

# **Special Point Examination**



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# **Driver's Handbook**

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# The Examination Requirement

As a driver who has been convicted of violations of Pennsylvania's Vehicle Code resulting in six or more points on your driving record, you must take and pass a written test to keep your driver's license. The test will have two kinds of questions. The first kind will test what you know about safe driving laws and safe driving practices. The second kind will test your judgment in making safe or unsafe driver decisions in everyday traffic situations where accidents are likely to happen.

**For the questions about Pennsylvania's safe driving laws and safe driving practices you will need to know:**

- How the point system works in Pennsylvania.
- Laws and penalties for driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Effects of alcohol, drugs and medication on your driving skills.
- Facts about seat belt safety.
- Other key traffic safety issues.

You will find all the information that you need to know and sample test questions in the Study Guide part of this Handbook. Learn the information in detail. On the test, you will be asked to answer "True" or "False" to information given in this section.

For the part of the exam that will test your judgement as a driver about safe versus unsafe driving decisions, you will need to study examples of "accident situations" in the Study Guide.

**Keep in mind:**

- Accidents don't "Just Happen."
- Every driver makes choices.
- Every driver is responsible for his or her decisions.

The "accident situations" in the Study Guide are taken from reports of real accidents. Drivers made unsafe choices. Different choices might have saved people from injury, death, or property loss. Different choices might also save drivers from high insurance rates and the cost of high repair bills.

In each example on an "accident situation, " you will see a number of diagrams. They will show traffic conditions, vehicle movements, and traffic signs and signals in the area of the accident. A description of what happened is under each diagram. Look at all of the diagrams and read all of the descriptions in each "accident situation."

**Use your judgment to decide:**

- (1) How did each driver act unsafely?
- (2) Where was the “critical decision point” before each unsafe act?
- (3) What other choices could each driver have made at that “critical decision point?”

Then answer “True” or “False” to statements about the drivers’ decisions, actions, and responsibilities for causing the accident. The example questions in the Study Guide will be similar to—but not exactly the same as—the questions on the test.

The questions about safe driving laws, procedures and practices will count for about 1/3 of the total score. The “accident situations” part of the test which shows your ability to recognize unsafe driver decisions will count for about 2/3 of the total score. There will be 20 questions on the examination. If you fail the exam, you must retake it and pass it to keep your driver’s license. You may not take the exam again on the same day.

PennDOT wants you to succeed on this test. Passing this test will show that you know the difference between safe and unsafe driving decisions. We hope this will influence you to make changes in the way you drive.

If you are convicted of any new violations, you can be called in for a HEARING, and PennDOT, has the authority to suspend your license. If you are in an accident, the outcome can be more serious. You can avoid these problems. If you study the material in the Guide and follow the procedures in the last part of the Handbook, you should pass this exam. Each time you get behind the wheel make decisions for safe driving. DRIVE SMART!

# Study Guide and Sample Test Items

The Study Guide includes sample test items with correct answers and explanations to make sure you understand each example. This section is in two parts. Part 1 covers Pennsylvania's safe driving laws and practices. Part 2 covers accident situations showing unsafe drivers' decisions.

## **Part 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pennsylvania Safe Driving Laws & Practices**

Since you are a licensed driver, we believe you know how to handle an automobile, and how to recognize and understand the traffic signs and signals. Therefore, this exam does not test your knowledge of the "rules of the road." It tests your knowledge about how to drive safely and the penalties for any further traffic violations.

### **Your Driving Record and the Point System**

You are required to take this exam because of the number of points on your driving record. The Department of Transportation keeps a driving record for every licensed driver in Pennsylvania. The Bureau of Driver Licensing adds points to your driving record whenever you are found guilty of certain traffic (moving) violations. The number of points you receive depends upon the seriousness of the violation. Most moving violations carry a penalty of three (3) points. These include offenses such as:

- (1) Failure to stop for a stop sign or a red light.
- (2) Failure to yield.
- (3) Following too closely.
- (4) Improper backing or passing.

#### **Some exceptions include:**

- (1) Failure to stop for a school bus with red lights flashing (5 points and a 60-day suspension).
- (2) Leaving the scene of an accident involving property damage only (4 points).
- (3) Exceeding maximum speed limits by 16-25 mph (4 points).
- (4) Exceeding the maximum speed limits by 26 mph or more (5 points).

For speeding, the faster you go also means you'll pay more in fines and costs. For example, if you are caught speeding 20 mph over the limit on a 55 mph highway, you will have to pay at least \$130. If you speed 30 mph over the limit, you will pay \$160 or more in a construction zone. These fines for speeding would double and in an active work zone the license will also be suspended for 15 days. Also, when accidents occur, fatalities are four times more likely when speeding is involved.

Whenever points are added to your driving record, PennDOT will notify you by sending a letter. The first time the total number of points on your record adds up to 6 or more, you are required to pass this examination to keep your driver's license. If you receive any more points you can be called in for a Hearing and your license can be suspended. However, if you drive safely for 12 months in a row without any violations, license suspension or revocation, PennDOT will remove 3 points from your record each year.

If your driving record shows 6 or more points repeatedly, or if you are guilty of other, more serious traffic violations, you may face lengthy suspension or revocation of your driver's license. When your driving record reaches 11 or more points, your driver's license will automatically be suspended. Also, there are certain unsafe driving practices that will result in the automatic suspension or revocation of your license. This will occur following conviction for any one of the following violations:

- Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Any felony involving a vehicle
- Homicide by vehicle
- Racing on highways
- Driving without lights to avoid identification
- Fleeing from a police officer
- Driving when your license is already suspended or revoked
- A second or any additional offense of driving without a valid license
- Failure to stop when you are driving a vehicle involved in an accident (hit & run)
- Failure to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights

## **Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs**

Choosing to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is the most unsafe driving decision you can make. In Pennsylvania alone, over 20,000 people each year are injured, crippled, or killed by drinking drivers. Almost half of all fatal accidents involve a drinking driver.

Alcohol does two things to make driving dangerous. First, it acts as a depressant to your brain and central nervous system. This means that it slows your thinking, your judgment, and your reactions. At the same time alcohol takes away your driving skills, it also makes you feel more confident. Drinking drivers are often out of control and don't even know it.

Alcohol gradually gets absorbed into your system, with a certain amount ending up in your blood. It is the blood alcohol content level (BAC) that determines when a person is legally too drunk to drive. In Pennsylvania, as in most other states, a BAC of .08% or greater is beyond the legal limit.

