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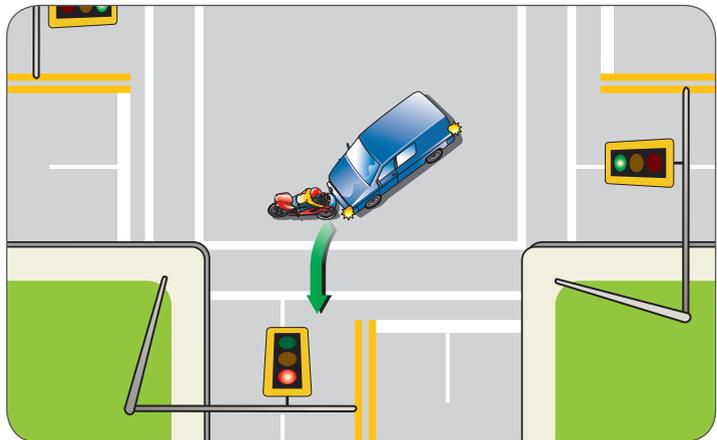
The last five chapters presented important driving information that can help you develop your smart driving skills. The next three chapters give suggestions on how you can apply this information to your driving. Knowing how to share the road is an important part of keeping safe when driving. In this chapter, you will learn who you share the road with and how to share the road with them in safety.

## Sharing the road safely

### At the scene of a crash

*Walter is speeding along Main Street in his van. He's in a hurry to turn left at the intersection before the light turns. He gets into the intersection and quickly swings to the left. Jodi is riding her motorcycle along Main Street in the opposite direction. She wants to go straight through, and she has just enough time to make it before the light turns yellow. Jodi assumes that Walter has seen her.*

*The result is a crash that seriously injures Jodi and sends Walter to the hospital with minor injuries.*



Be aware of other road users who may want to use the space into which you plan to move.

In this crash scene, both Walter and Jodi tried to move into the same space at the same time. By law, Walter should have stopped for Jodi before making his turn. But he didn't see the motorcycle coming. Jodi may have had the right-of-way, but she still should have looked carefully for vehicles in the intersection before riding through.

The way to avoid crashes is to make sure that the space you plan to move into will be empty. To share the road safely with others, use your **see-think-do** skills.

## see-think-do

Use your observation skills. Scan the intersection from left to right, and left again, looking for hazards. Walter started across the intersection without checking to make sure the road was clear.

## see-think-do

When another road user is approaching the space you were planning to use, you need to assess the risk, then choose the safest solution.

It's also important to know the right-of-way rules. When two or more road users want the same space, right-of-way rules tell you which road user should yield. However, other road users make mistakes and do unexpected things. It may not always be easy to decide who has the right-of-way. If in doubt, always be ready to give the right-of-way.

To learn more about right-of-way rules, turn to **chapter 4, rules of the road**.

## see-think-do

### Speed control

Drive at a safe speed. That way you will have time to stop if needed.



### Steering

Keep both hands on the outside of the wheel to maintain good steering control.



### Space margins

If you keep well away from other road users, there will be less chance of space conflicts. You will have room to stop or to steer around if others start moving into your space.



### Communication

Let other road users know what you are doing so they can react in time. Watch for communication from other road users.



## think about

How you'd feel if you injured or killed someone while you were driving. What difference would this make to the rest of your life? Who else would be affected?

## How to share the road

Next time you are stopped at a busy intersection, look around and count the different types of road users you can see. You share the roads with a number of different road users, including:

- pedestrians (for example, children, people in wheelchairs and traffic control people)
- cyclists
- motorcyclists
- drivers of:
  - passenger vehicles
  - large vehicles (motorhomes and commercial vehicles)
  - buses (school and public transit)
  - emergency vehicles
  - trains.

To share the road safely, you need to use all of your **see-think-do** skills. You also need to understand how different road users use the road. The following sections highlight some of the main points to keep in mind for each type of road user.



## Pedestrians

You always need to watch out for pedestrians. Like all road users, they can be unpredictable. You never know when a child might dash into the street, or someone might step out from behind a parked car. Pedestrians are often hard to see, especially at night.

### see

**Scan at crosswalks and intersections** — many pedestrians are unaware of the distance it takes a vehicle to stop. They may suddenly step out onto the street without warning. Any time you approach a crosswalk or intersection:

- be aware of vision blocks. Don't pass if you see a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk in the next lane. It's illegal and unsafe. The driver could be stopped to let pedestrians cross the road.
- don't enter a crosswalk without checking to see that it's empty, even when the light is green. Someone may be trying to dash across. People who find it difficult to cross the road quickly, such as the elderly, people with disabilities and parents walking with young children, may still be in the crosswalk.
- watch out for pedestrians on the cross street whenever you make a turn.

### warning!

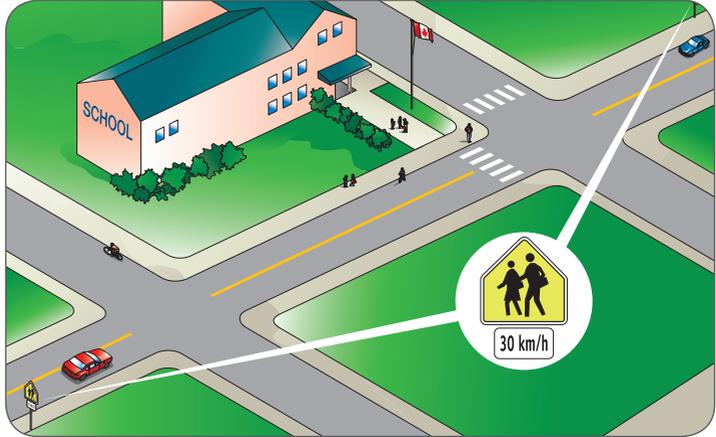
Crosswalks with flashing green lights are controlled by pedestrians. When you see a pedestrian standing near this type of crosswalk, you know that they have probably pressed the button and the light is about to change. Slow down and be prepared to stop.

**Pay attention at school zones and playgrounds** — observe carefully when driving in school and playground zones. Smaller children are harder to see than adults and are less predictable.

As you approach a school zone at a time when children may be arriving, leaving or taking their lunch hour, look well ahead for school patrols or crossing supervisors. You must obey them at all times.

For details on speed limits for school and playground zones, see **chapter 3, signs, signals and road markings**.

When you see a school zone sign with a 30 km/h posted speed, slow down to that speed. The speed limit is in effect between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on school days, or the hours shown on the sign. When you reach the end school zone sign on the other side of the street, you'll know you have reached the end of the 30 km/h zone.



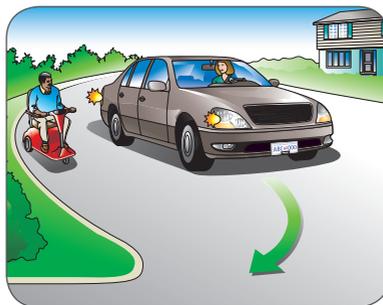
### driving tip

You must always be prepared to stop if you see a pedestrian who is about to step out in front of you. But don't encourage jaywalking (crossing between intersections) by stopping and inviting pedestrians to cross. The car behind you may not be expecting you to stop and may crash into you. Drivers in the other lanes may not see the pedestrians crossing in front of your vehicle and may hit them.

**Observe carefully in residential areas** — children and others may move in unpredicted ways. Remember, a ball or a hockey net can mean children are playing nearby.

Be especially careful when you're backing up. Check around your car before you get into it, then do a 360-degree vision check before moving. It's important to continue checking because you could easily back into a child or a family pet if you aren't observing carefully.

**Watch for pedestrians with disabilities** — take extra care if you see a person who's visually impaired. (They may be carrying a white cane or accompanied by a guide dog.) Often, they will raise their cane when they're uncertain about crossing the street safely. That is your signal to stop and give the person the right-of-way. Don't startle them or their guide dog by racing your engine or honking your horn.



People in motorized wheelchairs also share the roads. While wheelchairs should be on the sidewalk, not all roads have sidewalks. Also, sidewalks may be too rough or narrow to travel on, or difficult to access.

Watch for people in wheelchairs travelling along the side of the road, especially when you are planning to make a right turn.

## think

**Know the rules** — you must yield to pedestrians:

- in marked crosswalks, if the pedestrian is close to your half of the road
- at intersections (pedestrians near your half of the road still have the right-of-way even when there is no marked crosswalk)
- when turning
- when entering a road from a driveway or alley.

It is always the driver's responsibility to avoid hitting a pedestrian.



## do

### Speed control and space margins

Slow down when you see pedestrians who might enter your path, and give them plenty of room.

#### Strategies: Being a safe pedestrian

Just as drivers need to carefully observe for pedestrians, pedestrians also need to carefully observe for drivers. You can make yourself safer when you are walking by remembering a few simple rules.

- Do not leave the curb unless you are sure the approaching vehicles on the cross street have stopped or will stop.
- Watch for vehicles that are turning.
- Always hold a child's hand while crossing the street until he or she is old enough to understand safety rules.
- Do not start to cross if the traffic signal is flashing a warning (for example, an orange hand).
- Use crosswalks. Don't jaywalk.
- Always activate the pedestrian crossing signal if there is one.



## Cyclists

Cyclists commute to work as well as ride for recreation, so you can expect to see them on the road at any time of the day or night. Be aware that bicycle riders have the same rights and responsibilities on the road as drivers. Observe carefully at all times. Cyclists, like pedestrians, are vulnerable.

### fast fact

Children have poor peripheral vision, and often find it hard to judge the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles. They may not know the traffic rules or how much room it takes vehicles to stop.

Be very careful near children on bicycles. Children are used to adults watching out for them, so they tend to be unaware of danger.

### see

**Shoulder check** — shoulder checking is important because bicycles and riders are narrow and can easily be hidden in your blind spot. Make sure you shoulder check before you:

- open your door to get out of your vehicle. Check your side mirror as well. One of the most common causes of crashes involving cyclists is drivers who swing their doors open without checking.
- pull away from the curb
- move to the right.

**Pay attention at night** — observe carefully, and watch for bicycles coming in from side streets. Some cyclists may not have lights, reflectors or reflective gear.

