

6. TRAFFIC ON THE HIGHWAY – SHARING THE ROAD

When driving remember that there are many different users of our streets and highways.

It is everyone's responsibility to watch out for and adjust to the presence and actions of others.

- Passenger car drivers
- Truck drivers
- Motorcycle drivers
- Motor driven cycle drivers (moped)
- Bicyclists
- Pedestrians
- School bus drivers
- Emergency vehicle operators

The safety of all road users is shared. The more we make ourselves aware of and accept this responsibility, the safer we will make our streets and highways.

6.1 Drivers Helping Other Drivers

Driving is a high risk task - it is important to always pay attention – keep your mind on driving— be alert and adjust to the actions of others.

- Keep a safe following distance
- Avoid tailgating
- Avoid crowding other vehicles and leave yourself space in case of an emergency

Check your blind spot and watch for other drivers when turning or changing lanes. Avoid travelling in another vehicle's blind spot.

Avoid sudden or abrupt moves that might confuse other drivers.

Regardless of the speed limit posted, do not drive faster than conditions allow – adjust your speed to weather, road, traffic and vehicle conditions. Winter conditions demand your constant attention – watch for temperature changes, especially at or near the freezing point when roads are most slippery.

6.2 Drivers and Large Commercial Vehicles

Very large vehicles can be intimidating to car drivers - the fact is that it works both ways.

Vehicle Drivers

Large vehicles require more space when making turns at intersections.

- Right Turn – may require the driver to swing left before turning right. NEVER attempt to move into this open space.
- Left Turn – may require the driver to swing wide and use all the extra space.
- Heavy vehicles require longer stopping distances and accelerate more slowly. Avoid passing while going down hill. Wait until you are on level ground and the speed has stabilized.
- Large vehicles have very large **blind spots** – always keep eye contact with the driver. Remember, if you cannot see the driver, the driver cannot see you.
- Allow additional time and distance to pass these vehicles safely.

Large Commercial Vehicle Drivers:

- must have consideration for smaller vehicle driver.
- do not tailgate, always keep a safe following distance.
- do not attempt to pass unless you have enough time to complete the pass safely.
- be alert while turning for vehicles that may crowd in beside you.
- be alert for smaller vehicles cutting in front of you especially at intersections, driveways, business areas and multi-lane highways.

NOTE: Driving a large vehicle requires a special person who respects other road users. Think before you act. It takes a lot of knowledge and skill to be a successful *professional driver*.



6.3 Drivers and Motorcycles

Vehicle drivers and motorcyclists must share the road and do so safely. Always follow the rules of the road and be alert to the traffic around you.

Vehicle Drivers

- Look for motorcycles; make sure you know what the motorcycle driver is going to do before you make your manoeuvre into his/her path.
- A motorcycle is entitled to a full highway lane.
Never crowd into the same lane as the motorcycle.
- Motorcycles can stop quicker than other vehicles – therefore allow extra following distance.
- Motorcycles may be difficult to see and can easily disappear in your blind spot – *USE CAUTION*.

Motorcycle Drivers

- Remember your vehicle is small and not easily seen. Make eye contact with other drivers.
- Position yourself to see and be seen - as a rule ride in the left wheel position and keep a safe following distance.
- Maintain your lane position. Do not zig-zag between cars in traffic.

6.4 Drivers and Bicycles

Riders of bicycles must obey the traffic rules and regulations that apply to all road users. Drivers must respect the bicyclist's right to share the road.

Vehicle Drivers

Bicyclists are at greater risk of death or injury – use extreme caution.

- Check your blind spot when turning left and especially when turning right.

- Bicyclists can dart in and out of traffic quickly, expect the unexpected.
- Give the bicyclist room, do not tailgate or crowd the bicyclist.

Bicyclists

You are at greater risk of death or injury in a collision.

- Let others know what you are going to do, use hand signals, and be in the correct lane position.
- Check your blind spots.
- Avoid busy streets.
- Stay off sidewalks.
- Safe bicycling requires knowledge, skill and maturity.
- Keep your bicycle in good working order and properly equipped (i.e. horn, lights and reflectors at night).

