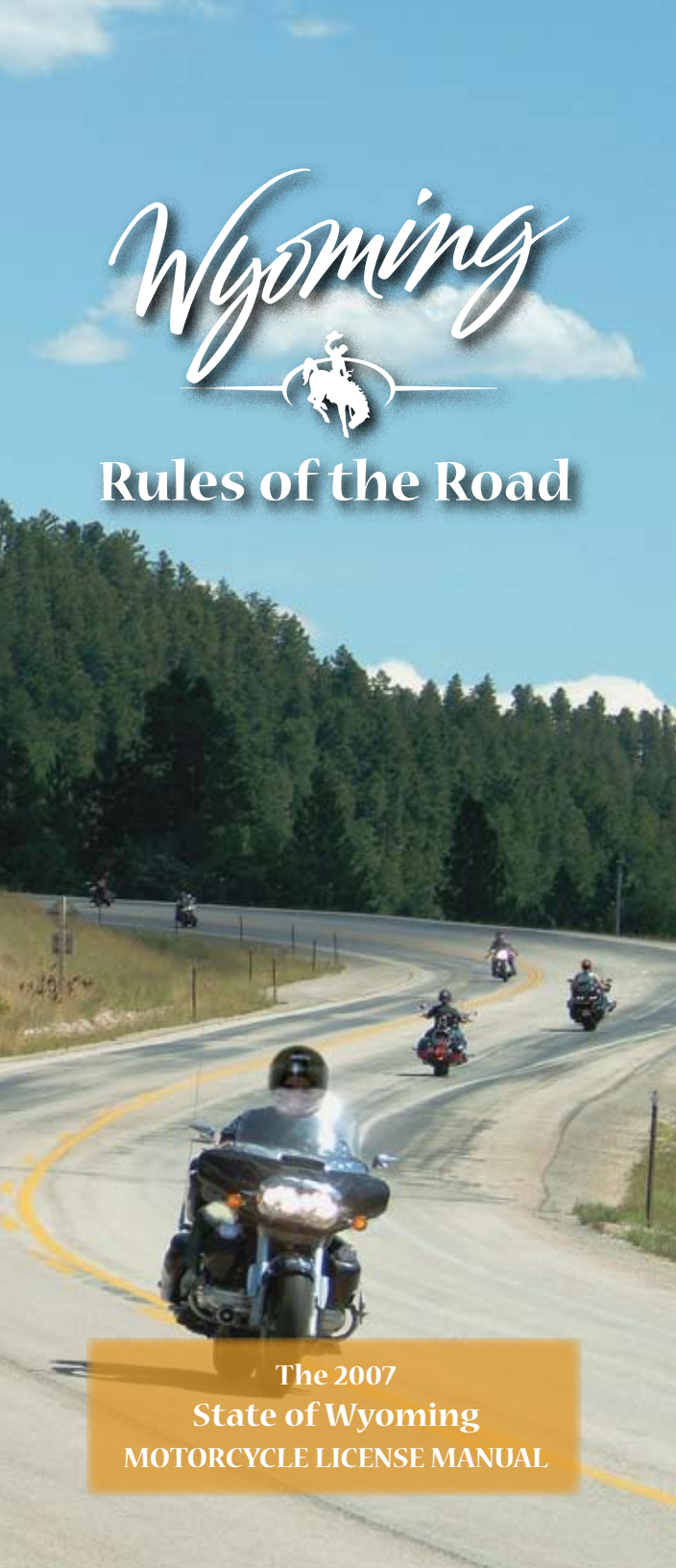

Wyoming
Rules of the Road
The 2007
State of Wyoming
MOTORCYCLE LICENSE MANUAL

# Above all else, drive safely

Welcome to the latest edition of Wyoming's Motorcycle License Manual. This book has been revised to include the most recent changes enacted by the Wyoming State Legislature effective July 1, 2006.

You will find information on how to obtain a driver's license or ID card, the penalties for drinking and driving, requirements for insurance, what to do in the case of a crash, rules for driving on streets, highways, and railroad crossings, and other driving-related subjects. You will also find information on other driver services offered both by the Wyoming Department of Transportation and other government entities in Wyoming.

Safe motorcycle operation involves obeying traffic rules and regulations, being courteous on the road, driving defensively and making sure that you and your passengers wear a seat belt.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Driver Services at (307) 777-4800 or 4810 or write to us at Wyoming Department of Transportation, Driver Services, 5300 Bishop Boulevard, Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340. Also, visit our website at *http://dot.state.wy.us*!

## This manual will help you attain your license and operate your motorcycle safely

**While a thorough knowledge of the information in this manual will help you pass the state knowledge and motorcycle-operation tests, it covers only the basic requirements. We urge persons who are just learning to drive to also take advantage of local driver education, such as the novice and experienced-rider courses offered by WYDOT (See page 35.).**

**The language of the Wyoming Motor Vehicle Law is not used in this manual, which therefore cannot be used as an actual expression of the law. This manual does provide, in simple terms, the basic intent of the law in driving situations. Statutes relating to driver licensing and motor vehicles are found in Wyoming Laws and Related Statutes.**

**Your future as a driver could be decided by how well you study and become familiar with the information in this manual. Applying it can help you operate your motorcycle crash free and provide enjoyment**

# Table of contents

# Rules of the Road
# Speed and maneuvers

## Legal speed limits

**(All unless otherwise posted)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Interstate Highways | 75 mph |
| Secondary Highways | 65 mph |
| Residential Areas | 30 mph |
| Business Areas | 30 mph |
| School Zones | 20 mph |

## Adjust speed

### Adjust speed for road conditions

The only contact your motorcycle or car has with the road is through its tires, and each only has an area of rubber about the size of a person's hand on the surface of the road. The grip provided by the tires, then, is very dependent on the condition of the road itself. It is imperative, therefore, that motorists drive in accord with road conditions.

### On curves

Adjust speed BEFORE entering a curve. Going too fast can break the grip that tires have on the road.

### At intersections

Trees, bushes, or buildings at intersections can block the view of vehicles coming from the side. Therefore approach a "blind" intersection at no more than 15 mph.

### On slippery roads

If the road is slippery, the grip your tires have is reduced. Therefore, drive slower than you would on a dry road. When driving on:

| | |
|---|---|
| Wet road | Reduce speed by at least 5-10 mph. |
| Packed snow | Reduce speed by at least half. |
| Ice | Reduce speed to a crawl. You may have to slow even more if vehicles are ahead. |

### Adjust speed for traffic conditions

Crashes tend to happen when one driver is going faster or slower than other vehicles on the road:

- If you are going faster than traffic, you will have to pass other vehicles. You have more chances of having a crash if you pass many vehicles.
- Going slower than other vehicles or stopping suddenly can be just as bad as speeding. The possibility of rear-end collisions is added to the danger of vehicles passing you.
- You should be able to identify slower-moving vehicles. Adjust your speed gradually. Slowing suddenly is a major cause of traffic crashes.
- Remember that you are sharing the road with bicyclists, and that they have as much legal right to be on a public roadway as you. All bicycles should be identified as slow-moving traffic and your speed and driving should be adjusted to accommodate them.

### Adjust speed for light conditions

#### Darkness

Never drive so fast that you cannot stop within the distance you can see ahead with your headlights. Your car lights will only let you see clearly about 250 feet. If you then drive faster than 55 mph on a dark road, you are really "driving blind" because you won't be able to stop within the 250 feet ahead of you that is lit well enough to see.

#### Rain, fog or snow

In a very heavy rain, snowstorm, or thick fog, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you can't see any further than that, you cannot drive safely at any speed. Whenever you cannot see well enough, pull off the road and wait until it clears.

## Motorcycle equipment

### Required equipment

Every motorcycle is required to have:

- at least one headlight, one taillight, one brake light and one red rear reflector;
- a mirror mounted on the left side of the vehicle as to reflect the view of the highway to the rear of the vehicle; and
- a muffler and a horn in good working order.

Turn signals, front and rear, are optional.



## Basic rules and regulations

Wyoming requires adherence to the following rules and regulations for operating a motorcycle on the road:

- A person operating a motorcycle shall ride only upon an attached permanent and regular seat, and the motorcycle shall not carry any other person unless the motorcycle is designed to carry more than one person. In that event a passenger may ride upon the permanent and regular seat if it is designed for two people or upon another seat firmly attached to the motorcycle at the rear or side of the operator.
- A person shall ride on a motorcycle only while sitting astride the seat, facing forward, with one leg on each side of the motorcycle.
- No person shall operate a motorcycle while carrying any article which prevents him from keeping both hands on the handlebars or obstructs his vision or interferes with the operation of the motorcycle.
- All motorcycles are entitled to full use of a lane of traffic.
- The operator of a motorcycle shall not overtake and pass any vehicle in the same lane occupied by the other vehicle unless it is another motorcycle.
- The operator of a motorcycle overtaking another motorcycle in the same lane shall first match the speed of the other motorcycle before passing.
- No person shall operate a motorcycle between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles.
- Motorcycles shall not be operated three or more abreast in a single lane of traffic.
- No person riding a motorcycle shall attach himself or the motorcycle to any other moving vehicle on a roadway. This does not prohibit attaching a motorcycle trailer or motorcycle semi-trailer designed for such an attachment.
- Any motorcycle carrying a passenger, other than in a sidecar or enclosed cab, shall be equipped with footrests for the passenger.
- No person shall operate any motorcycle with handlebars so positioned that his hands, when upon the grips, are above shoulder height when he is sitting astride the vehicle seat with the vehicle in an upright position.
- No minor shall operate or ride on a motorcycle unless he is wearing protective headgear, of a type that is approved, securely fastened on his head. The

standard for protective headgear shall meet or exceed the "290.1-1971 standard" of the American National Standards Institute.

- Any person operating a motorcycle or pedestrian vehicle (designed for use by a disabled person) shall have the headlamps of the motorcycle or pedestrian vehicle on at all times, including daylight hours.

## Before you go

What you do before you start a trip goes a long way toward determining whether you'll get there safely. Before any trip, a safe rider makes a point to:

- wear the right gear;
- become familiar with the motorcycle;
- check the motorcycle equipment; and
- be a responsible rider.

## Wear the right gear

Your gear is "right" if it protects you. In any crash, you have a far better chance of avoiding serious injury if you wear: an approved helmet, face or eye protection and protective clothing.

## Helmet use

Crashes are common, particularly among beginning riders, and one out of every five result in head or neck injuries. Head injuries are just as severe as neck injuries and far more common. Analyses also show head and neck injuries account for a majority of serious and fatal injuries to motorcyclists and that, with few exceptions, such injuries are reduced by the proper wearing of an approved helmet.

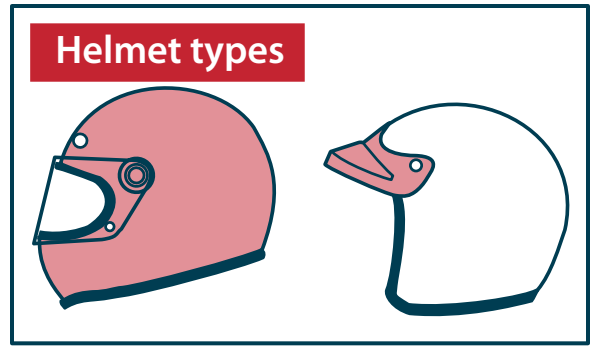
### Some helmet-related facts

An approved helmet lets you see as far to the sides as necessary. A study of more than 900 motorcycle crashes, where 40 percent of the riders wore helmets, found no case in which a helmet kept a rider from spotting danger.

Most crashes happen on short trips, less than five miles long and just a few minutes after starting.

Most riders are riding slower than 30 mph when a crash occurs. At these speeds, helmets can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by half.






No matter what the speed, helmeted riders are three times more likely to survive head injuries than those not wearing helmets at the time of the crash.

### Helmet selection

There are two primary types of helmets, providing two different levels of coverage: three-quarter and full face. Whichever you choose, you can maximize protection by making sure it:

- meets U.S. Department of Transportation and state standards (Helmets with a label from the Snell Memorial Foundation give you an added assurance of quality.);
- fits snugly all the way around; and
- has no obvious defects such as cracks, loose padding or frayed straps.

Whatever helmet you choose, keep it securely fastened on your head when you ride. Otherwise it's likely to fly off before it gets a chance to protect you.

## Eye and face protection

A plastic, shatter resistant face shield can help protect your whole face in a crash. It also protects you from wind, dust, dirt, rain, insects and pebbles thrown up from cars ahead. These problems are distracting and can be painful. If you have to deal with them, you can't devote your full attention to the road.

