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Texas

Study Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: Your License to Drive

1.1 Texas Learner License (Instruction Permit) Rules

The Learner License, also known as an instruction permit, is the first step for new drivers in Texas. It allows them to practice driving under specific supervision. The supervising driver must meet strict age and experience requirements and be in a position to assist the student driver.

- ✓ An applicant for a Learner License must be at least 15 years of age.
- ✓ The accompanying licensed driver must be at least 21 years old, have a minimum of one year of driving experience, and must occupy the seat beside the driver.
- ✓ A Learner License issued to a minor will expire on their 18th birthday.

1.2 Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program

The Texas Graduated Driver License (GDL) program is a two-phase system for drivers under 18. It is designed to reduce crashes among teen drivers by gradually increasing driving privileges as they gain experience. Phase One is the Learner License, and Phase Two is the Provisional License.

- ✓ Phase One of the GDL program requires an applicant under 18 to hold a valid Learner License for a minimum of six months before they can get a Provisional License.
- ✓ If a driver's Learner License is suspended, the six-month minimum holding period is extended by the number of days of the suspension.
- ✓ Phase Two of the GDL program applies to Provisional License holders and restricts their driving privileges until their 18th birthday.

1.3 Provisional License Driving Restrictions (GDL Phase Two)

A Provisional License is issued to drivers between 16 and 18 years of age and comes with specific restrictions as part of the GDL program. These restrictions limit the number of young passengers and prohibit driving during late-night hours to minimize risk.

- ✓ A Provisional License holder may not drive with more than one passenger in the vehicle who is under the age of 21 and not a family member.
- ✓ Driving is prohibited between midnight and 5:00 a.m. unless it is necessary for work, a school-related activity, or a medical emergency.
- ✓ All drivers under 18 are restricted from using a wireless communication device, including hands-free devices, except in an emergency.

1.4 New Resident Driver License Requirement

New residents moving to Texas must obtain a Texas driver license in a timely manner. Upon establishing residency, there is a specific grace period to switch from a valid out-of-state license to a Texas license. You must surrender any other valid licenses when applying.

- ✓ New residents who hold a valid out-of-state driver license have 90 days after establishing residency to secure a Texas driver license.
- ✓ To receive a Texas driver license, you must surrender all other valid driver licenses and ID cards issued by other states.

1.5 School Enrollment Verification (VOE Form)

Applicants under the age of 18 must prove they are actively enrolled and attending school to be eligible for a driver license. This is done by submitting a Verification of Enrollment and Attendance (VOE) form issued by their school.

- ✓ Any applicant under 18 applying for a Learner or Provisional License must provide a VOE form to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).
- ✓ The VOE form cannot be dated more than 30 days before the application date during the school year, or more than 90 days during the summer.

1.6 License Appearance for Drivers Under 21

To help enforce age-related laws, Texas driver licenses and ID cards issued to individuals under the age of 21 have a distinct appearance. They are formatted differently and carry a specific marking.

- ✓ All licenses and ID cards issued to persons under 21 years of age are displayed in a vertical format.
- ✓ Licenses and ID cards for individuals under 21 are clearly marked with the words 'UNDER 21'.

1.7 Hardship License Eligibility for Minors

A hardship license may be issued to a minor between 15 and 18 years of age who can demonstrate a specific, qualifying need to drive, such as a family economic hardship, illness of a family member, or participation in a vocational program.

- ✓ A hardship license can be issued if failure to do so would result in an unusual economic hardship for the minor's family.
- ✓ Applicants for a hardship license must be at least 15 years old and must complete and pass a full driver education course, vision exam, knowledge exam, and driving exam.

1.8 Exemptions from Texas Licensing Requirements

Certain individuals are exempt from needing a Texas driver license to operate specific vehicles or under certain conditions. This includes operators of farm equipment on highways and active-duty military personnel with valid home-state licenses.

- ✓ A person operating a farm tractor or implement of husbandry temporarily on a highway is exempt from holding a Texas driver license.
- ✓ A nonresident on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, as well as their spouse and dependent children, may drive in Texas using a valid license from their home state.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: Right-of-Way

2.1 General Right-of-Way Principles and Penalties

The fundamental concept of right-of-way in Texas is that it is something a driver gives, not takes. Even if you legally have the right-of-way, you should yield to prevent a collision. The law specifies significant financial penalties for failing to yield if it results in injury.

- ✓ If failing to yield right-of-way causes bodily injury to another person, the driver faces a fine of $500 to $2,000.
- ✓ If the failure to yield results in *serious* bodily injury, the fine increases to a range of $1,000 to $4,000.
- ✓ In any right-of-way situation, if another driver fails to follow the rules, you should give them the right-of-way to avoid a crash.

2.2 Right-of-Way at Uncontrolled Intersections

At intersections without any traffic signs or signals, specific rules determine who must yield. These rules are critical for preventing collisions and are frequently tested. The primary rule involves yielding to the vehicle on the right.

- ✓ When approaching an uncontrolled intersection, you must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle that has already entered the intersection or is approaching from your right.
- ✓ When turning left at any intersection, you must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles coming straight through from the opposite direction.
- ✓ At a T-intersection, a driver on the street that ends must stop and yield to all vehicles on the through street.

2.3 Texas "Move Over/Slow Down" Law for Emergency Vehicles

Texas law requires drivers to take specific actions when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle (police, fire, ambulance) with its lights activated. This is a critical safety law with precise speed requirements that are often tested.

- ✓ On a highway with two or more lanes in the same direction, you must vacate the lane closest to the stopped emergency vehicle.
- ✓ If you cannot move over, you must slow down to a speed not more than 20 mph less than the posted speed limit (when the limit is 25 mph or more).
- ✓ If the posted speed limit is less than 25 mph and you cannot move over, you must slow down to 5 mph.

2.4 School Bus Stopping Laws and Penalties

Drivers must follow strict rules when encountering a school bus with its alternating red lights flashing. The penalties for violating this law are severe and increase significantly for subsequent offenses or if injury occurs.

- ✓ You must stop when approaching a school bus from either direction if it is displaying alternately flashing red lights.
- ✓ A first conviction for illegally passing a stopped school bus results in a fine between $500 and $1,250.
- ✓ You are not required to stop for a school bus if you are on a different roadway or on a controlled-access highway where the bus is in a loading zone.