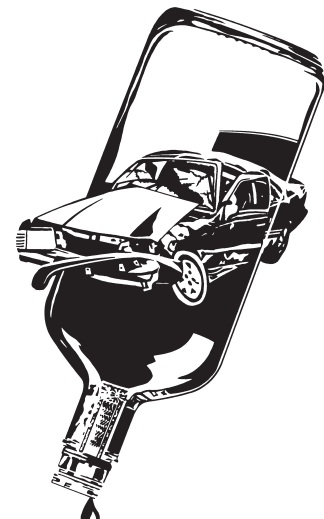
The amount of alcohol it takes to reach the .08% limit depends on your body weight and how quickly you drink. Generally if you have one drink per hour, you are not likely to become legally too drunk to drive. One drink can be either a shot of hard liquor or a cocktail, a 4 oz. glass of wine, or a 12 oz. beer. Eating is a good idea because it slows down the rate of absorption of alcohol into your system. It does not mean that you won't get too drunk to drive. The effect of the alcohol is the same as if you didn't eat. You just won't feel it as fast.

Also, .08% BAC is a legal limit only. Your driving will be affected before you've had this much to drink. Blood alcohol levels well below the legal limit for driving can still damage your reflexes and impair your judgment to a dangerous degree. In fact, if your BAC is only half the legal limit, you are 2 to 7 times more likely to have an accident than if you have no alcohol in your blood. As alcohol builds up in your blood, your driving errors will increase, starting with your very first drink.

Alcohol is by far the biggest problem in terms of impaired driving abilities. But other common drugs will also affect vision, memory, coordination and reflexes. This includes both prescription and non-prescription medications. Legal, over-the-counter drugs for cold symptoms can make you lose concentration and become too drowsy to drive. Amphetamines ("speed") can increase your alertness for awhile, but will impair your driving ability as the drug wears off. Barbiturates, or "downers" will affect your driving about the same way as alcohol. Tranquilizers may cause dizziness or drowsiness, and are dangerous to drivers when mixed with alcohol. One tranquilizer with one drink of alcohol results in the same degree of impairment as four drinks.

The wide variety of illegal drugs available on the street today can destroy your driving skills. A driver who gets high on coke or pot (cocaine or marijuana), angel dust (PCP) or psychedelics (LSD) cannot make good judgments and responses while driving. Again, the most dangerous condition results from driving while under the influence of any of these drugs and alcohol. This combination is deadly.

Before driving, people using drugs (even if prescribed by a doctor) should carefully read the label or ask a pharmacist about the effects on driving.



**Don't  
Drink & Drive**

## **Pennsylvania's Implied Consent Law**

By law when you receive a license to drive in Pennsylvania, you agree to take chemical tests of your blood, breath, or urine if the police arrest you for driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you refuse to take a test of this kind, your license will be automatically suspended for one year. Even if you are later found not guilty of driving while under the influence, you will still lose your license if you refuse to submit to chemical testing when arrested.

*As a driver, it is very important that you remember this law.*

## **Penalties for Driving While Under the Influence**

There are severe penalties for driving while under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or drugs in Pennsylvania. **A FIRST conviction for driving with a blood content of .08% or higher will result in:**

- A minimum jail term of two days and a maximum term of two years
- A minimum fine of \$300 and a maximum fine of \$5,000
- Automatic suspension of your license for one year
- Completion requirement of *Alcohol Highway Safety School*, at your own expense

If you become a repeat DUI offender in Pennsylvania, you will receive a mandatory minimum jail sentence of 30 days for a second conviction, 90 days for a third conviction, and one year for any additional convictions. And with only one offense you can have a criminal record that follows you for the rest of your life—when you apply for jobs, try to get loans, etc.

## **What Can You Do When it Counts?**

Obviously, if you've had too much to drink, don't drive. And if you see others who have had too much to drink, there are ways you can encourage them not to drive. You can try to suggest alternatives—call a cab, or find a nondrinker to drive the drinker home. Try to stall by getting the drinker to have something to eat, or getting involved in something else besides driving right then—this will allow a little time for the effects of the alcohol to wear off. But remember that a person can only “burn off” about one ounce (one drink) of alcohol per hour. Most important: try to get the drinker to stop drinking.

Dealing with someone who is alcohol-impaired is not easy. When you are trying to discourage someone who has been drinking from driving, it is not a good idea to accuse him or her of being drunk. Instead, try to convince the drinker that he's too smart to “take a chance.” You might say that, “Even though you're able to drive, you could get pulled over for anything, and once the police smelled the alcohol on your breath you would be out of luck. You would go to jail. You would have to pay a lot of money in fines. You would lose your license. It's not worth it.”

You can also appeal to other things besides a person's fear of the penalties for DUI. Pointing out how guilty they would feel if they hit or killed someone, especially a child, can encourage some drinkers to wait and sober up before driving. The embarrassment of having it become known by someone's family, or co-workers, that they have been caught and sent to jail for driving under the influence may be enough to make a drinker decide not to drive. Or the threat of financial ruin—“You hit somebody, you get sued, and you're wiped out. You'll pay for it for the rest of your life!”

Whatever works, if it works, is worth it to stop a drinker from driving. And if you know ahead of time that you are going to do some serious partying, find somebody to be a “designated driver” who will stay sober and give you and the rest of the group a ride home. Tough laws and strict enforcement can only do so much to keep drinking drivers off the road. Mostly, it is up to you. It is absolutely the most critical safe driving decision you can make. . **Don't drink and drive.**

## **Facts about Seat Belt Use for Adults and Children**

There are lots of good reasons to always wear your seat belt when you drive or ride as a passenger. First of all, IT'S THE LAW in Pennsylvania. In addition to requiring the use of seat belts for you, as an adult, the Pennsylvania Child Passenger Protection Act requires that:

- Children under the age of four (4) years must be buckled into an approved child car safety seat no matter where they ride in the car, front or back.
- Children ages 4 through and including 7 are required to be in an approved booster seat no matter where they ride in the car.
- Drivers are responsible for securing children into a child car safety seat.

There are actually two collisions in every automobile accident. When your car crashes into something, it gets twisted, bent, or buckled with the force of the collision, then comes to a stop. In the second collision the force of the crash is applied to you, inside your car. And if you're not wearing seat belts, it's you that gets your face smashed against the windshield or dashboard, and your body speared on the steering column.

Seat belts prevent this "Second Collision" by holding you in place against the force of the crash, and preventing contact with either the car's interior or with other passengers. You might think you could use your arms to brace yourself in a collision, and keep from hitting one of the surfaces inside your car. You are wrong. Your body is moving with several tons of force even in a low-speed crash, which is enough to shatter anybody's arms. That's if you could get them up in time. You have only 1/50 of a second to stop your body after your car crashed into something, to avoid injury. There is no way you can react that fast, but seat belts do the job.

The facts from analyzing traffic statistics are that cars crashing as slow as 10 to 15 mph can kill unbelted drivers and passengers. But even at high speeds, drivers and passengers who are protected by seat belts usually survive car crashes, often without serious injury.

