age 13 should be secured in the backseat.**

If you hold your child while riding in a vehicle, you could crush the child during a crash. In a 30 mph crash, a 100 pound adult becomes a 3,000 pound force against the child. That is why it's important for each passenger in a vehicle to be independently and properly restrained with a seatbelt or a child restraint.

CHAPTER 2 QUIZ

1. **Headlights are required at any time you cannot see persons or vehicles for 500 feet (because of snow, dust, etc.) and:**
   A. When traffic is very heavy.
   B. During daylight savings time.
   C. From 1/2 hour before sunset to 1/2 hour after sunrise.
   D. From 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.

2. **A leaking exhaust system can:**
   A. Cause excessive oil use.
   B. Make your vehicle need a tune-up sooner than normal.
   C. Make you drowsy while driving.
   D. Set grass fires on country roads.

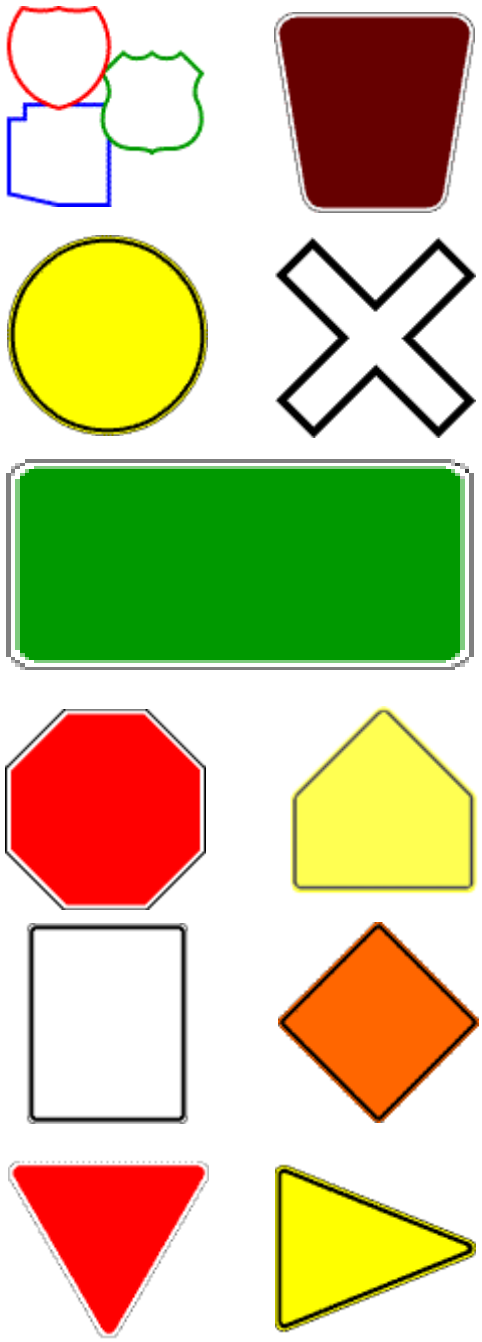
3. **Turn signals must be visible for:**
   A. 500 feet
   B. 250 feet
   C. 300 feet
   D. Only visible at night

CHAPTER 3 – SIGNS, SIGNALS, & MARKINGS

The language of the road is spoken in signs, signals, and pavement markings. It is a language you must know well if you are to drive safely.

► KNOW SIGNS BY THEIR SHAPE AND COLOR

Each type of sign has a special color to help you recognize the sign at a glance. The colors are illustrated below. In addition to color, the shape of a traffic sign also helps you identify the sign and what you must do to obey it. In poor visibility conditions, such as heavy fog, you may be able to make out only the shape of a sign. It is important for drivers to get to know both the colors and shapes of highway signs.



Red - used for STOP and YIELD signs, multiway supplemental plates, DO NOT ENTER and WRONG WAY signs, for legend or symbols on some regulatory signs, and as part of Interstate and some state route markers

Yellow - used as background color for warning signs (except temporary signs) and school signs

Fluorescent Pink - used as background color for incident management signs

Fluorescent Yellow-Green - used as background color for pedestrian, bicycle, and school warning signs

White - used as background color for most regulatory signs and some route markers, and as legend color on signs with red, green, blue, brown, and black backgrounds

Orange - used as background color for temporary traffic control signs

Green - used as background color for guide and information signs, and for legend on permissive regulation and parking signs

Blue - used as background color for traveler services information signs, emergency evacuation route signs, and as part of Interstate and some state route markers

Brown - used as background color for guide and information signs related to points of recreational or cultural interest

Black - used as background color for ONE WAY, night speed limit, and truck regulatory signs, and as legend color on signs with white, yellow, orange, fluorescent pink, and fluorescent yellow-green backgrounds

► SIGNS, SIGNALS, AND ROAD MARKINGS

The United States is moving toward an international-type system of traffic control devices, which emphasize picture and symbolic signs rather than written messages.

Illustrated on the next few pages you will find these new signs along with their counterparts, some of which will be in use for some time. Changes to the new signage are being made only when the old style signs are replaced due to repairs or maintenance.

A thorough knowledge of traffic signs, signals, and road markings is necessary for all drivers. You must be able to recognize and obey these signs without hesitation.

Signs, signals and road markings are placed on our highways to inform, warn and regulate drivers. They must be obeyed; violators will be arrested.

The types of traffic signs are classified according to function. They are regulatory, warning and information guide signs.

■ SIGNS

Intersection Traffic Control Signs

Intersections may be dangerous. Traffic control devices, such as signs that prohibit certain actions or movements, are shown in this section.

These signs help increase safety by controlling the flow of traffic through intersections. Remember: red always means stop, yield, do not enter, or wrong way.

The STOP sign is the only eight-sided traffic sign. It means that you must come to a complete stop before entering the intersection ahead and yield to traffic close enough to be an immediate hazard. If there is a crosswalk, stop before entering it.

The YIELD sign means slow down to a reasonable speed and yield right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway being entered.

The DO NOT ENTER square means the road ahead is a one-way roadway, or all vehicular traffic is not permitted. *DO NOT ENTER.*

The signs below prohibit certain actions. When you see a sign with a red circle and a red slash mark across a black arrow or symbol, it means don't do whatever is shown.

Regulatory Signs

The following signs tell you what to do. They show the driver's maximum speed or other required action. The signs shown are examples of regulatory signs, but there are many more such signs in use. Regulatory signs are rectangular with black words or symbols on a white background. You must obey the rules on all regulatory signs.

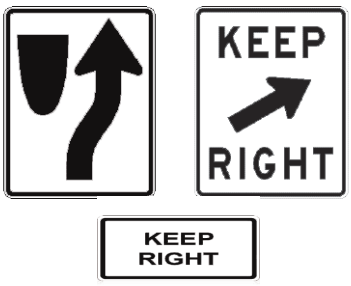
DO NOT PASS
You must not pass any vehicles going in the same direction as you are while you are in this area.

DO NOT ENTER
The road ahead is a one-way roadway or all vehicular traffic is prohibited.

PASS WITH CARE
When you have passed this sign, you are again allowed to pass other vehicles with care.

NO U TURN
You cannot turn about to go in the opposite direction at this intersection.

NO LEFT TURN
You must not make a left turn at this intersection.



KEEP RIGHT
Traffic is required to keep to the right of obstruction.

SPEED LIMIT
This indicates the maximum speed limit that you may travel on the road from where this sign is posted until a different speed sign is posted. Since visibility is limited at night, your speed may be limited also.

SPEED ZONE AHEAD
You are approaching an area where a reduced speed limit has been established.

Warning Signs

Warning signs are black and yellow. These signs are used to warn you of dangerous conditions ahead where you are required to drive with great caution. Warning signs are usually diamond shaped. However, the “railroad crossing ahead” sign is round. It is the only round warning traffic sign. There are many different warning signs, not all of which are shown here:

Crossroad
A four-way intersection is ahead. Be alert for cross traffic entering the roadway.

Winding Road
The road ahead is winding with a series of turns or curves.

T Intersection
You cannot go straight ahead. Road turns to both right and left.

Side Road (angled)
There is a side road ahead that enters the highway at an angle.

Side Road
There is a side road ahead that enters the highway ahead from the right.

Sharp Right Turn
There is a sharp turn to the right in the road ahead.

Sharp Left and Right Turn
The road ahead turns sharply to the left, then right.

Right and Left Curves
The road ahead curves to the right and then the left.

Railroad Crossing
There is a railroad crossing ahead.

Narrow Bridge
The bridge ahead is narrower than the road you are on. However, there is room to meet and pass.

School Ahead
There is a school ahead. Slow down and watch for children at all times.

Loose Gravel
The highway ahead is covered with loose gravel.

One Lane Bridge
There is not room on the bridge to meet or pass another car or truck.

Range Cattle
Where there are no fences, cattle and horses may be on the highway.

Road Narrows
The road ahead is not as wide as the road you’re on; however, there is room to meet and pass.

Icy Road
This sign is used whenever the road is icy and dangerous.

Narrow Bridge
The bridge ahead may be too narrow to meet or pass a truck. You must be careful.

School Bus Stop Ahead
This sign warns you that there is a school bus stop ahead. Begin slowing now.

Stop Ahead
There is a stop sign ahead. Begin slowing now.

Right Curve (with safe speed indication)
There is a right curve ahead. A suggested safe speed for the curve may appear just below the sign.

School Crossing Ahead
You are approaching a school crossing. Slow down and watch for children at all times.

School Crossing
School children cross the roadway at this point. You must stop if pedestrians are waiting to cross.

Pedestrian Crossing
Be alert for people crossing your path. Slow down and be prepared to stop.

Low Clearance
The overpass has a low clearance. Do not proceed if your vehicle is too tall to pass under.

Hill
A steep grade is ahead. Check your brakes. You may need to shift into a lower gear.

Divided Highway Begins
A median or divider ahead splits the highway into two separate roadways, and each roadway is one-way. Keep to the right.

Divided Highway Ends
The highway ahead becomes a single roadway with traffic going in both directions. Keep to the right.

Deer Crossing
Deer often cross the highway in this area. Be alert. Slow down if you see a deer.

Cattle Crossing
A highway quite often splits a farm. This sign indicates a point where the stock is driven from one area to another.

Slippery When Wet
Pavement is unusually slick when wet. Reduce your speed; do not brake hard or change directions suddenly. Increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.

Construction and Maintenance Signs

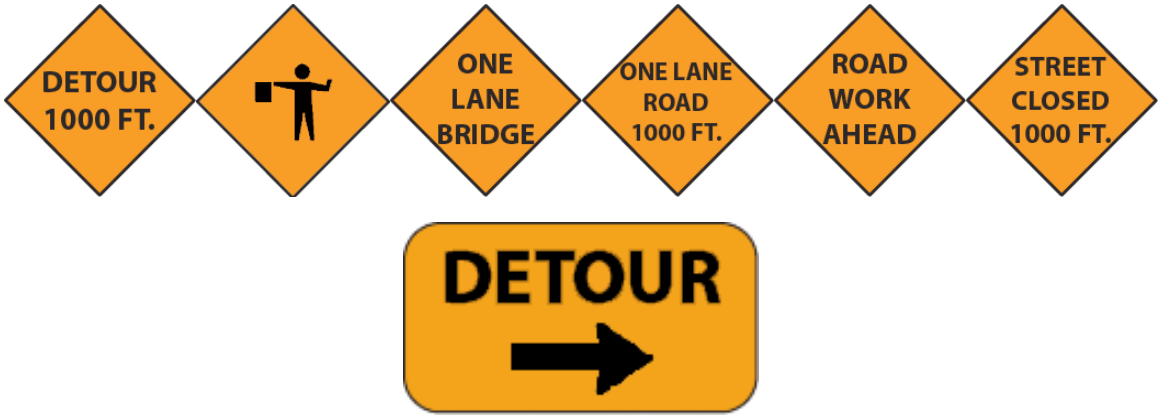
Various traffic control devices are used in construction and maintenance work areas to direct drivers or pedestrians safely through the work zone and to provide for the safety of the highway workers.

The most commonly used traffic control devices are signs, barricades, drums, cones, tubes, flashing arrow panels and flag persons. Orange is the basic color for these devices.

•Signs

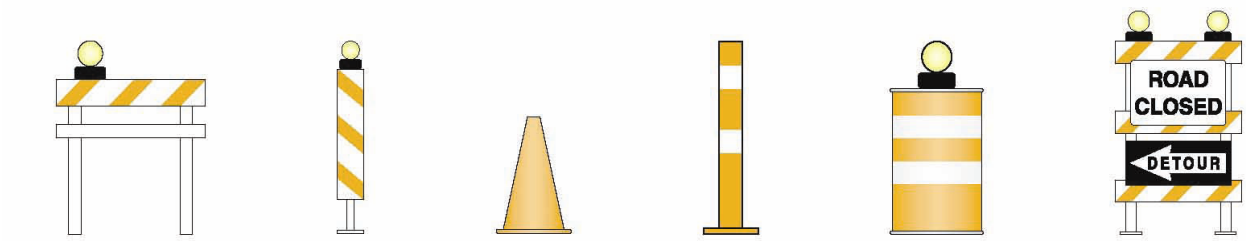
Construction and maintenance signs are used to notify drivers of unusual or potentially dangerous conditions in or near work areas. Most signs in work areas are diamond shaped. A few signs are rectangular. They are warning the highway ahead is being repaired, approach with caution. Also, there are men and women working ahead.

It is a violation to exceed the posted speed in construction and work zones. The fines for violation of a work zone are double the amount. In addition, a person who knowingly or negligently drives a motor vehicle in a highway construction zone in such a manner as to endanger persons or property, or if a person purposely removes, ignores or intentionally strikes a traffic control device, is guilty of a misdemeanor and the penalty is the same as reckless driving.



•Devices

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



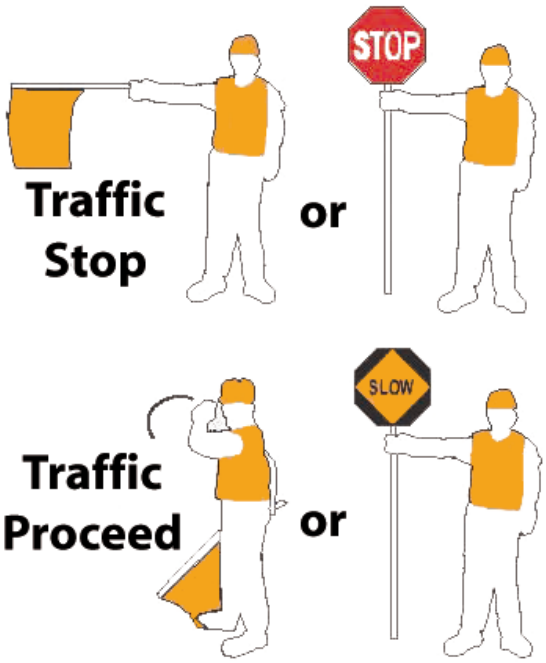
The diagonal stripes on the barricade or vertical panel guide the driver toward the direction to which traffic is to pass. Stripes sloping downward to the right mean the driver should bear to the right. Conversely, stripes sloping downward to the left mean bear to the left.

Bear Left

Bear Right

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

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



► CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Traffic fines double in work zones. There is not a standard speed limit in construction or work zones. The Department of Transportation, local authority, utility company, or private contractor sets a speed limit specific to each zone.

You may be charged with Reckless Endangerment of a Highway Worker if you knowingly or negligently drive a motor vehicle in a highway construction zone in a way that endangers persons or property, or remove, ignore, or intentionally strike a traffic control device.

► SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY STANDARDS

Develop the habit of checking your speed and slowing down near any school at all hours. Traffic congestion at school pick-up and drop-off times increases confusion in parking lots and adjacent streets. Plan a route that avoids school zones when you can. Mixing speeding or distracted driving with child pedestrians and bicyclists is dangerous because children are difficult to see due to their size and tendency toward unpredictable behavior.

Children walking or bicycling to school often ignore or don't understand traffic control so they cross streets and parking lots wherever it is convenient. They often do not check for an appropriate gap or for the right of way when crossing streets. Children need time to develop the ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. Young children may think that a car is able to stop when in fact it can't. Also, children may think that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them.

- Slow down for school zones
- School zone speed limits may be as low as 15 mph (MCA 61-8-310)
- Watch out for children near schools and parks day and night
- Stop and STAY stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks and at intersections

■ School Zone

School zone means an area near a school beginning at the school's front door, encompassing the campus and school property, and including the streets directly adjacent to the school property and for as many blocks surrounding the school as determined by the local authority establishing a special speed limit. See MCA 61-1-101(68).

■ School Crossings

Drivers must **always** yield to pedestrians in school crosswalks. There may or may not be school crossing guards to assist with safe pedestrian crossing. Drivers should stop before crosswalks so other drivers can also see pedestrians.

Drivers can't drive through a column of school children crossing a roadway, or past a school crossing guard while the crossing guard is directing the movement of children across a roadway and while the crossing guard is holding an official sign in the stop position. See MCA 61-8-502.

■ School Speed Limit

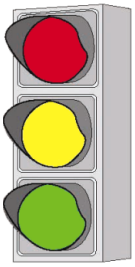
School speed limit signs indicate posted speeds or where reduced speeds have been authorized by local authorities. Watch for signs, markings, and/or flashing lights as indicators of speed limit changes. See MCA 61-8-310(1)(d).

■ Parking and Stopping

Signs may be used to prevent parked or waiting vehicles from blocking travel lanes and views for both drivers and pedestrians, keep school bus loading zones clear, and increase visibility of school zones.

■ Fines Doubled in School Zones

Montana law enforces a strict policy on speed violations in or near school zones. Fines are doubled in all school zones throughout Montana.

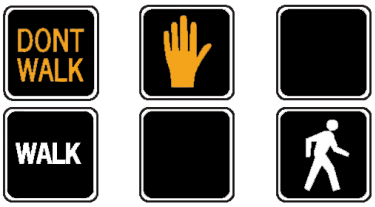


► TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Traffic signals are used to control drivers of vehicles and pedestrians at some intersections and mid-block crosswalks. Signals promote better movement of traffic on busy roads by assigning right of way. Generally, if a signal is not working, stop as you would if there were stop signs in all directions. Common courtesy says the driver who stops first should get to go first. However, stay cautious and be sure it is safe to proceed even when you are the first vehicle to reach the intersection.

■ Pedestrian Signals

These are special stop and go signals for pedestrians. When used, pedestrians must obey these signals rather than red-yellow-green traffic lights. Pedestrians facing a WALK signal may start from the curb or sidewalk to cross the street. If a DON'T WALK signal is showing or flashing, pedestrians must wait until a WALK signal appears before starting to cross the intersection. Pedestrians who are in the cross-walk when the DON'T WALK signal begins flashing should continue crossing the street. An upheld **orange hand** means DON'T WALK. A **white pedestrian figure** means WALK.