2.5 Yielding Rules for Specific Road Types

Right-of-way is also determined by the type of road you are on relative to an intersecting road. This includes yielding when on an unpaved road, a smaller road, or entering from a private driveway.

- ✓ If you are on a single or two-lane road that intersects with a road having three or more lanes, you must yield to vehicles on the larger road.
- ✓ When driving on an unpaved road that intersects with a paved road, you must yield to traffic on the paved road.
- ✓ When entering a street from a private road, alley, or driveway, you must stop before the sidewalk and yield to all approaching vehicles and pedestrians.

2.6 Stopping Requirements at Railroad Crossings

Drivers must adhere to specific stopping distances and conditions at railroad crossings to ensure safety. Trains always have the right-of-way, and there are fines for failing to obey crossing laws.

- ✓ You must stop between 15 and 50 feet from the nearest rail if a signal warns of an approaching train, a crossing gate is lowered, or a train is visible and in close proximity.
- ✓ A person who fails to obey the law regarding railroad grade crossings is subject to a fine of $50 to $200.
- ✓ Never stop your vehicle on the railroad tracks.

2.7 Right-of-Way on Highway Frontage Roads

Texas has specific right-of-way rules for drivers on frontage roads adjacent to controlled-access highways. These rules govern interactions with traffic entering and exiting the main highway.

- ✓ A driver on a frontage road must yield the right-of-way to a vehicle that is entering or about to enter the frontage road from the main highway.
- ✓ A driver on a frontage road must also yield to a vehicle that is leaving or about to leave the frontage road to enter the main highway.

2.8 Yielding the Right-of-Way to Pedestrians

Drivers have a legal responsibility to yield to pedestrians in various situations to prevent accidents. This includes yielding at crosswalks and intersections, even when traffic signals change.

- ✓ Drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians at an uncontrolled intersection.
- ✓ If a traffic light changes after a pedestrian has already entered the crosswalk, the driver must still yield to allow the pedestrian to cross safely.
- ✓ You must yield to a pedestrian who has a 'WALK' signal.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: Signals, Signs, and Markers

3.1 Obeying Traffic Signals and Law Enforcement

Traffic signals ensure the orderly flow of traffic. It is mandatory to obey all traffic signals. However, if a law enforcement officer is present and directing traffic, their instructions supersede any traffic signal or sign. You must follow the officer's directions, even if they contradict the signal.

- ✓ Drivers must obey all traffic signals, such as red, yellow, and green lights.
- ✓ You must always obey the directions of a law enforcement officer directing traffic, even if it goes against a traffic signal or sign.

3.2 Actions at a Steady Red Light

A steady red light means you must come to a complete stop before the crosswalk or intersection. In Texas, after stopping, you may turn right unless a sign prohibits it. You may also turn left from a one-way street onto another one-way street unless prohibited. You must always yield to pedestrians and other traffic.

- ✓ At a steady red light, you must come to a complete stop before the crosswalk or intersection.
- ✓ After a complete stop, you may turn right on red unless a sign specifically prohibits it.
- ✓ You may turn left on red only when turning from a one-way street onto another one-way street.

3.3 Responding to Flashing Traffic Signals

Flashing signals are used to draw attention to specific rules or hazards. A flashing red light has the same meaning as a stop sign: you must stop completely and proceed only when it is safe. A flashing yellow light is a warning to slow down and proceed with caution, being alert for cross-traffic.

- ✓ A flashing red light must be treated as a stop sign; come to a complete stop and proceed when safe.
- ✓ A flashing yellow light means to slow down and proceed with caution.

3.4 Meaning of Yellow Lights and Arrows

A steady yellow light warns that the signal is about to change to red. You must stop before entering the intersection if you can do so safely. A flashing yellow arrow for a left turn indicates that you may turn left but must first yield the right-of-way to oncoming traffic, as the turn is not protected.

- ✓ A steady yellow light means you must stop if you can do so safely before entering the intersection.
- ✓ A flashing yellow arrow allows a left turn, but you must yield to all oncoming traffic.

3.5 Proceeding on a Green Light or Arrow

A steady green light means you may proceed through the intersection if it is safe. However, when turning left on a solid green light, you must yield to all oncoming traffic. A green arrow indicates a 'protected' turn, meaning you have the right-of-way to turn in the direction of the arrow while oncoming traffic is stopped.

- ✓ When turning left on a steady green light, you must yield the right-of-way to oncoming traffic.
- ✓ A green arrow means you have a protected turn and can proceed carefully in the arrow's direction after yielding to vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection.

3.6 Identifying Traffic Signs by Color

The color of a traffic sign provides crucial information about its meaning. Recognizing these colors is a key part of the Texas driving test. Red is used for stop, yield, or prohibitions. Yellow indicates a general warning. Orange is exclusively for construction and maintenance warnings.

- ✓ Red signs are used for stopping, yielding, or indicating something is prohibited.
- ✓ Yellow signs serve as general warnings for hazards or road conditions ahead.
- ✓ Orange signs always indicate a construction or maintenance work zone.
- ✓ Green signs provide direction guidance, blue signs indicate motorist services, and brown signs point to recreational areas.

3.7 Recognizing Traffic Signs by Shape

The shape of a traffic sign can tell you its meaning from a distance, even before you can read it. The Texas exam frequently tests knowledge of sign shapes. An octagon is only for stop signs, and a downward-pointing triangle is only for yield signs. A diamond shape is always a warning sign.

- ✓ An octagon shape is used exclusively for stop signs.
- ✓ An equilateral triangle shape is used exclusively for yield signs.
- ✓ A diamond shape is used exclusively to warn of existing or possible hazards.
- ✓ A pentagon shape indicates a school advance or school crossing sign.
- ✓ A round shape is used for railroad advance warning signs.

3.8 Understanding Warning Signs

Warning signs, typically yellow and diamond-shaped, alert you to potential hazards or changes in road conditions ahead. Examples include signs for sharp curves, intersections, slippery roads, or merging traffic. When you see a warning sign, you should pay close attention and reduce your speed if necessary.