**Be careful when passing** — before you pass another vehicle, make sure you check for oncoming cyclists and cyclists in front of the vehicle you are passing.

**Scan at intersections** — be very careful to:

- shoulder check for bicycles before turning right.
- watch out for a cyclist ahead waiting to turn left if you're driving straight through.
- check carefully for oncoming cyclists before making a left turn.
- check carefully for cyclists crossing the road when coming to a place where a bicycle trail meets a road.
- be aware that a cyclist riding along the through road could be approaching faster than you think.

### think

**Know the rules** — cyclists follow the same rules and regulations as drivers.

- Yield to cyclists as you would to any other vehicle. If you have the right-of-way at an intersection, proceed if it is safe.
- Be aware that cyclists don't always stay on the right. To make a left turn, for instance, they need to move over to the left lane. If the lane is narrow, or if there is glass or a pothole on the right, a cyclist has the right to move out toward the middle for safety.
- Pay attention to bicycle lanes. For more information about these lanes, see **chapter 4, rules of the road**.

### warning!

A cyclist will expect you to follow the rules of the road.

## do

## Space margins

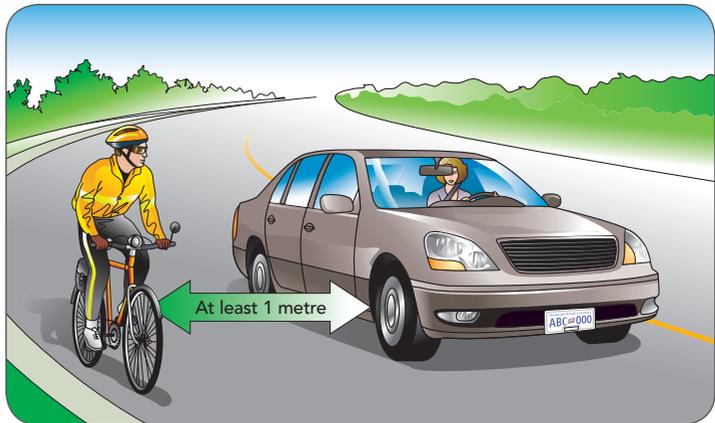
**Allow following distance** — allow plenty of following distance. You need to be able to avoid hitting a cyclist who falls. Cyclists who wobble are probably inexperienced and are more likely to fall than experienced cyclists. Give them even more space than usual.

**Allow side margins** — a significant number of crashes involving cyclists result from side-swiping. Make sure there is enough space if you want to pass a cyclist. On a narrow road, wait for a clear, straight stretch that will allow you to pull out and give the cyclist room. Remember, you are allowed to cross a single solid yellow line when passing a cyclist, provided you can do it safely. On a multi-lane road, change lanes rather than risk crowding the cyclist.

## driving tip

Even if you pull just slightly into another lane to pass, you are changing lanes. Remember to mirror check, signal and shoulder check.

Always check your side margin when passing a cyclist.



## Communication

**Recognize hand signals** — understand the hand signals that cyclists use. A cyclist may signal a right turn by extending the right arm straight out in the direction of the turn. For more information about hand signals, see the Turn signals section in **chapter 5, see-think-do**.

**Make eye contact** — a cyclist often uses eye contact to communicate. Make eye contact if you can. She or he is probably trying to anticipate your next move.

**Avoid honking your horn** — don't honk your horn at a cyclist unless you need to give a warning. A loud honk could startle a cyclist and even cause a fall.



### Strategies: Being a safe cyclist

If you are a cyclist, you're responsible for sharing the road in a way that keeps you and others safe.

**Be predictable.** Cyclists are more predictable if they follow the rules of the road.

**Be visible.** Because bicycles are narrow, you need to work at making yourself visible. Wear bright or reflective clothing, especially in the dark or in poor weather. Position yourself so drivers can see you. Avoid riding in blind spots.

**Ride defensively.** Think and look well ahead. Be assertive, but remember that a conflict between a cyclist and a motor vehicle usually results in injury to the cyclist.

**Ride legally.** In Whitehorse, you must wear an approved bicycle helmet. If you ride at night, your bicycle must be equipped with a front white headlight visible at 150 metres, and have a rear red light and a red rear reflector.



## Motorcycle riders

Like cyclists, motorcycle riders are vulnerable road users. They don't have the protection of an external frame, airbags or bumpers, and are sometimes difficult to see.

More than half of all motorcycle crashes result in injury or death.

### see

**Watch for clues** — sometimes a motorcycle's turn signals are hard to see. Watch the rider for clues. If the rider shoulder checks or the motorcycle leans, the rider is probably planning to change lanes or turn.

Look carefully for bicycles and motorcycles when you drive through an intersection. Without good observation skills, the driver of the blue car might miss seeing the motorcycle.



**Scan at intersections** — look carefully for motorcycles when you come to an intersection.

- When you are turning left, look out for oncoming motorcycles. Motorcycles can be hard to see, especially at night, at dusk or in heavy traffic. It is also difficult to judge how fast they are approaching.
- When you are driving through an intersection, watch for an oncoming motorcycle that may be turning left.

## do



### Space margins

**Allow side margins** — never try to share a lane with a motorcycle. A motorcycle needs the whole lane to travel safely.

**Allow following distance** — allow at least three seconds of following distance when you are behind a motorcycle because:

- motorcycles can stop very quickly.
- motorcyclists can skid and fall because of poor road conditions. You need to leave plenty of room to stop safely.

**Allow space when passing** — allow plenty of space when you pass a motorcycle. Your vehicle may throw dirt or water in the rider's face.



### Communication

**Make eye contact** — establish eye contact whenever possible.

**Read vehicle language** — don't assume that a rider in the left part of the lane is planning to turn left. Motorcyclists often ride in the left part of the lane to make themselves more visible.



## Passenger vehicles

When you drive, you will interact with the drivers of cars, vans and small trucks. Drivers of passenger vehicles can be just as unpredictable as other road users. They may not always look ahead. Their vehicles may not be well maintained; for example, their brakes and signal lights may not be working properly. And some drivers may be tired, impatient or impaired.

Use all of your **see-think-do** skills to observe and respond safely to other passenger vehicles.



## Large vehicles

Large vehicles operate quite differently than cars. Give them lots of room.

do



### Space margins

**Allow following distance** — a big vehicle can prevent you from seeing hazards ahead. You'll have a wider range of vision if you increase your following distance.

If you are stopped facing uphill behind a large vehicle, remember that it may roll backwards when the driver releases the brake. Leave extra space in front of your vehicle.

In rainy weather, large vehicles can spray dirt or water onto your windshield, reducing your vision. Their tires may also spray up rocks that could hit your vehicle. Staying well back will help prevent this.



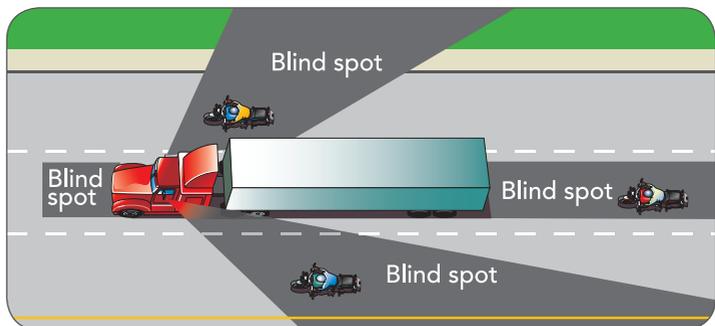
You will see this sign on the back of some vehicles. It is used to indicate vehicles that will be moving slowly. Keep your distance and pass only when you are certain it is safe.



When you see this sign or a Wide Load, Long Load or Oversize Load sign on a truck or pilot car, it indicates that an oversize load is being transported.

**Keep clear of blind spots** — there are large blind spots both behind and beside large vehicles. Make sure you keep out of the blind spots, otherwise the driver will not see you. You should be able to see both mirrors of the truck or bus in front of you. Never try to sneak behind a truck if it is backing into a loading bay or out of a driveway as you will enter one of the truck driver's blind spots and risk being hit.

When travelling near a large vehicle, think about whether the driver can see you — avoid travelling in blind spots.



**Allow space when passing** — you need a lot of space when passing. Remember that trucks are long and some pull two trailers. Don't pass unless you are sure you have enough space.

If you pass a large vehicle, or make a lane change in front of one, remember to leave extra room before you pull in. Big vehicles take longer to slow down. Make sure you can see the truck's headlights in your rear-view mirror before you re-enter the lane, and maintain your speed once you get there.

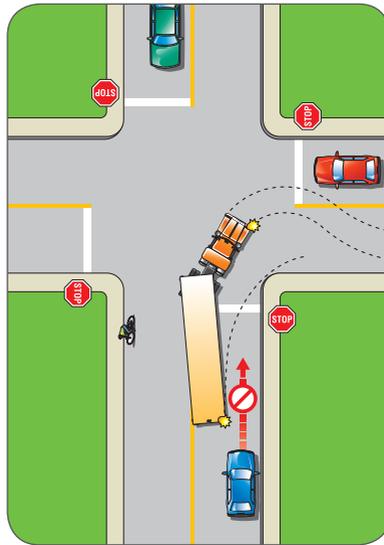
If you see a truck starting to slow down well before a red light, remember that the driver requires all of that space to stop in time. Never move into that space; you could be rear-ended.

### driving tip

Use extreme caution when passing large vehicles, especially if visibility is not ideal.

Avoid being on the right of a large vehicle if there's a chance it might turn right.

**Make room for turns** — big vehicles need a lot of room to turn. When they turn right, keep your distance or you may be squeezed between the truck and the curb.



You may also have a space problem if you are on a road that a large vehicle is turning onto. The driver may need to cross the centre line or cut a corner in order to complete a turn. Again, keep your distance.

**Avoid turbulence** — big vehicles create turbulence that can push you away from the vehicle or pull you towards it. Turbulence can cause problems when you are passing a big truck, or when you meet one coming toward you. Allow lots of space on the side, and keep a firm grip on the steering wheel.

### Communication



**Read vehicle language** — many large vehicles are equipped with engine retarders that slow the vehicle down without the use of brakes. Truck drivers also use their gears to slow down. This means the truck or bus ahead of you could slow down without the brake lights coming on. Look ahead and listen for a change in the truck's engine noise.

