

Calgary



# Traffic Safety Tips





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# Being a Responsible and Courteous Driver

The easiest way to prevent collisions or emergencies on our roads is to be courteous to other motorists. Be responsible for your vehicle and your safety.

- › Ensure your car is regularly maintained and road-ready.
- › Drive with your headlights on so you are more visible to other drivers.
- › Avoid driving in other driver's blind spots.
- › Be extra cautious during sunrise and sunset. Sun glare may make it difficult to see other road users.
- › Maintain a safe following time of at least two seconds from the vehicle in front of you. Increase this safe distance if you are driving a larger vehicle or road conditions are not ideal.
- › Make way for trucks completing turns. Large trucks need space to manoeuvre, so give them plenty of room.
- › Indicate your intention to turn or change lanes and avoid sudden moves.
- › Keep to the centre or right lane of multi-lane roads and allow faster vehicles to pass on the left.
- › Secure loose material in the back of your truck or trailer.
- › Be kind to the environment and other Calgarians by turning off your engine when parked.
- › Limit the noise your vehicle emits, including sounds from squealing tires, mufflers, radios, stereos or security systems.
- › Share the road with cyclists and give them plenty of room when passing.
- › Yield to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks.



slower traffic  
keep right

# Reporting Impaired Drivers

Drinking and driving puts people's lives and property at risk. If you suspect a driver is impaired, pull over to a safe location, then call 9-1-1. Do not follow the driver or place yourself in danger.

Possible signs of an impaired driver are:

- › Driving unreasonably fast, slow or at an inconsistent speed.
- › Drifting in and out of lanes.
- › Tailgating and changing lanes frequently.
- › Making exceptionally wide turns.
- › Changing lanes or passing without sufficient clearance.
- › Overshooting or stopping well before stop signs or stop lights.
- › Disregarding signals or signs.
- › Approaching signals or leaving intersections too quickly or slowly.
- › Driving without headlights, failing to lower high beams or leaving turn signals on.
- › Driving with windows open in cold or bad weather.



# Winter Driving in Calgary

Winter can create challenging driving conditions on Calgary roads. Drive with extra care.

## Winter driving tips

- › Tune-up and winterize your vehicle.
- › Check your tire treads and consider installing snow tires.
- › Clean snow and ice off your vehicle, headlights and windows.
- › Give yourself extra time to reach your destination.
- › Listen to your local radio station for traffic and weather updates, including Calgary Traffic Advisory Radio FM 106.5.
- › Delay your trip until the roads are in better condition if possible.
- › Reduce your speed and turn on your headlights.
- › Give yourself extra time to stop at intersections, signs and for pedestrians. Increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.
- › Do not pass working snow removal vehicles.
- › Leave 10 metres—about three car lengths—between your vehicle and snow removal vehicles.
- › Watch for stalled vehicles.
- › Be cautious when travelling on bridges, overpasses and off-ramps as they may be icy.
- › Turn on your windshield wipers before passing other vehicles on rainy or snowy days.
- › Use caution when passing cyclists, as they may have to ride further from the curb in the winter.
- › Be aware of parking restrictions including Snow Route Parking Bans and street cleaning restrictions. Refer to the Seasonal Parking Restrictions section of this booklet for more information.



# Distracted Driving

Alberta's distracted driving legislation is focused on ensuring motorists, including cyclists, use due care and attention when driving.

## Drivers are prohibited from:

- › Using hand-held cell phones.
- › Texting or e-mailing.
- › Using electronic devices such as audio and video players, computers, video games and cameras.
- › Entering information on GPS units.
- › Reading printed materials.
- › Writing or sketching.
- › Personal grooming.

For more information, visit [transportation.alberta.ca/distracteddriving](https://transportation.alberta.ca/distracteddriving).

Even though it is not illegal to use hands free devices, talking using hands free devices is just as risky as talking hand-held.

## Distracted driving tips

- › Turn off your device and put it away while driving.
- › Give yourself extra time to reach your destination so you can respond to messages when you arrive.

# Emergency Vehicles

Emergency vehicles include fire, police, ambulance, designated emergency response units and tow trucks. Flashing lights from emergency vehicles warn drivers to reduce speeds, carefully change lanes and/or prepare to stop.

