

## 3. Driving Responsibly

### Speed

A safe speed allows you to stop safely in emergency situations. Unless otherwise posted, the maximum speed limit is 90 km/h in rural areas and 50 km/h in urban areas. Poor driving conditions will require you to drive more slowly.

Driving safely can also mean not driving too slowly. You should not drive at such a slow speed that you hold back or block the normal and reasonable flow of traffic. At no time should you exceed the posted maximum speed limit.

### Following Safely

You are responsible for maintaining a safe following distance — one which provides you with sufficient time to stop in an emergency.

Use a four-second following distance when following under ideal driving conditions — **allow more time under adverse conditions.**



#### Calculating safe following distance:

1. The rear of the vehicle ahead has just passed the sign you have decided to use as your marker. Begin counting.
2. Count: One thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three.
3. Count: One thousand and four (four seconds). If it takes less than four seconds to reach the front of your vehicle to the marker, you are too close. Four seconds is correct. The safety factor is even greater if it takes more than four seconds.

If you are being followed too closely, slow down gradually to give the driver behind you time to react. This can reduce your chances of being struck from behind should you need to stop.

## Passing

Care must be taken when passing because it is extremely difficult to judge the speed of approaching vehicles. You might think you have plenty of time and distance to pass, but don't forget you are closing the gap between you and the approaching vehicle at twice your own rate of speed — and sometimes by more than that.

On highways, beware of vehicles parked on the opposite side, as they may suddenly pull out onto the highway. It is illegal to exceed the speed limit when passing.

The basic steps for passing are:

1. Check ahead for oncoming vehicles.
2. Check your side and rearview mirrors for vehicles approaching from behind.
3. Signal.
4. Check the blind spot on your left for vehicles beside you.
5. Check again that the road is clear before passing.

Once the vehicle you have passed is visible in your rearview mirror, check your blind spot on the right, signal to the right, and return to the proper lane.

When being passed, slow down and move as close as possible to the right side of the road.

### **Drivers must be aware of wind turbulence caused by passing semi-trailer trucks or other large motor vehicles.**

#### **You must never pass:**

- By driving off the road (e.g., on the shoulder).
- Where a vehicle is slowing or has stopped to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian or other vehicle.
- In a school area within 15 minutes of the opening or closing of morning and afternoon classes, or while children are near a school or playground.
- On the left side of the road if it is not sufficiently clear ahead.
- Where highway construction is taking place.

#### **Passing on the right is permitted only:**

- When overtaking a vehicle making a left turn.
- On one-way streets.
- On streets with marked lanes.

## No-Zone Around Large Vehicles

Big trucks have big blind spots — and to stay safe, you should avoid them. The No-Zone refers to blind spot areas around big trucks, where collisions are more likely to occur.

### Rear

Trucks have deep rear blind spots. A truck driver can't see you if you're in this No-Zone — especially if you're tailgating. If you can't see the truck mirrors, the driver can't see you. Stay well back of big trucks to avoid a rear-end collision.

### Side

Trucks have large blind spots on both sides. If you stay in these blind spots, that can mean trouble if the truck driver decides to change lanes.

### Front

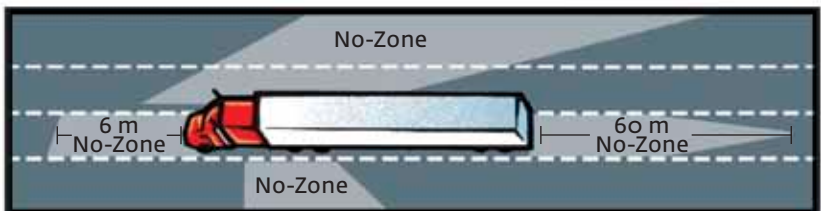
Truck drivers sit up high, and the hood of the cab obscures part of the road ahead. When you pass a big truck, make sure you can see the entire truck cab in your rear-view mirror before pulling in front. When cars cut in too soon, then abruptly slow down, truck drivers are forced to react with little time or room to spare.

### Backing

Never pass close behind a truck that is preparing to back up or is in the process of backing up. Most trailers are 2½ metres wide, and completely hide objects behind them.

### Wide Turns

Truck drivers must sometimes swing wide to the left in order to make a right turn. They can't see cars directly behind or beside them. If you cut in between the truck and the right curb, you might cause a collision.



