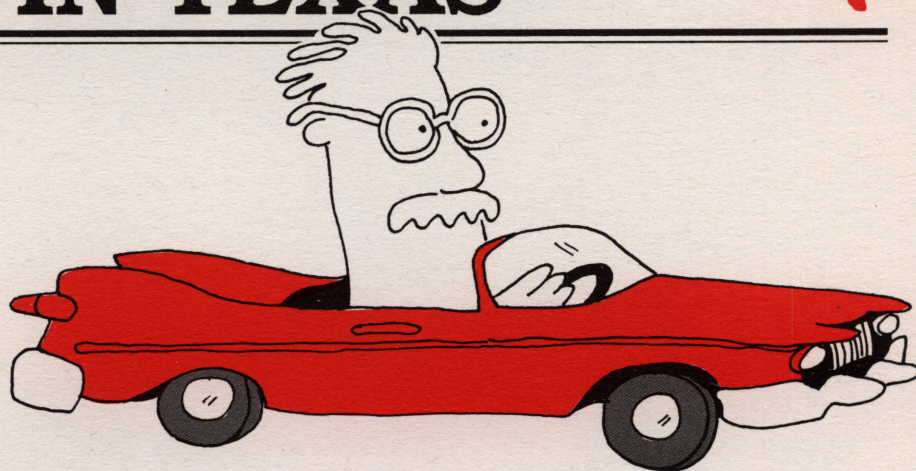


# **A**GING AND DRIVING SUCCESSFULLY IN TEXAS

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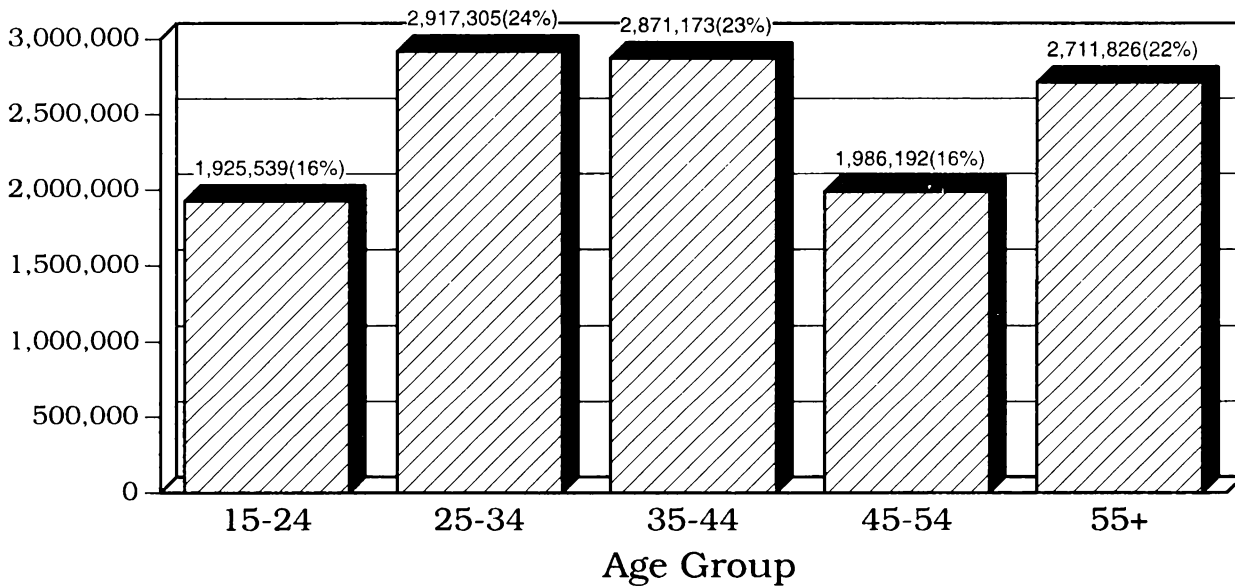
# STATISTICAL INFORMATION



By the year 2000, one out of every three drivers on Texas roadways will be over 55. One out of every twelve drivers will be over 80. Statistics for 1994 show that Texas has 2,711,826 licensed drivers 55 and older. This accounts for 22% of the licensed driving population. The number of licensed drivers in that age group increased by 72,150 from 1993 to 1994. Interestingly, 239 drivers 100 of age or older still hold valid Texas driver's licenses.