**Watch for signs that a large vehicle is about to back up** — a horn or beeper, four-way flashers or backup lights.

**Signal well ahead** — if you are ahead of a large vehicle, signal well before you slow down, turn or stop. Large vehicles need lots of time to slow down.



## School buses

see

**Watch for clues** — a school bus that has stopped to let children on or off has flashing lights at the top and sometimes a swing-out stop sign. The school bus driver may turn on flashing amber



On a street or undivided highway, you must stop in either direction whenever you see flashing red lights on a school bus.



lights when preparing to stop.

think

**Know the rules** — when you see a school bus with alternating flashing red lights at the top, you must stop whether you are

After stopping for a school bus, don't start moving again until the bus moves on or the driver signals that it's safe by turning off the lights and pulling in the stop sign.





approaching it from the front or the rear. (You don't need to stop if you are on the other side of a divided highway.)

## Public transit buses

### see



**Watch for buses that have stopped** — they may block your view of pedestrians about to cross the street, or they may be about to pull into traffic.

### think

**Know the rules** — when it is safe to do so, allow a public transit bus that is signalling and displaying a yield-to-bus sign to move out from the curb lane or a bus stop.

### do

#### Space margins and speed control

Change lanes to let a bus pull out if there is space in the next lane, or slow down if you can't change lanes safely.



## Emergency vehicles

Emergency vehicles include police cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

### see



**Listen for sirens and watch for flashing lights** — look to see where the emergency vehicle is coming from. Once the vehicle has passed, watch and listen because there may be others.

### think

**Know the rules** — emergency vehicles displaying flashing lights and sirens always have the right-of-way. All traffic moving in both directions must stop. (Exception: If you are on a divided highway and the emergency vehicle is approaching on the other side of the median, you may not need to stop. Make sure that it would be impossible for the emergency vehicle to move onto your side of the highway.)

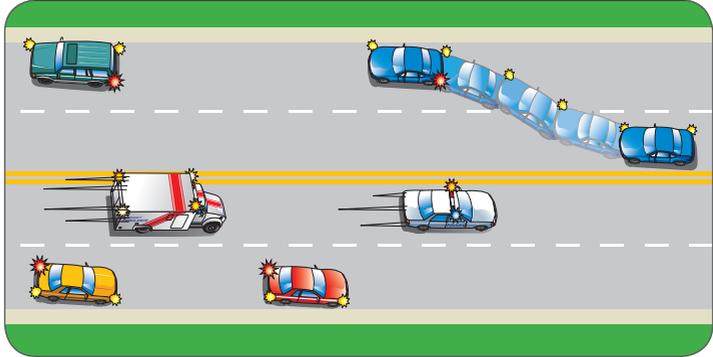
**Clear a path** — don't block the path of emergency vehicles. Usually the best thing to do is pull over to the right and stop (or to the left if you're driving in the left lane of a divided highway

### driving tip

If you are stopped at an intersection and you are blocking the path of the emergency vehicle, you may have to turn the corner to get out of the way.

**warning!**

All vehicles on both sides of the road must pull over to leave a clear path whenever an emergency vehicle uses its siren and flashing lights.



or on a one-way street). Do not stop in an intersection. Think well ahead, and have a plan in mind to create a path for the emergency vehicle.



**do**

**Space margins and speed control**

**Allow following distance** — when you're following a fire truck, you must stay back at least 150 metres.

**Communication**

**Signal** — use your turn signal to let the emergency vehicle driver know you have seen the vehicle and are pulling over.

## Emergency workers on roads

Slow down and leave plenty of room when passing stopped emergency vehicles displaying red and/or blue or amber flashing lights. These include police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, tow trucks, and vehicles used by vehicle inspectors, conservation officers, park rangers and special constables.

**see**

**Watch for** – flashing red, blue or amber lights or other signs that emergency workers are on the side of the road.

**think**

**Know the rules** – all traffic must slow right down when approaching stopped emergency vehicles displaying flashing lights. (Exception: This rule does not apply if you are on a divided highway and approaching the emergency workers from the opposite direction.)



If you are in the lane next to a stopped emergency vehicle — in either direction — you must also change lanes if traffic permits.

**do**

### Space margins and speed control

Slow down and leave space when passing emergency workers on roads. Change lanes if it is safe to do so.

## Construction zones

Road crews work throughout the year to maintain and improve our roads.



Despite construction zone signs and traffic control persons, crashes still occur in construction zones, mainly because some drivers don't pay attention.



### warning!

Traffic fines are double in a construction zone.

### driving tip

Check radio, television and websites for the latest traffic reports and updates to find out what is happening on the roads within your area, and along your intended route. Consider taking an alternate route. For Yukon's road report, phone 511 or visit [www.511yukon.ca](http://www.511yukon.ca).

**see**

**Scan ahead** — look for construction zones ahead and be prepared to obey traffic control devices within the zone.

**Pay attention at night** — road construction doesn't just occur in the daytime. With the high daytime traffic volumes, more and more road construction takes place at night. You need to pay extra attention and drive extra slowly through construction zones at night.

**Look around** — just because you don't immediately see traffic control persons or construction workers in a construction zone doesn't mean they are not there. Be alert for traffic control persons, construction workers and equipment.

**think**

**Know the rules** — you must obey the directions of traffic control persons and road construction signs from the start to the end of the construction zone.

**Think ahead** — construction zones often require lane closures, so you may need to change lanes. Merge to avoid a lane closure as soon as you can. This will help maintain traffic flow.

**Plan ahead** — expect delays, and plan for them by leaving early to reach your destination on time. Construction crews aren't there to personally inconvenience you — they are improving



## driving tip

Unnecessary idling wastes gas and causes emissions that degrade air quality and contribute to climate change. If you are directed to stop in a construction zone, turn off the engine. Idling for more than 10 seconds costs more than turning the engine off.



## crash fact

Be especially careful at night. Half of all nighttime collisions between trains and cars involve vehicles hitting the side of a train because the driver didn't see it.

the roads for everyone.

do

### Space margins and speed control

**Slow down** — the road surface may be uneven or unpaved, so you need to slow down. You must obey construction zone speed limits. Traffic fines are double in construction zones.

**Stop when directed** — stop when directed to do so by traffic control persons or other traffic control devices. In some construction zones, you may need to wait for a pilot car to escort you through the work zone.

**Allow following distance** — leave plenty of following distance between your vehicle and the vehicle immediately ahead. Avoid changing lanes in a construction zone.

**Allow side margins** — leave space between you, the construction crews and their equipment in the construction zones.

## Trains

Every year people die or are seriously injured in collisions between vehicles and trains, so you need to be careful when approaching a railway crossing. Most trains require approximately two kilometres to stop — never try to beat one.

see

**Watch for clues** — lots of clues warn you of a railway crossing ahead.

- **Advance warning signs** — these signs alert you to an upcoming crossing, and tell you to look, listen and slow down because you may have to stop. They are usually posted in locations where you cannot see an upcoming railway crossing (for example, on hilly or curvy roads). A speed sign below the advance warning sign may advise that the safe road speed is less than the posted speed.
- **Pavement markings** — at the approach to some railway crossings, you may see a painted "X" on the pavement. Some crossings also have flashing lights, a bell and gates. If the light and bell are activated or the gate is down, it means a train is approaching.
- **Reflective strips** — at night, reflective strips along the sides of train cars may be your first warning that a train is crossing the road in front of you.

You may not be able to see a train coming if visibility is poor, but you may hear its whistle. Remember that trains are not

**warning!**

Expect a train on a track at any time. Trains don't always follow regular schedules.

**driving tip**

When there is a red traffic light at an intersection on the other side of a railway crossing, do not stop on the tracks. Stop before the railway crossing unless there is room on the other side.

Stop no closer than five metres and no further than 15 metres from the nearest rail.



required to sound a whistle at every crossing.

**Observe carefully** — be aware that your eyes may mislead you. Trains often seem to be moving much slower than they really are. Passenger trains travel at up to 160 km/h in Canada.

**Check for other road users** — watch out for other road users at railway crossings. Motorcycle riders and cyclists may have to swerve to cross the tracks safely. They could slip and fall on wet tracks, so be sure to cover your brake and leave extra room.

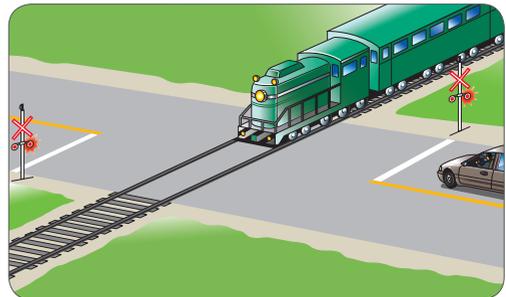
**Watch for a second train** — be aware that there is often more than one track, so watch out for a second train. One of the main causes of car and train crashes is that the driver doesn't wait for the second train that is hidden behind the first one.

**think**

**Know the rules** — trains always have right of way. They don't slow down for crossings. If there is a gate down, you must stop and wait for it to rise before you cross the tracks. If flashing red lights are displayed at the crossing, you must stop. Move across the tracks only when it's safe. If a flag person directs you to stop, you must obey their directions. If you hear or see a train approaching the crossing, stop and don't proceed until it is safe.

**Think ahead** — if your vehicle is stuck on the track, you will have to think and act quickly. Get all passengers out of the vehicle. Quickly move at least 30 metres away from the track to avoid flying debris. Then phone for help.

- Transport Canada — look for the phone number and location on the back of the railway crossing sign



- 911 or the local police.

**do****Speed control**

**Travel at a safe speed** — you should always be able to stop within the distance lit by your headlights if you're driving at night.

**Gear down** — if you are driving a vehicle with a standard transmission, change to a lower gear before you begin to cross.

Never change gears on the crossing because you could stall the vehicle.

### Space margins



**Allow following distance** — never get trapped on a crossing. When traffic is heavy, wait until you can clear the crossing before moving ahead.

## Animals

Hitting a large animal, such as a moose, elk, bison, or horse, can cause crashes that are fatal to both the animal and the people in the vehicle. Emergency braking and swerving to avoid hitting even small animals can also cause crashes.



