

THE COMMUNIQUE

Right-of-Way

Right-of-way is probably one of the most misunderstood of all driving rules. It simply refers to a motorist's right to cross an intersection ahead of another vehicle. This rule was established to determine the order of preference of all vehicles traveling on our streets and highways. Without right of way rules, driving would be a mass of confusion, with drivers always trying to beat each other through an intersection. Right of way rules are designed for all of our safety.

What are some of the precautions you can take to prevent right of way accidents? A relatively simple solution is to yield the right of way in every situation, whether or not it is required by law. To be more specific, if there is any doubt about there being enough room to pass on a narrow stretch of roadway, let the other vehicle go first. When entering a freeway, yield the right of way to vehicles already traveling the freeway. Those vehicles should not have to alter their speed or swerve to make room for your approach. Don't jump the gun at a four-way stop. The first to come to a complete stop should be given the right of way.

Since failure to yield the right of way is a frequent violation, a good driver should be thoroughly familiar with right of way rules. Knowing when you do have the right of way is not as important as knowing when you don't.

Base Rule:

First to Stop = First to Go.

The first vehicle at the intersection goes through the intersection first.

If base rule doesn't apply:

Farthest Right Goes First.

When two vehicles get to the intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the right goes first; it has the right-of-way.

If neither the base rule or furthest right rule apply:

Straight Traffic Goes First.

When two vehicles are directly across from each other, and one is turning left, the one that is going straight goes first.

When in Doubt, Bail Out.

This trumps all rules.

Even if you have the right-of-way, if for any reason you feel uncomfortable or that your safety is threatened, let the other traffic go ahead. Your safety always comes first.