Older Texas drivers have good accident records compared to most age groups in terms of licensed drivers. Statistics show that in 1994, 389 drivers 55+ were killed and 22,889 drivers were injured in automobile collisions. Statistics also show that 524 occupants were killed and 32,400 were injured on Texas roadways (occupants means drivers and passengers killed in automobile collisions).

Texas Licensed Drivers by Age Group  
Total Licensed Drivers – 12,412,035

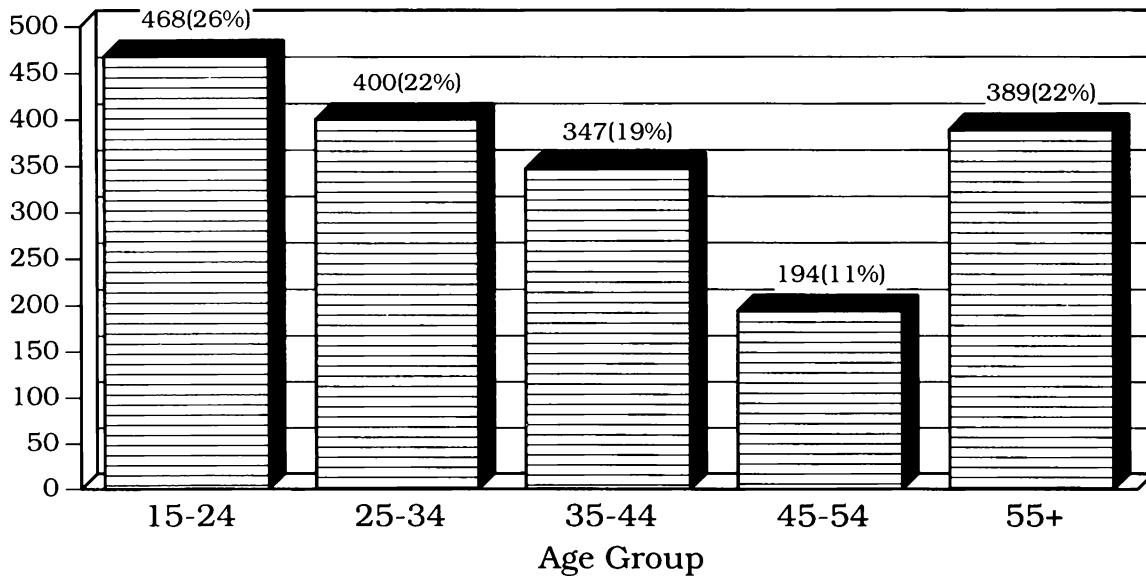


