

Location _____ Trainer _____ Date _____

TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

We have all heard drivers complain of the annoyance of traffic signs and signals, but we must realize that the regulations provided by these signs are absolutely necessary if today's traffic is to continue to move with safety. In order that each driver might be informed as to when and where each regulation applies—to guard our own safety and enable us to share the roadways fairly with all other drivers--traffic signs and signals had to be installed. It would take volumes to record the trials and errors, the slow evolution of traffic regulations and the accompanying signs. Rest assured that today's traffic controls are the best devised and there's plenty of proof they will save lives—if they're observed.

The first duty of every driver of a motor vehicle is to learn the functional meaning of each basic shape of traffic signs:

- First, there's the eight sided (octagon) shape, which always means STOP. It also means you cannot start again until you are sure the cross street or roadway is clear of closely approaching vehicles and pedestrians.
- Next is the triangle that tells you to YIELD. The old ones are yellow; the new ones will be red. You must slow down to a reasonable speed and stop if necessary for safety, allowing approaching vehicles to cross safely.
- One of the most helpful signs is the DIAMOND shape, a square placed with corners centered at top and bottom, which is always used for WARNING of hazards you can expect ahead.
- When you see a ROUND shape, you'd better start slowing down, because it means there is a railroad crossing 400 to 700 feet ahead.
- The CROSSBUCK shape appears at the railroad crossing itself. It may be accompanied by a crossing gate, a flashing signal or traffic light.
- Rectangular or square signs (not mounted in the diamond position) can be regulatory, such as speed limit, "One Way," "No Turn," "Wrong Way," "Stop at Line," "Do Not Pass," or they may be informational signs to aid the driver in identifying route numbers, mileage, exits, turn lanes, roadside accommodations, etc.

The lighted traffic control signal, the familiar "traffic light," controls our movements at intersections.

- GREEN: The bottom, green portion of the signal permits us to drive through the crossing, *IF* it is clear of other traffic.
- AMBER: The center amber light in the signal warns that the "Go" cycle has ended, and we must not enter the intersection after the red light appears. When the amber light goes on, it does not mean to speed up to get through the intersection at all costs. Amber means that you need to prepare to stop.
- RED: The red light commands that we stop our vehicle at the marked stop line, or before entering the crosswalk or intersection. We must remain stopped until the signal changes to green. This enables us to share the crossing with cross traffic in time-controlled cycles that are fair to all drivers.

When we approach a flashing red signal light at an intersection, we must stop because it marks a hazardous crossing. The more heavily traveled cross street or highway may have a flashing amber caution light, which means we must slow down, look carefully and proceed with caution.

Other lighted signals are lane markers on reversible lanes of expressways. We must be sure to drive in lanes marked by a green arrow pointing downward. We must stay off lanes marked by a red X, because they will accommodate traffic in the opposite direction. If an amber X appears over our lane, we must get into a green arrow lane at once, because it means the X will change to red.

While on the subject of traffic signs, don't forget the pavement markings. Stripes, reflectorized or painted, mark the centerline of two way roads. In rural areas they frequently are in 15 foot stripes on the centerline, 25 feet apart. In urban areas a solid line separates two way traffic. When there are two or more traffic lanes on each side, double yellow stripes mark the centerline.

Yellow stripes also are used to mark no passing zones. If a yellow stripe appears on your side of the centerline, you must not cross it to pass another vehicle.

If all drivers would realize the importance of traffic signs and signals, and would observe them to the letter, driving would be a much safer and happier experience.