Goggles protect your eyes, though they won't protect the rest of your face like a face shield does. A windshield is not a substitute for a face shield or goggles. Most windshields do not protect your eyes from the wind. Neither will eyeglasses or sunglasses. Glasses won't keep your eyes from watering, and they might blow off when you turn your head while riding.

To be effective, eye or face shield protection must:

- be free of scratches;
- be resistant to penetration;
- give a clear view to either side;
- fasten securely, so it does not blow off;
- permit air to pass through to reduce fogging; and
- allow room for eyeglasses or sunglasses, if needed.

Tinted eye protection should not be worn at night or any other time when light is limited.

## Clothing

The right clothing protects you in a collision. It also provides comfort, as well as protection from heat, cold, debris and hot and moving parts of the motorcycle.

### Jacket and pants

Jacket and pants should cover arms and legs completely. They should fit snugly enough to keep from flapping in the wind, yet loosely enough to move freely. Leather offers the most protection. Sturdy synthetic material provides a lot of protection as well. Wear a jacket even in warm weather to prevent dehydration. Many are designed to protect without getting you overheated, even on summer days.

### Boots or shoes

Boots or shoes should be high and sturdy enough to cover your ankles and give them support. Soles should be made of hard, durable slip-resistant material. Keep heels short so they do not catch on rough surfaces. Tuck laces so they won't catch on your motorcycle.

### Gloves

Gloves allow a better grip and help protect your hands in a crash. Your gloves should be made of leather or similar durable material.

In cold or wet weather, your clothes should keep you warm and dry as well. You cannot control a motorcycle well if you are numb. Riding for long periods in cold weather can cause severe chill and fatigue. A winter jacket should resist wind and fit snugly at the neck, wrists and waist. Good-quality rain suits designed for motorcycle riding resist tearing apart or ballooning up at high speeds.



# Know your motorcycle

There are plenty of things on the highway that can cause you trouble. Your motorcycle should not be one of them. To make sure that your motorcycle won't let you down:

- read owner's manual first;
- start with the right motorcycle for you;
- be familiar with the motorcycle controls;
- check the motorcycle before every ride;
- keep it in safe riding condition between rides; and
- avoid add-ons and modifications that make your motorcycle harder to handle.

## The right motorcycle for you

First, make sure your motorcycle is right for you. It should "fit" you. Your feet should reach the ground while you are seated on the motorcycle. At minimum, your street-legal motorcycle should have a headlight, taillight and brake light, front and rear brakes, turn signals, a horn and two mirrors.

## Borrowing and lending

Borrowers and lenders of motorcycles beware. Crashes are fairly common among beginning riders, especially in the first months of riding.

Riding an unfamiliar motorcycle adds to the problem. If you borrow a motorcycle, get familiar with it in a controlled area. And if you lend your motorcycle to friends, make sure they are licensed and know how to ride before allowing them out into traffic.

No matter how experienced you may be, ride extra carefully on any motorcycle that's unfamiliar to you. More than half of all crashes occur on motorcycles ridden by the operator for less than six months.

## Get familiar with the controls

Make sure you are completely familiar with the motorcycle before you take it out on the street. Be sure to review the owner's manual. This is particularly important if you are riding a borrowed motorcycle. If you are going to use an unfamiliar motorcycle:

- make all of the checks you would on your own motorcycle;
- find out where everything is, particularly the turn signals, horn, headlight switch, fuel-control valve,

and engine cut-off switch (Find and operate these items without having to look for them.);
- know the gear pattern, and work the throttle, clutch, and brakes a few times before you start riding (All controls react a little differently); and
- ride very cautiously and be aware of surroundings (Accelerate gently, take turns more slowly, and leave extra room for stopping).

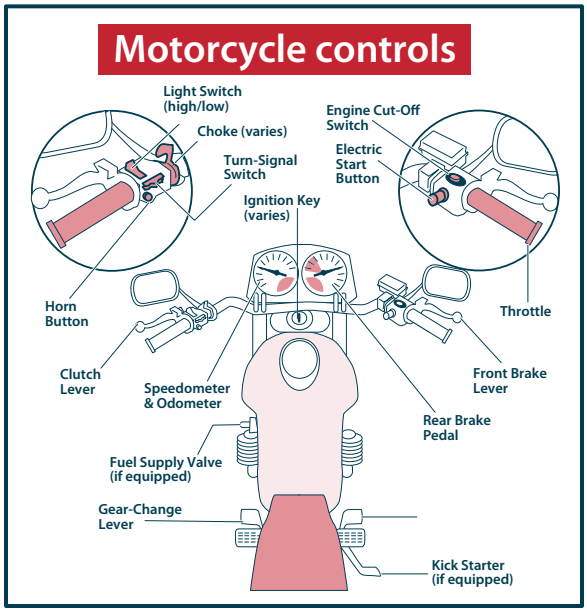
## Check your motorcycle

A motorcycle needs more frequent attention than a car. A minor technical failure in a car seldom leads to anything more than an inconvenience for the driver.

If something's wrong with the motorcycle, you'll want to find out about it before you get in traffic. Make a complete check of your motorcycle before every ride.

Before starting your trip, check the tires' air pressure and general wear and tread, oil and fluid levels. At a minimum, check hydraulic fluids and coolants weekly. Look under the motorcycle for signs of an oil or gas leak, check your headlight and taillight, and test your switch to make sure both high and low beams are working.

Also check both right and left turn signals, and make sure all lights are working properly. Try both brake controls, making sure each one turns on the brake light.






Once you are on the motorcycle but before starting out, check:
- that clutch and throttle are working smoothly (The throttle should snap back when you let go. The clutch should feel tight and smooth.);
- that mirrors are clean and adjusted properly (It's difficult to ride with one hand while you try to adjust a mirror. Adjust each mirror so you can see the lane behind and as much as possible of the lane next to you. When properly adjusted, a mirror may show the edge of your arm or shoulder, but it's the road behind and to the side that's most important.);
- your front and rear brakes one at a time, making sure each feels firm and holds the motorcycle when it is fully applied; and
- that your horn works.

In addition you should make weekly checks of wheels, cables, fasteners and fluids. Refer to your owner's manual for recommendations.

# Basic vehicle control

## Body position

To control a motorcycle well be aware of your posture, seat position, hands, knees and feet.

Posture: Sit so you can use your arms to steer the motorcycle rather than to hold yourself up.

Seat position: Sit far enough forward so that your arms are slightly bent when you hold the handle grips. Bending your arms permits you to press on the handlebars without having to stretch.

Hands: Hold the handle grips firmly to keep your grip over rough surfaces. Start with your right wrist flat. This will help you keep from accidentally using too much

throttle. Also, adjust the handlebars so your hands are even with or below your elbows. This permits you to use the proper muscles for precision steering.

Knees: Keep your knees against the gas tank to help you keep your balance as the motorcycle turns.

Feet: Keep your feet firmly on the foot pegs to maintain balance. Don't drag your feet. If your foot catches on something, you can be injured and it could affect your control of the motorcycle. Keep your feet near the controls so you can get to them quickly, if needed. Also, don't let your toes point downward; they may get caught between the road and the foot pegs.

## Shifting gears

There is more to shifting gears than simply getting the motorcycle to pick up speed smoothly. Learning to use the gears when downshifting, turning or starting on hills is important for safe motorcycle operation. Shift down through the gears with the clutch as you slow or stop.

Remain in first gear while you are stopped so that you can move out quickly if you need to.

Make certain you are riding slowly enough when you shift into a lower gear. If not, the motorcycle will lurch, and the rear wheel may skid.

When riding downhill or shifting into first gear, you may need to use the brakes to slow enough before downshifting safely. Work towards a smooth, even clutch release, especially when downshifting.

It is best to change gears before entering a turn. However, sometimes shifting while in the turn is necessary. If so, remember to do so smoothly; a sudden change in power to the rear wheel can cause a skid.

## Braking

Your motorcycle has two brakes, one each for the front and rear wheel. Use both of them at the same time. The front brake is more powerful and can provide at least three-quarters of your total stopping power. The front brake is safe to use if you use it properly. Remember:

- to use both brakes every time you slow or stop (Using both brakes for even "normal" stops will permit you to develop the proper habit or skill of using both brakes properly in an emergency. Squeeze the front brake and press down on the rear. Grabbing at the front brake or jamming down on the rear can cause the brakes to lock, resulting in control problems.);
- if you know the technique, using both brakes in a turn is possible, although it should be done very carefully (When leaning the motorcycle, some of the traction is used for cornering, and then less traction is available for stopping. A skid can occur if you apply too much brake. Also, using the front brake incorrectly on a slippery surface may be hazardous. Use caution and squeeze the brake lever, never grab.);
- some motorcycles have integrated braking systems that link the front and rear brakes together by applying the rear brake pedal (Consult the owner's manual for a detailed explanation on the operation and effective use of these systems.).

## Turning

Riders often try to take curves or turns too fast. When they can't hold the turn, they end up crossing into another lane of traffic or going off the road. Or, they overreact and brake too hard, causing a skid and loss of control. Approach turns and curves with caution. Use four steps for better control: SLOW, LOOK, LEAN and ROLL.

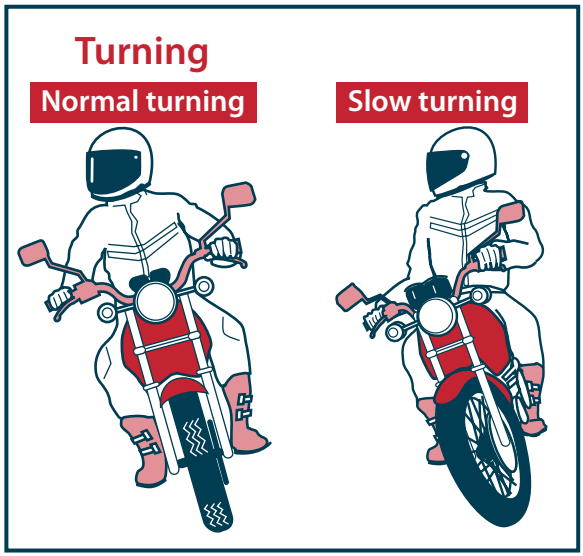
SLOW: Reduce speed before the turn by closing the throttle and, if necessary, applying both brakes.

LOOK: Look through the turn to where you want to go. Turn just your head, not your shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the horizon.

LEAN: To turn, the motorcycle must lean. To lean the motorcycle, press on the handgrip in the direction of the turn. Press left, lean left, go left. Press right, lean right, go right. Higher speeds and/or tighter turns require the motorcycle to lean more.

ROLL: Roll on the throttle through the turn to stabilize suspension. Maintain steady speed or accelerate gradually through the turn. This will help keep the motorcycle stable.

In normal turns, the rider and the motorcycle should lean together at the same angle. In slow tight turns, counterbalance by leaning the motorcycle only and keeping your body upright.




## Keeping your distance

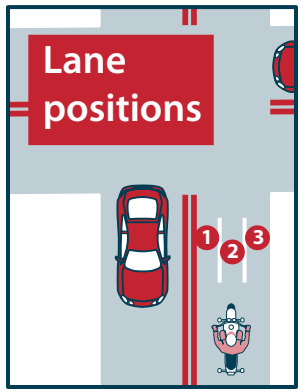
The best protection you can have is distance — a "cushion of space" — all around your motorcycle. If someone else makes a mistake, distance gives you time to react and space to maneuver.

### Maintain best lane position

In some ways the size of the motorcycle can work to your advantage. Each traffic lane gives a motorcycle three paths of travel, as indicated in the illustration.

Your lane position should:

- increase your ability to see and be seen;
- avoid others' blind spots;
- avoid surface hazards;
- protect your lane from other drivers;
- communicate your intentions;
- avoid wind blast from other vehicles; and
- provide an escape route.



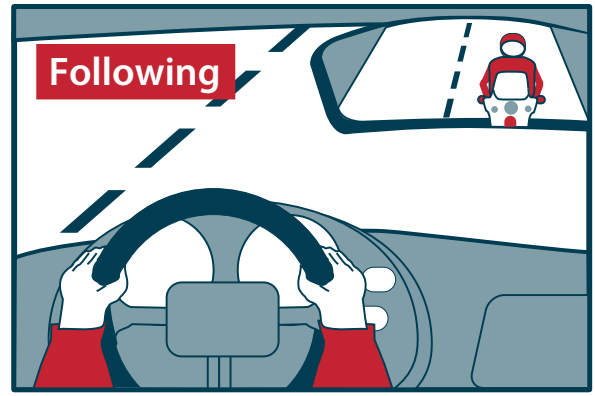

No portion of the lane need be avoided, including the center. Position yourself in the portion of the lane where you are most likely to be seen and you can maintain a space cushion around you. Change position as traffic situations change. Ride in path 2 or 3 if vehicles and other potential problems are on your left only. Remain in path 1 or 2 if hazards are on your right only. If vehicles are being operated on both sides of you, the center of the lane, path 2, is usually your best option.