Source: Texas Department of Public Safety 1994 Statistics

## Texas Fatalities by Age Group

\*Total Fatalities = 1,798

Drivers killed in automobile collisions

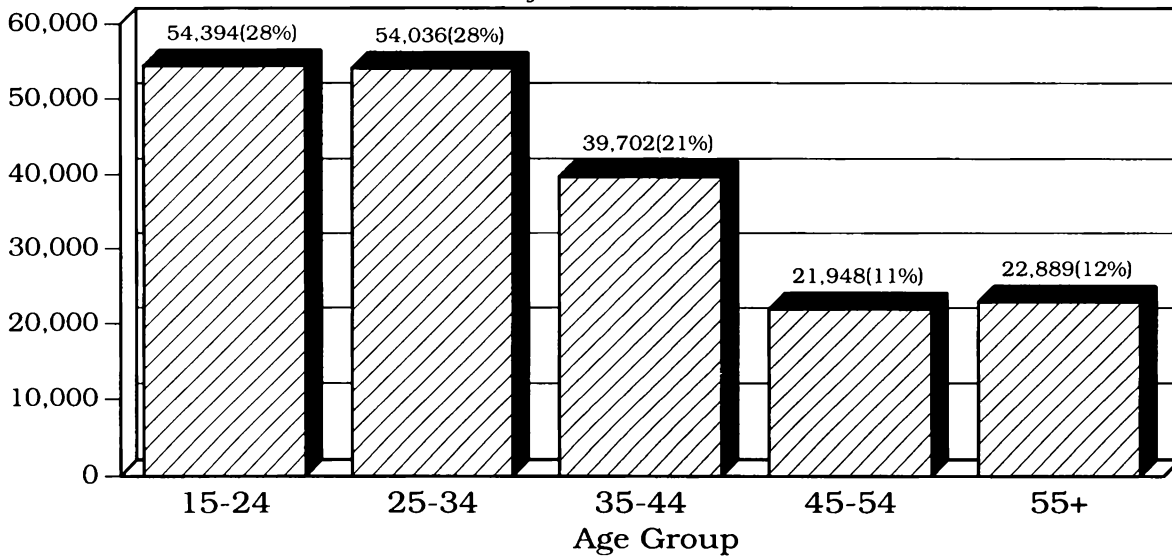


Source: Texas Department of Public Safety 1994 Statistics  
\*Does not include under 15 and unknown age

## Texas Injuries by Age Group

\*Total Injuries = 192,969

Drivers injured in automobile collisions

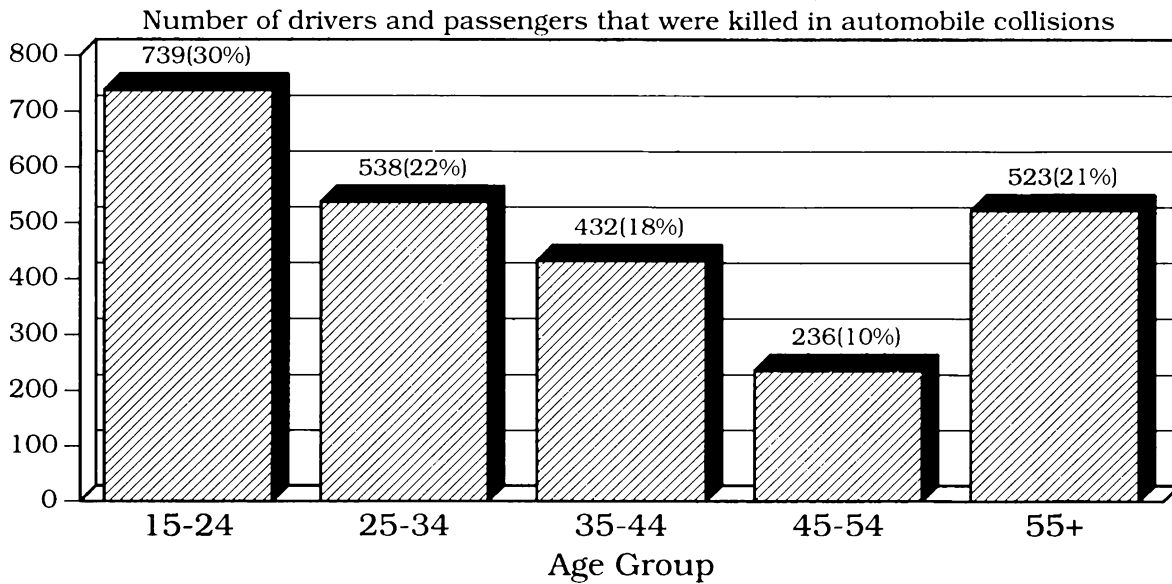


Source: Texas Department of Public Safety 1994 Statistics  
\*Does not include under 15 and unknown age



