

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

December 2022

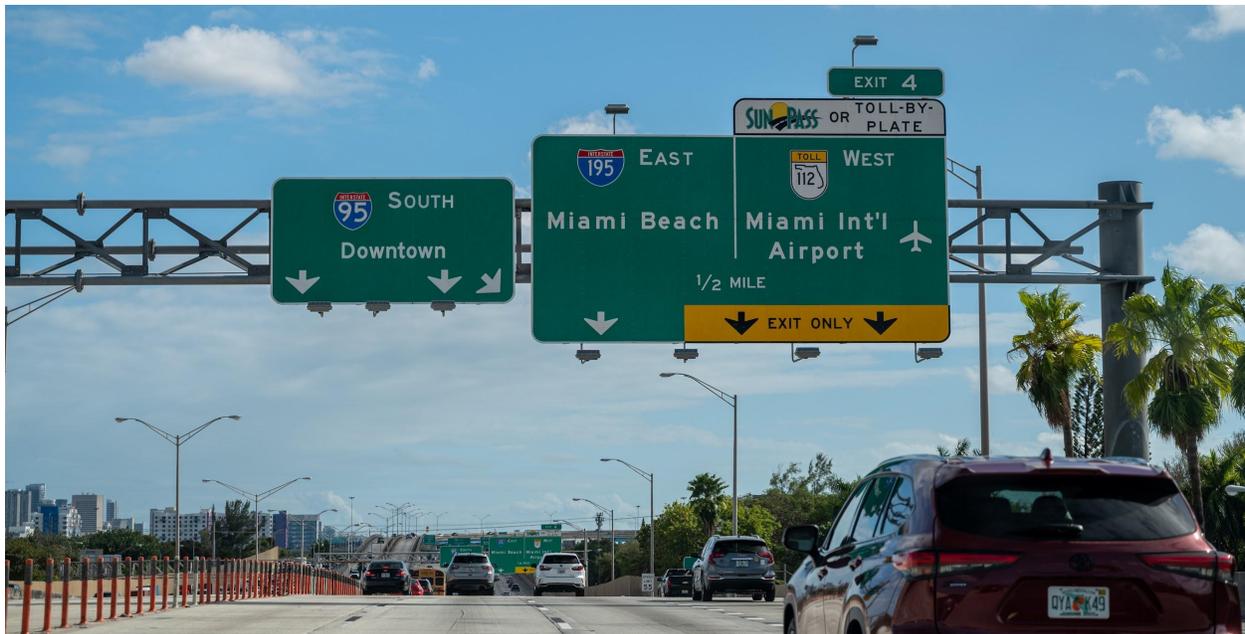


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Driving On Freeways

Driving on a freeway or limited access highway can be scary and teaching your teen to drive there can be terrifying. It doesn't have to be as long as you follow the rules and go over the rules with your teen before they attempt their first foray onto a freeway.

While you may encounter more traffic and significantly higher speeds on a freeway, statistically, your chances of being involved in a fatal crash are less on a freeway than they are on a two-lane country road.



Entrance ramp/acceleration lane

The entrance ramp is called an acceleration lane because it is just that. It's meant to allow you to get up to the same speed as the vehicles on the main portion of the road so that you can merge smoothly into traffic. As you approach the main part of the roadway you should adjust your speed to match that of the main traffic. You should also start looking for a clear spot in traffic to merge into. You'll need at least a four second distance between vehicles on the main road to safely merge. You should never stop on the acceleration ramp unless traffic is so thick and drivers on the main roadway are so rude that you just can't squeeze in. Stopping on the acceleration ramp and trying to merge into traffic from a standing start can be very dangerous. Remember that traffic on the acceleration ramp must yield to traffic already on the main portion of the road.

Main roadway

Once you are on the main roadway, you should keep up with the flow of traffic. Keeping up with the flow of traffic however is not a free pass to speed. A lot of drivers get speeding tickets while trying to use the excuse that they were just keeping up with the flow. You should maintain the posted speed limit while allowing drivers who want to drive faster plenty of room to get around you.

Passing lane

Remember that the far-left lane is for passing. It's not the fast lane; there's no such thing as the fast lane, only a passing lane. You should not occupy the far left lane unless you are using it to pass other vehicles and then merging back into the right lane once you have completed your pass. Remaining in the passing lane can get you a ticket for impeding the flow of traffic.

Lane changes

If you want to change lanes, signal for a turn and look for an opening in the other lane large enough for you to smoothly merge. Before you begin your merge, check your blind spot for traffic and check for traffic in the far lane that may also be trying to merge into the same spot. If the spot is clear, smoothly move over and maintain speed.

Signs

The signs directing exits onto other roadways will always be located over the lane that you should be in to exit. Remember that, when merging with other freeways or interstates, the exit may be in the left lane.

Exits

You should start your merge into the exit lane at least a half-mile before your exit. Once you are in the proper lane, maintain your speed and don't slow down until you are actually on the exit ramp. Once you are on the exit ramp, obey the speed limit signs for the exit ramp and look for signs directing you to the left or right for your destination.



Holiday Party Safety

As the holiday season approaches, there will be a lot of opportunities for holiday parties involving alcohol. For those who aren't careful, that means there will be lots of opportunities to be arrested for driving under the influence (DUI).

The problem with alcohol is that the first area of the brain that it affects is the area that is responsible for judgment. The user loses the capability to sense just how incapacitated they are and they lose the ability to make good, sound choices.

If you're going out for an evening of drinking, making a plan for how you will get home safely in advance increases your chances that you will stick with that plan. If you start drinking without a plan, chances are that you will make some very poor choices.

You have lots of options available to you to get home safely. If you are going with someone else, one of you can choose to be the designated driver and refrain from drinking alcohol for the evening. For the next party, you can swap out designated driving duties with your partner.

Options to get home safely include taking a cab, an Uber, or a Lyft. Many cities have programs that offer free cab rides on New Year's Eve. If the party is at a hotel, you can get a room for the evening. Whatever you choose, don't make the mistake of choosing to drink and drive.

If you're the host of the party, remember that you can be held liable and sued if you served alcohol to one of your guests who was later injured or killed or injured someone else in an alcohol related crash. To be a good host, you can act as the designated driver or take the keys and plan on putting your guests up for the night. Whatever you do, don't let your guests drive drunk.

