Driver Education Chapter 15

Driving in Rural Areas

15.1 Characteristics of Rural Driving

80 % of all roadway mileage is Rural

40 % of miles traveled and 61 % of deaths for traffic fatalities

Wide-open spaces and less traffic

Rural Roadways—paved or not, shoulders wide or narrow, paved or gravel. Some roads will be poor, some smooth.

Safe Speed—Many rural roads are 55 speed limit, Depending on conditions lower limits may be in place. Never drive faster than conditions allow.

Traffic Controls—signs, signals, and lane markings—direct, regulate inform, and warn drivers.

Most warning signs use graphics or pictures.

Roadside Hazards—Soft shoulders, potholes, washboards, deep ditches,  
 trees, shrubs, snow piles

15.2 Basic Skills in Rural Areas—Use IPDE and Zone Control

Drive at a speed so you can brake and steer appropriate

Visual Search Pattern—12-15 second zone—greater speed greater visual area.

Curves, Hills, and Intersections—

When approaching a curve--

1 See the curve in your target area

2 Check your rear zone

3 Check your left-front zone for oncoming traffic

4 Check your right front zone if it is open or closed due to line of sight and path of travel

5 Stay in or get into lane position 1

6 If the curve is sharp, lightly apply your brakes and hold until the midpoint of the curve before you turn the steering wheel

7 As you get closer to the curve, look in the direction and road curves. See if your path of travel is open.

8 Once you are beyond the midpoint of the curve, begin to accelerate gently if conditions allow.

9 Identify and evaluate your new target area, steer toward that target area, and search ahead for possible zone changes.

Hills—Usually not marked unless steep. Hills restrict your line of sight.

Intersections—Rural intersections vary—stop signs, yield signs, uncontrolled.

Following traffic—Always maintain a safe following distance(more than 3 seconds)

Driving on Multilane Roads

Try to drive on the right lane—left lane is usually for passing.  
 Turn left from the left lane and turn right from the right lane

Divided Roadways separated by a guardrail, fence, or median(area of ground or concrete)

Entering a Multilane Road—Turn right and enter the nearest lane

Turn left make sure you check the left, front and right zones and enter the left lane.

15.3 Passing and Being Passed on Rural Roads

Passing is a 3 stage process

Deciding to pass—is it worthwhile, is it legal, is it safe?

Pass only if yes to all 3 questions. Passer is the responsible party

Preparing to Pass

1 Check all roadway signs and markings to make sure it is legal

2 While maintaining a following distance o3 seconds or more, look ahead to your target area to make certain it is safe to pass.

3 If there are no conflicts ahead, get into the ready positon(2 second following distance), and then get into lane positon 2

4 Check roadway conditions. Is there anything that would might cause the vehicle ahead to swerve left.

5 Check your rearview mirror for possibl convlicts in your rear zone. Delay passing if your rear zone is closing because of another

6 Glance over your left should to make certain no vehicles are in your blind spot

7 Check the oncoming traffic lane again to be sure there are no vehicles approaching and that you have enough space to pass safely. Oncoming vehicles must be a lease 30 seconds away. You will need 10-15 seconds to complete your pass. IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT PASS

8 Check ahead for driveways and side roads, Make sure no traffic will be entering the roadway ahead.

Executing a Pass—2 lane road

1 Move from your following distance position(3 seconds or more) to your ready position, which is 2 seconds behind the vehicle you intend to pass

2 When it is safe to pass, signal left to prepare for your lane change, check over your left shoulder to make sure no vehicles are in your blind spot.

3 Change lanes smoothly and accelerate at least 10 mph faster than the vehicle you are passing. However, all passing should be done within the speed limit.

4 Make a final evaluation. Provided you have not passed the vehicle, you can change your mind if any conflicts to your front zone exist-20-30 seconds ahead. If your front zone is clear, continue to accelerate.

5 Maintain your speed until you can see at lese one of the headlights of the vehicle you are passing in your rearview mirror.

6 Signal for a right lane change, and return smoothly to the right lane. Do not slow down.

7 Cancel your turn signal and adjust your speed and lane position.

Passing on a multi-lane road—signal/use left lane, sometimes it may be necessary to use the right lane. Use same process of preparing to pass. You have to work about what is behind you because there is no oncoming traffic.

No Passing—Uphill , Intersecions

Within 100 feet of a railroad crossing

On a 2 lane bridge or underpass; on curves, where you line of sight is so restricted.

When several vehicles are ahead of you

Fog, rain, snow, or anytime your line of sight is restricted

Can’t complete passing before a no passing zone

Oncoming traffic to close

When stopping or turning soon.

Being passed-- If the driver is having a difficult time slow down

15.4 Rural Situations

Slow Moving Vehicle—SMV

Meeting SMVs’ large equipment

Animals

Railroad Crossings

At night---Don’t overdrive headlights—bugs/

500ft low beam

15.5 Special Driving Situations

Mountain Driving and Narrow roads—Black Hills, Badlands

Driving up and Down mountains

Switchbacks series of sharp turns

Pull Out areas—Needles Highway/Mt. Rushmore

Runaway vehicle ramps—black hills

Weather in Mountains—fog, rain, snow hail, ice

Altitude Effects on People—shorter breath, faster heartbeat, headache

Altitude Effects on Vehicles-Climbing power reduced, acceleration sluggish, overheating

Desert Driving

Heat Effects on Drivers stress, vision is reduced due to glare

Heat Effects on Vehicles—battery fluids, radiator fluids, tires

Sandstorms, Dust Storms, Flash Floods

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2tHxHkdJMU> rural roads

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hj3Fgj2XTAY> rural driving