

Many drivers do not know how to safely mix in traffic with motorcycles, bicycles, buses, large trucks, or pedestrians – all of whom have rights and responsibilities on the road. Avoid crashes and injuries by following the laws and common-sense safety rules for sharing the roadway, which is considered an extension of your workplace.

## Sharing the road with motorcycles

- Search traffic around you for motorcycles. Look for a helmet above, tires below, or a shadow alongside a vehicle that you can't see around.
- Check your blind spots before changing lanes or merging.
- Double-check traffic at intersections before you turn or pull out.
- Try to predict hazards facing motorcyclists and how they might react. Poor road conditions, bad weather, flying debris, oil slicks, and heavy traffic all put motorcyclists at risk.
- Don't follow too closely behind a motorcycle, because it can stop more quickly than other vehicles, and some road hazards could cause the motorcyclist to fall. Increase your "space cushion" behind a motorcycle to four seconds. Pick a fixed spot. When the motorcycle passes the spot, count "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four." If you pass the same spot before you finish counting, you are following too closely.
- Increase the following distance even more in poor driving conditions, at higher speeds, and at night to give the motorcyclist more space.
- Use turn signals early to indicate your next move. This lets the motorcyclist anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.
- Take a second look for motorcycles when turning left at an intersection. It is harder to see them and to judge their approach speed in traffic.
- Do not drive your car beside a motorcycle in the same lane. It is unsafe and illegal.
- Obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals, and yield the right of way. Treat motorcyclists with the same respect and courtesy you do other motorists.
- Stay focused on driving. Inattention is a major cause of car-motorcycle crashes. Remove all possible distractions – such as electronic devices – that could take your attention away from the road.



## Sharing the road with bicycles



- Bicycles are considered vehicles, but they are smaller and harder to spot. They also lack protection in a crash. Watch out for cyclists, especially at intersections. Check your vehicle's blind spots, and make sure a cyclist isn't coming up behind one side of your vehicle before turning in that direction. Signal well before you turn.
- Learn cyclists' turn signals – left arm outstretched for a left turn, right arm outstretched for a right turn, and left arm downward for a stop.
- Avoid passing a bicycle just before you turn at an intersection.
- Give cyclists extra time to cross intersections.

- Slow down and allow plenty of space – about 4 feet – when you pass a bicycle. Check over your shoulder before returning to your lane.
- Cyclists should ride with the traffic flow, and they must obey the same street signs, signals, and lane markings that other drivers do. By Texas law, a cyclist moving slower than traffic must ride as close as possible to the road's right curb or edge. Keep in mind that for their safety, cyclists might need to dodge potholes, debris, or other road obstacles without warning.
- Be considerate – don't startle cyclists by honking your horn unnecessarily right near them.
- Look around for cyclists before you open your door. Check rear and side mirrors, and look over your shoulder.

## Sharing the road with large trucks and buses

- Keep in mind the physical limitations of buses and large trucks (also known as commercial motor vehicles, CMVs) when driving near them. Trucks' large size and mass makes them accelerate more slowly, speed up faster going downhill, and take longer to come to a stop. Don't cut in front of a truck and suddenly slow down or stop; wait until you can see both of its headlights and its front tires in your rearview mirror to move into the lane. A crash with a bus or large truck will likely result in more severe injuries and damage to the smaller vehicle.
- Be patient behind large trucks that need to slow down on curves or ramps. A taller vehicle's higher center of gravity makes it more likely to roll over in a crash. Passenger cars can also be pushed or pulled under a large truck in a crash due to the difference in the vehicles' ground clearance.
- Be aware that large vehicles create wind gusts that can push smaller vehicles around on the road. If you are passing an oncoming truck, grip the steering wheel to offset the air turbulence. If you are on a motorcycle, move to the right-hand part of the lane.
- Leave plenty of space around trucks, which have large blind spots, or "no zones." Trucks have a big blind spot right behind the trailer – up to 200 feet. Other blind spots are up to 20 feet in front of the tractor, and anywhere along the sides of the trailer – especially on the left, so it's a good idea to position your vehicle so the driver can see it. In general, if you can't see the truck driver in his or her side mirrors, the driver cannot see you.
- Stay far back when following a truck. Use the "space cushion" counting tip in the motorcycle section to stay at least two seconds behind, or more as conditions call for.
- Avoid driving next to a truck for any length of time. If the truck needs to make an emergency move into your lane, it could crush your vehicle. Likewise, a tire blowout on a truck can cause you or the truck driver to lose control of the vehicle. You also don't want to get boxed in next to a truck and behind a slow-moving vehicle.
- Be strategic when passing a large truck. When you start to pass, don't get too close to the back of the truck. To move back into your lane, don't move in too quickly from either side. Don't return to your lane until you can see both of the truck's headlights and its front tires in your rearview mirror. Avoid passing trucks while traveling on a downgrade, where they can pick up speed.
- Be courteous when a truck driver signals to change lanes. Stay to the right and slow down slightly. Giving the truck plenty of space gets you out of its blind spots sooner.
- Do not pass a large truck when it is turning right. Large trucks make wide right turns, so the driver might not see you. They can't easily turn from the right lane, so they move left to make turning space. If you try to pass on the right when a truck is turning right, you could get stuck in the "right-turn squeeze" and contribute to a crash.
- When large trucks turn left, they often need to cross the road's center line. If you are stopped at an intersection, don't "block the box" – back up or move toward the side of the road if possible to give the truck more room.



## Sharing the road with pedestrians

- In Texas, drivers must always yield to pedestrians. Vehicles may not enter a crosswalk when it is occupied by a pedestrian who is on the same half of the roadway as the vehicle or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite side of the road as to be in danger. (Pedestrians should cross streets only at crosswalks, or, if there is no crosswalk, cross carefully at a well-lit place where drivers can see them.)
- Stop your vehicle before a crosswalk when required to stop by traffic signs, traffic signals, or pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk – there might be people crossing whom you can't see.
- Look for and yield to pedestrians before you turn. Yield even when you get a green light to turn right at the same time a pedestrian at a marked crosswalk gets the signal to walk in the same direction. (Pedestrians should also use crosswalk push buttons when they are available. That tells the traffic signal light to stay red longer to give pedestrians time to cross the street.)
- Be careful when backing up in parking lots, out of driveways, or across sidewalks. (By Texas law, pedestrians must use an adjacent sidewalk if it is provided. If it isn't, pedestrians should walk on the left side of the road facing traffic.)
- Slow down and obey the speed limit.



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