

Rules of the Road

Travel on public roadways is controlled by signs, signals, pavement markings, and driving laws. No matter what vehicle you drive or what road you drive on, you *must* obey these “rules of the road.”

You must learn how to drive properly on:

- Streets, roads, alleys, and avenues
- Traffic circles (rotaries)
- Highways, expressways, and freeways

You must also learn how to drive safely at:

- Special crossings
- Intersections
- Traffic hazards



Speed Limits

Driving too fast (speeding) is a main cause of motor vehicle crashes. To protect safety, speed laws in Massachusetts are strongly enforced. If you speed, there are severe penalties (see *Chapter Two*). When speeding, you need more distance to react and safely stop your vehicle.

1. You must never travel so fast that it is not safe. That is the fundamental speed law. Even if the speed limit is higher, your speed must be based on the following.
 - **Traffic conditions** – the number of vehicles on the road and their speed
 - **Road conditions** – is the road surface rough or smooth; how much water, ice, or snow is on the road surface; and how wide is the roadway
 - **Weather conditions and visibility** – situations that make it hard to see, including rain, snow, ice, dust, and wind
 - **Pedestrians or bicyclists** - people who are traveling along or across the road are unprotected and more vulnerable to death or severe injury in high speed crashes

You must lower your speed if there are poor driving conditions or hazards. It does not matter if the posted speed limit is higher.

2. Never drive faster than the **posted speed limit**. Sample speed limit signs appear below. All speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions. If conditions are hazardous, you must drive slower.

Most roadways in the state have posted speed limits. Speed limits change as you drive on different kinds of roads or enter and exit highways. Limited-access highways, like interstate routes, have speed limits from 50 to 65 mph. Smaller highways have speed limits of 55 mph or lower.

Some roadways may have minimum speeds. There is a minimum speed of 40 mph on the Massachusetts Turnpike. There is a minimum speed of 20 mph in the Boston Harbor tunnels (Callahan, Sumner, and Ted Williams). Even without a minimum speed, a police officer may order a driver to the side of a state highway if he/she is slowing traffic.

3. Unless posted otherwise, **your speed would *not* be reasonable and proper if you drive over...**
 - 20 mph in a school zone
 - 30 mph in a thickly settled or business district (unless there are signs showing a 25 mph limit)
 - 40 mph outside a thickly settled or business district
 - 50 mph on a highway outside a thickly settled or business district

If you drive 40 mph in a heavy rainstorm on a highway with a speed limit of 50 mph, you can get a ticket for driving too fast.

A “thickly settled district” is an area where buildings are fewer than 200 feet apart for a distance of 1/4 mile or more.



Some communities have a thickly settled speed limit of 25 mph unless posted otherwise (per M.G.L. c90, Section 17c). Signs are posted at all entrances to these cities and towns.



School Zones

The speed limit on roads near schools is 20 mph. This can be posted in various ways. Speed limit signs may have flashing yellow lights or be posted for certain hours of the day. Look closely for signs saying you are approaching or entering a school zone.

Drive carefully when entering a school zone. Be aware of children crossing the street or riding bicycles. Look out for school safety patrols or crossing guards.

Traffic Signals



Traffic signals are lights that control movement of vehicles and pedestrians, usually at intersections. You must know what each light means and obey its signals at all times.

Motor Vehicle Signals

Traffic signals are usually three round lights: red, yellow, and green circles, from top to bottom. There are also other types of signals, such as single flashing lights, colored arrows, and signals with 4 or 5 sections.



Steady Red Circle

A steady red circle means “stop.” Do not go until the light turns green. You can make a right turn on a red light *only* after you come to a complete stop and yield to pedestrians or other vehicles in your path. You may *not* turn on red if a **NO TURN ON RED** sign is posted.

You can turn left on a red light when driving on a one-way street and turning left onto another one-way street. Stop and yield to pedestrians and other vehicles before turning.



Steady Red Arrow

A steady red arrow means the same as a steady red, circular signal (see the preceding *Steady Red* section). However, it only applies to vehicles going in the direction of the arrow. The same rules for “turning on red” apply in Massachusetts. However, when driving out-of-state, this may not be true because different states have different laws.



Flashing Red Circle

A flashing red circle means the same as a **STOP** sign. Come to a complete stop. Obey the right-of-way laws and proceed when it is safe. If there is a white stop line or crosswalk line, you must stop **before** the line. If there are no lines, you must stop as close to the intersection as needed to see traffic in both directions. Do not enter the intersection until after coming to a complete stop.



Steady Yellow Circle

A steady yellow circle means the traffic signal is changing from green to red. You *must* stop if it is safe. If you are already stopped at an intersection or a stop line, you may *not* proceed.



Flashing Yellow Circle

A flashing yellow circle is a warning. Proceed with caution, and stay alert. Look both ways when crossing an intersection.



Flashing Yellow Arrow

A flashing yellow arrow allows you to turn left or right in the direction of the arrow when oncoming traffic has a green light but there is a break in traffic. You must carefully determine that there is an adequate gap in the oncoming traffic and ensure that there are no pedestrians in your path before making your turn.



Steady Green Circle

A steady green circle means “go.” But first, you must yield to other vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians in the road. If you are crossing an intersection, make sure you have enough room to make it completely through. Never block an intersection. You may make a turn as long as you have enough space to complete the turn and not create a hazard. If you are turning left on a steady green light, you must yield to oncoming traffic. Look out for drivers who do not obey traffic signals or race through intersections.



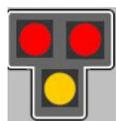
Green Arrow

A green arrow means you can make a “protected” turn in the direction of the arrow. When a green arrow displays for your turn, pedestrians and oncoming vehicles should be stopped for red lights. Look for signs saying the lane is only for turns in the direction of the arrow.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons are activated by pedestrians manually by a push button or by a pedestrian detection system. They are often located in intersections without traffic signals or at mid-block crosswalks. When activated, amber lights flash in an irregular pattern. You must stop for pedestrians when the beacon is flashing.



Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon

A Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) allows pedestrians to safely cross a roadway. A PHB only operates when activated by a pedestrian. When all lights are dark, you can proceed with caution. When the bottom yellow light is

flashing, you must slow down. When the bottom yellow light is solid, you must prepare to stop. When the top two red lights are solid, you must stop for pedestrians. When the top two red lights are flashing, you must stop and proceed with caution if clear.



Bicycle Signals

Bicycle signals are lights specifically meant for bicyclists. They display as steady red, yellow, and green bicycle symbols. When the signal is green, bicyclists can go through busy intersections while motor vehicles are stopped, protecting them from turning vehicles.

Traffic Signals Not Working

If traffic signals are not working, they will simply flash either red or yellow lights. When this happens, follow the rules for flashing lights. If signals are blacked out and not functioning, be cautious and proceed as though there is a stop sign in all directions. Go when it is safe.

Pedestrian Signals

Special lighted signals are often used at crosswalks to tell pedestrians when to cross a roadway. Pedestrians must obey white and orange **DON'T WALK** and **WALK** signals. Some crosswalk signals include a numeric countdown timer. Pedestrians who are already in the crosswalk when the countdown reaches zero have the right-of-way.



Laws for Drivers

- You must yield to pedestrians entering or using a crosswalk in your travel path.
- Never let your vehicle block a crosswalk.
- You must yield to pedestrians if your traffic signal is red or if it is red and yellow.
- Never pass a vehicle that is stopped or slowing for a pedestrian.
- You must yield to pedestrians when turning into a driveway or parking lot.

Laws for Pedestrians

- Use a crosswalk if one is available.
- At crosswalks with pedestrian signals, push the button on the pole and wait for a **WALK** signal. Intersections without buttons automatically give **WALK** signals.
- When the **WALK** signal is shown, you can begin to cross. When **DON'T WALK** is shown, you should not begin to cross; if you are already in the crosswalk, you should finish crossing.
- Before you cross a roadway, stop at the curb and look left and right for traffic. *Be alert.* Look out especially for cars turning onto the road you are crossing.