- ✓ Warning signs are almost always diamond-shaped and yellow with black lettering or symbols.
- ✓ These signs alert you to conditions ahead, such as a sharp turn, crossroad, or slippery surface.
- ✓ Upon seeing a warning sign, you should slow down and prepare for the condition indicated.

3.9 Obeying Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs inform you of traffic laws or regulations and are legally enforceable. They are typically rectangular (black and white) or red and white. Examples include Speed Limit signs, 'Do Not Enter' signs, and 'No Passing' signs. Disobeying a regulatory sign is a traffic violation.

- ✓ A STOP sign (octagon) requires a complete stop before the crosswalk or intersection.
- ✓ A YIELD sign (triangle) requires you to slow down and give the right-of-way to traffic on the intersecting road.
- ✓ A SPEED LIMIT sign (vertical rectangle) indicates the maximum legal speed you can travel under ideal conditions.

3.10 Rules for School Zones

A pentagon-shaped sign indicates you are approaching a school zone. Special speed limits are often in effect during specific hours or when yellow lights on the sign are flashing. Drivers must be extremely cautious and watch for children. Using a wireless communication device in a school zone is prohibited.

- ✓ A pentagon-shaped sign warns of a school zone ahead.
- ✓ You must obey the posted school zone speed limit when the yellow lights are flashing or during the times indicated on the sign.
- ✓ It is illegal to use a handheld cell phone or other wireless communication device while driving in an active school zone.

3.11 Approaching and Crossing Railroad Tracks

A round, yellow sign with an 'RR' is an advance warning of a railroad crossing. At the crossing itself, a crossbuck sign marks the location of the tracks. You must stop between 15 and 50 feet from the nearest rail when warning lights are flashing, a gate is lowered, or a train is approaching. Never try to beat a train.

- ✓ A round yellow sign is the advance warning for a railroad crossing.
- ✓ A crossbuck sign is posted at the railroad crossing itself.
- ✓ You must stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the nearest rail when a train is approaching.

3.12 Interpreting Pavement Markings

Pavement markings regulate traffic and provide warnings. Yellow lines separate traffic moving in opposite directions, while white lines separate traffic moving in the same direction. A solid line indicates that passing or lane changing is prohibited, whereas a broken line permits it when safe.

- ✓ Yellow lines separate traffic flowing in opposite directions.
- ✓ White lines separate lanes of traffic flowing in the same direction.
- ✓ A solid yellow line on your side of the road marks a no-passing zone.
- ✓ A broken white line indicates that you may change lanes when it is safe to do so.

3.13 Driving Safely in Construction Work Zones

Work zones are indicated by orange signs, barrels, cones, and other devices. Drivers must slow down, be prepared to stop, and follow the directions of signs or flag persons. In Texas, traffic fines are doubled for violations committed in a construction zone where workers are present.

- ✓ Orange is the standard color for all signs, barricades, and channelizing devices in work zones.
- ✓ You must obey all instructions given by a flag person in a work zone.
- ✓ Traffic fines are doubled for moving violations in an active work zone where workers are present.

3.14 Using a Center Left-Turn Lane

The center lane bordered by a solid yellow line on the outside and a broken yellow line on the inside is exclusively for making left turns. You should not enter this lane too far in advance of your turn. It must never be used for passing other vehicles or as a through-traffic lane.

- ✓ The center lane is for making left turns only and may be used by traffic from either direction.
- ✓ This lane should never be used for passing or as a regular driving lane.

3.15 Understanding Work Zone Channelizing Devices

In work zones, devices like barricades and vertical panels use diagonal stripes to guide drivers. The direction of the stripes indicates which way traffic should move. It is important to interpret these correctly to navigate the work zone safely.

- ✓ Diagonal stripes on a barricade sloping downward to the right mean the driver should bear to the right.
- ✓ Diagonal stripes on a barricade sloping downward to the left mean the driver should bear to the left.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: Signaling, Passing, and Turning

4.1 Required Signaling Distance and Situations

In Texas, drivers must always communicate their intentions to others on the road. This involves signaling before turning, changing lanes, or stopping. The law specifies a minimum distance for signaling to ensure other drivers have adequate time to react. You must signal when you plan to change lanes, make a turn, pull away from a curb, slow down or stop, enter or leave a highway, or pull over to the side of the road.

- ✓ You must signal continuously for at least 100 feet before you turn or stop.
- ✓ You are required to signal when pulling away from a parking space that is parallel to the curb.
- ✓ After completing a turn, you must ensure your turn signal is turned off.

4.2 Prohibited Areas for Driving on the Left

To prevent head-on collisions, Texas law strictly prohibits driving on the left side of the road in certain situations. These rules apply even when passing another vehicle. Prohibitions are often indicated by pavement markings (solid yellow lines) or signs, but drivers are expected to know these rules even without explicit signs.

- ✓ You may not drive on the left side of the road within 100 feet of an intersection, railroad crossing, bridge, or tunnel.
- ✓ Driving on the left is prohibited on a hill, curve, or any other place where your vision is limited.

4.3 Procedure for Passing on a Two-Lane Road

Passing on a two-lane road is a high-risk maneuver that requires careful judgment. Before passing, you must ensure the way is clear of oncoming traffic and that you are not in a 'No Passing Zone.' The rules specify the minimum safe distance you must have from an oncoming vehicle before returning to your lane.

- ✓ You must have enough space to return to the right lane before an approaching car comes within 200 feet of you.
- ✓ After passing, you must wait until you can see the car you have just passed in your rearview mirror before returning to the right lane.

4.4 Specific Texas Rules for Passing on the Right

While passing is typically done on the left, Texas law permits passing on the right under specific, limited conditions. A key Texas-specific rule involves the use of a paved shoulder, which is only allowed in certain circumstances. Driving off the paved portion of the highway to pass is always illegal.

- ✓ You may pass on a paved shoulder only when the vehicle you are passing is slowing, stopped, disabled, or preparing to make a left turn.
- ✓ Passing on the right is permitted on a one-way street or on a road that is wide enough for two or more lanes of traffic in each direction.
- ✓ You must not pass on the right by driving off the paved portion of the highway.