**A lot of UNTRUE statements are often made about seat belts. Some of the most common ones are:**

- **"Seatbelts can cause injuries in accidents."** Yes, there are reports of people being injured by their seat belts. But in these cases either the belts were not fastened correctly, or the people would have been dead—not just injured—if they hadn't been wearing seat belts. Also, when belt injuries occur it is to a larger and stronger part of the body—usually the chest—which is much better able to withstand the force of a crash than, for example, your head.
- **"In many kinds of accidents it's better to be thrown clear of the car."** You are roughly 25 times more likely to be fatally injured if you are thrown from your car, in all kinds of crashes. The pavement is hard, there are lots of lethal objects to get thrown into or to hit while you are scraping along the ground, and you've got a good chance of being crushed by another vehicle if you're thrown out of your car. Even if your car catches fire or goes under water—which together make up less than one-half of one percent of all injury-producing accidents—you're better off if you are wearing your seat belt. It will keep you from hitting your head and losing consciousness, making it possible for you to escape after your car is at rest.

- **“I don’t really need my seat belt since I have a new car with air bags.”** While air bags alone can reduce your chances of being killed in a frontal collision by 20 to 40 percent, air bags and seat belts in combination make you 45 to 55 percent safer. And air bags provide virtually no protection in rear-end collisions, or if someone runs a stop sign or red light and crashes into you from the side, or if your car rolls over in a crash.
- **“I can protect my baby best by holding him next to me.”** In fact, a baby that weighs only 12 pounds becomes a human projectile moving with a force of 120 pounds in a crash at only 10 mph. You can’t possibly hold on. Use a child safety seat as the law requires. You’d never forgive yourself.

On this final point, you must keep in mind that it is not enough just to use an approved infant, toddler, or child safety seat...you must use it properly for it to provide the protection it was designed for. Obviously, you should carefully follow the manufacturer’s instructions for correct installation and use of a particular safety seat. Your automobile may even need an additional clip or buckle to keep the safety seat securely in the automobile. Dealers usually will provide the additional parts for free, but you have to ask for them. The only way to know if your automobile needs anything to help secure the child safety seat is to read your auto’s manual.

### **More generally, you should remember:**

- Infants face backward
- Toddlers face forward
- The center rear seat is the safest place in the car for your child in the safety seat
- The cars seat belt should always be used to anchor the safety seat
- The safety seats harness should fit snugly  
(allow only two finger widths of slack) around your child

**AND...use your own seat belts, always.  
Your children will follow your example.**

## **Sample Test Items (PART 1)**

Your knowledge of the material included in Part 1 of the Study Guide will be tested using TRUE/FALSE questions. Statements will be made about Pennsylvania safe driving laws and practices. For each statement, you must check either TRUE or FALSE. If you do not check either TRUE or FALSE, that item will be marked wrong.

**EXAMPLE #1** Your driver's license will be automatically suspended or revoked after more than one conviction for any of the following violations: failure to yield to pedestrians in a school zone; racing on highways; operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs; driving when your license is already suspended or revoked.

TRUE      FALSE

**Explanation:** This statement is *FALSE* for two reasons. First, in the Study Guide failure to yield to pedestrians in a school zone is not on the list of violations which result in automatic license suspension or revocation. Second, only one conviction is required from the list of violations to cause you to lose your license.

**EXAMPLE #2** In Pennsylvania, your license will be automatically suspended for one month if you are arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and you refuse to take a chemical test of your blood, breath, or urine, unless you are later found not guilty of the offense.

TRUE      FALSE

**Explanation:** This statement is *FALSE*. It refers to the "Implied Consent Law" in Pennsylvania. This law provides for automatic license suspension for DUI test refusal even if you are later found not guilty. Also, the term for violating this law is one year, not one month.

**EXAMPLE #3** Pennsylvania law required all adult drivers and front seat passengers to wear seat belts and all children under four (4) years of age must be buckled into approved infant or child safety seats, no matter where they ride in the vehicle.

TRUE      FALSE

**Explanation:** This statement is *TRUE*. It is the law in Pennsylvania that all adults, whether drivers or front seat passengers, must wear seat belts. Also, the statement about children under four (4) years of age is true under the Pennsylvania Child Passenger Protection Act. (See the Study Guide)

The sample items shown test your knowledge of the three major topics in Part 1 of the Study Guide: (1) penalties for unsafe driving, (2) alcohol and drugs, and (3) seat belts. The exam will also include questions from all three of these areas.

When taking the exam, read each statement carefully. If there is anything untrue in the statement, then the entire statement is FALSE. Remember, all material in Part 1 of the Study Guide can and will be used by PennDOT to develop test items for the exam.

## Part 2: --- **Avoiding Accidents Through Safe Driving Decisions**

The number one traffic safety goal is to reduce accidents on Pennsylvania's streets and highways. This section of the Handbook explains how you can reduce the chances of an accident by "driving smart." You can train yourself to make safe driving decisions whenever you face a possible traffic conflict. It is a fact that drivers with more violations are more likely to have an accident than drivers with fewer violations.

The possibility of conflict with other vehicles is a fact of driving. This is true in the city, the suburbs, and even on country roads. The chances of an accident go up as the amount of traffic increases.

The chances of an accident also go up at intersections, and at any other location where traffic from two or more directions passes through the same point on the road. These locations include any point where one "stream" of traffic merges with another, for example where a ramp enters a highway or where two lanes of traffic narrows to only one lane.

Certain kinds of movement with your car, such as passing on a two-lane highway or driving in the center (left turn) lane on a major road, raise the possibility of traffic conflicts. If you are "driving smart" you will be able to recognize ahead of time when and where there is an increasing chance of a conflict with other cars.

Knowing situations where the likelihood of an accident increases is one big part of protecting yourself while driving. But that is not enough. What happens in those high-risk situations depends upon the decisions you make from moment to moment behind the wheel. Every driver is in control of the situation to some degree. Every accident you become involved in, even if you're not "at fault," is to some degree the result of your driving decisions. Even in the most dangerous situations, there is almost always a safe driving decision that allows you to avoid an accident.

But that is still not enough. You must be able to make the right decision at the right time. There is a "critical decision point" in every accident situation. After this point you will be out of luck no matter how you react. So, to "drive smart" you really have to be able to do three things:

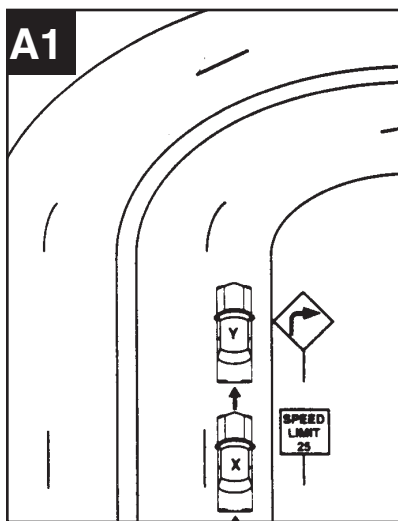
- (1) Recognize situations where the chances of traffic conflicts, and therefore accidents, are high.
- (2) See the chances for conflicts far enough ahead of time so that you are at least partly in control of what happens.
- (3) Make safe driving decisions that will lower the chance of conflict between you and other drivers.

