

Traffic Frequently Asked Questions

Can I ride my bicycle on a sidewalk?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 45-302. - Riding on sidewalks.

- No person shall ride a bicycle upon a sidewalk within a business district.
- Whenever any person is riding a bicycle upon a sidewalk, such person shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give audible signal before overtaking and passing any pedestrian.

Do I have to wear a helmet when riding bicycle?

Currently there are no rules that prohibits adults, age 18 and above, from riding a bicycle without wearing a helmet. However, Sec. 45-326 of the City Ordinance states that:

1. It is unlawful for any child to operate or ride upon a bicycle or any side car, trailer, child carrier, seat or other device attached to a bicycle unless the child is wearing a helmet.

Can I park my car next to a fire hydrant?

Under Texas Transportation Code 545.302 Section B, an operator may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle in the following manners:

- Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant

Can I park my car next to an intersection or a driveway?

Under Texas Transportation Code 545.302 Section B, an operator may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle in the following manners:

1. In front of a public or private driveway
2. Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection

Can I park my car in the median?

No. Under City Ordinance Sec. 26-90. - Use of esplanade, median strip or traffic island.

It shall be unlawful for any person to ride, operate, leave unattended any animal and/or livestock or park any vehicle on, over or across any esplanade, median strip or traffic island.

I received a citation for my car blocking part of a sidewalk. Is this a valid citation?

Yes. Under Sec. 26-92 of the City Ordinance - Vehicles on parking lots not to protrude over property line.

It shall be unlawful for any person who operates, keeps or maintains, or causes to be operated, kept or maintained, a parking lot where automobiles or other vehicles are parked on private property adjacent to public streets or sidewalks to permit any automobile or vehicle parked thereon to be parked in such a manner so as to protrude over the property line of such parking lot or to obstruct in any manner any public street or sidewalk adjacent to such private property.

I received a citation for “obstructing street”. What did I do wrong?

Under Texas Transportation Code 545.301. STOPPING, STANDING, OR PARKING OUTSIDE A BUSINESS OR RESIDENCE DISTRICT.

1. An operator may not stop, park, or leave standing an attended or unattended vehicle on the main traveled part of a highway outside a business or residence district unless:
 1. stopping, parking, or leaving the vehicle off the main traveled part of the highway is not practicable;
 2. a width of highway beside the vehicle is unobstructed and open for the passage of other vehicles; and
 3. the vehicle is in clear view for at least 200 feet in each direction on the highway.
2. This section does not apply to an operator of:
 1. a vehicle that is disabled while on the paved or main traveled part of a highway if it is impossible to avoid stopping and temporarily leaving the vehicle on the highway;
 2. a vehicle used exclusively to transport solid, semisolid, or liquid waste operated at the time in connection with the removal or transportation of solid, semisolid, or liquid waste from a location adjacent to the highway; or
 3. a tow truck, as defined by Section 545.157(e), that is performing towing duties under Chapter 2308, Occupations Code.

Can I double-park?

No. Under Texas Transportation Code 545.302. STOPPING, STANDING, OR PARKING PROHIBITED IN CERTAIN PLACES.

1. An operator may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle:
 1. on the roadway side of a vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street;

Can I make a left-turn across double yellow center lines?

Yes. Under Texas Transportation Code 545.055. PASSING TO THE LEFT: PASSING ZONES

An operator may not drive on the left side of the roadway in a no-passing zone or on the left side of any pavement striping designed to mark a no passing zone. This doesn't prohibit a driver from crossing to make a left turn

When I cross a street in a crosswalk, must vehicles yield to me?

Yes. Under Texas Transportation Code Sec. 552.003. PEDESTRIAN RIGHT-OF-WAY AT CROSSWALK:

The operator of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing a roadway in a crosswalk if:

- no traffic control signal is in place or in operation; and
- the pedestrian is:
 1. on the half of the roadway in which the vehicle is traveling; or
 2. Approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.

How can I request a traffic signal?

You may submit a request by contacting 311

How can I request an all-way stop-control?

You may submit a request by contacting 311

How can I request a pedestrian crosswalk signal?

You may submit a request by contacting 311

I arrive at an intersection with no (or missing) traffic control, how do I proceed?