Regulatory



ALL WAY



Yield



No right turn



No left turn



No U-turn



No trucks



No pedestrians



No bicycles



No parking allowed between posted hours



Traffic moves only in direction of arrow



You may not overtake another vehicle



You may *not* turn right after stopping at a red light



All traffic must go left



Keep to the right of the upcoming median or lane divider

Warning



AHEAD

School zone



School zone



Lane merging from right, watch for other traffic



Divided highway begins



Winding road, multiple curves ahead



Road turns right



AHEAD

School crossing



School crossing



Playground



Divided highway ends



Crossroad ahead



Road curves right



AHEAD

Pedestrian crossing



Pedestrian crossing



Stop ahead



Two-way traffic



Road entering from the right



Area off paved road is soft dirt - hazardous



200 FEET

Pedestrian crossing ahead



Traffic signal ahead



Right Lane End - Road Narrows



Road slippery when wet



Road ends at junction



You may not cross the yellow line



Circular intersection ahead



Traffic may flow on both sides of sign



Deer crossing



Railroad crossing ahead

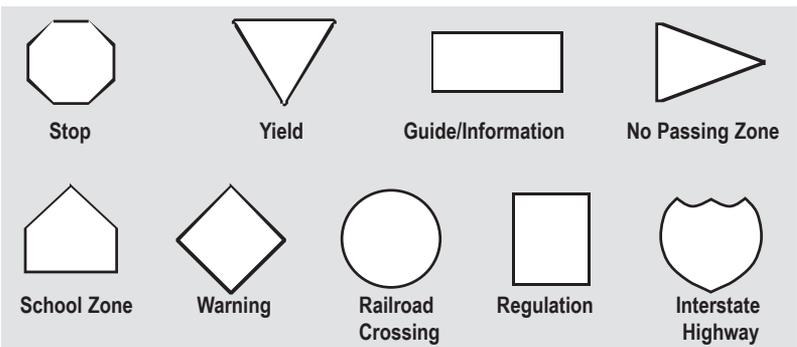


Added lane

Guides and Directions



Know signs by their appearances so you can recognize them at a distance.



Traffic Signs

Traffic signs control traffic, warn you of hazards, help you get where you are going, and tell you about roadway services. The shapes and colors of traffic signs are important. Sign colors mean the following:

RED—stop or prohibition

GREEN—direction, shows where you can go

YELLOW—general warning

BLACK/WHITE—regulation

BLUE—motorist service (e.g., gas, food, hotels), evacuation route

BROWN—recreational, historic, or scenic site

ORANGE—construction or maintenance warning

FLUORESCENT YELLOW-GREEN—school zone, bicycle, pedestrian, and curve warning

FLUORESCENT PINK—incident management signs

PURPLE—electronic toll collection signs

Stop and Yield Signs

A STOP sign always means “come to a complete halt” and applies to each vehicle that comes to the sign. When approaching a stop sign, you must stop before any crosswalk or stop line painted on the pavement. Come to a complete stop, yield to pedestrians or other vehicles, and go carefully. Just slowing down is not enough. If a 4-WAY or ALL WAY sign is added to a STOP sign at an intersection, all traffic coming to the intersection must stop. The first vehicle in the intersection or four-way stop has the right of way.

When you see a YIELD sign, slow down and be prepared to stop. Let vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians go before you proceed. You must come to a complete stop if traffic conditions require it.

Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs have a red or white background and inform drivers of traffic laws or regulations. Some, such as SPEED LIMIT signs, may only include words. Others, such as NO U-TURN signs, use only images. Some are a combination of words and images. Signs that use a red circle with a diagonal slash mean that something is prohibited.

Warning Signs

Yellow and fluorescent yellow-green warning signs warn you of hazards or changes in conditions ahead. The road layout may be changing, you may be coming to a school zone, or there may be a special situation ahead. Slow down and obey the sign.

Guide Signs

In the “guide signs” category are route markers, distance and destination signs, and informational signs. Green signs give highway directions and guide you through highway interchanges. Blue signs list motorist services, like gas, food, and lodging. Brown signs direct you to public recreational areas, state and national parks, points of interest, and scenic sites.

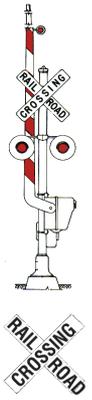
In Massachusetts, numbered state highway routes are posted on white, rectangular signs with black letters and borders. Interstate highway signs are blue, red, and white shields.

Railroad Crossings

There is usually a round warning sign before a railroad crossing. When you see this sign, slow down and prepare to stop. If you see or hear a train coming, do *not* speed up and try to beat the train to the crossing.

The point at which train tracks cross a road is marked with a white crossbuck sign. If more than one track crosses a road, the number of tracks is posted below the crossbuck.

A railroad crossing may also have red flashing lights, a bell, and a red-and-white striped gate that lowers across the roadway when a train is passing. If the lights begin to flash, you must stop at least 15 feet before the light post or gate. You must then remain stopped until the gate raises and the lights stop flashing. Failure to stop is a violation that has a heavy fine. Even if you do not see a train coming, *never* drive around a lowered gate or ignore the flashing lights.



Roadway Construction/ Maintenance (Work Zones)

Any roadway in Massachusetts may be under construction or require maintenance at any given time. These sections of roadway are designated and protected by warning signs and traffic control devices. They help guide you safely through a work zone and past any hazards. There are several rules or practices you should be aware of to protect yourself and roadway workers.

When approaching a work zone, reduce your speed. Be aware of the traffic around you and any obstructions or hazards that can be seen on or near the roadway. If a police officer or civil flagger is present, follow and obey their directions. DO NOT be distracted by what is happening within a work zone.

The start of a work zone is indicated with a warning sign or electronic message sign. This sign usually refers to roadwork/utility work beginning at a certain distance down the road.



Civil Flaggers are typically used on low-speed, low-volume roadways to control traffic movement around the work area and to support other road users navigate the area.



Flagger Ahead Sign (500 feet)



Work zone flag person

Upcoming warning signs inform you of where work is taking place and how you should maneuver through the work area. Read and follow the messages on these signs.



This sign shows which lane is closed



This sign means the right lane is closed and traffic should move to the left



This sign means the lanes are shifting to the right

Certain devices (such as drums, cones, and tubular markers) are used to direct traffic away from a work area where the shoulder or travel lane is closed. They are usually lined up in an angular fashion to shift traffic from the beginning of a travel lane to the left or right. You should carefully merge into the adjacent travel lane when you see these devices in the roadway. When a lane is closed to traffic, a barricade is often used to block off access to that area.



Drum



Cones



Tubular Marker



Barricade

In some cases, road work requires full closure of travel lanes in one direction, or an entire road closure. In these cases, detour signs are posted. They provide direction on bypassing the work zone and then getting back on the original road.



Detour sign used along the detour



Detour sign used at the start of the detour

On multiple lane roadways, portable arrow boards are used to provide notification that the shoulder or lane is closed and which lane is open for travel. These devices are located before the work area within the closed lane to give you notice to merge your vehicle when it is safe.



Right lane closure - merge left



Middle lane closure - merge right or left

There are many more types of traffic control devices you may encounter. Be aware, be cautious, be observant, and use common sense when driving through work zones. There are men and women working to improve roads for public use and these work zone signs and devices are there to guide motorists and protect these workers.

When approaching a work zone, the **FIRST** thing you must do is **SLOW DOWN** and look for guidance on how to safely travel through the area.

The Highway Division has a 511 phone service. You can use this to get up-to-date information about traffic and weather conditions and construction projects. You can also report problems on the road. Service is available 24/7.

Dial 511 from your cell phone or 617-986-5511 (Metro-Boston), 508-499-5511 (Central Mass), or 413-754-5511 (Western Mass) from a landline.

For more information, visit Mass.Gov/Traffic-Information

Pavement Markings

Lines, symbols, and words are often painted on a roadway to help direct drivers and control traffic. You must know what the different lines and colors mean and obey them.

White and yellow lines are used on pavement edges and between lanes to keep vehicles in line. The lines may be solid or broken (long dashes), single or double. A solid white or solid yellow line that turns into a dotted line (short dashes) is a continuation of the line through an intersection or highway interchange.

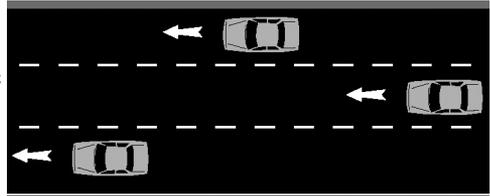
Unless you're turning, exiting a highway, or changing lanes, always stay between lane lines.

White Lane Lines

White lane lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the **same** direction. Single white lines may also mark the right edge of the pavement.

