

# Traffic Signs, Signals, Markings

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Traffic signs and signals are essential to highway safety.

South Carolina's traffic signs, signals and pavement markings conform to the nationally recommended standards. In many cases, the signs use easily recognized symbols or pictures rather than words.

The following section shows a sampling of signs you will see on the highway, including a number of important regulatory, warning and guide signs. A driver must know the meaning of all the signs to be able to drive safely.

There are seven basic shapes of signs, each shape having a different meaning. Each color also has a particular meaning.

For your own safety, learn the signs that are shown and explained on these pages.

## **Regulatory Signs**

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The stop sign **(1)**, most important to your safety, is the only eight-sided (octagonal) sign you will see. A vehicle approaching a stop sign shall stop at a clearly marked stop line, a marked or unmarked crosswalk, but if none, then at the point nearest the intersection where the driver can see in both directions without entering the cross traffic in front of him/her.

The three-sided yield sign **(2)** means you are approaching an intersection where you must yield to any lanes you intend to enter or cross approaching from the right or left. This sign is also found at un signaled railroad crossings where you must yield to approaching trains. Whenever this sign is present, it is your responsibility to slow down, look to the right or left and yield to oncoming traffic. The yield sign is also found at un signaled railroad crossings where you must yield to approaching trains.

Sign **3**, Do Not Enter, which you will see particularly on ramps to interstates, tells you that you must not enter the road or highway because it is used only for traveling in the opposite direction.

Sign **4** tells you that you are entering or traveling on a one-way roadway in the wrong direction. You should immediately stop and reverse your direction.

Anytime you see a sign (such as sign 5) bearing a red circle with a slash mark across a black arrow (or other symbol), it means don't do whatever is shown by the arrow (or other symbol). On sign **5**, the message is that you must not make a U-turn.





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Sign 6 with the red circle and red slash mark across the arrow pointing left means you must not make a left turn. Similarly, sign 7 means that you cannot make a right turn.

Sign 8 with an arrow curving to the right around a traffic island (bullet-like) symbol on the left appears when you approach a divided highway or traffic island where traffic must keep right. (It can show that traffic must keep left by having the arrow pass to the left of the island.)

Sign 9, which has been placed on all controlled access interstates in South Carolina, tells pedestrians and drivers of slow-moving vehicles they are prohibited from using the interstate.

Sign 10 indicates a minimum speed at which it is safe to travel. This is usually 40 or 45 miles per hour. No traffic moving more slowly than the minimum speed limit may use the highway.

Sign 11 declares that passing is illegal when indicated by the pavement markings.



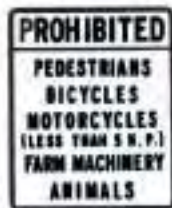
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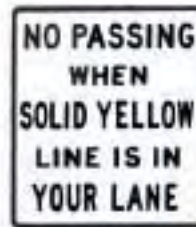
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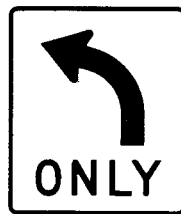
### Other Important Signs

Signs **12** and **13** are lane-use control signs. Sign **12** is used over a lane to show that all traffic in that lane must turn left. Sign **13** is used over a lane where a left turn or straight movement is permitted. Similar signs are used to restrict lanes to right turns and other combinations of traffic movements.

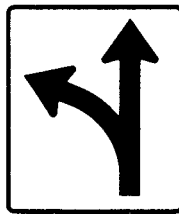
Sign **14** is used at some intersections to tell you that you **CANNOT** turn right on red at that intersection. The law permits you to turn right on a red traffic signal unless a sign prohibits it. If no sign **14** is present, you must first stop, look both ways and yield to any other vehicles or pedestrians lawfully in or near the intersection.

Sign **15** means slower traffic should drive in the right (outside) lane and faster traffic should take the inside left lane.

Sign **16** tells you that the speed limit is 65 miles per hour. However, signs showing lower limits appear on some roads (see sign **10**). When used, sign **10** is always posted directly beneath sign **16**.



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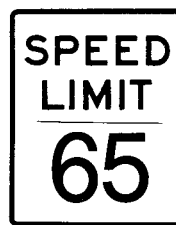
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## Warning Signs

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Sign **17** tells you that you are approaching a traffic signal and should slow down or be prepared to stop.