## When an emergency vehicle is travelling on the road:

- › Pull over in a safe manner so emergency vehicles do not have to slow down or change lanes.
- › Use proper signals so all drivers are aware of your intentions.





- › Slow down to 60 km/h or the posted speed, whichever is lower, when passing a stopped emergency vehicle with its lights flashing. This applies to the lane directly next to the stopped vehicle.
- › Do not follow an emergency vehicle through a signalized intersection when the light is red.
- › Do not follow an emergency vehicle too closely. These vehicles often have large blind spots. Use a minimum four second following distance.



## Funeral Processions

Funeral processions are identified by flashing purple lights. If you approach a funeral procession in progress, do not pass through it. Yield the right of way until it has passed.

## Bus Only Crossings

Bus only crossings allow access to Calgary Transit buses and emergency vehicles. They typically use gates to restrict passage of other vehicles.

Some older bus only crossings consist of a narrowed street with a pit that is only passable by vehicles with a large wheel base, such as transit buses or some emergency vehicles. Other vehicles attempting to use this type of bus only crossing may become trapped in the pit area. Warning signs are placed in advance of and adjacent to these bus only crossings.



# Vehicle Height Restrictions



low clearance 3.8 m



low clearance 4.1 m

When driving beneath bridges and underpasses, it is your responsibility to know the height of the vehicle you're driving, and to watch for posted vertical clearance warning signs.

The maximum legal height of a vehicle is 4.15 metres (13 feet 6 inches) when measured from the road surface to the highest point on the vehicle or the load it is carrying. Vehicles exceeding this dimension require an over dimensional permit from The City of Calgary. Permits are available by calling **311**.

When driving within The City of Calgary please watch for these low clearance structures:

- › Centre Street Bridge, over the Bow River (lower deck): 3.6 m (11'-10").
- › Riverfront Avenue S., under Centre Street Bridge: 2.7 m (8'10").
- › 7 Street S.E., under the CPR Bridge immediately south of 9 Avenue: 2.0 m (6'-6").
- › 14 Street N.W., under the pedestrian overpass at 8 Avenue: 4.3 m (14'-2").





# Pedestrians

Pedestrians have the right of way at all intersections and crosswalks unless the intersection is controlled by a traffic signal, a traffic control device or if a police officer indicates otherwise. Before crossing, pedestrians should signal their intention to cross (make themselves visible), ensure traffic has **stopped**, and cross the road without delay. Pedestrians have a responsibility to not step in front of a vehicle when it is not practicable for the vehicle to stop.

Motorists should not stop for pedestrians waiting to cross illegally, but should be cautious when proceeding.

Regardless of the level of enhancement provided, pedestrians and motorists should always exercise the same level of care.

Pedestrians can cross streets at the following locations:

- › **Unmarked crosswalks** exist at every intersection where there is a sidewalk, unless signs indicate that the crosswalk is closed. They extend from the corner of one sidewalk, across the roadway, to the corner of the opposite sidewalk.
- › **Marked crosswalks** have signs and painted white lines that extend from the corner of one sidewalk, to the corner of the opposite sidewalk. Marked crosswalks may also be located mid block, between intersections.
- › **Pedestrian corridors** have marked crosswalks, overhead flashing yellow lights (activated by pedestrians) and advance warning signs.
- › **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon locations** have marked crosswalks, side mounted rectangular flashing yellow lights (activated by pedestrians) and advance warning signs.
- › **Intersections controlled by traffic signals** have **WALK** and **DON'T WALK** signals in addition



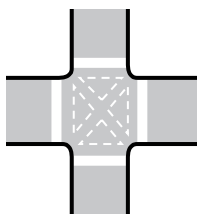
marked pedestrian crosswalk



pedestrian corridor



push to cross



pedestrian scramble



to a marked crosswalk. Pedestrians can complete crossing when the **DON'T WALK** is flashing but should not start crossing. At intersections controlled by traffic signals, pedestrians have the right of way:

- › When crossing with the **WALK** symbol displayed.
- › When the **DON'T WALK** symbol is displayed, provided they had already started to cross when the **WALK** symbol was displayed.
- › Countdown timers are provided at many intersections to provide information to pedestrians about how much time they have to complete crossing. The countdown begins when the flashing **DON'T WALK** is displayed and pedestrians should not be starting to cross.
- › **Pedestrian scrambles** are signalized intersection controls that stop traffic in all directions to allow pedestrians to cross in any direction. Vehicles are not permitted to make right turns when signals are red.