## Sample Test Items (PART 2)

The material and examples in this section, based upon real accident reports, show how unsafe decisions can lead to traffic conflicts. They explain how safer decisions in these situations might have reduced the likelihood of conflict and probably would have avoided the accident. While you are studying this material, remember that on the exam you will be asked TRUE/FALSE questions like those below. To answer correctly you must think about each accident in terms of the decisions of the drivers involved, and be able to explain whether or not each driver “drove smart” according to the three things listed on the previous page.

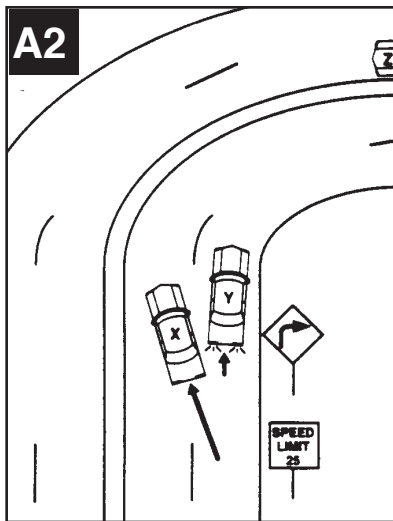
### Example A

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams A1, A2 and A3.



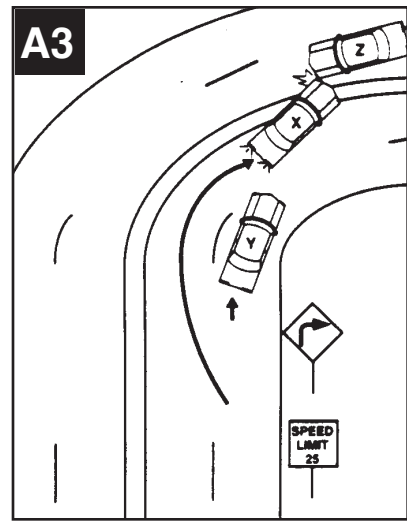
#### In the first diagram:

Driver X is following closely behind Driver Y, as both cars come to a sharp curve to the right. The road has four lanes, two in each direction.



#### A second later:

Driver Y puts on the brakes just before entering the curve.  
Driver X decides to pass and speeds up into the left lane around Driver Y.  
Driver Z starts around the curve from the opposite direction.



#### The accident occurs when:

Driver Y continues slowly through the curve.  
Driver X puts on the brakes but can't stop from drifting across the center of the road into the path of Driver Z.  
A crash occurs as Driver Z fails to avoid Driver X.

Answer the following question **as if you are Driver Y**.

**Question:** You knew that Driver X was following close behind you. By putting your brakes on before you entered the curve, you forced Driver X into a decision to swing out around you into the left lane. Therefore you are partly responsible for the accident shown here.

- TRUE       FALSE

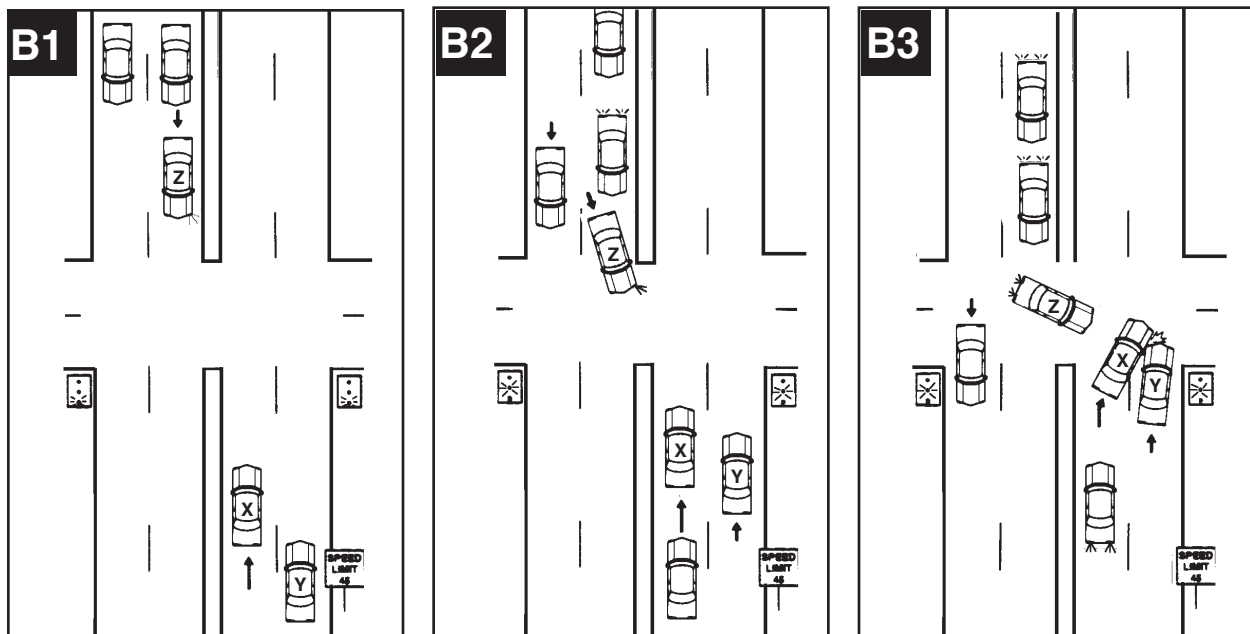
**The answer to Example A is FALSE.** Slowing your speed before entering a sharp curve is a safe driving practice. This is taught in the Pennsylvania Driver's Manual for beginning drivers. If you wait to put on your brakes until you are in the middle of the curve, you will have less control of your car. The most important point in answering this question, however, is that a driver cannot be forced into an unsafe driving decision by someone else. In this situation, Driver X chose to speed up and pass at the beginning of the curve, then lost control and veered into the oncoming lane of traffic. Driver X is fully responsible for this decision and you, as Driver Y, cannot be held partially at fault for this accident.

### Example B

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams B1, B2 and B3.  
Answer the following question **as if you are Driver X.**

**Question:** The "critical decision point" for your choice to go through the intersection on the yellow light was before the time when Car Z actually started to turn in front of you.

- TRUE     FALSE



#### In the first diagram:

Driver X sees a green light ahead while coming to an intersection on a four-lane city street.

Driver Y is in the right lane, next to and a little behind Driver X.

Driver Z is approaching the intersection from the opposite direction and is signalling to turn left.

#### After another second or two:

Driver Z has just entered the intersection as the light turns yellow.

Driver X is about to enter the intersection, hurrying to get through before the light turns red.

Driver Y keeps pace with Driver X, heading toward the intersection.

#### The accident occurs when:

Driver Z abruptly comes to a stop sticking part way into the path of Car X.

Driver X swerves to the right to avoid Car Z, still hurrying to get through on the yellow light.

Driver Y cannot react fast enough to keep from crashing into the side of Car X.