The two arrows pointing in opposite directions (sign **18**) mean that you are on or approaching a street or highway carrying two-way traffic. These roads will usually be marked with broken yellow center lines and you must drive to the right of that line except when passing.

Sign **19** shows you (with a picture of a skidding car) that the road on which you are traveling can be slippery when wet and that you should reduce speed.

Sign **20** shows a truck going down an incline, indicating you are approaching a hill.

Sign **21** tells you that you are approaching a location where traffic may be entering from another roadway and you will be merging with this traffic. Here the sign shows that traffic may be entering from your right.

The two arrows pointing in opposite directions (on sign **22**) with the traffic island (bullet-shaped symbol) at the top of the sign tells you that a divided highway is ahead. You must move to the right and should not pass within this area.

Sign **23** showing the opposite arrows with the traffic island (bullet-shaped symbol) at the bottom means that the divided highway is coming to an end and that you must prepare to meet traffic coming toward you in the opposing lane.

Sign **24** is very important to the driver of a truck or van that may be too tall to drive under a bridge having only 12 feet, 6 inches clearance. These signs tell the amount of space between the road and the overpass.

Sign **25**, in a five-sided pentagonal shape, is a very important sign. When you see the picture sign with two children's figures, you know you are approaching a school. When you see one of these, slow down and be prepared to stop. Farther along, the second pentagon-shaped sign (**26**) with the line representing a crosswalk tells you that children may be crossing the road at or near that point going to and from school. A sign shaped like a one-room schoolhouse means drive slowly and, carefully and be prepared to stop.

A yellow diamond-shaped sign (**27**) picturing an adult tells you that just ahead is a location where pedestrians often cross. It cautions you to drive slowly and, carefully and be prepared to stop.





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Sign **28** is immediately understandable. It shows a deer leaping in the air and warns you that deer often cross the road in that area. The driver should be on the lookout for this animal, particularly at night.

Signs **29** and **30** give notice that you are approaching an intersection and should watch for entering traffic. The black lines show you what kind of intersection it is. Sign **29** tells you it is a “branch” intersection with traffic entering from one side. Sign **30** tells you that it is a crossroad. Be prepared to slow down, and observe any special speed limit instructions, in the event a car enters or crosses the highway from the side road.

Signs **31** and **32** give notice that you are approaching a curve. The black line represents the road you are on and, the type of curve you can expect and tells you that you must slow down. Sign **31** tells you that you must turn left and then right. Sign **32** tells you must be prepared for a rather sharp turn to the right. The smaller sign (sign **33**, which is displayed on the post beneath the larger sign) shows the highest speed at which you can make the turn safely. Exceeding the speed posted on this type of sign is not only hazardous but also a traffic violation.

Sign **34** informs you of the highest safe speed at which you may drive on interchange ramps when leaving the interstate.



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## Railroad Crossings

Signs that warn about railroad crossings are among the most important a driver needs to know.

The familiar round sign (35) with black **X** and **RR** (for railroad) on a yellow background is used in advance of the crossing. At the track itself, you will see the standard railroad crossbuck.

Sign 36 indicates that a side road crosses a railroad track. Be careful when making a turn across the tracks.

Some crossings are protected by flashing lights and crossing barrier gates. But every driver should approach all crossings with caution and always drive safely enough to be able to stop for any railroad crossing. You cannot legally go around barrier gates while they are down or while lights are flashing.

The crossbuck (37) is placed at all railroad crossings. Slow down, look and listen before crossing. The sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks. Yield to any approaching trains.

If you see sign 38 in advance of a railroad crossing, a low ground clearance vehicle or trailer may get stuck on the crossing and should avoid it.