4.5 Executing Safe and Proper Turns

Many crashes are caused by improper turns. The process for a safe turn involves deciding to turn well in advance, moving into the correct lane, signaling at the proper distance, and slowing to a reasonable speed before beginning the turn. If you miss your turn, you should not make a last-minute maneuver.

- ✓ You must give the proper turn signal at least 100 feet before you turn.
- ✓ If you cannot get into the proper lane within one-half block before turning, you must continue straight ahead and not make the turn.
- ✓ For a right turn, you must keep your vehicle as close as possible to the right edge of the road.

4.6 Procedure for Making a Left Turn

Left turns are particularly dangerous because they often involve crossing in front of oncoming traffic. Drivers making a left turn must yield the right-of-way. The procedure involves moving into the correct lane, signaling, looking in all directions, and completing the turn into the proper lane of the new road.

- ✓ When making a left turn, you must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction.
- ✓ You should complete a left turn by entering the lane on the new road that will interfere the least with other traffic.

4.7 Driver Responsibilities When Being Passed

Safe driving is a cooperative effort. When another vehicle is in the process of passing you, you have a responsibility to help make the maneuver as safe and easy as possible for the other driver. Your actions should be predictable and courteous.

- ✓ When another vehicle is passing you, you must not increase your speed.
- ✓ You must stay in your lane and, if the lanes are not marked, move as far to the right as you safely can.

4.8 Correct Hand and Arm Signals

If your vehicle's turn signals are not working, you must use hand and arm signals. These signals must be extended well out of the driver's side window to be clearly visible to other drivers. There are three standard signals for turning left, turning right, and slowing down or stopping.

- ✓ To signal a left turn, you must extend your hand and arm straight out horizontally.
- ✓ To signal a right turn, you must extend your hand and arm upward.
- ✓ To signal a stop or a decrease in speed, you must extend your hand and arm downward.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5: Parking, Stopping, or Standing

5.1 Prohibited Parking Distances from Key Infrastructure

Texas law specifies exact minimum distances you must maintain when parking near critical infrastructure like fire hydrants, intersections, and traffic signals. These rules are strictly enforced to ensure safety and access for emergency vehicles and pedestrians. Memorizing these specific distances is crucial for the knowledge test, as questions often test these exact numbers.

- ✓ Do not park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- ✓ Do not park within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection.
- ✓ Do not park within 30 feet of a stop sign, yield sign, or traffic control signal.
- ✓ Do not park within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing.

5.2 Disabled Parking Regulations and Severe Penalties

Texas law has strict regulations for designated disabled parking spaces to ensure they are available for those who need them. Illegally parking in one of these spaces is a misdemeanor offense with significant, escalating fines. The striped areas next to these spaces are for wheelchair lifts and must not be blocked.

- ✓ Illegally parking in a disabled parking space is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of $500 to $750 for a first offense.
- ✓ You may not park in the striped access aisles adjacent to disabled parking spaces, as they are for wheelchair lifts.
- ✓ You may not use a disabled parking placard unless you are transporting the disabled person to whom it was issued.
- ✓ You may not block an access or curb ramp.

5.3 Absolute 'No Stopping, Standing, or Parking' Zones

Certain areas are always off-limits for stopping, standing, or parking, even if a driver is present in the vehicle. These restrictions apply to areas like intersections, crosswalks, bridges, and tunnels to prevent obstruction of traffic flow and ensure safety.

- ✓ You may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle within an intersection, on a crosswalk, or on a sidewalk.
- ✓ It is illegal to stop, stand, or park on a bridge, in a highway tunnel, or on any railroad track.
- ✓ Double parking, which is parking on the road side of a vehicle already parked at the curb, is prohibited.

5.4 Rules for Parking on a Curb and on Hills

When parking alongside a curb, your vehicle must be positioned correctly to avoid being a hazard. On hills, the direction you turn your front wheels is a critical safety measure to prevent the car from rolling into traffic if the brakes fail. These rules are frequently tested.

- ✓ When parked alongside a curb, your vehicle's right-hand wheels must be within 18 inches of the right-hand curb.
- ✓ When parking uphill with a curb, turn your front wheels away from the curb (to the left).
- ✓ When parking downhill with a curb, turn your front wheels toward the curb (to the right).
- ✓ When parking on a hill without a curb (either uphill or downhill), turn your front wheels toward the edge of the road (to the right).

5.5 Parking Near Fire Stations and Driveways

To ensure emergency vehicles have clear access, there are specific rules for parking near fire stations and in front of public or private driveways. These rules involve different distances depending on whether you are on the same side or the opposite side of the street as the fire station.

- ✓ You may not park or stand a vehicle in front of a public or private driveway.
- ✓ Do not park within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station.
- ✓ On the side of a street opposite the entrance to a fire station, do not park within 75 feet of that entrance.

5.6 Securing an Unattended Vehicle and Coasting

To prevent theft and runaway vehicles, Texas law requires drivers to follow a specific procedure when leaving a motor vehicle unattended. This includes turning off the engine and setting the brake. Additionally, it is illegal to coast downhill in neutral.

- ✓ When leaving a vehicle unattended, you must turn off the engine, lock the ignition, remove the key, and set the parking brake.
- ✓ When leaving a vehicle unattended on any grade, you must also turn the front wheels to the curb or side of the road.
- ✓ It is illegal to coast on a downgrade with the gears or transmission in neutral.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6: Speed and Speed Limits

6.1 Texas Statutory 'Prima Facie' Speed Limits

This covers the default speed limits in Texas that apply when no speed limit sign is posted. These are legally defined as 'prima facie' limits, meaning they are the accepted speed unless conditions warrant a slower speed. Memorizing these specific numbers is critical for the knowledge test, as questions frequently test these default situations.

- ✓ The maximum speed limit in an urban district is 30 mph unless otherwise posted.
- ✓ The maximum speed limit in an alley is 15 mph.
- ✓ The maximum speed limit on a public beach is 15 mph.
- ✓ On a U.S. or Texas numbered highway outside an urban district, the default speed limit for a passenger car is 70 mph.