Broken White Line

Broken white lines separate lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction. Once you have signaled, and it is safe to do so, you may cross this line when changing lanes.



Broken white lines separate lanes in the same direction.

Solid White Line

A solid white line marks the right edge of the roadway or separates lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction, including bicycle lanes. You can go in the same direction on both sides of this line (except the shoulder), but you should not cross it unless you need to avoid danger.

Double Solid White Line

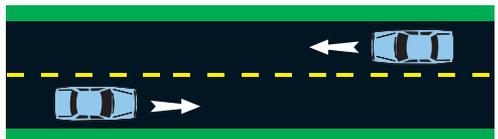
A double solid white line separates two lanes of traffic going in the same direction. Crossing a double solid white line is not allowed.

Yellow Lane Lines

Yellow lane lines separate lanes of traffic moving in **opposite** directions. Single yellow lines may also mark the left edge of the pavement on divided highways and one-way streets.

Broken Yellow Line

A broken yellow line separates lanes of traffic moving in opposite directions. Stay to the right of the line, unless you are passing a vehicle in front of you.



When passing, you may cross this line temporarily when it is safe to do so.

Double Yellow Lines: One Solid, One Broken

One solid yellow line and one broken yellow line separate opposite lanes of traffic. If the *solid* yellow line is closer to you, you *cannot* cross the lines. If the *broken* line is closer to you, you can *only* cross the line to pass another vehicle when it is safe to do so.



Double Yellow Lines: Both Solid

Two solid yellow lines prohibit vehicles from crossing them to pass another vehicle. You may not cross these lines unless turning left when it is safe to do so.

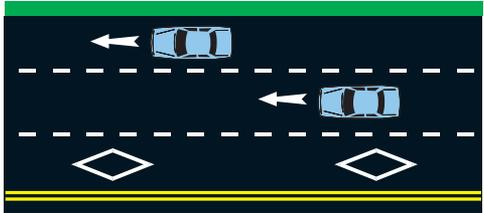


Do not cross a double yellow line unless turning left.

Words and Symbols

Words or symbols may be painted on roadway surfaces to help guide, warn, or regulate drivers. Words or symbols are often used with traffic signs, signals, and other pavement markings. White arrows show lane directions or restrictions.

A white diamond symbol means there is a special lane restriction, like “high occupancy vehicle (HOV) only” or “bus only.”



In the above three-lane diagram, the far left travel lane is reserved for high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs), like those used in carpools, or for buses.

Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows)

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



Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle lanes are portions of the roadway that are intended for use by bicyclists and are typically marked by solid white lines, along with pavement markings and signs. They are five feet wide. Motor vehicles may only drive in these lanes when turning on or off the road. Before crossing a bicycle lane, you must look carefully for bicyclists, and you must cross with care.



Advisory Bicycle Lanes

Advisory bicycle lanes are becoming common on streets that are too narrow for a full

bicycle lane, but still have a lot of bicycle traffic. They are dashed on one or both sides to indicate that motor vehicles may use the lane space when necessary, but they must always yield to bicyclists first.

Green Pavement

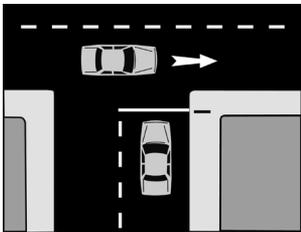
Green pavement is used in areas where there could be road sharing conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles. You should pay close attention and look for bicyclists before crossing green pavement. At a red light, you should not stop on green pavement. See the *Laws for Bicyclists and Motorists in the Presence of Bicyclists* section later in this chapter for more information on green pavement.

Stop Lines, Yield Lines, and Crosswalks

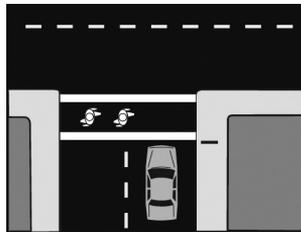
An intersection or pedestrian crossing with a stop sign or traffic signal may have a solid white **STOP** line painted across it. An intersection with a yield sign may have a **YIELD** line painted across it. A **YIELD** line looks like a series of triangles painted next to each other.

A crosswalk is a pair of white lines, or other distinguished pavement markings or materials, painted across a lane to guide pedestrians from one side of the road to the other. A painted crosswalk also warns drivers that pedestrians may be crossing the road. Crosswalks may have diagonal or vertical lines painted between the two main lines. Crosswalks are often located at intersections, but can also be found in other areas, such as bus stops, schools, trail crossings, commercial districts, and areas with a lot of pedestrians.

You must stop *behind* the stop lines, yield lines, and crosswalk lines if required by a stop/yield sign, traffic signal, or pedestrian in the crosswalk.



Stop line



Crosswalk



Yield line

Channelizing Islands

A channelizing island is a traffic island or pavement marking that guides traffic along certain paths and prevents operation on areas of the roadway. You cannot drive over or park a motor vehicle upon any channelizing island, unless directed to do so by a police officer.

Crossing Guards

In recent years, several crossing guards in Massachusetts have been killed or injured while on duty when struck by vehicles. As a driver, you should look for warning signs that crossing guards and children may be in the road and be prepared to stop. Crossing guards depend on drivers to be aware and obey their signals. Use caution when you see the following:

- Crosswalks/ Pedestrian Crossing Signs - These will be white crosswalks painted on the street, or pedestrian crossing signs placed in the middle or the side of the road.
- Reflective Vests - Crossing guards wear brightly colored and highly reflective clothing so they will be highly visible.
- Stop Paddles - These are hand-held stop signs that crossing guards hold up while walking out into the street to warn drivers of children crossing.

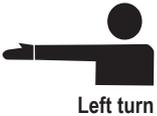
Lanes, Intersections, and Turns

This section explains the rules of driving that apply to any roadway or intersection. In addition to standard travel lanes, there are...

- Special lanes for turning
- Restricted lanes for buses, car pools, and bicycles
- Breakdown lanes on the right-hand shoulder of highways and expressways

Signaling

When you are driving on a roadway, you are expected to drive straight ahead, unless you show otherwise. This is why you must use signals whenever you stop or make *any* move in traffic. Your signals alert pedestrians and motorists of what you are doing and give them time to react.



Regardless of the kind of vehicle you are driving, you *must* use signals. If the electronic signals on your vehicle are not working, you must use the three hand signals shown. Signals should be made through the driver's side window. You must know these signals to pass the road test.



You must signal in certain situations:

- Changing lanes
- Turning at an intersection or into a driveway
- Pulling away from a curb
- Pulling over to the side of the road
- Entering or exiting an expressway or a freeway



Once you have completed your move, you must turn your signal off. Any time you want to turn, merge, join traffic from a stopped position, or change lanes, you must...

1. Check your mirrors for traffic behind you and check your blind spot on the side you are moving or turning toward.
2. Signal your intent to move.
3. Make your move.

Bicyclists may use either arm to signal.

Using Lanes

Always use traffic lanes as they are defined by pavement markings and road signs. Many intersections have special lanes marked for turns. Follow the rules of the road, using the proper lanes for turning and driving straight ahead.

On roadways with two or more lanes in your travel direction, use the right lane for driving unless...

- You are passing another vehicle.
- You are making a left turn.
- The right lane is blocked.

Here are a few more general rules for using lanes properly:

- Never change lanes in the middle of an intersection. It is illegal and dangerous.
- As a general rule, do *not* use a highway breakdown lane for travel or passing. On some highways, however, you may use the breakdown lane for travel during specific times.
- If you come to a curve in the road and cannot see ahead, keep to the right and slow down.

The use of breakdown lanes as travel lanes is very restricted, and hours of use are posted clearly.

Special rules for motorcycles:

- Do not ride along pavement lines, between lanes of traffic.
- Ride no more than two abreast (side-by-side).
- Unless your motorcycle can safely drive at minimum posted speeds, do not travel on highways or expressways.

Restricted Lanes

You must not drive in lanes posted as restricted, except when preparing for a turn. Look for signs like the ones to the right.



Highway Driving

A divided highway has separate roadways for traffic in opposite directions. There are often multiple lanes on each side. Highway speed limits are usually between 45 to 65 mph.

Some highways cross other roads and are controlled by traffic signals. Others are “controlled access,” which means they have no signals or intersections. You enter and exit these highways using ramps. These highways are called “expressways” or “freeways,” and you enter or exit these highways at “interchanges.” In Massachusetts, interstate Routes 90 and 495 and State Highway 128 are examples of expressways.