The oily strip in the center portion that collects drippings from cars is usually no more than two feet wide. Unless the road is wet, the average center strip permits adequate traction to ride on safely. You can operate to the left or right of the grease strip and still be within the center portion of the traffic lane. Avoid riding on big buildups of oil and grease usually found at busy intersections or toll booths.

## Following and being followed

### Following another vehicle

"Following too closely" is a major factor in crashes involving motorcyclists. In traffic, motorcycles need as much distance to stop as cars.




Normally, a minimum of two seconds distance should be maintained behind the vehicle ahead. To gauge your following distance:

- pick out a marker, such as a pavement marking or lamppost, on or near the road ahead;
- when the rear bumper of the vehicle ahead passes the marker, count off the seconds: "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two;" and

The view from Wyoming's highways improves immensely as thousands of Adopt-A-Highway volunteers pick up trash along their two-mile highway sections, typically twice a year.

### 900 Adopt-A-Highway groups

Wyoming's popular Adopt-A-Highway program has about 900 participating groups statewide, and the members are encouraged to get out in May, during a Spring Clean Fling, to make one of their two cleanups for the year.

**They keep OUR VIEWs pristine**

It's estimated Wyoming's dedicated volunteers clean some 100 tons of litter from along the state's highways every year.

### 5,000 miles remain up for adoption

Wyoming's 900 AAH groups are each responsible for two miles of highway. That means there are still 5,000 miles of highway in the state available for adoption by your group.

***For information about how your group can help, write WYDOT's Public Affairs Office at 5300 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340 or call (307) 777-4013.***


- if you reach the marker before you reach "two," you are following too closely.

A two-second following distance leaves a minimum amount of space to stop or swerve if the driver ahead stops suddenly. It also permits a better view of potholes and other hazards in the road.

A larger cushion of space is needed if your motorcycle will take longer than normal to stop. If the pavement is slippery, if you cannot see through the vehicle ahead, or if traffic is heavy and someone may squeeze in front of you, open up a three second or greater following distance.

Keep well behind the vehicle ahead even when you are stopped. This will make it easier to get out of the way if someone bears down on you from behind. It will also give you a cushion of space if the vehicle ahead starts to back up for some reason.

When behind a car, ride where the driver can see you in the rear view mirror. Riding in the center portion of the lane should put your image in the middle of the rear view mirror, where a driver is most likely to see you.

Riding at the far side of a lane may permit a driver to see you in a side view mirror. But remember that most drivers don't look at their side view mirrors nearly as often as they check the rear view mirror. If the traffic situation allows, the center portion of the lane is usually the best place for you to be seen by the drivers ahead and to prevent lane sharing by others.

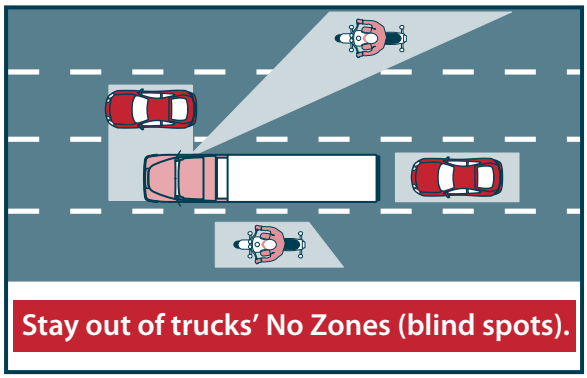
### Being followed

Speeding up to lose someone following too closely only ends up with someone tailgating you at a higher speed. A better way to handle tailgaters is to get them in front of you. When someone is following too closely, change lanes and let them pass. If you can't do this, slow down and open up extra space ahead of you to allow room for both you and the tailgater to stop. This will also encourage them to pass. If they don't pass, you will have given yourself and the tailgater more time and space to react in case an emergency does develop ahead.

### Avoid the No-Zone

One of the most serious misjudgments made about trucks concerns the truck driver's field of vision. Many

believe that because a truck driver sits high, he can see further ahead and can react sooner to developments on the road. True, the truck driver has a better view over the top of any vehicles ahead of him, but heavy vehicles have serious blind spots that other vehicles do not.




Heavy vehicles have deep blind spots directly behind them. Avoid tailgating in this No-Zone area. The truck driver cannot see you in this position and your own view of the traffic flow is severely reduced. Following too closely not only greatly increases your chances of a rear-end collision but also creates a hazardous situation if debris such as ice, rocks and tire-recapping material ends up in your path or strikes you or your motorcycle through no fault of the truck driver. Heavy vehicles also have very large blind spots on both the right and the left side. When you drive in these blind spots (No-Zones) for any length of time, you cannot be seen by the truck driver. If the truck driver needs to change lanes quickly for any reason, a serious or fatal crash could occur.

The "right-turn squeeze" happens when a motorcycle finds itself in the blind spot located on the right side of a heavy vehicle, which is turning right. Motorcyclists who are aware of No-Zone areas when sharing the road with heavy vehicles are better prepared to avoid potential crashes. For all of the reasons listed above, it is best to avoid loitering in any No-Zone area.

## Passing and being passed

Passing and being passed by another vehicle is not much different than in a car. However, visibility is more

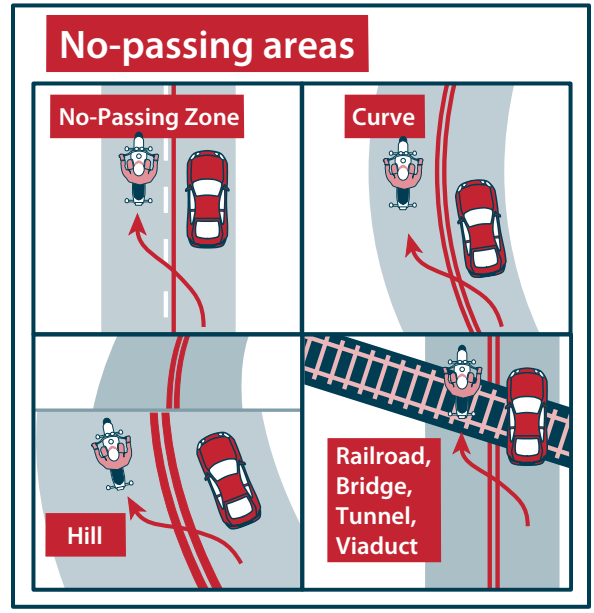


critical. Be sure other drivers see you, and that you see potential hazards.

### Passing

Decide if it is safe to pass.

- Do not pass if signs or pavement markings prohibit passing. If you see any vehicles, pedestrians, bridges, curves, hills, intersections, or railroad crossings just ahead, do not pass; WAIT.
- Do not try to pass more than one vehicle at a time on a two-lane road.
- Do not follow another vehicle that is passing a car in front of you.
- It is not legal to exceed the speed limit when passing.
- DO NOT pass a school bus with flashing red lights.

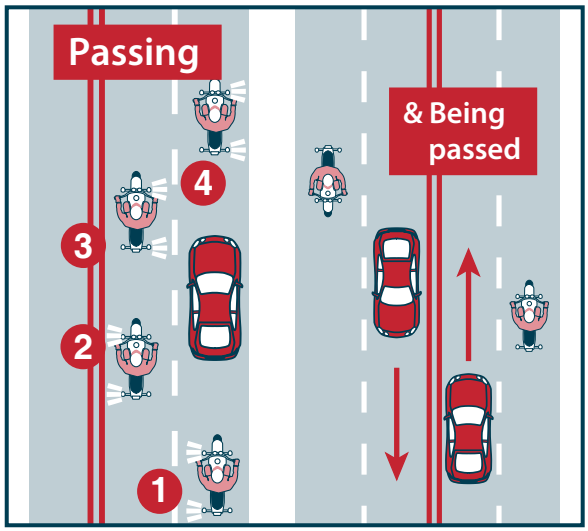



### How to pass

- Before passing, ride in the left portion of the lane at a safe following distance to increase your line of sight and make yourself more visible. Signal and check for oncoming traffic. Use your mirrors and turn your head to look for traffic behind.
- When safe, move into the left lane and accelerate. Select a lane position that doesn't crowd the car you

are passing and provides space to avoid hazards in your lane.
- Ride through the blind spot as quickly as possible.
- Signal again, and complete mirror and head checks before returning to your original lane and then cancel your signal.

Remember, passes must be completed within posted speed limits and only where permitted. Know your signs and road markings!




## Being passed

When you are being passed from behind or by an oncoming vehicle, stay in the center portion of your lane. Riding any closer to them could put you in a hazardous situation. Avoid being hit by:

- the other vehicle (A slight mistake by you or the passing driver could cause a side-swipe crash.);
- extended mirrors (Some drivers forget that their mirrors hang out farther than their fenders.);
- objects thrown from windows (Even if the driver knows you're there, a passenger may not and might toss something on you or the road ahead of you.); and
- blasts of wind from larger vehicles (They can affect your control. You have more room for error if you are in the middle portion when hit by this blast than if you are on either side of the lane.).



Do not move into the portion of the lane farthest from the passing vehicle. It might invite the other driver to cut back into your lane too early.

## Passing heavy vehicles

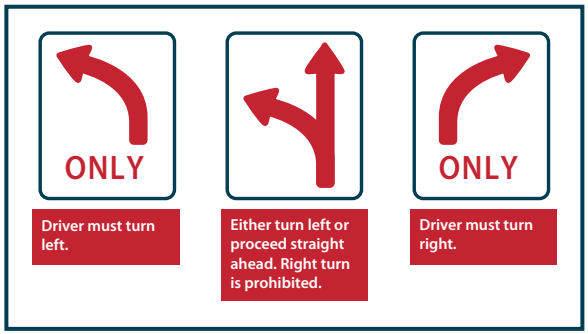
When passing a tractor-trailer, take into account the vehicle's total length, particularly double trailers. Some of these vehicles can be as much as 100 feet long. Make sure you have adequate space.

When a motorcyclist cuts in too soon after passing a heavy vehicle, then abruptly slows down, truck drivers are forced to compensate with little time or room to spare. Because it takes longer to pass a large vehicle, you should maintain a consistent speed when passing and be sure you can see both headlights and the entire cab of the truck behind you before pulling back into your lane.

When approaching a construction zone, a motorcyclist may be tempted to pass a heavy vehicle at a high speed and then cut in front of the truck to avoid being trapped behind it. However that can often result in not enough braking distance between the truck and the motorcycle, and the truck may unavoidably "rear end" the bike, causing a serious or even fatal crash.

# Traffic signs, signals and road markings

The different shapes and colors of signs are significant and mean different things. If fading light, fog, rain, snow or darkness makes them difficult to read, their shapes can still tell informed drivers generally what to look for or what to do. For instance, diamond-shaped signs are meant to warn you of such things as road hazards, while rectangular signs give regulatory information about lawful speeds and directions.




***The different shapes of signs are explained and shown in full color on the inside and outside of the back* cover.** Be sure and familiarize yourself with them. Pavement markings also provide the driver with important information about the proper position of vehicles on the roadway.

## Overhead signs

Overhead lane signs tell you what direction you must go. When the word "ONLY" is used, you must go in the direction the arrow points; there is no option. Arrows painted on the roadway and arrows on the overhead signs have the same meaning.

## Use of lanes

On a two-lane roadway (one lane going in each direction) you are required to drive on the right side and to yield the left half of the roadway to oncoming traffic.

On multi-lane roads, drive in the lane that has the smoothest flow of traffic. It helps you keep a safe space cushion and saves gas. When there are three or more lanes going in one direction, the middle lane or lanes



are usually the smoothest. The left lane is for drivers who want to go faster, pass or turn left. Slower drivers and those turning right use the right lane.

If the road has two lanes going in one direction, the right lane usually has the smoothest flow of traffic. On roads that have special left turn lanes, the left lane may have the smoothest flow of traffic.

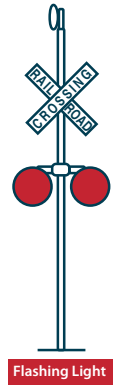
## Railroad crossings

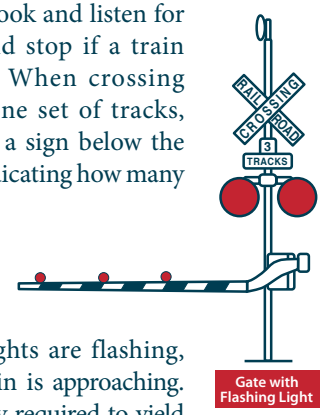
Where public highways and railways intersect, one or more of the following warning devices mark the crossing for your safety.