### see

**Scan ahead** — and always be on the look-out for animals on the road or in the ditches.

### think

**Know the rules** — very few roads are fenced on either side to prevent wild animals, and even domestic animals, from crossing the road in front of you. In Yukon, bison and elk herds are allowed to range freely. Horses may be ridden on most public roads and horse carriage operators have the same rights (and responsibilities) as motor vehicle operators.



**Know the hazards** — animals are unpredictable. Startled by sudden movement or noise, they may run across the road right in front of you. Horse riders or herders of domestic animals may not be able to control their animals.

Animals are also very hard to see at night. Even when no large animals are visible on the road ahead of you, the driver in front of you may brake suddenly, or steer erratically, to avoid running over a small animal, or even hitting a bird.

### do

#### Space margins

**Slow down** — especially at night. Never out-drive your headlights. Allow plenty of following distance in case the driver ahead of you brakes or swerves for an animal you can't see.

**Leave extra space** — when passing animals, and when passing slow or stopped vehicles that may obstruct your view of animal hazard on the road.

**Pass carefully** — avoid sounding your horn, and pass carefully and slowly.

**Prepare to stop** — if an animal is in position to cross the road or a rider is having trouble controlling a horse, pull over to the shoulder of the road and stop. It's better to wait until the animal moves, or the horse is back under the rider's control, than to risk passing them.

### driving tip

What strategies will you use to avoid crashes caused by trying to avoid hitting animals on the road?

## in this chapter

- Fitness to drive
  - seeing and hearing
  - assessing your health
- Dangerous emotions
- Impairment
  - alcohol
  - drugs
  - fatigue
  - distraction
- Taking risks
- Peer pressure
- Unsafe passengers
- Unsafe drivers
- Aggression on the road
- Organ Donor Registry

In the previous chapter, you learned how to share the road safely with other road users. This chapter gives strategies you can use to handle situations that can have a negative influence on you and your driving.

## Fitness to drive

### You in the driver's seat

*You wake up with a cold and feel awful, but you have to go to work. You take some cold medication before getting into your car. As you're driving, you notice that you feel light-headed and tired. Turning right at the first intersection, you narrowly miss a cyclist.*

*What should you do?*

To be in control while driving, you need to be able to rely on the information your eyes and ears pick up. You need to be healthy, rested and focused to be a safe driver.

## Seeing and hearing

Experts estimate that about 80 per cent of all driving information comes to drivers through their eyes. You need to take a vision screening test before you can be licensed to drive.

Your sense of hearing also helps you gather information about the driving scene. Listen for important warning signals such as horns, sirens, train whistles and unusual noises in your engine.

### Strategies: Seeing and hearing effectively

To see and hear effectively while driving:

- Use glasses or contact lenses if you need them.
- Scan systematically as you drive.
- Repair or replace a noisy engine muffler.
- Don't play your stereo too loudly.
- Don't use a cellphone or headphones while driving.

### Assessing your health

Even a mild illness like a cold or the flu can affect your alertness. Over-the-counter medicines can make you drowsy and slow your reaction time.

Read labels carefully before taking medication if you plan to drive.



If you have a health condition that you think might impair your ability to drive, be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist before getting behind the wheel.

#### Strategies: What to do if you're not feeling well

- Take the bus or get a friend to drive you.
- Read the label carefully if you are taking any medications. Don't drive if the label says the drug may cause drowsiness or dizziness.

### Dangerous emotions

We all have changing emotional states. Emotions are powerful forces that can interrupt the concentration you need for driving. When you are feeling very angry, anxious, sad or upset, you miss important information. Your thinking becomes unclear. Your safety and the safety of others is in danger.

Sometimes you may become angry or impatient because of the driving environment. Crowded traffic conditions and high-speed freeway driving often cause stress. Being slowed down by other traffic when you're in a hurry produces tension. Drivers who are angry or stressed are less tolerant of the mistakes that other road users make.

Whatever the cause of the emotion, it is important to look at your emotional fitness to drive. Sometimes it's best to stay out of the driver's seat.

### Strategies: Controlling emotions

Here are some things you can do to help you stay calm and in control while driving:

- Keep learning. Review your stressful driving situations and figure out what you can do next time to be calmer and safer.
- Plan ahead. Choose a route that avoids heavy traffic so you can concentrate better.
- Allow yourself plenty of time. Being in a hurry can cause you to become angry or frustrated. Realize that if you leave late, you'll arrive late.
- Think of your own safety and the safety of others. This can help you calm yourself.
- Be patient and extra courteous. Remember that all drivers make mistakes. Take a couple of moments to calm yourself down and leave your problems behind before you start to drive. If you can't focus, don't get behind the wheel.
- Be honest with yourself. Admitting to yourself exactly how you feel can often help to calm you down.
- Open the windows to let in some fresh air and take a few deep breaths.
- Listen to the radio or a relaxing CD.
- Loosen your grip on the steering wheel. This will help to ease your arm and neck muscles and reduce the chance of you getting a headache.

## Impairment

### crash fact

In an average year in Canada, over 1,200 people are killed and 75,000 are injured in police-reported collisions where alcohol was involved. Nearly 30 per cent of all traffic deaths involve impaired driving.

Statistics Canada, 2007

### You in the driver's seat

*You are going home from a party with your friend. It's pretty late and you're anxious to get to bed. It's been a long day. Your friend runs a yellow light, just catching the beginning of a red. You notice he is staring straight ahead, his eyes not moving. The car starts to weave and then lurches to one side as he brakes hard. "Hey, what are you doing?" you ask. "It's okay, I thought I was at the intersection...a little early, huh?" he laughs.*

*What should you do?*



If you plan to drink, decide ahead of time how you will get home safely.

## Facts about alcohol

The table below shows some ways that alcohol can interfere with seeing, thinking and doing. It's risky behaviour to mix drinking with driving.

**Chapter 10, Yukon's driver's licence**, talks about some of the fines and charges for impaired driving.

Ability	Driver's symptoms	Effects on the driver
See	• tendency to stare	• cannot take in information quickly enough
	• eyes lose reflex abilities	• can be blinded by glare
	• reduced coordination of images	• sees double
	• reduced depth perception	• can't judge distance or speed of other vehicles
	• reduced peripheral vision	• may not see hazards approaching from the side
Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reasoning becomes unclear</li> <li>• reduced concentration</li> <li>• emotional state becomes unstable</li> </ul>	• thinks mental ability is sharp but cannot make sound driving decisions
Do	• reduced muscle control	• cannot coordinate steering and braking
	• increased impulsiveness	• takes greater risks by speeding or taking chances
	• reduced coordination	• oversteers; brakes late or not at all
	• slowed reaction time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cannot make turns accurately</li> <li>• cannot react to emergencies quickly</li> </ul>

What alcohol does to drivers		
Alcohol myth		Alcohol fact
Alcohol won't affect me as much if I drink coffee, have something to eat, or take a cold shower.		<p>Only time can sober you up or lower your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC). Contrary to popular belief, food, coffee, cold showers or exercise will not speed up the elimination of alcohol from your system.</p> <p>Transport Canada states that if you have a BAC of .08 it takes about six hours for your body to completely process that alcohol and return to a BAC of zero.</p>
Beer doesn't affect driving as much as other alcoholic drinks do.		<p>A glass of beer contains the same amount of alcohol as a glass of wine or an average cocktail. In some cases, even small amounts of alcohol can cause a driver to be impaired.</p>

## think about

Is it worth it to drink and drive?

- You or your passengers could be injured or killed in a crash.
- You may spend time in jail.
- You could lose your licence.
- You may have to pay stiff fines.
- Your insurance may not pay for any injuries or damage you cause.
- You could spend the rest of your life dealing with the grief of injuring or killing an innocent person.

## Strategies: Protecting yourself from impaired drivers

To get home safely:

- Learn the effects of drugs and alcohol. Accurate information allows you to make informed decisions.
- Refuse to ride with drivers who may be impaired. Ask to be let out of the car if necessary.
- Take a stand. Don't let someone who may be impaired drive.
- Choose a designated driver before going out.
- Keep money aside for a bus or taxi.
- Call a friend.

In general, be conscious that in certain areas (such as near bars) and at certain times of the day (especially at night), the driver of a car sharing the road with you could be drunk!

## driving tip

If you are feeling impaired after taking a drug or medication, don't drive. Let someone else do the driving until the effect has worn off.

## Facts about drugs

### Drugs and driving

Drugs and medications can impair driving. If you are taking medications or drugs, you need to know how they can affect your ability to drive safely. Drugs affect people differently. If there is any doubt about safety, leave the driving to someone else.

### Medications

Over-the-counter medicines for allergies, coughs, colds and nausea can cause drowsiness and inattention. Prescriptions, including sedatives, tranquilizers, painkillers and some antidepressants, can affect alertness, concentration and reaction time.

These effects can continue for many hours after the medicine is taken.

If your doctor or pharmacist cautions you that a medication is likely to interfere with driving safety, pay attention. If you are feeling impaired after taking a medication, don't drive — let someone else do the driving until the effect has worn off.

## driving tip

Always read the label of any medication you are taking to see if it can affect driving. If you are taking more than one medication, ask your pharmacist or doctor about their combined effects on driving.

### crash fact

A driver who combines alcohol and drugs is nine times more likely to have a crash than a sober driver.

*Australian study,  
O. Drummer, 1994*

### Illegal drugs

Recreational or street drugs, such as marijuana, speed, heroin and cocaine, have a wide variety of effects. Some effects are listed under *Medications* on the previous page, and others include:

- hallucinations
- altered perception
- feelings of invincibility
- lack of judgment.

They may cause a driver to:

- have difficulty following the movement of vehicles or pedestrians accurately
- misunderstand visual cues from the driving environment
- delay responses, especially in emergency situations.

### Drugs and alcohol

Many drugs will greatly increase impairment when combined with even small amounts of alcohol.



### Fatigued Driving

Being tired is one of the leading causes of crashes. Fatigue affects all stages of the see-think-do strategy. It can cause you to scan inaccurately, slow your thinking and lengthen your reaction time.