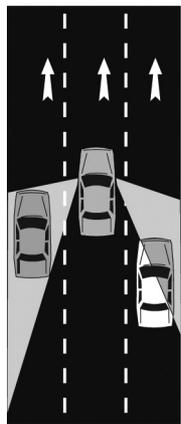
Highway driving can make any new driver nervous. Following are some useful tips for driving on highways:

Entering and Exiting the Highway

- Make sure you are in the proper lane well in advance so you can safely enter or exit the highway.
- Yield the right-of-way to drivers already on the highway.
- When you enter a highway, increase your speed to match vehicles already on the road.
- **If you miss your exit, do not stop. Never back up on the highway.** Get off the highway at the **next** exit and look for signs showing you how to rejoin the road in the other direction.
- Be sure to signal your exit at least 500 feet before you reach the exit ramp.
- As you leave the highway and drive along the exit ramp, slow to the posted exit ramp speed limit.

Driving on the Highway

- Make sure your vehicle operates well and can drive at highway speeds.
- Stay to the right and only use the left lane for passing. On an expressway with three or more lanes in your direction, use the far right lane for slower driving, the middle lane for faster driving, and the far left lane for passing.
- Drive in the middle of your lane, staying between the lines.
- Use your rearview mirror, check your blind spots, and use your directional signals when changing lanes. Remember these three steps: **(1) look, (2) signal, (3) move.**
- Do not drive in another driver's blind spot. If you are in another driver's blind spot, safely drive through the blind spot as quickly as you can.
- Look out for vehicles entering the highway and any vehicles or pedestrians in the breakdown lane.
- Do not weave in and out of traffic.
- Be aware of road construction signs, work crews, and signs that require you to reduce speed or change lanes.



The accompanying diagram shows the “blind spots” around your vehicle, in which you cannot see with your vehicle’s mirrors.

Take extra care when exiting a highway that uses breakdown lanes as travel lanes. Look to your right and check your right-hand blind spot before exiting.

- Avoid “highway hypnosis.” If you’ve been driving for a long time and feel tired, you should get off the highway at the next exit, rest stop, or service area.
- If you plan to drive far, stop and stretch every two hours or every 100 miles.

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Intersections

Intersections are where two or more roadways meet. Traffic flow at intersections is often controlled by signals, signs, and/or pavement markings. The next two sections in this chapter, *Turns* and *Right-of-Way Rules*, describe the rules and procedures you must follow at intersections.

Some roads have multiple turning lanes. While on these roads, you should follow the applicable road signs or markings.

Intersections are very important to the flow and safety of traffic. **It is illegal to block an intersection with your vehicle.** When driving through an intersection, you must obey all signs or traffic signals. **You may *only* enter an intersection or drive across a crosswalk if there is enough room for you to drive through safely. Blocking the paths of other vehicles or pedestrians in an intersection or a crosswalk is dangerous. This causes traffic jams and violates traffic law.**

When driving through an intersection, be especially alert for bicyclists. Give them plenty of space

and always double check for approaching bicyclists before proceeding through. If you're turning, you must yield to bicyclists going straight through an intersection. Never cut in front of a bicyclist.

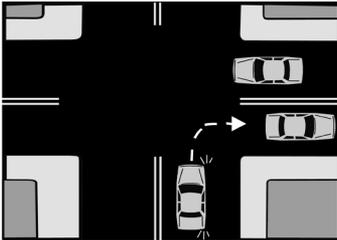
Turns

Many motor vehicle crashes are caused by improper turns. Take the following steps to turn safely.

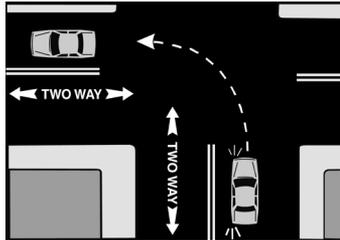
1. Plan for the turn. Do not turn suddenly.
2. Signal your turn at least 100 feet before making the turn. On a highway, signal at least 500 feet before a turn. It is best to signal before you apply your brakes, so you make your intentions known to other drivers.
3. Reduce your speed.
4. Check your mirrors for traffic behind you and check the blind spot on your turning side.
5. Give the right-of-way when appropriate (see the *Right-of-Way Rules* section).
6. Complete the turn carefully, making sure you turn into the proper lane.

The road diagrams below show proper turns. It is very important that you turn from and turn into the proper lane. Look for yellow or white pavement lines marking the road you are turning into. If you need to change lanes, do so *after* you turn. Here are a few rules:

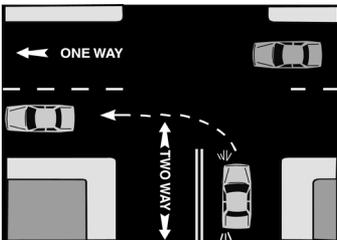
- Turn from the lane closest to the lane you want to enter. For a right turn, turn from the far right lane. For a left turn, turn from the lane closest to the center lane.
- Do not swing your vehicle out of your lane when making a turn or swing wide through the intersection. Keep your vehicle centered in the middle of the lanes you are leaving and entering.
- Once you have started a turn through an intersection, you must follow through. Do not stop in mid-turn and change direction. If you decide you do not want to make the turn, simply drive to the next intersection and work your way back.



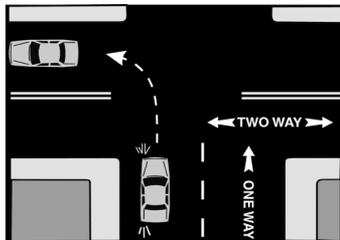
Right turn



Left turn from a two-way road to a two-way road



Left turn from a two-way road to a one-way road



Left turn from a one-way road to a two-way road

Turns on Red

You must come to a complete stop at a red traffic light. You may then turn *right* unless a **NO TURN ON RED** sign is posted. You must first give the right-of-way to pedestrians and other vehicles. You may turn *left* on red *only* if you are turning from a one-way street onto another one-way street. The same rules that apply to right turns apply to left turns.

U-Turns

A U-turn is a tight left turn that puts you in the opposite direction.

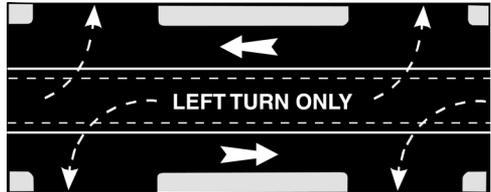
You can make a U-turn if your path is clear and it is safe to do so. You cannot make a U-turn if a NO U-TURN sign is posted.



- You may only make a U-turn from the lane closest to the center line.
- Make sure you have enough room to complete the turn. Do not create a hazard for oncoming vehicles.
- Do not make a U-turn at the crest of a hill, near a curve, or anyplace where you or other drivers cannot see 500 feet away.

Left Turns from Center Lanes

On some two-way roads, a center lane may be marked as a common left-turn lane to be used by vehicles in both directions. You may *not* travel in a center turning lane.



Three-Point Turns

When there is not enough room for a U-turn, you may consider a three-point turn. This will put you in the opposite direction. This turn should only be used when all of the following conditions are met:

- The street is narrow
- There is good visibility
- There are no public driveways to turn into
- The traffic is light
- The turn is legal
- There is no other option

Following are the steps of a three-point turn.

1. Position yourself as close as possible to the right edge of the curb. Signal a left turn. Check for traffic and pedestrians in both directions (including your blind spot). Wait until you have a 20-30 second gap to complete the turn.
2. Move slowly and turn the steering wheel quickly to the left. This will bring the vehicle perpendicular to the street about two feet from the curb. Come to a stop.
3. Turn your steering wheel fully to the right. Check for traffic in both directions (including your blind spot). Shift into reverse and start backing up, while looking over your right shoulder.

4. Back up to the opposite curb, stopping just before the curb.
5. Check again for traffic in both directions (including your blind spot). Signal a left. Shift into drive (or for manual cars, first gear) and accelerate to the proper speed.

Right-of-Way Rules

“Right-of-way rules” help drivers handle traffic situations not controlled by signs or signals. These rules are based on safety and courtesy. They do not give you any “rights.” Remember, the right-of-way is something you give, not take. If another driver does not follow these rules, you should always give the right-of-way.

This section describes many right-of-way rules. Other rules, like giving the right-of-way to emergency vehicles, are covered later in this chapter.