It is mandatory to wear an approved helmet when riding your bicycle.

6.5 Drivers and Pedestrians

Vehicle Drivers

Remember that pedestrians are extremely vulnerable to death or injury in a collision with a motor vehicle.

- Drivers must give the pedestrian the right of way in a crosswalk, unless otherwise indicated by a sign or signal.
- Pedestrians may not act as you expect – expect the unexpected. Be alert.
- Persons with disabilities may take longer to cross the street – give them enough time.
- *Never pass a vehicle yielding to a pedestrian at a crosswalk.*

Pedestrians

- Always stop and make eye contact with drivers. Check ahead, left, right and behind for other vehicles.
- Always look behind the one car you see for passing vehicles - learn to expect the unexpected.
- Cross the street briskly, do not run.

- At night, wear light coloured or reflective type clothing so drivers can see you better.
- Do not rely on the driver for your own safety.
- Obey all traffic signals, use crosswalks and sidewalks.

Important Note:

Drivers must always be aware that pedestrians can be hidden in the vehicle's *blind spot*:

- behind the rear view mirror.
- beside the door pillars.
- to the sides of the vehicle.
- in front of and behind the vehicle (do a circle check before starting).

6.6 Drivers and School Buses

Transportation of school students is an important part of our education system and requires the co-operation of all drivers.

Vehicle Drivers

School buses are specially marked and have alternating flashing lights.

- Alternating flashing **amber** lights are to be used 150 metres (500 feet) before the school bus stops to pick up children. Be alert for students.
- Alternating flashing **red** lights are used when the school bus is stopped, *while* picking up or discharging students.

It is illegal to pass a school bus displaying the alternating flashing red lights.

School Bus Drivers

- School bus drivers should be courteous and assist in maintaining the flow of traffic.
- Be alert for passing motorists when picking up or discharging students.

- Train your students to be alert and cautious when using the school bus.
- All drivers hired to transport children to and from school must obtain a “B” or “C” endorsement on their driver’s licence.

Drivers of school buses must stop before proceeding through a railway crossing unless otherwise indicated.

6.7 Drivers and Emergency Vehicles

Drivers of emergency vehicles and other vehicle drivers must share the responsibility of assisting in dealing with emergencies.

Drivers

When approached by an emergency vehicle using siren and flashing lights:

- Pull over to the right and come to a complete stop. Allow the emergency vehicle to proceed.
- Yield the right of way to emergency vehicles at intersections.
- It is an offence to follow an emergency vehicle within 150 metres (500 feet).

Emergency Vehicle Drivers

- May only use siren and flashing lights when responding to an emergency.
- Are required to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highways at all times.

6.8 Drivers and Farm Vehicles

In recent years, the number of collisions on Canadian highways involving farm equipment has increased. The equipment has become larger in size and the speeds at which they operate are higher. However, in most cases, the equipment has not kept pace with other vehicles using the highways. When approaching, it can be difficult for other drivers to determine the rate of speed at which the farm equipment is traveling. Three major types of accidents involving farm equipment include:

- rear end collisions with moving vehicles,
- collisions at intersections where the direction of movement of the farm vehicle was difficult to recognize and
- overtaking a farm vehicle that is turning left.

As a result, new regulations have been made regarding the safe movement of farm vehicles. It is important that all other road users be familiar with safe driving practices when in the presence of such vehicles:

- **BE ALERT!** - Watch for slow moving farm equipment and adjust your speed accordingly. Give these drivers the courtesy that you would expect if you were driving the equipment.
- **BE AWARE!** - Look for any farm lanes near the highway and watch for signs indicating high volumes of agricultural equipment. When you encounter slow-moving equipment, slow down, keep your distance and assess the situation.
- **DO NOT PASS!** - First ensure that the operator of the farm equipment is fully aware of your intentions. Be sure that the way is clear. Always check your rear view mirror for other approaching vehicles that may be traveling at a faster rate than you.
- **BE PATIENT!** - Often, these large farm vehicles will not be able to respond to you immediately. It may be impossible for the equipment to move over right away if there are obstructions or soft shoulders on the road.