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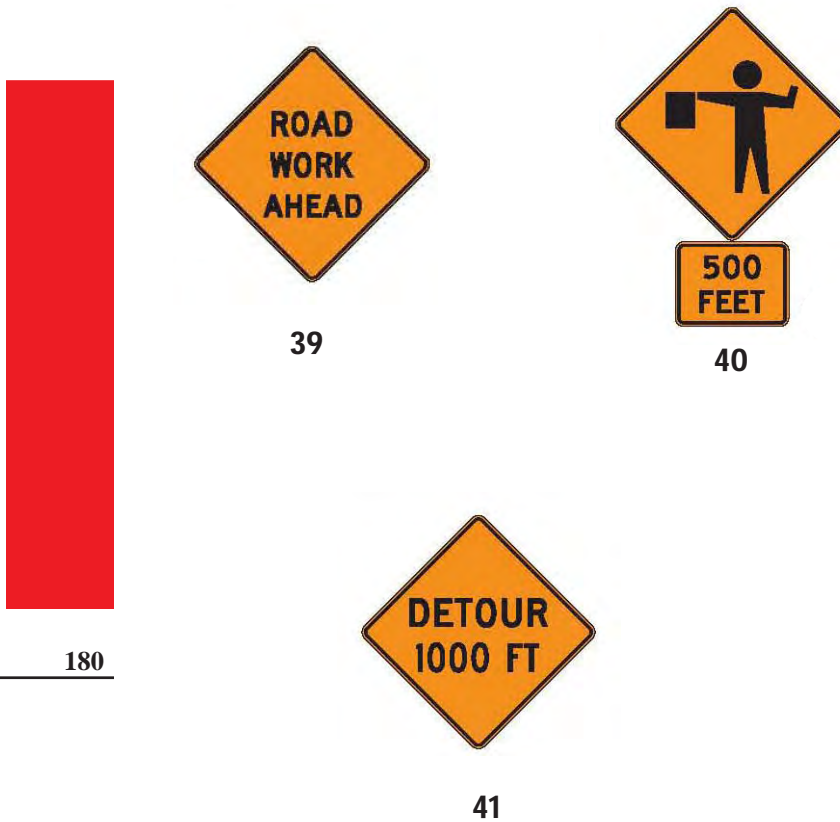


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### Work Zone Signs

Whenever road work is performed on the highway, special signs are displayed to advise you and guide you through the work area. Most signs and other traffic control devices associated with work zones are orange. Use caution and lower your speed as you travel through these areas for your safety and the safety of the workers.

Sign **39** indicates a work zone is ahead. Sign **40** warns you that a flagman is ahead and that you will need to obey the directions that he or she provides. Sign **41** indicates that you will start a detour 1,000 feet ahead.



## Guide Signs

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The miles are numbered from South to North and from West to East on Interstate highways. In South Carolina the numbering for I-20, I-85 and I-95 begins at the Georgia line. I-26 begins at the North Carolina line, and I-77 begins at Columbia. Incidentally, interchanges in South Carolina are numbered according to the nearest milepost.

If you have trouble, give the best directions you can, including the nearest milepost number, which will help to pinpoint your exact location.

Guide signs are used on the state's interstates well in advance of an exit taking traffic to another highway. It also bears the names of the places you may reach by taking the exit. These signs show exit numbers corresponding to the number of the milepost nearest the interchange. Two miles before an interstate exit, sign **42** gives the exit number (the same as the nearest milepost) and tells what places may be reached by taking the exit. Sign **43** alerts you to the next exit, the road number, direction you will be traveling, and town you could reach.



**42**



**43**



The exit sign is used to indicate where and in what direction a ramp leaves the interstate. The new sign (44) has the exit number on it.

Sign 45 is a destination sign. Some, but not all such signs, give the distance to each town listed and arrows point in the direction you must take to get to each town. Sign 46 is used for interchanges having more than one exit ramp. It shows the driver the route and direction in which he will be traveling, as well as the town or city to be reached by taking the exit.



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## Route Markers

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When planning a trip you'll want to know the best route to take. And if you want to go safely, and save time and travel costs at the same time, you should plan your trip carefully, using a good road map.

Each route shown on the map is marked by a number. The route number on the map corresponds with the numbers posted on the highway. Therefore, by choosing from the map the route you want to take, you can reach your chosen destination simply by following the numbers posted on the highway.

There are several different highway systems. The routes in each system are posted with a particular type of marker.

### Mileposts

Green and white mileposts (47) are posted at one-mile intervals along the Interstate routes. They tell you the progress you are making. Since they are placed at one-mile intervals along the route, they are also useful in reporting locations of accidents, disabled vehicles and other emergencies.