### driving tip

You can become unaware of your surroundings when you drive for a long time on a highway or freeway that doesn't change much. This is called highway hypnosis. Some areas have installed rumble strips or rough patches to warn drivers if they start to drift into another lane. You can help avoid highway hypnosis by turning off the cruise control, scanning systematically and using strategies to stay awake.

#### Strategies: Staying awake

To keep alert behind the wheel, especially for long journeys:

- Start out well rested.
- Take breaks. Walk around and get some exercise.
- Stop and eat, but avoid heavy meals because they may make you feel sleepy.
- Keep the heat level moderate.
- Keep a window open for fresh air.
- Sing or talk to keep yourself paying attention.
- Pull over to a rest stop and take a nap (be sure to lock your doors).
- Don't drive too far at one time. If you are making a long trip, be especially careful on the second day. This is when tiredness is most likely to affect you.

## Distracted Driving

When you are driving, your mind and senses should be focused only on driving. Distractions can affect your hazard perception and your reaction time.

### Strategies: Keeping focused

To help you concentrate on driving:

- Keep your eyes moving. Don't get distracted by one thing in the driving scene.
- Keep predicting what might happen, and plan your moves.
- Pull over and stop your car if you need to use your cellphone or other electronic device.
- Pull over and look after whatever is distracting you — check the map and figure out the best route, look for the music you want to play, send a text message, etc.
- Let your passengers know that you need to give most of your attention to driving, so you will have to keep conversation to a minimum.
- Don't hang distracting items on the rear-view mirror or keep them on the dash.

### fast fact

Examples of hand-held electronic devices that cannot be used while driving include laptop computers, iPods, iPads, electronic video devices, hand-held music devices with or without headphones, hand-held GPS devices and electronic gaming devices.

### warning!

GDL drivers caught using such electronic devices will be required to re-start the GDL program.

### Cellphones and other hand-held devices

Transport Canada research shows that using electronic devices while driving is distracting and increases driving risks. For this reason, most Canadian jurisdictions, including Yukon, have banned the use of electronic hand-held devices while driving.

Yukon does permit experienced drivers to use hands-free electronic devices while driving. Examples of allowable electronic devices while driving are hands-free communication devices, hands-free GPS devices and hands-free music devices without headphones.

Yukon residents learning to drive in the Graduated Driver's Licence program (see Chapter 9) are not permitted to use electronic devices while driving, even if they have hands-free capabilities.

In all cases, a driver who is safely and lawfully parked may use electronic devices.

Driving requires your full attention and concentration. You have a responsibility to your passengers, other road users and yourself, to operate your vehicle in a safe manner. Cellphone use while driving reduces awareness of what is happening around you and slows reaction times. The distraction results

from your involvement in the conversation, not only from physically handling or looking at the device.

### Avoid crashes as a result of cellphone use

- Turn off your cellphone before you start driving. Let voice mail do its job.
- If you must use the cellphone, give this task to a passenger.
- If you must make a call, look for a safe place to pull over and park. Then make the call.

#### You in the driver's seat

*You're on your way to work or school. The traffic is heavy, so your progress is slow. As you approach a green light, the car in front slows down. The driver seems to be deciding whether to make a turn. You mumble under your breath in frustration. Finally, the car moves, but the light turns yellow, so you now have to stop and wait. You feel a surge of anger. A driver like that shouldn't be on the road slowing up traffic. You just know you are going to be late.*

## Taking risks

#### You in the driver's seat

*You are alone and driving on a straight stretch of highway. You are tempted to floor it.*

*What choice will you make?*

### think about

What kind of driving style you plan to have. Do you want to stay within your skill level? Do you think it is better to be cautious rather than take too many chances? Driving attitude or style is something you choose.

New drivers differ in how they manage risk. You probably know drivers who are unsure of what actions to take and are nervous around other road users. These people lack confidence in their skills. Other drivers are overconfident and think they are much better drivers than they really are. Both overconfident drivers and those who lack confidence need to learn more and take more time to practise their skills.

A few people adopt a dangerous driving style, seeking excitement through speeding and taking risks. These people are thrill-seekers who enjoy speeding, tailgating or passing unsafely.

## How often do you take risks?

How often do you:	Always	Sometimes	Never
Shoulder check?			
Drive within the speed limit?			
Signal?			
Avoid drinking and driving?			
Leave good space margins?			

### Strategies: Identifying your driving attitude or style

To identify your driving attitude or style:

- Ask someone you trust to give you some feedback on your driving skills, driving attitude and driving style.
- Analyze your attitude and style. If you have a close call, ask yourself why it happened, and think about how you can drive more safely so it doesn't happen again.
- Be critical when you watch a car ad or a car chase scene in a movie. Ask yourself: *What message am I getting? Do I agree with this message? Will this message affect my driving attitude or style?*
- Do you find yourself always blaming others for bad driving? If so, then ask yourself: *Is it really their fault or could it be me?*

## Peer pressure

### crash fact

Over 75 per cent of all drivers travelling at an unsafe speed resulting in a casualty collision were male. Over 37 per cent of people killed in collisions were victims of collisions caused by unsafe speed.

*B.C. Traffic Collision Statistics, Police-attended injury and fatal collisions 2007*

### You in the driver's seat

*"Aw come on, join the party, have a drink," your friend says.*

*You promised to be the driver after the party. You were going to stick to soft drinks. But this is a new friend and you really like him.*

*What choice would you make?*

It's hard to resist peer pressure. We want to belong, so we're sensitive to what others think of us. There are two kinds of peer pressure: positive and negative. Friends who persuade

you to do the safe thing because they care about you are giving positive peer pressure. On the other hand, friends or acquaintances who encourage you to do something dangerous are putting negative pressure on you.

Learning how to handle peer pressure takes a lot of practice. You want to keep your friends, but you don't want to get talked into doing things that put yourself and others in danger.

### Strategies: Handling negative peer pressure

Try using these four steps to help you resist negative peer pressure.

1. **Identify the problem.** You may impress your new friend if you drink, but you aren't keeping your promise to stay sober and be the designated driver.
2. **Think about the consequences.** If you choose to have a drink so you don't upset your friend, you increase the risk of being involved in a crash when you get behind the wheel. You could hurt or even kill yourself or someone else.
3. **Identify alternatives.** Suggest to your friend that you'll have a drink with him another time when you don't have to drive.
4. **Follow through.** Stay sober, and when you are ready to leave, offer your friends a ride.

### think about

How you would handle unsafe passengers.

## Unsafe passengers

### You in the driver's seat

*You are driving home at night with a load of passengers. They are all having a good time, telling jokes and fooling around. The light rain is making it hard to see. There is a lot of reflection on the road. You need to concentrate, but you are finding it hard to think with all the noise around you.*

*What should you do?*

When you drive, you are responsible for the safety of your passengers. Sometimes you will find that passengers can be distracting. Children often become bored with long drives and demand attention from you. Passengers may start talking loudly, teasing or wrestling in the car. This is a time when you will have to show leadership and maintain control.

**Strategies: Being a good passenger**

As a passenger, you can help drivers:

- Avoid heated or emotional conversations, as these can distract the driver.
- Discourage reckless driving.
- Be prepared to take a stand for safety.

**Strategies: Keeping passengers safe**

Help keep people in your vehicle safe.

- Refuse to move unless everyone is wearing a seatbelt.
- Tell children the rules before you start the trip.
- Give children activities if it's a long drive.
- Tell passengers that you will not be able to talk very much because you need to concentrate on driving.
- Use humour with your friends. For example, tell them you're not smart enough to drive and joke around at the same time.

**driving tip**

Make sure animals you are transporting are secured in cages. A wandering, frightened animal is a dangerous distraction.

## Unsafe drivers

**You in the driver's seat**

*Your friend offers to drive you and your buddies to the next town. It's only 20 km away so you agree. He starts down the highway and is soon way over the speed limit. He pulls out to pass a car and barely has space to get back into the lane. You quickly realize that he is a very unsafe driver.*

*What should you do?*

Everyone's had the experience of being stuck in a car with someone whose driving scares them. Having a licence gives you more power to deal with this situation because you know the rules and regulations and you know what safe driving means. But it isn't easy to persuade unsafe drivers to change their driving style.

### Strategies: Stopping unsafe driving situations

Here are some ideas that could help you handle unsafe drivers.

- Try using humour. It works sometimes.
- Use “I” statements to get across how you feel.  
For example, you might say: *I’m feeling pretty nervous right now. Could you please slow down for me?*
- Offer to take the wheel. Tell your friend that you’d really like a turn driving.
- If there are other passengers, try to get their help.  
Ask: *Are you guys really in this much of a rush to get there?* Chances are they are probably feeling the same way.
- Be firm. Say something like: *Hey! Slow down before you get us killed.*
- If all else fails, ask to be let out of the car.

## Aggression on the road

### You in the driver’s seat

*It’s late at night and you are driving in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. A vehicle comes speeding up behind you. The driver starts flicking the headlights back and forth from high to low beam.*

*What should you do?*

It’s often difficult to know what to do when you’re faced with drivers who are aggressive. Their lack of courtesy and bad driving habits can lead to crashes. Extreme aggression, or road rage, is not common, but mild aggression can grow if you are not careful. How should you respond?

**think about**

What you would do to be a safe and courteous driver if you saw a stranger hitchhiking or parked beside the road with the vehicle hood up.

Be smart about your choices and safety.

**Strategies: Handling other drivers' aggression**

When other drivers start acting aggressively behind the wheel:

- Respond with good driving manners. Give the other driver plenty of room and the right-of-way.
- Don't return aggression. Avoid eye contact, keep away from erratic drivers and don't gesture back.

If you're in a situation where you feel threatened:

- Get help. Drive to a police station or to a location where there are plenty of people (for example, a shopping mall).
- Call the police if you have a cellphone. (If you're travelling with someone else, get this person to make the call so you can focus on driving.)
- Don't go home.
- Keep the doors locked and the windows closed.
- Sound the horn or attract attention to yourself if someone tries to get into your car.

**Preventing aggression**

How can you make sure you don't increase the anger or frustration of other drivers? If you use your smart driving skills, allow plenty of space and give others the right-of-way, you can help prevent situations that cause aggression.

