



Navigating Intersections

In 2022, over 1,000 people died in intersection-related crashes. That statistic shows that intersections pose a hazard to drivers for a variety of reasons, including high traffic volume, failure to yield, poor visibility, inadequate signage, and more. Local government employees who drive vehicles should always stay **R.O.A.D. Ready** by continuously: (1) recognizing the hazards; (2) observing people, processes, and equipment; (3) assessing the risk level; and (4) determining the safest course of action. Doing so while following this step-by-step guide will allow a driver to execute their responsibilities effectively, while minimizing the risks associated with navigating intersections.

- 1. Approach with Caution and Plan for the Unexpected:** Approaching an intersection requires a vigilant mindset. Reduce your speed as you approach and be prepared to come to a complete stop if necessary. Scan the intersection for traffic signals, signs, and other vehicles. Approach with caution, especially when visibility is compromised due to weather conditions or obstacles.
- 2. Obey Traffic Signals and Signs:** Pay close attention to traffic lights, stop signs, yield signs, and other regulatory signals. Treat red lights as non-negotiable stops and proceed through green lights only after confirming the intersection is clear.
- 3. Stay in Your Lane:** Maintaining lane discipline is crucial at intersections. Abrupt lane changes can lead to confusion and increase the likelihood of accidents. Signal your intent well in advance if you need to change lanes.
- 4. Check for Pedestrians:** Pedestrians are vulnerable road users, particularly at intersections. Always be on the lookout for pedestrians, whether they are using crosswalks or not. Yield the right of way to pedestrians, and never block crosswalks, ensuring they have a clear and safe path to cross.
- 5. Use Your Turn Signals:** Turn signals are your communication tools with other drivers. Clearly signal your intentions well before reaching the intersection.
- 6. Practice Defensive Driving:** Intersections are hotspots for potential conflicts. Adopt a defensive driving mindset by anticipating the actions of other drivers. Be prepared for sudden stops, unexpected lane changes, and vehicles running red lights. Always maintain a safe following distance to provide yourself with reaction time in case of emergencies, and beware of turning vehicles.
- 7. Avoid Distractions:** Distracted driving is a leading cause of accidents, and intersections demand our full attention. Refrain from using mobile devices, adjusting the radio, or engaging in other distracting activities while approaching or navigating through intersections.



Resources

- Federal Highway Administration Intersection Safety :[About Intersection Safety | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)
- Don't Block the Box : [Don't Block the Box | AustinTexas.gov](#)
- [TRANSPORTATION CODE CHAPTER 545. OPERATION AND MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES \(texas.gov\)](#)
- Defensive Driving Basics ([Local GovU](#))
- [Media Library DVD's](#) listed under Driving Safety