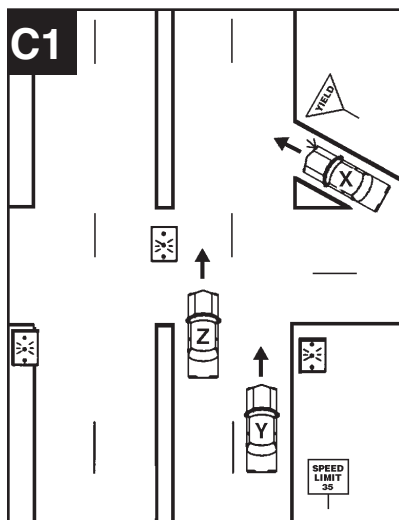
**The answer to Example B is TRUE.** When you first saw the light turn yellow, you had not yet entered the intersection. Your choices were to “go for it” or to slow down and try to stop. This decision should have considered both the movement of Car Z and the fact that Car Y in the lane next to you had you “boxed in.” There would be no room to maneuver if a conflict developed with Car Z. In this situation, “driving smart” means that you recognize at least two things that increase the chances of an accident. First, both you and Driver Z need to pass through the same point to get through the intersection before the light turns red. Second, the signal turning from green to yellow may lead Driver Z to assume you will stop. At this point he is more likely to make his turn, and less likely to yield to you. This does not excuse the unsafe decision of Driver Z to turn across your path, but it shows how your decision could have helped avoid this accident.

### Example C

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams C1, C2 and C3.  
Answer the following question **as if you are Driver X.**

**Question:** Once you saw the light turn yellow, with Car Y still on the other side of the intersection, it was a good decision to go ahead with your turn onto the main street.

- TRUE       FALSE

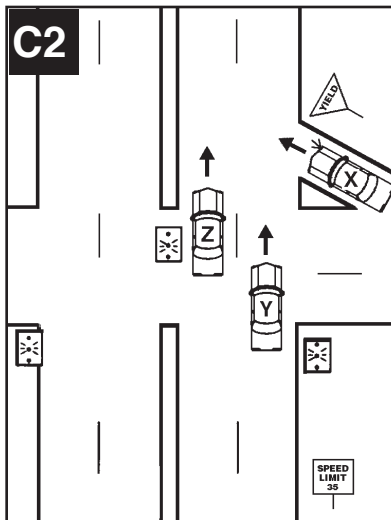


**In the first diagram:**

Driver X is signalling to turn right from a small street, and sees the traffic light on the main street turn yellow.

Driver Y is travelling on the main street and has almost reached the intersection when the light turns yellow.

Driver Z is travelling on the main street and is part way through the intersection when the light turns yellow.

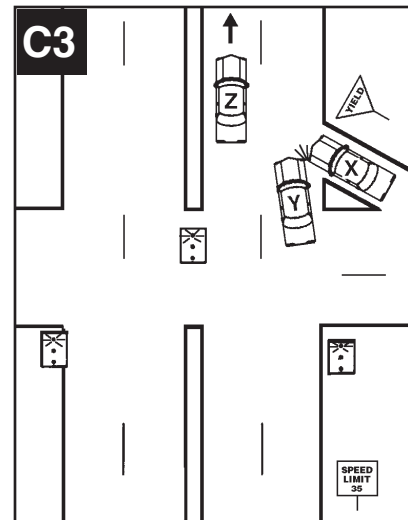


**In the next instant:**

Driver Z goes through the intersection on the yellow light.

Driver Y starts across the intersection hurrying to get through on the yellow light.

Driver X has just barely started to turn onto the main street, then sees that Driver Y is not stopping at the intersection.



**The accident occurs when:**

Driver Z easily makes it through the intersection by the time the light turns red. He continues ahead in the left lane of the main street without slowing down.

Driver X brakes hard but cannot stop before skidding into the path of Car Y.

Driver Y tries to swerve into the left lane as soon as Car Z has gone by, but cannot avoid hitting the corner of Car X.

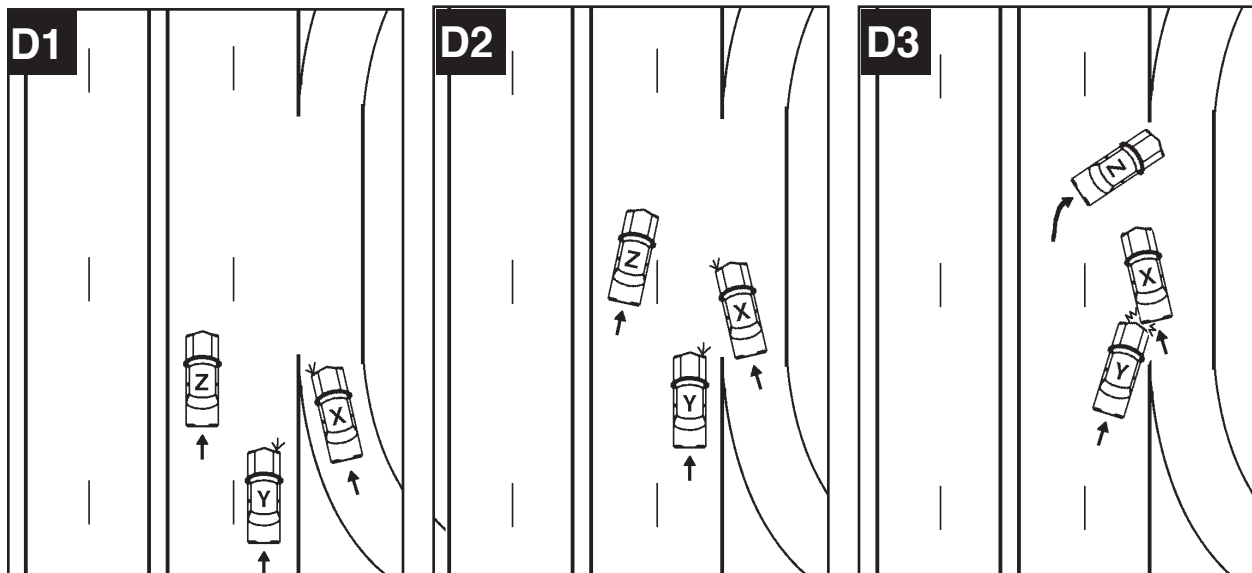
**The answer to Example C is FALSE.** As in Example B, a decision to drive through a point of conflict assuming that “the other guy” will stop or slow down is not a safe driving decision. Your decision to make the turn as shown should consider that Driver Y, if she chose to hurry through the intersection on the yellow light, would have no room to avoid a crash with your car because of Car Z in the next lane. In this case, “driving smart” means that before you decide to turn onto the main street, remember that you do not know what Driver Y will do and that there is no room for Driver Y to maneuver the car. These facts increase the chance of a traffic conflict, leading to an accident.

### Example D

Look at the accident shown below in Diagrams D1, D2 and D3.  
Answer the following question **as if you are Driver Z**.

