

Could you still pass your driver's test?

Take the challenge and update yourself on traffic laws

How well do you know the rules of the road in Minnesota? Pretty well? Kinda? Enough to get by? Take this test to find out! Even if you've been driving for years, you might be surprised by some of the answers. (Answers are on Page 11.) But read carefully, some of them are tricky...

1. A trail crosses a road where there are no stop signs or traffic signals. There is a pedestrian crossing sign and white lines across the road to mark the crosswalk. You approach with your vehicle, and notice a pedestrian waiting behind the curb to cross. You are legally required to:

- Come to a complete stop to let the pedestrian cross, and not resume until the pedestrian has completely crossed the road.
- Come to a complete stop to let the pedestrian cross, and not resume until the pedestrian has completely crossed the lane your vehicle occupies.
- Slow down and let the pedestrian cross, but a complete stop is not required.
- Keep going; you're not required to stop or slow at all for the waiting pedestrian.

2. You are driving a car northbound on a gravel road in a rural area when you approach an intersection with another gravel road. On the other roadway, a truck is approaching the same intersection, traveling westbound. There are no stop signs, yield signs, or signals at the intersection — it is completely uncontrolled. Both you and the truck are approaching the intersection at about the same time. You are legally required to:

- Yield to the truck, because it's bigger than your car.
- Yield to the truck, because it's going westbound.
- Keep going; the truck is supposed to stop for you.
- Both of you come to a stop and wave at each other until one of you finally goes.

3. You are driving on a two-lane county road in a rural area and someone in front of you is making a left turn at a four-way intersection. There are no stop signs in the direction you're going; it's a two-way stop for the cross street. There is no left-turn lane or right-turn lane, the other driver is stopped waiting for oncoming traffic to clear. The other driver is completely

blocking the lane you're in. There is, however, plenty of paved shoulder on both sides of the road. You are supposed to:

- Stay in the lane you're in, and wait patiently until the car in front of you turns and gets out of the way.
- Pass on the right, using the shoulder.
- Pass the other vehicle on the left.

4. You are making a left turn at a signalized intersection. You don't have a green arrow, just a green circle, and need to yield to oncoming traffic before making your turn. A pedestrian is in the crosswalk with a flashing "don't walk," crossing the road you're turning onto, though it said "walk" when they first started crossing. When the oncoming traffic clears, you complete your turn and collide with the pedestrian. Who broke the law?

- The pedestrian, because you had a green light for your left turn and they had a flashing "don't walk."
- You, because you failed to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk, even though it was flashing "don't walk."
- Both A and B.

5. You're driving your car, approaching a marked crosswalk where a trail crosses the road. A bicyclist riding on the trail emerges from behind some shrubs and enters the crosswalk at a high speed without slowing. You see the cyclist immediately, hit the brakes and swerve, and fortunately you don't collide... but it was really, really close. Who broke the law here?

- You, because you were supposed to stop at the crosswalk since you couldn't see around the trees.
- The bicyclist, because they're riding through crosswalk and rather than walking their bike.
- The bicyclist, because they entered the crosswalk when it was impossible for you to yield.

6. You are driving, approaching an intersection where there are no signals. It's a two-way stop, and the stop signs face the side streets, not the street you're driving on. A pedestrian is crossing the street at the intersection. There are sidewalks on all four corners of the intersection but no crosswalks are marked on the road, and there are no crosswalk signs. You see the pedestrian have plenty of time to stop, but are you required by law to stop for the pedestrian?

- Yes, because they're crossing at an intersec-

tion.

- Yes, because it doesn't matter where they're crossing.
- No, because there are no crosswalk signs or markings.

7. Under what conditions are you are required to use your headlights?

- At any time from sunset to sunrise.
- At any time when it is raining, snowing, sleeting, or hailing.
- At any time when visibility is impaired by weather, smoke, fog, or other conditions.
- All of the above.

8. You approach a railroad crossing that is not equipped with gates, flashing lights, or a stop sign, just the white "X" crossbuck sign on a wooden post. How should you react?

- Come to a complete stop.
- Slow down enough to be sure that it's safe to cross.
- Nothing; if there are no lights, then the trains need to stop for you.

9. You are driving westbound on Scott County Road 2 approaching the roundabout at Highway 13, in the middle a long string of cars. As you pass through the roundabout, you see stopped cars waiting to enter the roundabout on southbound Highway 13. As you drive around the circle and approach the cars that are waiting to enter, you are supposed to:

- Stop and let them in, taking turns one-by-one.
- Keep going, and let them keep waiting.
- Slow down and give them space to enter.

10. You are driving in the right lane on the freeway in a rural area and see a sign that the right lane will be closed ahead for construction. You can see that it is congested on the approach to the work zone. You should:

- Merge as soon as it's safe to do so, keeping everyone in the same order they arrived, but creating a long single-file line.
- Stay in your lane until the actual closure, even if it means driving past cars and cutting to the front of the line.
- Straddle the lanes to keep anyone from getting past you in either lane

Education, answers provided for driver's test

ANSWERS:

1. The answer is **d**, because the pedestrian is waiting behind the curb. Per the definitions of Minnesota Statute 169.01, subs. 31 and 37 state:

“Crosswalk” means (1) that portion of a roadway ordinarily included with the prolongation or connection of the lateral lines of sidewalks at intersections; (2) any portion of a roadway distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface. and

“Roadway” means that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the sidewalk or shoulder. In the event a highway includes two or more separate roadways, the term “roadway” as used herein shall refer to any such roadway separately but not to all such roadways collectively.