Many intersections have a button marked **push button** to cross. At these locations, pedestrians must activate the pedestrian crossing signal by pressing the button to ensure sufficient time is given to cross the street safely.

## Cycling

Cyclists have all the same rights and responsibilities as a motor vehicle when travelling on roadways, unless indicated otherwise. Bicycles are permitted on all Calgary roads, except for Deerfoot Trail.

Certain residential streets are designated bicycle routes. These are the preferred roadways for bicyclists in residential areas. These routes are identified with blue and white way finding signage.

Some major roadways have designated bike lanes or cycle tracks. They are identified by black and white signs with diamonds and with stencils on the pavement.



residential bike route

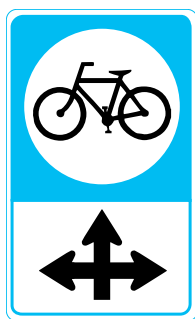
Restricted lanes may also be used for bicycle lanes and this is marked with a white painted diamond and signage.

**As a motorist, remember:**

- › Cyclists are not restricted to bike lanes and can use regular traffic lanes.
- › Marked bike lanes are restricted to bicycle use only. You may enter a bike lane to execute a turn, as long as you yield to existing cycle traffic and use your turn signals in advance.
- › Avoid sounding your horn unnecessarily near a cyclist, as it may be distracting.
- › Check for cyclists and other on-coming traffic before you open your vehicle door when parked.
- › When pulling away from the curb, check for cyclists who may be trying to pass you.
- › Pass cyclists only when it is safe to do so, ensuring you give them at least one metre of space.
- › Watch for cyclists who may be in your blind spot when preparing to make a right turn. Yield to cyclists on the right as you would to a car in an adjacent lane.
- › Be extra cautious during sunrise and sunset, because it may be difficult to see cyclists and other roadway users during these times.
- › If a cyclist dismounts completely and is walking beside their bicycle, they are considered a pedestrian.

**As a bicyclist, remember:**

- › Obey all traffic control devices and regulations. Cyclists must follow all the rules of the road.
- › Distracted driving legislation applies to all vehicles, including bicycles.
- › Examine your bicycle before riding to ensure the tires are properly inflated, the brakes work and other components are in good order.
- › Ensure you have a working headlight and a tail-light while traveling at night.
- › Equip your bike with a bell.



bicycle route marker



restricted lanes



share the road

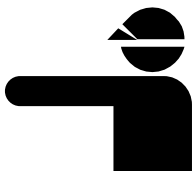




- › Wear an approved bicycle helmet.
- › Cycling on the sidewalk is prohibited if you're over the age of 13.
- › Wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing to ensure you're visible to motorists.
- › Keep both hands on the handlebars except when making a hand signal.
- › Do not carry more people at one time than the bicycle was designed for.
- › Do not hold onto or attach the bicycle to any other moving vehicle.
- › Ride single file except when passing another bicycle.
- › Watch for motorists turning left.
- › Ride predictably, use hand signals to indicate that you are preparing to turn and ride in a straight path when possible.
- › Always ride in the same direction as traffic, unless otherwise indicated. It is difficult for drivers to see cyclists coming from the right when pulling out of a driveway or intersection.
- › To maintain visibility on the road ride at least one metre from parked cars and avoid weaving around them.
- › Be aware of your surroundings. Try to make eye contact with others to ensure they see you.



stop



◀ left



right ▶

## Cyclist hand signals

Since bicycles do not have built-in turn signals, bicyclists should use hand signals to indicate their intentions in traffic.

For more information on bicycling in Calgary, visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).

# Playground Zone Safety

## Playground Zones

Playground zones warn motorists to take extra caution and reduce speed when driving near playgrounds.