## Entering and Leaving an Expressway

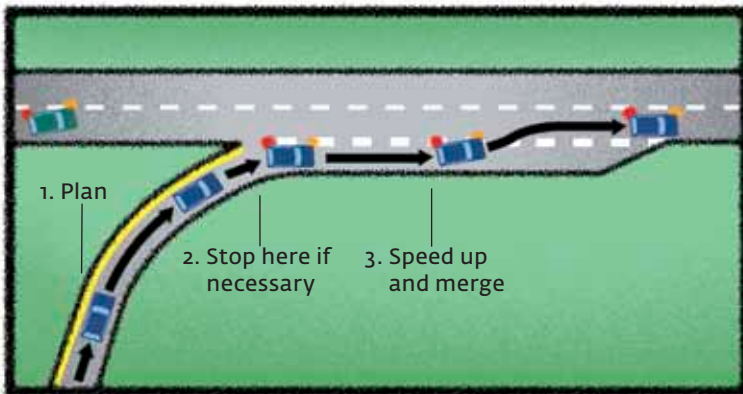
### Entering

Rear-end collisions are the leading type of accidents at entrances to expressways. Not only do you face the possibility of being rear-ended by traffic behind you in the entrance lane or on the expressway, you might rear-end a vehicle while your attention is focused on traffic in the expressway. The following advice will help minimize the risk of rear-end collisions:

1. As you enter the entrance lane, adjust your speed to match traffic and keep plenty of space between you and the vehicle ahead, so that you and the vehicle behind you will have more time and distance to stop in an emergency.
2. Check expressway traffic to determine if it will be necessary for you to slow down or stop at the point immediately before the entrance of the merge lane. (See illustration.) Keep in mind that the decision could be made for you by the driver immediately ahead of you.

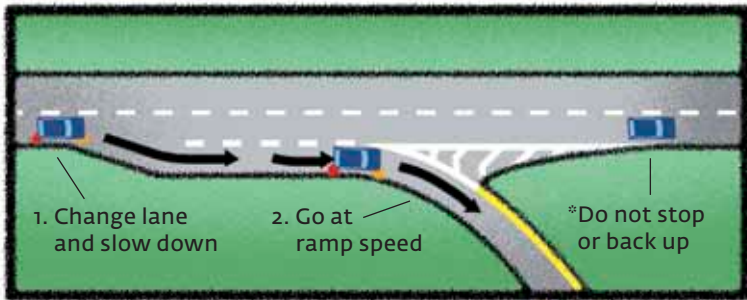
If you're not entirely sure if you'll have to slow down or stop, touch your brakes lightly to alert drivers behind that you may have to do so. The place to stop is just before the entrance of the merge lane.

3. Use the merge lane to match your speed with expressway traffic, so as to merge without having to stop. If you stop at the end of the entrance lane, you sharply increase the risk of being struck from behind.



## Leaving

1. Give yourself plenty of time to move over to the lane closest to the exit.  
(Follow the instructions given earlier for making lane changes.)
2. Maintain your speed until you are completely in the exit ramp, and then slow down smoothly to whatever speed is posted or to the prevailing speed in the exit ramp (whichever is slower).



\*If you pass your exit on an expressway, **never stop to back up**. Continue on to the next exit.

## Right-of-Way

### Uncontrolled Intersections

When two vehicles approach an intersection with no traffic signals or signs, both must slow down. The vehicle on the left must always yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right. Nevertheless, the driver with the “right-of-way” must still exercise proper care and attention to avoid a collision.

### Private Entrances to Public Thoroughfares

When entering a street, Provincial Road or Provincial Trunk Highway from a private road, lane, driveway or parking lot, you must stop before crossing the sidewalk and yield the right-of-way to all pedestrians and traffic. Proceed when safe.

### Funeral Processions

Drivers of vehicles in a funeral procession with lighted headlights and following a lead car may, if traffic conditions and local bylaws permit, go through a red light or stop sign with caution. The drivers of all other vehicles must yield the right-of-way to the procession.

The lead car in the funeral procession may be equipped with a flashing purple light.

## Emergency Vehicles, Tow Trucks and Other Designated Vehicles

Motorists can be fined under provisions of *The Highway Traffic Act* for failing to use caution when passing emergency or designated vehicles working at roadside.

An emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, will sound an alarm and use flashing lights. The alarm may be a horn, gong, bell or siren. The lights may consist of any of the following: a flashing red light, flashing red and blue lights or alternating flashing headlights.

