CHAPTER 2
TRAFFIC SIGNS AND HIGHWAY MARKINGS

This chapter summarizes traffic signs, signals and road markings that are set up to control the flow of traffic, making streets and highways safer for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

These signs, posted by the Indiana Department of Transportation and local governments, use colors, shapes, written messages and symbols that aid the driver in reading and understanding the information. Understanding of these rules will be necessary to obtain an operator license in Indiana.

Traffic signs:

Signs are divided into three basic categories: regulatory, warning and guidance signs. The signs:

- **Warn** you of hazards ahead that would otherwise be difficult to see;
- **Guide** you to your destination by clearly identifying the route;
- **Regulate** traffic speed and movement.

The signs are manufactured in different shapes and colors to convey a particular message.

Examples of the various sign types, shapes and colors are as follows:

Sign Colors:

The background color of traffic signs helps identify the type of information provided:

Red signs are used to inform the driver of requirements that must be followed and that constitute an immediate threat to traffic safety if not followed, e.g. “STOP,” “YIELD,” “DO NOT ENTER,” “WRONG WAY.”

Yellow or Fluorescent yellow-green signs warn drivers of specific road conditions and dangers ahead.

White signs provide important information regarding traffic regulations that you must obey such as state highway markers, maximum speed limits and other helpful information.

Orange signs warn drivers of special dangers ahead due to highway construction and maintenance projects.

Green signs indicate directions, highway exit signs and mileage signs.

Blue signs impart traveler information to motorists.

Brown signs indicate nearby parks and recreational areas.

Sign Shapes:

The shape of a sign also gives an indication of the information. There are eight common shapes used:

Octagonal (“STOP”) Sign:

The eight-sided red stop sign is a common sign indicating the requirement to stop and yield the right-of-way at an intersection.

Triangular (“YIELD”) Sign:

The three-sided red and white yield sign informs the driver that he or she must slow down when approaching an intersection and be prepared to come to a complete stop.

Square (Regulatory) Sign:

The red and white square regulatory signs convey regulations that the driver must follow. Signs indicating prohibitions often will have a symbol inside of a red circle with a red diagonal bar. When you see a red circle with the red diagonal bar it always means “NO.”

Circular (Railroad) Sign:

The yellow circular sign is designated to provide information to the driver of an impending railroad crossing.

Pentagonal (School Zone) Sign:

The yellow or the new fluorescent yellow-green five-sided sign indicates the presence of a nearby school and an area in which children will be crossing traveled roads.

Diamond (Warning) Sign:

The four-sided, diamond-shaped signs warn drivers of specific road conditions and dangers ahead. **Example shown: Divided Highway Ends**

Pennant-Shaped Sign:

The yellow pennant-shaped sign is used exclusively to warn drivers of impending no-passing zones. These pennant-shaped signs are placed on the left-hand side of two-way roads to aid the driver who may be trying to pass a vehicle on the left.

Rectangular (Regulatory) Sign:

In conjunction with pennant-shaped sign you might see a regulatory sign indicating do not pass or pass with care. The white rectangular sign also provides important regulations that drivers must obey, such as maximum speed limits, or contains useful information such as state highway markers.

Written Messages and Symbols:

Traffic signs will employ either written messages or symbols to convey the information to the driver. Specific examples of written messages and symbols for particular types of signs are:

Warning Signs:

Slippery When Wet

Crossroads Ahead

Low Clearance

Divided Highway Begins

Pedestrian Crossing

Two Way Traffic

Narrow Bridge

Long Steep Downgrade

Merging Traffic

Lane Ends

Added Lane

Winding Road Ahead

Side Road

Low Shoulder

Traffic Signal Ahead

Bicycle Crossing

Turn (Speed 30 or less)

T Intersection

Fire Station Ahead

Yield Ahead

Curve Ahead

Playground Warning

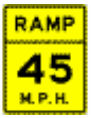
Deer Crossing

Stop Ahead

Farm Machinery

Cattle Crossing

An advisory speed plate may accompany some warning signs.



Regulatory signs

No Right Turn

No Left Turn

No U Turn

Yield

Stop

Keep Right

Wrong Way

Do Not Enter

One Way

One Way

Following are Supplemental Plaques that may be added to the bottom of a stop sign.

Railroad Signs provide a driver with a warning of an impending railroad crossing.

Pentagonal (School Zone) Signs are yellow or fluorescent yellow-green and indicate the presence of a nearby school and an area in which children will be crossing traveled roads.

School Crossing

School Zone

NOTE: Use caution when you see this warning sign

Highway Construction and Maintenance Areas pose dangers both for drivers and for the workers. The following signs warn drivers to be cautious when approaching a work zone.

Flagger Ahead

Workers Ahead

Survey Crew

The following **Regulatory Signs** might be seen at <u>intersections to regulate traffic flow.</u>

Left or Through

Right or through

Multiple Turn Lane

Written Messages and Symbol Traffic signs will employ either written messages or symbols to convey the information to the driver. Specific examples of written messages and symbols for particular types of signs are:

Two Way
Left Turn Lane

No Parking

Reserved Parking

No Trucks

Limited Parking

Tow Away Zone

Narrow
Bridge

No Parking
Anytime

Guide Signs provide information of exit locations, types of highways the driver is traveling, or locations of airports or bus terminals.

Airport

Bus Station

Exit

U S Route

Interstate

State Route

The following **Motorist Services and Recreation Signs** provide drivers with information.

