

Chapter 11: Sharing the Road



CHAPTER ELEVEN

SHARING THE ROAD

Sharing the Road

Note: Practice quizzes are available only for those sections of the manual covering rules of the road (Chapters 4 through 11 and Road Signs).

As a driver, you must learn to safely share the road with a variety of other users. These include but are not limited to large vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, pedestrians, bicyclists, in-line skaters, roller skaters, skateboarders, slow-moving vehicles, non-motorized scooters, and horseback riders. You should know how to safely manage the problems they can present and understand the special rules they must obey.

Pedestrians and Skateboarders

Pedestrians and skateboarders are at high risk in traffic. The law requires you to be extra careful to avoid a collision with them.

Look out for children near schools, bus stops, playgrounds, parks, and ice cream trucks.

When you back up your car or truck look through your back window for pedestrians. Do not rely only on mirrors when children are near. Before you back into a driveway, or out of it, get out of the vehicle and check behind your vehicle.

Pedestrians are supposed to walk on the side of the road and face the traffic in the lane nearest them. When you make a right turn watch for pedestrians on your right. When you make a left turn, watch for pedestrians on the other side of the road on your left.

Pedestrians and skateboarders who are legally crossing the road or street at marked or unmarked crossings, like an intersection, always have the right-of-way. You must decrease your speed or, if necessary, come to a complete stop. The elderly and persons with disabilities can require additional time to complete their crossings.

A special right-of-way law allows blind pedestrians to go across the road with a guide dog or a white or metal cane. You must always give them the right-of-way when they are trying to cross at a marked or unmarked crosswalk, even if the traffic signals or other right-of-way rules are not in their favor.

Remember to move your eyes as you drive. Look to either side every few seconds to help you spot pedestrians near or approaching the roadway.

The law requires pedestrians and skateboarders to:

- Obey traffic and pedestrian signals, traffic officers, and official signs.
- Use the sidewalk when available or face traffic as they walk, as far from the near traffic lane as possible.
- Never stand in the road to hitchhike or conduct business with motorists.

Bicyclists and In-Line Skaters

Bicyclists and in-line skaters have the right to share the road and travel in the same direction as motor vehicles. They are often hard to see in traffic and have no protection from a traffic crash. Check your "blind spots" before you make a turn, parallel park, open a door or leave a curb. Do not depend only on your mirrors - turn your head to look for bicyclists and skaters and scooter operators that may be next to you or approaching.

Give bicyclists and in-line skaters room when you drive. Reduce speed as you pass them. Air pressure from a vehicle that passes them quickly can send them off balance.

Be aware that the bicyclist or in-line skater near or in front of you can react to road hazards like a motorcyclist would with sudden changes of speed, direction or lane position.

The rules of the road and right-of-way apply to and protect these and other highway users. You must yield the right-of-way to them just as you would to another vehicle. And they must obey the rules of the road just as motor vehicle drivers do.

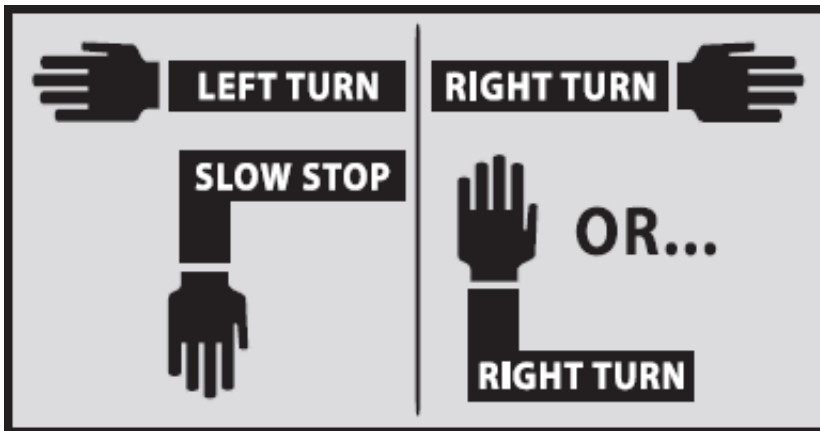
Bicyclists and in-line skaters must:

