

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

June 2022

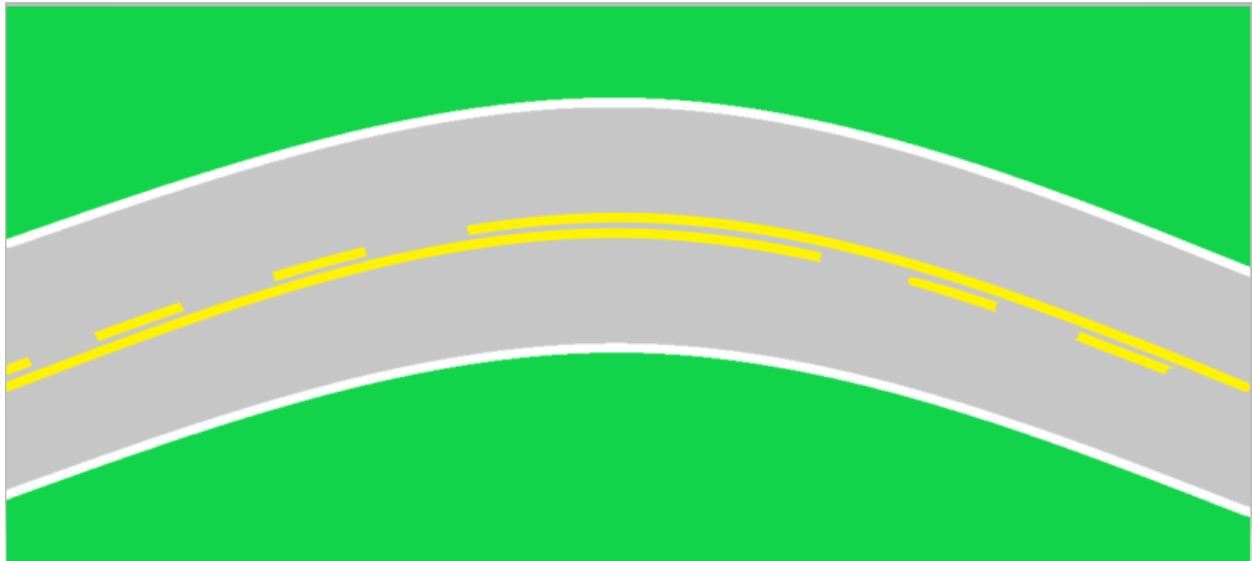


Lane Markings and Street Signs

Just hours after winning their conference championship, two young baseball players from Lagrange College in Georgia were killed in a traffic crash. According to the Georgia Highway Patrol, the car, driven by one of the young men, tried to pass another vehicle in a no-passing zone. They hit another vehicle head on, killing the two young men and the driver of the other vehicle.

No-passing zones are there for a reason! They designate sections of the highway where the view of the oncoming lane is obscured either due to curves in the road or hills. You'll also find them where the roadway is restricted, with no path for escape, such as the approach to bridges, tunnels, or railroad crossings.

No-passing zones are designated by either a single or double solid yellow line, meaning passing is prohibited in either direction. Or, in the case of the approach to hills or curves, the solid yellow line will be to the right of the centerline.



As you can see in the image above, the solid yellow line is placed to the right of the dashed yellow center lane at the approach to a curve. Once the curve is passed and the view of the oncoming lane is clear, the line changes to a dashed yellow line. Where the view is restricted in both directions, there is a double solid yellow line.

When teaching your teen to drive, make note of no-passing zones and have your teen tell you why passing is prohibited on that portion of the road. Repeating this procedure will hopefully drive it into your teen's head so that, long after they start driving on their own, they'll automatically recognize the reason for and the importance of the no-passing zone.

When passing, you have to consider three things:

1. Is the car ahead going slow enough? You aren't allowed to break the speed limit to pass.
2. Am I going far enough to justify passing? There's nothing more irritating to other drivers than to be passed only for the passing driver to slow down to turn off the road.
3. Is there enough clear space to pass? Can you safely pass the vehicle ahead while remaining within a passing zone and return to your lane with room to spare from oncoming traffic?

Passing is one of the most dangerous procedures that drivers engage in and it can't be done without some consideration of the dangers involved.

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Move Over Laws Beefed Up

In May, a 16-year-old girl struck and killed a Georgia sheriff's deputy as he was directing traffic at an intersection. The deputy, who was wearing a reflective vest, didn't see the driver as she approached but another deputy did and tried but failed to stop her before it was too late.

One of the biggest hazards faced by law enforcement officers, along with fire and rescue personnel, is the risk of being struck by a vehicle while working at the scene of a roadway crash. It's not just police and fire/rescue but tow truck operators and roadside assistance technicians as well.

According to the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (www.ResponderSafety.com) in 2021, the number of emergency responder deaths were as follows:

Law Enforcement	30
Fire/EMS	9
Tow Operators	22
Road Service Technician	2
DOT/SSP	2
Total	65

The problem, as always, is distracted driving and speed. It may seem hard to imagine that someone could miss something as obvious as bright blue and red flashing lights but it happens every day. Driver distraction also includes rubber-necking, looking at the crash scene so intently that you're not watching where you're going.

This is why all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico now have some form of a "Move Over Law." The Move Over Law states that, if you are approaching an emergency vehicle on the side of the road with its emergency lights activated, you must move into the lane farthest from the emergency vehicle. If you are unable to move into the other lane, you must slow down to 20 mph below the posted speed limit (in zones where the posted speed limit is 25 mph or less, you must slow to 5 mph) until you have safely passed the emergency scene.

Since the Move Over Laws were initially passed, many states, including Florida and Texas, have amended their laws to include tow trucks, DOT vehicles, utility (water, electric, gas,

cable) vehicles, and sanitation (garbage) trucks with their blue, red, or yellow emergency lights activated.

Roadside construction workers are also killed in large numbers every year. In 2020, 857 construction workers were killed in American construction zones. Exercise care and follow the instructions of construction zone warning signs.

Not all states have exactly the same wording in their laws so it's probably a good idea to take the laws that include the most type of roadside emergency/work vehicles and get in the habit of following those laws. You can't go wrong exercising the most care when approaching roadside hazards.