Pedestrians

You must always yield to pedestrians who are in a roadway. Also note these rules concerning pedestrians:



- If you are stopped at a traffic light that turns green, you must yield to pedestrians already in the crosswalk.
- When turning, look for pedestrians. Pedestrians have the right-of-way if using a sidewalk or crossing a driveway or an alley.
- Always yield to visually impaired (blind) people crossing a street. You must remain stopped until the person has safely crossed. Do not honk or wave the person on. Never pass another vehicle which is stopped. Blind pedestrians may use a white cane or a guide dog. The White Cane Law states that a driver must come to a complete stop when a blind pedestrian is crossing a street.
- On a multiple lane roadway, never pass another vehicle stopped at a crosswalk without checking for pedestrians first.

Intersections Not Controlled by Signs or Signals

Slow down at an uncontrolled intersection. Look left and right for oncoming traffic and proceed if the way is clear. However:

- You *must* yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that has entered the intersection from your *right* or is coming from your right.
- Look for traffic coming from the left. Even though you may have the legal right-of-way, make sure that the other driver is yielding before you proceed.

Four-Way Stop

At an intersection with stop signs in all directions, you must yield the right-of-way to...

- Another vehicle that has **already** come to a full stop
- A vehicle directly to your *right* that has stopped at the **same time** as you



Four-way stop intersections can cause confusion. Try to make eye contact with the drivers of other vehicles to judge their intentions and avoid crashes.

At a four-way stop, vehicles must go in the order they stopped. The first to stop is the next to go. If in doubt, give the right-of-way to the driver on your right.

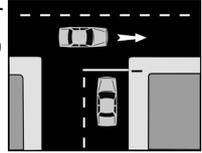
Turning Left

When making *any* left turn, you must first yield the right-of-way to any...

- Oncoming vehicle
- Vehicle already in the intersection
- Pedestrians or bicyclists crossing your intended path of travel

Private Roads, Driveways, and Unpaved Roads

When entering a paved thoroughfare from a private road, a driveway, or an unpaved road, you must stop. You must then give the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists, or vehicles on the road you are entering.



You must give the right-of-way at throughways.

Throughways

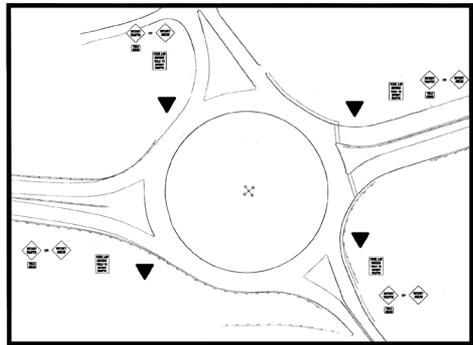
On a designated throughway, you must yield the right-of-way to traffic on the throughway before you turn.

Intersection of Single or Two-Lane Road and Multiple-Lane Road

If you are on a single or two-lane road and come to an intersection with a divided highway or a roadway with three or more lanes, you must yield the right-of-way.

Rotaries

Rotaries are much more common in Massachusetts than in other parts of the country. A rotary is an intersection of roads coming together from several directions. It allows you to continue through without stopping at a STOP sign or a traffic signal. There are yield signs at the entrance to a rotary. There is a physical barrier (the Central Island) in the center that forces traffic to travel around it. Big rotaries are designed to handle traffic traveling at up to 40 miles per hour.



Traffic in a rotary travels counter-clockwise.

Rotary Traffic Rules

Traffic travels counter-clockwise in a rotary. Always yield the right-of-way to vehicles already in the rotary (unless told differently by signs or police officers) and to pedestrians. Use your turn signals in the same way as any other intersection. Travel through the rotary and, when you are ready to exit, use your right turn signal.

Choosing a Lane

If the rotary has a single lane, you must enter from the right lane of the road you are coming from. You must exit onto the right lane of the road you intend to travel on.

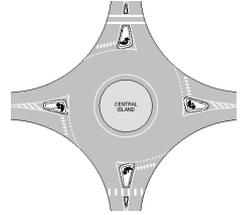
If the rotary has multiple lanes, look for signs to help you choose the proper lane. If there are no signs, you should do the following:

- For a quarter-turn, or to continue straight ahead, enter the rotary from the right lane. Stay in that lane, and exit onto the right lane.
- For a three-quarter-turn, or a U-turn, enter the rotary from the left lane. Travel through the middle or inner lane. Exit onto the right lane. If coming from a road with a single lane, you should stay in the right lane for the entire turn.

In a multiple-lane rotary, there may be traffic on both sides of your vehicle. Do not attempt to move out of your lane until it is safe to do so. If you miss your exit, don't get upset. Check the traffic around you. If it is safe to do so, go around again and position your vehicle to properly and safely exit the rotary. **Do not stop in the rotary.**

Roundabouts

Roundabouts are similar to rotaries. They are generally much smaller than rotaries and have a smaller central barrier. Most roundabouts have yield lines on the pavement and crosswalks for pedestrians. Roundabouts are used on busy streets and their small size requires vehicles to reduce speed to 25 miles per hour or less. Roundabouts reduce the need to change lanes. Look for signs as you get near a roundabout to determine which lane you should be in. When entering a roundabout and choosing a lane, you should follow the same rules as for a rotary. Slow speeds in roundabouts make them safe for bicyclists.



Rules for Passing

In general, the law requires you to drive on the right side of the road. When passing is allowed, you should pass on the left. Passing on the right is allowed only in certain situations.

You should pass a pedestrian, bicyclist, or motor vehicle *only* when it is necessary and safe to do so. **You may not exceed the speed limit when passing.** If you have any doubt, do not pass.

Never use a breakdown lane, the shoulder of a road, or a sidewalk for passing another vehicle.

Passing on the Left

On a multiple-lane roadway with several lanes in one direction, you must use the middle and left lanes for passing. A broken yellow line on a two-way road allows you to cross over into the oncoming lane temporarily to pass a vehicle, **if it is safe to do so.**

The following steps go with the diagram to the right:

1. Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle you want to pass. Check the passing lane to make sure it is clear. If you are crossing a broken yellow line to pass, you must be able to see clearly **at least 400 feet** in front of you. Check your mirror and your blind spot.
2. Signal left and gradually move into the passing lane.
3. Maintain your speed until safely past the other vehicle, then signal right.



If you are operating a motorcycle, you may only pass single file.

4. Make sure there is enough distance between you and the other vehicle before moving back into the right lane. Wait at least until you can see the vehicle's headlights in your mirror.
5. You must return to the right lane before any oncoming vehicle comes within 200 feet of you. Turn off your signal once you have returned to the right lane.

Passing on the Right

Passing on the right is only allowed in certain circumstances. It can only be done when the road is clear and is wide enough for two or more lines of motor vehicles. You can pass on the right in the following circumstances:

- The vehicle you are passing is making, or is about to make, a left turn.
- You are driving on a one-way street.
- You are driving on a road where traffic moves in one direction (such as a multiple lane highway).

Being Passed

If you are being passed by another vehicle, you must slow down and stay to the right. Allow the other driver to pass safely. Do *not* speed up.

The “move-over law” (Chapter 418 of the Acts of 2008) requires that if you are approaching a stationary emergency vehicle and it is displaying its flashing lights, you must proceed with caution and reduce your speed to that of a reasonable and safe speed for the road conditions. If you are on a highway with at least four lanes (at least two of which allow travel in the same direction you are heading), yield the right-of way by safely “moving over” to a lane that is not next to the lane the emergency, highway, or recovery vehicle is occupying. In other words, leave an open lane between your vehicle and the stopped emergency vehicle. If “moving-over” is impracticable, you must still proceed with caution and reduce your speed to that of a reasonable and safe speed for the road conditions.

Road Respect/Sharing the Road

Roadways are intended for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Courtesy is expected by all who use the road. Motorists must be especially careful because more vulnerable users can be seriously injured or killed. We ask that you show respect to people you share the roadway with. Do not let your anger get the best of you.

How Can You Identify Aggressive Drivers?

Aggressive Drivers often do the following:

- Cut people off
- Exceed the speed limit
- Switch lanes without signaling
- Tailgate
- Run red lights
- Prevent other motorists from passing them

What Can You Do When confronted by an Aggressive Driver?

- Attempt to get out of his/her way.
- Do not challenge that person.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Ignore rude gestures.
- Wear your safety belt. It will keep you in control of your vehicle and protect you in a crash.