- Ride in a bicycle lane, if available. Where there is none, they must remain near the right curb or edge of the road or on a right shoulder of the road, to prevent interference with other traffic. When they prepare for a left turn or must move left to avoid hazards, cyclists do not have to remain to the right.
- Come to a full stop before they enter a roadway from a driveway, an alley or over a curb.
- Never travel with more than two side-by-side in a single lane.
- Never ride on a sidewalk if it is prohibited by local laws.

Bicyclists and their passengers and in-line skaters, ages 1 through 13, must wear an approved helmet. Adults must obey any local laws or regulations about helmet use.

Bicyclists also must:

- Signal turns, lane changes and stops through the use of the hand signals shown. A bicyclist can signal a right turn when they extend the right arm straight out to the right.



Left turn - left arm fully extended to left; Stop - left arm extended and bent down at elbow;
 Right turn - right arm fully extended to right or left arm extended and bent up at elbow

- Never carry an infant under a year old as a passenger. It is against the law. Child passengers ages 1 - 4 years old must ride in attached bicycle safety seats.
- Never carry a passenger unless the bicycle has a passenger seat.
- Keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times and do not carry any item which prevents correct control of the bicycle.
- Report any bicycle crash that causes death or serious injury must to DMV within 10 days of the incident. Bicycle accident report forms (MV-104C) are available at any motor vehicle office.

A bicycle driven on public highways must have adequate brakes and a horn or bell that can be heard at least 100 feet (30 m) away. A bicycle used at night must have a headlight visible from at least 500 feet (150 m) ahead and a red taillight visible from at least 300 feet (90 m) behind. One of these lights must be visible from at least 200 feet (60 m) away on each side. A bicycle sold by a dealer must have wide-angle, spoke-mounted reflectors or reflective tires, a wide-angle rear reflector and pedal reflectors.

Motorcyclists

As a driver, you share the road with a lot of other motorists – not all of which are driving cars or trucks. Motorcycles are common on New York roads. As a driver, you are responsible to be aware of motorcycles and understand how to safely share the road with them.

Motorcycles (which include scooters and mopeds) come in a variety of shapes and sizes. New York State Law defines a motorcycle as “Every 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 excluding a tractor.” Most motorcycles you’ll see have either two or three wheels. Examples include (but are not limited to Cruisers, Standards, Dual-sport, Off-road, Sport bikes, Tourers, Mopeds, and Scooters):



Motorcyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of other vehicles, and must follow the same traffic laws as pedestrians, bicyclists and skaters. Though you may often see motorcycles on the roads in the spring, summer, or fall – you can encounter motorcycles anytime and anywhere. Because we don’t see them all year, we may not actively think about them.

When there is a crash involving a motorcycle and another vehicle, the rider (and passenger) have a much higher chance of being seriously hurt or killed than the driver (and passengers) of the other vehicle. Though motorcyclists are required to wear approved helmets and goggles or a face shield, motorcycles themselves do not offer the rider the protections that you have with other types of vehicles. For example, motorcycles don’t protect the rider with a frame around the rider.

Many drivers who are involved in a crash with a motorcyclist report that they did not see the motorcycle. The question is “why not?”

There are several factors that make motorcyclists less visible. They include:

- Motorcycles, when compared to other highway users, are smaller. No matter from which direction you view a motorcycle (front, back, or side), you’ll find they are smaller than most other highway users.
- Motorcycles may appear to move faster than other vehicles. A motorcycle’s smaller size makes it seem much farther away, and makes it difficult to judge how far away they are or how fast they are going.