## Texas Fatalities by Age Group

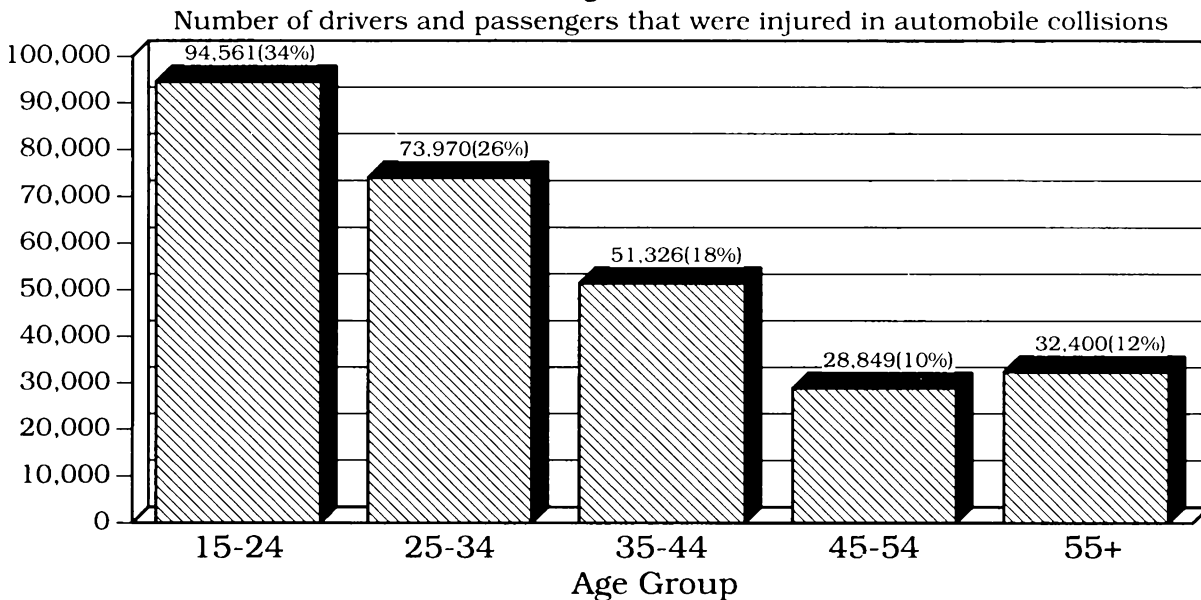
**\*\*Total Fatalities = 2,468**



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety 1994 Statistics  
\*Does not include under 15 and unknown age  
\*\*Does not include pedestrian and pedalcyclist fatalities

