

NEW DRIVERS

KNOW YOUR TRAFFIC SIGNS

KELLY MANNING: Welcome to DMV Infocast, an audio production of the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. This is Kelly Manning, Infocast Editor.

Today we are here with **Mark Silbo**, Program Coordinator of DMV's Handicapped Driver Training Unit. Mark is going to help us get a little familiar with the traffic signs.

KELLY MANNING: Mark, why is it important for drivers to know and obey different traffic signs?

MARK SILBO: Road signs have a number of uses. They tell us what road we are on and what direction we are traveling, what's ahead or how or what lanes and roads are going to merge, when to stop, when to yield the right of way, and warnings about hazards that may be ahead.

KELLY: Driving down the road, I see signs in many different shapes. Can you tell me what the different shapes stand for?

MARK: Well, obviously, an eight-sided octagon means stop. And a triangle means yield the right of way. Diamond shapes usually give us information about the road ahead, such as sharp turns or curves or intersections as well as possible hazards such as pedestrian crossings, fire stations, slippery roads or other traffic warnings.

School zone signs are important signs as well, and they're in a unique shape. They resemble a house with school children depicted on them.

KELLY: What about the different colors. Do they have certain meanings?

MARK: Yeah. Yellow signs are advisory in nature, alerting the driver to school zones, road conditions and intersections, et cetera. White signs are noted as regulatory in nature such as speed limit signs, no parking signs, no u-turns, and truck weight limit signs and things like that. Red is for warnings like stop and wrong way signs. Green and

brown highway signs are destination signs that tell us what towns or exits are ahead or what historic sites might be up ahead.

KELLY: Can you go over some of the most common signs that I'll see on the roadways?

MARK: Yeah. Stop signs are a pretty common site. I would think people see those mostly at every -- almost every intersection other than the ones with lights. Obviously green highway signs are very prevalent. They're on the highways telling us where the exits are and what towns we're coming up to. Highway route number signs and of course, speed limit signs too.

KELLY: Is there anywhere I can go to get a list of all the signs and their meanings?

MARK: There may not be one place where you can go, but there are certainly a number of places where you can get a number of the signs. The Connecticut Driver's Manual has a large listing of signs in the back of the manual. And certain DOT sites will probably have a lot of the signs. And if you go on the internet and do a search on road signs, a number of sites do have and display road signs.

KELLY: If I drive into different states will I see the same signs or will they be different?

MARK: The road sign shapes and colors are pretty standard throughout the United States, although I'm sure that there are some unique situations that require a unique sign. So when you're driving in another state, always be alert while driving. And be aware of any and all road signs at all times.

KELLY: What are the consequences if someone doesn't obey a traffic sign?

MARK: The consequences of not obeying a road sign may range from getting a warning or ticket from law enforcement to being involved in an accident, which depending on which sign was not obeyed may range from a fender bender to a fatal accident. So the advice is to obey traffic signs all the time.

KELLY: Will there ever be a time that I won't need to obey a traffic sign?

MARK: Generally the only time you should not obey a traffic sign is if you are instructed by the police, fire, or medical emergency personnel or possibly a road crew to do something other than what is indicated by the road sign. And that's only because

usually that means there's an emergency ahead or there's some blockage in the road.

That would be the only time that I can think of that you shouldn't obey a traffic sign.

KELLY: Will I be required to know all of these signs for my driver's test?

MARK: Yes. The Connecticut Driver's Manual does go over almost all of the road signs that are important. And yes, there are a number of questions that may come up on the driver's test that have to do with road signs. And obviously for safety's sake knowing as many of the road signs and what they mean is a good thing.

KELLY: Well, thank you, Mark, for being with us today. Students need to be familiar with traffic signs, not just for their test, but to become a good, safe driver.

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