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### EC88-785 Traffic Emergencies ... Prepare for Them!

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TRAFFIC EMERGENCIES

# Traffic Emergencies...

## ...prepare for them!



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



# TRAFFIC EMERGENCIES.....

## Prepare for them!

Rollin D. Schnieder  
Extension Safety Specialist

So you're taking a trip. How far? To town, to the fair or to a football game? Perhaps it's a vacation trip of hundreds of miles. Whatever the distance, preparation is important.

There are things you should know and have for your trip. Your credentials and equipment should be up-to-date at all times so if you have to leave for a long trip on a moment's notice, you will be ready.

What should you be concerned about? Let's start with insurance. There are two main kinds of auto insurance—liability and collision.

*Liability insurance* includes personal, per person; personal, per accident; and property damage.

This is usually described by coverage amount, such as 25/50/25 (liability insurance up to \$25,000 per injured person, up to \$50,000 total per accident and property damage up to \$25,000 per accident). In some states 25/50/25 coverage is below the minimum required by law. Nebraska's minimum is 25/50/25. Many motorists carry 100/300/100 or even more. Investigate whether you need more insurance, at least during the time of your trip, than the law requires in Nebraska.

*Collision insurance* helps repair or replace your own car in case of collision damage. It is not required by law. Carrying it is a matter of personal preference or family economics.

### Traveling Papers

There are several papers you should consider as must papers when traveling:

- Drivers license
- Vehicle registration
- Hospitalization card
- Emergency medical identification
- Auto insurance company identification card
- Motor club identification card
- Travelers checks or blank bank checks
- Cards or addresses of friends or next of kin

Keep in mind that Nebraska has a re-examination law for driver licensing. It is possible that your license could

expire while you are on a trip. If this is so, take your re-examination before you leave.

### What To Check

Check your own health but, above all, check the health of your car. A stall on today's high-speed roads can be a frightening—and dangerous—experience. If you're not happy with your car's start, idle or road performance, tell your mechanic. A tune-up before setting out may save risk or towing expense.

Tell your serviceman you're going to take a trip. Ask him to make a complete safety check covering:

- Tires, including spare
- Steering system
- Brakes
- Hoses and belts
- Fluid levels, including water, oil, master brake cylinder, power steering reservoir, transmission, differential, battery
- Exhaust system
- Windshield wipers and washers
- All lights
- Front end alignment

A long trip at sustained highway speeds means *safety up*, not just gas up. If your care is air conditioned, keep condenser and radiator clean of bugs and leaves by brushing and vacuuming from front. This will prevent overheating especially in slow traffic.

### How About Proper Packing?

A heavy load changes the handling characteristics of your car, so don't expect the performance you are accustomed to in normal driving. Acceleration will be more sluggish. Stopping distances will be greater. And you'll find increased sway on curves. More room for passing and stopping will be needed.

Load the car so you don't block rear corner vision or the rear-view mirror. A heavy trunk load can danger-

ously affect steering and headlight aim. This is especially hazardous in rain when the shift of weight balance from the front wheels can cause hydroplaning and loss of steering control where a thin film of water keeps tires from actually touching the road. A top carrier or a small trailer may better distribute a heavy load.

By all means, keep hard, pointed or heavy objects off the rear shelf. In a minor collision or even a sudden stop, they can become lethal missiles.

Proper tire inflation and adequate tire size are all-important when carrying extra cargo. You may need additional air pressure or larger tires. Consult your owner's manual or check with your car dealer.

### **Emergency Equipment—A Must When You Need It**

Highway problems can occur on a moment's notice. You may drive for years without a problem. Then suddenly an emergency arises. Here are some of the things you might need:

- Flares
- Portable electric light or lantern
- First aid kit and manual
- Fire extinguisher (multi-purpose dry chemical is best)
- Tow chain
- Jack, lug wrench
- Matches
- Windshield ice scraper
- Tire chains
- Shovel

### **Before You Go**

TELL police or sheriff's office how long you'll be gone and where you can be reached in an emergency.

ASK a neighbor to keep an eye on your house. A next door day-night "watchman" is the best you can get. A timer switch that turns a light on at night and off during the day is an additional safeguard.

STOP regular deliveries such as milk and newspapers.

HAVE the post office hold or re-direct your mail.

ARRANGE for regular lawn mowing.