Telephone

Disability Access

Hospital

Playground Area

Bicycle Traill

The Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem has been developed to indicate a slow-moving vehicle, which is any vehicle driven at a speed less than 25 miles per hour and slow-moving vehicles are required to exhibit the emblem.

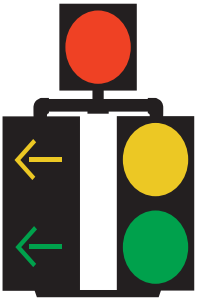
Orange Fluorescent Center

Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem Kit

Red Reflective Borders

TRAFFIC CONTROL AT INTERSECTIONS

Traffic control devices and signs are used to control traffic flow and to indicate right—of-way at intersections and pedestrian crossings.



Stop Lights: Pictured at left are the two most common types of stop lights

For Vehicles Proceeding <u>Straight</u> through Intersection:

- A green signal means go. The driver has the right-of-way and may proceed through the intersection provided it is clear of other traffic and pedestrians.
  - A yellow signal means that the right-of-way is ending.

- A red signal means stop. Traffic entering the intersection from another direction has the right-of-way. The driver may not enter the intersection until the light turns green and the intersection is clear of other traffic.

For Vehicles Turning at the Intersection:

- A green arrow displayed in conjunction with a red or green signal means the driver has the right-of-way to make the turn so long as the intersection is clear. Oncoming traffic must stop.
- A yellow arrow displayed in conjunction with a red or green signal means that the right-of-way to turn is ending.
- A green signal alone means that the driver may make a turn so long as the intersection is clear and the driver yields the right-of-way to all oncoming traffic. When making a left turn on green, only one vehicle is allowed to move into the intersection to complete the turn when the way is clear. Always make sure that the oncoming vehicles are going to stop.
- A yellow signal alone means that the period to turn is ending. As stated above, if you are in the middle of the intersection, complete your turn once the oncoming traffic has stopped.
- A red signal alone means stop. Drivers lawfully within the intersection shall complete the turn. Traffic entering the intersection from another direction has the right-of-way when conflicting traffic is no longer present. The driver may not enter the intersection until the light turns green and the intersection is clear of other traffic.

NOTE: ***Traffic facing a steady red signal alone shall stop at a clearly marked stop line. However, if there is no clearly marked stop line, traffic shall stop before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection. If there is no crosswalk, traffic shall stop before entering the intersection.***

Flashing Light Signals

At some intersections a traffic control device may be found that has one steady flashing or blinking signal in each direction. The following are the rules for obeying these types of flashing light signals.

- **Red flashing light signals**: A red flashing light signal is equivalent to a stop sign and means the driver must come to a complete stop before entering the intersection.
- If cross-traffic is not required to stop at the intersection, a driver may proceed only when the way is clear and the driver will not interfere with the right-of-way of any such cross-traffic.
- If all traffic is required to stop at the intersection then the driver may proceed after a complete stop and after yielding to any vehicle:
  - that is already in the intersection,
  - that has already completely stopped and is about to enter the intersection,
  - that is to the right of the driver and has arrived at the intersection at the same time as the driver.

- **Yellow flashing light signals:** A yellow flashing light indicates the driver should slow down and use caution when traveling through an intersection or other dangerous areas where an accident can happen. Cross-traffic is required to yield the right-of-way; however, drivers should proceed with caution, watching for vehicles or pedestrians attempting to cross the intersection.

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signals allow pedestrians to know when it is legally permitted and safe to cross a street or intersection. Pedestrians can promote traffic safety and protect themselves by observing the following rules:

- "Walk" Sign: Many streets with significant pedestrian traffic have a pedestrian signal that displays the word "WALK" or a symbol of a person walking when it is legally permitted and safe to cross the street or intersection. Pedestrians who have started to cross the street or intersection when the "WALK" sign or walking person symbol appears should continue as quickly as possible to the other side of the street if the signal shifts to "DON'T WALK."

NOTE: ***At some intersections there is a button near the base of the pedestrian signal or stop light that may be pushed by the pedestrian to activate the pedestrian signal to show the "WALK" sign.***

- "Don't Walk" Sign: Pedestrian signals indicate when it is not legally permissible or safe to cross a street or intersection. When the pedestrian signal shows the words "DON"T WALK" or a symbol of a raised hand appears, it is not legally permitted or safe to begin crossing a street or intersection.

Stop signs

The rules pertaining to stop signs are the same as those pertaining to red flashing light signals. A driver should come to a complete stop before the solid white line or crosswalk. If there is neither a solid white line nor crosswalk, the driver should come to a complete stop parallel to the stop sign if possible, or before entering the intersection at a place that allows the driver to determine whether any other vehicles are approaching the intersection from another direction. As always, watch for pedestrians.

Yield Signs

A yield sign indicates that a driver must slow down when approaching an intersection and be prepared to come to a complete stop if a vehicle or pedestrian with the right-of-way is approaching from another direction. A vehicle approaching from another direction with the right-of-way should not have to brake to avoid a collision with a vehicle entering from a road with a yield sign.

Intersections with No Signal or Sign, or with Traffic Signal not functioning

Vehicles approaching an intersection that has no signal or a non-operating traffic signal shall stop before entering the intersection. After stopping, vehicles may proceed with caution through the intersection and shall yield right of way to traffic within the intersection.

Entering Streets or Roadways from an Alley, Building or Driveway

A driver must yield the right of way to other vehicles and is required to stop before entering a street or roadway from an alley or driveway.