## Texas Injuries by Age Group

**\*\*Total Injuries = 281,105**

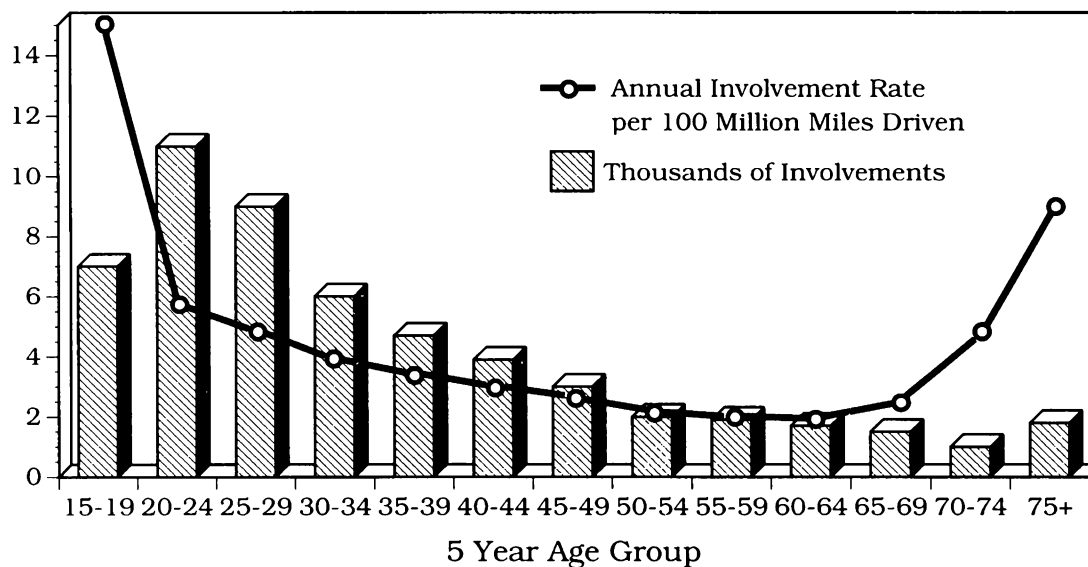


Source: Texas Department of Public Safety 1994 Statistics  
\*Does not include under 15 and unknown age  
\*\*Does not include pedestrian and pedalcyclist fatalities



One of the largest national studies, "Transportation Research Board Special Report 218," found that older people drive fewer miles per year compared to other age groups. However, when their collisions and fatalities per mile driven are counted, the risk of crashes increases beginning around age 75. In reality, the threat that older drivers pose to traffic safety is very small relative to those aged 15-to-24 who make up 29% of drivers involved in fatal collisions in Texas. (Total drivers excluding under 15 and unknown age.)

## Driver Involvements in Fatal Crashes and Fatal Involvement Rates by Age



Source: Special Report 218, Transportation in Aging Society Improving Mobility and Safety for Older Persons, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, 1988

Older drivers who are involved in a serious collision have a three times greater chance of suffering serious injury or death than younger persons. Older persons also have slower, less complete recovery from crash injuries. Since older persons are more susceptible to injury or death in collisions, it is important for them to take advantage of the protection of air bags and safety belts.


The low frequency of older driver collisions and fatalities in Texas reflects some awareness by older drivers of decreasing skills and diminishing sensory abilities. Drastic reduction in their driving may occur during at-risk times—for instance, after dark, during rain or other adverse weather, or dense traffic periods.

# **PREVENTION PROGRAMS**




There are many programs that can help older drivers continue to drive safely and prevent traffic collisions.

## **DEFENSIVE DRIVING PROGRAMS**


-  55 Alive/Mature Driving Program  
American Association of Retired Persons  
1819 Maux Drive  
Houston, Texas 77043  
(713) 465-2195 or (214) 361-3060

Persons 50 and older are eligible for the 6-hour 55/Alive/Mature Driving program. The course is taught by volunteer instructors and provides participants with a 10% insurance discount, but does not dismiss tickets. The fee is \$8.00-\$9.00.

-  Coaching The Mature Driver  
Greater San Antonio Safety Council  
1802 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 100  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
(210) 824-8180


Persons 50 and older are eligible for the 6-hour Coaching the Mature Driver course. This course is taught by instructors licensed by the Texas Education Agency and provides participants with a 10% insurance discount and ticket dismissal. The fee is \$14.00 - \$20.00.



 Older Driver Self-Assessment Inventory  
American Automobile Association (AAA)  
3000 Southwest Freeway  
Houston, Texas 77098  
(713) 524-1851

The Older Driver Self-Assessment Inventory is a self-rating package that helps drivers learn about unsafe driving practices and suggests ways they can be safe drivers. The package is free for members of AAA. For non-members, it is \$2.00. Members who are 50 and older may take an 6-hour driving course conducted by licensed instructors. The course provides special handouts to drivers over 50, a 10% insurance discount, and ticket dismissal. The fee is \$15.00-\$20.00.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

 Traffic Safety for Older Adults  
Bureau of Epidemiology  
Texas Department of Health  
1100 West 49th Street  
Austin, Texas 78756  
1-800-252-8255

This program provides free educational programs, brochures, and a toll-free nationwide telephone number that gives information and safe-driving tips for seniors. This program has an ELITE SURVIVORS CLUB for drivers 50 and older who escaped death or injury by using car safety restraints. Each survivor receives a pin, certificate, and a safety packet with novelty items.