- Motorcycles may not take up the entire lane because they are not as wide as other vehicles, but an experienced rider may move around within a lane to avoid obstacles, or to help them see better. In addition to using the full lane, two motorcyclists are allowed to ride side-by-side in a single lane, but a motorcyclist cannot pass or share a lane with another motor vehicle that is not a motorcycle. If you are overtaking a car/SUV/truck, you might not have seen the motorcycle in front of that vehicle until you're already in the passing lane. The same holds true if you are entering an expressway. You may not see a motorcycle that is driving in the left portion of the lane you intend to merge into.
- Motorcycle lighting is different, and often less obvious, than other vehicles:
 - Headlights and taillights on motorcycles must be illuminated when driving. But, with so many vehicles equipped with daytime running lights (i.e. headlights that are always on – even in daylight), motorcycle headlights don't stand out.
 - It is harder to see the brake lights. Tail lights on a motorcycle are generally smaller in size than those on other vehicles, and because motorcycle tail lights are always on, the brake lights don't always stand out.
 - Motorcycles don't have a tail light at eye level. Most cars and trucks are equipped with a "Center High Mount Stop Light" (CHMSL) which is designed to be at, or close to, eye level. Most motorcycle brake lights are mounted lower than eye level, which makes them less obvious to many motorists.
 - Turn signals on motorcycles are often close to the headlight or taillights, which can make them more difficult to see. Additionally, on most motorcycles, the directional signal does not turn off automatically after a turn, so their turn signal may be on inadvertently when the motorcyclist has no intention of turning.

Intersections can be especially dangerous for motorcycles. It's human nature to notice large vehicles first. Motorcycles are smaller than other vehicles, and they may seem to "blend in." Numbers help tell the story:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that, in 2015, 41 percent of fatal motorcycle crashes in the US occurred with "the other vehicle turning left while the motorcycles were going straight, passing, or overtaking other vehicles."
- In 2014, there were 4,750 reported motorcycle crashes in New York State. 2,546 of these crashes involved another vehicle. That is 53.6% of the reported crashes.

Another factor is that drivers may not see motorcycles simply because they don't look for motorcycles. It's human nature to look for something specific. A new driver may be told to look for cars (and trucks) before going through an intersection – and that is precisely what the driver will look for. All drivers need to train themselves to look for a multitude of hazards (including – BUT NOT LIMITED TO - trucks, buses, bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcycles).

Because motorcyclists must take additional precautions when they come upon special highway surfaces, you should know what a motorcyclist may do:

- The motorcyclist may quickly change speed or lane position to avoid loose gravel, debris, seams or grooves in the pavement, sewer or access covers or small animals.
- When approaching a railroad crossing, a motorcyclist may decrease speed and rise off the seat to

cushion the rough crossing and change direction to go across the tracks at a right angle.

- On steel deck bridges the motorcyclist may move to the center of the lane to adjust for the surface that is not even. Stay a good distance behind a motorcyclist in this situation.

Drivers need to adjust how they drive around motorcycles.

- Don't tailgate. Motorcycles can stop in a shorter distance than cars – under the right conditions. Also, it may be more difficult to notice they are slowing or stopping.
- If it is raining, or dark, give motorcycles even more space.

Be careful when you pass a motorcyclist. Like bicycles, the air pressure created by vehicles as they quickly pass by can affect motorcycles.

Moped Operators

Limited use motorcycles, often called mopeds, are low speed, two or three-wheeled vehicles for limited use on public highways. There are three different classes of mopeds based on maximum performance speed. The chart below describes the requirements for moped operation.

Class B and C mopeds can be driven only in the right lane of traffic, as far to the right as possible. Class A mopeds are allowed to drive in any lane and any section of a lane. Mopeds are not permitted on expressways or other controlled access highways unless posted signs permit it.

When you approach a moped, use the same precautions you would when you approach a bicyclist.