Advance warning signs advise you to slow down, look and listen for the train, and be prepared to stop if a train is approaching.


Pavement markings consist of an RXR followed by a stop line closer to the tracks. They may be painted on the paved approach to a crossing. Stay behind the stop line while waiting for a train to pass.


Crossbuck signs are yield signs. You are legally required to yield the right-of-way to trains. Slow down, look and listen for the train, and stop if a train approaches. When crossing more than one set of tracks, there will be a sign below the crossbuck indicating how many there are.




Flashing red light signals: When the lights are flashing, STOP! A train is approaching. You are legally required to yield the right-of-way to the train. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before crossing.

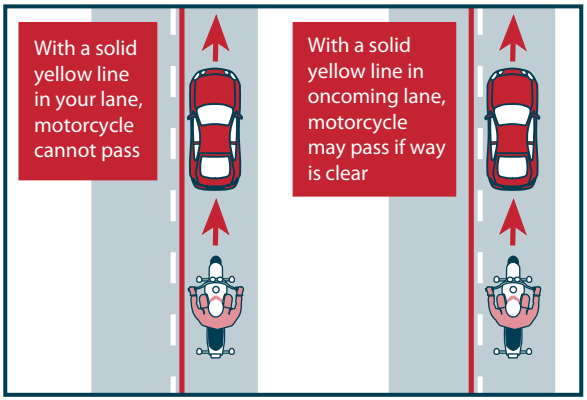
Flashing-light signals with gates: Stop when the lights begin to flash and before the area where the gate will

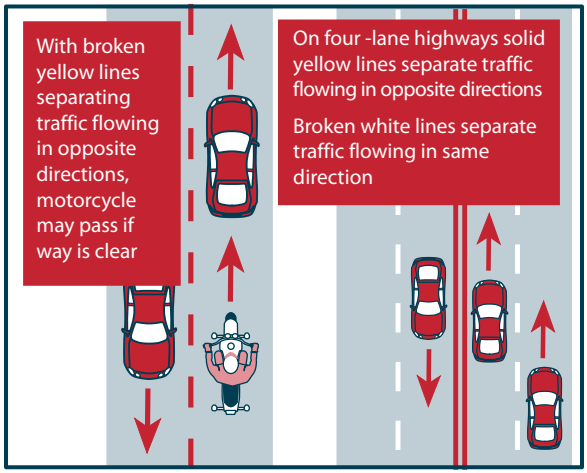
lower across your road lane. Remain stopped until the gates go up and the lights have stopped flashing. Proceed when it is safe.

**PREVENTING RAILROAD CROSSING CRASHES IS UP TO YOU!**

## Pavement markings (Yellow shown here as blue)

White lines separate traffic going the same direction.
Yellow lines separate traffic flowing in opposite directions.
Broken lines indicate passing or lane changing is permitted if the way is clear.
Solid white lines indicate that passing or lane changing is hazardous.
Solid yellow lines indicate no passing or lane changing — unless making a left turn into or from an alley, private road or driveway.






# Traffic crashes

## If you're involved in a crash

If you are involved in a crash you must:

- stop your vehicle at or near the crash scene and stay there until the police have arrived and questioned everyone involved;
- give aid to any injured persons and send for an ambulance (DO NOT MOVE AN INJURED PERSON unless there is danger of another crash.);
- warn passing traffic (Have someone warn approaching traffic to prevent further damage.);
- get the names and addresses of all witnesses as well as persons involved in the crash;
- record the other driver's name and address, driver license number, make of vehicle, insurance company name, model and year of vehicle, damage to the vehicle, and license plate number; and
- contact the police if there is an injury, death or property damage amounting to $1,000 or more. The law requires you to give the police information on the crash at the time of the crash. The police will fill out and submit an accident report to the Accident Records Section of the Wyoming Department of Transportation. You must submit a separate written report of the crash to the Accident Records Section of the Wyoming Department of Transportation within 10 days and attach an estimate of repairs or a statement of the total loss from an established repair garage or an insurance adjuster employed by an insurer licensed to transact insurance in this state.

## Damaging unattended vehicles

If you damage an unattended vehicle or other property and you cannot locate the owner, leave the following information on a piece of paper where the owner can find it:

- your name, address and telephone number;
- driver license number;
- license plate number;
- date and time of crash; and
- damage to the vehicle.

Then you must also contact the nearest law enforcement agency.

# Sharing the road safely

## Know your responsibilities

### Understand they're not 'accidents'

"Accident" implies an unforeseen event that occurs without anyone being at fault or negligence. But most traffic altercations or crashes are not accidents because most often they could have been avoided had all involved operated their vehicles correctly and responsibly.

Consider a situation where someone decides to try to squeeze through an intersection on a yellow light turning red. Your light turns green. You pull into the intersection without checking for possible latecomers. That is all it takes for the two of you to tangle. It was the driver's responsibility to stop. And it was your responsibility to look before pulling out. Neither of you held up your end of the deal.

### Be proactive

As a rider you can't be sure that other operators will see you or yield the right of way. To lessen your chances of a crash occurring:

- be visible (Wear proper clothing, use your headlight, ride in the best lane position to see and be seen.);
- communicate your intentions (Use the proper signals, brake light and lane position.);
- maintain an adequate space cushion while following, being followed, lane sharing, passing and being passed;
- scan your path of travel 12 seconds ahead;
- identify and separate multiple hazards; and
- be prepared to act (Remain alert, and know how to carry out proper crash-avoidance skills.).

Blame doesn't matter when someone is injured in a crash. There is rarely a single cause of any crash. The ability to ride aware, make critical decisions and carry them out separates responsible riders from all the rest. Remember, it's up to you to keep from being the cause of, or an unprepared participant in, any crash.

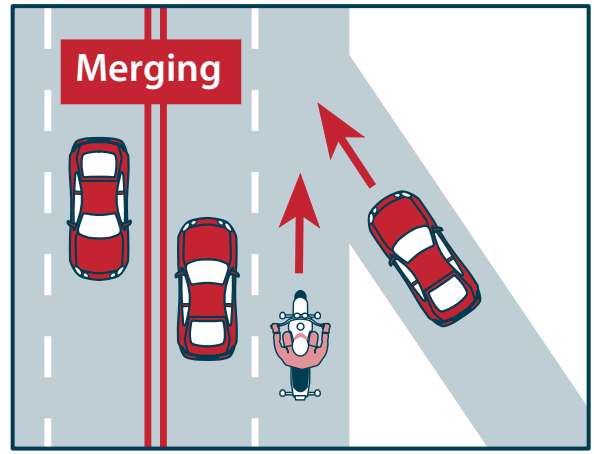
## Lane sharing

Cars and motorcycles need a full lane to operate safely. Lane sharing is usually prohibited. Riding between rows of stopped or moving cars in the same lane can leave you vulnerable to the unexpected. A hand could come out of a window, a door could open, a car could turn suddenly. Discourage lane sharing by others; keep a center-portion position whenever drivers might be tempted to squeeze by you. Drivers are most tempted to squeeze you:

- in heavy, bumper-to-bumper traffic;
- while passing you;
- when you are preparing to turn at an intersection; and
- when you are getting in an exit lane or leaving a highway.

## Merging cars

Drivers on an entrance ramp may not see you on the highway. Give them plenty of room. Change to another lane if one is open. If there is no room for a lane change, adjust speed to open up space for the merging driver.




## Cars alongside

Avoiding riding next to cars or trucks in adjacent lanes. You could be in one of their blind spots, and they could switch into your lane without warning. Close-by vehicles also block your escape if you come upon danger in your own lane. Speed up or drop back to find a place clear of traffic on both sides.

## SIPDE

Good, experienced riders remain aware of what is going on around them. They improve their riding strategy by using "SIPDE," an abbreviation for a five-step process

used to make appropriate judgments and to apply them correctly in different traffic situations. SIPDE stands for scan, identify, predict, decide and execute.

## Scan

Constantly search ahead, to the sides and behind to avoid potential hazards before they arise. How assertively you search and how much time and space you have can eliminate or reduce harm. Focus even more on finding potential escape routes in or around intersections, shopping areas, school and construction zones.

Search for:

- oncoming traffic that may turn left in front of you;
- traffic coming from the left and right;
- traffic approaching from behind; and
- hazardous road conditions.

Be especially alert in areas with limited visibility. Visually "busy" surroundings could hide you and your motorcycle from others.

## Identify

Locate hazards and potential conflicts:

- vehicles and other motorcycles that could move into your path and increase the likelihood of a crash;
- pedestrians and animals (They are unpredictable and make short, quick moves.); and
- stationary objects such as potholes, guard rails, bridges, roadway signs, hedges, and trees that will not move into your path but may still influence your riding strategy.

## Predict

Consider speed, distance, and direction of hazards to anticipate how they may affect you. Cars moving into your path are more critical than those moving away or remaining stationary. Predict where a collision may occur. Completing this "what if ...?" phrase to estimate results of contacting or attempting to avoid a hazard depends on your knowledge and experience.

## Decide

Determine what you may need to do based on your prediction. The mental process of determining your course of action depends on how well you searched. The result is your action and knowing which strategy is best for the situation. You want to eliminate or reduce



the potential hazard. You must decide when, where and how to take action. Your constant decision-making tasks must stay sharp to cope with constantly changing traffic situations.

The decisions you make can be grouped by the number of hazards encountered: single, double or multiple hazards.

## Execute

Carry out your decision. For more space and to minimize harm from any hazard:

- communicate your presence with lights and/or horn;
- adjust your speed by accelerating, stopping or slowing; and
- adjust your position and/or direction.

Apply the old adage "one step at a time" to handle two or more hazards. Adjust speed to permit two hazards to separate. Then deal with them one at a time as single hazards. Decision making becomes more complex with three or more hazards. Weigh consequences of each and give equal distance to the hazards.

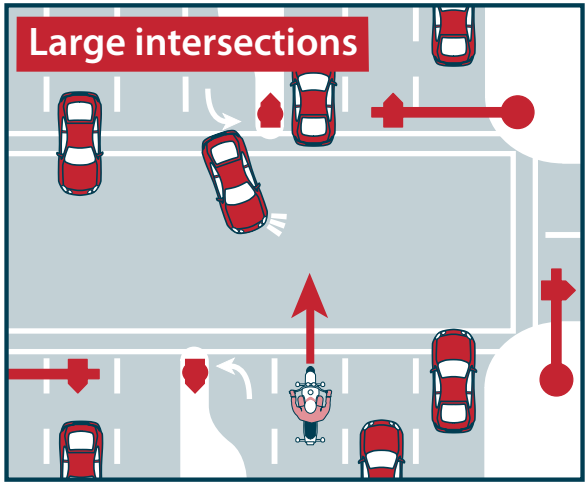
In high-risk areas, such as intersections, shopping areas, school and construction zones, cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce the time you need to react.

# Intersections

The greatest potential for conflict between you and other traffic is at intersections. An intersection can be in the middle of an urban area, at a driveway on a residential street or any other place where traffic paths cross. Over one-half of motorcycle/car crashes are caused by drivers entering a rider's right-of-way. Cars that turn left in front of you, including cars turning left from the lane to your right, and cars on side streets that pull into your lane, are the biggest dangers. Your use of "SIPDE," described above, at intersections is critical.

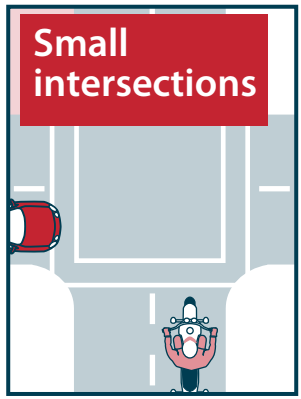
There are no guarantees that others see you, and never count on "eye contact" as a sign that a driver will yield. Too often, a driver looks right at a motorcyclist and still fails to "see" him. The only eyes that you can count on are your own. If a car can enter your path, assume that it will. Good riders are always "looking for trouble" in order to stay out of it.

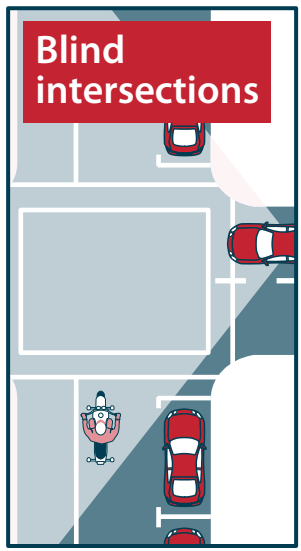
Increase your chances of being seen at intersections. Ride with your headlight on in a lane position that




provides the best view of oncoming traffic. Provide a space cushion around the motorcycle that permits you to take evasive action.