When driving through a playground zone, remember:

- › Children do not perceive traffic like adults do – extra caution is needed.
- › The maximum permitted speed in playground zones is 30 km/h.
- › The zones are in effect from 7:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. every day of the year.
- › You may not pass another vehicle within the playground zone during this time.
- › Drive carefully and watch for children.

When driving through a playground zone near a school, remember:

- › Traffic congestion near schools is problematic. Consider dropping your child off a few blocks away from school.
- › Do not double park – it is illegal and dangerous.
- › Do not park within 5 metres of a crosswalk to ensure children are visible.
- › Do not park in school bus zones.
- › Do not park within 1.5 metres of a driveway or garage.



playground zone



playground zone ends



# School Bus Safety

Always watch for children in the vicinity of a school bus when it is stopped. Be prepared to slow down or stop.



school bus  
stop ahead

## Amber flashing lights

School buses use flashing amber lights to alert passing motorists that the bus is slowing down and preparing to load or unload children. If you approach a school bus with its amber lights flashing, you may pass with caution. Remember to watch for pedestrians and be prepared to stop.

## Red flashing lights

School bus operators are prohibited from using their red flashing lights on most Calgary roads. They are required to use them in rural areas when stopping to load or unload children.

If you see a school bus with its red lights flashing, you must stop regardless of your direction of travel, unless you're on the opposite side of a divided road.





# Traffic Controls

## Roundabouts and Traffic Circles

Roundabouts control traffic at intersections without the use of traffic signals or stop signs. All vehicles must travel counter clockwise around the roundabout to pass through the intersection.

### When driving through a roundabout, remember:

- › Plan ahead – know which exit you will be using.
- › Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks (both when entering and exiting the roundabout).
- › Yield to traffic when entering a roundabout.

### In multi-lane roundabouts:

- › Enter into the right (outer) lane if you plan to leave at the first exit point.
- › Enter into the left (inner) lane(s) to proceed to the second exit or beyond.
- › Yield to vehicles on your left.
- › Use turn signals when changing lanes.

To see a video on how to safely navigate a roundabout, visit [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca) and search for “traffic roundabout”.



roundabout ahead



roundabout yield





restricted lanes



lane reversal



## Restricted Lanes

Restricted lanes can only be used by vehicles designated on signage. These vehicles may include:

- › Buses.
- › Taxis.
- › Bicycles.
- › Other vehicles with two or more occupants, including motorcycles.

Restricted lanes are identified with white diamond markings that are stencilled on the roadway. Misuse of these lanes may result in a fine. If you must cross a restricted lane to enter or exit a roadway, you must do so in one block.

## Lane Reversals

In areas where lane reversals are in effect, overhead signal displays indicate which lanes are open to traffic and which lanes are not. A green arrow identifies a lane as being open, while a red **X** identifies a lane that is closed. During periods when there are no lane reversals in effect, there will be no displays on the overhead signal.



speed limit alleys

## Speed Limits

- › The standard speed limit on Calgary roads is 50 km/h, unless otherwise posted.
- › The speed limit in alleys is 15 km/h.
- › The speed limit in school and playground zones is 30 km/h during the hours indicated on signs.
- › Reduced speeds may be required depending on traffic or road conditions.

Speed creates the energy that causes damage, injury and death in collisions. Speeding by even a few km/h over the posted speed limit increases the likelihood of a collision, injury or death.

In addition to regular enforcement, The Calgary Police Service uses specialized

cameras to enforce speed at several intersections. If a vehicle registered to you is captured on camera travelling through a red light or speeding through a green light, you may receive a traffic fine in the mail.

## Traffic Calming Measures

Traffic calming measures are used on residential streets to reduce vehicle speed, discourage short cutting through communities and improve road safety. When approaching a traffic calming device, slow down.

The most common traffic calming devices include:

- › Raised areas of roadway such as such as humps, bumps, raised crosswalks.
- › Curb extensions.
- › Roundabouts.
- › Digital *intelligent Speed Limit Observation and Warning Signs* (iSLOWS).
- › Signage.



speed hump



residential area  
drive safely

## Road Construction Zones

Always be on the lookout for signs warning of construction ahead. Construction zone speed limits must be obeyed at all times. Speed fines are doubled when workers are present.