GUIDE TO LIMITED USE MOTORCYCLE (MOPEDS) OPERATION

REQUIREMENT	CLASS A	CLASS B	CLASS C
Top speed range mph (km/h)	31 to 40 (Over 48 to 64)	21 to 30 (32 to 48)	20 or less (32 or less)
Type of license or learner's permit required	4 M	ANY CLASS 4	ANY CLASS 4
Registration required	YES (A Plate)	YES (B Plate)	YES (C Plate)
Headlight to be on when operating	YES	YES	YES
Helmet & eye protection required when operating	YES	YES	Recommended
Where operation is permitted	Any Traffic Lane & Shoulder	Right Hand Lane or Shoulder 1	Right Hand Lane or Shoulder 1
Mandatory insurance required	YES	YES	Recommended 2
Safety responsibility 3 applies	YES	YES	YES
Annual inspection required	YES	Recommended	Recommended
Title required	NO	NO	NO

- 1** Except when making a left hand turn.
- 2** If a Class C limited use motorcycle is used in a rental business, insurance is mandatory.
- 3** Safety responsibility is the requirement to pay for or post security for damage or personal injury you may cause in traffic crash.
- 4** Usual learner's permit and junior license restrictions apply.
- 5** Motorcyclists must wear approved motorcycle helmets, as defined by USDOT federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS 218). To improve the motorcyclist's visibility, the DMV recommends that helmets have at least four square inches of reflective material on both sides. Motorcyclists must also wear approved eye protection, even if the motorcycle is equipped with a windshield. Prescription or made-to-order safety glasses may be used if the user can present written certification that they meet DMV standards. The eye protection must be manufactured in conformity with the regulations issued by the Vehicle Equipment Safety Commission (VESC-8).

Large Vehicles

In more than 60 percent of all fatal crashes involving cars and big trucks, the car driver, not the truck driver, contributes to the cause of the traffic crash. Four out of five times, it is the car driver who is killed.

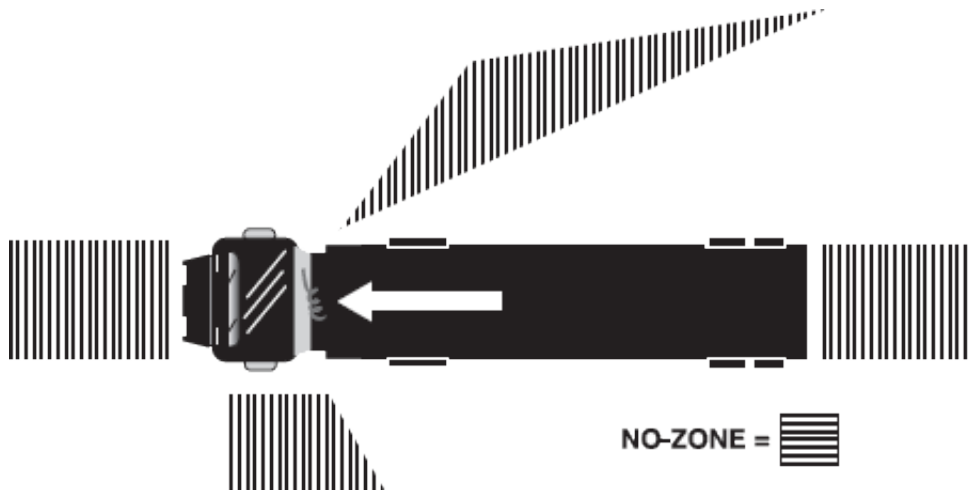
Many of these crashes could be prevented if motorists know about truck (and bus) limitations and how to steer free from situations that are unsafe and involve large vehicles.

Large trucks, recreational vehicles and buses are not big cars. The bigger they are:

- The bigger their blind spots,
- The longer it takes them to stop,
- The more room they need to maneuver,
- The longer it takes for an auto to pass them.

Blind Spots

Different from cars, large vehicles have deep blind spots directly behind them. They also have much larger blind spots on both sides than cars do. Tractors with long hoods can have a blind spot of 20 feet in front of the vehicle. You should avoid these "no zones."