SHUT OFF gas and water at main valves, electricity at master switch unless freezer or refrigerator is to be left on (if off, block doors open to prevent mildew).

LOCK all windows and doors but don't lower shades.

### **How About Driver Physical Fitness?**

Fatigue is probably a driver's most common booby trap. New interstate highways invite long trips, with monotonous, constant-speed, one-position driving. It's even more important on such highways to stop and rest, or change drivers, every two hours.

Alcohol in any form dulls reflexes, impairs judgment and makes you a "sitting duck" for an accident.

Drugs such as tranquilizers and antihistamines, pep pills and some pain killers can be deadly to a driver.

And if taken in association with alcohol (either before or after a drink or two), many common medicines can act like knockout drops. Ask your doctor if your medications can affect your driving ability.

Carbon monoxide is produced by all auto and truck engines. It is a creeping killer, stalking its victims without being smelled, tasted or seen. So never run an engine in a confined place, don't neglect periodic checks of the exhaust system and don't tailgate in heavy traffic. If you ever experience headache, weakness or any strange feeling while driving, park immediately and get fresh air. Avoid driving with windows closed.

Hunger is a poor travel companion. Don't skip or delay meals because you're in a hurry to "get there." Low blood sugar is a common cause of fatigue and drowsiness. Eat regular light meals of easily digested foods along the way. Carry fruits and cookies to munch on.

Altitude can cause weakness, sleepiness or dizziness. If you notice such symptoms, stop, open the windows and rest until you feel better. It may be better to avoid smoking. See a doctor if symptoms recur.

Emotional strain is a known cause of accidents. Don't drive when upset. Avoid quarrels in the car. Driving requires full concentration.

Minor ailments such as indigestion and headache that cause pain and discomfort are a threat. If you're not feeling right, ask someone else to drive for awhile. If alone, pull off the road for a rest and get a good night's sleep as soon as possible.

### **Seat Belts Are A Must**

Statistics show that seat belts have been of great benefit to Nebraska drivers. Nebraska passed legislation in 1964 requiring seat belts in the front seats of all new cars sold. The federal government now requires manufacturers to put belts in front and rear. Newer designs are appearing in the newer models of cars.

The problem so far is that all people are not wearing seat belts. Where belts have been in use, lives have been saved and serious injuries have declined.

If you're caught in a car crash, will you be sitting on your seat belt or snugly buckled up? Make it a habit to buckle up and lock your door even before turning the key in the ignition. Make sure the children are properly buckled. Keep your car seat as far back from the steering wheel as possible. This allows you to maintain the greatest critical distance between the steering wheel and you.

## Are You Ready for Hazardous Road Conditions?

When weather or road conditions are hazardous, stay off the road if possible. If you must go ahead, here's how to keep moving with minimum danger:

### Rain

A new rain after a dry spell means danger because the water lifts accumulated oil from the pavement and causes intermittent "slicks." Hydroplaning, a phenomenon in which front tires ride on a water film and threaten steering control, can occur more easily with a heavy trunk load. In any rain cut speed, turn headlights on low beam, allow more room for stopping—and watch for head-down pedestrians.

Remember—rainstorm visibility is very poor straight ahead and almost zero on sides and to the rear.

Even after a heavy rain has stopped, be on the alert for poorly drained sections of the highway that may be covered with water too deep for safety at normal speeds. Slow down and shift to lower gear to prevent a stall and to keep ignition system dry. Lightly "ride" brakes to dry them. Never venture into water of unknown depth.

### Fog

No amount of driving skill can compensate for the lack of visibility in fog. Slow down when you encounter any fog, even a thin patch. Keep headlight beams low and watch the side of the road to be sure you're in the correct lane.

If visibility nears zero, find a safe place to pull off the road. This is a judgment decision on your part. Always be wary entering any patch of fog—there may be an accident on the road just ahead. Fog causes many multiple-car accidents.

### Snow and Ice

These wintertime hazards drastically cut vital traction in starting, turning and stopping. Though snow tires will help in wintry climates, reinforced chains are best where conditions are particularly severe. Adjust your speed to road and visibility conditions and keep your windshield completely clear at all times.

### Dust and Sand Storms

Here, the great hazard to life and limb results from reduced visibility. But airborne dust and sand can also severely damage the mechanical parts of your car. Avoid dusty air whenever possible. If caught in a dust storm be sure to stop as soon as you can for a replacement of the air filter, oil filter and engine oil.