Be prepared to slow down, stop and obey instructions from flag people. Hazards such as bumps, fresh oil and loose gravel may be present even when there are no workers or equipment. Speeding in construction zones endangers you, workers and other drivers.



curb extension





## Collisions and Stalled Vehicles

If you've been in a minor non-injury collision (damage is under \$2000) or your vehicle is stalled, turn your hazard signals on and move your vehicle out of the way as soon as possible. If you are unable to move your vehicle, wait at a safe location to call emergency services and exchange insurance information.

The Calgary Police Service and The City of Calgary ask you to follow these three simple steps when involved in a minor non-injury collision.

1. Assess the situation and check for injuries. If no one is injured, move your vehicle off the road to the nearest safe location.
2. Exchange driver, vehicle and insurance information with those involved in the collision.
3. Report the collision to your local district police office in person or online, and to your insurance provider.

If you witness a major collision or situation that requires emergency services:

- › Be calm. Contact 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Answer the questions asked by the communications dispatcher, and follow their instructions.
- › Remain at the scene if possible to provide first responders with any information they may require, including a witness statement and your contact information in case an investigator needs to follow-up with you.
- › Render assistance if it is safe and you are able to do so.
- › Do not move the vehicles or debris on the roadway.



# Roving Tow Trucks

Tow trucks travel along key corridors throughout the city during the morning and evening peak periods to remove vehicles that are stalled or inoperable and take them to the nearest safe location.

For more information, visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) or call 311.



parking time limit

# Parking

## On-Street Parking

### When parking on-street, do not park:

- › In the opposite direction of traffic flow.
- › On a sidewalk or boulevard.
- › Within 5 metres of a fire hydrant, corner, intersection, stop or yield sign or marked crosswalk.
- › Within 1.5 metres of a driveway or alley.
- › Within 8 metres of a designated accessible parking zone.
- › In an alley in the downtown area, unless your vehicle has commercial licence plates.
- › In restricted lanes when they are in effect.
- › In one spot for more than 72 consecutive hours. Your vehicle may be considered abandoned and towed.
- › In a marked fire lane.
- › A detached trailer or camper.

For rules about parking special vehicles such as trailers or recreational vehicles, refer to [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).



no parking



no parking  
in a fire lane



## When parking in an alley, do not park:

- › Within 1.5 metres of, or directly across from a driveway or garage entrance in an alley.
- › Within 1 metre of the side of a garbage container.
- › In alleys that are less than 6.1 metres wide.
- › In a manner that impedes other vehicles from using the alley.

You must leave a minimum of 3 metres unobstructed width for the passage of other vehicles.

## Standard parking signs

- › A **No Stopping** sign indicates that you may not stop your vehicle, even momentarily, to pick up or drop off a passenger.
- › A **No Parking** sign indicates that you may only stop your vehicle while actively loading and unloading passengers. You may not leave your vehicle stopped for any other reason.
- › Activating your emergency flashers does not exempt your vehicle from the above restrictions.

## Special Parking Zones

### Parking for persons with disabilities

Accessible parking zones are for the exclusive use of people with disabilities who operate or travel by motor vehicle. Vehicles using designated accessible parking spaces must display a parking placard or a license plate for persons with disabilities.



handicap parking permit required



handibus loading zone



bus zone



## Bus Zones

Bus zones are marked with a Bus Stop sign. No vehicle other than a Calgary Transit vehicle may stop or park in a bus zone. You may not stop, even momentarily, to drop off or pick up a passenger in a bus zone.

## Taxi Parking Zones

No vehicle other than an on-duty taxi may stop or park in a marked taxi zone.

Taxi zones are installed throughout downtown and in areas where the demand is the highest.

Taxi hydrant zones enable on-duty taxis to wait for customers at designated fire hydrants.

Late night taxi zones are in effect during designated days and times, as indicated by signage.

## Residential Parking Zones

Residential parking zones are identified with signage, indicating that only residents and their visitors, with special permits may park there. Parking permits for residents and their visitors may be obtained from the Calgary Parking Authority.