**Question:** Your decision to pass in front of Drivers X and Y to exit the freeway was responsible for the most unsafe act in this accident situation.

- TRUE     FALSE



**In the first diagram:**

Driver X is speeding up on an entrance ramp to the freeway, with his left turn signal flashing.  
Driver Y is travelling in the right lane of the freeway, with his right turn signal flashing.  
Driver Z is traveling in the left lane of the freeway.

**Seconds later:**

Driver X is about to enter the freeway.  
Driver Y is just beginning to turn toward the exit ramp.  
Driver Z begins a sharp turn from the left lane toward the exit ramp.

**The accident occurs when:**

Driver Z cuts in front of Driver X to exit the freeway.  
Driver X puts the brakes on hard to keep from hitting Driver Z.  
Driver Y crashes into the rear of Driver X.

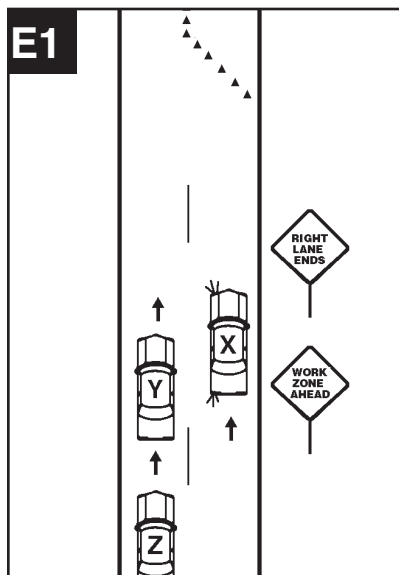
**The answer to Example D is TRUE** Even though you escaped injury or damage to your car, your decision added the likelihood of an accident by adding an extra conflict in an already dangerous situation. There was already a conflict between Cars X and Y. Each driver had to weave through the path of the other. You should have considered the chance of a conflict with Driver X and the likelihood of an accident between Cars X and Y before you decided to turn across the path of Driver X. This example stresses the need to recognize possible traffic conflicts with any vehicles, not just your own, in time to make safe driving decisions. In this accident, you (Driver Z) managed to escape. The next time this situation occurs, it is just as likely that Driver X will decide to speed up to avoid Driver Y, and end up crashing into your car.

### Example E

Look at the accident shown below in Diagrams E1, E2 and E3.  
Answer the following question **as if you are Driver Y**.

**Question:** Considering the fact that Car Z was following right on your bumper, the safest driving decision you could make in this situation was to maintain your speed and cut off Driver X as he tried to force his way in front of you.

TRUE     FALSE

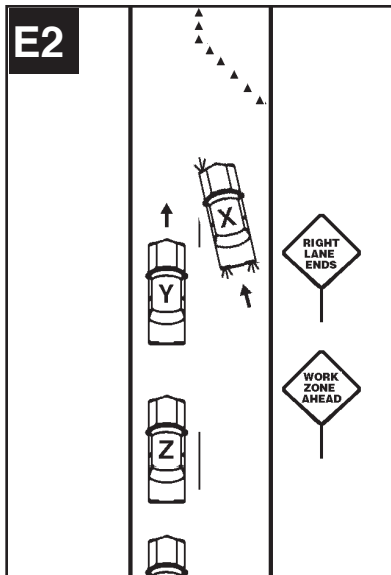


**In the first diagram:**

Driver X is travelling in the right lane of a busy street. He signals to change lanes and move in front of Driver Y, after seeing that the right lane is closed in a work zone ahead.

Driver Y is travelling in the left lane more or less even with Driver X.

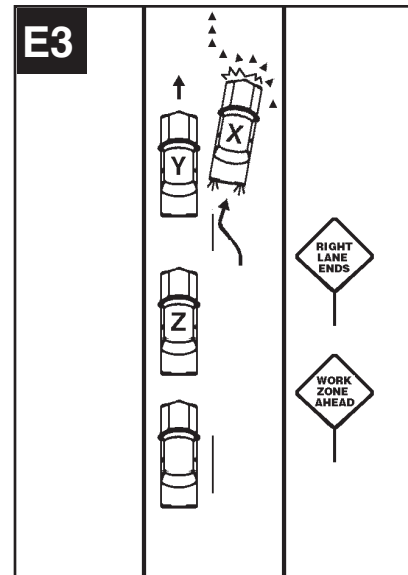
Driver Z is following closely behind Driver Y.



**A moment later:**

Driver X turns slightly toward the left lane, then puts on the brakes hard, seeing that Driver Y is not going to slow down.

Driver Y maintains speed as the road narrows, with Driver Z staying close behind.



**The accident occurs when:**

Drivers Y and Z continue in the left lane with almost no gap between them.

Driver X swerves back to the right and skids into the row of traffic cones set up to mark the lane closure.

**The answer to Example E is FALSE.** Any choice you make that increases the likelihood of conflict with another driver—even if he chooses to drive unsafely—is not a safe driving decision.

## **Examples F, G and H**

The examples on the following pages are used to help explain PennDOT's concern that you "drive smart" and make the "right decision at the right time." When studying these accident situations, you may find it helpful to put yourself in the position of every driver of the cars marked X, Y and Z, not just the ones used in Examples A-E.

### **Ask yourself:**

- What should each driver have recognized in each situation that increased the chances of traffic conflicts?
- When should he or she have seen the possible conflict (where was the "critical decision point")?
- What safe driving decision(s) could each driver have made to reduce the likelihood of an accident?

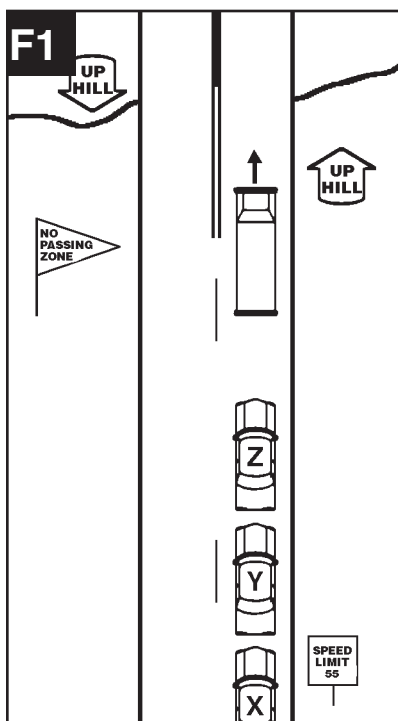
Three more accident situations are shown in Diagrams F, G and H. There are no example questions that go with these diagrams. Diagrams F-H are included in the Study Guide to give you more practice in recognizing how to avoid accidents through safe driving decisions.