As you approach the intersection, select a lane position to increase your visibility to the driver. Cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce reaction time. Reduce your speed. After entering the intersection, move away from vehicles preparing to turn. Do not change speed or position radically. The driver might think that you are preparing to turn.

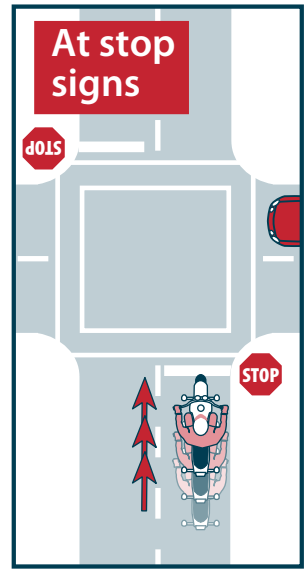



## Blind intersections

If you approach a blind intersection, move to the portion of the lane that will bring you into another driver's field of



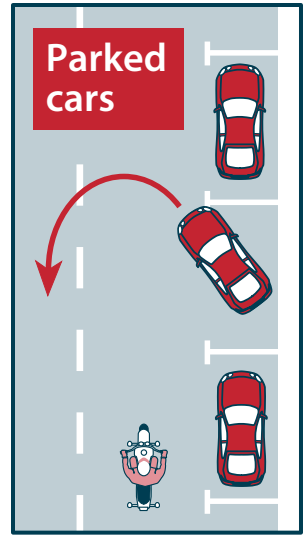



vision at the earliest possible moment. In this picture, the rider has moved to the left portion of the lane, away from the parked car, so the driver on the cross street can see him as soon as possible. Remember to see as much as possible and remain visible to others while protecting your space.

If you have a stop sign or stop line, stop there first. Then edge forward and stop again, just short of where the cross-traffic lane meets your lane. From that position, lean your body forward and look around buildings, parked cars or bushes to see if anything is coming. Just make sure your front wheel stays out of the cross lane of travel while you're looking.

## Passing parked cars

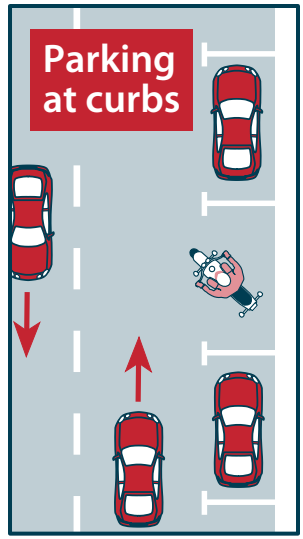
When passing parked cars, stay to the left of your lane, so you can avoid problems caused by doors opening, drivers getting out or people stepping from between cars. If




oncoming traffic is present, it is usually best to remain in the center-lane position to maximize your space cushion.

A bigger problem can occur if the driver pulls away from the curb without checking for traffic behind. Even if he does look, he may fail to see you. In either event, the driver might cut into your path. Slow down or change lanes to make room for someone cutting in.

Cars making a sudden U-turn are the most dangerous. They may cut you off entirely, blocking the whole roadway and leaving you with no place to go. Since you can't tell what a driver will do, slow down and get the driver's attention. Sound your horn, and continue with caution.




## Parking at the roadside

Park at a 90-degree angle to the curb with your rear wheel touching the curb.

## Increase your noticeability

In crashes with motorcyclists, drivers often say they never saw the motorcycle. From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline is much smaller than a car's. Also, it's hard to see something you are not looking for, and most drivers are not looking for motorcycles. More likely, they are looking through the skinny, two-wheeled silhouette in search of cars that may pose a problem to them.

Even if a driver does see you coming, you aren't necessarily safe. Smaller vehicles appear farther away and seem to be traveling slower than they actually are. It is common for drivers to pull out in front of motorcyclists, thinking they have plenty of time. Too often, they are wrong.

However, you can do many things to be more conspicuous, to make it easier for others to recognize you and your cycle.

### Clothing

Most crashes occur in broad daylight. Wear bright colored clothing to increase your chances of being seen. Remember, your body is half of the visible surface area of the rider/motorcycle unit.

Bright orange, red, yellow or green jackets or vests are your best bets for being seen. Your helmet can do more than protect you in a crash. Brightly colored helmets can also help others see you.

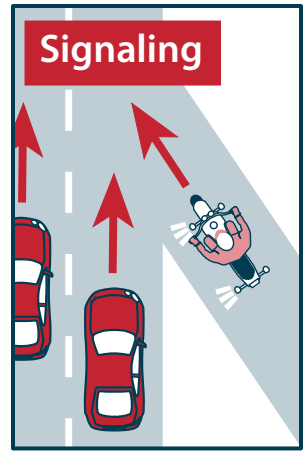
Any bright color is better than drab or dark colors. Reflective, bright colored clothing (helmet and jacket or vest) is best. Reflective material on a vest and on the sides of the helmet will help drivers coming toward you, from behind you or from the side to spot you.

### Headlight

The best way to help others see your motorcycle is to keep the headlight on at all times, and, in fact, motorcycles sold in the U.S. since 1978 automatically have the headlights on when running. Studies show that, during the day, a motorcycle with its light on is twice as likely to be noticed. Use of the high beam during the day increases the likelihood that oncoming drivers will see you. Use your low beam at night and in cloudy weather.

### Signals

The signals on a motorcycle are similar to those on a car. They tell others what you plan to do. However, due to a rider's added vulnerability, signals are even more important.




Use them anytime you plan to change lanes or turn. Use them even when you think no one else is around. It's the car you don't see that's going to give you the most trouble.

Your signal lights also make you easier to spot. That's why it's a good idea to use your turn signals even when what you plan to do is obvious.

When you enter onto a freeway, drivers approaching from behind are more likely to see your signal blinking and make room for you.

Turning your signal light on before each turn reduces confusion and frustration for the traffic around you. Once you turn, make sure your signal is off or a driver

may pull directly into your path, thinking you plan to turn again. Use your signals at every turn so drivers can react accordingly. Don't make them guess what you intend to do.

### Brake light

Your motorcycle's brake light is usually not as noticeable as the brake lights on a car, particularly when your tail-light (It goes on when the headlight does.) is on. If the situation will permit, help others notice you by flashing your brake light before you slow down.

It is especially important to flash your brake light before:

- you slow more quickly than others might expect (turning off a high-speed highway); or
- you slow where others may not expect it, such as in the middle of a block or at an alley.

If you are being followed closely, it's a good idea to flash your brake light before you slow. The tailgater may be watching you and not see something ahead that will make you slow down. This will hopefully discourage them from tailgating and warn them of hazards ahead they may not see.

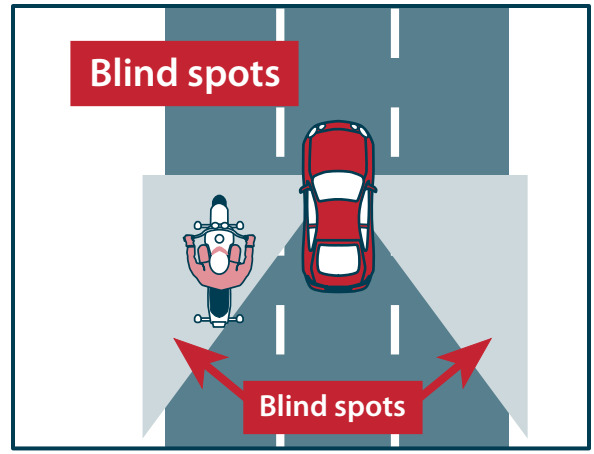
## Using your mirrors

While it's most important to keep track of what's happening ahead, you can't afford to ignore situations behind. Traffic conditions change quickly. Knowing what's going on behind is prerequisite for making a safe decision about how to handle trouble ahead.

Frequent mirror checks should be part of your normal scanning routine. Make a special point of using your mirrors:

- when you are stopped at an intersection (Watch cars coming up from behind. If the driver isn't paying attention, he could be on top of you before he sees you.);
- before you change lanes (Make sure no one is about to pass you.); and
- before you slow down (The driver behind may not expect you to slow, or may be unsure about where you will slow. For example, you signal a turn, and the driver thinks you plan to turn at a distant intersection, rather than at a nearer driveway.).






Some motorcycles have rounded (convex) mirrors. These provide a wider view of the road behind than do flat mirrors. They also make cars seem farther away than they really are. If you are not used to convex mirrors, get familiar with them. While you are stopped, pick out a parked car in your mirror. Form a mental image of how far away it is. Then, turn around and look at it to see how close you came. Practice with them until you become a good judge of distance. Even then, allow extra distance before you change lanes.

## Head checks

Checking your mirrors is not enough. Motorcycles have "blind spots" like cars. Before you change lanes, turn your head, and look to the side for other vehicles.

On a road with several lanes, check the far lane and the one next to you. A driver in the distant lane may head for the same space you plan to take. Frequent head checks should be your normal scanning routine. Only by knowing what is happening all around you, are you fully prepared to deal with it.

## Horn

Be ready to use your horn to get someone's attention quickly. It is a good idea to give a quick beep before passing anyone who may move into your lane. Here are some situations:

- a driver in the lane next to you is driving too closely to the vehicle ahead and may want to pass;
- a parked car has someone in the driver's seat; or

- someone is in the street, riding a bicycle or walking.

In an emergency, press the horn button loud and long. Be ready to stop or swerve away from the danger. Keep in mind that a motorcycle's horn isn't as loud as a car's. Therefore, use it, but don't rely on it. Other strategies may be appropriate along with the horn.

## Crash avoidance

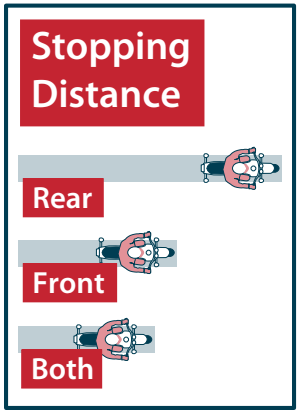
No matter how careful you are, there will be times when you find yourself in a tight spot. Your chances of getting out safely depend on your ability to react quickly and properly. Often, a crash occurs because a rider is not prepared or skilled in crash-avoidance maneuvers.

Know when and how to stop or swerve, two skills critical to avoiding a crash. It is not always desirable or possible to stop quickly to avoid an obstacle. Riders must also be able to swerve around an obstacle. Determining the skill necessary for the situation is important as well. Studies show that most crash-involved riders:

- under brake the front tire and over brake the rear;
- did not separate braking from swerving or did not choose swerving when it was appropriate.

### Quick stops

To stop quickly, apply both brakes at the same time. Don't be shy about using the front brake, but don't "grab" it either. Squeeze the brake lever firmly and progressively. If the front wheel locks, release the front brake immediately and then reapply it firmly. At the same time, press down on the rear brake. If you accidentally lock the rear brake on a good traction surface, keep it locked until you have completely stopped. Even with a locked rear wheel, you can control the motorcycle on a straightaway if it is upright and going in a straight line.

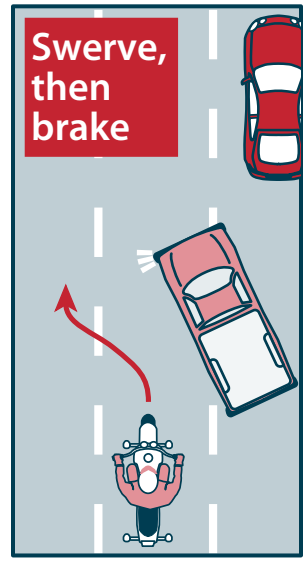


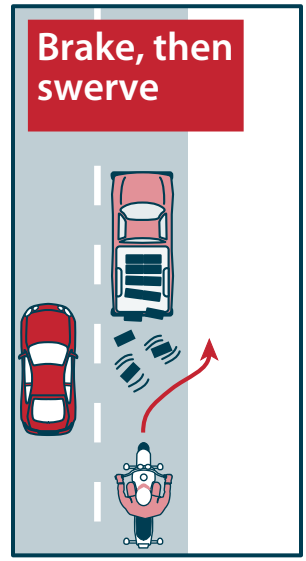

Always use both brakes at the same time to stop. The front brake can provide 70% or more of the potential stopping power.



If you must stop quickly while turning or riding a curve, the best technique is to straighten the bike upright first and then brake. However it may not always be possible to straighten the motorcycle and then stop.