## Special Hazards of All Highways

### Bad Weather

Especially dangerous on expressways because of higher speeds. Adjust to bad weather wherever you drive.

### Darkness

The better the highway, the greater the temptation to overdrive your headlights. At 65 m.p.h. it can take almost 500 feet to stop—and your headlights on high beam must be in top condition to clearly illuminate for that distance. (Low beams, often used on heavily traveled roads, light up only 250 feet or so.) Don't drive blind!

### Stopping

A last resort on expressways. Stop only in emergencies. If you must, drive on shoulder as far from the traffic lane as you can. For help, raise hood or tie white cloth on antenna or door.

### Motorcycles

Their growing number gives rise to a new hazard in both city and highway driving. Their maneuverability leads their drivers—often young people—to take chances. So watch out for them.

### What Vehicles Should You Be Alert For?

The fast ones are police cars, ambulances, fire engines or other emergency vehicles exhibiting a flashing light or siren.

Be alert for the slow ones such as wide load trucks, school buses, farm vehicles, construction equipment, funeral cars and riding horses.

### What Should You Be Alert For in Rural Areas?

Country roads often mean high-crowned blacktop, narrow culverts, soft shoulders, gravelly crossroads and excessive road oil. Be alert for:

- Farm lanes with emerging farm vehicles.
- Railroad crossings without signals.
- Bridges with narrow floors in rough condition.
- Intersections obscured by foliage or crops.
- Farm implements moving slowly, sometimes at night.
- School buses which must not be passed while stopped.
- Animals, especially deer, wandering onto the roadway.

New high frequency alarms are available for warning wildlife of approaching traffic.

## What Should You Do If You Go Into a Skid?

Abrupt turns, sudden lane changes or hard braking can throw you into a dangerous skid, especially on wet or icy roads.

If the rear end of your car starts to slide, take your foot off the gas at once.

Your first instinct may be to turn hard away from the direction of the skid. Don't! That will really spin you into a crash.

Instead, turn your wheels in the same direction the rear of the car is skidding. But be careful about it—don't oversteer. You'll be able to "feel" when the car regains rolling traction. Then straighten the wheels.

By all means, never hit the brakes during a side skid correction. For the fastest stop with the least chance of causing a side skid, pump your brakes with a hard, rapid jabbing and releasing of the brakes.

## Night Driving

Night driving also causes problems. Follow these rules when driving in the dark.

Turn headlights on at early dusk. Don't use parking lights when car is in motion. Nebraska law requires that headlights be turned on by at least half an hour after sunset and that they be on up to half an hour before sunrise.

The law forbids the use of parking lights while driving. They are to be used only as the name implies, for parking.

Never drive with a headlight out.

Keep instrument lights dim and dome light off.

Nebraska speed laws for Interstate highway driving call for a maximum of 65 m.p.h. day and night and a minimum of 40 m.p.h. On state highways the speed limit for passenger cars is 55 during day and night. On non-hard surfaced roads the speed limit is 50 m.p.h. day and night. There are some lower speed limits on the Interstate through larger cities.

Never wear sunglasses at night.

If trouble stops you at night, pull far off roadway, place a flare 300 feet back and another near vehicle. Switch on four-way flashers if you have them.

Check headlight aim if oncoming drivers blink their lights at you when your low beam is on.

In addition, keep your windshield, headlights and taillights clean.

## If Your Car Heats Up

Stop in safe off-the-highway spot.

Set brakes and move shift lever to neutral or park.

Raise hood but don't attempt to remove the radiator cap.

Idle the engine rapidly to increase air flow. Never pour cold water on a hot engine.

If this procedure does not work, shut engine off and go for services of a trained mechanic.

## Give Yourself a "Brake"

Driver abuse causes most serious brake troubles. Here's how to get full braking power every time you press the pedal:

Have brakes checked for equilization.

Correct excessive pedal travel.

Don't over-use brakes in city traffic. Time lights and traffic flow to avoid hard braking.

Keep brakes dry.

## If You Are First at the Scene of an Accident!

Park off the highway 50 to 100 feet from the nearest car.

First help the injured and account for occupants of all vehicles. Call for medical aid if needed. Administer first aid only if qualified. Do not move injured unless they are endangered by traffic, fire or some other emergency.

Protect the scene with flares, lantern or flags and get others to warn traffic in both directions.