■ Vehicle Signals

	A **steady red signal** means “STOP.” Stop before a stop line on the pavement. If there is no stop line, stop before entering the nearest crosswalk or before entering the intersection if there is no crosswalk. When entering a two-way street, you may cautiously turn right after stopping. You may make the right turn unless a sign or police officer tells you not to turn against the red light. Yield to pedestrians, bicyclists, and traffic in the intersection. Look for pedestrians to the left, right, and ahead. When entering a one-way street from a one-way street, you may also turn left after stopping for the red light. Yield, if needed. Pedestrians facing a red light must not enter the street unless a pedestrian signal directs otherwise.
	A **steady red arrow** means “STOP.” Stop and remain stopped except for allowed turns on red. (Review above)
	A **flashing red signal** means the same as a stop sign. Come to a complete stop. Look to the left, right, and ahead, yield to traffic and pedestrians and proceed when it is safe to do so.
	A **steady yellow signal** means “CAUTION.” Cautiously enter the intersection. The signal is about to turn red. Do not enter an intersection against a steady yellow light unless you are too close to stop safely. Pedestrians facing a yellow light must not start across the street unless a pedestrian signal directs otherwise.
	A **steady yellow arrow** means that the time to make a “protected” turn is about to end or stop. Vehicles making a turn should clear the intersection. Be prepared to obey the next signal, which could be an arrow with a green or red light.
	A **flashing yellow arrow** means left turns are allowed, but you must first yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. Oncoming traffic has a green light. You must determine if there is a safe gap before turning.
	A **flashing yellow signal** means “PROCEED WITH CAUTION.” It usually means you need to slow down.
	A **steady green signal** means “GO.” Cautiously enter the intersection. Look both ways for oncoming traffic that may run the red light. Pedestrians facing a green light may cross the street in a marked or unmarked crosswalk, unless directed by other signs or pedestrian signal.
	A **steady green arrow** means that you have a “protected” turning movement. If there is no green arrow, left and right turning traffic is “unprotected” and must yield right of way to oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

► ROUNDABOUTS IN MONTANA

Roundabouts are circular intersections designed to reduce traffic crashes, delays, and speeds. These rules will help you navigate your way through a Montana roundabout:

1. **Slow Down** – Driving speeds in roundabouts are 15 mph or less
2. **Look to the Left** –Yield to vehicles that are already in the roundabout; they have the right-of-way. ***Traffic flows in a counterclockwise direction***.
3. **Stay Right** – Enter the roundabout and stay to the right of the center island. Do not stop if the way is clear. ***Never pass or overtake another vehicle after entering a single-lane roundabout.***
4. **Travel Around the Circle** – Travel around the circle until you reach your desired street; use your right-turn signal and exit the roundabout.

Roundabouts are easy to navigate and are safer than traditional intersections. When entering and exiting a roundabout, watch for and yield to pedestrians in or waiting at the crosswalk.

■ Large Vehicles

Give large vehicles the space they need. Roundabouts are designed to handle all sizes of vehicles, including truck and trailer combinations. The center island of the single lane roundabout is built with a gradually sloped and flat curb, called a truck apron. The rear wheels of a large vehicle will cross over the truck apron. The driver of the smaller vehicle should drop back behind the larger truck as it completes its travel through the roundabout.

■ Pedestrians

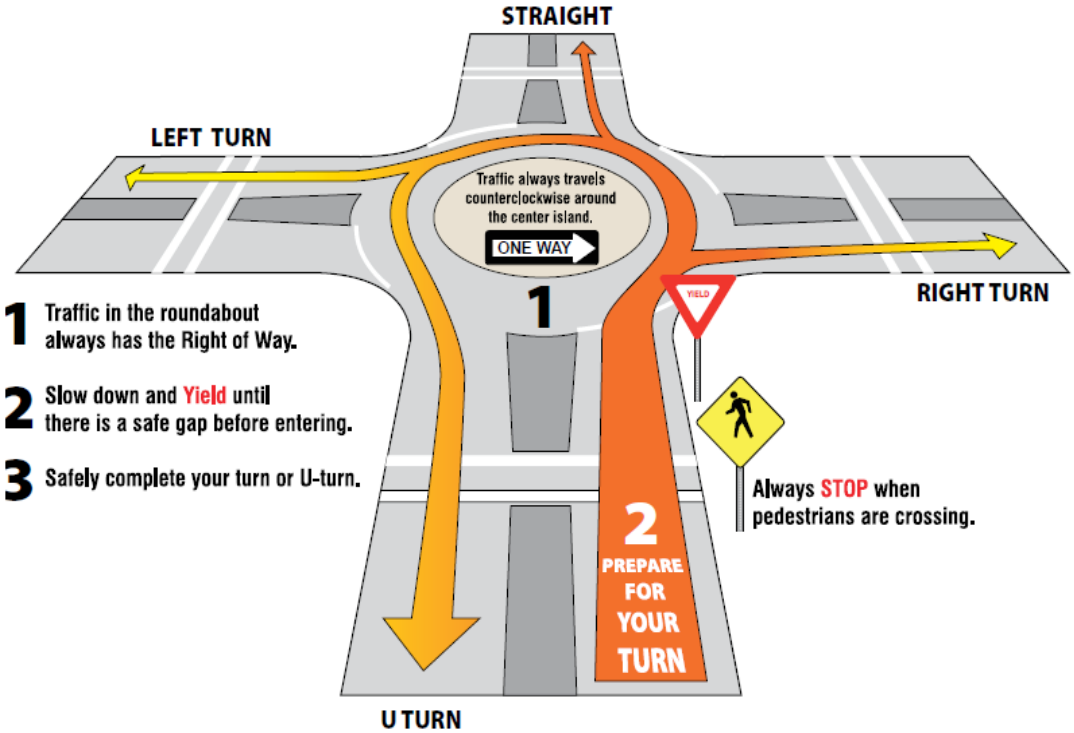
Yield to pedestrians. All pedestrians must cross at the designated crosswalks. Never cross to the central island. Although vehicles are required to stop for pedestrians, pedestrians should always exercise caution when crossing.

■ Bicyclists

Walk your bicycle and use the crosswalks. Bicyclists are encouraged to walk their bicycles on the sidewalks and use the pedestrian crosswalks. If you are comfortable riding in traffic, ride on the circulatory roadway of the roundabout like a car, but obey the same traffic rules as motorized vehicles. Clearly signal your turning intentions.

■ Emergency Vehicles

Do not pull over or stop in the roundabout when approached by an emergency vehicle. Continue on and exit as normal, then pull to the right where there is room for the emergency vehicle to pass. If you are approaching the roundabout, pull over if there is room for the emergency vehicle to get by; if there is not room, continue through the roundabout and pull over after exiting.



► RAILROAD CROSSING WARNING SIGNS/SIGNALS

Many railroad crossings have signs or signals to warn drivers. Never try to beat a train across the tracks. Stop if there is any question about safety. Never start to cross until there is room for your vehicle on the far side. It is wise to not shift gears when crossing railroad tracks, just in case you might stall.

Public railroad grade crossings have been marked with warning devices for your safety by both highway departments and the railroad companies. Learn what they are and watch for them. With these warning devices and caution on your part, railroad grade crossing crashes should never happen.

You are required to STOP at railroad crossings as close as practicable but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail when warning signals, crossing gates, stop signs, or human watchmen indicate the approach of a train, or when the train is within 1500 feet of the crossing or if clearly visible and an obvious hazard.

■ Advance Warning Signs

Advance warning signs are located in advance of the crossings. They tell you to slow down, look, listen, and be prepared to stop at the crossing ahead.

■ Pavement Markings

Pavement markings consisting of a STOP LINE, an X and letters RR may be painted on the pavement in front of crossings. This warns you to be alert to the crossing ahead.

■ Railroad Cross Buck Signs

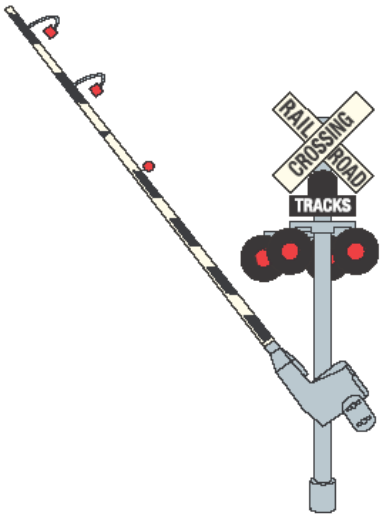
Railroad cross buck signs will be found at all public crossings. If there is more than one track, a sign below the cross buck indicates the number of tracks. Be prepared to stop at the tracks if a train is coming.

■ Flashing Light Signals

Flashing Light Signals are used with cross buck signs at many railroad crossings. Always stop when the lights begin to flash. This means that a train is coming. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before starting to cross.

■ Gates

Gates are used with flashing light signals at certain crossings. Stop when the lights begin to flash before the gates lower across your road lane. Remain stopped until the gates are raised and the lights stop flashing.



► ROAD MARKINGS

A broken yellow line as the centerline may be crossed. Don't cross the centerline unless overtaking or passing. A solid yellow line on your side means that you cannot pass over the centerline. A double yellow line may not be crossed by traffic moving in either direction. Crossing a solid centerline is permitted only as part of a left turn maneuver. Heed other pavement markings, such as pedestrian crosswalk strips, warning signs, etc.

► PAVEMENT MARKINGS

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

■ Edge and Lane Lines

Solid lines along the side of the road show you where the edge of the road is located. Lines separating lanes of traffic moving in the same direction are white. Lines separating traffic moving in opposite directions are yellow.

White Lane Markings

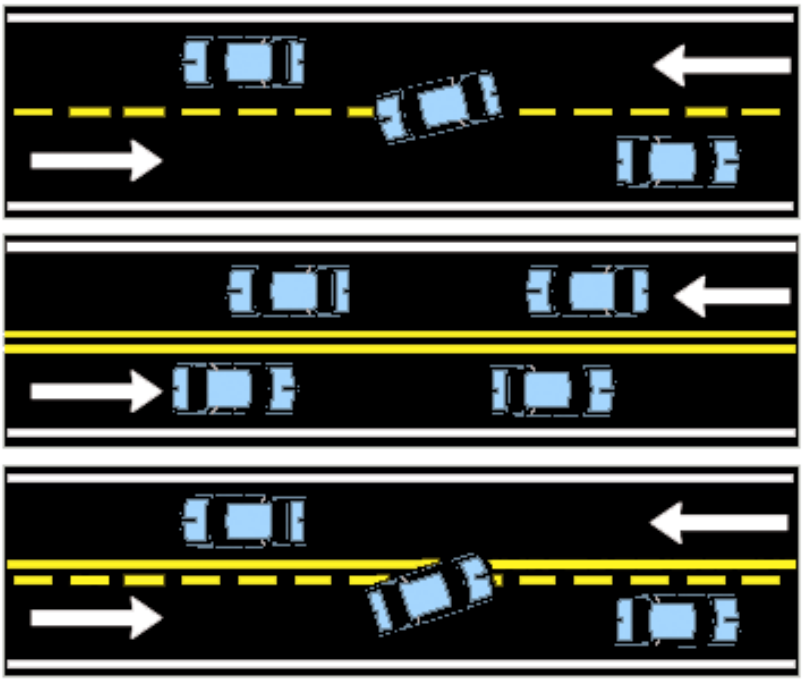
A dashed white line between lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to change lanes if it is safe to do so. A solid white line between lanes of traffic means that you should stay in your lane unless a special situation requires you to change lanes.

Crosswalks and Stop Lines

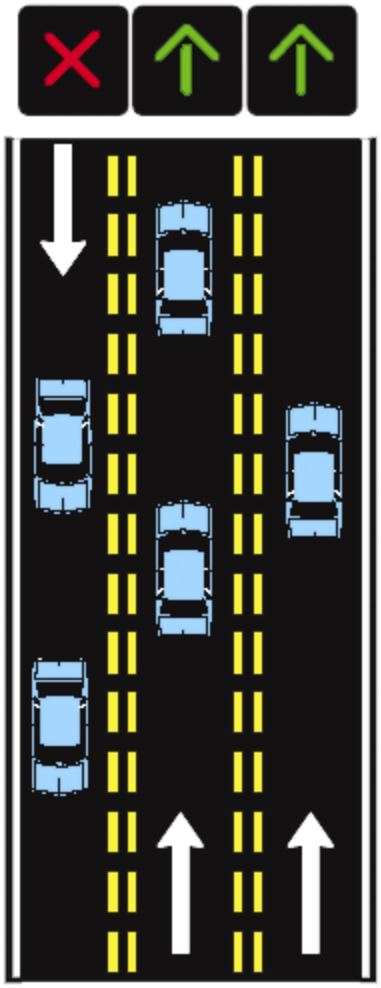
When required to stop because of a sign or signal, you must stop before your vehicle reaches the stop line, or if there is one, a crosswalk. Crosswalks define the area where pedestrians are to cross the roadway. You must yield to pedestrians in or about to enter a crosswalk. Not all crosswalks are marked.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

Yellow Lane Markings

A dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic means that you may cross it to pass if it is safe to do so. Some passing zones have signs that tell you where you can pass and where you cannot pass. Where there is both a solid and a dashed yellow line between opposing lanes of traffic, you may not pass if the solid yellow line is on your side. If the dashed line is on your side, you may pass if it is safe to do so. Two solid lines between opposing lanes of traffic means neither side can pass. You may cross a solid yellow line to turn into a public or private parking lot, private driveway, or a roadway if it is safe to do so.



■ Other Lane Controls



Reversible Lanes

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

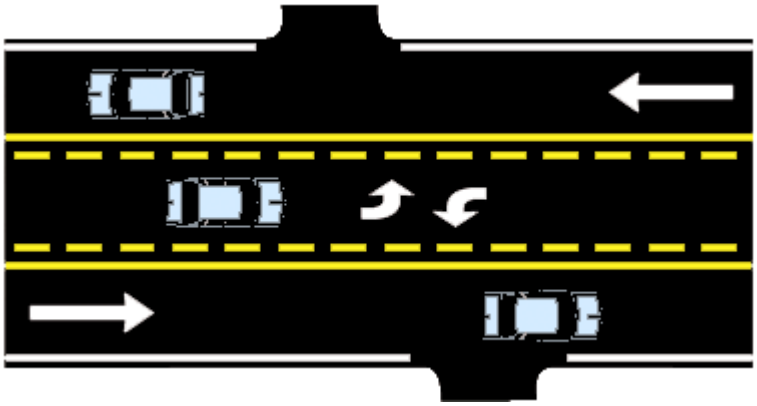
Reserved Lanes

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

- "Transit" or "Bus" means the lane is for bus use only.
- "Bicycle" means the lane is reserved for bicycles.
- "HOV" stands for High Occupancy Vehicles and indicates lanes reserved for vehicles with more than one person in them. Signs say how many people must be in the vehicle, as well as the days and hours to which it applies. For example, "HOV 3" means that there must be at least three people in the vehicle.

Shared Center Lane

These center lanes are reserved for making left turns (or U-turns when they are permitted), but can be used by vehicles traveling in both directions. On the pavement, left-turn arrows for traffic in one direction are alternate with left-hand arrows for traffic coming from the other direction. These lanes are marked on each side by a solid yellow and dashed yellow line.



■ No Lane Markings

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

CHAPTER 3 QUIZ

1. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. There is a bus stop ahead.
- B. There is a stop sign ahead.
- C. There is a caution sign ahead.
- D. You must stop when other cars stop.

2. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. You must drive slowly and sound horn.
- B. You must watch for children in this area.
- C. You must watch for children during school hours.
- D. School ahead - slow down and watch for children at all times.

3. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. The highway ahead turns only to the right.
- B. The highway ahead turns sharply to the right.
- C. The highway ahead turns to the right and then the left.
- D. The highway ahead turns to the left and then to the right.

4. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. Trucks are permitted on a narrow bridge.
- B. The bridge ahead is open to one-way traffic only.
- C. The bridge ahead is wide enough for one car at a time.
- D. The bridge ahead may be too narrow to meet or pass a truck, you must be careful.

5. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. There is a detour ahead.
- B. You must stop for flaggers.
- C. The road ahead is closed to traffic.
- D. The highway ahead is being repaired, approach with caution.

6. The sign pictured at the right means that:
- A. There are trucks hauling gravel ahead.
- B. The highway ahead is under construction.
- C. The highway ahead is covered with loose gravel.
- D. The highway ahead has been sanded for icy conditions.

7. The shared center lane is reserved for:
- A. Making left turns.
- B. U-turns when they are permitted.
- C. Can be used by vehicles traveling in both directions.
- D. All of the above.

CHAPTER 4 – DRIVING RULES

► DRIVER TEST FOR IPAD AND IPHONE

You can download a free app to test your knowledge of Montana's driving laws. This app was created by the MVD to help you learn the rules to become a safe driver. A link can be found at dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing.

► GENERAL DRIVING

- Drive at a speed that is safe for conditions.
- Respect other road users, share the road, and drive courteously.
- Only move a vehicle when it can be done safely and without interfering with traffic.
- Walk around your parked car before backing up.
- Never back up or stop in any travel lane for any reason (confusion, breakdown, letting out a passenger); keep moving until you can safely pull off the road.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS KEEP YOU SAFE

The first rule of the road is OBEY:

- OBEY the orders of highway patrol, police officers, and flaggers
- OBEY all traffic control devices
- OBEY traffic laws

Some basic, important laws are:

- Drive in a careful and safe manner.
- Use a proper turn signal 100 feet before turning in town, 300 feet before turning on rural roads.
- Stay in the right lane, except to pass, on a road with three or more lanes traveling in the same direction. If there is a lot of traffic entering, use the center travel lane.
- If you approached a turn in the wrong lane or forgot to signal, you should proceed, get into the proper lane, go to the next intersection, signal, and then turn.
- Unless told to do so, never drive on the shoulder of the road.

► SPEED LIMITS

Always obey the posted speed limit and take road conditions into consideration. If the road or weather is bad, you may need to drive below the speed limit.

	CARS and LIGHT TRUCKS		HEAVY TRUCKS*	
	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT
Interstate Highways	75/80	75/80	65	65
Urban Area Highways**	65	65	65	65
Two-Lane Highways	70	65	60	55

**Trucks in excess of one ton Manufacturer's Rated capacity.*

***Applies to interstates within the Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula areas.*

Vehicles traveling on a two-lane road may exceed the speed limit by 10 miles an hour in order to overtake and pass another vehicle and return safely to the right lane.

► PASSING

Pass only when it can be done safely.

On **two-lane roads**, you can drive to the left of the centerline of a highway when overtaking and passing another vehicle.

On **multi-lane roads**, the left-most lane is intended to be used to pass slower vehicles.