# ALCOHOL AND MEDICATIONS



Older adults should be alert to the effects that alcohol and/or medications have on their driving ability. This is true of both over-the-counter and prescription medications. It is important to avoid alcoholic beverages while taking medications. Liver and kidney functions slow down with age. If the liver function is slowed down, less alcohol is taken from the bloodstream, and the alcohol can build up more easily. A slower kidney allows more medications to remain in the bloodstream, and reach a dangerous level more quickly. Some medications are dependent on the concentration of water in the bloodstream, and as the percentage of water decreases, the concentration of the drug increases.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care professional to make sure you know about the side effects of all medications you are taking, whether prescribed or not. The chart on page 8 lists the possible types of medications you may be taking and their possible effects on driving.

SOURCE: 55 Alive/Mature Driving. Developed by the American Association For Retired Persons, 4Th Edition.



# AWARENESS OF MEDICATION EFFECTS FOR THE OLDER DRIVER



<b>Check Your Condition(s)</b>	<b>Medical Conditions</b>	<b>Types of Medication with Example</b>	<b>Potential Effects on Driving</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arthritis and rheumatism	Analgesics – Motrin	Drowsiness, inability to concentrate, ringing in ears
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allergies	Antihistamines – Benadryl	Drowsiness, confusion, reduced reaction time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Cold	Antihistamines – Tavist Anti-tussives – Robitussin AC	Drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hypertension	Antihypertensive – Hydrodiuril	Drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weight control	Stimulants – Dexatrim	False feeling of alertness, overexcitability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety	Sedatives – Equanil/Meprobamate	Drowsiness, staggering, blurred vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression	Stimulants – Elavil	Overexcitability, false sense of alertness, dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression	Antidepressants – Prozac	Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fatigue	Stimulants – Ritalin	Overexcitability, false sense of alertness, dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insomnia	Sedatives – Xanax Hypnotics – Serax Antihistamines – Seldane	Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Heart Arrhythmia	Anti-arrhythmics – Quinidine	Blurred vision, dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seizure Disorders	Anti-convulsants – Dilantin	Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision

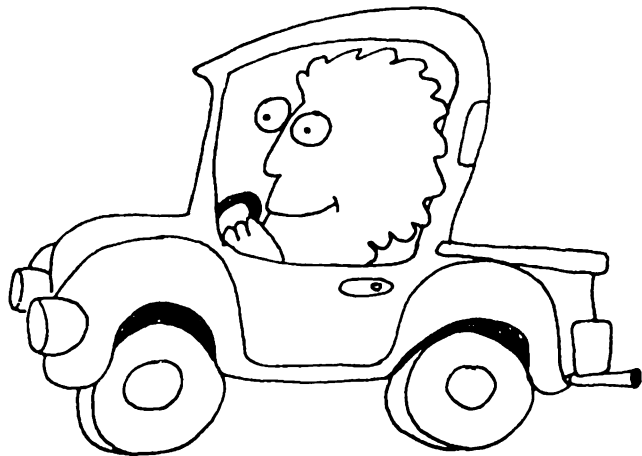
SOURCE: 55 Alive/Mature Driving. Developed by the American Association For Retired Persons, 4Th Edition.

# FEATURES TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A CAR



Older drivers should consider the following equipment when buying a car:

- ▨ Simply laid out dashboards with easy-to-read instruments.
- ▨ Electrochromatic rearview mirrors, which automatically adjust eliminate night time glare.
- ▨ Heated windshields that melt snow so that it does not have to be scraped off.
- ▨ More power equipment, such as electric seat adjustment systems, power windows, door locks, and automatic safety belt systems.
- ▨ Pick the best type of seat that makes getting in and out of the vehicle easier. (Options may include bench seats, bucket seats, or swivel seats).
- ▨ Airbags provide extra protection and help to prevent broken bones and other injuries in collisions.