Call any police authority—your call will be referred to the proper jurisdiction.

## If Your Car Stops, The Reason Might Be:

Empty fuel tank

Fuel system dirt

Overheating

Vapor lock

Electrical failure

Broken fan belt

Flooded carburetor

Frozen gas line

Wet ignition

Most of these problems you can handle. Here's how: Check your gas gauge. If it reads "Empty" do not attempt to restart the engine until the tank is refueled.

Electrical failure usually means a blown fuse or opened circuit breaker, or loose or broken wire or corroded battery terminals. If everything is dead, trouble is with the battery, battery cables or connections. Remove cables, clean battery terminals and check tightness of cable connections to engine.

If only headlights are out, circuit breaker has opened or a fuse has blown. The circuit breaker is heat actuated and will open and close, giving intermittent light that will help you get off the road until trouble is corrected. A blown fuse must be replaced.

Gas smell means flooded engine. Remove air filter, flip choke open, replace filter, crank engine. Engine will dry out and start. (Don't drive with air cleaner off, it also acts as a flame arrester.)

Wet spark plugs and cables will short out, causing engine to miss or stall. Dry off top of ignition coil, all cables and spark plus porcelains with a rag.

If dirt plugs fuel system, remove air filter, hold palm over carburetor while someone operates starter. Power-

ful suction may remove obstruction. If not, call for service.

Vapor lock is easy to fix. Just park in the shade, raise the hood, wait 5 to 10 minutes. To speed things up, put a wet rag on the fuel pump and the fuel line to the carburetor to cool the vaporized gasoline inside.

If a fan belt breaks, the engine will overheat and the generator and air conditioner will quit. Stop to let the engine cool off (about 15 minutes), then proceed slowly to the nearest service station, stopping from time to time to cool the engine.

Gas line freeze is caused by the accumulation and freezing of water, usually in low spots of the fuel line. If waiting doesn't bring a thaw, you'll have to get a tow to a warm garage. Antifreeze solutions poured in the gas tank will help prevent future trouble. Keeping the gas tank full will help stop condensation of water.

## **What Would You Do?**

### **Accelerator Sticks**

If possible, turn off the ignition and brake your car to stop. But remember—with dead power steering the car will be hard to steer so be prepared for the wheel stiffness. On some cars, the steering wheel locks when the switch is turned off. Don't shift into neutral—a wide-open engine without load can literally tear itself to pieces. Do not re-start engine until the cause (usually a broken return spring) is corrected.

### **Brakes Fail**

Shift to lower gear—engine compression will help braking. Use the parking brake; it may reduce speed. If shoulder is not obstructed, drive onto it and coast to a stop. In a serious situation, such as a runaway on a downgrade, steering into a sandy bank or underbrush may be your last resort.

### **Lights Go Out**

Slow down as quickly as possible. Get onto the shoulder when safe to do so. Set up flares or other warnings. Never drive at night without lights.

### **If Your Car Won't Start and You're Not Out of Gas:**

Check to make sure your gear selector is in "N" (neutral) or "P" (park). Jiggle the lever from one position to the other. Often a balky in-gear safety switch can be freed this way.

Turn off the radio, lights and everything electrical. This relieves the battery of excessive load.

Wait a full minute. This rests the battery.

Depress accelerator halfway. This brings the automatic choke into operation.

Turn the starter key and hold it until the engine starts, or for 5 to 10 seconds. If the engine still won't start, it may be flooded. An odor of gasoline may be present.

Wait two or three minutes. Then press the accelerator all the way to the floor and hold it there. Crank the engine again. Never pump the accelerator—this will only cause worse flooding. When the engine starts to "catch," the cylinders may not all fire evenly at first.

Don't pump—keep your foot steadily on the gas pedal until the engine smooths out. Then let up on the accelerator but idle at least 30 seconds before shifting into gear and starting off.

## **What Would You Do If Your Car Catches on Fire?**

Most car fires are caused by a short circuit in the electrical system.

It's almost impossible to disconnect battery terminals without tools. So don't waste time. Get the jack handle from the trunk and rip loose any burning wires. They are a lot less expensive to replace than a burned-out car.

If you don't carry a fire extinguisher, try to smother burning wires with a large article of clothing. Don't grab burning wires with your bare hands; use a heavy cloth or article of clothing because an electrical burn can be serious (while autos use only 6 or 12 volts, amperage or current can be relatively high in malfunction).