6.2 Texas 'Move Over/Slow Down' Law

This law mandates specific actions for drivers approaching stationary emergency vehicles, law enforcement, tow trucks, or TxDOT vehicles that have their lights activated. The test will expect you to know both required actions (moving over or slowing down) and when to apply them. This is a major safety law and a frequent topic on the exam.

- ✓ On a roadway with multiple lanes traveling in the same direction, you must vacate the lane closest to the stationary emergency or service vehicle if it is safe to do so.
- ✓ If you are unable to change lanes, or if you are on a road without multiple lanes in the same direction, you must reduce your speed to 20 mph below the posted speed limit.

6.3 Safe Following Distance Rules

Maintaining a safe cushion of space behind the vehicle in front of you is essential for having enough time to react and stop. The Texas handbook specifies time-based rules for following distance that change with speed. You should know the minimum times for different speeds and that these times must be increased in poor conditions.

- ✓ At speeds of 30 mph or less, you must maintain a minimum following distance of 2 seconds in good conditions.
- ✓ At speeds above 30 mph, you must maintain a minimum following distance of 4 seconds in good conditions.
- ✓ A four-second following interval is the recommended best practice for any beginning or less experienced driver, regardless of speed.

6.4 Impact of Speed on Vision and Stopping

The exam tests the understanding that higher speeds have dangerous physical consequences. As speed increases, your peripheral vision narrows significantly, and your vehicle's total stopping distance increases exponentially. You may be asked about the relationship between speed and vision or the components of stopping distance.

- ✓ As speed increases, your field of vision is reduced. At 60 mph, your field of vision is only about one-fifth of what it is when you are stationary.
- ✓ You must always be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead. At night or in bad weather, do not 'over-drive' your headlights or range of vision.
- ✓ Total stopping distance is the sum of reaction distance and braking distance, both of which increase dramatically with higher speeds.

6.5 Illegal Street Racing Penalties

The Texas knowledge test includes questions about the specific consequences of illegal driving behaviors. Street racing, which includes drag racing and speed competitions on public roads, is a serious offense with severe penalties. You should be aware of what constitutes street racing and the range of criminal charges.

- ✓ It is illegal to participate in a race, a vehicle speed competition, a drag race, or an exhibition of speed on a public road.
- ✓ A conviction for illegal street racing is a criminal offense that can range from a Class B misdemeanor to a second-degree felony.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7: Some Special Driving Situations

7.1 Required Headlight and Low Beam Usage

In Texas, specific rules dictate when you must use your headlights and when you must switch to low beams. Headlights are required from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise, and any time visibility is less than 1,000 feet. You must dim your headlights to low beams when approaching or following other vehicles at specific distances to avoid blinding other drivers.

- ✓ You must use your headlights from 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise.
- ✓ Headlights must be used anytime visibility is less than 1,000 feet.
- ✓ Use low beam headlights when you are within 500 feet of an approaching vehicle.
- ✓ Use low beam headlights when you are following within 300 feet of another vehicle.

7.2 Entering and Merging onto a Highway

Properly entering a highway or freeway is a critical maneuver. Drivers on the entrance ramp (speed change lane) must yield the right-of-way to traffic already on the main highway. You should use the ramp to accelerate to the speed of traffic, signal your intent to merge, and find a safe gap before moving into the flow of traffic.

- ✓ You must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles already traveling on the main highway.
- ✓ Use the speed change lane (entrance ramp) to increase your speed to match the flow of highway traffic before merging.
- ✓ Signal your intention to merge and ensure the way is clear before entering the highway.

7.3 Safe Following Distance on Highways

Maintaining a safe following distance is crucial for having enough time to react to sudden stops. The Texas Driver Handbook recommends a time-based rule. In ideal conditions, you should maintain at least a two-second gap between your vehicle and the one in front of you. This distance must be increased in adverse weather conditions.

- ✓ In normal, clear weather, you must maintain a following distance of at least two seconds.
- ✓ In bad weather, such as rain or fog, you must increase your following distance to at least four seconds.

7.4 Navigating Modern Roundabouts in Texas

Modern roundabouts are circular intersections where traffic flows counter-clockwise around a central island. Drivers approaching a roundabout must yield to traffic already inside the circle. It is critical to know the proper procedure for entering, navigating, and exiting, as well as how to handle emergency vehicles.

- ✓ You must yield to all traffic, including bicyclists, that is already in the roundabout.
- ✓ Traffic in a roundabout always travels in a counter-clockwise direction.
- ✓ If an emergency vehicle approaches, do not stop inside the roundabout; exit the roundabout first and then pull over.

7.5 Sharing the Road with Large Trucks

Large trucks have significant blind spots, longer stopping distances, and make wide turns. A key rule is that if you cannot see the truck driver in their side mirror, they cannot see you. Drivers should avoid lingering in a truck's 'No-Zones' (blind spots) and never pass a truck on the right that may be preparing for a right turn.

- ✓ Never pass a truck on the right if there is a possibility it is making a right turn, as they swing wide.
- ✓ If you cannot see the truck driver in their side-view mirror, you are in their blind spot and they cannot see you.
- ✓ When passing a truck, wait until you can see the entire front of the truck in your rearview mirror before pulling back into the lane.

7.6 Sharing the Road with Motorcycles

Motorcycles are entitled to a full lane and can be difficult to see. Drivers must be extra vigilant, especially at intersections, as making a left turn in front of an oncoming motorcycle is a common cause of crashes. Always allow a greater following distance behind a motorcycle.

- ✓ You must allow a motorcyclist the use of a full lane; do not share a lane with a motorcycle.
- ✓ When following a motorcycle, you should maintain a following distance of at least four to six seconds.
- ✓ The most common cause of car-motorcycle collisions is a car turning left in front of an oncoming motorcycle.

7.7 Preventing Highway Hypnosis and Fatigue

Long-distance driving can lead to a dangerous state of drowsiness or inattention known as highway hypnosis. To combat this, the Texas Driver Handbook provides specific recommendations for taking breaks and limiting daily driving time to maintain alertness and safety.

- ✓ To prevent fatigue, you should stop for a break at least every two hours or every 100 miles.
- ✓ It is recommended that you do not drive for more than eight hours in a single day.