## Loading Zones

You may stop in a passenger-loading zone for up to 20 minutes to pick up, discharge or wait for passengers.

Loading zones may be used by anyone while actively loading or unloading for up to 20 minutes.

Commercial vehicles with appropriate license plates can stop in commercial loading zones for up to 20 minutes while actively loading or unloading.



taxi hydrant zone



late night taxi zone



residential parking permit zone



public loading zone



## ParkPlus Parking

The Calgary Parking Authority manages paid parking through the ParkPlus System. It includes on-street parking, surface lots and parkades that are split up into various payment zones.

Make a payment by using any ParkPlus machine or your cell phone. Ensure you note the zone number you've parked in and the license plate number of your vehicle.

For more information, visit [calgaryparking.com](http://calgaryparking.com).

## Seasonal Parking Restrictions

### Snow Route Parking Bans

Parking will be temporarily restricted on designated *snow routes* for up to 72 hours following a declaration of a Snow Event by The City. Snow Events may be declared when approximately five centimetres or more of snow has accumulated on city streets. On-street handicap parking zones located along snow routes will be exempt from the parking ban at all times.

To find out if a snow route parking ban is in effect, and for more information:



snow route



street cleaning



- › Sign up for automatic e-mail alerts by downloading The City of Calgary Road Conditions application on your smartphone.
- › Visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).
- › Call **311** to listen to the automated message, or to speak to a customer service representative.
- › Watch the local news or listen to the radio.

### Spring Clean-up Street Cleaning

Spring Clean-up street cleaning runs from mid to late April until the first week of July. City crews will put out signage in affected areas to inform residents to remove their vehicles and garbage/recycling bins when street cleaning is scheduled.

To see the street cleaning schedule for your area, visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) or call **311**.

# Additional Information

This document provides tips that are specific to driving in Calgary. It does not replace standard driving manuals. For information about driver education in Alberta, visit [transportation.alberta.ca](http://transportation.alberta.ca).

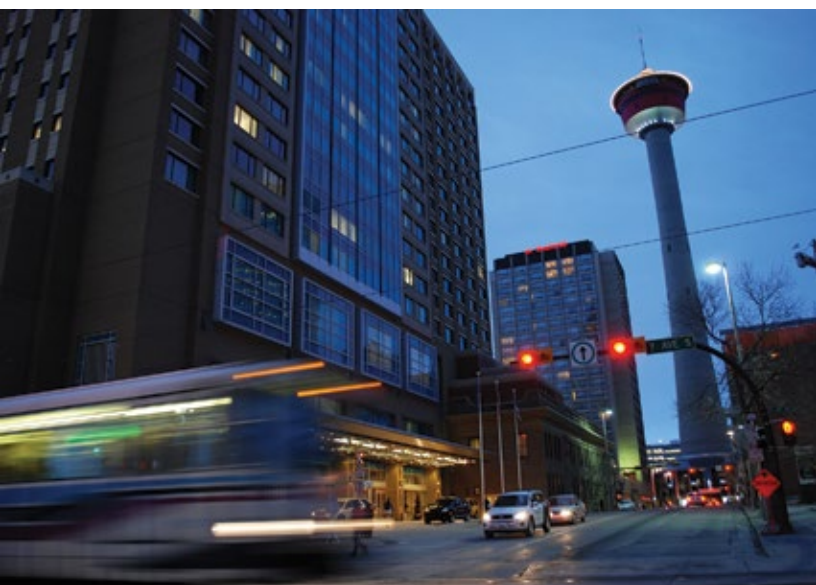
For more detailed information about the content in this handbook, please refer to [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca) or call 311.

## References

The City of Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96  
[www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca)

Province of Alberta Traffic Safety Act  
[www.qp.alberta.ca](http://www.qp.alberta.ca)

Alberta Transportation, Driver's Guide to Operation, Safety and Licensing



## Contact information

For more information on these and other traffic tips contact **311**.

For updates and downloadable PDFs of traffic tips visit [calgary.ca/roads](http://calgary.ca/roads).