### Strategies: Preventing aggression

Help prevent other drivers from becoming frustrated or angry:

- Know the rules of the road and follow them.
- Keep a generous following distance.
- Give the right-of-way.
- Move over for merging traffic.
- Signal your intentions.
- Pull over to let other drivers go by if there is a line of vehicles behind you.
- Keep your headlights on low beam unless you're in an unlit area.
- Keep your car stereo turned down.
- Don't block passing lanes.
- Don't take more than one parking spot.
- Don't use your horn unless it's really necessary.
- Don't park in spaces reserved for people with disabilities if you're not entitled to use the space.
- Don't yell at other road users.

### think about

What messages your actions give to other drivers. Sharing the road means considering other drivers.



## Yukon Organ Donation Program

### Give someone a second chance at life

Every year, hundreds of men, women and children wait anxiously for a phone call that will save their lives. They need a new kidney, liver or heart. They are the ones who hope to see again, or for the first time, through a cornea transplant.

When that call does come, they are the ones who get a second chance to live life to the fullest, thanks to the kindness of people who gave the gift of life through donation of organs and tissue. But many more are waiting and many lives are lost because suitable donors are not found in time.

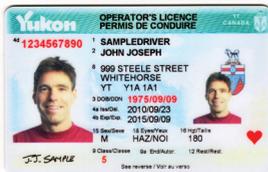
People will spend months or even years waiting for that second change because the need for organs and tissue in Canada continues to outweigh the availability.

You can improve and save lives by choosing to be an organ and tissue donor. Your family may find comfort in knowing that someone else has hope for a better life.

### How to register

If you want to be a donor, the most important thing you can do is to make your wishes known to your family and next-of-kin. Doctors will support the decision of the family at the time of death. That is why it is so important to talk to your family about your wishes.

For more information on how to become an organ donor, contact the Yukon Organ Donor Program at 867-667-5209 or toll free at 1-800-661-0408, local 5209. Once you are registered, your preferences will be stated on your Yukon health card. When you apply for your Yukon driver's licence, you can show this health card and ask to have the heart-shaped organ donor symbol shown on your Yukon driver's licence.





## in this chapter

- Preparing for emergencies
- Emergency driving strategies
- Environmental hazards
- Night hazards
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Animals on the road
- Collision avoidance
- At the scene of a crash

## driving tip

Ask an experienced driver what kind of emergency equipment you should carry in your vehicle. What equipment do you need in different situations or seasons?

**Chapter 7** gave useful strategies to help you handle personal situations that can influence your driving in a negative way. This chapter describes two strategies for handling driving emergencies and many practical tips for helping you prevent emergencies from developing.

## Preparing for emergencies

No one really expects to be involved in an emergency, but you can be sure that at some time you'll face one while you're driving. The best way to handle emergencies is to be prepared. One way you can prepare is by practising what you would do. Try these steps.

1. As you drive, look ahead and scan the scene for potential hazards (a child running out in front of you, a cyclist swerving into your lane, a car stopping in front of you suddenly, etc.)
2. Ask yourself: *What would I do?* (brake, swerve, pull over, etc.)

The best preparation is to always be alert and drive using the **see-think-do** strategy. If you're alert and make good decisions based on your observations, you will usually be able to take a driving action before an emergency develops.

Remember to prepare your vehicle for emergencies. Carry the right emergency equipment to help you deal with situations described in this chapter.

## Emergency driving strategies

Two strategies to handle dangerous situations are emergency braking and skid control. These strategies are difficult to master. You should only practise them in a safe location under the supervision of an expert driver.

### warning!

Even skilled drivers are not able to safely handle every emergency. The strategies in this chapter can't guarantee your safety. The best preparation for an emergency is to avoid it.

## Emergency braking

### You in the driver's seat

*You're driving along your street, almost home. Out of the corner of your right eye you see a ball roll out onto the street with a blurry image behind it — maybe the neighbour's child. There's hardly any time to stop.*

*What should you do?*

Even when you scan carefully, unexpected hazards can occur. When that happens, you may need to use emergency braking.

### Standard braking systems

The key to emergency braking with standard braking systems is to stop the vehicle as quickly as possible without locking the brakes. If you lock the brakes, the wheels stop turning. You will lose control of the steering and the car may skid.

In most cases, you will not want to lock the brakes when stopping quickly. However, there may be occasions when you choose to lock the brakes because stopping is more important than steering.

### Strategies: Emergency braking technique

To stop suddenly in an emergency:

1. press down hard on the brake pedal, but not hard enough to lock the wheels.
2. quickly release the brake and press hard again to regain control if you start to skid.
3. look and steer in the direction you want to go.

### driving tip

Learn to use ABS correctly by practising in a safe location. Accelerate to 30 km/h, brake hard and steer around an imaginary object. Do not pump the brakes because this turns the system off. Don't be alarmed by brake noise or shudder; this is normal. Check your owner's manual so you know the correct braking technique.

### Anti-lock braking systems (ABS)

ABS allows drivers to brake and steer at the same time. You can't do this with ordinary brakes. In an emergency situation, drivers using ABS should apply continuous, firm, hard pressure to the brake pedal until the vehicle stops. The computerized sensors automatically release the brakes from the wheels to prevent locking.

Contrary to what some people believe, ABS does not allow you to drive faster and they don't always allow you to stop sooner. On some surfaces, like gravel, the braking distance may be longer. But ABS can help prevent wheels from locking up on wet and slippery surfaces.

### think about

Think about the road conditions before you start to drive. Will the weather conditions make the road slippery? You should be able to avoid skidding by making safe choices in the first place. The most likely cause of skidding is poor driving skills.

## Skid control

### You in the driver's seat

*It's a cold morning and you're in a hurry to make it to work on time. You suddenly feel the vehicle isn't responding when you turn the steering wheel. You press the brake. The back of the car swings to the right. You've hit ice!*

*What should you do?*

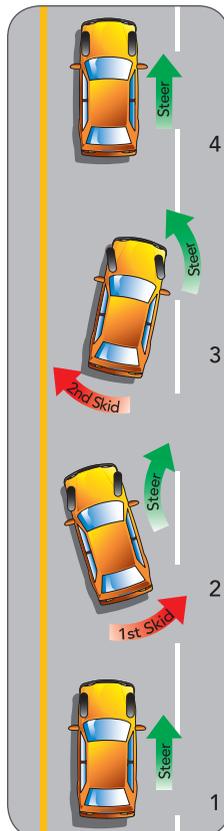
Skids can happen any time the tires lose grip on the road. This can be caused by slippery surfaces, as in the scene above, or by changing speed or direction too suddenly. Rain and ice contribute to skidding, but poor driving skills are the main cause of skidding. The way to avoid skids is to use your **see-think-do** skills. In slippery conditions, slow down.

### warning!

Skids happen when drivers:

- slam on the brakes
- slam on the brakes and steer at the same time
- go around a corner too fast
- accelerate suddenly

### Steps to handle a skid



The illustration shows what happens to your car when it skids and how you can regain control. The numbers in the illustration correspond to the following steps.

1. You're driving straight, but you fail to notice the patch of black ice ahead.
2. As you drive over the black ice, the rear of your vehicle skids to the right. Ease off the accelerator. Look and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go. (In this case, steer to the right.) Don't brake; this will make the situation worse.
3. Now the rear of your vehicle skids to the left. (This is likely caused by overcorrecting in Step 2.) Stay off the accelerator. Steer smoothly in the direction you want to go. (In this case, steer to the left.) You may need to repeat Steps 2 and 3 until you regain control.
4. Once you've regained control, continue driving with caution.

### driving tip

The best option in extreme weather conditions is to stay home or take the bus.

## Environmental hazards

In Yukon, ice fog, rain and snow can create difficult driving conditions. They can make road surfaces unpredictable. Slippery road surfaces are dangerous for drivers and their passengers, and may lead to crashes involving several vehicles.

### Loss of visibility

#### You in the driver's seat

*You're driving along a rural road when suddenly you're in a low area that is covered in fog. You strain to see ahead, but it is hard to see anything.*

*What should you do?*

### warning!

Your ability to effectively **see-think-do** is reduced in bad weather conditions



Weather conditions like fog, rain or snow can also be blinding. If you can't see clearly ahead or behind, your information about the road scene is dangerously reduced. You can't make good driving decisions in these conditions.

**driving tip**

Fog lights can be used instead of headlights in very foggy conditions. Make sure you know how to use your vehicle's heater and defroster controls. Some heater defrosters have a position to allow for recirculating the air in the vehicle's interior. Don't use this position in cold weather as it can cause windows to fog up.

**think about**

Your equipment list. A window scraper with a snow brush is a must.

**warning!**

It is against the law to drive unless your windows are clear of snow, ice or fog.

**Strategies: Driving in low visibility conditions**

Difficult weather conditions can be hazardous for drivers because visibility is often reduced. In these conditions:

- Slow down.
- Maintain extra space margins.
- Search and scan more carefully.
- Use low beam headlights in rain, snow and fog.
- Do not pass in extreme weather conditions because you can't see far enough ahead.
- Pull over and stop if necessary until the visibility improves. Choose a place that is safe from other traffic and does not block roadways.
- Use your defroster to keep your windows clear. If necessary, leave a window partly open for ventilation.
- Clear the vehicle of snow and ice before starting off. Make sure you can see clearly.
- Keep your wipers and washers in good working order.

**Glare and shadows**

Changing light conditions can reduce your ability to see. Glare can blind you in the day or at night when meeting vehicles with bright headlights. Dark shadows can hide hazards.

**Strategies: Overcoming glare and shadows**

To handle glare and shadows while driving:

- Slow down before entering tunnels to let your eyes adjust to the lower light levels.
- Remove your sunglasses and turn on your headlights while driving through tunnels.
- Use sunglasses and your sun visor during the daytime.
- Keep your windows clean.
- Adjust your rear-view mirror to the night-driving position.
- Keep a good following distance at night to reduce the glare your headlights create.