7.8 Emergency Skid and Brake Failure Procedures

Knowing how to react when your vehicle skids or your brakes fail is a critical safety skill. In a skid, you should not brake hard. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and steer in the direction of the skid. If your brakes fail, you should pump the brake pedal, use the parking brake cautiously, and shift to a lower gear.

- ✓ If your vehicle begins to skid, take your foot off the accelerator and turn the steering wheel in the direction the rear of the car is skidding.
- ✓ If your brakes fail, you should shift to a lower gear and apply the parking brake cautiously to avoid locking the wheels.

7.9 Driving Safely Through Floodwaters

Driving into floodwater is extremely dangerous as it can cause loss of control and sweep a vehicle away. The Texas handbook provides specific details on the depth of water that can affect different vehicles. The primary rule is to avoid driving through standing or moving water.

- ✓ As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- ✓ Twelve inches (one foot) of water is enough to float many cars.
- ✓ If your vehicle stalls in floodwater, you should abandon it immediately and move to higher ground.

7.10 Procedure for Running Off the Pavement

If your vehicle's wheels drift off the paved road surface, it is important to react correctly to avoid losing control or swerving into traffic. A sudden, hard application of the brakes or a sharp turn of the steering wheel can cause a serious crash. The correct procedure is to slow down gradually before attempting to return to the pavement.

- ✓ If you run off the pavement, do not brake hard or suddenly.
- ✓ Grip the steering wheel tightly, take your foot off the gas, and brake carefully.
- ✓ Wait until your speed is reduced and check for traffic before carefully steering back onto the pavement.

CHAPTER 8

Chapter 8: Alcohol and Drug Impact on the Driving Ability

8.1 Texas Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limits

In Texas, the definition of legal intoxication is based on Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). For adult drivers aged 21 and over, the legal limit is 0.08%. However, Texas enforces a strict 'Zero Tolerance' policy for drivers under the age of 21. This means any detectable amount of alcohol in a minor's system while they are operating a motor vehicle is a criminal offense.

- ✓ For a person aged 21 or over, a BAC of 0.08% or more is considered legally intoxicated.
- ✓ For minors under the age of 21, Texas has a 'Zero Tolerance' law, making it illegal to drive with any detectable amount of alcohol in their system.

8.2 Distinction Between DWI and DUI in Texas

Texas law uses specific terms for alcohol-related driving offenses. 'Driving While Intoxicated' (DWI) is the offense for an adult (21+) operating a vehicle with a BAC of 0.08% or higher, or who has lost the normal use of their mental or physical faculties due to alcohol or drugs. 'Driving Under the Influence' (DUI) is the specific offense for a minor (under 21) who operates a vehicle with any detectable amount of alcohol in their system.

- ✓ The primary alcohol-related driving offense for adults (21 and over) is Driving While Intoxicated (DWI).
- ✓ The offense for a minor (under 21) driving with any detectable amount of alcohol is Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

8.3 Penalties for First-Time DWI (Adults)

An adult (age 21 or over) convicted of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) for the first time faces severe penalties. These include a significant fine, mandatory jail time, and a lengthy driver license suspension. These penalties are designed to deter drunk driving.

- ✓ A first DWI offense for an adult is punishable by a fine of up to $2,000.
- ✓ A first DWI conviction includes confinement in jail for a minimum of 72 hours up to 180 days and a driver license suspension of 90 to 365 days.

8.4 Penalties for First-Time DUI (Minors)

Under the Zero Tolerance law, a minor (under 21) convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) for the first time faces specific penalties. This is a Class C misdemeanor and includes fines, community service, and mandatory participation in an alcohol awareness course.

- ✓ A first-offense DUI by a minor is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to $500.
- ✓ Penalties for a first-time minor DUI also include 20 to 40 hours of community service and mandatory attendance at an alcohol awareness course.

8.5 Texas Implied Consent Law

By operating a motor vehicle in Texas, you have automatically given consent to have a breath or blood specimen taken to determine your BAC if you are arrested for a DWI or DUI. Refusing to submit to this test results in an automatic and immediate driver license suspension, regardless of whether you are ultimately convicted of DWI/DUI.

- ✓ Refusal by an adult to provide a blood or breath specimen for a first offense results in a 180-day driver license suspension.
- ✓ Refusal by a minor to provide a blood or breath specimen for a first offense results in a 180-day driver license suspension.

8.6 Texas Open Container Law

It is illegal in Texas to knowingly possess an open container of an alcoholic beverage in the passenger area of a motor vehicle that is located on a public highway. This law applies whether the vehicle is being operated, stopped, or parked.

- ✓ Possessing an open container of alcohol in a vehicle's passenger area is illegal on a public highway.
- ✓ A conviction for an open container violation is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed $500.

8.7 Enhanced Penalty for DWI with a Child Passenger

The penalties for DWI are significantly increased if the driver has a passenger under the age of 15 in the vehicle. This offense is elevated to a state jail felony, reflecting the increased danger posed to the child.

- ✓ Driving While Intoxicated with a passenger under 15 years old is a state jail felony.
- ✓ Penalties include a fine up to $10,000, confinement in a state jail for 180 days to 2 years, and a driver license suspension.

8.8 Penalty for Providing Alcohol to a Minor

Texas law holds individuals accountable for providing alcohol to minors. Any person who purchases, furnishes, or sells an alcoholic beverage to a minor (under 21) can face serious criminal charges.

- ✓ A person who purchases for or furnishes an alcoholic beverage to a minor can be fined up to $4,000.
- ✓ In addition to the fine, a person who provides alcohol to a minor can be confined in jail for up to one year.

8.9 Myths About Sobering Up

It is a dangerous myth that drinking coffee, taking a cold shower, or exercising can make a person sober. These methods do not reduce a person's BAC. The only factor that can lower BAC and restore sobriety is time, as the body needs time to metabolize the alcohol.

- ✓ Only time can make a person sober; methods like drinking black coffee or taking a cold shower are ineffective.
- ✓ It takes the body approximately one hour to rid itself of the alcohol from one standard drink (e.g., one 12 oz beer, one 5 oz glass of wine).

