



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### How Wrong Can You Get?

We have heard many times of the football players becoming confused and carrying the ball over the wrong goal line. We have also heard of basketball players throwing the ball through the wrong hoop. These are practically always honest mistakes and we can understand and sympathize with the unfortunate players. But for some people, the wrong way has a peculiar fascination. They'd rather be wrong, if they can possible get away with it.

I wonder if this isn't true in traffic safety? Too many of us ask, "Is it wrong to do this?" "Is it against the law to do that?" "Can I be arrested for doing this?" "How fast can I go without being arrested and fined?"

Asking and finding out what is prohibited or illegal or wrong is not a bad thing in itself. But it would be much better for all of us if we inquired, "What is the right way to do this?" If we learn and practice the right way to drive we will not be concerned with what is wrong. Learning what is wrong gets the wrong way fixed in our mind instead of the right way. Let's look at a few examples:

- A driver asks, "Is it illegal to drive over forty during a rainstorm?" The correct answer is, "no", but that doesn't tell the questioner the right way to drive in a rainstorm. The correct answer to that question would be, "Reduce your speed -- keep your vehicle under control -- pavements are slippery and this calls for increased following distance because your stopping distance is greatly increased."
- A driver asks, "Is it illegal to ride with my left arm hanging out the window?" The answer is "no" but the right way to drive requires that you keep your hands and arms inside the vehicle, both as a protection to yourself and so that no movement of your hands can be mistaken for a hand signal.
- Another driver asks, "Does the law prohibit braking while going around a curve?" Again the answer is "no" but the right way to take a curve is to brake before you enter the curve and then you can feed gas while in the curve without running off the road.
- Another asks, "If I stop at a stop sign and let two or three drivers pass on the major street does the law require that I wait until all traffic is through the intersection before crossing?" This question, too, rates a "no" answer but unless you are tired of living the tight way is to wait until the way is clear.

- Still another asks, "Is there any law prohibiting passing where sight distance is not limited?" Of course not, but the right way is to be sure there is sufficient room and time to complete the passing movement in safety.
- Finally one inquires, "Is it illegal to drive at night at the same speed as in daytime?" In most states the answer would be "no" but it is certainly not the right thing to do because your range of vision is greatly limited by darkness.

These instances should be enough to illustrate the need for learning the right way and not merely what is illegal. Most of the critical decisions we must make behind the wheel must be made quickly. We make them much easier and with more self-assurance if we always ask for and learn the right way. Don't worry about the wrong way. Know the right way and put it into practice.