If you **pass on the right**, the other driver may have difficulty seeing you and might suddenly change lanes in front of you. Passing on the right is legal only when the vehicle you're passing is making or about to make a left turn, or on a road with unobstructed pavement wide enough for two or more lanes of vehicles legally going in the same direction as the vehicle you're passing. You cannot pass on the right by driving off the pavement or main-traveled portion of the road, which means never passing on the shoulder (whether it is paved or not). Other drivers will never expect you to be there and may pull off the road without looking.

► TURNING

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

■ Right Turns

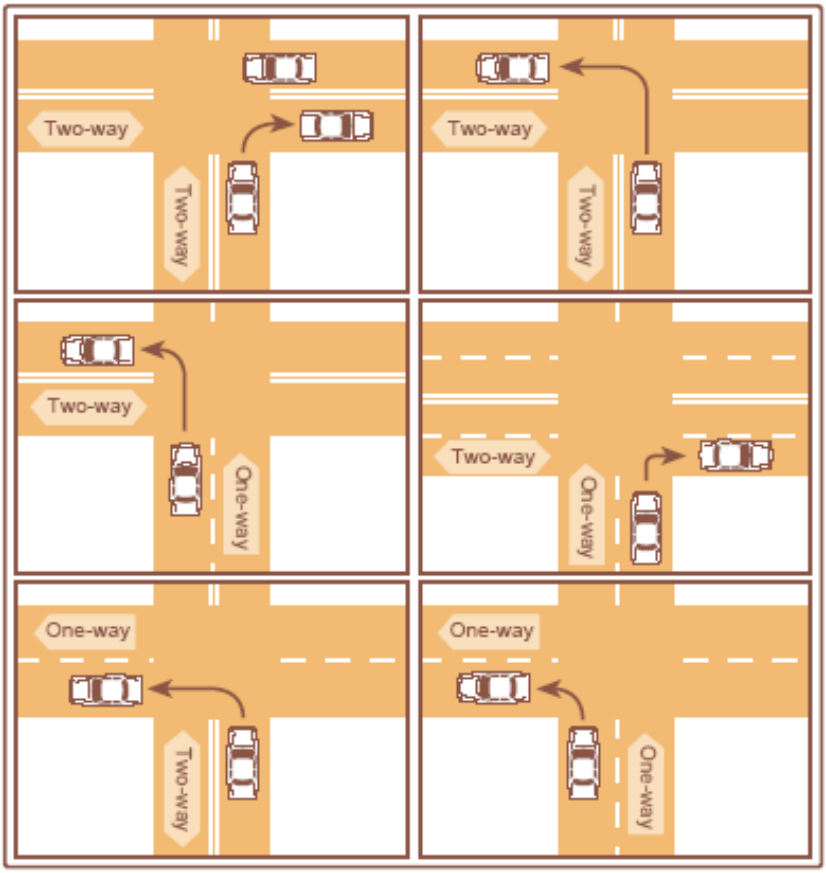
On right turns, avoid swinging wide to the left before turning to make the turn easier. If you swing wide, the driver behind you may think you are changing lanes or going to turn left and may try to pass you on the right. If you swing wide as you complete the turn, drivers who are in the far lane will not expect to see you there.

■ Left Turns

When making a left turn, avoid cutting the corner so sharply that you run into someone approaching from the left. However, you must leave room for oncoming vehicles to turn left in front of you.

■ Turning Around

Common sense should tell us never to try turning around on a busy street or near a curve or hill. Not only is it illegal, but also it is dangerous to turn around in any of these situations. You may turn around on a roadway where the driver has 500 feet in both directions (almost two average city blocks) of unobstructed view and no vehicles are approaching. Remember that most city ordinances prohibit U-turns in the middle of a block and some prohibit U-turns entirely. Above all, remember that no vehicle shall be turned at any time unless it is in the proper lane and it is safe to do so.



► RIGHT-OF-WAY

Where vehicles or pedestrians are likely to meet one another, and there are not 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 says who must *yield* the right-of-way; it does not *give* anyone the right-of-way. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

■ Pedestrians

To a driver, a pedestrian is a hazard - or should that be the other way around? In either case, drivers and pedestrians must share our roadways and each MUST be aware and alert for the other.

Obviously in any conflict between a vehicle and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is going to be the loser. This would seem to indicate that those on foot have the responsibility to stay out of trouble with vehicles. To a certain extent, this is true. These laws are well and good, but it is still the driver's basic responsibility to be alert for pedestrians and to yield the right-of-way, even if the pedestrian is wrong. Just as the fact that a stop sign does not cause a vehicle to stop if the driver ignores it, pedestrian laws don't keep people off the streets, especially if they are young. Be alert at all times for pedestrians - especially in residential areas where children may be playing.

In addition to simple common sense, there are traffic laws and safety rules that govern pedestrians:

- Pedestrians using a guide dog or carrying a white cane have absolute right-of-way. Do not use your horn because it could confuse or frighten the blind pedestrian.
- Drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians crossing in a crosswalk, but no pedestrian can leave a curb and walk into the path of a vehicle.
- People walking along the highway at night should wear light-colored clothing or carry a light.
- Where sidewalks are provided, it is against the law for pedestrians to walk on the roadway.
- When people are walking on the roadway, they must walk on the left (facing oncoming traffic).
- Pedestrians must cross streets at intersections, using crosswalks as provided.
- Pedestrians must obey all the traffic laws and rules that apply to them.

■ Intersections

The following right-of-way rules apply at intersections:

- Drivers crossing a sidewalk, entering or exiting a driveway, alley, or parking lot must yield to pedestrians. It is illegal to drive on a sidewalk, except to cross it.
- Drivers turning left must yield to oncoming cars going straight ahead.
- Drivers entering a traffic circle or rotary must yield to drivers already in the circle.
- At an intersection where there is no stop sign or traffic signal, drivers should yield to vehicles coming from the **right**. However, a driver should always be prepared to yield to avoid a crash. Do this by taking your foot off the accelerator, cover the brake, and look left, right, and left again.
- At a four-way stop, the driver reaching the intersection first gets to go first (after coming to a complete stop).
- Drivers entering a road from a driveway, alley, or roadside must stop and yield to vehicles already on the main roadway.
- Drivers may not enter an intersection unless they can get through it without having to stop. You should wait until traffic ahead clears so that you are not blocking the intersection.
- A yield sign means that you must slow to a reasonable speed and yield right-of-way to **all** vehicles.
- At intersections controlled by a light, unless there is a sign that says you cannot turn right, you may turn right AFTER YOU HAVE STOPPED (if vehicle is in the proper lane) and you have determined it is safe to do so. Montana law also permits turning left from a one-way street to a one-way street under the condition stated above for turning right on red. When you reach a red light and wish to make a right turn and your car is in the left lane, drive to the next intersection, get into the proper lane, and then make the turn.

■ Crosswalks

- Drivers must exercise care to avoid hitting pedestrians.
- Drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians crossing in a crosswalk, but no pedestrian can leave a curb and walk into the path of a vehicle.
- When a vehicle is stopped at a marked crosswalk or at an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, the driver can make a right turn if the pedestrian is in the opposite half of the roadway and is not in danger.
- When a vehicle is stopped at a marked crosswalk or at an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection to let a pedestrian cross the street, other drivers approaching from the rear may not pass the stopped vehicle.

■ Overtaking Vehicles

Drivers overtaking a vehicle traveling in the same direction must yield to that vehicle, even if the vehicle is slowing or coming to a stop.

■ Emergency Vehicles

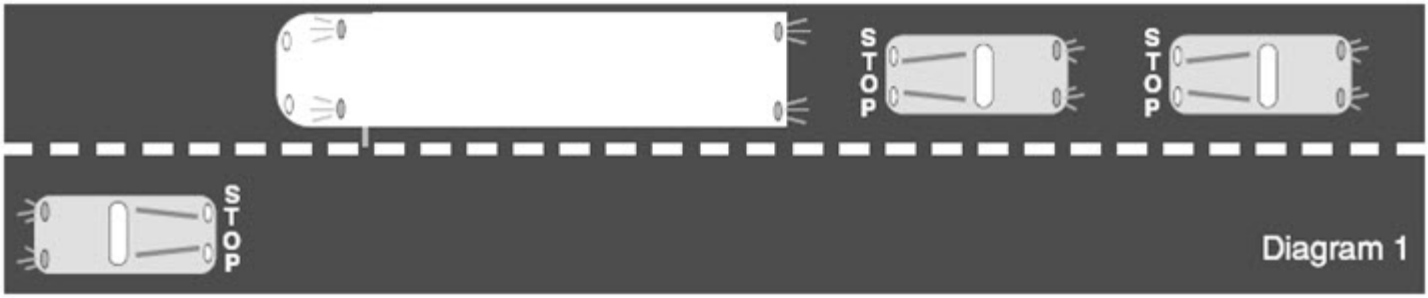
You must yield the right-of-way to a police vehicle, fire engine, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle using a siren or air horn and a red or blue flashing light. **Pull over to the right edge of the road or as near to the right as possible when you see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction.** Follow any instructions given over the emergency vehicle's loudspeaker. Also, stop and remain stopped until the vehicle has passed. If you are in an intersection, drive through the intersection before you pull over and stop.

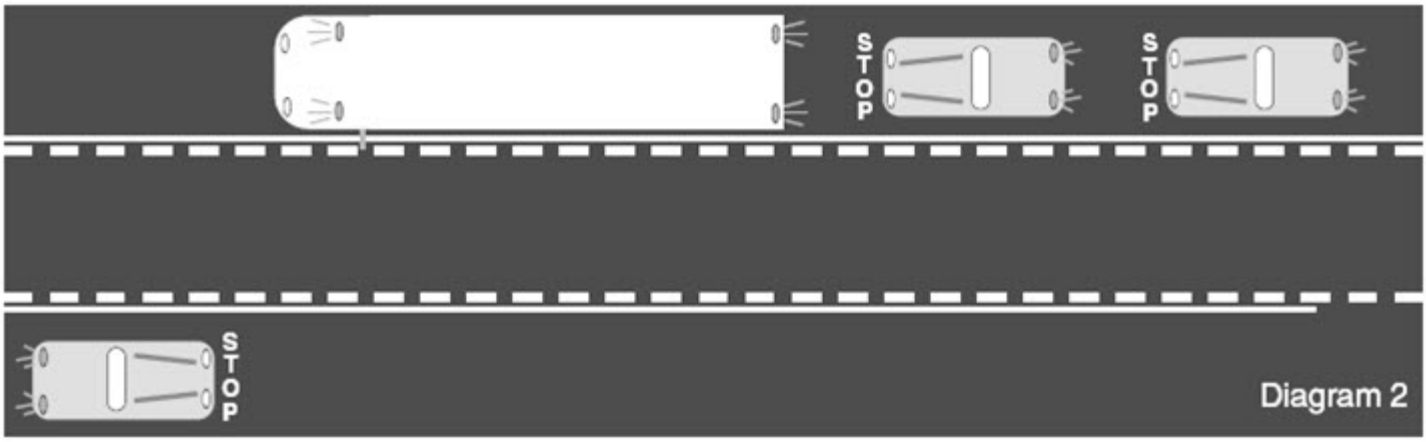
■ School Buses

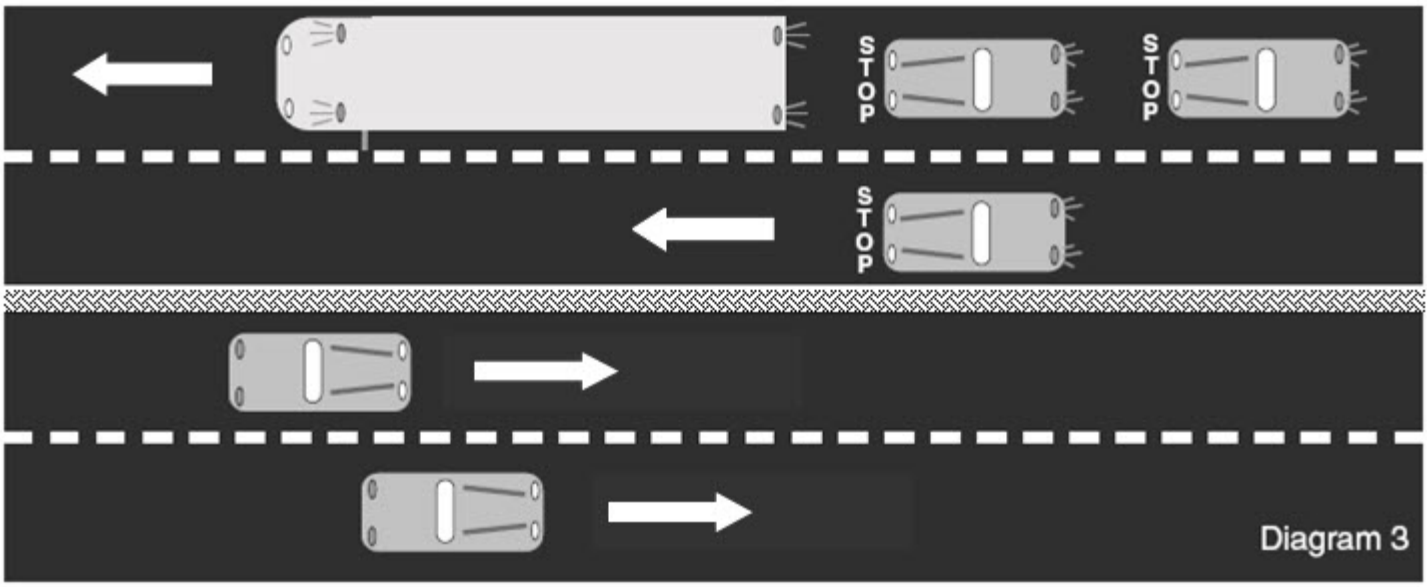
Let's give our children a "brake." Every child is a human caution sign and as unpredictable as Montana's weather. Upon meeting or passing from either direction any school bus stopped with its red lights flashing, the driver of a vehicle must stop at least 30 feet from the bus and cannot proceed until the red lights are turned off (Diagrams 1 and 2). If you approach a bus from either direction that is slowing down in preparation to stop to load passengers, or a bus displaying a yellow flashing light, you must slow down and proceed carefully. Keep in mind that the bus is about to stop and children may be in the road. You do not need to stop if meeting or passing a school bus that is on a different road (Diagram 3) or is stopped in an adjacent loading zone where pedestrians are not allowed to cross the road.

When driving past a school, slow down and watch for children DAY and NIGHT. Kids go back to use the playground at all hours. Develop the habit of checking your speed when nearing any school. BE ALERT.

School bus requirements for stopping at railroad crossings are in MCA 61-8-349.







■ Funeral Procession

The state of Montana has some unique right-of-way provisions when driving in or encountering a funeral procession (MCA 61-8-380 through 61-8-384). By state definition, a funeral procession means two or more motor vehicles, including a funeral lead vehicle and a funeral escort vehicle, one of which is carrying the remains of a deceased person, in the daylight hours (MCA 61-1-415).

State law requires that pedestrians and operators of motor vehicles not part of a funeral procession shall yield the right-of-way to a motor vehicle that is part of a funeral procession being led by a funeral lead vehicle or a funeral escort vehicle.

The driver of a vehicle that is not part of a funeral procession cannot drive between the vehicles forming the procession while the procession is in motion unless the driver is authorized to do so by a police officer, or is driving an emergency vehicle. A driver may not join a funeral procession to secure the right-of-way that the procession enjoys, or pass a procession on a multiple-lane highway on the procession's right side unless the procession is in the farthest left lane.

In addition, the driver of a vehicle not part of a procession may not enter an intersection when a funeral procession is proceeding through a red traffic-control device unless that driver can do so without crossing the path of the funeral procession.

When the funeral lead vehicle arrives at an intersection, it must comply with the requirements of any official traffic-control device, right-of-way provision or local ordinance. At the point that the lead vehicle proceeds, others in the procession may follow through the intersection despite any official traffic control device. However, the operator must exercise reasonable care toward any other vehicle or pedestrian.

When driving in a funeral procession, a driver must follow the preceding vehicle as closely as possible. An ordinance, law, or regulation requiring that motor vehicles be operated to allow sufficient space between them to enable another vehicle to enter and occupy that space without danger does not apply to vehicles in a funeral procession.

A driver in a funeral procession may not drive faster than 55 miles per hour on a highway where the speed limit is 55 miles per hour or more, or may not drive more than 5 miles per hour below the posted speed limit on other streets or roads. All headlights and taillights must be illuminated. In addition, turn signals must be flashing simultaneously as warning lights on a vehicle that is the first vehicle in a funeral procession or believed to be the last vehicle in a funeral procession.

A driver in a funeral procession must yield the right-of-way to an approaching authorized emergency vehicle giving an audible or visual signal.

Remember, however, nothing in the state law relieves a driver from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

► BICYCLISTS & MOTORISTS

■ Same Road – Same Rules – Same Rights

More and more people of all ages are riding bicycles for a variety of reasons, including: health and fitness, enjoyment, energy conservation, and for commuting to work and school less expensively. Bicyclists are not only found traveling on city streets; many are using rural roadways now, as well.

Motorists and bicyclists need to safely and courteously share the roadway with each other. **Under Montana law, bicycles are considered vehicles and are governed by the same traffic laws that reasonably apply to their operation.** It is important for motorists to realize that bicycles and mopeds travel at a slower speed, and make the appropriate adjustments when passing or sharing the roadway with a bicycle or moped.

Perhaps the most hazardous situation is when a motorist approaches a cyclist from behind on a high-speed, two-lane roadway. In this case, the safest way to pass the cyclist is to view it as any other legitimate slow-moving vehicle, such as a farm tractor. If there is no oncoming traffic, carefully cross the centerline to give the cyclist a recommended five-feet distance between them and your motor vehicle. If there is oncoming traffic, slow to the speed of the cyclist and wait for it to be safe to pass.

Do not assume that a cyclist is riding on the shoulder of the road; make the assumption that to safely pass the cyclist you will need to wait for a safe time to leave that driving lane in order to pass the cyclist in a safe manner. Also, do not assume a cyclist is riding alone; many times cyclists travel in groups and ride in a single-file line, which will require more time to safely pass all of the cyclists.

Bicyclists are required by law to ride as far to the right as practical; this does not mean, however, the cyclist is always on the shoulder of the roadway. Many bicyclists will often ride further into the lane (approximately 18-24 inches) to discourage motorists from trying to attempt a dangerous in-lane pass; it is recommended that motorists wait for a safe passing zone to pass the bicyclist.

Shared Lane Markings (also known as sharrows) are pavement markings to help bicyclists position themselves in the right location and in the right direction in a lane that is shared with motor vehicles. By following these markings of two arrows over a bicycle, cyclists can avoid being hit by the open door of a parked vehicle or getting squeezed next to a motor vehicle in a narrow lane. **When you see a shared lane marking, you must look out for bicyclists and make sure that you leave them enough space when passing.** Shared Lane Markings are not the same as the bicycle symbols that are used to mark bicycle lanes.