Minn. Stat. 169.21 essentially gives the right of way at a crosswalk to pedestrians, but requires using ordinary care in doing so. If the pedestrian had been *in* the crosswalk rather than behind the curb — or had even a foot in the crosswalk — you would be required to stop until the pedestrian had crossed your lane of traffic. While not perfect, the statutes allow for pedestrians to wait for traffic to clear and also prevents unnecessary stopping when a pedestrian is not intending to cross, such as waiting on a corner for a bus. Stopping for the pedestrian who is not in the crosswalk might be a courtesy, but it is not required (and may risk causing a rear-end crash). This applies in Minnesota; other states may have other variations. More information on Minnesota crosswalk laws can be found at www.dot.state.mn.us/peds/

2. The answer is **b**. If you're going northbound and the truck is going westbound, then the truck is approaching from your right. Minn. Stat. 169.20, subd. 1(a) says:

When two vehicles enter an uncontrolled intersection from different highways at approximately the same time, the driver of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.

It has nothing to do with the size of the vehicle or the surface of the road. Of course, the other driver might not know the rules, so you should slow down and always make sure it's safe before entering the intersection. One interesting thing to note: During a power outage when a traffic signal is completely dark (not the same as flashing red), the intersection becomes an “uncontrolled intersection” and the yield-to-the-right rule takes over.

3. The answer is **a**. It's illegal to pass on the right when it involves use of the shoulder, according to Minn. Stat. 169.18, subd. 4(4). It's also illegal to use a right-turn lane for passing when prohibited by a sign stating “Right Lane Must Turn Right.” Passing on the left in this situation is illegal; moreover, it would probably result in a serious crash, as there was clearly some oncoming traffic plus the risk that the vehicle would turn into you as you passed.

4. The answer is **b**. A flashing orange hand or “don't walk” doesn't mean that the pedestrian doesn't have the right-of-way. A flashing orange hand or “don't walk” indication simply means that the pedestrian shouldn't start crossing. If the pedestrian didn't *start* crossing until after it was already flashing the “don't walk” (or when it was a steady “don't walk”), then they too broke the law. Of course, even if the pedestrian did break the law, that doesn't mean it's okay to hit them! Minn. Stat. 169.21, subd. 3(d) states: *Notwithstanding the other provisions of this section every driver of a vehicle shall (1) exercise due care to avoid colliding with any bicycle*

or pedestrian upon any roadway and (2) give an audible signal when necessary and exercise proper precaution upon observing any child or any obviously confused or incapacitated person upon a roadway.

5. The answer is **c**. A bicyclist in a crosswalk, whether they're on the bike or walking with the bike, is afforded all the rights and responsibilities of a pedestrian by Minn. Stat. 169.222, subd. 4(f). However, Minnesota Statute 169.21 states *“No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield.”* Therefore, the bicyclist violated this provision by darting into traffic without giving the driver a chance to slow down.

6. The answer is **a**. A crosswalk does not need to be painted, signed, or marked in any way in order to be legally considered a crosswalk. A crosswalk can be any logical extension of a sidewalk within an intersection, as defined by Minn. Stat. 169.01, subd. 37 (See answer to #1 for the legal definition). A pedestrian crossing a roadway in the absence of an intersection, sidewalk, or marked crosswalk is required yield to vehicles (Minn. Stat. 169.21, subd. 3).

7. The answer is **d**. The choices are taken directly from Minn. Stat. 169.48, subd. 1.

8. The answer is **b**. Gates and flashing light systems are very expensive to install and maintain, and are only installed by the railroad under high-risk circumstances. There are many places where active railroads and highways cross without anything other than a sign. If, however, a train is approaching, Minn. Stat. 169.26, subd. 1 states that when approaching a railroad grade crossing a driver must stop the vehicle at least

ten feet from the track and shall not proceed until safe to do so when an approaching railroad train is plainly visible and is in hazardous proximity. If you can't see far enough down the track, you may have to slow down considerably before crossing to ensure safety.

9. The answer is **b**. A roundabout is controlled by yield signs at the entry. While the “yield” sign does not require a complete stop, it does mean that vehicles already in the circle have the right-of-way, and traffic wishing to enter the roundabout needs to wait until there is a safe gap to enter. “Yield” is not the same as “merge.” Slowing down or stopping within the roundabout can be dangerous and impedes traffic. While entering traffic may sometimes have to wait for long strings of traffic to clear, the delay is almost always less than what would be expected by a traffic signal in the same location. While answer **c** might seem courteous, it creates confusion for entering drivers and could encourage them to violate the yield sign, which would have negative consequences both at the roundabout and at other “yield” locations on the roadway system. More information about Minnesota roundabouts and rules can be found at <http://www.mnltap.umn.edu/publications/videos/ModernRoundabouts/>

10. The answer is **b**, but only because it is already congested. If it's *not* congested, merging safely and smoothly ahead of the merge point is best for both safety and traffic operations. However, if traffic flow exceeds the capacity of the work zone, congestion begins and merging early ceases to be beneficial for either operations or safety. Mn/DOT is trying experimental systems to prevent the long single-file lines from forming. The goal is to instruct the drivers based on actual traffic conditions. More about this issue and this system can be found at www.dot.state.mn.us/newsrels/03/10/29merge.html