If you must brake while leaning, apply light brakes and reduce the throttle. As you slow, you can reduce your lean angle and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. You should "straighten" the handlebars in the last few feet of stopping, the motorcycle should then be straight up and in balance.




### Swerving or turning quickly

Sometimes you may not have enough room to stop. An object might appear suddenly in your path, or a car ahead might stop suddenly. The only way to avoid a crash may be to turn quickly or swerve around it.

A swerve is any sudden change in direction. It can be two quick turns, or a rapid shift to the side. Apply a small amount of hand pressure to the handgrip located on the side of your intended direction of escape. This will cause the motorcycle to lean quickly. The sharper the turn(s), the more the motorcycle must lean.

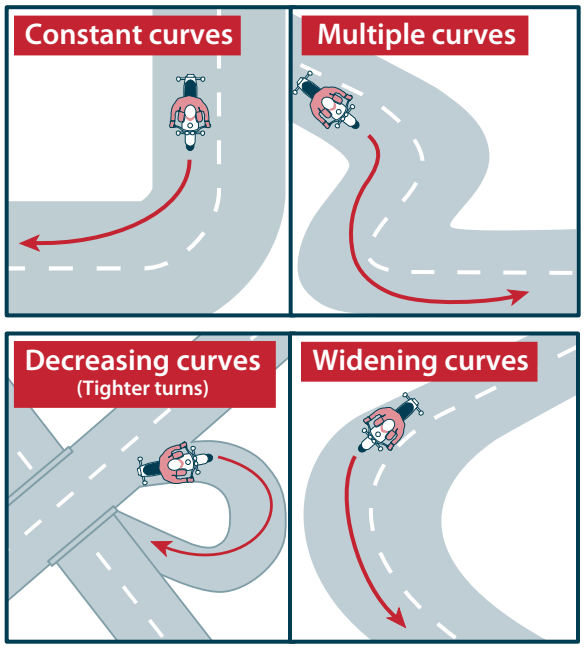
Keep your body upright and allow the motorcycle to lean in the direction of the turn while keeping your knees against the

tank and your feet solidly on the pegs. Let the motorcycle move underneath you. Make your escape route the target of your vision. Press on the opposite handgrip once you clear the obstacle to return you to your original direction of travel. To swerve to the left, press the left handgrip, then press the right to recover. To swerve to the right, press right, then left.

IF BRAKING IS REQUIRED, SEPARATE IT FROM SWERVING. Brake before or after, never while swerving.

## Cornering

A primary cause of single-vehicle crashes is motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn and colliding with the roadway or a fixed object.




Every curve is different. Be alert to whether a curve remains constant, gradually widens, gets tighter or involves multiple turns. Ride within your skill level and posted speed limits.

Your best path may not always follow the curve of the road. Change lane position depending on traffic, road conditions and curve of the road. If no traffic is present, start at the outside of a curve to increase your line of sight and the effective radius of the turn. As you turn, move toward the inside of the curve, and as you pass the center, move to the outside to exit.

Another alternative is to move to the center of your lane before entering a curve and stay there until you exit. This permits you to spot approaching traffic as soon as possible. You can also adjust for traffic "crowding" the center line or debris blocking part of your lane.



# Hazardous situations

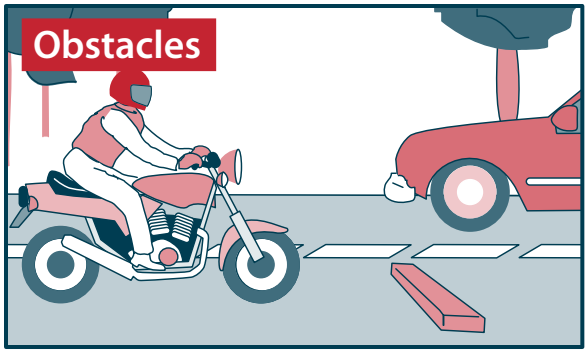
## Riding at night

At night it is harder for you to see and be seen. Picking your headlight or taillight out of the car lights around you is not easy for other drivers. To compensate, you should:

- reduce your speed (Ride even slower than you would during the day, particularly on roads you don't know well. This will increase your chances of avoiding a hazard.);
- increase your distance (Distances are harder to judge at night than during the day. Your eyes rely upon shadows and light contrasts to determine how far away an object is and how fast it is coming. These contrasts are missing or distorted under artificial lights at night. Open up a three-second following distance or more, and allow more distance to pass and be passed.);
- use the car ahead (The headlights of the car ahead can give you a better view of the road than even your high beam can, and taillights bouncing up and down can alert you to bumps or rough pavement.);
- use your high beam (Get all the light you can. Use your high beam whenever you are not following or meeting a car. Be visible, wear reflective materials when riding at night.); and
- be flexible about lane position (Change to whatever portion of the lane is best able to help you see, be seen, and keep an adequate space cushion.).

## Dangerous surfaces

Your chance of falling or being involved in a crash increases whenever you ride across uneven surfaces or obstacles, slippery surfaces, railroad tracks or grooves and gratings.




## Uneven surfaces and obstacles

Watch for uneven surfaces such as bumps, broken pavement, potholes or small pieces of highway trash.

Try to avoid obstacles by slowing or going around them. If you must go over the obstacle, first, determine if it is possible. Approach it at as close to a 90-degree angle as possible. Look where you want to go to control your path of travel. If you have to ride over the obstacle, you should:

- slow down as much as possible before contact;
- be sure the motorcycle is straight;
- rise slightly off the seat with your weight on the foot pegs to absorb the shock with your knees and elbows and avoid being thrown off the motorcycle; and
- just before contact, roll on the throttle slightly to lighten the front end.

If you ride over an object on the street, pull off the road and check your tires and rims for damage before riding any farther.

## Slippery surfaces

Motorcycles handle better when ridden on surfaces that permit good traction. Surfaces that provide poor traction include:

- wet pavement, particularly just after it starts to rain and before surface oil washes to the side of the road;
- gravel roads or where sand and gravel collect;
- mud, snow, and ice; and
- lane markings, steel plates and manhole covers, especially when wet.





WYDOT's Give 'em a Brake work zone safety program urges drivers to act in their own best interests. It emphasizes that, by not paying attention in work zones, motorists are endangering themselves.

## Drivers, passengers are dying

GIVE 'em a BRAKE

Indeed, the message that motorists themselves are at greatest risk in work zones is validated by the facts. According to the Federal Highway Administration, more than 1,000 die annually in crashes in work zones, and 85 percent, more than four of every five, are drivers themselves and occupants of their vehicles.

Other relevant data:

- about 20 percent of the national highway system is under construction during the summer;
- more than 40,000 are injured yearly in work zone crashes; and
- 25 percent of fatalities occur in crashes involving large trucks.

***For more information, contact WYDOT's Public Affairs Office at 5300 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340 or by calling (307) 777-4013.***

To ride safely on slippery surfaces:

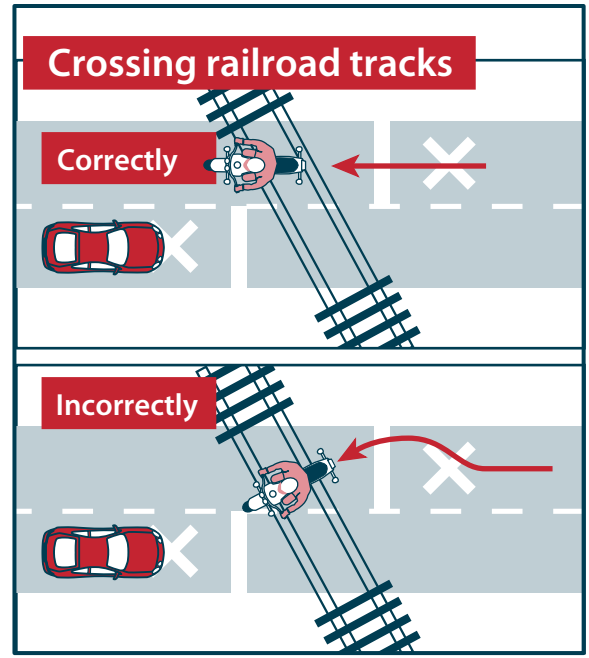
- reduce speed (Slow down before you get to a slippery surface to lessen your chances of skidding. Your motorcycle needs more distance to stop. And, it is particularly important to reduce speed before entering wet curves.);
- avoid sudden moves (Any sudden change in speed or direction can cause a skid. Be as smooth as possible when you speed up, shift gears, turn or brake.);
- use both brakes (The front brake is still effective, even on a slippery surface. Squeeze the brake lever gradually to avoid locking the front wheel. Remember, gentle pressure on the rear brake.);
- watch the center of a lane which can be hazardous when wet (When it starts to rain, ride in the tire tracks left by cars. Often the left tire track will be the best position, depending on traffic and other road conditions as well.);
- watch for oil spots when you put your foot down to stop or park (You may slip and fall.);
- watch for dirt and gravel that can collect along the sides of the road, especially on curves and ramps leading to and from highways (Be aware of what's on the edge of the road, particularly when making sharp turns and getting on or off freeways at high speeds.);
- be aware that rain dries and snow melts faster on some sections of a road than on others (Patches of ice tend to crop up in low or shaded areas and on bridges and overpasses. Wet surfaces or wet leaves are just as slippery. Ride on the least slippery portion of the lane and reduce speed.).

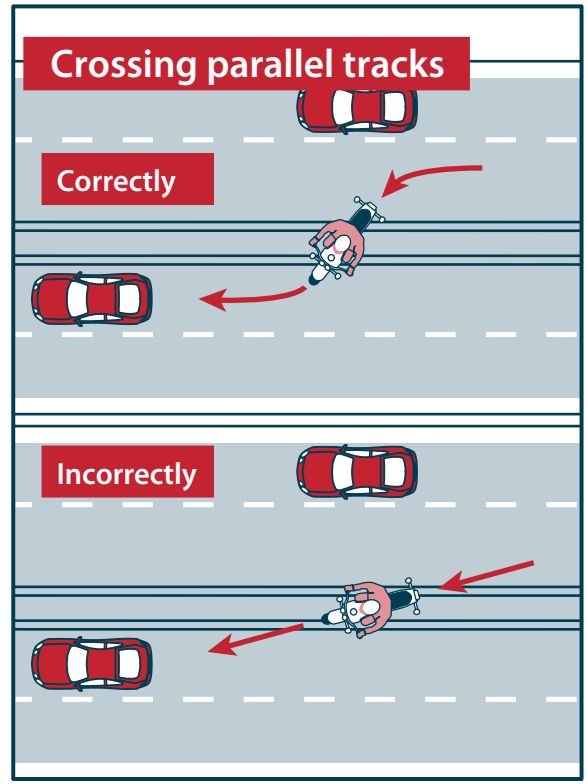
Cautious riders steer clear of roads covered with ice or snow. If you can't avoid a slippery surface, keep your motorcycle straight up and proceed as slowly as possible. If you encounter a large surface so slippery that you must coast or travel at a walking pace, consider letting your feet skim along the surface. If the motorcycle starts to fall, you can catch yourself. Be sure to keep off the brakes. If possible squeeze the clutch and coast. But attempting this maneuver at anything other than the slowest of speeds can prove hazardous.

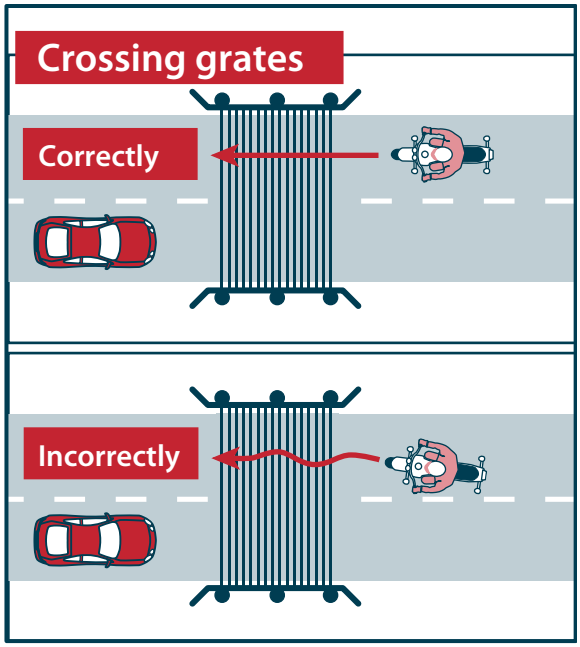
## Railroad & trolley tracks & pavement seams

Usually it is safer to ride straight within your lane to cross tracks. Turning to take tracks head-on (at a 90-








degree angle) can be more dangerous, because that path may carry you into another lane of traffic.