### Interstate System Route Marker

This red, white and blue sign (48) is the standard marker erected on Interstate System highways throughout the nation. The sign not only gives the number of the highway but also the name of the state in which the marker is located. It is used on the highway itself and also on approaches to the highway at or near traffic interchanges.



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### **U. S. Number Route Marker**

This sign with black numerals on the familiar U.S. shield (sign **49**) is used on all U.S. numbered routes. A U.S. numbered highway, like an Interstate System highway, extends into or through more than one state; such highways are owned and maintained by the states in any case.

### **State Route Marker**

Signs **50** and **51** are state route markers. A state route is a primary or main route extending from one major point in South Carolina to another, usually across county lines.

### **Business And By-Pass Plates**

Some U.S. and state routes have a plate mounted over them. A “Business” sign (**52**) means the route leads through the town’s business area. The word “By-Pass” (**53**) means the route by-passes the town’s business area and therefore is the faster route.

### **Secondary System Road Marker**

Sign **54** is a marker that is used to designate a state secondary system route. The first number after the letter “S” is the number of the county and the last number is the road number.

There is a separate set of secondary road numbers for each county. You will find only a few of the more important secondary road numbers on your state primary system map because there are too many secondary roads to show. However, they are all shown on county maps, which may be purchased by mail from the central office of the Department of Transportation. Secondary system roads are local roads, built to serve traffic in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas they are not intended as through routes and should not normally be used by drivers who are not familiar with the area.

### **Evacuation Route**

In the event of a hurricane, a mandatory evacuation may be declared for the coastal areas of South Carolina. Sign **55** indicated the road or highway is used as an evacuation route in this type of emergency.



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## Pavement Markings

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A broken yellow line (**56**) indicates that you are on a two-lane road and can expect oncoming traffic in the lane to the left of the line. Passing is permitted where there is ample passing distance and the opposing lane is clear of traffic.

A double yellow line (**57**) means that it is illegal to cross the marking from either direction in order to pass another vehicle. A solid yellow barrier line (**58**) in your lane with a broken yellow line on the other side of it means that you cannot pass. Traffic in the other lane may pass when it is safe to do so.

Broken white lines (**59**) are used to divide lanes of traffic going in the same direction. This type of marking is frequently seen on wide streets within a city, as well as on interstate highways, other freeways and roadways carrying traffic in one direction.

A special type of yellow barrier line is used to mark a median as a “refuge area” where vehicles may safely wait to turn left, out of the way of other traffic. Each side of the median area is marked with a yellow line and a broken yellow line. The solid yellow line is next to the lanes of travel, indicating “no passing,” but motorists from either direction must cross into the area to wait and turn left. This median area must not be used for travel along the highway at any time.

### Directional Arrows

Pavement arrows shown on this page indicate directions of permitted traffic movement. When approaching intersections where pavement arrows are used, you should enter the lane where the arrow points in the direction you want to go. If you get in the wrong lane you should keep going in the direction indicated by the arrow until it is safe to turn off and get back on the street or highway that will carry you to your destination. Some lanes have double-headed arrows, indicating optional lane usage. Lane control signs sometimes are placed above the roadway to supplement the pavement arrow.

A straight arrow (**60**) on the pavement means the lane is only for traffic moving straight ahead and that a vehicle in the lane should not turn either right or left.

An arrow pointing to the left (**61**) means the lane is for left-turning traffic only. An arrow pointing right (**62**) means the lane is for right-turning traffic only.

A two-headed arrow with one head pointing straight ahead and the other pointing left (**63**) means traffic in the lane may go straight ahead or turn left.

A two-headed arrow (**64**) with one head pointing straight and the other pointing right means traffic in the lane may go straight ahead or turn right.