To clarify, Montana law specifies the following for motorists:

- Motorists must grant people operating bicycles the same rights as the operators of any vehicle legitimately using Montana roadways.
- Motorists may not intentionally interfere with the movement of a person lawfully riding a bicycle.
- Motorists may not overtake and pass a person riding a bicycle unless it can be done without endangering the person riding on the bicycle, or those in any nearby motor vehicle.
- Motorists must yield the right-of-way to a person riding a bicycle within a designated bicycle lane.

Individuals riding bicycles on a roadway must ride in single file except when:

- Riding on bike paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles;
- Overtaking and passing another bicycle;
- Riding on a paved shoulder or on a parking lane, in which case the persons may ride two abreast; or
- Riding within a single lane on a laned roadway with at least two lanes in each direction, in which case the persons may ride two abreast if they do not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic more than they would otherwise impede traffic by riding single-file.

Bicyclists riding on a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic must ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable except when:

- Overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction;
- Preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway; or
- When necessary to avoid a condition that makes it unsafe to continue along the right side of the roadway, including, but not limited to: a fixed or moving object, parked or moving vehicle, pedestrian, animal, surface hazard, or a lane too narrow for a bicycle and another vehicle to travel safely side-by-side within the lane.

- When approaching parked vehicles, many bicyclists will ride far enough away from a vehicle to avoid being “doored.” This term describes a situation when an individual within a parked vehicle suddenly opens their car door without checking for any bicyclists approaching from behind. Frequently, cities place bike lanes next to parking lanes, but bicyclists may be hesitant to use the designated lane due to the danger of being “doored.”

- Most bicycles are not equipped with mirrors, so they are often not aware that a motorist is approaching from behind. Always proceed with extra care when bicycles are in traffic. If approaching a bicyclist from behind, assume he/she does not hear or see you in the motorized vehicle.

- When a bicycle is traveling in your lane and you need to make a right turn, always check to make sure the bicyclist has either stopped to let you turn, or allow the bicyclist to pass you before making the turn. Bicycles *should* pass on the left, but this is often overlooked due to the bicyclist's comfort in doing so.

- Bicycles are less visible and, unlike motorcycles, are not required to have lights during daytime travel.

- Many bicyclists are under the age of 15 and many have not participated in a bicycle safety course or taken the Montana motor vehicle test. They are therefore unaware of many rules of the road, so proceed with extra caution when encountering youngsters on bikes.

- Treat bicyclists with respect. You share the road with bicyclists just as you do any other legitimate user of our roadways. **Do not** honk your horn, yell, or swerve toward a bicyclist. This may startle the bicyclist and cause a serious crash.

■ Equipment and Lighting Required for Bicycles

Montana law requires that bicycles be equipped as follows:

- When used at nighttime, a light on the front, which must emit white light visible for at least 500 feet to the front.

- A light emitting a red light visible from 500 feet to the rear may be used in addition to the rear-facing reflectors, which are required.

- When used at nighttime, both tires of a bicycle must be equipped with retro-reflective sidewalls or reflectors mounted on the spokes of each wheel. Spoke-mounted reflectors must be within 76 mm (3 inches) of the inside of the rim and must be visible on each side of the wheel. The reflectors on the front wheel must be essentially colorless or amber and the reflectors on the rear wheel must be amber or red.

- A brake that will enable the operator to make the wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

In addition, every bicyclist is encouraged to equip his/her bicycle with a fluorescent orange flag, clearly visible from the rear and suspended at least 6 feet above the roadway when the bicycle is standing upright.

Many vehicle/bicycle crashes could be avoided. One of the major causes of such crashes is the fact that most motorists do not see the bicyclist. Start now to think "bicycle" just as you do "vehicle" while driving. Pay extra attention as you enter streets, cross bikeways or sidewalks, and when you make turns. Watch for children on bicycles who may dart out between parked cars or hedges. Keep in mind that bicyclists are very vulnerable.

► PARKING

■ General Guidelines

Drivers are responsible for making sure that their vehicle does not become a hazard after it has been parked. Whenever you park your car, be sure it is in a place that is (1) far enough from any travel lane to avoid interfering with traffic and (2) visible to cars approaching from either direction.

- Always park in a designated area if possible.
- Always set your parking brake when you park. Leave the vehicle in gear if it has a manual transmission, or in park if it has an automatic transmission.
- Check traffic before you open the door. Get out of the vehicle on the curbside if you can. If you have to use the street side, check for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians before you get out. Shut the door as soon as you can after getting out.
- Never leave keys in a parked car. Lock the doors whenever you leave your vehicle.
- If you must park on a roadway, park your vehicle as far away from traffic as possible. If there is a curb, park as close to it as you can. If there is no curb available to stop or park, pull over as close as practicable to the edge of shoulder.
- Your vehicle must be within 18 inches (1.5 feet) of the curb or shoulder.

- Vehicles parked on a roadway or shoulder during hours of darkness must have front and rear lights visible for 500 feet. If headlights are on, they must be dimmed.
- Use your turn signal when entering traffic from a parking space. Be sure to look in both directions and double-check for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians when backing out of a parking space.

■ Parallel Parking

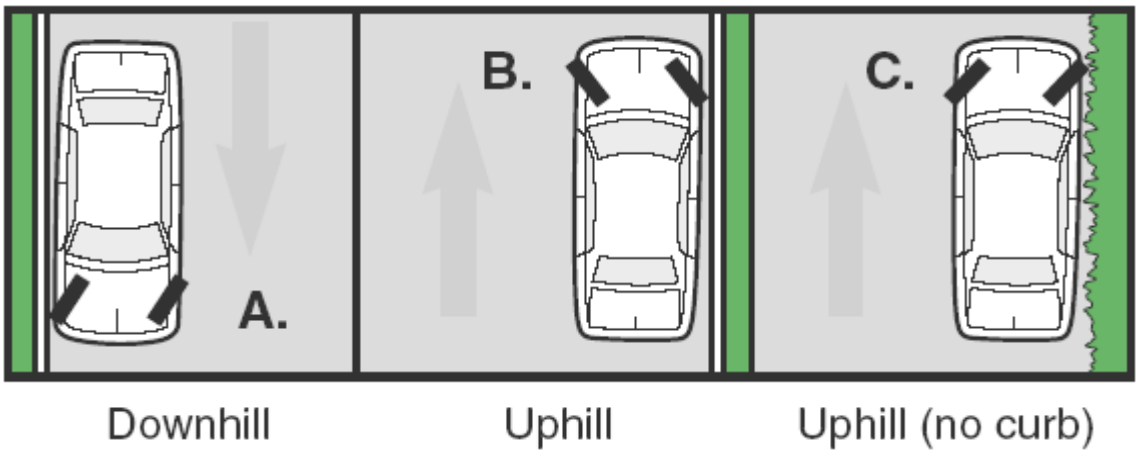
To parallel park in an empty space that has vehicles parked in front of and behind it:

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

■ Parking on a Hill

When you park on a hill, turn your wheels sharply toward the side of the road. This way, if your car starts to roll downhill, it will roll away from traffic.

- When you park **facing downhill**, turn your wheels toward the curb (Figure A).
- When you park **facing uphill**, turn your wheels away from the curb (Figure B).
  - If there is **no curb**, turn your wheels away from the street (Figure C).



■ No Parking Zones

There are many areas where you cannot park. Check for signs that prohibit or limit parking.

Some parking restrictions are indicated by **colored curb markings**:

- White = stopping only to pick up or unload passengers
- Yellow = stopping only long enough to load or unload and you must stay with the car
- Red = do not stop, stand, or park

Do not park:

- In an intersection
- Within 20 feet of a crosswalk or sidewalk at an intersection
- In a construction area if your vehicle will block traffic
- Within 30 feet of a traffic signal, stop sign, or yield sign
- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
- Within 50 feet of a railroad crossing
- More than 18 inches (1.5 feet) from the curb
- Within 20 feet of a fire station driveway on the same side of the street, or within 75 feet of a driveway on the other side of the street
- Blocking a driveway, alley, private road, or area of the curb removed or lowered for access to the sidewalk
- On a bridge or elevated structure or in a tunnel or underpass
- On the wrong side of the street
- On the road-side of a parked vehicle (double parking)
- On railroad tracks
- Wherever a sign says you cannot park
- In a space marked for the handicapped, unless you have a handicap license plate, tag, or sticker (you can be fined for improper parking in Handicapped Parking Only)

► MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE

■ Requirements

Liability insurance is mandatory (except for motorcycles). This insurance must be in effect in the vehicle being operated. **Owners must always have insurance of at least:**

- $25,000 - Bodily Injury or Death of one person in any one accident
- $50,000 - Bodily Injury or Death of two persons in any one accident
- $10,000 - Injury to or destruction of property of others in any one accident

Under Montana law, motorists stopped for a traffic violation or involvement in a motor vehicle collision are required to show evidence of insurance to law enforcement, in addition to displaying their driver license and vehicle registration. **Evidence of insurance must be carried in the vehicle at all times.**

■ Consequences

Driving a motor vehicle on Montana roads without a valid liability insurance policy is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of at least $250, not to exceed $500, or by imprisonment in the county jail for up to 10 days, or both; and, 5 points against your driving record. A 2nd or subsequent offense is punishable by a fine of at least $350, or by imprisonment in the county jail for up to 10 days, or both; and, suspension of your license plates and registration for 90 days (180 days for 3rd or subsequent offense).

If you are involved in an accident, your license and registration can be suspended if a court finds you responsible for the damages and you fail to pay the fine within 60 days. Suspension is automatic. It remains in effect until the fine has been paid or 6 years have elapsed. Additionally, you will be required to submit evidence of motor vehicle insurance.

■ Self-Insurers

The law also says that owners of more than 25 motor vehicles registered in Montana may qualify as self-insurers. In the case of nonresident owners or operators who are involved in any accident in Montana, adequate insurance written by a company licensed to do business in this state will be accepted. Nonresidents owning or operating motor vehicles in Montana are subject to all of the provisions and penalties of the Safety Responsibility Law and if they do not comply, their driving privileges in Montana will be withdrawn. A certified copy of the record will be sent to a nonresident's home state if it has a law authorizing authorities to act on it.

■ Montana Insurance Verification System (MTIVS)

In order to help enforce the liability insurance law, the Montana Legislature enacted legislation that authorized creation of an online motor vehicle liability insurance verification system. Montana Code Annotated 61-6-157 directs the Montana Department of Justice to establish a motor vehicle insurance verification system capable of confirming that vehicle owners and operators on Montana roadways are in compliance with vehicle liability policy requirements. The Montana Insurance Verification System (MTIVS) was implemented to fulfill this requirement.

MTIVS uses information from Montana vehicle registration records and from insurance companies that write policies in Montana to access up-to-the-minute data to confirm if a vehicle has minimum liability insurance coverage.

Law enforcement agencies, courts, the MVD, County Treasurer offices, and the public can use MTIVS to confirm evidence of insurance.

The ultimate goal of this system is to reduce the number of drivers in Montana who do not carry liability insurance as required by Montana law. Uninsured drivers are a serious problem, undermining traffic safety and driving up the costs for insured, law-abiding motorists. Real-time insurance verification will make the roads safer for everyone.

For more information about MTIVS, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/insurance-and-verification

CHAPTER 4 QUIZ

1. Upon hearing an emergency vehicle siren, a driver must:
- A. Stop quickly where he is.
- B. Stop and wait for a red or green light.
- C. Stop at the right side of the street or roadway.
- D. Increase speed and keep out of the way of the emergency vehicle.

2. When dealing with pedestrians, a driver must:
- A. Make very sure the pedestrian sees him/her.
- B. Yield the right-of-way, even if the pedestrian is in the wrong.
- C. Always yield the right-of-way when the pedestrian is legally entitled to it.
- D. Slow down and sound the horn when entering a heavily congested area.

3. Upon meeting or overtaking a school bus from either direction that has stopped on the highway with its red lights lashing, a driver must:
- A. Stop before reaching the bus and not proceed until the bus has resumed motion.
- B. Stop before reaching the bus and not proceed until the red lights have been extinguished.
- C. Stop before reaching the bus and proceed only when all children have loaded or unloaded.
- D. Stop and not proceed until the way is clear.

4. When encountering a funeral procession, a driver:
- A. May not drive between the vehicles forming the procession unless authorized by a police officer.
- B. May not enter an intersection to cross the path of a funeral procession as it is proceeding through a red traffic control device.
- C. Must yield the right-of-way to a motor vehicle that is part of the funeral procession.
- D. All of the above.

5. When approaching an uncontrolled intersection, a driver should:
- A. Maintain speed and proceed.
- B. Stop at the intersection, check all directions, and proceed when safe.
- C. Slow down and yield to all drivers.
- D. Take his/her foot off the accelerator, cover the brake, look left, right, and left again, and be prepared to yield.

6. It is permissible to drive a motor vehicle to the left of the centerline of a highway:
- A. When overtaking and passing another vehicle.
- B. When you have 500 feet of clear road ahead and to the rear.
- C. When the shoulder of the road is rough and the ditch is deep.
- D. When the road is clear of vehicles coming from the opposite direction.

CHAPTER 5 – HOW TO DRIVE SAFELY

No manual can teach you how to operate a vehicle or be a safe driver. Driving requires skill you can only gain through instruction and practice, and even then it all depends on how you choose to apply what you have learned.

► DON'T BE A DISTRACTED DRIVER

Distracted driving occurs any time you take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your primary task of driving safely. Driving requires decision making and critical thinking, and 90% of driving decisions are based on what we see.

You risk a crash when you try to do something else while you drive, and when you look away from the road ahead. **Distractions include:**

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to or arguing with passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player
- Being drowsy, sleepy, fatigued, or stressed

Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves simultaneous manual, visual, and cognitive distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field while blindfolded. **Arrive alive. Don't text and drive.**

All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety, and increase your risk of crashing. What is commonly referred to as "multi-tasking" really isn't. Your brain is actually dealing with one task at a time, but shifting between tasks very quickly.

- Protect lives by never texting or talking on the phone while driving. Calls can wait.
- Be a good passenger, buckle your seatbelt, and speak up if the driver in your car is distracted.
- Encourage your friends and family to drive phone-free.

Most Montana cities have passed laws against texting and talking on cell phones while driving.

If there are things you think you need to take care of while you are behind the wheel, **wait** until you can safely pull over to the side of the road and STOP.

- **Always keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel. Remember, it is not only your life in your hands, but also all the lives of those that are affected by your choices.**
- **Buckle up and make sure all your passengers are buckled as well.**
- **Never consume alcohol and drive.**
- **Visit http://www.distraction.gov/ for more information.**

► BASIC DRIVING

■ Starting

Check the vehicle owner's manual for the best starting procedures for the vehicle. The procedures vary depending on whether the vehicle has electronic ignition, and on the type of transmission. Make sure the parking brake is on before you start the vehicle.

If the vehicle has a manual transmission, it must not be in gear, and in some vehicles, you must depress the clutch. For a vehicle that has an automatic transmission, you must put the shift selector in "park." The vehicle will not start otherwise.

■ Accelerating

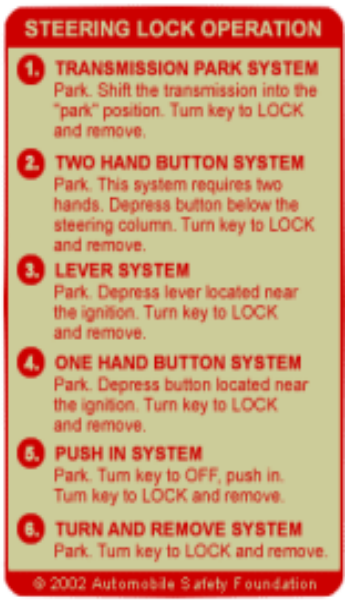
Accelerate gradually and smoothly. Trying to start too fast can cause the drive wheels to spin, particularly on slippery surfaces, and cause the vehicle to slide. With a manual-shift vehicle, practice using the clutch and accelerator so that the engine does not over-rev or stall when shifting between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

■ Steering

Use a proper grip. Both hands should be placed on opposite sides of the steering wheel (e.g., at the 9 and 3 o'clock positions or the 8 and 4 o'clock positions of newer vehicles equipped with airbags mounted in the steering wheel). This position is comfortable, and on high-speed roads allows you to make turns without taking your hands off the wheel. This may give you better control in critical situations.

Look well down the road, not just at the road in front of your vehicle. Look for traffic situations where you will need to steer before you get to them. This way, you have time to steer smoothly and safely.

When turning corners, turn the steering wheel using the "hand-over-hand" technique; do not turn the wheel with just the palm of one hand or you could lose control. When you complete a turn, straighten out the steering wheel by hand. Letting it slip through your fingers could be dangerous.



■ Controlling Speed

The best way to control your speed is to know how fast you are going. Check the speedometer often. People are not very good at judging how fast they are going. You may be going much faster than you think. This is especially true when you leave high-speed roads and are driving on much slower local roads.

FOLLOW THE SPEED LIMIT SIGNS, they are there for your safety. If the road or weather is bad, you may need to drive below the speed limit.

Montana's standard speed limits are listed in Chapter 4 - Driving Rules on page 36.

■ Stopping

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

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

► SEEING WELL

Most of what you do in driving depends on what you see. To be a good driver, you need to see well. The single biggest contributor to crashes is failing to see what is happening. You must look down the road, to the sides, and behind your vehicle, and be alert for unexpected events. At night and at other times when it's hard to see, you must use your headlights. For example, in many crashes with motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians, drivers reported that they looked but did not see them.

In order to see, drivers must be alert to what is going on around them. Many crashes occur because drivers do not pay enough attention to their driving. Do not take your eyes off the road for more than a few seconds at any one time. For example, if you need to look at a map, pull safely off the road before you try to look at it. Do not try to read the map while you are driving.

If you have a mobile phone or two-way radio, avoid using it when the vehicle is in motion. Even with hands-free equipment, talking on a phone or radio takes your attention away from driving,and can make you less likely to notice hazardous situations. Do not drive with headphones or earbuds. They make it too hard to hear emergency horns and sirens.

When passing a crash with emergency responders, someone getting a ticket, or other roadside activity, do not take your eyes off the road and do not slow down to stare (often called "rubbernecking"). If you take your eyes off the road to look at something, you could run into a vehicle that slowed or stopped in front of you. Slowing down to stare can also increase congestion. When you pass roadside incidents, keep your eyes on the road and get past them as safely and as soon as you can.