## Example F

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams F1, F2 and F3.  
Consider the following questions:

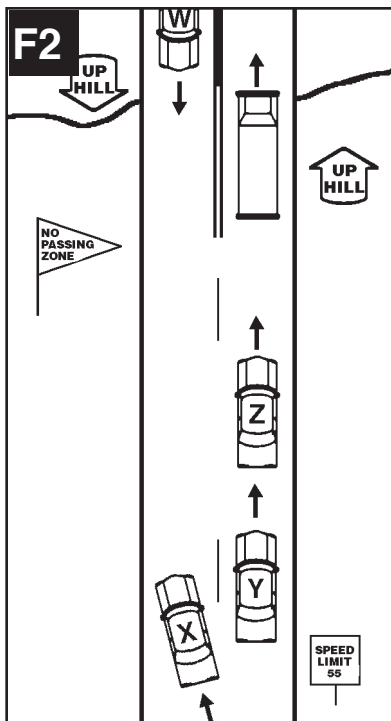
### Ask yourself:

- What should each driver have recognized in each situation that increased the chances of traffic conflicts?
- When should he or she have seen the possible conflict (where was the “critical decision point”)?
- What safe driving decision(s) could each driver have made to reduce the likelihood of an accident?



#### In the first diagram:

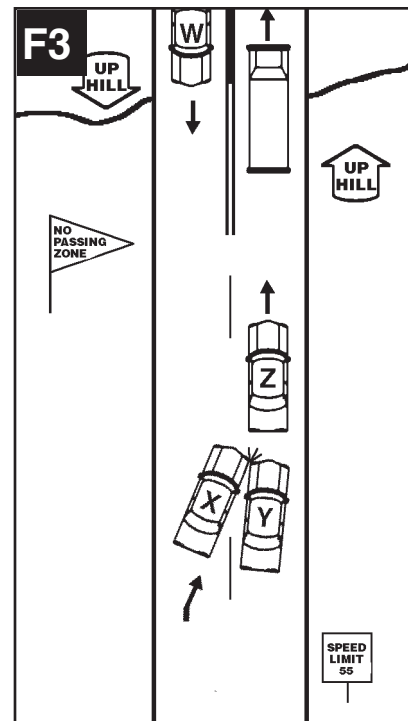
Drivers X, Y and Z are in a line following a truck uphill on a two-lane highway.



#### In the next instant:

Driver X decides to try to get around Cars Y and Z before the no passing zone at the top of the hill.

Drivers Y and Z keep their distance behind the truck, with Driver Y following closely behind Car Z.



#### The accident occurs when:

Car W appears over the top of the hill.

The truck has slowed down a lot by the time it reaches the top of the hill.

Drivers Y and Z have narrowed the gap behind the truck, with Driver Y right on the bumper of Car Z.

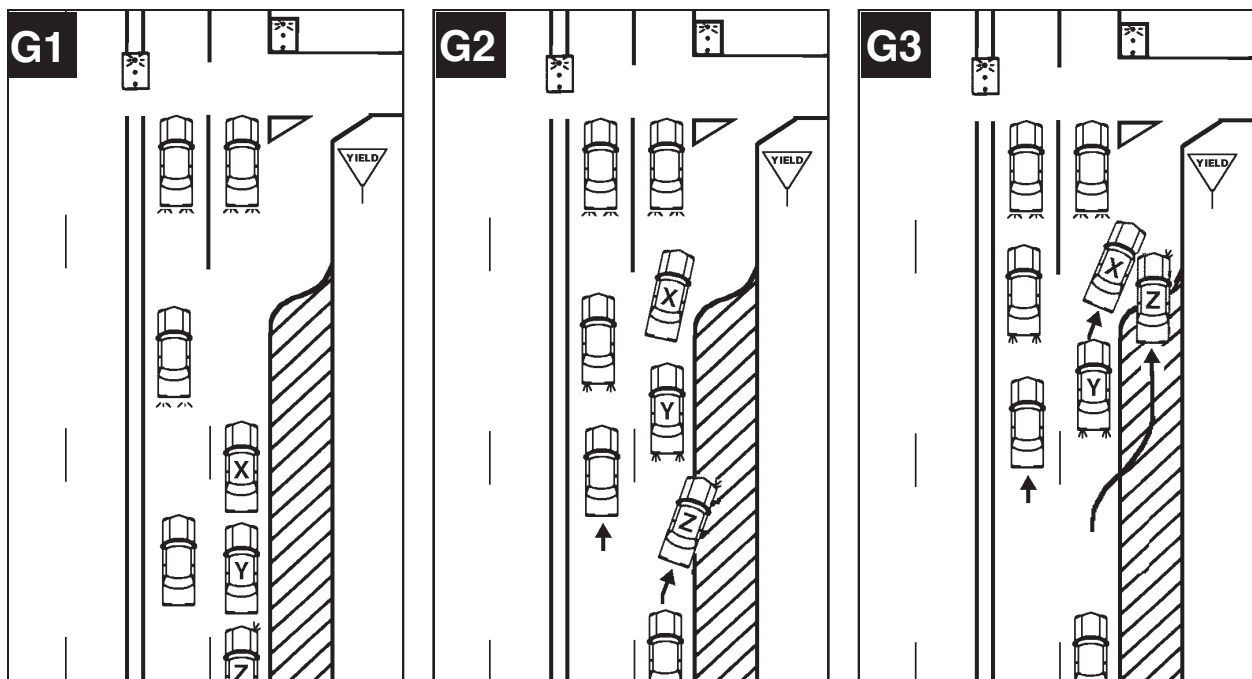
Driver X reacts to Car W by trying to force his way back into his own lane, crashing into Car Y.

## Example G

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams G1, G2 and G3.  
Consider the following questions:

### Ask yourself:

- What should each driver have recognized in each situation that increased the chances of traffic conflicts?
- When should he or she have seen the possible conflict (where was the “critical decision point”)?
- What safe driving decision(s) could each driver have made to reduce the likelihood of an accident?



#### In the first diagram:

Driver X is slowing down before reaching the red light at the intersection.

Driver Y is following closely behind Driver X.

Driver Z is closely following Driver Y, and is signalling to make a right turn at the intersection.

#### A couple of seconds later:

Driver X, without signalling, begins to turn slightly to the right, still coasting toward the intersection. Driver Y puts on the brakes, preparing to stop for the red light.

Driver Z, speeds up onto the right shoulder of the road, heading toward the turn lane at the corner.

#### The accident occurs when:

Driver X swings into the right turn lane at the corner without seeing Car Z.