Do not become an Aggressive Driver!

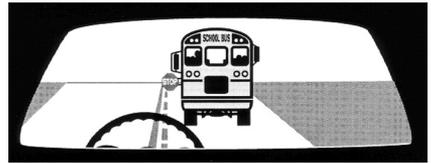
Control your anger and do not let the situation get worse. Do not question how aggressive the other driver may be. If you have a cell phone, call the State Police at 911 to report an emergency situation.

State Police patrol highways in unmarked vehicles. They look for aggressive drivers who put everyone in danger. If you are arrested for aggressive driving, the RMV may review your case. The RMV can suspend your license and registration before a court date if you are a threat to public safety.

Be a safe driver, be courteous, and always treat other drivers as you would like to be treated. As the driver of a passenger car, van, small truck, or motorcycle, you must constantly share the roadway with other people and other vehicles.

School Buses

Yellow school buses have flashing red lights and stop signs that fold out from the driver's side. School pupil transport vehicles, like vans, station wagons, or family sedans, have flashing red lights and SCHOOL BUS signs on top. Drivers use these warning signals when letting pupils on and off.



Obey school bus signals from either side of the road.

If a school bus or a school pupil transport vehicle has its lights flashing and a stop sign extended, you must stop. It is the law. It does not matter which side of the road you are traveling on. Remain stopped until the lights stop flashing or the stop sign folds back.

A first violation of this law can cause a license suspension and a \$250 fine.

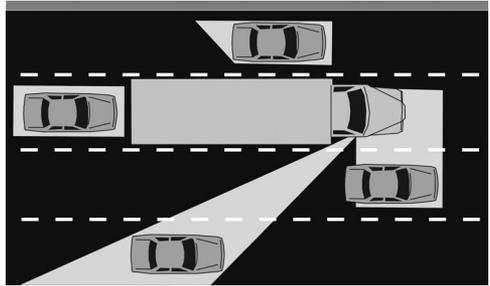
Even after the warning signals have stopped, you should proceed slowly and continue to look for children.

The only exception to this law is if a school bus has stopped on the other side of a divided highway with a barrier between travel directions. In this case, you do not have to stop.

Trucks and Other Large Vehicles

One of the worst "sharing-the-road" problems is between large vehicles, like trucks and buses, and smaller ones, like cars and motorcycles. Following are some rules for driving safely among trucks, tractor-trailers, and buses:

- **Blind Spots** — It is easy for a car or a motorcycle to be hidden in a large vehicle's blind spots. Therefore, do **not** follow closely behind a truck or a bus. When driving near a large vehicle, be aware of the driver's blind spots on the right, left, front, and behind.



This diagram shows the various blind spots for a tractor-trailer

- **Tailgating** — If you cannot see a truck's rearview mirrors, you are tailgating. Tailgating is dangerous. By following too closely, you are losing the safety cushion you need if the vehicle in front of you stops short.
- **Cutting in Front** — Drivers of large vehicles try to keep a safety cushion of space around them. A large truck may need twice as much distance to stop as an automobile or a motorcycle, especially when roads are wet or icy. Do not drive into the space immediately surrounding a large vehicle. Do *not* pull in front of a large vehicle and slow down or stop suddenly. The driver will have too little room to stop and will crash into you or may risk "jackknifing" by trying to stop suddenly at highway speeds.

Studies by the National Safety Council and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that a fully loaded tractor trailer may take twice as far to stop as a passenger vehicle.

- **Driving Too Slowly** — On a multiple-lane highway, trucks and buses can only drive in the two right-hand lanes. They use the far right lane for normal travel and the second lane for passing. If you travel in the second lane, stay with the flow of traffic and do not drive below the minimum speed limit.

Driving too slowly in this lane can create a bottleneck of large vehicles. This can increase highway traffic hazards. If the driver of a truck or bus wants to pass you, move over when it is safe to do so and let the vehicle pass.

- **Passing on the Left** — It takes longer to pass a tractor-trailer or a bus than another car or a motorcycle. Be aware that large vehicles travel slower uphill and faster downhill.
- **Passing on the Right** — Do not pass a truck or bus on the right unless it is absolutely necessary. Large vehicles make wide turns, and sometimes they must move to the *left* before making a wide turn to the *right*. If you are next to a truck or bus, you are probably in a blind spot. Watch for possible right-hand turns, and stay safely behind until you know what the driver is doing.



If you are thinking about passing, remember that a tractor may be pulling more than one trailer.

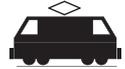
- **Truck or Bus Approaching** — If a large vehicle is coming toward you on an undivided road, stay to the right. You will avoid being sideswiped or shaken by air turbulence. At intersections, take extra care in judging the speed of the oncoming vehicle. Trucks and buses cannot slow down easily if you cut in front of them to turn.

Buses and Trolleys

Be very careful near public transport buses and trolleys. Buses stop often. Be courteous and allow signaling buses to pull away from bus stops. Be cautious of pedestrians entering or exiting buses or trolleys.



State law is very specific about driving near trolleys and their tracks:



- You must *not* drive closer than eight feet of a trolley passenger step when the trolley is letting passengers on or off.
- Look for oncoming trolleys before crossing any tracks. Do *not* turn in front of a trolley if one is approaching.
- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and a trolley if the trolley is sharing the roadway.

Remember, a trolley's path is limited to the tracks. A trolley driver cannot swerve to avoid **you**.

Slow-Moving Vehicles

Most farm vehicles, construction rigs, and other slow-moving vehicles have orange warning signs attached to the back. If you approach one, reduce your speed and use caution. Treat them similar to bicyclists and pedestrians. Leave plenty of space around the vehicle if you plan to pass.

Funeral Processions

A funeral procession is two or more vehicles, including a lead or escort vehicle, traveling during daylight hours with the body or cremated remains of a deceased person. The rules for operating in and around a funeral procession are set by M.G.L. Ch. 85, Section 14A.

Funeral processions have the right-of-way at intersections, with the EXCEPTION that they must yield to emergency vehicles with flashing lights or sirens or when directed by law enforcement. If the lead vehicle in a funeral procession (which may be a hearse or a police vehicle) legally drives through an intersection, all vehicles in the procession may also drive through the intersection, even if a traffic light changes or there is a stop sign.

If driving as part of a funeral procession, you must:

- Drive carefully at all times. You may follow the vehicle ahead as closely as is safe.
- Watch out for pedestrians or other vehicles when entering an intersection. As long as it is safe to do so, you may follow the lead vehicle through an intersection, regardless of a traffic light or stop sign.
- Not drive faster than 55 MPH on a highway with a speed limit of 55 MPH or higher. You must also not go more than 5 MPH slower than the speed limit on any other public way.
- Have your headlights and taillights turned on.
- Have your hazard lights on, if you are the first or last vehicle in the procession.

If your vehicle is not part of the funeral procession:

- You may not drive between procession vehicles unless directed by law enforcement or you are operating an emergency vehicle with siren and flashing lights turned on.
- You may not join the procession.
- You may not pass a procession on a multiple lane highway on the procession's right, unless the procession is in the far left lane.

- You may not cross an intersection, even if you have a green light while a funeral procession is passing through a red light, unless you can do so without crossing the path of the procession.

A vehicle owned by a funeral home or a funeral home director may display a flashing purple light (but no other color) when operated by the owner or an employee or contractor of the funeral home during a funeral procession.

Road Workers and Repair Crews

Nationally in 2017, 799 people were killed in crashes that happened in work zones.

**ROAD WORK
NEXT 5 MILES**

Although road construction and maintenance sites are often well posted with warning signs, you must take extra care to ensure the safety of anyone working on a roadway. Orange warning signs and work equipment usually mean that people are on foot nearby. Follow road work signs carefully, and stay alert. Look for sudden changes in road direction or condition. Be prepared to stop. **If you are cited for speeding in a “work area”, the fine will be doubled.**

Animals and Horse-Drawn Vehicles

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



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

The law applies to horses, cows, and any other draft animals.

In rural areas, take extra care when passing hay rides. These are usually animal drawn and full of passengers.

Parking

Stopping and parking your motor vehicle is regulated. It is important to ensure safety and a smooth traffic flow. You should practice parking maneuvers and know the parking laws.