## Loss of traction

### You in the driver's seat

*It snowed during the night. You're just starting out to pick up some groceries. You've driven in snow before, so you don't think this should be a problem. As you move slowly down the driveway, you apply the brake lightly to test your braking distance. Your car slides slightly; this is more dangerous than you thought at first. There was icy, hard-packed snow below the new snow.*

*What should you do?*

Rain, snow and ice can affect your traction. Loose gravel, wet leaves, mud or sand can also make roads slippery and dangerous. Slow down and use caution when driving on any low-traction surface, and avoid driving altogether in extremely bad weather conditions.

### driving tip

Make sure your vehicle tires are in good condition, properly inflated and suitable for the driving conditions.

### Rain

Rain can cause two dangerous driving conditions:

- loss of traction
- hydroplaning.

Rain makes the road surface slippery, especially during the beginning of a rainfall. The rain mixes with the oil on the road to create a slippery, oily film. This film washes away with continued rain, but if the rain is light or if it has not rained for a long time, the road will remain slippery longer.

### Strategies: Driving on wet roads

Make sure you have good control when roads are wet:

- Slow down and leave more following distance.
- Allow at least twice the normal braking distance.
- Brake gently so the wheels don't lock.

### warning!

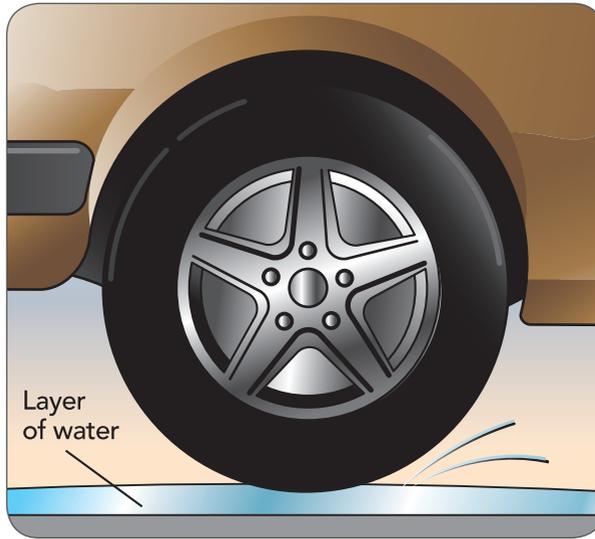
Never use cruise control in wet or slippery conditions. Your owner's manual will tell you to use it only in ideal driving conditions.

Hydroplaning happens when the tires lose contact with the road surface and float on a film of water. The driver instantly loses control of steering and braking. It can happen in rain or standing water. The higher your speed, the greater your chances of hydroplaning. You can tell if your vehicle is hydroplaning because the steering will suddenly become very light.

**driving tip**

Carry a good quality tire pressure gauge, know the correct tire pressure for your vehicle, and adjust the tire pressure as soon as it is needed.

Vehicles with low tire pressure or worn tread are more likely to hydroplane.

**Strategies: Preventing/handling hydroplaning**

To prevent hydroplaning:

- Check your tires for proper tread and inflation.
- Scan ahead for large puddles.
- Reduce your speed, especially during heavy rain.

If hydroplaning happens:

- Slow down and drive straight. Never brake.

**warning!**

Moving water that is deeper than half a metre can carry a car away.

**Deep water**

Going through deep water can stall your vehicle and can even damage the engine or transmission. Consider turning back and going another way if you are faced with water across the roadway. If you can't avoid the section of roadway, drive through very slowly. After leaving the water, lightly apply the brakes for a short distance to dry them.

**Ice and snow**

Ice and snow can cause you to lose traction very quickly. Lack of traction causes the wheels to spin when accelerating and to lock when braking. You can easily lose control of the steering.

In winter, temperatures can change quickly, causing unpredictable road traction. Temperatures near freezing are more dangerous than colder temperatures. Although the road may look the same, ice can form unexpectedly and may not be visible.

Be aware of hidden dangers:

- **Black ice** is caused by moisture freezing on the road surface. Normally you can't see it. But if the asphalt looks shiny and black instead of gray-white, be suspicious.
- **Shaded areas** may still be icy even after the sun has melted the ice on the other parts of the road.
- **Bridges and overpasses** tend to form ice on their surfaces before other road surfaces do.
- **Intersections** ice up quickly because of car exhaust and snow packing.

### warning!

It can take you 10 times the normal braking distance to stop on ice.

### Strategies: Handling ice and snow

When faced with icy or snowy driving conditions:

#### Plan ahead

- Check the weather forecast before starting out. Staying home may be the wisest choice.
- Use tires that are suitable for winter conditions.
- Carry chains. Snow tires and/or chains are a good idea on Yukon roads during the winter.
- Carry sand or a piece of carpet to use if you become stuck on ice or in snow.

#### See

- Make sure you can see. Scrape snow or frost from the windows and mirrors, get rid of any ice or snow on the wipers and clean all the lights before driving.
- Scan further ahead when driving to give yourself a larger safety margin.

#### Think

- Plan turns and stops further ahead so you have more time to react.

#### Do

- Slow down.
- Accelerate gently. Sudden starts can send a vehicle into a skid or cause the wheels to spin.
- Carefully test your braking and steering at a very low speed. Use this test to decide whether to continue, or whether to slow down more.

- Ease off the brakes and then re-apply them to maintain steering control if the wheels lock.
- Slow down before entering curves and corners. Braking in curves may cause you to skid.
- Use a low gear to go down hills that are icy.
- Don't use cruise control in icy or snowy driving conditions.
- Allow extra space margins (including more following distance).
- Avoid passing unless absolutely necessary.
- Travel in the section of road with the least amount of snow or ice if you have the choice of more than one lane.
- Use a gentle, smooth steering motion.

## Stranded or snowbound

If you're stranded in snow, stay with your vehicle unless you are absolutely sure you can reach help.

If you decide to run the car to keep the interior warm, only do this for about five minutes every hour. You must be very cautious because the car could fill with carbon monoxide gas. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause dizziness or drowsiness and even lead to death. Make sure you also check that the exhaust pipe and exhaust system are not blocked or damaged because this could cause increased leakage of carbon monoxide into the car. Keep one window slightly open at all times for fresh air. Make sure that at least one person stays awake at all times.

### warning!

If you feel dizzy or drowsy while your vehicle is running, you may be getting carbon monoxide poisoning. Turn off the engine and get plenty of fresh air.

### think about

The equipment you need for winter driving. On long trips through rural areas, or with passengers, what else might be useful?



### Turbulence

Watch out for crosswinds, headwinds and tailwinds. These can make it difficult for you to control steering. Even a passing tractor-trailer can create enough turbulence to move a vehicle.

#### fast fact

Driving in strong cross winds can make turbulence harder to handle.

#### Strategies: Dealing with turbulence

If you experience turbulence while driving:

- Slow down.
- Grip the steering wheel firmly with both hands.
- Watch out for vehicles that could be more easily forced into your path like motorcycles, small cars, campers and vehicles towing trailers.
- Allow extra space on the side if you are passing a large truck or trailer.

### Night hazards

#### You in the driver's seat

*You've been driving all day to reach the city where your friends live. Now it's nighttime, and you're feeling a bit drowsy. You're on a quiet rural road. There is very little traffic, but you see a car approaching from a distance. You switch from high beam to low beam. The other driver isn't dimming the headlights. They are shining straight into your eyes, and it's hard for you to see.*

*What should you do?*

Driving at night is a challenge for all drivers. It means your vision is limited and you can't be seen as well. You can't judge distances as well either. You will need to be more alert to practise **see-think-do** effectively.

#### Using the headlights

Make sure you use the right headlights for the driving conditions. Low beam headlights will light up a path up to 30 metres straight ahead of you. High beams give you about 100 metres of light.

Be sure to use your headlights properly.

- The law states you must have your headlights on at all times when driving Yukon highways.

**driving tip**

Do you have trouble judging distances? Most people do. Be courteous and dim your lights early.

- It is illegal to drive at night with parking lights or daytime running lights instead of headlights.
- You must dim your high beam headlights when you are within 150 metres of another vehicle, either when meeting or following a vehicle.
- You must also use headlights if visibility is reduced to less than 150 metres (e.g., in fog or heavy rain).



Daytime



Low beam headlights



High beam headlights

**Overdriving the headlights**

Be careful not to overdrive your headlights at night, or in fog, rain or snow. Overdriving happens if you go too fast and you are not able to stop within the distance covered by your headlights. It is especially dangerous in a curve.

**Strategies: Night driving**

To reduce the risks of driving at night:

- Keep your eyes moving. Scan carefully for pedestrians, cyclists and animals on the road.
- Avoid glare from lights. Glance to the right edge of the road to avoid glare from oncoming lights. Adjust your rear-view mirror to the night-driving position to avoid headlight glare from vehicles behind you. Adjust your outside rear-view mirrors so that the body of the vehicle is just outside your view; this will help reduce blind spots as well as glare. Keep interior lights off and keep the instrument panel lights low.
- Keep your windows and lights clean.
- Stay alert at night. Sing, talk out loud or stop for a cup of coffee to make sure you stay awake.
- Slow down.
- Increase your following distance.

## Vehicle breakdowns

An unexpected vehicle breakdown can create a dangerous situation for you and your passengers. The best prevention is having a well-maintained vehicle and doing regular and pre-trip checks.

### Tire blowout

#### think about

What a slow leak feels like and how it affects your driving.

#### You in the driver's seat

*You are driving along a highway when your front tire suddenly blows out.*

*What should you do?*

When a front tire blows out, your vehicle can be pulled in the direction of the deflated tire, especially at high speeds. A rear blowout can cause the vehicle to start skidding.

#### Strategies: Handling a tire blowout

To help stay safe when a tire blows out:

- Keep a firm grip on the steering wheel.
- Don't brake suddenly and risk loss of steering control. Ease off the accelerator and let the vehicle decelerate slowly. You can start to brake gently once the car has slowed down.
- If you start to skid, steer in the direction you want to go. (See **Skid control** earlier in this chapter.)
- Signal or put on the hazard lights and pull off the road as soon as it's safe.

#### driving tip

Be sure you know how to change a tire. Is your vehicle carrying the equipment you need? Is packing a tire repair kit a good idea?

### Brake failure

Total brake failure is rare. However, if your brake system fails, you will need to use your **see-think-do** skills to respond quickly and safely.