Under Texas Transportation Code, Sec. 545.151. VEHICLE APPROACHING OR ENTERING INTERSECTION

(d) Except as provided in Subsection (e), an operator approaching an intersection of a street or roadway that is not controlled by an official traffic-control device:

1. shall stop, yield, and grant immediate use of the intersection to a vehicle that has entered the intersection from the operator's intersection or is approaching the intersection from the operator's intersection in a proximity that is a hazard; and
2. after stopping, may proceed when the intersection can be safely entered without interference or collision with traffic using a different street or roadway.

Below are the general right-of-way rules in Texas,

- In the event you are driving on an unpaved road and coming up to a paved road, the traffic on the paved road always has the right-of-way.
- If you come up to an uncontrolled intersection, the driver that was there first has the right-of-way. If you approach at the same time, you must yield to the driver to your right.
- If you are trying to make a left hand turn, you must yield to all pedestrians and any traffic traveling in the opposite lane. The same can be said for making a right hand turn. Furthermore, you must yield to through traffic traveling in the lane you wish to enter.
- When approaching an intersection at a main road from a driveway, alley, or other private road, you must yield to any traffic or pedestrians on the main road.
- When you approach a railroad crossing, the train always has the right-of-way. Make sure you stop at the designated spot, as trains are much wider than the tracks so you could be at risk if you stop too close.

Can I have children-at-play signs on my street?

No. This sign is not a traffic control sign and has not been shown to be effective.

Where should pedestrians walk?

Under Texas Transportation Code, Sec. 552.006. USE OF SIDEWALK.

1. A pedestrian may not walk along and on a roadway if an adjacent sidewalk is provided and is accessible to the pedestrian.

2. If a sidewalk is not provided, a pedestrian walking along and on a highway shall if possible walk on:
 1. the left side of the roadway; or
 2. the shoulder of the highway facing oncoming traffic.
3. The operator of a vehicle emerging from or entering an alley, building, or private road or driveway shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian approaching on a sidewalk extending across the alley, building entrance or exit, road, or driveway.

Is it not legal to park vehicles on an alley?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 26-84. - Blocking roadways.

No person shall park any vehicle upon a street or alley in such a manner or under such conditions as to leave available less than ten feet of the width of the roadway for free movement of vehicular traffic.

Can you combine all the signs in front of my property onto a single post?

There are several sign types and we must conduct an investigation to determine whether the signs can be combined. Section 2A.16 of the MUTCD states that "Signs should be individually installed on separate posts or mountings except where a) one sign supplements another, or b) route or directional signs are grouped to clarify information to motorists, or c) regulatory signs that do not conflict with each other are grouped, such as turn prohibition signs posted with one-way signs or a parking regulation sign posted with a speed limit sign, or d) Street name signs are posted with a stop or yield sign."

Can I leave a vehicle parked on the street for multiple days?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 26-93. - Parking in excess of 24 hours.

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly leave parked or standing in any public street, alley or other public place any vehicle for a longer continuous period of time than 24 hours.

Can I park a trailer on a public street?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 26-94. - Time limit for trailer parking.

It shall be unlawful for any person to leave, stand or park a trailer, semi-trailer, pole trailer or house trailer, either attached or unattached to a motor vehicle, on the public streets of the city for a period of time in excess of two hours.

Trailer means any vehicle with or without motive power, other than a pole trailer, designed for carrying persons or property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and so constructed that no part of its weight rests upon the towing vehicle.

Can 18-wheelers park in a residential area?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 26-95. - Parking of commercial vehicles prohibited between certain hours.

It shall be unlawful for any person to park or stand any commercial vehicle on or upon the streets between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. except during the act of loading or unloading. It is a defense to prosecution under this section that the commercial vehicle is actually in the process of being loaded or unloaded.

Commercial vehicle means a truck or other vehicle that displays one or more commercial vehicle signs, but does not include a taxi, limousine, or bus.

Can an RV be parked in a residential area?

Per City Ordinance Sec. 26-96. - Large vehicle restrictions.

No person shall park or cause to be parked or permit to remain parked any large vehicle upon any street or highway in any residential district. It is a defense to prosecution under this section that the large vehicle is:

1. Actually in the process of being loaded or unloaded;
2. Parked while the driver or operator is performing a service visit; or
3. Leased or borrowed and parked for a period of not more than 72 hours.