If the fire is beyond your control, get away from the car before the gas tank explodes.

## **What Would You Do If Your Hood Flies Up?**

Brake smoothly and ease onto the shoulder. You'll have to depend on the view from your left window for steering reference. On some cars you may be able to peek through the gap under the hinge edge of the hood.

Make it a habit to check whether the attendant securely latched the hood after a service station stop.

## **How to Change a Tire Safely**

When a tire goes, steer firmly and guide car well off the road to solid ground. Don't slam on the brakes!

Set the parking brake tight. Chock the wheel diagonally opposite the flat. Get out jack, lug wrench and spare.

Pry with chisel end of leg wrench to remove wheel cover. Slightly loosen each lug nut (may be left or right-hand thread).

Place jack on firm ground, making sure it is perfectly vertical. See your car's directions for hooking the jack on the bumper inside the bumper guard or in notch provided on bottom bumper edge of some cars. Raise level to "up" position, insert handle (usually the lug wrench) and pump jack until wheel is off ground 2 to 3 inches.

Remove lug nuts, place them in dish or wheel cover for safekeeping.

Lift wheel off, place it with spare, screw lug nuts on until snug.

Flip lever to "down" position, pump car down until tire just touches ground. Then tighten nuts hard and finish jacking car down.

**Warning**—A bumper jack is only for tire changing. Never crawl under a car when it is on a bumper jack.

### Towing or Being Towed

A passing motorist is usually reluctant to push or tow a stalled car, fearing body damage to his own auto. But he usually is glad to give you a start from his battery if you carry jumper cables. These are inexpensive emergency equipment to keep in your trunk.

When jumper cables or a replacement battery are not available, the car may have to be towed to a service garage. By all means, have this done by a tow truck if possible. In an emergency, a car can be used to pull another car, using a chain or heavy rope.

**Note:** If a car has to be moved any distance, always pull, never push the stalled vehicle. For an engine start, though, always push.

**Caution:** A stalled car with automatic transmission should be towed only a short distance and at a speed under 35 m.p.h. to prevent overheating and damaging the transmission. For long distances, the rear wheels must be lifted off the ground. Since manufacturer's instructions may vary, consult your owner's manual.

**Danger:** Never tow a car equipped with power steering or power brakes unless the engine is running. With the engine dead, brakes and steering are powerless and extremely stiff and unresponsive, not suited for tricky towing.

### To Push-Start a Stalled Car

**Remember:** Always push, never pull a car in need of an engine start. If pulled, the stalled engine may catch and the car leap forward, smashing into the vehicle ahead. Pushing must be done with caution and only with a perfect bumper-height match.

**With Manual Transmission:** Depress clutch, turn ignition on, shift into highest or next highest gear (never first or low). AT about 10 m.p.h. signal pushing vehicle to stop. Then let clutch out quickly while lightly pressing accelerator. This will crank the engine.

(If engine does not start, get another push and try again. Quit if engine won't start in four or five tries.)

### If Your Car Plunges into Water

Tests show a passenger car usually floats four to eight minutes after hitting the water. With windows open or broken it fills faster. Try to escape by rolling down a window while the car is afloat.

**Important:** This underscores the value of seat belts, which are the best way to avoid being knocked out or injured in the original accident or impact with the water. Unhurt, you can save yourself in those precious first minutes. Belts can be released with a finger.

Front engine cars sink nose first. As the passenger compartment fills, trapped air is pushed to the rear and

into the trunk. If the car settles wheels down, the air repositions itself at the roof over the seats. The size of the air pocket varies but it is not affected by opening a window after the car is submerged.

If you can't escape while the car is afloat, go to the rear seat and breathe the trapped air near the roof while planning escape. Remember this air! You can't push a door open against the water pressure or swim against the inflow of water through an open window while a vehicle is sinking. Once the pressure is equalized inside and out, you can open a door or roll down a window without great effort.

If you must break a window, remember that side and rear glass is often the tempered type. A blow from a sharp, hard object is the easiest way to shatter it.

### Drowning

A part of your car might be helpful in aiding a drowning victim. Your spare tire, properly inflated, could serve as a buoy for a person who might be drowning. If a person is in trouble and you have no other means of rescue, throw your tire to the drowning victim. A tire could help as many as five people stay afloat.

### If You're Caught in a Lightning Storm

Stay in the automobile and roll up the windows.