Side Blind Spots

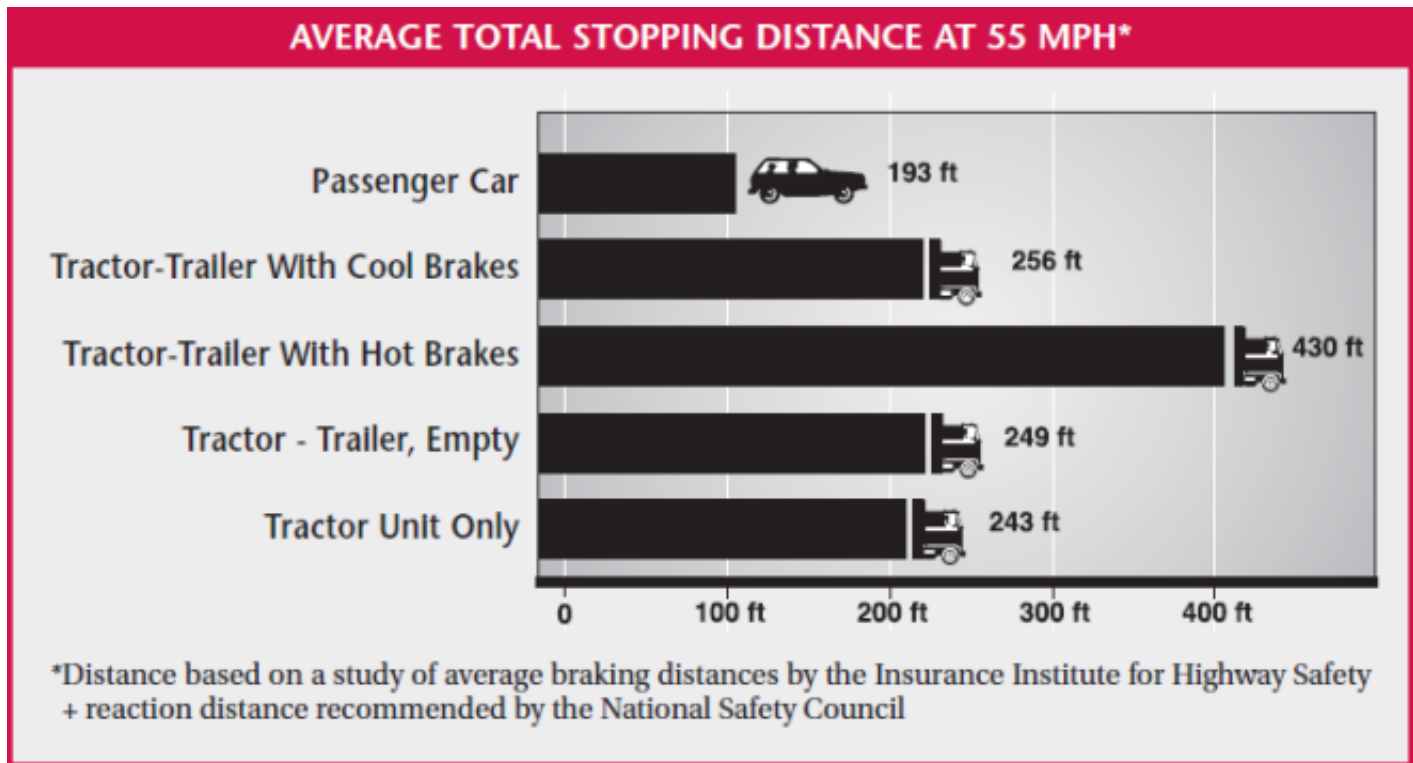
Large vehicles have much larger blind spots on both sides. If you drive in these blind spots, you cannot be seen by the driver. Even if the driver knows you are there, if you remain next to the vehicle it can make it difficult for the driver to avoid a dangerous situation.

Blind Spots in Back

If you remain in the back blind spot of a large vehicle, you increase the chance of a crash. The other driver cannot see your car, and your view of other traffic will be blocked.

Distance to Stop

Large vehicles take much longer to stop than smaller vehicles that travel at the same speed. For tractor trailers, the difference comes from brake delay. Air brakes transmit brake power from the tractor to the trailer and this can add many feet to the distance it takes to stop. Leave plenty of space between your car and the truck. If you are in front of a truck, indicate your intention to turn or change lanes early. Do not make sudden moves.