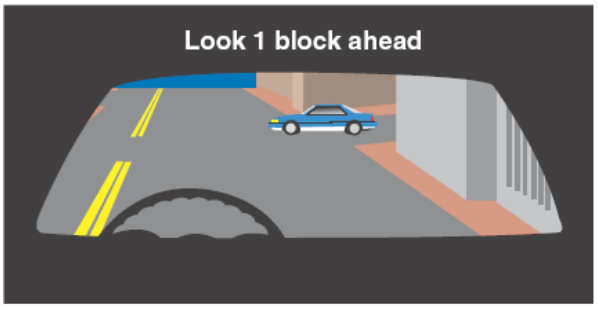
■ Scanning

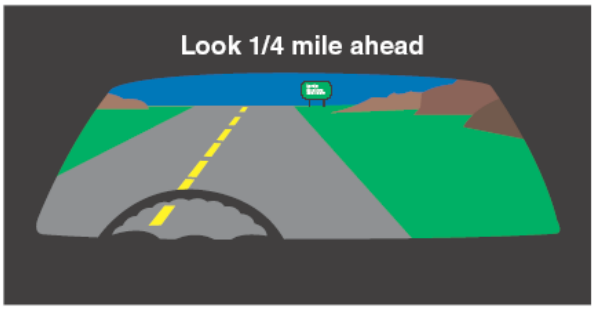
To be a good driver, you must know what is happening around your vehicle. You must look ahead, to the sides, and behind your vehicle. Scanning helps you to see problems ahead, vehicles and people that may be in the road by the time you reach them, signs warning of problems ahead, and signs giving directions.

Look Ahead

In order to avoid last-minute braking or the need to turn, you should look down the road at least 10 seconds ahead of your vehicle. By looking well ahead and being ready to stop or change lanes if needed, you can drive more safely, save on fuel, help keep traffic moving at a steady pace, and allow yourself time to better see around your vehicle and along the side of the road. Looking well down the road will also help you steer straighter with less weaving.

In the city, 10 seconds is about one block. When you drive in city traffic, try to look at least one block ahead. **On the highway, 10 seconds is about four city blocks or a quarter of a mile.**





Here is how to figure if you are looking 10 seconds ahead:

1. Find a non-moving object like a sign or telephone pole.
2. Start counting (one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, etc.) until you reach the object.
3. The number of seconds you counted is the number of seconds ahead that you were looking.

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

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

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

Look to the Sides

Because vehicles, pedestrians, or animals may cross or enter your path anytime, you should search and scan to the sides to make sure no one is coming. This is especially true at intersections and railroad crossings (where you should always expect a train).

Intersections

Intersections are any place where traffic merges or crosses. They include: cross streets, side streets, driveways, and shopping center or parking lot entrances. Before you enter an intersection, look both left and right for approaching vehicles and/or crossing pedestrians. If stopped, look both left and right just before you start moving. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure the path is clear through the intersection.

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

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

Do not rely on traffic signals or signs to stop cross traffic in front of you. Some drivers do not obey traffic signals or signs. At an intersection, look left and right even if other traffic has a red light or a stop sign. **Always be watchful for red-light runners.** This is especially important just after your light has turned green. This is when drivers on the cross street are most likely to run a red light. Others who may not stop are individuals who have been drinking or other reckless drivers.

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

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

Railroad Crossings

As you approach any railroad crossing, look up and down the tracks to make sure a train is not coming. Do not assume that a train is not coming even if you have never seen one at that crossing before. That is one of the leading causes of fatalities at railroad crossings.

At crossings with more than one track, wait until the passing train is well down the track before starting to cross. Another train could be coming - one that might have been hidden by the one that just passed.

Look Behind

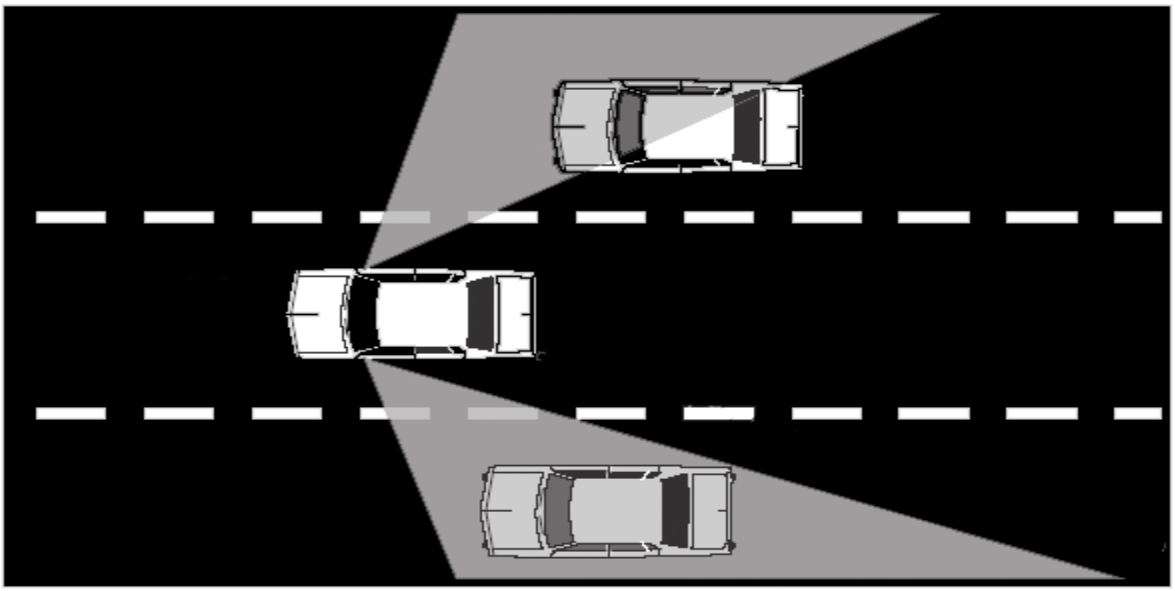
Besides watching traffic ahead of you, you must check the traffic behind you. You need to check more often when traffic is heavy. This is the only way you will know if someone is following too closely or coming up too fast and will give you time to do something about it. It is very important to look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

When Changing Lanes

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

When changing lanes, you should:

- *Use your turn signal to indicate your lane change or merge.* The best way to alert other drivers of your intention to change or merge lanes is by using your turn signal to indicate which lane you will be entering.
- *Look into your rearview and side mirrors*. Make sure there are no vehicles in the lane you want to enter. Make sure that nobody is about to pass you.
- *Look over your shoulder* in the direction you plan to move. Be sure no one is near the rear corners of your vehicle. These areas are called “blind spots” because you cannot see them through your mirrors. You have to turn your head and look.



Light gray areas in the illustration indicate a driver’s blind spots.

- *Check quickly.* Do not take your eyes off the road ahead for more than an instant. Traffic ahead of you could stop suddenly while you are checking traffic to the sides, rear or even over your shoulder. Also, use your mirrors to check traffic while you are preparing to change lanes, merge, or pull onto the roadway. This way you can keep an eye on cars ahead of you at the same time. Check over your shoulder just before you change lanes for traffic in your blind spot. Look several times if you need to so as not to look for too long a period at any one time. You must keep track of what traffic is doing in front of you and in the lane you are entering.
- *Check the far lane.* Be sure to check the far lane, if there is one, as someone in that lane may be planning to move into the same lane you want to enter.
- *Check for other road users. Remember that there are other road users such as motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians* that are harder to see than are cars and trucks. You should always be cautious when passing a bicycle because the cyclist may have to swerve into traffic to avoid an object on the road. Be especially alert when you are entering the roadway from the curb or driveway.

When You Slow Down

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

When Pulling Away From the Curb

Signal, look over left shoulder and pull out when it is safe to do so.

When You Back Up

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

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
- Place your right arm on the back of the seat and turn around so that you can look directly through the rear window. Do not depend on your rearview or side mirrors as you cannot see directly behind your vehicle.
- Back up slowly; your vehicle is much harder to steer while you are backing.
- Whenever possible, use a person outside the vehicle to help you back up.

■ Night Driving

90% of driving decisions are based upon what we see. Because vision is reduced at night, drivers cannot see as well at night, so SLOW DOWN. Night driving requires that you take into account not only the speed limit, but condition of the road, car, and weather. Anytime from a half hour after sunset and a half hour before sunrise, or anytime when, due to insufficient light conditions, persons or vehicles are not visible for 500 feet, you shall turn on your headlights.

Headlights on upper beam (bright) shall reveal persons and vehicles for 350 feet, and when on lower beam (dim) for 100 feet. At dusk or on overcast days, you should turn on your headlights. Dim your lights within 1000 feet of meeting a vehicle and within 500 feet when following one. NEVER drive with your parking lights, as oncoming traffic may think that you are stopped. A spotlight may be used just as long as you turn it off when approaching a motor vehicle.

When meeting traffic at night, avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights. Instead, watch the right edge of the roadway and if an oncoming driver flicks his lights at you, check to be sure you have dimmed yours. The law not only requires dimming for approaching traffic, but it is courteous and safer to do so.

Although sunglasses are a big help during the daylight hours, they reduce your visibility dangerously at night. Even tinted and some "photo gray" lenses can detract up to 30% of your night vision. All wearers of tinted lenses should use caution.

If you have mechanical problems or a tire failure, be sure to slow down gently. Make no attempt to pull off the road until your vehicle is under control. Then, move to your right, out of the traffic lane as far as safely possible. If at night, be sure to leave your parking lights on and if your headlights are on, make sure that they are dimmed.

Avoid night driving for long distances. When you are fatigued, stop at least every two hours for a short break, open the window or cold air vent to allow fresh air to circulate throughout the vehicle, sing or play the radio. If you become drowsy, pull off the road and take a nap, or better yet, find a room for the night. It's better to arrive at your destination a few hours later than never to arrive at all.

► COMMUNICATING

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

■ Letting Others Know You Are There

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

Use Headlights

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

- On rainy, snowy, or foggy days, it is sometimes hard for other drivers to see your vehicle. In these conditions, headlights make your vehicle easier to see. Remember, if you turn on your wipers, turn on your headlights.
- Turn on your headlights when it begins to get dark. If you turn them on a little early, you will help other drivers see you.
- Whenever driving and lights are necessary, use your headlights. Parking lights are for parked cars only.
- When driving away from a rising or setting sun, turn on your headlights. Drivers coming toward you may have trouble seeing your vehicle. Your headlights will help them see you.

Use Your Horn

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

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

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

- A child or older person is about to walk, run or ride into the street.
- Another car is in danger of hitting you.
- You have lost control of your vehicle and are moving toward someone.

When NOT to Use Your Horn

There are several occasions when you should not use your horn. They are:

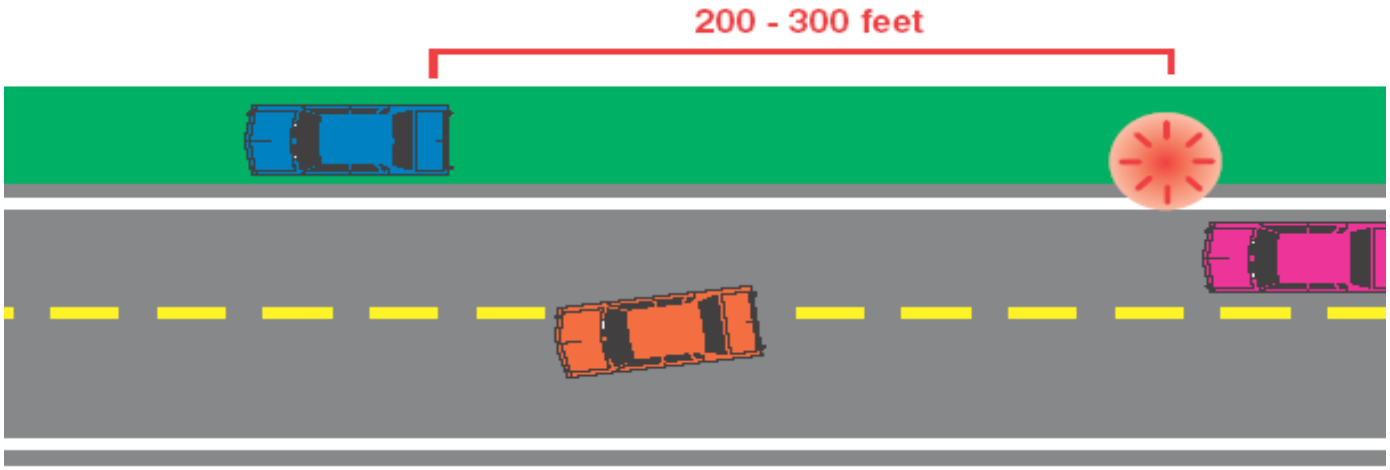
- To encourage someone to drive faster or get out of the way.
- To apprise other drivers of an error.
- To greet a friend.
- Around visually impaired pedestrians.

Use Emergency Signals

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

- If at all possible, get your vehicle off the road and away from traffic.
- Turn on your emergency flashers to show you are having trouble.

- If you cannot get your vehicle off the roadway, try to stop where other drivers have a clear view of your vehicle. Do not stop just over a hill or just around a curve.
- Try to warn other road users that your vehicle is there. Place emergency flares behind the vehicle. This allows other drivers to change lanes if necessary.



- If you do not have emergency flares or other warning devices, stand by the side of the road where you are safe and wave traffic around your vehicle. Use a white cloth if you have one.
- Never stand in the roadway. Do not even try to change a tire if it means you have to be in a traffic lane.
- Lift the hood or tie a white cloth to the antenna, side mirror, or door handle to signal an emergency.

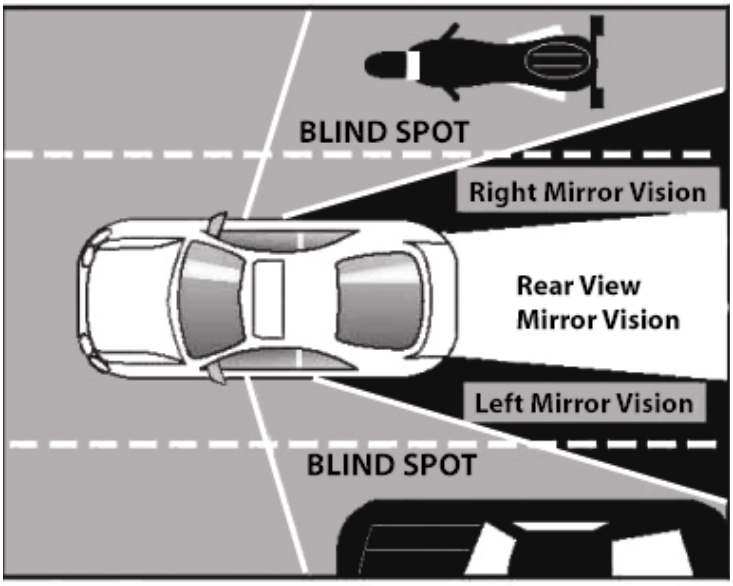
Stay Out of the Blind Spot

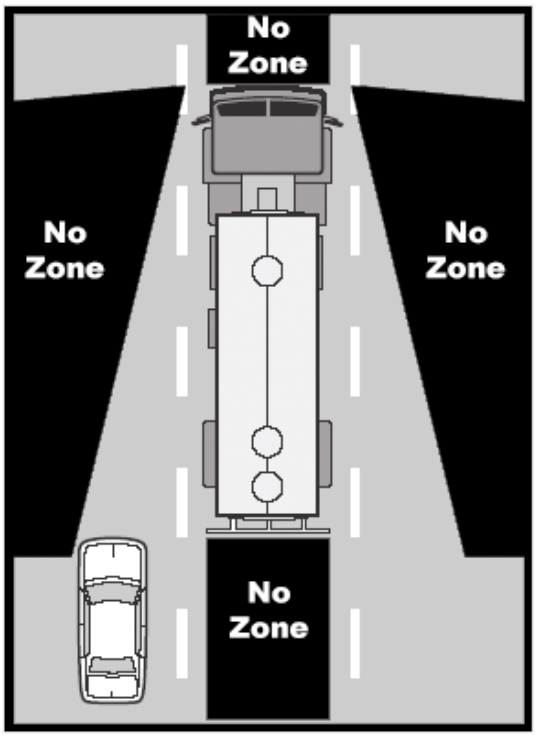
Drive your vehicle where others can see you. Do not drive in another vehicle's blind spot.

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

■ Letting Others Know What You Are Doing

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





Use Your Signals to Communicate

You should use your turn signals before you change lanes, turn right or left, merge into traffic, pass on a highway or interstate, or park. It gives other drivers time to react to your moves.

Get into the habit of signaling every time you change direction or lanes. Signal even when you do not see anyone else around. It is easy to miss someone who needs to know what you are doing.

Left Turns - Well ahead of your turn, look for any following vehicles, give signal and move over close to the centerline.

- Signal 100 feet (1/3 city block) or 300 feet (for rural areas) and start slowing down.
- Look and yield right-of-way to oncoming traffic.
- While waiting to complete the turn, keep your wheels pointed straight ahead - if you are struck from behind, you will not be forced into oncoming traffic.
- Enter street just to the right of the center - do not cut corners.
- After completing the turn, gradually move to the center of your lane and be sure that your signal has canceled.

Right Turns - Right turns should be made as close as practical to the right edge of the curb or roadway.

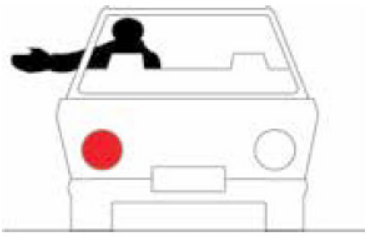
- Well in advance of your turn, get into the proper lane.
- Signal your right turn for 100 feet (1/3 city block) or 300 feet (for rural areas) and slow down.
- Keep as close to the right side as possible when completing a right turn.
- Do not make a wide-sweeping turn or cross into the left lane.

Be careful that you do not signal too early. If there are streets, driveways, or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.

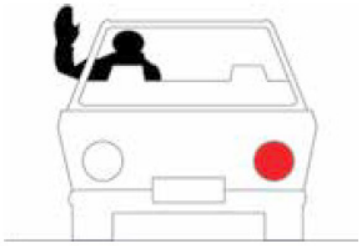
If another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn. If you signal earlier, the other driver may think you plan to turn where they are and they might pull into your path.

Even though vehicles are equipped with turn and brake lights, you must know the basic hand signals as well.

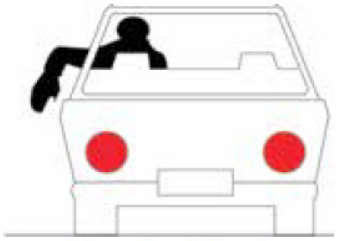
The hand signals are shown here.