8.10 General Effects of Drugs and Alcohol on Driving

Any drug, including prescription, over-the-counter, and illegal substances, can impair the skills necessary for safe driving. Alcohol is a depressant that affects coordination, judgment, perception, and reaction time. Mixing drugs, or mixing drugs with alcohol, can have a cumulative and unpredictable effect, making driving extremely dangerous.

- ✓ One of the first abilities lost when a person drinks alcohol or uses drugs is judgment.
- ✓ Mixing alcohol with other drugs, such as tranquilizers or sedatives, can dramatically increase their depressant effects and is highly hazardous.

CHAPTER 9

Chapter 9: Motor Vehicle Crashes

9.1 When to Immediately Notify Law Enforcement

Certain crash scenarios legally require you to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency as soon as possible. These situations are typically more severe and require an official response. Failing to report these incidents can lead to serious legal consequences.

- ✓ You must immediately notify law enforcement if a crash results in any injury or fatality.
- ✓ You must also notify law enforcement if a driver leaves the scene of the crash or if you suspect another driver is intoxicated.

9.2 Penalties for Leaving a Crash with Injury or Death

Leaving the scene of a crash involving injury or death is a felony offense in Texas, known as Failure to Stop and Render Aid. The penalties are severe and depend on the severity of the injury sustained by the victim. The law requires you to stop, provide information, and offer reasonable assistance to anyone injured.

- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash that results in a person's death is a second-degree felony, punishable by 2 to 20 years in prison and a fine up to $10,000.
- ✓ Leaving the scene of a crash that results in a person's serious bodily injury is a third-degree felony, punishable by 2 to 10 years in prison and a fine up to $10,000.

9.3 Penalties for Leaving a Crash with Property Damage

If you are involved in a crash that results only in damage to a vehicle or other property (such as a fence or mailbox), it is illegal to leave the scene without providing your information. The offense is a misdemeanor, with the penalty determined by the amount of damage caused.

- ✓ If you leave the scene of a crash where property damage is $200 or more, it is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to $2,000 and/or up to 180 days in jail.
- ✓ If the property damage is less than $200, leaving the scene is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to $500.

9.4 Information Exchange Required After a Crash

After being involved in any motor vehicle crash, Texas law requires you to stop and exchange essential information with all other drivers. This includes your name, address, phone number, driver license information, vehicle registration number, and motor vehicle liability insurance information. It is crucial to record the insurance company name and policy number exactly as it appears on the insurance card.

- ✓ You must always stop and exchange information, including name, address, driver license number, and insurance details, with other drivers involved in a crash.
- ✓ If you are involved in a crash, you must show your driver license to the other operator if they request to see it.

9.5 Filing a Written Crash Report with TxDOT

In Texas, if you are in a crash that is not investigated by a law enforcement officer, you may be required to file a written report yourself. This report must be submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on a specific form within a set timeframe.

- ✓ A written crash report must be filed if the crash was not investigated by law enforcement and resulted in property damage of $1,000 or more.
- ✓ The report must be filed with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) no later than the 10th day after the date of the crash.

9.6 Duties When Hitting an Unattended Vehicle

If you collide with and damage a vehicle that is parked and unattended, you are still legally obligated to take action. You cannot simply drive away. The law provides two options for fulfilling your responsibility in this situation.

- ✓ After hitting an unattended vehicle, you must immediately stop and either locate the owner to provide your name and address.
- ✓ If the owner cannot be found, you must securely attach a written notice to the vehicle in a visible place, providing your name, address, and a statement of the circumstances.

9.7 Moving Vehicles After a Minor Crash

To prevent further danger and traffic obstruction, Texas law requires drivers to move their vehicles after a minor crash under certain conditions. This is often referred to as a 'Move It' or 'Steer It, Clear It' law.

- ✓ If a crash occurs on a main lane, ramp, or shoulder and each vehicle can be normally and safely driven, drivers must move their vehicles out of the travel lanes.
- ✓ Vehicles should be moved to a designated crash investigation site, frontage road, or other suitable location that does not obstruct traffic.

CHAPTER 10

Chapter 10: Pedestrian Safety

10.1 Pedestrian Right-of-Way at Crossings and Intersections

In Texas, the right-of-way between vehicles and pedestrians depends on where the pedestrian is crossing. While drivers must always exercise caution, pedestrians have specific responsibilities. A pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles if they cross the street at any point other than a marked or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection. This practice, often called 'jaywalking,' is dangerous and illegal. Similarly, if a designated pedestrian tunnel or overhead crossing is provided, a pedestrian must use it and yield to traffic if they choose to cross at street level instead.

- ✓ If you cross a street at any point other than within a crosswalk at an intersection, you (the pedestrian) must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles.
- ✓ If a pedestrian tunnel or overhead crossing is provided, a pedestrian crossing the street at road level must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles.
- ✓ Pedestrians should not cross the street between two intersections.

10.2 Driver Responsibilities for Blind or Disabled Pedestrians

Drivers must show extreme caution for pedestrians who are blind, partially blind, or disabled. These individuals are often identified by carrying a white cane or being guided by an assistance animal. A driver must take all necessary precautions to avoid injuring such a pedestrian. If the only way to avoid injury or danger is to stop, the driver must bring their vehicle to a full stop. Drivers should be especially alert for these pedestrians near bus stops, intersections, and schools for the blind.

- ✓ A driver shall bring the vehicle to a full stop if injury or danger to a pedestrian with a white cane can only be avoided by that action.
- ✓ A driver must take all necessary precautions to avoid injuring or endangering a pedestrian guided by an assistance animal or carrying a white cane.
- ✓ Only blind, partially blind, or disabled individuals are legally permitted to carry a white cane on any public street or highway.

10.3 General Driver Duty of Care Towards Pedestrians

As a motorist, you have a fundamental responsibility to be vigilant and protect pedestrians. Whenever you see a pedestrian crossing or attempting to cross the street, you must slow down, be prepared to stop, and use your horn if necessary to alert them of your approach. This duty applies even if the pedestrian is not in a crosswalk. You must always be prepared for unexpected actions, such as a person suddenly running into the street.

- ✓ If you see a pedestrian crossing or attempting to cross the street, you must slow down and be prepared to stop.
- ✓ A driver should use their horn if necessary to alert a pedestrian to their vehicle's presence.
- ✓ Do not assume a pedestrian sees you; always be ready to yield or stop.