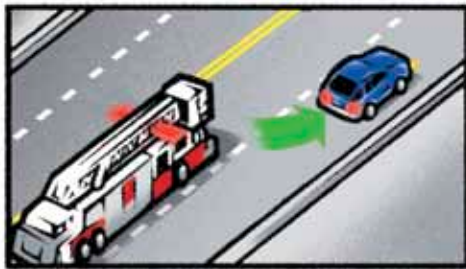
When an emergency vehicle (ambulance, fire or police), sounding an alarm and flashing lights, is approaching from any direction you must yield right-of-way by:

- Immediately moving clear of an intersection if you are stopped for a red light or stop sign. If blocking the path of an emergency vehicle, you must proceed through a red light or stop sign with caution, to clear the way.
- Driving as closely as possible to the right curb or edge of roadway.
- Remaining stopped at the edge of the road until the emergency vehicles have passed.

**Note:** On one-way streets, pull right or left to the nearest curb so as not to block the emergency vehicle.

When passing a stopped emergency vehicle you must slow down and move safely as far away from the emergency vehicles and workers as possible.

Designated vehicles include tow trucks and other roadside assistance vehicles and vehicles used by government enforcement officers. When these vehicles are working at roadside with their warning lights activated, motorists must slow down and pass only if it is safe to do so. On multi-lane roadways, drivers must also move to a lane farther away from the vehicle working at roadside, provided it is safe to do so.



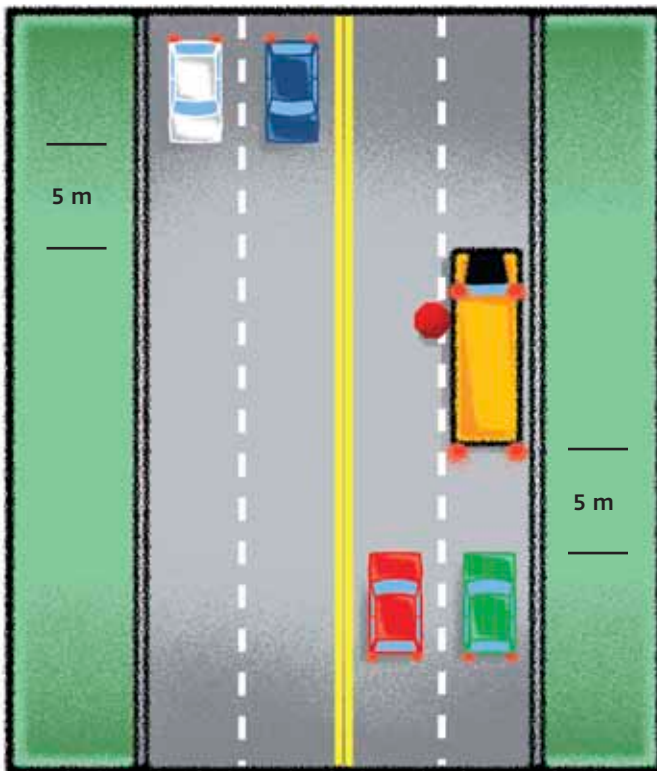
Pull over and stop for emergency vehicles.

## School Buses

Whenever you approach a school bus with flashing lights or other warning device, whether you are approaching it from the front or rear, you must stop at least five metres from the bus and remain stopped until the signal is turned off or the bus starts moving again.

A school bus with flashing amber lights means it is about to stop. You must prepare to stop.

You need not stop when approaching a school bus from the opposite direction of a divided highway, providing there is a physical separation such as a median between the two roads. However, you must slow down and watch out for children. **A double solid line is not a physical separation.**



You must stop your vehicle not less than five metres from the bus when approaching from either direction.

## Transit Buses

A number of collisions involving transit buses result from vehicles rear-ending the bus, either in the bus stop location, or at intersections. Be aware of their travel and maintain a safe following/stopping distance.

Buses do not necessarily stop at all bus stops. Some stops are designated for special routes such as express and sporting events. If a stop is coming up, do not assume the bus is going to stop.