# OTHER SAFE DRIVING TIPS FOR SENIORS



- ▨ Purchase a lighter-colored car such as white or yellow, which is two to four times more visible at a distance.
- ▨ Larger cars are safer and more comfortable.
- ▨ Avoid driving during rush hour traffic.
- ▨ Always wear a safety belt, even if your car is equipped with an airbag. Safety belts double your chances of surviving an accident or fatality. A safety belt and airbag combination offers the most advanced safety technology.
- ▨ If you must drive at night, increase your following distance, do not look at on-coming car lights, and use your mirrors more.
- ▨ Avoid tinted windshields.



# ON THE ROAD: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR OLDER DRIVERS



## **Failure to Yield Right-of-Way**

Always yield to Pedestrians in or near cross-walks, even if the crosswalk isn't marked. Always yield at yield signs. Yield to approaching traffic when making left turns. Yield to pedestrians and vehicles when you're entering the street from a driveway or an alley. Yield to emergency vehicles with flashing red lights. Yield to moving traffic when you're leaving a parking space.

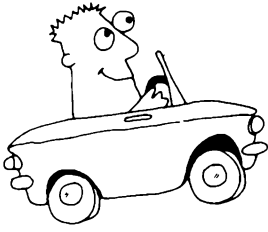
## **Turning**

Always slow down and flash your left-or right-turn signal well in advance of making a turn. Before turning check all around you for traffic, pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists. Keep your wheels straight until you actually begin to make the turn so that if rear-ended you won't be thrown in the path of oncoming traffic. When making a turn avoid swinging wide; stay in the same lane.

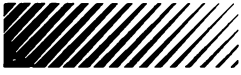
## **Entering/Exiting Expressways**

When getting on an expressway, observe the ramp speed if posted. As you approach the acceleration lane, match your speed to that of the traffic on the expressway lane you're about to enter. At the same time, check the lane for a gap in traffic. Also check to make sure a car in another lane isn't about to wheel into your gap. If expressway traffic is heavy as you're getting on, try not to stop altogether. Slow down about halfway down the ramp not at the very end, but accelerate to expressway speed before entering. What if it's a worst-case scenario and traffic is so heavy that you have to stop and wait for a gap? Wait until there's a very big gap before you enter, because it takes time to accelerate to full speed. When leaving an expressway, signal your intention to exit but, don't slow down until you're in the special exit (deceleration) lane. Then slow to the posted limit on the exit ramp. Never attempt to get back on the expressway after you've started to leave, even if you discover that you're at the wrong exit. Instead leave, find the proper entrance ramp, reenter the expressway, proceed to the proper exit.

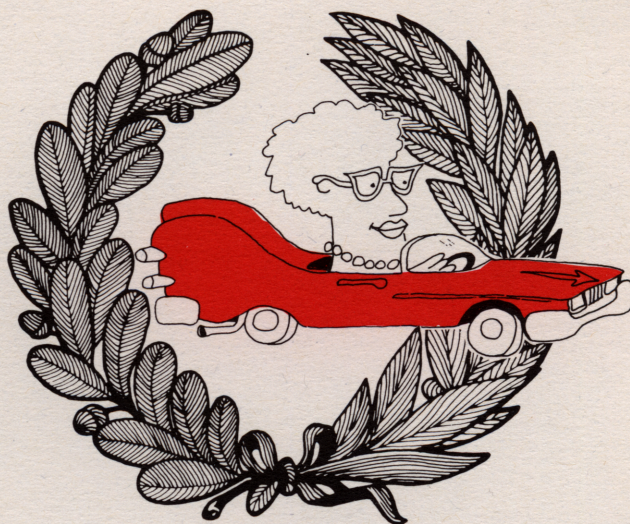




# NOTES







## **DRIVE SAFELY! DON'T WRECK YOUR LIFE!!**

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"The conclusions and opinions expressed in this pamphlet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the Texas Department of Transportation or any political subdivision of the state or Federal Government."

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