For track and road seams that run parallel to your course, move far enough away from tracks, ruts or pavement seams to cross at an angle of at least 45 degrees. Then, make a quick, sharp turn. Edging across could catch your tires and throw you off balance.

### Grooves and gratings

Riding over rain grooves or bridge gratings may cause a motorcycle to weave. The uneasy, wandering feeling is generally not hazardous. Relax, maintain a steady speed and ride straight across. Crossing at an angle forces riders to zigzag to stay in the lane. The zigzag is far more hazardous than the wandering feeling.

## Mechanical problems/guidelines

You can find yourself in an emergency the moment something goes wrong with your motorcycle. In dealing with any mechanical problem, take into account the road and traffic conditions you face.

### Tire failure

You will seldom hear a tire go flat. If the motorcycle starts handling differently, it may be a tire failure. This



can be dangerous. You must be able to tell from the way the motorcycle reacts. If one of your tires suddenly loses air, react quickly to keep your balance. Pull off and check the tires.

If the front tire goes flat, the steering will feel "heavy." A front flat is particularly hazardous because it affects your steering. You have to steer well to keep your balance.

If the rear tire goes flat, the back of the motorcycle may jerk or sway from side to side.

If either tire goes flat while riding:

- hold handle grips firmly, ease off the throttle, and keep a straight course;
- if braking is required however, gradually apply the brake of the tire that isn't flat, if you are sure which one it is; and
- when the motorcycle slows, edge to the side of the road, squeeze the clutch and stop.

### Stuck throttle

Twist the throttle back and forth several times. If the throttle cable is stuck, this may free it. If the throttle stays stuck, immediately operate the engine cut-off switch, and pull in the clutch at the same time. This will remove power from the rear wheel, though engine noise may not immediately decline. Once the motorcycle is "under control," pull off and stop.

After you have stopped, check the throttle cable carefully to find the source of the trouble. Make certain the throttle works freely before you start to ride again.

### Wobble

A "wobble" occurs when the front wheel and handlebars suddenly start to shake from side to side at any speed. Most wobbles can be traced to improper loading, unsuitable accessories or incorrect tire pressure. If you are carrying a heavy load, lighten it. If you can't, shift it. Center the weight lower and farther forward on the motorcycle. Make sure tire pressure, spring pre-load, air shocks and dampers are at the settings recommended for that much weight. Make sure windshields and fairings are mounted properly.

Check for poorly adjusted steering; worn steering parts; a front wheel that is bent, misaligned or out of balance; loose

wheel bearings or spokes; and swing-arm bearings. If none of these are determined to be the cause, have the motorcycle checked out thoroughly by a qualified professional.

Trying to "accelerate out of a wobble" will only make the motorcycle more unstable. Instead:

- grip the handlebars firmly, but don't fight the wobble;
- close the throttle gradually to slow down (Do not apply the brakes; braking could make the wobble worse.);
- move your weight as far forward and down as possible; and
- pull off the road as soon as you can to fix the problem.

## Chain problems

A chain that slips or breaks while you're riding could lock the rear wheel and cause your cycle to skid. Chain slippage or breakage can be avoided by proper maintenance.

Slippage: If the chain slips when you try to speed up quickly or ride uphill, pull off the road. Check the chain and sprockets. Tightening the chain may help. If the problem is a worn or stretched chain or worn or bent sprockets, replace the chain, the sprockets, or both before riding again.

Breakage: You'll notice an instant loss of power to the rear wheel. Close the throttle and brake to a stop.

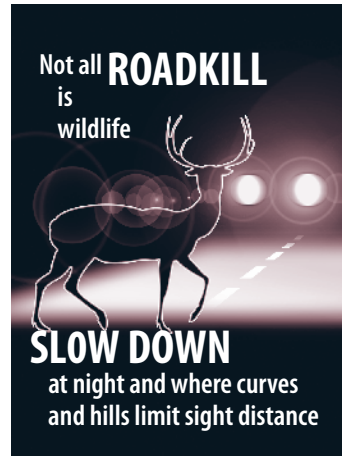
## Engine seizure

When the engine "locks" or "freezes" it is usually low on oil. The engine's moving parts can't move smoothly against each other, and the engine overheats. The first sign may be a loss of engine power or a change in the engine's sound. Squeeze the clutch lever to disengage the engine from the rear wheel. Pull off the road and stop. Check the oil. If needed, oil should be added as soon as possible or the engine will seize. When this happens, the effect is the same as a locked rear wheel. Let the engine cool before restarting.

## Animals

Naturally, you should do everything you safely can to avoid hitting an animal. If you are in traffic, however,






remain in your lane. Hitting something small is less dangerous to you than hitting something big, like a car.

Motorcycles seem to attract dogs. If you are chased, downshift and approach the animal slowly. As you approach it, accelerate away and leave the animal behind. Don't kick at an animal. Keep control of your motorcycle, and look to where you want to go. For larger animals (deer, elk, cattle), brake and prepare to stop. They are unpredictable.

## Flying objects

From time to time, riders are struck by insects, cigarettes thrown from cars or pebbles kicked up by the tires of the vehicle ahead. If you are wearing face protection, it might get smeared or cracked, making it difficult to see. Without face protection, an object could hit you in the eye, face or mouth. Whatever happens, keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the handlebars. When safe, pull off the road and repair the damage.

## Getting off the road

If you need to leave the road to check the motorcycle or just to rest for a while, be sure you:

- check the roadside (Make sure the surface of the roadside is firm enough to ride on. If it is soft grass, loose sand or if you're just not sure about it, slow way down before you turn onto it.);
- signal (Drivers behind might not expect you to slow down. Give a clear signal that you will be slowing down and changing direction. Check your mirror, and make a head check before you take any action.);
- pull off the road (Get as far off the road as you can. It can be very hard to spot a motorcycle by the side of the road. You don't want someone else pulling off at the same place you are.); and

- park carefully (Loose and sloped shoulders can make setting the side or center stand difficult.).

## Cell phones

Cell phones are a convenience but can divert your attention away from the task of riding. This lack of attention to the road may create a dangerous situation for you and other vehicles around you. When possible, pull off to the side of the road when using your cell phone.

Cell phones are everywhere. In emergencies they can be lifesavers, and, at other times, they can simply be a great communications tool. But using a cell phone while operating a motorcycle is a very dangerous thing to do and should be avoided.

Federal studies have shown that using cell phones, including the hands-free variety, has precipitated many crashes and near misses. And, in fact, using hands-free cell phones provides little safety benefit over hand-held phones, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In addition, the research shows that it is the actual process of conversing that proves to be among the greatest driver distractions.

Wyoming does not have any laws governing the use of cell phones while driving, but WYDOT does recommend that all motorcycle operators pull well off the highway surface and stop before they make a cellular call. Always remember, your first responsibility when you are driving is to pay attention to the road.

## Fatigue

Operating a motorcycle while you are tired is also a very dangerous thing to do. To avoid fatigue:

- limit your distance (Experienced riders seldom try to ride more than about six hours a day.);
- take frequent rest breaks (Stop, and get off the motorcycle at least every two hours.); and
- don't drink or use drugs (Artificial stimulants often result in extreme fatigue or depression when they start to wear off. Riders are unable to concentrate on the task at hand.).



# Sharing your motorcycle, riding in groups

## Carrying passengers, cargo

Only experienced riders should carry passengers or large loads. The extra weight changes the way the motorcycle handles, balances, turns, speeds up and slows down. Before taking a passenger or heavy load on a street, practice away from traffic.

## Equipment

To carry passengers safely:

- equip and adjust your motorcycle to carry passengers;
- instruct the passenger before you start; and
- adjust your riding technique for the added weight.

Equipment should include:

- a proper seat, large enough to hold both of you without crowding (You should not sit any farther forward than you usually do.);
- foot pegs for the passenger (Firm footing prevents your passenger from falling off and pulling you off too.); and
- protective equipment, the same protective gear recommended for operators.

Adjust the suspension to handle the additional weight. You will probably need to add a few pounds of pressure to the tires if you carry a passenger (Check your owner's manual for appropriate settings.). While your passenger sits on the seat with you, adjust the mirror and headlight according to the change in the motorcycle's angle.

## Instructing passengers

Even if your passenger is a motorcycle rider, provide complete instructions before you start. Tell your passenger to:

- get on the motorcycle only after you have started the engine;
- sit as far forward as possible without crowding you;
- hold firmly to your waist, hips or belt;
- keep both feet on the pegs, even when stopped;
- keep legs away from the muffler(s), chains or other moving parts;

- stay directly behind you, leaning as you lean; and
- avoid unnecessary talk or motion.

Also, tell your passenger to tighten his or her hold when you:

- approach surface problems;
- are about to start from a stop; and
- warn that you are about to make a quick or sudden move.

## Riding with passengers

Your motorcycle will respond more slowly with a passenger on board. The heavier your passenger, the longer it will take to slow down, speed up or turn, especially on a light motorcycle. Always:

- ride a little slower, especially when taking curves, corners or bumps;
- start slowing earlier as you approach a stop;
- open up a larger cushion of space ahead and to the sides; and
- wait for larger gaps to cross, enter or merge in traffic.

Warn your passenger of special conditions, such as when you will pull out, stop quickly, turn sharply or ride over a bump. Turn your head slightly to make yourself understood, but keep your eyes on the road ahead.

## Carrying loads

Most motorcycles are not designed to carry much cargo. Small loads can be carried safely if positioned and fastened properly. Make sure to:

- keep the load low (Fasten loads securely, or put them in saddle bags. Piling loads against a sissybar or frame on the back of the seat raises the motorcycle's center of gravity and disturbs its balance.);
- keep the load forward (Place the load over, or in front of, the rear axle. Tank bags keep loads forward, but use caution when loading hard or sharp objects. Make sure a tank bag does not interfere with handlebars or controls. Mounting loads behind the rear axle can affect how the motorcycle turns and brakes. It can also cause a wobble.);
- distribute the load evenly (Load saddlebags with about the same weight. An uneven load can cause the motorcycle to drift to one side.);



- secure the load (Fasten the load securely with elastic cords, such as bungee cords or nets. Elastic cords with more than one attachment point per side are more secure. A tight load won't catch in the wheel or chain, causing it to lock up and skid. Rope tends to stretch, and knots come loose, permitting the load to shift or fall.); and
- check the load (Stop and check the load occasionally to make sure it has not worked loose or moved.).

# Group riding

If you ride with others, do it in a way that promotes safety and doesn't interfere with the flow of traffic.

## Keep the group small

Small groups make it easier and safer for car drivers who need to get around them. A small number isn't separated as easily by traffic or red lights. Riders won't always be hurrying to catch up. If your group is larger than four or five riders, divide it up into two or more smaller groups.

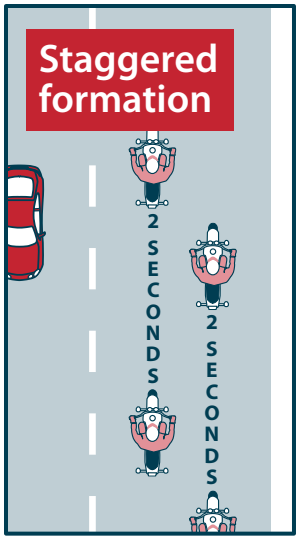
## Keep the group together

- plan (The leader should look ahead for changes and signal early so "the word gets back" in plenty of time. Start lane changes early to permit everyone to complete the change.);
- put beginners up front (Place inexperienced riders just behind the leader. That way the more experienced riders can watch them from the back.);
- follow those behind (Let the tailender set the pace. Use your mirrors to keep an eye on the person behind. If a rider falls behind, everyone should slow down a little to stay with the tailender.); and
- know the route (Make sure everyone knows the route. Then if someone is separated, they won't have to hurry to keep from getting lost or taking a wrong turn. Plan frequent stops on long rides.).