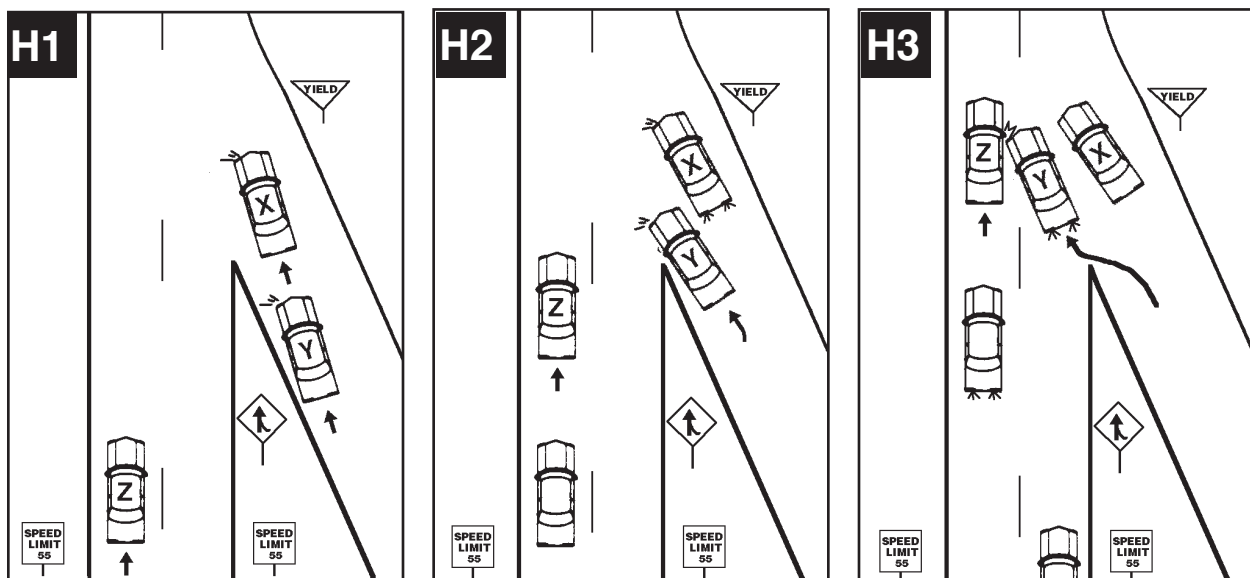
Driver Z puts the brakes on hard but cannot avoid crashing into the side of Car X.

## Example H

Look at the accident shown in Diagrams H1, H2 and H3.  
Consider the following questions:

### Ask yourself:

- What should each driver have recognized in each situation that increased the chances of traffic conflicts?
- When should he or she have seen the possible conflict (where was the “critical decision point”)?
- What safe driving decision(s) could each driver have made to reduce the likelihood of an accident?



### In the first diagram:

Driver X is travelling on a small road approaching the merge point with traffic on a main highway,

Driver Y is following closely behind Driver X.

Both Drivers X and Y are signalling their intentions to turn left onto the main highway.

Driver Z is traveling in the outside (left) lane of the highway.

### In the next instant:

Driver X puts on the brakes and stops before moving onto the highway.

Driver Y sees Driver X stop for no obvious reason and decides to try to squeeze by into the clear (right) lane of the highway.

Driver Z continues to approach in the left lane traveling at high speed.

### The accident occurs when:

Driver X decides to go ahead and enter the highway. He speeds up into the right lane.

Driver Y is forced out of the right lane. He puts on the brakes, but can't keep from scraping the side of Car Z as it passes by on the left.

# General Examination Information

Please follow the direction in this section of the Handbook. They tell how to schedule your appointment to take the exam, what to do when you get to your exam location, and how to find out if you passed or failed.

## **How to Make Your Examination Appointment**

**This exam is given by appointment only. It is your responsibility to schedule and pass the exam within 30 days of the mail date on the notification letter. If you don't do this, your license will be suspended.**

**Do not call any examination sites.**

When you schedule your exam appointment, you should tell PennDOT of any special needs you have by calling 1-800-932-4600. If you are handicapped, PennDOT will ensure proper access to an examination location. If you cannot understand English well, you may ask for a Spanish version of the exam. If you cannot read, you may ask for a spoken version (on tape), either in English or in Spanish.

**You can schedule your driving test online at: [www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us)**

**If you show up at an exam location without an appointment, or show up at the wrong time, you will not be admitted to take the examination.**

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

In order to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, the following services are available to people who want to take the special point examination and have a hearing or reading impairment.

### INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED

The Department's Bureau of Driver Licensing will provide an interpreter upon request for individuals who are hearing impaired and communicate through the use of sign language and want to take the special point exam. In order for an interpreter to be present when you take the exam, you must take the following steps:

1. For the days and hours of operation at a Driver License Center nearest you, to download the most current forms, publications, and fact sheets or to access PennDOT's online services, including scheduling your On-the-Road Skills Test, visit PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services Web site at [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us) or call PennDOT's Customer Call Center at 1-800-423-5542 (in state) or 1-717-412-5300 (out-of-state).
2. When making your appointment, you should indicate if there is a type of sign language you prefer to use. The types available are: a. American Sign Language (ASL), b. Pidgin Sign Language (PSE), c. Signed Exact English (SEE), or d. An oral interpreter (a person who reads lips).

The Department will do its best to secure a person who signs in your preference.

3. Make your initial contact with the Department at least two (2) weeks prior to the time you want to take the exam. This will give the Department time to hire an interpreter.
4. If an emergency arises and you are unable to keep the appointment, please call the Department as soon as possible to cancel.

## **Procedures for Taking the Examination**

You should arrive at your exam location 15 minutes early. A PennDOT Driver Safety Examiner will give the exam. To get into the room where the exam is given, you must show the Driver Safety Examiner the following:

- Your notification Letter (OFFICIAL NOTICE) and/or
- Your valid Driver's License.

If you do not have a valid Pennsylvania Driver's License, you may bring other forms of identification including:

- Other photo I.D. card or photo welfare card
- Military, bank, employee, or school photo identification, or out-of-state license
- Passport, citizenship or naturalization papers, or weapons permit
- Medicare card, voter's registration, vehicle registration, Pennsylvania Learner's Permit or Temporary Driver's License

No one will be admitted to the examination room after testing has begun. No one under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be admitted to the room.

### **NO SPOUSES, CHILDREN, OR GUESTS WILL BE ADMITTED TO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.**

All exam materials will be provided by PennDOT, including examination booklets, answer sheets, and pencils. The exam booklets contain 20 questions. **Do not write anything in the booklets.** Do not bring this Handbook, any other book or papers, or anything to eat or drink to your exam location. There will be NO SMOKING at the exam location.

You may take up to 45 minutes to finish the exam. During the exam, no talking is permitted. If the Driver Safety Examiner feels that you are acting in a disruptive way, or that you are cheating, you will fail the exam and must leave immediately. Also, you may not leave the room while taking the exam. **After finishing, you must return your answer sheet and examination booklet to the Driver Safety Examiner.**

## **Scoring of Examination Results**

The PennDOT Driver Safety Examiner who gives the exam will score it for you after you finish. If you fail, you must reschedule your exam by following the same instructions in the LOCATION LIST INSERT. You are still responsible for passing the exam within 30 days of the mail date of your notification letter, or your license will be suspended. You may not take the exam again on the same day.

**Study this Handbook carefully. Remember, when you pass the exam within 30 days, two points will be removed from your driving record.**