10.4 Rules for Pedestrians on Roads Without Sidewalks

Drivers must be aware of the rules pedestrians follow when no sidewalks are available, as this helps anticipate their location on the road. In Texas, if there are no sidewalks, pedestrians are instructed to walk on the left side of the road, facing oncoming traffic. This makes them more visible to drivers. They are also instructed to step off the pavement when a vehicle approaches.

- ✓ If there are no sidewalks, a pedestrian should walk on the left side of the road.
- ✓ Pedestrians walking on the road should face oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Drivers should expect to see pedestrians on the left side of the road in areas without sidewalks.

10.5 Anticipating Sudden Pedestrian Actions

A critical aspect of defensive driving is anticipating that pedestrians may not follow traffic rules. Pedestrians, especially children, can be unpredictable and may suddenly walk or run into the street directly in the path of a vehicle. Such an action may make it impossible for a driver to yield or stop in time. Therefore, drivers must be exceptionally cautious in residential areas, school zones, and near parks.

- ✓ A driver must be alert for pedestrians who may suddenly walk or run into the street.
- ✓ Sudden actions by a pedestrian may make it impossible for a vehicle operator to yield.
- ✓ Be extra careful when pedestrians are getting off a streetcar or bus, as they may cross in front of the vehicle.

10.6 Prohibition of Soliciting on Roadways

For safety and traffic flow, Texas law prohibits individuals from standing in the road to conduct business. It is illegal for any person to stand in a roadway for the purpose of soliciting a ride (hitchhiking), contributions, or business. There is a specific exception for charitable contributions, which may be allowed if the person has been authorized to do so by the local authority that has jurisdiction over that road.

- ✓ No person may stand in the road for the purpose of soliciting a ride, contributions, or business.
- ✓ A person may stand in a road to solicit a charitable contribution only if authorized by the local authority.

10.7 Dangers and Illegality of Intoxicated Pedestrians

Alcohol impairs judgment and coordination for both drivers and pedestrians. In Texas, it is illegal for a pedestrian to walk on a road while under the influence of or consuming an alcoholic beverage. Drivers should be aware that alcohol is a significant contributing factor in pedestrian traffic crashes and should exercise increased caution in areas where intoxicated pedestrians are likely, such as entertainment districts.

- ✓ A pedestrian must not walk on a road when under the influence of alcohol.
- ✓ A pedestrian is not permitted to consume an alcoholic beverage while on a roadway.
- ✓ Drivers should recognize that alcohol is a major contributing factor to pedestrian traffic crashes.

CHAPTER 11

Chapter 11: Additional Safety Tips

11.1 Texas Safety Belt and Child Restraint Laws

Texas law mandates the use of safety belts for the driver and all passengers in a vehicle. Specific rules apply to children based on age and height, with significant fines for non-compliance. The driver is responsible for ensuring passengers under 17 are properly secured.

- ✓ The fine for a driver who has a passenger under 17 years old riding without a safety belt is $100 to $200.
- ✓ Any child under 8 years old must be secured in a child passenger safety seat system unless they are taller than 4 feet 9 inches.
- ✓ The fine for a driver or a passenger who is at least 15 years old riding without a safety belt is $25 to $50.
- ✓ Your chances of being killed in a crash are five times greater if you are thrown from your car.

11.2 The Offense of Evading Arrest or Detention

Intentionally fleeing from a law enforcement officer who is attempting to lawfully arrest or detain you is a serious offense in Texas. Using a vehicle to evade arrest results in higher penalties, especially if it causes injury to another person.

- ✓ A person commits an offense if they intentionally flee from a person they know is a peace officer attempting to lawfully arrest or detain them.
- ✓ You will be subject to higher penalties if you use a vehicle while evading arrest or cause injury to another person.

11.3 Restrictions on Passengers in Open Bed Trucks

In Texas, it is illegal to operate an open bed truck or trailer with a child under the age of 18 occupying the bed. The driver is responsible and will be fined for violations. There are specific exceptions to this rule, such as for parades, on a beach, or for transporting farm-workers on certain roads.

- ✓ It is an offense for a person younger than 18 years of age to occupy the bed of an open truck or trailer.
- ✓ The fine assessed to the driver for a child under 18 riding in an open-bed pickup truck is $25 to $200.
- ✓ An exception to the open bed restriction rule is when operating the vehicle on a beach.

11.4 Driver Obligations During a Law Enforcement Stop

When stopped by law enforcement in Texas, drivers have specific obligations. State law requires you to stop immediately for an emergency vehicle. During the stop, you must remain in your vehicle, keep your hands visible, and provide your driver license upon request. Failure to comply can lead to serious charges.

- ✓ State law requires a driver to immediately stop when approached by an authorized emergency vehicle.
- ✓ When stopped, you should remain in the car and keep both hands clearly in sight on top of the steering wheel until the officer provides instructions.
- ✓ Drivers are required by law to display a driver license when requested by a law enforcement officer.
- ✓ Giving a false or fictitious name to a law enforcement officer who has lawfully detained you is a criminal offense.

11.5 Texas Regulations for Towing a Vehicle

When one vehicle tows another in Texas, there are specific rules for the connection between them to ensure safety. The length of the connection is limited, a warning flag is required, and safety chains are mandatory for most trailers.

- ✓ The drawbar, chain, rope, or cable used for towing must not be longer than 15 feet from one vehicle to another.
- ✓ A white flag, not less than 12 inches square, must be attached to the connection between the two vehicles.
- ✓ A passenger car or light truck towing a trailer on a public highway must have safety chains attached from the trailer to the towing vehicle.

11.6 Rules for Safely Transporting Loose Materials

To prevent hazards from falling cargo, Texas law requires that any loose material capable of blowing or spilling, such as sand or gravel, must be properly contained. This involves enclosing the load and using a secure cover.

- ✓ A vehicle bed carrying loose material must be completely enclosed on the sides, front, and rear by a tailgate or panel.
- ✓ The top of a load of loose material must be covered with a canvas, tarpaulin, or other covering that is firmly secured to prevent the load from blowing or spilling.