

## Driving Large Vehicles

# Turns

You can't drive very far in this world without making a turn. They're such an everyday part of life that you may take them for granted. But the wide turning radius of a large vehicle makes turning it trickier than turning a car. Know how to turn safely and you won't get caught in a crunch.

### Know Your Blind Spots

Every vehicle has blind spots. For most, there is a blind spot on the left just to the rear of the driver's seat, and one on the right a little farther back. The larger the vehicle, the larger the blind spots. Thus it becomes crucial to check those blind spots carefully during a turn.

### Give Plenty of Warning

Signal before braking to turn—and up to 500 feet on the highway. Watch your mirrors closely for any vehicles, pedestrians or bicycles that might be in your path when you turn. Remember that they're harder to see from a large vehicle. Be prepared to stop until you're sure that any potential hazard has cleared out of the way.

### Allow a Larger Turning Radius

In a large vehicle you have to drive farther past the corner, allowing about half the length of your vehicle to pass the corner, before beginning your turn. Otherwise, your rear wheels may run over the curb in a right turn, or crowd the lane going the opposite direction in a left turn.

### Right Turns—The Trickiest

Of the two directions you normally turn in, right turns are the riskiest. The main reason is that you're turning into your blind side, where you can't see a thing except with your outside mirrors, and that still leaves plenty of blind spots.

When you turn, stay as close to the right-hand edge of the road as you can. Get into a gear that will carry you through the turn without shifting, since you need both hands on the wheel. Continue to check your blind spots as you turn. Drive slowly enough that you don't need to brake during the turn.

### Left Turns Are Easier

In a left turn you usually have more room to maneuver without getting into another lane. Also, you're turning from the side where you can see. Start your turn from the lane next to the center line, but stay as far to the right in that lane as you safely can. It gives you more room to maneuver. Keep your eye on the outside mirror so you can be sure you're not crowding the lane next to the one you're turning into. If you're driving a tractor-trailer, shoulder check to make sure the trailer arc is not crowding the lane next to the one you're turning into.

### Easy Does It

Drive slowly enough that you don't need to brake during a turn. There are two reasons for this. One is that large vehicles tend to have a higher center of gravity. The weight of your vehicle is pulled outward during a turn. The faster the turn, the greater the centrifugal force, with its potential for causing you to skid or even roll over. Another reason to go slow is it allows you to be more careful about checking your blind spots as you turn. If it's a choice between going into a turn too fast or too slow, always err in the direction of turning too slowly.