Ability to Maneuver

Large vehicles are not as maneuverable as cars. They take longer to stop and to accelerate and they often need to move wide to make their turns.

You can reduce the chance of a collision with a large vehicle if you:

- Do not cut abruptly in front of the large vehicle; when you exit, take a few additional seconds to decrease speed and exit behind it; when you pass do not pull in front of it unless you can see the whole front of the vehicle in your mirror.
- Pay close attention to the turn signals. Because trucks make wide right turns, they move to the left before they turn right. Look at the turn signals.
- Do not delay near a large vehicle. You may not be visible to the driver in the wide area the truck needs for making a turn.

When You Pass

When you pass a large vehicle, it takes a longer time and requires more space than when you pass a car. On a two-way road, leave more time and space when you pass a large vehicle. Make sure you can see the whole front of the vehicle before you return to your lane after you pass. A large vehicle normally loses speed on a grade or a hill. Look far ahead when you drive. If you need to pass a large vehicle, be prepared and know when you are near a grade that can cause the other vehicle to decrease speed. Also, as your own vehicle

begins a downward grade, the speed of the other vehicle can increase significantly. This will increase the time it takes you to pass it.

When a Truck is Backing up

Never pass close behind a large vehicle that is backing up. Often a truck driver has to block a road to back into an area to load or unload goods. Be patient!

It is far better to wait until the large vehicle has completed its backup maneuver than to try to pass. If you try to pass in this situation, it is likely that you will enter one of the blind spots. This could make your vehicle invisible to the driver and increase the risk of a traffic crash.

When You Approach a Truck

Do not underestimate the size and speed of an approaching tractor-trailer or other large vehicle. Its larger size will often make it appear to move at a slower speed than it really is. Also, from a distance it may not appear to be as large as it really is. The other vehicle will often reach you before you expect! When you drive on a two way highway, it is often better to move as far to the right as possible to make sure your vehicle will not be hit by an approaching tractor-trailer or other large vehicle.

When You Stop behind a Truck

Always leave space when you stop in back of a truck or bus at a traffic light or stop sign, especially when you face up a hill. The truck or bus could stop or move backward slightly when it starts. If you leave enough room between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead, you usually can pull away from behind and go around it.

Slow Moving Vehicles

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

All-Terrain Vehicles and Snowmobiles

State law allows all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles to legally go across many state highways and local roadways. Before they cross, they must come to a stop and yield to traffic. They must go across at a 90-degree angle to the road surface.

Horseback Riders

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

The law requires you to be careful when you approach a horse being ridden or walked along a road. You must drive at an acceptable speed and at an acceptable distance away from the horse. It is illegal to sound your horn when you approach or pass a horse.

Questions

Before you go on to Chapter 12, make sure you can answer these questions:

- How do the blind spots around a large commercial vehicle differ from the blind spots around a car?
- How does the stopping distance of a large vehicle with air brakes compare with the stopping distance of a car?
- After you pass a large vehicle, what should you make sure of before you return to the lane of the large vehicle?
- What is the best method to follow when you approach a large vehicle that is in reverse as it moves toward a loading area?
- When children are close, what should you do before you back out of a driveway?
- How can you identify a blind pedestrian to whom you must yield the right of way?
- Where must a pedestrian walk when there are no sidewalks?
- How must you approach a bicyclist?
- Must a bicyclist obey traffic laws and signs?
- Where there is no bicycle lane, where on the road must a bicyclist ride?
- What equipment must a bicycle have when used at night?
- What can a driver do to be more aware of motorcyclists?
- What factors contribute to drivers not being aware of motorcycles?
- Why are motorcycles harder to see?
- Why is it important for a motorist to be aware of motorcycles?

- May three motorcyclists ride side-by-side in a single lane?
- What is the slow-moving vehicle symbol?
- Where are you likely to find an ATV, snowmobile, or horse rider?

[Chapter 11 Quiz](#)