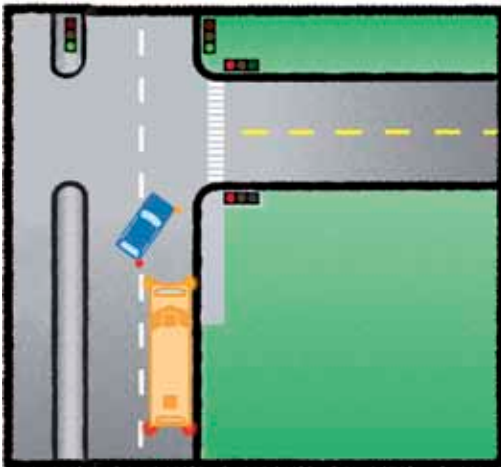
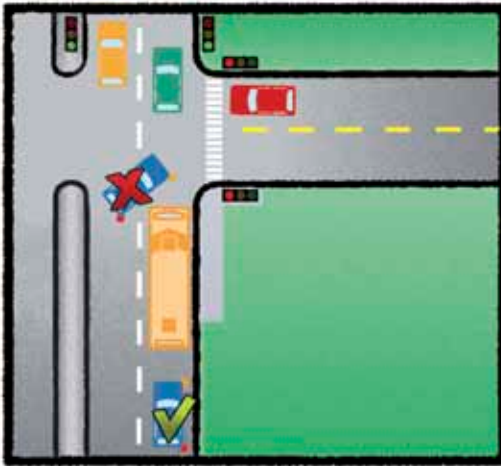
Transit buses display a decal on the rear of the buses requesting motorists to “Please Yield”. A bus operating on the street will be moving around parked vehicles or out of bus bays. If a transit bus is signaling its intention to change lanes to the left, a motorist can increase the safety of this manoeuvre by allowing sufficient time and space for the bus to enter the lane. At times, a bus may be required to change multiple lanes in order to move from a right hand curb lane to a left hand turn storage lane.

Buses are wider than most cars and light trucks, and consequently, they occupy more roadway space. Buses operate on a wide variety of street types, including residential streets and busy downtown streets. When exiting a parked vehicle, shoulder check before opening your door to avoid contacting a passing bus or other large vehicle.

### Transit Bus Situation #1

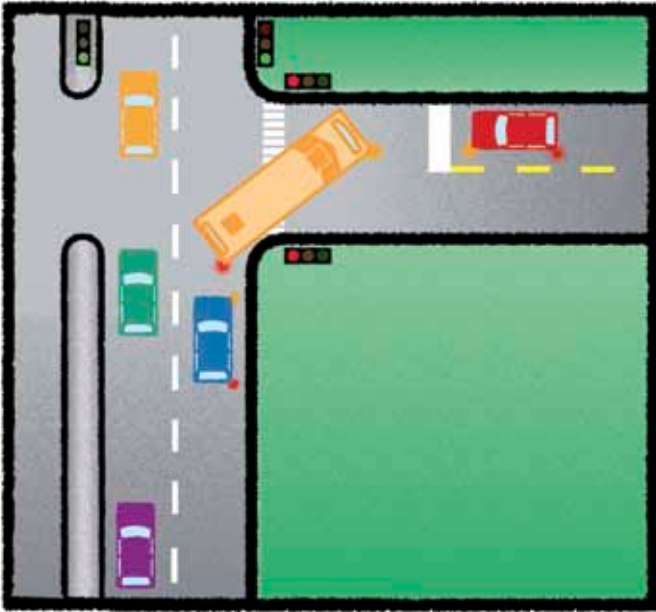
When making a right turn, it must be done in the extreme right lane. Making a right turn from the second lane in front of a transit bus not only places you at risk of being struck if the bus pulls away, but is also illegal. Pull behind and wait until the bus completes loading, unloading and pulls away from the stop or intersection.

If the bus has its hazard lights activated and is sitting a short distance from the intersection, communicate your intentions by signaling and tapping your horn prior to pulling around the front of the bus.



### Transit Bus Situation #2

There are numerous locations where the stop line of an intersection is set back farther than normal from the crosswalk. This is to accommodate large vehicles such as trucks and transit buses to be able to physically negotiate the turn.



### Transit Bus Situation #3

At many times, there may be passengers standing on transit buses.

Conducting a sudden, unexpected manoeuvre in front of a bus, such as a lane change or pulling out in front, may force the bus to stop or brake suddenly causing passengers on board the bus to fall down and possibly be injured.

Please drive cautiously around transit buses and be aware that they carry standing passengers.