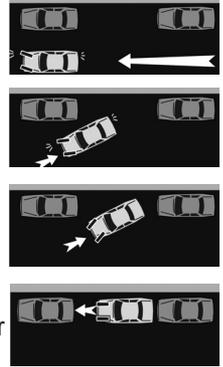
Here are some general rules about stopping and parking:

- You must not create a traffic hazard while parking or while your vehicle is stopped.
- You must always make sure that you leave at least a 12-foot wide, clear roadway for traffic to pass.
- When you leave your vehicle by itself, state law requires you to stop the motor, set the brake, make sure the ignition is locked, remove your key, and lock the door.

- When you pull away from the curb, you must wait for vehicles in the travel lane to pass. You must then signal that you are pulling out and move slowly into traffic.

Parallel Parking

1. Choose a space that is long enough for your vehicle. Make sure parking is legal.
2. Pull up alongside the vehicle in front of the space. Leave about two or three feet between your vehicle and the parked one. Position your vehicle so that your rear bumper or front seats line up with the rear bumper or front seats of the other vehicle.
3. Look behind you *both* ways to check for pedestrians and other traffic.
4. Slowly back up and turn the steering wheel all the way toward the curb. Rest your foot lightly on the brake. Look directly out your rear window. Do *not* use your mirrors.
5. When your front passes the parked vehicle's rear bumper, turn your steering wheel the opposite way and continue backing up. Do not hit the vehicle behind you.
6. When you are back far enough, straighten your wheels and pull forward. Make sure you keep enough space in front of and behind you so that other vehicles can get out.

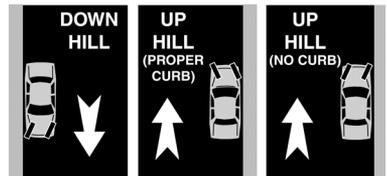


The steps in parallel parking

Parking on Hills

Always set your parking brake and leave your vehicle in gear when parking on a hill if you have a manual transmission. If you have an automatic transmission, set your parking brake and shift into park. You must turn your front wheels in the proper direction to stop it from rolling downhill if the brake fails.

- **No Curb** — Turn your wheels *inward*, toward the edge of the road.
- **Uphill Against a Curb** — Turn your wheels *outward*, toward the travel lane.
- **Downhill Against a Curb** — Turn your wheels *inward*, toward the curb.



Parking Regulations

Parking regulations are generally determined by state law and enforced by local cities and towns. When these regulations are adopted by municipalities, they are often, but not always, similar to the state regulations. If you park in a business or residential district, your vehicle must be no more than 12 inches from the curb. The only exception is if angled parking is allowed. Parking spaces are often marked by white road lines. You must park your vehicle between these lines. You may not take part of two spaces. In Massachusetts, you may *not* park your vehicle in certain places.

- In a zone posted with a NO PARKING, NO STANDING, or NO STOPPING sign
- In a bicycle lane

- In a bus stop (the penalty for parking in a posted bus stop is \$100)
- In a taxi stand
- In a zone and at a time posted for street cleaning
- In a posted loading zone
- Within 20 feet of an intersection
- In a crosswalk, in front of a driveway, or in front of a handicap-access ramp
- In a zone posted for HP-DV parking only (unless you have disabled person plates or placards, or disabled veteran plates). The fine for a first offense is \$300. The fine for wrongful use of a disabled person or veteran plate or placard is a minimum of \$500.
- In a striped crosshatch area next to an HP-DV space, even if you have disability plates or a placard
- Within ten feet of a fire hydrant or fire lane
- On a sidewalk, curb, center traffic island, or median
- During a weather or roadway emergency
- Facing the wrong way against traffic
- On a state or an interstate highway, unless authorized
- On the Massachusetts Turnpike (fines range from \$15 - \$100)
- On a roadway in a rural area or outside a thickly settled district
- In a traffic lane next to a row of parked vehicles (“double parked”)
- To make nonemergency repairs to your vehicle

You may get a citation with a fine for violating a parking regulation. The fines for most of the violations listed above are set by city or town ordinance and will vary depending on the city or town. Unpaid parking tickets can stop you from renewing your license or vehicle registration.



Parking Meters

Many public parking spaces are operated by coin-fed meters. Rules and time limits usually apply during posted days and hours.

If you park longer than allowed or fail to pay the meter fee, you may be issued a parking citation.

Parking Permits

Many cities and towns give special parking permits to residents. Certain streets have **RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING ONLY** signs. If you do not have a permit or a special visitor’s placard, you may not park there. Contact your local city or town to find out how to get a permit.

Miscellaneous Rules of the Road

Listed below are laws that have not yet been covered. **It is illegal to...**

- Drive on a bet or wager
- Drag race
- Throw anything out of your window while driving
- Throw garbage or glass onto a roadway or onto public or private land
- Throw lighted cigarettes or anything that can cause a fire near a forest or open field
- Bypass or cut out a motor vehicle's muffler system

You must return used motor oil, transmission fluid, and other hazardous materials to the place you bought them. The garage or store that sold it to you is responsible for disposing of it.

Rules for Pedestrians

Pedestrians must remember the following rules:

- State law requires you to use a crosswalk when one is available. If an intersection has a traffic signal, press the button and wait for the **WALK** signal. Intersections with no push buttons automatically give **WALK** signals. Be patient!
- Do not cross if the signal says **DON'T WALK**.
- Before you cross a roadway, stop at the curb, look left, look right, and look left again for traffic. Do this even on a one-way street. Be alert while crossing. Be especially alert at intersections that allow motor vehicles to turn right on red.
- If you must enter the street from between parked cars, stop and look before crossing.
- You must use a sidewalk when one is available. When no sidewalk is available, you should walk on the shoulder **facing** traffic.
- Never walk along or across expressways, interstate highways, or turnpikes.
- Wear clothing with bright colors or reflective strips, especially at night.



See *Appendix E* for color images of these signs.

Laws for Bicyclists and Motorists in the Presence of Bicyclists (as amended by Chapter 525 of the Acts of 2008)

Bicyclists have the right to use all public ways in this state except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted. When riding on public ways, bicyclists must obey the same basic traffic laws and regulations that apply to motor vehicle operators. The rules for bicycles (including amendments) are listed here.

As a bicyclist: (from Chap. 85, Section 11B)

- You can use the **full lane** anywhere, anytime, and on any street (except limited access or express state highways where signs specifically prohibiting bicycles have been posted), even if there is a bike lane.
- You must bike in the same direction as traffic unless otherwise indicated by signs or markings.
- You must stop at red lights and stop signs.
- You can keep to the right when passing a motor vehicle moving in the travel lane.
- You must signal your intent by either hand to stop or turn. However, the signal does not have to be continuous or be made at all if both hands are needed for the bicycle's safe operation.
- You can ride on sidewalks outside of business districts for safety unless banned locally.
- If on a sidewalk or shared use path, you must yield to pedestrians and give an audible signal before overtaking or passing (no sirens or whistles).
- No more than two bicycles can be operated side-by-side. On a roadway with more than one lane in the direction of travel, bicyclists riding side-by-side must stay in one lane and not unnecessarily restrict a passing vehicle's ability to overtake you.
- You must maintain a safe distance from other bicyclists, especially when approaching intersections.
- You must slow down when approaching crosswalks, especially during heavy traffic.
- You must ride on or astride a permanent seat affixed to the bicycle. A passenger must also ride on a permanent seat attached to the bicycle or to a trailer towed by the bicycle.
- You cannot transport a person who is between one and four years old or who weighs 40 lbs. or less except in a "baby seat" attached to the bicycle. The person must be in a harness, be seated in an upright position, and their hands and feet must be protected from hitting the wheel spokes. A person can ride on or astride a seat on a tandem bicycle if the person can reach the pedals and handlebars. You cannot transport a child under the age of one year on a bicycle.
- A bicycle helmet approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission must be worn by a bicycle operator or passenger under 16 years old. It must be secured to the person's head when the bicycle is operated on a public way or bicycle path, unless the passenger is secured in an enclosed trailer which protects his/her head.
- You must give an audible warning (other than a siren or whistle) when necessary to ensure safe operation.
- You can park your bicycle on a way or a sidewalk, but only if it does not obstruct vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- You cannot let the bicycle be pulled by another vehicle and can only tow a bicycle trailer.
- You cannot carry any objects that would interfere with the safe operation of the bicycle and must keep one hand on the handlebars at all times.
- You must have a proper working brake system to stop from 15 MPH within 30 feet.