Left Turn



Right Turn



Stopping/Slowing

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

Signal When You Slow Down

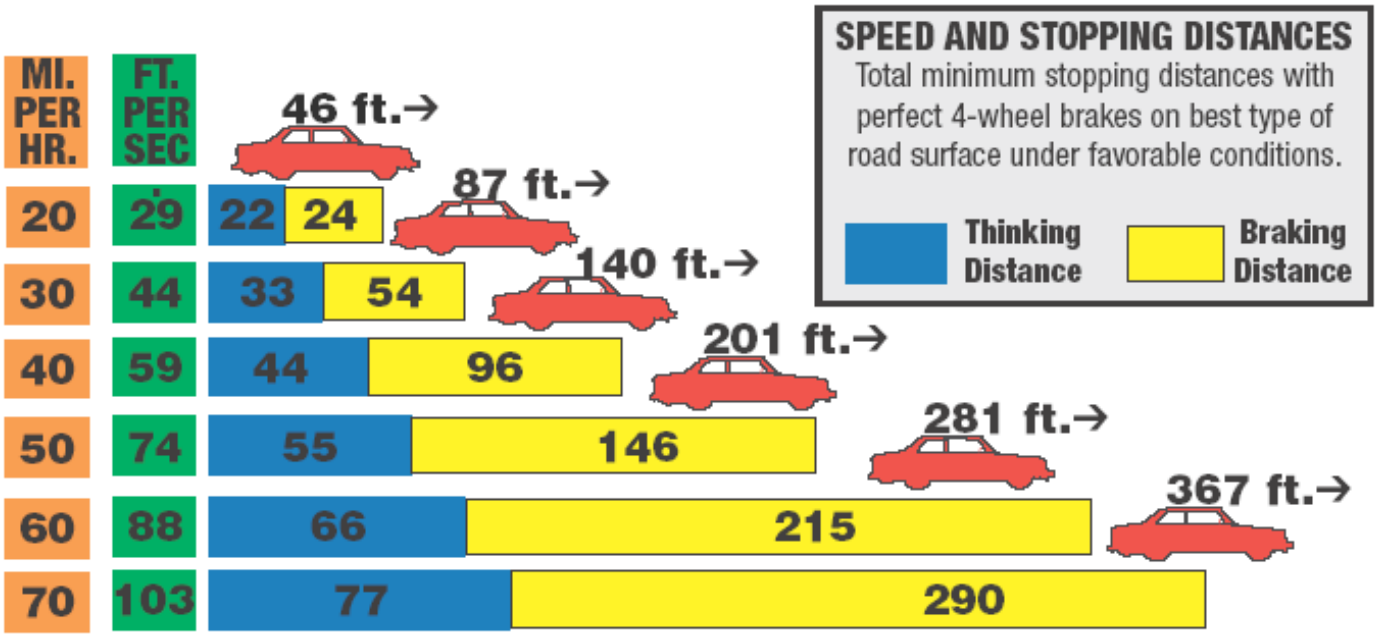
Your brake lights let people know that you are slowing down. Always slow down as early as it is safe to do so. If you are going to stop or slow down at a place where another driver does not expect it, tap your brake pedal three or four times quickly to let those behind you know you are about to slow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

Signal when you slow down to:

- turn off a roadway that does not have separate turn or exit lanes.
- park or turn just before an intersection (following traffic expects you to continue through the intersection).
- avoid something in the road or stopped or slowing traffic that the driver behind you cannot see.

► ADJUSTING SPEED

The faster your vehicle is going, the more distance it will take to turn, slow, or stop. For example, stopping at 60 mph does not take twice the distance as it takes at 30 mph, but over three times the distance. Driving safely means adjusting your speed to road and traffic conditions, how well you can see, and obeying speed limits.



■ Adjusting to Road Conditions

There are various road conditions where you must slow down to be safe. You must slow down before a curve, when the roadway is slippery, and when there is standing water on the road.

The only contact your vehicle has with the road is through the tires. How good a grip the tires have on the road depends on the type and condition of the tires and the road.

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

Rural Roads

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

- **Gravel**
  Stopping or turning on loose gravel is more difficult compared to pavement because tire traction is reduced. Skidding can occur as traction is lost. A "washboard" effect can occur on gravel roads. This is a series of potholes that can affect steering and vehicle control. When driving on gravel, you must slow down. It will take you much longer to stop and it is much easier to skid when turning.

- **Dust**
  During dry periods of the year, gravel roads can become extremely dusty. Vision can be reduced. It is recommended that drivers use low beam headlights to make the vehicle more visible to others.

- **Narrow Bridges and Roads**
  Gravel or dirt roads can be narrow and have little to no shoulder. Ditches can be very steep and dangerous. Drivers should look for narrow bridge signs and be prepared to stop for oncoming traffic.

Curves

A vehicle can travel much faster in a straight line than it can in a curve. It is easy to go too fast in a curve. If you go too fast, the tires will not be able to grip the road, and the vehicle will skid. Always slow down before you enter the curve so you do not have to brake in the curve. Braking in a curve can cause the vehicle to skid.

Slippery Roads

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

If at all possible, do not drive when the roads are icy. In some areas where there is a lot of icy weather, special studded tires are allowed. Because these tires can cause road damage, they are not allowed in many areas or on certain roads. Studded tires are not allowed June 1 through September 30.

Some road surfaces are slippery at certain times or places. Here are some clues to help you spot slippery roads:

- On cold, wet days, shady spots can be icy. These areas freeze first and dry out last.
- Overpasses and other types of bridges can have icy spots. The pavement on bridges can be icy even when other pavement is not. This is because bridges do not have earth underneath them to help insulate them against the cold.
- Ice can become wet when it is near the freezing point. This makes it more slippery than at temperatures well below freezing.
- If it starts to rain on a hot day, pavement can be very slippery for the first few minutes. Heat causes oil in the asphalt to come to the surface. It makes the road more slippery until the oil is washed off.

Water on the Roadway

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

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

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

Skid Control – Look and Steer Where You Want to Go

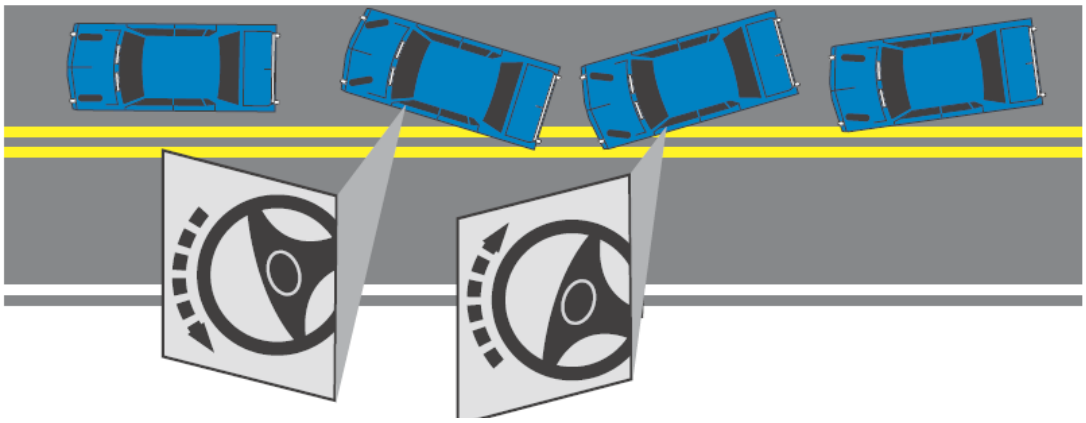
Any road that is safe under normal conditions can be dangerous when it is wet, or has snow or ice on it. High speeds under normal conditions also increase the possibility of a skid if you must turn or stop suddenly. Skids are caused when the tires can no longer grip the road.

The best skid control is prevention. By judging weather and road conditions and knowing where skids are likely to occur, such as on curves or bridges, most skids can be avoided. In the vast majority of cases, skids are caused by drivers traveling too fast for conditions.

If your vehicle begins to slide:

- Stay off the brake - Until the vehicle slows, your brakes will not work and could cause you to skid more.
- Take your foot off the accelerator to slow and look where you want to go.
- Steer – Use quick hand-over-hand steering to turn the wheel in the direction you want the vehicle to go. As soon as the vehicle begins to straighten out, turn the steering wheel back the other way. If you do not do so, your vehicle may swing around in the other direction and you could start a new skid.

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



Wildlife and Other Animals

Animals are another dangerous part of driving. Drivers can't always predict when or where an animal might suddenly appear in the road. **Crashes involving direct hits or swerving to avoid an animal resulted in about 200 deaths and 26,000 injuries per year,** according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Large animals such as deer, bear, moose, horses, elk, and cattle were involved in many of these crashes.

Be aware and look for animals, especially at sunrise and sunset. If you see an animal, slow down and be prepared to stop. If there isn't time to stop or avoid the animal, do not swerve sharply. **The driver's chance of getting seriously hurt are decreased if he/she hits the animal and avoids swerving into oncoming traffic or rolling the vehicle over in the ditch.** Deer, elk, and similar wildlife travel in herds, so always look for more animals if you see one.

■ Adjusting to Traffic

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

Keep Pace With Traffic

Each time you pass someone, there is a chance for a collision. If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to keep passing others. Drive with the flow of traffic, passing only as needed. The vehicle you are passing may change lanes suddenly; or, on a two-lane road, an oncoming car may suddenly appear. Slow down and keep with other traffic. Speeding does not save more than a few minutes. If you must exceed the speed limit to pass another vehicle, you should not pass until you can do so legally and safely.

Going much slower than other vehicles can be just as risky as speeding. It tends to make vehicles bunch up behind you and causes the other traffic to pass you. If vehicles are piled up behind you, pull over and let them pass when it is safe to do so. You should drive the speed limit or consider using a slower road.

Entering Into Traffic

When you merge with traffic, try to enter at the same speed that traffic is moving. Signal your intent to merge, use your rearview mirror, AND look over your shoulder. High-speed roadways generally have ramps to give you time to build up speed. Use the ramp to reach the speed of other vehicles before you pull onto the road. Do not drive to the end of the ramp and stop. This will not leave you enough room to get up to the speed of traffic. Also, drivers behind you will not expect you to stop. If they are watching the traffic on the main road, you may be hit from the rear. If you have to wait for space to enter a roadway, slow down on the ramp so you have some room to speed up before you have to merge. When traveling on a controlled-access highway and you observe another driver entering, you should, whenever possible, move to your left so that they may enter safely.

Leaving Traffic

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

Slow-Moving Traffic

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

- Watch for large trucks and small, underpowered cars on steep grades or when they are entering traffic. They can lose speed on long or steep hills and it takes longer for these vehicles to speed up when they enter traffic.
- Farm tractors, animal-drawn vehicles, and road maintenance vehicles usually go 25 mph or less. These vehicles must have a slow-moving vehicle sign on the back (see page 16).
- When four or more vehicles are slowed up, slow-moving vehicles must turn off the roadway whenever there is sufficient room for a safe turnout.
- Slow-moving vehicles must drive in the extreme right lane of roadway.

Trouble Spots

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

- Shopping centers, parking lots, and downtown areas. These are busy areas with vehicles and people stopping and starting and moving in different directions.
- Rush hours. Rush hours often have heavy traffic and drivers that always seem to be in a hurry.
- Narrow bridges and tunnels. Vehicles approaching each other are closer together.
- Toll plazas. Vehicles are changing lanes and preparing to stop and then speeding up again as they leave the plaza. The number of lanes could change both before and after the plaza.
- Schools, playgrounds, and residential streets. These areas often have children present. Always be alert for children crossing the street, running, or riding into the street without looking.

■ Adjusting to How Well You Can See

If something is in your path, you need to see it in time to be able to stop. It takes much longer and farther to stop than many people think. If you have good tires and brakes and dry pavement:

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

If you cannot see 400 feet ahead, it means you may not be driving safely at 50 mph. If you cannot see 200 feet ahead, you may not be driving safely at 30 mph. By the time you saw an object in your path, it might be too late to stop without hitting it. Nine out of ten crashes are caused by errors in human judgment. The following are some elements that limit how well you can see, and tips to be a safer driver.

Darkness

It is harder to see at night. You need to be closer to an object to see it at night than during the day. You must be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead with your headlights, which is about 400 feet. You should drive at a speed that allows you to stop within this distance, or about 50 mph.

Rain, Fog, or Snow

Drive with headlights on so other vehicles can see you. In a very heavy rain, snow storm, or thick fog, you may not be able to see much more than 200 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. In a very heavy downpour, you may not be able to see well enough to drive. If this happens, pull off the road in a safe place and wait until the weather clears.

Hills and Curves

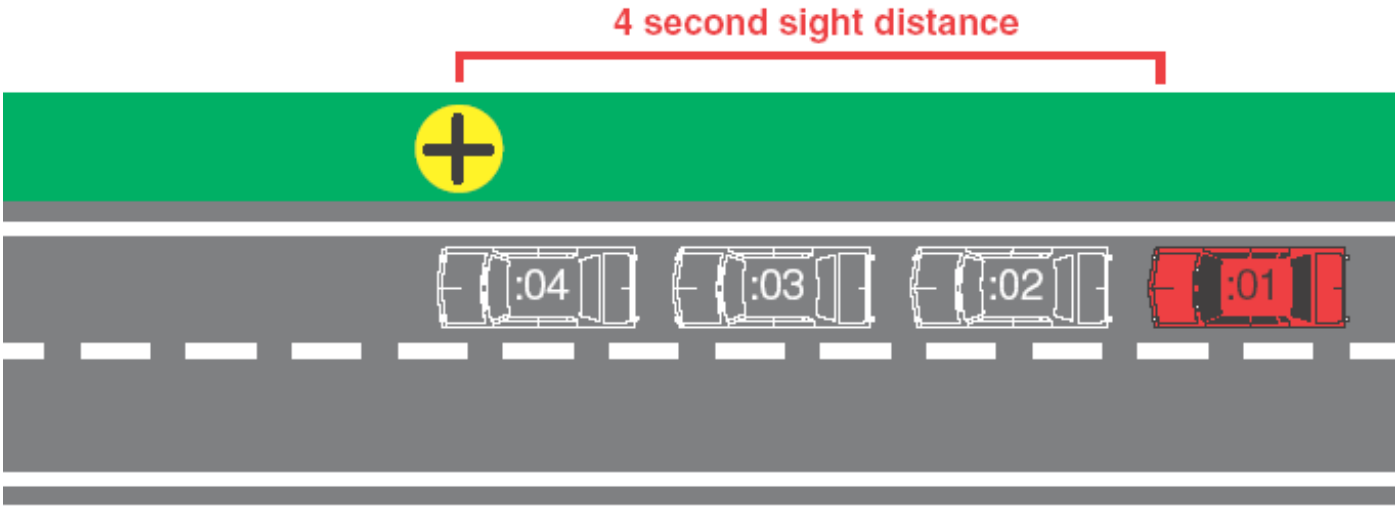
You may not know what is on the other side of a hill or just around a curve, even if you have driven the road hundreds of times. If a car is stalled on the road, just over a hill or around a curve, you must be able to stop. Whenever you come to a hill or curve where you cannot see over or around, adjust your speed so you can stop if necessary.

Parked Cars

Vehicles parked along the side of the road can block your view. People may be ready to get out of a car or walk out from between parked vehicles. Give parked vehicles as much room as you can. Most crashes between cars that are parallel parked and cars being driven on the street are caused by carelessness of the driver pulling away from the curb.

Sight-Distance Rule

Drive at a speed where you can always safely stop. To tell if you are driving too fast for conditions, use the "Four Second Sight Distance Rule." Pick out a stationary object as far ahead as you can clearly see (e.g., a sign or telephone pole). Start counting (e.g., one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand). If you reach the object before you finish saying "four-one-thousand," you need to slow down. You are going too fast for your sight distance. You must not drive faster than the distance you can see. If you do, you are not safe and could injure or kill yourself or others.



You can also use the "Four Second Sight Distance Rule" at night to make sure you are not "over driving" your headlights.

Speed Limits

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

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

► SHARING SPACE

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

■ Space Ahead

Rear-end crashes are very common. They are caused by drivers following too closely to stop before hitting the vehicle ahead when that vehicle suddenly stops. There is an easy way to tell if you are following too closely. It is called the "Three-Second Rule," and it works at any speed.

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

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

- *On slippery roads* - As you need more distance to stop your vehicle on slippery roads, you must leave more space in front of you. If the vehicle ahead suddenly stops, you will need the extra distance to stop safely.
- *When the driver behind you wants to pass* - Slow down to allow room in front of your vehicle. Slowing also will allow the pass to be completed sooner.
- *When following motorcycles* - If the motorcycle should fall, you need extra distance to avoid the rider. The chances of a fall are greatest on wet or icy roads, gravel roads, or metal surfaces such as bridges, gratings, or streetcar or railroad tracks.
- *When following drivers who cannot see you* - The drivers of trucks, buses, vans, or vehicles pulling campers or trailers may not be able to see you when you are directly behind them. They could stop suddenly without knowing you are behind them. Falling back allows you more room to see ahead.
- *When you have a heavy load or are pulling a trailer* - The extra weight increases your stopping distance.
- *When it is hard for you to see* - When it is hard for you to see ahead because of darkness or bad weather, you need to increase your following distance.
- *When being followed closely* - If you are being followed closely, you should slow down, encouraging the vehicle behind you to pass, or pull off on a turn out and allow them to pass.
- *When following emergency vehicles* - Police vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks need more room to operate.
- *When approaching railroad crossings* - Leave extra room for vehicles required to come to a stop at railroad crossings, including transit buses, school buses, or vehicles carrying hazardous materials.
- *When stopped on a hill* - Leave extra space when stopped on a hill. The vehicle ahead may roll back when it starts up.

■ Space Behind

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

Stopping to pick up or let off passengers - Try to find a safe place out of traffic to stop.

Parallel parking - If you want to parallel park and there is traffic coming behind you, then put on your turn signal, pull next to the space, and allow following vehicles to pass before you park.

Driving slowly - When you have to drive so slowly that you slow down other cars, pull to the side of the road when it is safe to do so and let them pass. There are “turnout” areas on some two lane roads you could use. Other two lane roads sometimes have “passing lanes.”

Being tailgated - Every now and then, you may find yourself being followed closely or “tailgated” by another driver. If you are being followed too closely and there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the way is clear then reduce speed slowly. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater, all that does is increase your risk of being hit from behind.

■ Space to the Side

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

Avoid driving next to other vehicles on multi-lane roads. Someone may crowd your lane or try to change lanes and pull into you. Move ahead or drop to the back of the other vehicle.

Keep as much space as you can between yourself and oncoming vehicles. On a two lane road this means not crowding the center line. In general, it is safest to drive in the center of your lane.

Make room for vehicles entering on a roadway that has two or more lanes. If there is no one next to you, move over a lane.

Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked vehicles. Someone could step out from a parked vehicle or from between vehicles, or a parked vehicle could pull out.

Give extra space to pedestrians, especially children. They can move into your path quickly and without warning. Do not share a lane with a pedestrian or bicyclist. Wait until it is safe to pass in the adjoining lane.

"Split the Difference Rule." Split the difference between two hazards - for example, steer a middle course between oncoming and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the danger side. For example, if the oncoming vehicle is a tractor-trailer, leave a little more room on the side that the truck will pass.

When possible, take potential hazards one at a time. For example, if you are overtaking a bicycle and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down and let the vehicle pass first so that you can give extra room to the bicycle.

