

## **Sharing the Highway**

### **1. The basics of passing another vehicle.**

Well developed skill and judgement are necessary to safely complete a passing maneuver. Before making any sort of passing attempt, the driver must make sure any oncoming traffic is a safe distance away. If a driver has any doubts about an oncoming vehicle he/she shouldn't execute the maneuver. Another way to judge if it is safe to pass is by the movement or lack of movement by the oncoming vehicle. If the oncoming vehicle appears to be standing still, there is probably enough time to pass successfully. If the oncoming vehicle appears to be moving, there isn't enough time to pass.

### **2. Discuss the importance of visibility.**

As with any driving maneuver, visibility is an important ingredient in the passing mix. The driver should be sure that:

- \* the windshield and all other glass is clean and clear;
- \* the mirrors are properly adjusted;
- \* all lights are properly operating; and
- \* all turn signals work properly.

### **3. The questions drivers should ask themselves before executing a passing maneuver.**

Before passing another vehicle, the driver should ask himself/herself the following questions:

- \* Is passing necessary?
- \* Do signs and/or road markings indicate that passing is allowed?
- \* Has the driver checked the road ahead and behind his/her vehicle? The driver must look ahead to be sure there is adequate room to pass and behind to make sure other vehicles aren't trying to pass.
- \* Is the driver ahead aware that he/she is going to be passed? Always assume the driver ahead isn't aware. Be prepared for the driver to pull to the left to pass another vehicle or make a left turn.
- \* Has the driver signalled his/her intention to change lanes and move into the passing lane?

### **4. How time and distance play a part in passing safely.**

The amount of time and distance necessary to safely complete a passing maneuver varies. For example, if a driver is traveling at a speed of 40 mph and wants to pass a vehicle traveling 35 mph it will take about 1/3 mile and 15 seconds to complete the maneuver. If the driver is traveling 50 mph and wants to pass a vehicle traveling 40 mph it will take about 1/2 mile and proportionately more time to pass. Remember, the faster the vehicles are traveling, the longer it will take to complete the passing maneuver.

### **5. Passing technique.**

After making all necessary checks the driver should be able to complete the passing maneuver. The following are the steps he/she should take when executing the maneuver:

1. Signal his/her intentions using both directionals and a short "toot" of the vehicle's horn.
2. Anticipate all potential situations:
  - \* While passing, keep an eye out for vehicles entering the roadway from side roads or driveways.
  - \* Watch for passing vehicles from the other direction.
  - \* Make sure the vehicle being passed isn't accelerating.
3. Move smoothly into the other lane to pass. The driver should make every attempt to stay as far left as possible to avoid side swiping the vehicle he/she is trying to pass.
4. Return to the normal travel lane as soon as possible. The driver should signal his/her intention to return to the normal travel lane, making sure there's enough in front of the vehicle he/she passed. Passing on a multi-laned road is less hazardous than on a two-laned road but the same procedures apply.

## **6. Unsafe passing conditions.**

There are certain times when passing is out of the question. Passing is unsafe (and in many cases illegal) when:

- \* going uphill;
- \* rounding a curve;
- \* approaching an intersection;
- \* approaching a side road;
- \* approaching a stopped school bus;
- \* approaching a bridge; and
- \* approaching a railroad crossing.

Night driving presents additional hazards when passing. Research shows the faster a vehicle travels at night, the shorter the distance a driver can see ahead. Extreme caution must be used when passing at night.