



#10763

RURAL DRIVING: NOT JUST ANOTHER DRIVE IN THE COUNTRY

SAFETY INDUSTRIES, INC., 2002
GRADE LEVEL: 9-13+
15 MINUTES

DESCRIPTION

Driving in the countryside presents its own unique set of considerations for safe driving. After reviewing basic speed laws, passing on a two-lane road, and other common scenarios, describes some hazards special to rural driving. Covers wild and

farm animals, school buses, narrow bridges, soft shoulders, and slow-moving farm vehicles. Stresses that as in any type of driving condition, caution, courtesy, and common sense keep one safe.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Working with Others

- Standard: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.
 - Benchmark: Demonstrates appropriate behaviors for relating well with others (e.g., empathy, caring, respect, helping, friendliness, politeness).
 - Benchmark: Knows strategies to effectively communicate in a variety of settings (e.g., selects appropriate strategy for audience and situation).
 - Benchmark: Uses nonverbal communication such as eye contact, body position, and gestures effectively.

Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety.
 - Benchmark: Knows injury prevention strategies for community health (e.g., neighborhood safety, traffic safety, safe driving).

Subject Area: Self-Regulation

- Standard: Considers risks.
 - Benchmark: Knows potential safety hazards, and knows common strategies to avoid hazard or injury.
 - Benchmark: Knows emergency safety procedures before undertaking hazardous procedures.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To compare and contrast driving in rural areas compared to urban areas.
2. To comprehend the basic rules of rural driving (i.e., speed limit, rural cross, narrow bridges, farm vehicles, animals, etc.).
3. To learn how to be a responsible driver on rural roads and avoid accidents.

BEFORE SHOWING

The nation's rural roads are a critical link in the nation's transportation system, providing access from urban areas to the nation's heartland. These roads also provide farm-to-market transportation and are the primary routes of travel and commerce for the approximately 60 million people living in rural America. But rural roads in the nation's heartland are carrying growing levels of traffic and commerce, often lack many desirable safety features, and experience serious traffic accidents at a rate far higher than all other roads and highways.

Fifty-six percent of drivers report that the roads they normally drive are more urban than rural while about one-third (35%) drive on roads that are more rural. Drivers in their 20s report the heaviest travel on urban roads (63%), while those age 46-64 are slightly more likely to say their preferred roads are more rural in nature (39%).

Travel on rural roads increased by 27 percent between 1990 and 2002 by all vehicles and by 32 percent by large commercial trucks.

Approximately 60 million people—21 percent of the nation's population—live in rural communities in the United States, an increase of approximately 11 percent since 1990.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss the following key findings from the 2005 "Growing Traffic In Rural America" study conducted by the Road Information Program.
 - a. The use of rural roads is increasing as rural populations increase and the dependence on roads increases in rural areas.
 - b. The nation's food distribution system is becoming increasingly reliant on truck travel to move agricultural products, including grains, wheat, corn, and fruits and vegetables. The reliance on trucking for goods movement by the agricultural sector is expected to increase.
 - c. Traffic fatalities are occurring on the nation's rural roads at a rate approximately two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads.
 - d. There are numerous roadway safety improvements that can be made to reduce serious accidents and traffic fatalities. These improvements are designed largely to keep vehicles from leaving the correct lane and reducing the consequences of a vehicle leaving the roadway.
 - e. Inadequate roadway safety design, longer emergency vehicle response times, and the higher speeds traveled on rural roads compared to urban roads are factors in the higher traffic fatality rate found on rural, non-Interstate routes.
2. Have students research and report on what your state is doing to improve rural traffic safety. For example, the California Highway Patrol is leading a task force to examine the safety of all state corridors and to identify the most high-risk corridors. The task force will recommend behavioral and infrastructure improvements that are needed on these high-risk corridors to improve traffic safety. Most of the corridors identified have been two-lane, rural roads. The California Department of Transportation also has formed a task force to identify locations where a high number of run-off-the-road crashes are occurring. About two-thirds of these locations identified in 2004 were rural. The agency plans to use cost-effective strategies to improve traffic safety at these locations.
3. Have students research and report on the role that groups like farmers or truckers play in rural road safety. For example, some states have developed tips for farmers, such as these:
 - a. Pennsylvania law requires a farmer to place a "slow moving vehicle" reflector on any machine that travels the road slower than 25 mph. Always point the triangle up, keep the SMV emblem

C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- clean to maximize reflectivity, and replace the emblem when it fades, normally every two to three years.
- b. Mark the edges of tractors and machines with reflective tape and reflectors. Consider installing retrofit lighting on older machinery to increase visibility.
 - c. Turn on your lights, but turn off rear spotlights when going onto the road. From a distance they can be mistaken for headlights.
 - d. Avoid the highway during rush hours and bad weather. Don't drive before sunrise or after sunset.
 - e. Use pilot cars, one in front and one in back, if you are going a considerable distance. Hang an orange flag out the window of these pilot vehicles.
 - f. Consider installing mirrors on equipment to enable you to be aware of motorists around you.

RELATED RESOURCES

Captioned Media Program

- [*Citizens' Guide To Safe Driving #7914*](#)
- [*Driver's Education: Part 4—A System for Safe Driving Decisions #10453*](#)
- [*Driver's Education: Part 5—Driving With Natural Forces #10454*](#)
- [*Driver's Education: Part 14—Keeping You and Your Passengers Safe #10450*](#)

To view more titles in the *Driver's Education* series and other related media, please connect to our Web site at <http://www.cfv.org/browsetitles.asp?sn=98>.

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **GROWING TRAFFIC IN RURAL AMERICA: SAFETY, MOBILITY AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN AMERICA'S HEARTLAND**

<http://www.tripnet.org/RuralRoads2005Report.pdf>

The nation's rural roads are a critical link in the nation's transportation system, providing access from urban areas to the nation's heartland. This report looks at the condition, use and safety of the nation's noninterstate rural roads, based partly on an analysis of all fatal rural traffic accidents over the five-year period from 1999 to 2003.

- **TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DANGERS OF RURAL DRIVING**

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/extensionnews/2000/ruraldriving.html>

When you're driving on a highway in a rural area, you're at greater risk for a fatal crash than when you're driving in the city. You need to learn how to protect yourself under these conditions.



- **DRIVER FATIGUE**

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/fatigue/>

Driver fatigue can severely impair judgment and can affect anyone. Provides a list of symptoms.