

Drive Safely

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of workplace deaths. According to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), 10 people die on California roads every day. The CHP reports the most frequent accident causes on California roads include unsafe speed, unsafe following, improper turns, and inattention to the road. Proper driver education, seatbelts, following speed laws, obeying the rules of the road, and paying attention to the road and fellow drivers can help reduce the risk of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle accident.

The California Vehicle Code requires you to **follow posted speed limits** on roads and highways. Excessive speed reduces your ability to respond to unexpected road hazards. The higher the speed, the greater the risk of serious injury or death in a crash.

Posted speed limits are maximums. Always maintain a speed that is reasonable for the road and the conditions at the time. Take into account the weather, visibility, traffic, and the surface conditions of the road when you determine your speed of travel. Never use a speed that endangers your safety, other persons, or property.

The CHP recommends you **leave a 3-second cushion** between your car and any vehicle you are following. This applies if the pavement is dry, there's no heavy traffic, and your brakes are in top condition. In poor conditions, add one more second for each weather condition or hazard encountered.

Avoid unsafe turns, never pull out in front of a car that has not committed to a stop or a turn.

Be a defensive driver and prevent accidents by scanning the road and other drivers. Watch the road ahead and behind you. Keep your eyes moving and stay alert to be prepared to react to the unexpected.

Pay attention to what you and other drivers are doing on the road. Adjust your seat and mirrors and preset your favorite radio stations and climate controls *before* you start the car. Don't eat, drink, smoke, or read while driving. The best and safest situation is to be stopped when using a cell phone. Never text or use a personal digital assistant while driving. And, do your personal grooming at home, *not* in the car.

Get driver's education training for California roads and know how to operate vehicles that you are assigned to take on the road.

Always wear your seat belt when driving or riding in a vehicle. According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA), seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent in a car and by 60 percent in a light truck. A lap and shoulder belt is best, but use a lap belt if it is present. Only transport people in a car or truck if you have enough seatbelts for everyone.

When you get behind the wheel of a vehicle, **follow the rules of the road**. Do not drive if you have been drinking, are on medication, or are very tired. Be a courteous and safe driver and yield the right of way when necessary.

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