### If You're Caught in a Tornado

Seek the shelter of a culvert or other underground protection. If you seek shelter in a culvert, make sure you keep an eye on amount of water coming in.

If you must stay with your car, make sure you have your seat belt on and that you have it snugly fastened.

### If You're Caught in a Blizzard

Protect yourself against suffocation.

If you must run car, do so for only short periods and make sure exhaust is not plugged. This allows the carbon monoxide to be vented away from the car.

Be on the lookout for snow drifting over the top of car and shutting off air.

Cover yourself to maintain body warmth. Newspapers or seat covers may be of benefit. Floor carpeting might also be used.

Cigarette lighter can serve as a source of heat for starting a fire.

If you start a signal fire, use materials that will give off dark smoke.

Your staying with the car depends on distance to help. It is probably better to stay with the car if you are not capable of living with the hazards of a blizzard. In most cases snowplows or highway patrols will be along within a short time after the blizzard has subsided.



Sit on feet and hands if they get extremely cold.

The headlight could be unscrewed and pointed upward as a source of signal light.

The rear view mirror or a shiny hub cap can also be used for a signal during daylight if the sun is shining.

Above all, stay calm. Fright or overexertion can be extremely serious for the cardiac patient.

Winter travelers should listen to weather reports and get off the road before the blizzard starts.

If you must go, make sure the gas tank is filled before the start of the trip. Having a full gas tank and the car in tiptop condition at all times is a good rule to follow. A recommended car kit for winter travel should contain:

Two blankets

A few newspapers

Supply of matches

Candles and 2 or 3 lb coffee can for a candle heat stove

Dry clothing such as caps, gloves, thermal underwear

Food such as candy bars

Transistor radio or car radio

Overshoes and shovel

Box of tissues.

The candle heat stove is made by placing the candle in the bottom of the can and using the heat from the burning candle as source of warmth. Make sure you have ventilation when using candle heat stove.

## People Emergencies and How To Handle Them

### You Need a Doctor

Observing speed limits, hurry to the nearest town.

Flash your headlights at any patrol car you see along the way, then pull over and park. Officer will escort you.

Without such help look for a policeman as you drive into town, or stop at the first drugstore and ask directions to the nearest hospital, clinic or doctor.

At the hospital, look for the **emergency** sign and drive directly to that entrance.

### You Are Too Sleepy To Go On

Stop at the first safe place. Open two or more windows slightly, lock all doors.

Rest. Sleep if possible for 30 minutes or more, then drink coffee if available.

When you resume driving, keep some windows open, play the radio, chew gum, sing and keep your eyes moving.

Stop for a night's rest at the first opportunity.

**Caution:** If fatigue is unusual for you, suspect an engine exhaust leak. Have the exhaust system checked before continuing your trip.

### Someone Gets Carsick

Children are often subject to motion sickness, especially where hills and curves are encountered. Car

sickness is unusual with adults. If it happens with no prior history of such ailment, suspect a cause other than the motion of the car and consult a doctor.

Stop and let the sick person get out of the car for at least 15 minutes. If he feels like it, encourage him to walk around a little.

Proceed to the nearest town with the sick person in the front seat.

At a drugstore, purchase a motion sickness medicine (the liquid form is easier to give children; adults may prefer tablets).

Wait 15 minutes. Resume trip with the person in the front seat. Go slower on hills and curves.

## If An Emergency Forces You to Stop

Protect yourself and your passengers by observing these precautions:

Signal first. On an expressway with paved shoulders, pull off at traffic speed, then slow down. Where the shoulder is unpaved, signal a right turn, slow down and turn off carefully.

Stop as far from the traffic lanes as possible. If position seems risky, get passengers out of the car and to a safe spot.

At dusk or night, keep headlights on low beam. Switch on the dome light. Don't obscure taillights while working behind car. Turn on four-way flashers if your car has them, or pump brakes to flash stop lights.

Place a flare day or night 300 feet (about 120 paces) to the rear of your car, another just behind car.

To signal for help, raise the hood and tie a white handkerchief to the antenna or left door handle. The first police officer from either direction will stop and assist you.

## Posted Speeds

Remember that posted speeds are not necessarily safe speeds. Various conditions can make driving dangerous even when its legal. Posted speeds may be unsafe under conditions of darkness, bad pavement, hazardous weather, children playing, highway construction, deer or other animal crossings, congested areas, vision limiting areas, and others.