## Keep your distance

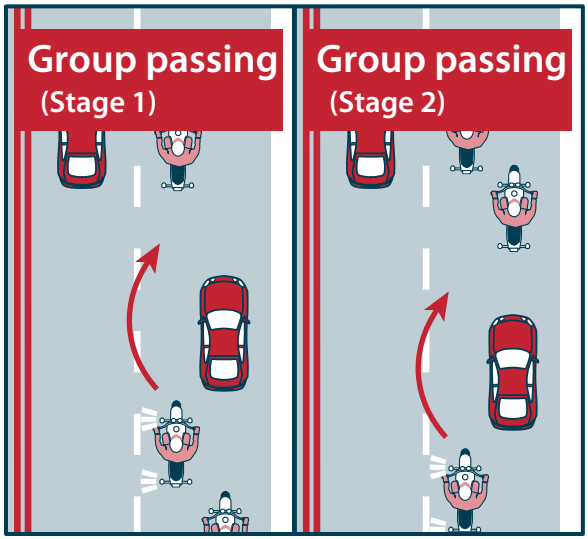
Maintain close ranks but at the same time keep a safe distance to allow each rider in the group time and space to react to hazards. A close group takes up less space on the highway, is easier to see and is less likely to be separated. However, it must be done properly. You should:

- not pair up (Never operate directly alongside another




rider. There is no place to go if you have to avoid a car or something on the road. To talk, wait until you are both stopped.);

- maintain a staggered formation (This is the best way to keep ranks close yet maintain an adequate space cushion. The leader rides in the left side of the lane, while the second rider stays one second behind in the right side of the lane. A third rider maintains in the left position, two seconds behind the first rider. The fourth rider would keep a two-second distance behind the second rider. This formation keeps the group close and permits each rider a safe distance from others ahead, behind and to the sides.);
- pass in formation (Riders in a staggered formation should pass one at a time. First, the lead rider should pull out and pass when it is safe. After passing, the leader should return to the left position and continue riding at passing speed to open room for the next rider. After the first rider passes safely, the second rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider.).






Some people suggest that the leader should move to the right side after passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea. It encourages the second rider to pass and cut back in before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It's simpler and safer to wait until there is enough room ahead of the passed vehicle to allow each rider to move into the same position he or she held before the pass.

### Single-file formation

It is best to move into a single file formation when riding curves, turning, entering or leaving a highway.

## Moped tips

An accidental take-off can be a problem when a Moped is on its kickstand with the motor running. Hold the rear brake on firmly.

### Driving a moped

A moped may be operated with a class license, instruction permit or restricted "RM" license.

When traveling behind another moped, stay at least two vehicle lengths back and slightly to one side of the moped in front. Before a turn or stop, the driver in front should signal early, to give the driver behind plenty of warning.

When making right turns, watch out for any car which may also be turning right. If it turns sharply, it could run your moped off the road or actually run into your vehicle. You're safest if you stay far enough behind and to the right of the rear bumper. Then, you're not in the motorist's blind spot and can watch his directional signals.

Always signal properly. Use electric signals if your moped has them or use hand signals. Hand signals, always given with the left hand, are:

- for a left turn, the left hand and arm are extended horizontally;
- for a right turn, the left hand and arm are extended upward;

- to stop or slow, the left hand and arm are extended downward.

## Pedaling

Keep your feet on the pedals, even with the motor running. If you don't, the pedals may keep on turning and could hit the pavement when you lean to turn. When the motor is off, the moped should pedal like a regular bicycle. The chain should turn freely without touching the chain guard. Pedaling a moped is much tougher than a regular bike however, and it's important to have your seat and handlebars adjusted to make pedaling easy. Your heels should be able to touch the ground while you are seated astride the saddle. This will allow your legs to almost straighten on each downward stroke. Pedal with the balls of the feet for maximum power with least effort. You will often find it useful to pedal to help the motor when going up hills. Going downhill, don't pedal. Instead, turn off the motor and "pump" the brakes.

## Service and repair

Leave major repairs to dealers. Take your moped in for routine maintenance at regular intervals. For minor repairs, carry a set of small tools, including wrenches, screwdrivers and pliers. Also carry extra light bulbs and a spare spark plug. Know how to fix a flat tire. Carry a spare tube, patch kit and hand air pump, especially on longer trips.



# Definitions

**Alien:** any person who is not a citizen of the United States of America.

**Authorized Emergency Vehicles:** fire, police or ambulance vehicles or others approved by statute.

**Bicycle:** any vehicle powered solely by human power, upon which any person may ride, having two (2) tandem wheels, except scooters and similar devices. Legally classified as vehicles, bicycles can be ridden on all public roadways in Wyoming. While not legally required, a properly fitted and Consumer Product Safety Certified bicycle helmet is highly recommended for protection against serious head injury or death. A Snell Memorial Foundation approval will provide assurance of quality regarding a helmet.

**Blind Spot:** the area near the right and left rear corners of the vehicle which cannot be seen through the mirrors. The driver must turn his/her head to view these areas.

**Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC):** the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream.

**Brakes:** device used to stop the vehicle.

**Critical Object:** any person, vehicle, animal or anything else that could cause a driver to slow down, speed up or turn.

**Crosswalk:** a place where people may legally cross the street or highway. The crosswalk may or may not be marked. If there are no markings, a crosswalk is considered to be where imaginary lines would connect the sidewalks on each side of the street or highway.

**Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT):** the state agency responsible for the licensing of drivers in Wyoming. WYDOT's address is: 5300 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340.

**Driving While Under the Influence (DWUI):** the operation of a vehicle by a person who is under the influence of alcohol or who is under the influence of a controlled substance.

**Emancipated Minor:** a person at least 17 years of age who is or was married, is in the military service of the

United States, or who has been emancipated by the district court. Emancipated minors may have this status put on their Wyoming licenses by making application to the department and paying the required fee.

**Gap in Traffic:** an opening or space between vehicles in traffic that is large enough for a vehicle to enter safely.

**Helmet:** protective headgear.

**Hydroplaning:** when a vehicle's tires ride on a thin film of water instead of the road.

**Intersection:** the area where highways or streets join or cross each other.

**Lane:** a section of roadway for a single line of vehicles.

**Median:** a barrier of grass, concrete or other material separating two roadways, such as the area between the two roadways on an interstate highway. It is not legal to ride over, across or on the median.

**Merging Traffic:** a situation where two moving lanes of traffic come together, such as an entrance ramp on an interstate.

**Moped:** a vehicle equipped with two or three wheels, foot pedals to allow propulsion by human power, an automatic transmission and a motor with cylinder capacity not exceeding 50 cubic centimeters, producing no more than two-brake horsepower, whose motor is capable of propelling the vehicle at a maximum speed of no more than 30 miles per hour on a level road surface.

**Motorcycle:** a motor vehicle having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground but which may have a sidecar to transport a single passenger. For the purpose of registration and titling, "motorcycle" includes motorized bicycles, scooters and recreational vehicles primarily designed for off-road use and designed to be ridden astride upon a seat or saddle and to travel on four wheels, but excludes mopeds and off-road three-wheel recreational vehicles.

**Motor Vehicle:** every vehicle which is self-propelled by some power source other than muscular power and used on public highways for transporting persons or property or both. This includes motorcycles and mopeds.



**Moving Violation:** an act of control or lack of control by the driver of a motor vehicle while the vehicle is in motion, that results in a conviction, including a conviction for driving in violation of the restriction for corrective lenses and/or outside mirrors.

**No-Zone:** an area on either side or directly behind a heavy vehicle in which another vehicle is not visible to the driver.

**Off-Road Recreational Vehicle:** a recreational vehicle primarily designed for off-road use which is fifty (50) inches or less in width, has an unladen weight of nine hundred (900) pounds or less and is designed to be ridden astride upon a seat or saddle and to travel on at least three (3) low pressure tires. A "low pressure tire" is a pneumatic tire at least six (6) inches in width, designed for use on wheels with a rim diameter of twelve (12) inches or less and having a manufacturer's recommended operating pressure of ten (10) pounds per square inch or less; any unlicensed motorcycle which has an unladen weight of six hundred (600) pounds or less and is designed to be ridden off road with the operator astride upon a seat or saddle and travels on two (2) tires; and any multi-wheeled motorized vehicle not required by law to be licensed and is designed for cross-country travel on or over land, sand, ice or other natural terrain and which has an unladen weight of more than nine hundred (900) pounds.

Wherever practicable, off-road recreational vehicles shall only be operated off the main traveled portion of the roadway. Crossings of main traveled roadways shall be made at right angles to the roadway or as nearly so as practicable, but, in any case, yielding the right-of-way to all traffic in the main traveled roadway. If the operator is a minor, or if a minor is a rider, they shall be operated in accordance with all Wyoming helmet laws and be operated only by a person who possesses a valid driver license with a motorcycle endorsement.

**Pedestrian Vehicle:** any self-propelled conveyance designed, manufactured and intended for the exclusive use of persons with a physical disability. In no case shall a pedestrian vehicle exceed 48 inches in width.

**Reinstatement Fee:** the fee required to reinstate a person's driver license and/or driving privilege before a

suspension or revocation can be lifted and the privilege to drive restored.

**Revocation:** termination of a person's privilege to drive.

**Roadway:** that portion of a street or highway ordinarily used for driving.

**Shoulder:** that portion of the road beside the traveled highway. It may be either hard surfaced or gravel. It is used by stopped vehicles and helps provide proper drainage of the highway.

**Space Cushion:** the space that isolates your vehicle from other vehicles; a cushion of space ahead, behind and to the side of your vehicle.

**Suspension:** the TEMPORARY REMOVAL of a person's privilege to drive. The license may be returned after a specified period of time, and/or after certain requirements have been met.

**Total Stopping Distance:** the distance a vehicle travels before it comes to a complete stop. It includes the complete distance traveled while deciding to stop, then reacting, and finally after brakes are then applied.

# Traffic signs

The shapes and color of signs have meaning. If fading light, fog, rain, snow or darkness makes it difficult to see the letters, you should still know what to look for or what to do.

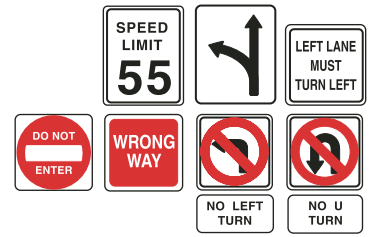
Pavement markings provide the driver with important information about the proper position of vehicles on the roadway.

## Regulatory signs

These signs tell you what to do. You must **always** obey them.

### Rectangles

Rectangular signs regulate traffic and direct the driver's speed and direction.




### Octagon (eight sides)

This shape is reserved for stop signs. You must come to a complete stop.


### Triangle pointing down

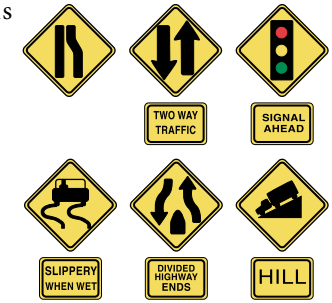
This shape requires that you yield the right-of-way to cross traffic or to merging traffic.


## Warning signs

Warning signs alert you to conditions ahead. They are usually diamond-shaped and warn you about road hazards, construction sites, schools or other situations which require your special attention. While most warning signs are yellow, construction and maintenance warning signs are orange.

### Diamond

These signs are yellow with black letters. They warn of a possible danger ahead.



### Pentagon
This sign warns of a school zone ahead or marks a school crossing. The absolute speed limit in a school zone is 20 mph.

### Pennant
Pennant-shaped signs are located at the beginning of a no-passing zone.


### Round
A round sign warns of a railroad crossing ahead. Instead, a stop line or an "X" with the letters "RR" may be painted on the pavement before a crossing, or any combination of the above may warn of an upcoming railroad crossing.


### Construction
Construction signs have black lettering on an orange background. They warn motorists of temporarily dangerous or unusual conditions on construction or maintenance projects.


### Guide signs
Guide signs are very helpful. They tell you where you are, what road you are on and how to get where you want to go. Most guide signs are rectangular. However, guide signs for county roads and route markers on freeways are different in shape. The type of information given determines the color of the sign.

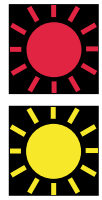

## Traffic signals

### Red light
You must stop behind the crosswalks or stop line. You can turn right at a RED light unless there is a sign that prohibits the turn. You may turn RIGHT only after STOPPING AND YIELDING to persons and other vehicles. You may also, after stopping and yielding, turn left from a one-way street onto a one-way street.

### Amber light
Traffic lights transition from green to amber and then to red. When approaching an amber light you may proceed through an intersection with caution while being ready to stop when the light turns red.

### Green light
You may enter the intersection when the way is clear. You MUST yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and persons already in the intersection.

### Flashing red light
You must come to a complete stop before entering the intersection. This light has the same meaning as a “STOP” sign.



### Flashing amber light
You must use caution. This light warns of a dangerous intersection or location.

### Turn arrows
1. A RED arrow prohibits turning in the direction of the arrow. It is used to remind drivers that they must turn in the direction the arrow is pointing when the light turns green.
2. An AMBER arrow may appear after a GREEN arrow and warns you to clear the intersection.
3. A GREEN arrow means that you may turn in the direction shown by the arrow without stopping if the way is clear. You MUST yield the right-of-way to persons and other traffic within the intersection.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