- From a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, you must have a white lamp in front visible from up to 500 feet and a rear facing red light or reflector visible up to 600 feet.
- From a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, you must have a reflector on each pedal or your ankles, or reflective material on yourself or on the bicycle. The reflectors must be visible up to 600 feet from all sides.
- Your handlebars cannot be set at a height above your shoulders while gripping them and you cannot extend the fork from its original manufacturer's design.
- You must report any crash involving personal injury and any crash involving property damage in excess of \$100 to the police in the municipality where it occurred.

In addition to the laws listed above, bicyclists should also do the following:

- Ride in a straight line so drivers and pedestrians know where to expect you.
- Ride at appropriate speeds on shared paths and streets. If riding on a sidewalk where it is legal, you must ride at a walking speed and yield to pedestrians.
- Put your phone away when biking. Do not text and bike.
- Yield to pedestrians. Be alert and prepared to stop for them.
- Slow down as you approach crosswalks.
- Ride outside of the "door zone" (at least three feet from parked cars) and watch for opening car doors.
- Give other bicyclists room. Pass other bicyclists on the left, not the right. Don't cut in front of other bicyclists who are stopped at an intersection.
- At intersections, assume drivers cannot see you. Slow down and try to make eye contact with the driver. Anticipate when drivers may turn. Don't try to race by a driver at an intersection. Maintain a safe speed.
- Give buses, trucks, and other large vehicles room and avoid riding next to them or passing them. They make wide turns, take time to come to a full stop, and have large blind spots. Be especially careful in the rear blind spot and don't assume the driver can see you. Never pass a moving tractor trailer on the right.
- Don't pass buses on the right. You might hit someone exiting the bus or get squeezed into the curb. If passing a bus on the left, pay attention and expect it to re-enter the lane.
- Do not wear headphones or earbuds in both ears while biking.

Wearing a proper bicycle helmet significantly reduces the risk of bicycle-related deaths and disabling injuries.

As a motorist in the presence of bicycles:

- **Do Not Cut-Off After Passing:** When passing a bicycle traveling in the same direction that is on your right, you must not return to the right until you have safely passed the overtaken bicycle. (Chap. 89, Sec. 2)
- **Do Not Make an Abrupt Turn After Passing:** When passing a bicycle near an intersection or driveway where you want to turn right, you cannot turn unless you are at a safe distance from the bicyclist and you can make the turn at a reasonable and proper speed. (Chap. 90, Sec 14)

- **Do Not Squeeze Bicycles in a Narrow Lane:** If a lane is too narrow to pass a bicycle at a safe distance, be **PATIENT** until you can safely use an adjacent lane or **WAIT** until it is safe to pass in the lane you share. (Chap. 89, Sec. 2) You should stay at least three feet away when passing.
- **Do Not Fail to Yield When Turning Left:** When turning left at an intersection or into an alley, private road, or driveway, you must yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction, including a bicycle, if it is in the intersection or close enough to be an immediate hazard. (Chap. 90, Sec 14)
- **Watch for Bicycles on Your Right:** Bicycles can legally ride to the right of motor vehicle traffic. The law says it is not a defense for a motorist causing a crash with a bicycle that the bicycle was to the right of other traffic. (Chap. 85, Sec 11B)
- **Do Not Open a Door Without First Looking:** Drivers and passengers can be fined up to \$100 for opening a vehicle door into an oncoming bicycle. (Chap. 90, Sec 14) Before opening your door, you should always check behind you to make sure that no bicyclists are approaching.
- **Be aware that bicyclists can ride two bicycles side-by-side.** However, on a road with more than one lane in the direction of travel, they must stay in one lane. (Chap. 85, Sec. 11B)
- **Be aware that bicyclists Do Not Always Have to Signal Turns!** Bicyclists must signal their intent by either hand to stop or turn. However, the signal does not have to be continuous or be made at all if both hands are needed for the bicycle's safe operation. (Chap. 85, Sec. 11B)



See Appendix E for color images of these signs.

The Danger of Open Doors to Bicyclists

Open vehicle doors pose a very serious threat to bicyclists. When opening a vehicle door, drivers and passengers should do the following:

1. Check your rear-view mirror.
2. Check your side-view mirror.
3. Open the door with your far hand (the hand farther from the door).

This is called the "Dutch Reach" method because it originated in the Netherlands. It forces your body to turn, which will better allow you to see approaching bicyclists. It also prevents the vehicle door from being opened too fast. This not only protects bicyclists, but can also prevent your door from being damaged or torn off by an approaching motor vehicle.

Bicyclists should ride at least three feet from parked cars to avoid doors, both on streets with and without bike lanes. This will keep bicyclists outside of the "door zone" and protect them from getting hit by opening vehicle doors.



The "Dutch Reach" method for opening vehicle doors.

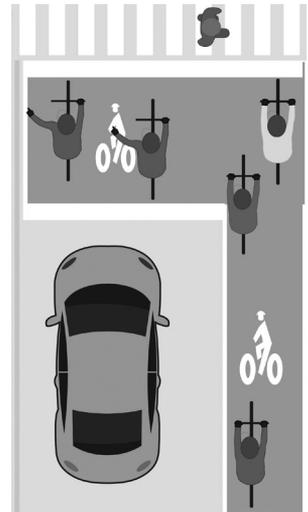
Bicycle Boxes

Bicycle boxes are pavement markings that are installed at intersections to allow bicyclists a safe way to turn when approaching a red light. Bicycle boxes are green and have an image of a bicyclist. At intersections, they are painted on the pavement before the crosswalk and they cover the entire travel lane.

Drivers must stop behind the bicycle box (even when it's empty) and wait for a green light.

Bicyclists who are turning left should stop in the bicycle box, move to the left side of the box, signal the turn, and wait for the green light. Bicyclists traveling straight or turning right should stay to the right in the bicycle box, in a staggered formation, and wait for the green light.

Bicycle boxes can also be used by bicyclists to make a two-stage left turn. A two-stage left turn allows bicyclists to make a left turn in two separate steps, rather than crossing multiple lanes of traffic:



Example of a bicycle box

Step 1: Cross straight through the intersection on the green light and stop in the bicycle box for the road you are turning onto.

Step 2: Wait for the green light and go straight through the intersection.

Separated Bicycle Lanes

Separated bicycle lanes, also know as cycle tracks and protected bike lanes, physically separate bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic. Where bicycle lanes cross an intersection, they are often indicated by green pavement with an image of a bicyclist. Bicycle lanes are not intended for pedestrians, who must stay on the sidewalk.

At intersections, drivers must stop at the stop line to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross safely. When turning right, drivers must yield to pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing.

Bicyclists must ride in the proper direction on bicycle lanes. At intersections, bicyclists should ride in the lane through the intersection, while watching for turning vehicles.

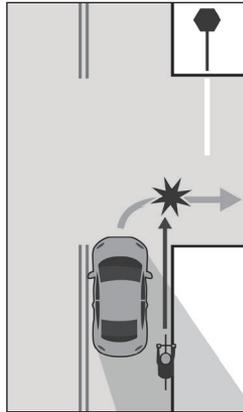
Bicyclists must yield to crossing pedestrians.

Common Bicycle Crash Scenarios

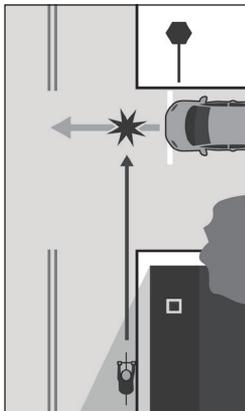
The images below show common crash scenarios between motor vehicles and bicyclists. The motor vehicle is at fault in all of these crashes and drivers must always be alert for bicycles that may be hidden by other vehicles or buildings. Drivers must also be careful to not underestimate a bicyclist's speed or the amount of space needed to pass. In all of these scenarios, bicyclists can increase their visibility and reduce the risk of a crash by riding farther left in the lane.



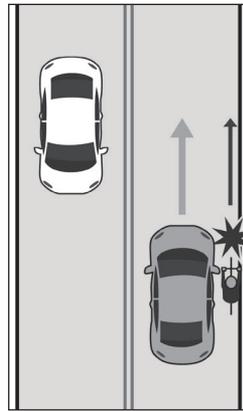
Left Cross



Right Hook



Drive Out



Sideswipe