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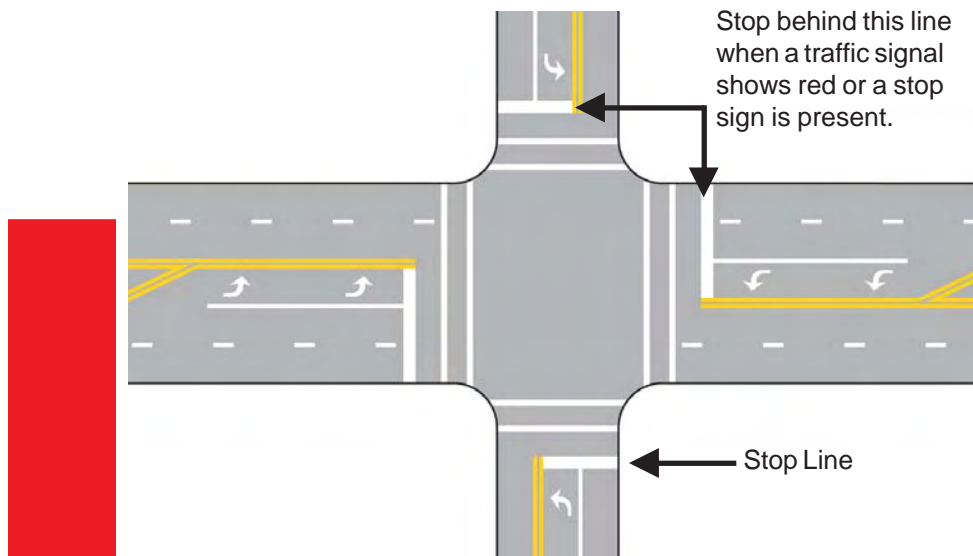
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### Intersection Markings

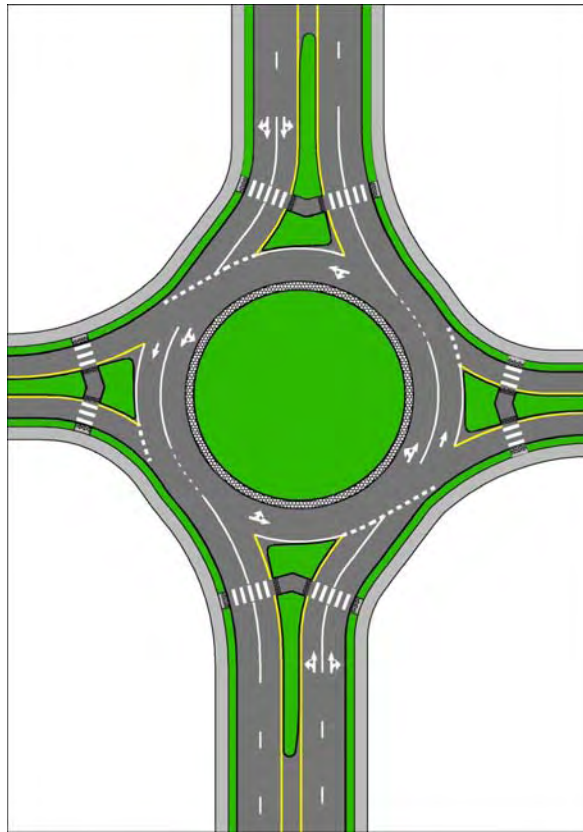
Most intersections in or near cities will have white pavement markings that indicate where you are to stop when directed by a traffic signal or stop sign. You should stop your vehicle with the front of your vehicle at the stopline. This will allow vehicles crossing in front of you to pass safely and allow space for pedestrians to cross also.



### Roundabouts and Traffic Circles

These are found in some areas to help ensure safe passage of traffic through an intersection without necessarily stopping the flow of traffic. A roundabout or traffic circle is a circular intersection with design features that promote safe and efficient traffic flow.

Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. When entering the roundabout or traffic circle you must negotiate a sharp curve. Slow your speed to about 15 to 20 mph. Slow speeds aid in the smooth movement of vehicles into, around, and out of a roundabout. Once in the roundabout, proceed to the appropriate exit, following the guidance provided by traffic signs and pavement markings. Roundabouts are generally larger and have lower speeds than traffic circles, but both work the same way.



When using roundabouts or traffic circles:

- Slow down as you approach the circle. Sign **65** warns of a roundabout or traffic circle.
- Yield to any traffic in the circle. If another vehicle arrives at the traffic circle at the same time as you do, yield to the vehicle if it is on your right. Also, yield to pedestrians and bicyclists in the traffic circle or roundabout.
- Enter a traffic circle to the right, but steer to the left (in a counterclockwise direction).





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Always slow down and prepare to yield when approaching a traffic circle or a roundabout. You must turn right to enter a traffic circle or a roundabout and right again to leave it. You must yield to vehicles that are already in the traffic circle or roundabout and to vehicles that are on your right.