■ Space to Merge

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

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

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

■ Space to Cross or Enter

When you cross traffic, you need a large enough gap to get all the way across the road without stopping. When you enter traffic, you need enough space to first turn and then get up to speed.

Stopping halfway across is only safe when there is a median divider large enough to hold your car. Do not stop in a divider where part of your vehicle is sticking out into traffic.

If you are turning left, make sure there are no vehicles or pedestrians blocking your path. You do not want to be caught waiting for a path to clear while being stuck across a lane that has an oncoming vehicle bearing down on you.

Even if you have a green light, do not start across the intersection if there are cars blocking your way. If you are caught in the intersection when the light changes to red, you will block other traffic. You can get a ticket for blocking an intersection.

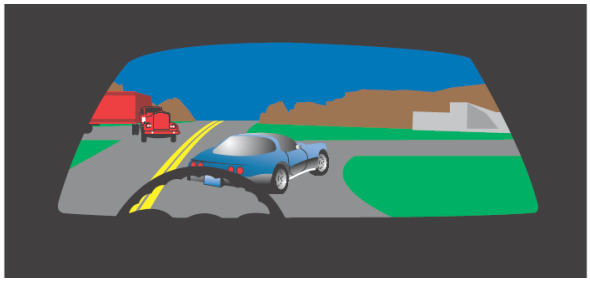
Never assume another driver will share space with you or give you space. Do not turn just because an approaching vehicle has a turn signal on. The driver may plan to turn beyond you, or have forgotten to turn the signal off from a prior turn. This is particularly true of motorcycles; their signals often do not cancel by themselves. Wait until the other driver actually starts to turn and then go if it is safe to do so.

■ Space for Passing

Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to pass safely. Do not count on having enough time to pass several cars at once. Be safe. As a general rule, only pass one vehicle at a time. At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10 second gap in oncoming traffic and sight distance to pass. You must judge whether you have enough space to pass safely.

At 55 mph you will travel over 800 feet in 10 seconds. So will an oncoming vehicle. That means you need over 1600 feet or about one-third of a mile to pass safely. It is hard to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles at this distance. They do not seem to be coming as fast as they really are. A vehicle that is far enough away generally appears to be standing still. In fact, if you can really see it coming closer, it may be too close for you to pass. If you are not sure, wait to pass until you are sure that there is enough space.

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



Intersections - It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings, and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, the vehicle you are passing can block your view of people, vehicles or trains. Also, drivers turning right into the approaching lane will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.

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

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

Space to return - Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. And do not count upon other drivers to make room for you.

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

■ Space for Slow-Moving Vehicles and Animals

Slow-Moving Vehicles

The slow-moving vehicle emblem, a fluorescent or reflective orange triangle, must be displayed on the rear of vehicles drawn by animals, and most farm vehicles and construction equipment. The United States Postal Service also requires these orange safety-triangles to be displayed on all rural mail delivery vehicles. Use caution when approaching a slow-moving vehicle and be sure it is safe before you pass.

Livestock and Draft Animals and Horse-Drawn Vehicles

Always give the right-of-way to an animal that someone is leading, riding, or driving. Animals are easily scared by motor vehicles. When you get near an animal or horse-drawn vehicle, be careful and do the following:

- Slow down.
- Stop if the animal or vehicle is coming toward you or is crossing your path. Allow the animal to pass.
- If the animal or vehicle is traveling in the same direction as you, allow plenty of room for passing safely. Drive at a reasonable speed.
- Do not honk your horn or make a loud noise.
- If the animal you are passing looks scared, pull your vehicle to the side and stop.
- Proceed only when it's safe.
- Stop if a rider or driver signals you to do so.

This applies to horses, catlle, and any other draft animals.

Horseback Riders

Horseback riders are subject to, and protected by, the rules of the road. They also must ride single file near the right curb or road edge, or on a usable right shoulder, lane, or path.

The law requires you to exercise due care when approaching a horse being ridden or led along a road. You must drive at a reasonable speed, and at a reasonable distance away from the horse. It is illegal to sound your horn when approaching or passing a horse.

■ Space for Special Situations

There are certain drivers and other road users you should give extra room to. Here are some of them.

Those who cannot see you

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

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

People who are distracted

Even when others can see you, allow extra room or be extra cautious if you think they may be distracted. People who may be distracted include: delivery persons, construction workers, children, and drivers who are not paying attention to their driving, e.g., talking or texting on their cell phone, eating, putting on makeup, playing music too loudly, etc.

People who may be confused

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

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

Drivers in trouble

If another driver makes a mistake, do not make it worse; for example, drivers who pass you when they do not have enough room. Slow down and let them return to the drive lane safely. If another driver needs to suddenly change lanes, slow down and let them merge. These gestures will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

CHAPTER 5 QUIZ

1. **At dusk or on overcast days, you should:**
   A. Drive with your four way flashers on.
   B. Drive with your parking lights on.
   C. Not turn any vehicle lights on.
   D. Turn on your vehicle lights.

2. **You should be cautious when passing a bicycle because:**
   A. You are going faster than the bicycle.
   B. The bicycle always has the right-of-way.
   C. Oncoming traffic may not see you pull out to pass.
   D. The cyclist may have to swerve into traffic to avoid an object on the road.

3. **In order to avoid last-minute braking, or the need to turn, you should look down the road at least:**
   A. 2 seconds ahead of your vehicle.
   B. 4 seconds ahead of your vehicle.
   C. 10 seconds ahead of your vehicle.
   D. 15 seconds ahead of your vehicle.

4. **Driving at night requires increased caution because:**
   A. Traffic is faster at night.
   B. There is a larger volume of traffic at night.
   C. A driver cannot see as well at night.
   D. Accidents occur more frequently at night.

5. **Other than by your turn signals, other motorists can sometimes determine your intention to turn by:**
   A. Your vehicle positions and eye contact.
   B. The turning of your wheels.
   C. You slowing up at the corner.
   D. The actions of the car behind you.

6. **A good rule to remember for passing is:**
   A. Pass on the right whenever possible.
   B. Drive with the flow of traffic, passing only as needed.
   C. Try to get to the front of any line of slow moving traffic so that you can see better.
   D. Always flash your lights and sound your horn to alert the other driver.

7. **"Hydroplaning" is best described as:**
   A. Your tires pushing water out of their paths.
   B. Your tires actually floating on a film of water.
   C. Your tires causing sheets of water to splash on passing vehicles.
   D. Your tires throwing water to the rear, causing problems for following vehicles.

8. **If you become stranded in a snow storm, the best thing to do is:**
   A. Get out of the car and go for help.
   B. Lay down in the car and go to sleep.
   C. Keep the windows rolled up tight, keeping the engine running at all times.
   D. Stay in the car, as you are more likely to be found.

CHAPTER 6 – PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

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

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

► VISION, HEARING, & FATIGUE

■ 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.

Vision is so important that Montana requires that you pass a vision test before you get a driver license. This test measures that you have at least 20/40 vision in at least one eye, with or without corrective lenses.

Because it is so important for safe driving to see well, you should have your eyes checked every year or two by an eye specialist. You may never know you have poor vision unless your eyes are tested.

If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, remember to:

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

Other important aspects of vision are:

•Side Vision

You need to see “out the corner of your eye.” This lets you spot vehicles and other potential trouble on either side of you while you look ahead. Because you cannot focus on things to the side, you also must use your side mirrors and glance to the side if necessary.

•Judging Distances and Speeds

Even if you can see clearly, you still may not be able to judge distances or speeds very well. In fact, you are not alone; many people have problems judging distances and speeds. It takes a lot of practice to be able to judge both. It is especially important in knowing how far you are from other vehicles and judging safe gaps when merging, and when passing on two lane roads.

•Night Vision

Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble seeing at night. All people have more trouble seeing at night than in the daytime. Some drivers have problems with glare while driving at night, especially with the glare of oncoming headlights. If you have problems seeing at night, don’t drive more than is necessary, and when you do, be very careful.

•Hearing

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

• Fatigue

When you are tired, you cannot drive as safely as when you are rested. You do not see as well and you are not as alert as when you are rested. It takes you more time to make decisions and you do not always make good decisions. You can be more irritable and can get upset more easily. Lastly, when you are tired you could fall asleep behind the wheel and crash. Here are tips to help prevent you from getting tired on a long trip:

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

► DRINKING & DRIVING

Alcohol is involved in approximately 40% of fatal crashes. Alcohol consumption, even small amounts, increases your chances of being in a crash.

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

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

■ Why is Drinking and Driving So Dangerous?

Alcohol reduces all of the important skills you need to drive safely. Alcohol can be absorbed through the walls of the stomach, and can affect your brain within one minute. In your brain, alcohol affects those areas that control judgment and skill. This is one reason why drinking alcohol is so dangerous - it affects your judgment. Good judgment is important to driving. But in this case, judgment helps you to know when to stop drinking. In a way, it's like alcohol puts good judgment on hold. You do not know when you have had too much to drink until it is too late. It is a little like a sunburn: by the time you feel it, it is already too late.

Alcohol slows your reflexes and reaction time, reduces your ability to see clearly, and makes you less alert. As the amount of alcohol in your body increases, your judgment worsens and your skill decreases. You will have trouble judging distances, speeds, and the movement of other vehicles. Finally, you will have trouble controlling your vehicle.

■ If You Drink, When Can You Drive?

The best answer is: **If you drink alcohol, do not drive. Even one alcoholic beverage can affect your driving.**

Many factors play a part in determining how impaired a person will become when consuming alcohol: the amount consumed; how fast it is consumed; a person's body weight; food intake; and, a person's general health. The average person's body will process one alcoholic drink in one hour. **Alcohol can still accumulate in your body even if you are drinking at a rate of one drink per hour.**

One alcoholic drink is: 1-1/2 ounces of 80-proof liquor (one shot glass), straight or with a mixer; 12 ounces of commercial beer (a regular size can, bottle, mug or glass); or a 5 ounce glass of wine. Microbrews and craft beers often contain more alcohol than a 12 ounce commercial beer. Specialty drinks can have more alcohol in them and are the same as having several normal drinks.

There are ways of dealing with social drinking situations. Arrange to go with two or more people and agree that one of you will not drink alcohol. You can rotate among the group being a Designated Driver. If available, you might take public transportation or a cab.

■ Alcohol and the Law

You are not allowed to buy or consume alcohol unless you are 21 years of age or older.

If you are arrested for drinking and driving, the penalties are severe. You can be arrested for driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more, or while driving under the influence. BAC is the percentage of alcohol in your blood, and is usually determined by a breath, blood, or urine test. The BAC for a driver under 21 years of age is 0.02.

If a police officer asks you to take a test, you must do so. You can lose your driver license if you refuse to take a BAC test. If you are found guilty of an alcohol violation and it is your first conviction, you will be fined from $300 to $1000, plus court charges; you could be sentenced to 1 to 60 days in jail; and your license will be suspended for six months.

For second and subsequent convictions, the penalties are much worse.

Open Containers

Montana law also prohibits the possession of an open alcoholic beverage container by a person in a motor vehicle. Open alcoholic beverage containers, including bottles, cans, jars or other receptacles containing any amount of an alcoholic beverage must be kept:

- In a locked glove compartment or storage compartment;
- In a trunk, luggage compartment, truck bed or cargo compartment; or
- Behind the last upright seat or within a closed container kept in an area not normally occupied by the driver or passenger of any motor vehicle that is not equipped with a trunk.

There are exceptions within the law for:

- Containers with an unbroken seal and none of the original contents removed;
- Open containers stored within the living quarters of a camper, travel trailer or motor home; and
- Passengers transported by a hired driver within a bus, taxi, or limousine.

But remember, it is an offense to unlawfully possess an open alcoholic beverage container within the passenger area of a motor vehicle on a highway.

■ Report a Drunk Driver

In December 1981, the Governor, the Attorney General, and officials from the Montana Highway Traffic Safety Division, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division and the Montana Highway Patrol inaugurated the “Report A Drunk Driver” program. Nationally over 23,000 deaths occur yearly as a direct result of a drinking or drunk driver. In Montana, 50% of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related, and over 2100 injuries are the result of a drinking or drunk driver. The problem is immense and the “Report A Drunk Driver” program is designated to help rid the road and highways of your NUMBER ONE killer.

The program is very simple. All it requires is everyone’s concern and a phone call. All citizens who suspect a person of driving while intoxicated are asked to call their local law enforcement agency or the Montana Highway Patrol and give a description of the vehicle and the direction in which the suspected vehicle is traveling. You do not have to give your name. Law enforcement personnel will attempt to make contact with the suspect vehicle, and if probable cause can be determined a stop and possible arrest will be made.

The program works. Current statistics show that law enforcement officials are able to make contact with 37% of those suspected of driving under the influence, and of those contacted, 71% are being arrested for drunk driving. Two drinking drivers are being arrested each day in Montana as a direct result of this program. If you see someone you suspect of driving while intoxicated, or need to report an accident, you may call toll free 1-800-525-5555.

REPORT A DRUNK DRIVER
1-800-525-5555

► OTHER DRUGS & DRIVING

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

If you are driving, check the label for warnings about its effects before you take a drug. **Drug warnings about operating heavy machinery mean DO NOT DRIVE YOUR CAR OR TRUCK.** If you are not sure if it is safe to take the drug and drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects. Never drink alcohol while you are taking other drugs. The drugs could multiply the effects of alcohol or have additional side effects of their own. These effects not only reduce your ability to be a safe driver, but the effects could cause serious health problems, even death.

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

► HEALTH

Many health problems can affect your driving - a bad cold, infection, or a virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough, or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not feeling well and need to go somewhere, let someone else drive. You should decide each time you drive if you are physically able or mentally capable to drive safely.

■ Some health conditions can be very dangerous

Epilepsy

A person suffering from epilepsy needs a physician to attest in writing that the person's condition has stabilized and would not likely interfere with a person's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Diabetes

Diabetics who take insulin should not drive when there is any chance of going into shock. Such a situation could result from skipping a meal or snack, or from taking the wrong amount of insulin. It also might be a good idea to have someone else drive during times when your doctor is adjusting your insulin dosage. If you have diabetes, you also should have your eyes checked regularly for possible night blindness and other vision problems.

Heart Condition

People with heart diseases, high blood pressure, or circulation problems may be in danger of a blackout, fainting, or a heart attack; and, if the condition is untreated, should not drive a motor vehicle. If a doctor is treating you for a heart condition, ask if the condition could affect your driving safely.

► EMOTIONS

Stress can lessen your concentration on the driving task and emotions can have a great effect on your driving safely. You may not be able to drive well if you are overly worried, excited, afraid, angry, or just down.

If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. If necessary, take a short walk, but stay off the road until you have calmed down. If you are worried or down about something, try to keep your mind on your driving. Some find listening to the radio helps. If you are impatient, give yourself extra time for your driving trip. Leave a few minutes early. If you have plenty of time, you may not tend to speed or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or cause an accident.

► SENIOR DRIVERS

Most older drivers enjoy the use of their cars and they handle them with skill. There is no reason why they should not continue to drive as long as they are in good health and keep up to date with traffic laws.

Unfortunately, the passing years take their toll on the best of us and sometimes they do it so gradually that we are not aware of the change.

Deterioration of vision, hearing, and reaction time develops almost unnoticed until we find ourselves faced with an emergency that we are no longer equipped to handle. The result is an accident that the driver could easily have averted a few years, or even months, earlier.

This is one of the reasons that the accident rate of drivers 65 and over, in terms of miles traveled, is exceeded only by the rate of drivers under 24 years old. Frequently reported errors made by older drivers include inattention, failure to drive in the proper lane, failure to signal or to observe stop signs and signals, and unreasonably slow driving on busy highways.

■ Considerations for Senior Citizens

Drivers over 65 should recognize it is necessary to exercise constant care to insure their own safety and that of others on our streets and roads. Traffic conditions today demand more of every driver than they did ten or twenty years ago.

These are the problems that face an older driver in today's traffic:

- As age increases, hearing and eyesight are less keen.
- Judgment is slower. It takes longer to recognize traffic situations and to make the necessary decisions.
- Physical dexterity is weakened. Older people don't have the same ability to act with speed and decisiveness in an emergency.
- Older drivers are more susceptible to injury and death. What would have been a minor accident some years ago could mean injury or death now.
- The older driver is apt to forget that the volume of traffic is increasing all the time and that new rules and regulations are being continually introduced.

■ To address these age-related issues, please consider the following points.

They are all intended to make your driving safer for you and your family.
Get your doctor's frank advice about your driving. If your doctor advises you to avoid heavy or fast traffic or night driving, follow that advice.

- There are forms on www.dojmt.gov/driving to help medical professionals assess your physical ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. See 32-1800 Recommendation for Re-Exam; 20-1900 Driver Medical Evaluation; and 22-1801 Report of Eye Examination.
- Keep yourself fit and well; drive only when you feel up to it.
- Don't drive after taking medications unless your doctor says it's safe to do so.
- Be alert at the wheel. Try to anticipate any sudden or unsafe actions by other drivers, pedestrians, or children.
- Keep up to date on traffic laws and rules of safe driving.
- Plan every trip—short or long—before you set out. Avoid heavily-traveled or high-speed routes. Stay away from routes or zones that bother you.
- Don't obstruct faster-moving traffic by unreasonably slow driving. If you are impeding traffic behind you, pull off the road and allow it to pass. Better still, choose another route or a less-busy time of day or week.
- Keep your car and its equipment in safe condition. Take your car in for regular checkups.
- Keep your windshield, headlights, and your glasses clean. Dirt on any of these surfaces interferes with your driving vision—especially at night.
- Wear your seat belt on every drive.

Here's a chance to check your own driving skills. These are common causes of trouble among older drivers. If two or three of the points apply to you, you should take the necessary steps to correct them.

1. Do you need two or three tries when parallel parking?
2. Have you had difficulty in distinguishing between objects, such as a hydrant and a small child, when driving at night?
3. Does the glare from headlights of approaching cars cause prolonged discomfort to your eyes at night?
4. Do you have trouble maintaining the pace of other cars or do they seem to be passing you all the time?
5. Does it take you a long time to get going again after the light has turned green?
6. Are you getting an increasing number of minor scrapes (such as from your garage door) and dents on your car?
7. Are you missing stop signs, important highway signs, and other traffic indicators?
8. Do you find yourself becoming confused when unexpected or unfamiliar things happen while you're driving?
9. Do you have trouble making out objects that are a few feet away and those that are many yards away?
10. When a car is approaching you on the road, do you have trouble judging how far away it is at a given moment?
11. When you are looking straight ahead in the driver's seat, do you have difficulty seeing the sides of the road?

How many of these questions can you honestly answer with a "no?" **For your own protection and that of others, please consider your driving abilities if you have had trouble with any of them.**

■ Giving Up Driving

Choosing to give up your privilege to drive is a difficult decision. There are many factors to consider when deciding whether to continue driving, such as no longer being comfortable at the wheel, feeling that driving is becoming too risky, concerns that your health or medications are adversely affecting your driving, having a close call or serious crash, and worries about getting lost. Your decision is important because it not only involves your independence, but also your safety and the safety of others on the road.