In congested areas it's important to keep up with the flow of traffic—neither faster or slower than other cars.

Your best protection for the unexpected is to learn to think with your eyes. Sharpen your seeing habits and train your eyes to pick up danger signals ahead. Will that car turn just because the turn signal is flashing? Will the farm truck wait for you to get by or will it pull onto the road in front of you?

## Signs of Life

Road signs, signals and markings provide warning that can mean life or death to travelers—especially in strange territory.



**Diamond**

This sign warns you to get ready for dangerous or unusual road conditions ahead, such as curves, intersections, hills.



**Round**

Railroad advance warning signs mean a railroad crossing is ahead. Be prepared to stop. Be sure tracks are clear.



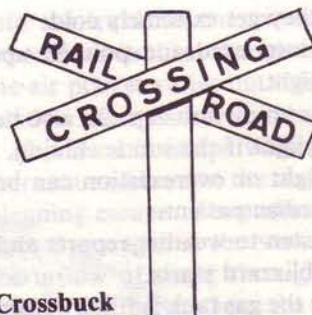
**Octagon**

The "Stop" sign, red with white letterings, means what it says—come to a full stop. Be sure the way is clear before moving.



**Triangle**

The triangle yield sign requires a driver to yield—slow down or stop—to give the right of way to cross traffic.



**Crossbuck**

This is the traditional symbol at railroad grade crossings. Alone, or with a bell, lights or gates, it is there to warn you to be alert.



**Slow Moving Vehicle**

This emblem is the only one ever attached to a vehicle. You'll see them attached to rear of tractors, farm implements, wagons and other vehicles moving slower than other highway traffic. **Watch for the SMV emblem—slow down** when you see it!

### Drive Like the Pros

Truck and bus drivers are among the most skillful on the road—many of them have driven more than a million miles without an accident. Here are some of their ideas for driving safely:

Adjust the seat so your body is 4 to 8 inches back from the lower rim of the steering wheel but be sure you can press the pedals firmly. Sit up straight.

Fasten your seat belt snugly. In addition to its safety factor, a snug belt will help keep you sitting erect, with less back fatigue on long runs.

Set your rear-view mirrors correctly.

Use your eyes—keep them moving ahead, to the mirrors, to the sides—and they'll give you advance warning of distant situations that quickly can become immediate emergencies.

Always leave yourself an "out"—space for possible evasive action—in adjoining lanes, front, rear or shoulder.

Watch the car in front and also the brake lights of the car ahead of it for extra time in stopping.

Learn to anticipate potential accidents. An expert driver "expects" the car following the approaching bus to suddenly swerve around it into his lane.

Use your horn whenever you're not sure the other fellow sees you. The idea that a good driver doesn't have to use the horn is a dangerous fallacy.

At night, reduce speed about 10 m.p.h. below your usual daytime speed.

Realize, as pro drivers do, that you have passed the

peak of your efficiency after five or six hours at the wheel. Allow for it, as the pros do, by slowing down and taking it easy.

## **Driving Rules You Should Follow**

### **City Driving**

To a driver not experienced in big-city traffic, the noise, confusion and competition for space can be terrifying distractions. Driving experts recommend:

Stop at the city limit and study your map. Write down key turns.

Be alert for one-way streets, left-turn lanes and other special engineering features.

Keep up with traffic flow.

Always yield to pedestrians.

Check your fuel gauge; stop-and-go city traffic gulps fuel.

Observe lane lines.

Heavy traffic makes it harder to keep distance so be ready for fast stops.

Avoid rush hour traffic. Keep watch on local time.

### **Expressway Driving**

The technique for driving expressways is different but these tips will help you avoid a mishap:

Check your tires before entering.

Watch the fuel gauge; gas stops are farther apart.

Study a map before you start so you'll know your correct exit.

When you enter, speed up in the acceleration lane so you can blend with the traffic.

Never slow down suddenly in a traffic lane.

Don't stop, and never back up. If you miss an exit, you must go on to the next one. If there's car trouble, get as far onto the shoulder as possible.

Use turn signal when passing or changing lanes. Nebraska law requires you to make your signal at least 8 seconds before you attempt to change lanes on the Interstate.

Keep your distance—it's your only security against a multi-vehicle pile-up.

Read all the signs—they are few but important.