Some traffic circles and roundabouts have more than one lane. Lane use signs and markings may be displayed during the approach to indicate where you can go in each lane when you are in the traffic circle or roundabout. Make sure you know where you want to go and are in the proper lane to get there before you enter a traffic circle or roundabout. Do not change lanes or pass any vehicles while in a traffic circle or roundabout.



## Signals

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### **Green Go Light (bottom)**

A green signal light (example **66**) means you may proceed with caution - but it does not guarantee safe passage through the intersection.

Look in both directions before entering the intersection, then proceed with such care as to avoid hitting any vehicle or pedestrian. Always obey the rules of proper turning or right of way, such as yielding to opposing traffic when you are making a left turn on a green light. Always approach a green signal with alertness and be prepared to stop if the yellow caution light appears. (In cities where traffic lights are arranged horizontally green is at right and red is at the left side.)

### **Yellow Caution Light**

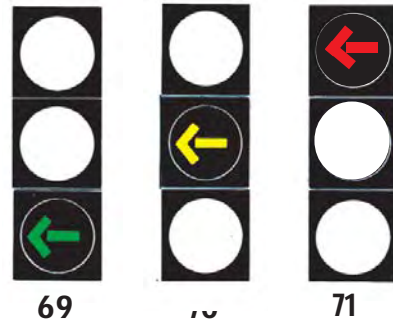
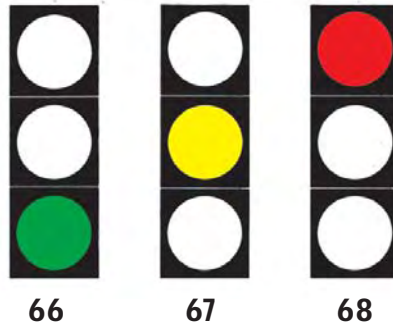
A yellow caution light (example **67**) follows the green signal. The yellow light is a warning that the signal is about to change, and that the red stop signal (example **68**) is about to be shown. Therefore, you should stop your car and wait for the next green light. Traffic situations around us can become critical under these conditions. You must observe and allow for other drivers - side, front and rear - when you are approaching a yellow light.

### **Red Stop Light**

A steady red signal light (example **68**) means that you must stop before entering a crosswalk or intersection and remain at a standstill until the green light appears, unless a signal permits a special movement of traffic to proceed. An exception to this rule permits traffic facing a red signal to turn right except where a sign prohibits a turn on red. When turning on red you must stop before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the turn, yielding right of way to pedestrians lawfully within and adjacent to the crosswalk and to other traffic lawfully using the intersection.

### **Green Arrows**

A green arrow (example **69**) means you may proceed carefully only in the direction in which the arrow is pointing, but must give the right of way to pedestrians and vehicles already lawfully within the intersection. Often a signal may be associated with a particular lane, and you may travel only in the direction indicated by the signal facing your lane, as in example **69**.



**Yellow Arrows**

In many cases, the familiar yellow caution light is used after the green arrow to warn that the red stop light will appear. In certain cases, as in example **70**, a yellow arrow may be used to indicate that the green arrow for a turn has ended and you must obey the signal that next appears.

**Red Arrows**

A steady red arrow signal (**71**) means that you must stop for the direction in which the arrow is pointing before entering a crosswalk or intersection and remain stopped until the green arrow appears for this movement.

### Flashing Red Light

A flashing red light (72) requires you to stop completely, as at a stop sign, and proceed when you can do so safely.

### Flashing Yellow Light

A flashing yellow light (73) requires you to slow down to a safe and reasonable speed and to proceed with caution.

### Lane-Direction-Control Signals

Often referred to as “reversible lane signals,” these devices (example 74) can be used to relieve congestion on some heavily traveled streets during the morning and afternoon rush hours. A signal is used over each traffic lane, and each signal has a red “X” indication and green “arrow” indication. The green arrow, when illuminated, advises that you may travel in that lane. The red “X,” when illuminated, advises that those lanes are being used by traffic traveling toward you and you may not use those lanes. These devices are used to provide additional lanes in the directions of heaviest travel in order to accommodate peak traffic.



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