Drivers who think they are no longer able to safely drive can turn their licenses into any driver exam station. If you turn in your license before it's eligible for renewal (more than six months before it expires), you can receive an identification card at no charge. If you give up your license during the renewal eligibility period (six months before expiration), the standard ID card fee will apply.

If you have concerns about a driver's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle, visit the Forms website on www.dojmt.gov/driving for form 32-1800 Recommendation for Re-Exam.

CHAPTER 6 QUIZ

1. Your body gets rid of:
- A. Three alcoholic drinks an hour
- B. One alcoholic drink an hour
- C. Two alcoholic drinks an hour
- D. None of the above

2. To help relieve fatigue on a trip, it is a good idea to:
- A. Stop for a rest every two hours
- B. Do arm exercises every hour
- C. Drive with one eye open at a time
- D. Change feet on the gas pedal

3. The main reason why drinking alcohol and then driving is so dangerous is that it affects your:
- A. Coordination
- B. Vision
- C. Judgment and skill
- D. Reflexes

4. Stress can affect your driving by:
- A. Lessening your concentration on the driving task
- B. Decreasing your chances of an accident
- C. Causing you to go to sleep at the wheel
- D. Making you more aware of others around you

5. What is the number one killer on Montana's roads?
- A. Poor or unkempt roads
- B. Inclement weather/driving conditions
- C. Drunk drivers
- D. Excessive speed

CHAPTER 7 – EMERGENCIES, CRASHES, & ENFORCEMENT STOPS

All drivers find themselves in an emergency situation sooner or later. 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.

► 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 preventative measures greatly reduces the chance your vehicle will have a problem. Following are some possible vehicle failures and what you can do if they happen.

■ Brake Failure

If your brakes stop working:

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

■ Tire Blowout

If a tire suddenly goes flat:

- Hold the steering wheel tightly and keep the vehicle going straight.
- Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal and use the brakes lightly.
- Do not stop on the road if at all possible. Pull off the road in a safe place.

■ Power Failure

If the engine dies while you are driving:

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

■ Headlight Failure

If your headlights suddenly go out:

- Stay calm, visualize the road.
- Take your foot off the accelerator, begin braking.
- Try the headlight switch a few times and turn on the high beams.
- If that does not work, turn on the emergency flashers, turn signals, or fog lights if you have them.
- Pull off the road as soon as is safely possible.

■ Gas Pedal Sticks

If the motor keeps going faster and faster:

- Keep your eyes on the road.
- Quickly shift to neutral.
- Apply steady pressure on the brake.
- Pull off the road when it is safe to do so.
- Turn off the engine.

■ Drift or Run off the Road

If your vehicle's right wheels leave the pavement:

- Take your foot off the accelerator and steer parallel to the road.
- When slowed down, ease back on the road when it's safe. Keep both hands on the steering wheel and steer into the road's right lane with a small left quarter turn of the steering wheel.
- Brake when you are back on pavement.
- Stay in the lane. Panicked drivers over-steer across the road and crash head-on or roll off the other side. Wearing seatbelts can increase your chances of surviving.

► AVOIDING COLLISIONS

When it looks like a collision may happen, many drivers panic and fail to act. In some cases they do act, but do something that does not help 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: (1) stop, (2) turn, and (3) speed up.

■ Stopping Quickly

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

With ABS: If you have an anti-lock braking system and you need to stop quickly:

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

Without ABS: If you must stop quickly and you do not have an anti-lock braking system:

- You can cause the vehicle to go into a skid if you brake too hard.
- Apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking them.
- If the brakes lock up, you will feel the vehicle start to skid. Quickly let up on the brake pedal.
- As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, push down on the brake pedal again. Keep doing this until the vehicle has stopped.

■ Turning Quickly

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

Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel. It is best to have your hands at about 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions (8 o'clock and 4 o'clock in newer vehicles equipped with airbags 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 and electronic stability control (ESC) is that you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn or stop or slow down.

Without ABS - If you do not have ABS, you must use a different procedure to turn quickly. You also step on the brake pedal, but then you let up and turn the steering wheel. Braking will slow the vehicle some, and it puts more weight on the front tires and this allows for a quicker 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 occur when another vehicle is about to hit you from behind or the side and there is room in front of you to get out of danger. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

► PROTECT YOURSELF IN COLLISIONS

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

■ Hit from the rear

If your vehicle is hit from the rear, your body will be thrown backward. Press yourself against the back of your seat and put your head against the head restraint. Be ready to apply your brakes so that you will not be pushed into another vehicle. Your lap and shoulder belts will help minimize your vulnerability to injury.

■ Hit from the side

If your vehicle is hit from the side, your body will be thrown toward the side that is hit. Side air bags will help in this situation, but you still need your lap and shoulder belts to help minimize your vulnerability to injury. Your lap and shoulder belts are needed to help keep you behind the wheel. Get ready to steer or brake to prevent your vehicle from hitting something else.

■ Hit from the front

If your vehicle is going to be hit from the front, try to turn your vehicle in such a way to avoid a direct, head-on collision. This may help to minimize potential bodily harm and damage. If your vehicle has an airbag, it will inflate. Your seatbelt should help minimize vulnerability to injury.

► ACCIDENTS

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

No matter how good a driver you are, there may be a time when you are involved in a crash.

- If you are involved in an accident you must stop.
- If you are involved in an accident with a parked vehicle, you must try to locate the owner.
- If any person is injured or killed, the police must be notified.
- It is a crime for you to leave a crash site where your vehicle was involved if there is an injury or death before police have talked to you and gotten all the information they need about the crash.

You should carry a basic emergency kit that has flares and first aid supplies in your vehicle.

■ At the accident scene

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

■ If someone is injured

- Get help. Make sure the police and emergency medical or rescue squad have been called. If there is a fire, tell the police when they are called.
- Do not move the injured, unless they are in a burning car or in other immediate danger. Moving a person can make their injuries worse.
- First, help anyone who is not already walking and talking. Check for breathing, then check for bleeding.
- If there is bleeding, apply direct pressure directly on the wound with your hand or with a cloth. Even severe bleeding can almost always be stopped or slowed by using pressure on the wound.
- Do not give injured persons anything to drink, not even water.
- To help prevent an injured person from going into shock, cover them with a blanket or coat to keep them warm.

■ Report the accident

- Get the names and addresses of all people involved in the accident and any witnesses. Also, make sure to get the names and addresses of any injured persons.
- Exchange information with other drivers involved in the crash. Name, address, driver license number, vehicle information (license plate, make, model, and year of vehicle), and insurance company and policy number.
- Record any damage to the vehicles involved in the crash.
- Provide information to the police or other emergency officials if requested.
- Should the accident involve a parked car, try to find the owner. If you cannot, leave a note in a place where it can be seen with information on how the owner can reach you and the date and time of the accident.
- You must report an accident immediately to law enforcement if anyone is injured or killed, or property damage is $500 or more. You must report to the Highway Patrol if there is an injury, a death, or property damage of $1,000 or more to one person's property. Accident forms are at law enforcement agencies or available from most insurance agents. You must file the report within 10 days of the accident. If you are injured and unable to complete the report, someone can file it for you.

■ Driver response to emergency vehicles

The drivers of other vehicles must yield the right-of-way and, when possible and safe, pull over and stop at the right edge of the road when they see or hear an emergency vehicle approaching from any direction.

These are the different types of emergency signals used by law enforcement and emergency vehicles:

- Police vehicle: Siren and/or red or blue flashing or rotating lights, or flashing or rotating amber lights
- Authorized Emergency Vehicle: Siren and/or flashing or rotating red lights, or flashing or rotating amber lights

Montana state law, with respect to Montana Code Annotated 61-8-346, requires that all non-emergency vehicles, in the presence of an emergency vehicle making use of audio and visual signals, yield the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to a position parallel and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the road.

On highways with a posted speed limit of 50 MPH or more, vehicles in a lane directly next to a stationary emergency or police vehicle displaying emergency signals **must slow down to a speed of at least 20 miles below the posted speed limit**. When possible, vehicles should switch to a lane farther away from the lane that the stationary vehicle is in.

► ENFORCEMENT STOPS

If a law enforcement officer pulls you over:

- **Acknowledge the officer's presence by turning on your right turn signal.**
  Turning on your signal lets the officer know that you recognize his or her presence. An officer may become alarmed if you fail to recognize him or her, and might perceive that you have a reason to avoid yielding or that you might be impaired.
- **Move your vehicle onto the right shoulder of the road.**
  The officer will guide you using the patrol vehicle. Do not move onto the center median. Do not stop in the center median of the interstate or on the opposite side of a two-lane road. This places both the driver and the officer in danger of being hit by oncoming traffic.
  Stop in well-lit areas when possible. Pull your vehicle as far off the road as possible. When it's dark, look for locations that have more light such as areas with streetlights, near restaurants, or service stations.
- **End your cell phone conversation and turn off your radio.**
  The officer needs your full attention to communicate with you to complete the enforcement stop in the least amount of time needed.
- **Remain inside your vehicle unless otherwise directed by the officer.**
  Never step out of your vehicle unless an officer directs you to do so. During an enforcement stop, the officer's priorities are your safety, the safety of your passengers, and the officer's own safety. In most situations, the safest place for you and your passengers is inside your vehicle. Exiting your vehicle without first being directed by an officer can increase the risk of being struck by a passing vehicle and increase the officer's level of feeling threatened.
- **Driver and passengers should place their hands in clear view; for example, on the steering wheel, on top of your lap, etc.**
  During an enforcement stop, an officer's inability to see the hands of the driver and all occupants in the vehicle increases the officer's level of feeling threatened. Most violent criminal acts against a law enforcement officer occur through the use of a person's hands, such as the use of a firearm, sharp object, etc. If your windows are tinted, it is recommended that you roll them down after you have stopped your vehicle on the right shoulder of the road and before the officer makes contact with you.

CHAPTER 7 QUIZ

1. What should you do if your vehicle's right wheels leave the pavement?
- A. Stop quickly
- B. Pull all the way off and wait until it is safe to get back on the road
- C. Accelerate and steer back on the road quickly
- D. Take your foot off the gas and when you are slowed down, ease back on the road when it is safe to do so

2. What should you do if your accelerator sticks while driving?
- A. Reach down and attempt to pull it up
- B. Shift to park
- C. Shift to neutral and apply steady pressure on the brake
- D. Turn the engine off

3. When involved in an accident as a driver:
- A. Do not exchange information with other drivers
- B. Exchange all information with other drivers
- C. Deny responsibility for the accident
- D. Let the other driver report the accident

4. When approaching an accident scene, you should:
- A. Keep your attention on your driving
- B. Keep moving
- C. Stop if you are involved or if emergency help has not arrived
- D. All of the above

5. If involved in an accident, a driver should:
- A. Stop their vehicle at or near the scene
- B. Do not stand or walk in traffic lanes
- C. Turn off the ignitions of wrecked vehicles
- D. All of the above

CHAPTER 8 – PENALTIES & DRIVING RECORDS

► LOSING YOUR LICENSE

Many people get into serious trouble with their driver license because they do not learn or understand the responsibilities of having a license. **A license is a privilege and can be suspended, revoked, or cancelled when the driver breaks the law.**

Impaired driving, distracted driving, driving with a suspended or revoked license, and being a minor in possession are examples of choices that can cause you to lose your license.

To learn more about penalties, **visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/driver-license-sanctions-2/** Additional information is on the Montana Department of Transportation website www.mdt.mt.gov/safety; look for Safety Information and Traffic Safety Programs.

► YOUR DRIVING RECORD

Your driving record maintains important details about: your application for a driver license, the examination process, the subsequent issuance, denial, revocation, suspension or cancellation of a license, driver performance, and any other action taken in response to unsafe driver performance or other legal requirements.

A record features information in five major categories:

- personal history information
- licensing information
- conviction/accident history
- driver license sanctions
- motor vehicle accident history

For instructions on how to request your driving record, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/driving-records or call the Montana Motor Vehicle Division Customer Care Center at 1-866-450-8034.

CHAPTER 9 - OTHER SERVICES

► VOTER REGISTRATION

You can register to vote at any Montana driver exam station. The voter registration form will be forwarded to the proper election administrator and a voter registration card will be mailed to you. If you were registered to vote, but did not vote in the last presidential election, you should fill out a voter registration card to make sure your registration stays valid. You may visit the Montana Secretary of State "My Voter Page" at https://app.mt.gov/voterinfo/ to check if you are registered to vote, check your voter registration address, and to find the location and direction to your polling place.

► SELECTIVE SERVICE

Young men who are at least 15 years old and not older than 26 are required to register with the Selective Service in compliance with the federal Military Selective Service Act, 50 App. USC 453. An individual must be able to fulfill those registration requirements when applying for an instruction permit, basic driver license, CDL, or Montana ID card.
If under 18 years old but at least 15 years old, an individual must be able to be registered by the selective service system upon turning 18 years old. An individual will have the opportunity to register when filling out an application at a Montana driver licensing exam station.

► ORGAN & TISSUE DONATION

There are several reasons to be an organ and tissue donor, including to:

- save another's life
- improve someone's life
- contribute to the advancement of medical science

You can become an organ and tissue donor by:

- requesting to have it marked on your driver license
- going to the organ donor website at www.donatelifetoday.com
- calling, toll-free, 1-877-275-5269

Be sure to discuss your participation with your relatives, physician, and friends.

If you want to make changes to your donation wishes or decide you no longer want to be an organ and tissue donor, visit the website at www.donatelifetoday.com or call the toll-free number at 1-877-275-5269 to update or deactivate your record.

A minor who is at least 15 years old can request an organ donor designation on his/her driver license. Parental authorization is not required.

► LIVING WILL

If you are 18 or older, you can choose to have your driver license indicate that you have a living will.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Chapter 1 - The Driver License 1. C 2. D 3. B	**Chapter 5 - How to Drive Safely** 1. D 2. D 3. C 4. C 5. A 6. B 7. B 8. D
Chapter 2 - Motor Vehicle Equipment 1. D 2. C 3. C 4. C	**Chapter 6 - Physical Requirements** 1. B 2. A 3. C 4. A 5. C
Chapter 3 - Signs, Signals, & Markings 1. B 2. D 3. C 4. D 5. D 6. C 7. D	**Chapter 7 - Emergencies, Crashes, & Enforcement Stops** 1. D 2. C 3. B 4. D 5. D
Chapter 4 - Driving Rules 1. C 2. B 3. B 4. D 5. D 6. A	

HISTORY OF THE MONTANA LICENSE PLATE

What would lead to the need for license plates began in 1891 when the Second Legislative Assembly passed an act establishing taxation on all property in the state (with exceptions). In 1913, the Legislature recognized motor vehicles as property and in 1919 provided for the specific classification of automobiles, motor trucks, and other power-driven vehicles.

Taxation on motor vehicles was put into effect in 1913 for the purpose of raising revenue for the construction, maintenance, and improvement of public highways. A license fee of $5 to $20 was charged depending on the horsepower of the vehicle.

Registration of vehicles, including all identifying features of the vehicle and the name and address of the owner, was also put into effect in 1913. A Registrar of Motor Vehicles was designated and it became his responsibility to assign a distinctive number to be displayed on the front and rear of each vehicle. These numbers were issued in numerical sequence as the registrations were received. Since the state was not yet providing a license plate, many vehicle owners would inscribe the registration number on a piece of leather or other article and attach it to their vehicle.

Montana began issuing license plates in 1914. The first plate displayed only the plate number. The 1915-1916 plates displayed “MON,” the year, and the plate number. A prefix number was assigned in 1926, which designated population centers as they existed in 1914. The first prison-made plates were issued in 1928, and “MONTANA” was spelled out; plates prior to 1928 were manufactured out of state. Approximately 127,215 plates were manufactured in 1928. In 1933, the prefix number was revised to designate the county in which that vehicle was registered. The words “PRISON MADE” were stamped into plates during the years 1939-1957.

The state map, which outlines the standard issue license plate of today, was first found on the 1933 orange and maroon plate, and the bison skull was first added for a single year in 1938.

The “Treasure State” slogan was first used in 1950 and changed to the popular “Big Sky Country” slogan in 1967. That would be used until 2010 when “Treasure State” was reintroduced.

During 1944, license plates were manufactured from pressed soybean fiberboard due to a shortage of steel caused by the war. Goats, cows, and mice reportedly enjoyed the taste of these plates, with some vehicle owners losing their plates to a snack for the animals.

Steel was replaced by aluminum in 1960. New resources initiated another change in 1967 when reflectorized materials were introduced. Adhesive registration decals were first used in 1968, replacing the metal insert tags dating to 1954.

Montana currently offers five standard-issue plate designs and over 190 specialty and collegiate plates.

For the complete history of license plates in Montana, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/license-plates/license-plate-history/.

For general license plate information, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/license-plates/.

To see the specialty and collegiate license plates, visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/plate-designs-and-fees/.

T**o see a list of license plate and title and registration statistics and collected fees,** visit www.dojmt.gov/driving/mvd-by-the-numbers/.

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Driver License Bureau
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MVD Customer Care Center

1-866-450-8034
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Go online to www.dojmt.gov/driving

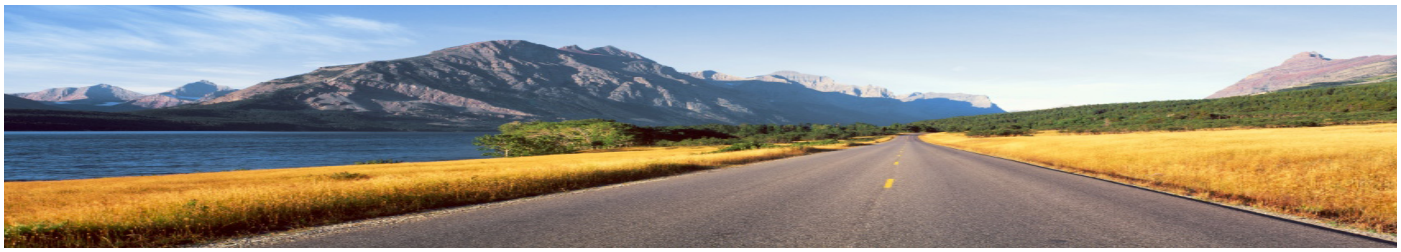
for comprehensive, up-to-date information regarding:

- **Fees**
- **Required documents**
- **Driver licensing requirements**
- **Driver exam station hours and locations**
- **County Treasurer office locations and phone numbers**

Schedule an Appointment

Online: www.dojmt.gov/driving/appointments
Phone: 1-866-450-8034

MONTANA DRIVER MANUAL



The Montana Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of this document and auxiliary aids will be provided upon request. For information please contact the Motor Vehicle Division at (866) 450-8034 or TTY (406) 444-1987.

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