**driving tip**

If you have power or power-assisted steering, you can still steer even after the engine has stopped. You just need to use more effort. If the engine stops, don't turn the ignition off, because the steering will lock.

**Strategies: Handling brake failure**

If your brakes ever fail:

- Don't panic. Keep thinking about the hazards in front of you and how to avoid them.
- Look for an escape route or something to slow you down (like a side road or open field).
- Pump the brakes hard and fast. You may be able to get enough braking action to stop the vehicle.
- Gear down to the lowest gear so the engine will help slow you down.
- Apply the parking brake gently and gradually. Use the brake release as you do this, so you are prepared to release the brake quickly if the car goes into a skid.
- Use the hazard lights or the horn to warn other drivers.

**Engine problems**

You never know when the engine may die. If this happens, you need to move out of traffic and into a safe place as quickly as possible.

**warning!**

If your vehicle catches fire, stop and get everyone out immediately. Do not open the hood — that could cause the fire to spread. Move well away from the vehicle.

**Strategies: Handling engine failure**

If your engine ever fails:

- Signal and steer to the edge of the road.
- Try to get to the nearest exit or service area or pull off the road as far as possible on a busy highway or freeway. Avoid stopping on a bridge or in a tunnel if at all possible.
- Turn on your hazard lights.
- Set out flares or a warning triangle if it is dark or visibility is limited.
- Stay with your vehicle. Put a HELP sign on your windshield.
- Consider carrying a cellphone if you often travel on freeways or isolated roadways. In Yukon, cellphones may only work in communities. Let someone know your travel plans before you leave.
- Never get into a stranger's vehicle. Ask them to continue ahead and phone for you.
- Don't try to do roadside repairs on crowded and fast-moving freeways.

**think about**

Whether you'll equip your vehicle with flares. What about a HELP sign?

### Headlight failure

It is dangerous and illegal to drive at night without headlights. You must get off the road as quickly as possible if your lights fail.

#### Strategies: Handling headlight failure

If your headlights ever fail:

- Turn the light switch on and off quickly.
- Turn on the hazard lights if the headlights stay off.
- Slow down, pull off the road and get help.

### Hood flying up

Hoods can fly up if they are not securely latched. If you notice that your hood is not properly latched, pull over and fully close the hood.

#### Strategies: Hood flying up

Don't panic if you find yourself blinded by the hood flying up when you're driving.

- Try to look through the crack below the hood or open your window and look in the direction you're travelling.
- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Turn on the hazard lights.
- Pump your brakes to warn drivers behind you that you're slowing down.
- Steer over to the side of the road.

Be conscious that there could be cars or people on the edge of the road or that you could be on a multi-lane road.

#### warning!

Never reach down with your hand to release a stuck gas pedal because you could easily lose control of the vehicle.

### Gas pedal sticking

The gas pedal can stick due to ice or snow build-up, or because of a malfunction.

You may be able to release the pedal by using your toe to lift it if you are travelling at a very low speed when the pedal sticks.



### warning!

Drive with extra caution when you see animal signs posted along the road. These signs are posted in areas with a history of wildlife/vehicle collisions.

### driving tip

If you see an animal on the road, slow down and try flashing your headlights from high to low beam.

### driving tip

Take extra care when driving near horses and riders. Slow down and give them lots of space when you pass. Don't honk the horn because this could cause the horse to bolt into your path.

### Strategies: Stuck gas pedal

If your gas pedal sticks:

- Apply the brake.
- Look for an escape path that will get you off the road. Continue to brake.
- Shift to neutral to disconnect the engine from the wheels. (This may damage your engine but it's better than crashing. Note that steering and braking will become harder if the engine stops.)
- Follow your escape path and, once you're stopped, turn off the engine.
- Do not try to start the engine again. Call for help instead.

## Animals on the road

### You in the driver's seat

*You're driving along a rural highway at dusk. You're keeping a careful watch for animals; you've seen bison and elk in this area before. Suddenly, a large elk steps out from the brush, right into your path.*

*What should you do?*

In Yukon, animals on the road are a major hazard. Crashing into a large animal can cause damage and injury, not just to the animal, but to you and your passengers.

### Strategies: Watching for animals

To help prevent a collision with an animal:

- Scan the sides of the roadway ahead for animals.
- Watch for animal crossing signs when driving through farming or wooded areas. Slow down in these areas.
- Be extra cautious at dusk and dawn. This is when animals move around to feed, and it is also harder for you to see them at these times.
- Look for sudden, unusual spots of light on the roadway at night. This may be the reflection of your headlights off an animal's eyes.
- Remember that wild animals often move in herds. If you see one animal, there may be more.

### driving tip

Watch the ditches on either side of the road for animals. Also consider whether you could safely drive into the ditch in an emergency.

### Strategies: When an animal is in your path

If an animal is directly in front of you:

- Check your rear-view mirror to see if there is a vehicle behind you, or if you can stop suddenly.
- Assess the risks and decide on an action. Can you stop safely? Can you steer around the animal? Would it be better to hit the animal or risk a crash?
- Slow down but resist the urge to slam on your brakes when you see an animal. This could send your vehicle out of control.
- Leave a wide margin when you drive around an animal. A frightened animal may run in any direction.
- If the animal is large and you can't stop in time, brake firmly and steer to strike the animal at an angle. Let up on the brake pedal just before hitting the animal. This will cause the front of your vehicle to rise and reduce the chance that the animal will come through the windshield.

## Collision avoidance

### You in the driver's seat

*You're driving up a hill. Suddenly a car is coming right toward you in your lane.*

*What should you do?*

No one wants to be involved in a collision, but you may find yourself in a situation where one is unavoidable. The best way to avoid collisions is to use your **see-think-do** skills. Keep yourself alert, scan systematically, maintain good space margins and travel at the appropriate speed. These steps will help you avoid most collisions.

Even if you're faced with an unavoidable collision, you can sometimes reduce the impact. You will need to think quickly to do this.

### driving tip

In an emergency, try to steer away from light standards and power poles. Crashing your vehicle into hard, thin objects increases the risk of death and injuries.

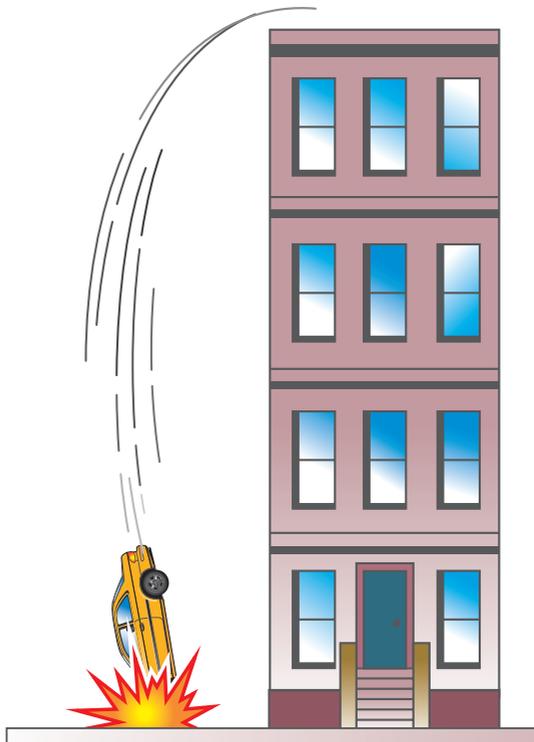
### Strategies: Avoiding crashes or reducing the impact

These techniques may help avoid a crash or reduce the impact of a crash:

- Slow down as much as possible.
- Try to avoid locking the brakes.
- Try to steer for something that will cushion your car, like bushes or a high snow bank. Avoid hard objects like parked cars or trees.
- Try to avoid a head-on collision at all costs by steering to the side. Steer to the right, not the left, as the oncoming driver may steer to the right.
- Use the horn. This may help the other driver regain alertness.

### crash fact

Crashing into a solid object at 30 km/h is like sitting in a vehicle when it falls from a one-storey building. At 60 km/h, hitting a solid object is like being in a vehicle when it falls from the roof of a four-storey building.



As shown in the graphic above, twice the speed means four times the force of impact. This is one reason why speed is such an important factor in crashes, and why slowing down saves lives.

### think about

If you arrive at the scene of a crash, you may decide to stop and help. Think about what you would do. What would you like others to do if you were involved in a crash?

### driving tip

When driving by a crash scene, don't slow down more than necessary. Stay focused on your driving to avoid causing another crash.

## At the scene of a crash

### You in the driver's seat

*As you round a curve, you hear the sound of screeching brakes followed by a crash. You slow down and see that the car in front of you has rear-ended a truck.*

*What should you do?*

## You arrive at the scene of a crash

If other drivers have been involved in a crash, they may need assistance.

### Strategies: Assisting at a crash scene

Here are some of the ways you might be able to help:

- Make sure your vehicle is parked away from the crash where it won't hold up other traffic or emergency vehicles.
- Take measures to alert other drivers that there has been a crash: for example, set up warning triangles. This will help to avoid further crashes and injuries.
- Call for emergency services if necessary. Consider carrying a cellphone for emergency situations.
- Stay with injured people until help arrives.
- Do not let anyone smoke or light matches near the scene. There could be a fuel leak.

## You are involved in a crash

### Legal responsibilities

You have certain legal responsibilities if:

- you're involved in a crash
- other drivers have a crash because of something you do.

In either of these cases, you are legally required to:

1. Remain at the scene.
2. Give all reasonable assistance. Call for emergency services if you can and if necessary.

### driving tip

Record important information at the scene of a crash.

3. You must exchange the following information with the other driver, anyone who has been injured and anyone whose property has been damaged:
  - your name and address
  - the name and address of the registered owner of the vehicle
  - the licence plate number
  - insurance information.

You must also provide this information to the police or a witness if requested.

### Suggestions

Here are some other things you should do:

- Move the vehicles off the road if it is safe to do so.
- Avoid discussing who is at fault for the crash.
- Write down the names and addresses of all witnesses.
- Exchange driver's licence numbers with any other drivers involved.
- Draw a sketch or take photos of the scene, noting conditions such as time, location and weather.
- Notify your insurance company right away.