When exiting, slow in deceleration lane to ramp speed. Believe your speedometer, not your senses.

### **What To Do if on a Collision Course?**

Suddenly your blood chills! Another car is speeding toward you in your lane—a head-on crash looms!

Is he drunk, asleep, ill, inattentive—no matter. You'll need to keep your wits about you to avoid the worst of all highway accidents.

Brake hard—every mile you take off your speed reduces the impact force. Head for the right shoulder and give him the entire road. If there's time, lean on the horn and flash your lights.

If he continues toward you, take the ditch or any open ground to the right free of solid obstructions. Remember that any alternative, even a roll-over, gives you a better chance than a head-on collision.

Whatever you do, don't try to outguess him and swerve to the left around him. He may recover at the last instant and instinctively veer back into his own lane—to hit you head-on.

### **If You Have an Accident**

Stop at once near scene but away from traffic.

Help the injured but don't move anyone unless necessary.

Protect the scene by clearing the road if possible, putting out warning signals and stationing someone to warn traffic.

Notify police or sheriff if there are injuries or property damage.

Get name and address of other driver and owner and license number of other vehicle.

Get names and seating positions of other occupants.

Write down names and address of witnesses.

Make a diagram of the physical details of the accident. If possible, take pictures.

See a doctor—you might be injured and not know it.

Report to your insurance company immediately.

File an official accident report with the state.

### **Remember**

Even before the arrival of police, it's permissible to move cars if they are a traffic hazard.

You are required to tell only your name and address and show your driver's license and vehicle registration. The law recognizes that you may be in a condition of shock and not competent to make a statement.

You don't have to sign anything for anybody.

### **In Case of Arrest**

Be cooperative—don't argue with the officer.

Show your driver's license and vehicle registration when requested.

Go with officer to the nearest magistrate.

You will be asked to plead guilty or not guilty.

(1) If you plead guilty a fine will be assessed; you can pay and leave.

(2) If you plead not guilty, your case may be bound over to a later date. You'll have to post bond.

Bond can be:

Cash from your pocket.

Supplied by a bondsman for a fee.

Guaranteed by your auto club.

**Note:** Auto insurance usually does not guarantee your bail bond. If may, however, later reimburse you for your cost in obtaining professional bonding.

If he continues toward you, take the first or any open ground to the right (or left) of your position. Remember that any attempt to pass a car is illegal. You a better chance than a head-on collision. Warned on the right, it is common for the driver to the left ground him. Let the driver of the last instant and instinctively see back into his own lane—again you head on.

### If You Have an Accident

Stop at once near scene but away from traffic. Turn off engine and set parking brake. If possible, protect the scene by clearing the road if possible, setting out warning signals and stationing someone to warn traffic. Notify police or sheriff if there are injuries or property damage. Get names and address of other driver, other witnesses, license number of other vehicle. Get names and calling positions of other witnesses. Write down names and address of witnesses. Make a diagram of the physical damage to the car. If possible, take pictures. See a doctor—your health is insured and you must report to your insurance company.



Be cooperative—don't argue with the officer. Show your driver's license and car registration when requested. If you don't have a license, you will be asked to the nearest magistrate's court. You will be asked to plead guilty or not guilty.

(1) If you plead guilty a fine will be assessed.

back of your distance after use of air horns if the horn is not working. Allow for a safety margin of 100 feet and leaving it easy.



### These Rules You Should Follow

#### City Driving

To a driver not experienced in heavy traffic, the noise, confusion and congestion of city streets are a real challenge. Driving in the city is a real challenge. Stop at the city limit and stay there. With heavy traffic, it is better to stop at the city limit and stay there. Be alert for one-way streets and one-way traffic signs. Avoid congestion by using alternate routes. Keep up with the traffic. Always yield to pedestrians. Check your mirrors and blind spots. Use your horn sparingly. Do not drink and drive. Do not use your cell phone while driving. Do not use your car as a phone booth. Do not use your car as a storage locker. Do not use your car as a workshop. Do not use your car as a classroom. Do not use your car as a library. Do not use your car as a museum. Do not use your car as a bank. Do not use your car as a post office. Do not use your car as a gas station. Do not use your car as a parking garage. Do not use your car as a playground. Do not use your car as a petting zoo. Do not use your car as a zoo. Do not use your car as a circus. Do not use your car as a circus. Do not use your car as a circus. Do not use your car as a circus.