### Transit Bus Situation #4

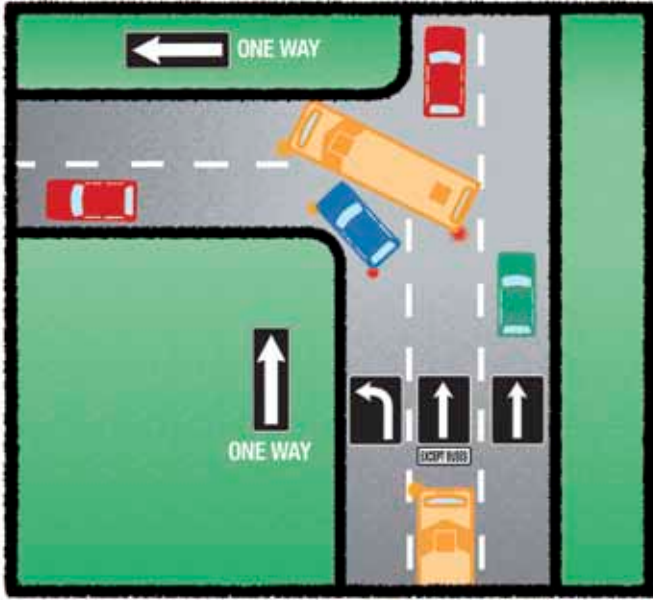
The blind spot of a 12.2 metre transit bus is 4.3 metres on the right side and 1.5 metres on the left, as well as 12.2 metres to the rear.

If you are driving in this area, the bus operator may not see you.



### Transit Bus Situation #5

Transit buses are given special turning privileges at certain identified intersections. Be aware of these locations and watch for buses turning with you.



## Railway Crossings

The signs below indicate a railway crossing ahead. Slow down, check to the right and left along the angle of the track shown in the sign, and proceed only when safe.

The actual crossing is marked by a railway crossing sign.

When approaching railway crossings, check both ways for trains and remember that they always have the right-of-way.

When stopping at a crossing, keep at least five metres away from the nearest rail in a restricted speed area and at least 15 metres away in a non-restricted speed area. A restricted speed area means any area within a city, town or village. It also includes any municipality or part of a municipality or any highway or portion of a highway designated by *The Highway Traffic Board*.

If you see a train approaching, be prepared to stop. Motorists can seriously misjudge the speed of trains, believing they're travelling much slower than they actually are or incorrectly assuming that trains must slow down at railway crossings.

Since most railway crossings do not have electronic signals warning you when to stop, the most important rule to recognize is that **trains automatically have the right-of-way at all railway crossings**. In other words, **at railway crossings, the safety of you and your passengers depends entirely on you, the driver.**

Other safety pointers include:

- When there is more than one set of tracks, don't start across when the train passes. Make sure there isn't another train coming on the other track.
- Half of all night rail/highway crossing collisions involve vehicles hitting trains. To avoid that, slow down when you see the advance warning sign so that you can stop in time if you have to.
- Never move onto the track unless you're sure there is plenty of room on the other side. If traffic is backed up so that you can't get across the tracks, stop and wait at least five metres from the crossing, until the traffic jam clears and it is safe to cross.
- Some vehicles may stop at all crossings. These may include regular buses, school buses and vehicles carrying hazardous materials. If you're following such a vehicle, be prepared to stop.



Railway Crossing Ahead



Railway Crossing

It is **illegal** to:

- Cross a railway crossing when warning signals are on (except as explained below).
- Shift gears when crossing railway tracks.
- Drive a vehicle through, around or under a crossing gate or barrier that is closed or being opened or closed.
- Drive a vehicle onto a railway crossing unless there is sufficient space at the other side of the crossing to accommodate your vehicle without obstructing the passage of trains.
- Park within 30 metres of the nearest rail of a railway crossing unless otherwise posted.

Drivers may cross a railway crossing when the warning lights are flashing if:

- The vehicle is brought to a complete stop prior to crossing.
- The crossing is not protected by gates or barriers.
- The crossing is within a restricted speed area.
- The train is stopped or is a safe distance away.
- The crossing may be done safely.

For railway crossing procedures, drivers of for-hire vehicles, school buses and vehicles capable of transporting flammable liquid or gas should consult the *Professional Driver's Handbook*.

**If there is any doubt, stop and wait for the train to cross or for the warning lights to stop flashing.**