Large vehicle means a "motor vehicle" or a "trailer," as defined herein, that is in excess of eight feet in height at the highest point on the vehicle or trailer or in excess of 22 feet in length. To the extent that any motor vehicle is coupled or otherwise attached to a trailer, then the motor vehicle and trailer shall together be deemed as constituting a single large vehicle if the combined length of the motor vehicle and trailer exceeds 30 feet.

What is access management?

Access management is a set of techniques that the City can use to control access to roadways. Access management techniques are designed to increase the capacity of these roads, manage congestion, and reduce crashes. Common techniques are raised medians, increased spacing between signals, indirect turns, and driveway location.

According to an analysis of crash data in seven states, raised medians reduce crashes by over 40 percent in urban areas. Raised medians also provide extra protection for pedestrians. A study found that raised medians reduced pedestrian-involved crashes by 45 percent and fatalities by 78 percent, compared to two-way left-turn lanes. For information, refer to https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access_mgmt/docs/benefits_am_trifold.htm.

According to the Access Management Manual, 2nd Edition, the average crash rate on roadways with a raised median is about 30% less than that on roadways with a two-way left-turn lane. Regarding economic impacts, a 1999 study in Texas found that most business types reported increases in the number of customers and that 93% of business owners reported minimal or no change to customer base.

Who can direct traffic in Texas?

Per the Texas Transportation Code listed below, police officers, school crossing guards, and escort flaggers can direct traffic.

Sec. 542.501. OBEDIENCE REQUIRED TO POLICE OFFICERS, SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS, AND ESCORT FLAGGERS. A person may not willfully fail or refuse to comply with a lawful order or direction of:

- 1) a police officer;
- 2) a school crossing guard who:
 - a. is performing crossing guard duties in a school crosswalk to stop and yield to a pedestrian; or
 - b. has been trained under Section 600.004 and is directing traffic in a school crossing zone; or
- 3) an escort flagger who is directing or controlling the flow of traffic in accordance with a permit issued by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles under Subtitle E for the movement of an oversize or overweight vehicle.

3D Crosswalk. I've heard about a crosswalk design that simulates 3-dimensional (3-D) objects in the roadway. Is such a concept compliant with the MUTCD?

This concept does not comply with the MUTCD. As a result of demonstrated safety concerns, the FHWA is no longer considering field experimentation with "3-D" crosswalk designs. The FHWA had previously approved field experimentation with "3-D" markings until one such experiment showed unintended—and potentially dangerous—effects. A significant percentage of drivers swerved upon seeing the markings, perhaps perceiving them to be real raised objects on the roadway. While this type of driver reaction did decrease over time, the experiment showed that at least more than one in ten drivers

might make an evasive or erratic maneuver upon experiencing this or similar installations for the first time. The results suggest that a "3-D" marking design can result in unsafe behavior by drivers. If the design is effective at portraying a 3-dimensional object and drivers believe there are real raised objects on the roadway, it is a reasonable expectation that drivers will take evasive action, such as braking abruptly, in fear of colliding with the perceived obstruction. This type of driver reaction is, in fact, what the experiment showed. The potential for a significant percentage of drivers to react unpredictably is too great a risk to allow further field experimentation.

What's the default speed limit when a speed limit is not posted?

Per Sec. 545.352 of the Texas Transportation Code. Prima facie speed limits are

(1) 30 miles per hour in an urban district on a street other than an alley and 15 miles per hour in an alley;

(2) except as provided by Subdivision (4), 70 miles per hour on a highway numbered by this state or the United States outside an urban district, including a farm-to-market or ranch-to-market road;

(3) except as provided by Subdivision (4), 60 miles per hour on a highway that is outside an urban district and not a highway numbered by this state or the United States;

(4) outside an urban district:

1. 60 miles per hour if the vehicle is a school bus that has passed a commercial motor vehicle inspection under Section 548.201 and is on a highway numbered by the United States or this state, including a farm-to-market road; or

2. 50 miles per hour if the vehicle is a school bus that:

1. has not passed a commercial motor vehicle inspection under Section 548.201; or

2. is traveling on a highway not numbered by the United States or this state;

(5) on a beach, 15 miles per hour; or

(6) on a county road adjacent to a public beach, 15 miles per hour, if declared by the commissioners court of the county.

Note: "Urban district" is a territory improved with structures that are used for business, industry, or dwelling houses and located at intervals of less than 100 feet for a distance of at least one-quarter mile on either side of the highway.