

# Signs you must recognize

NY tests 4 sign questions on the permit exam - you need at least 2 correct. Shape and color tell you most of the answer.

## Color decoder

Red	Stop / yield / do not enter / wrong way	Blue	Driver services / hospitals / rest
Yellow	Warning - hazard ahead	Brown	Recreation / parks / historic
Orange	Work zone or detour	White	Regulatory - must obey
Green	Guide / distance / permitted		

## Most-tested New York signs

 <p><b>Slippery road</b> Yellow diamond - road may be slick. Ease off the gas.</p>	 <p><b>RR crossing</b> Round yellow advance warning — slow, look, listen, prepare to stop.</p>	 <p><b>Signal ahead</b> Traffic light ahead — slow and be ready to stop.</p>	 <p><b>Do not enter</b> Wrong way on a one-way or expressway ramp.</p>	 <p><b>Cross road</b> Intersection ahead — be ready to yield to crossing traffic.</p>	 <p><b>Soft shoulder</b> Edge of road is loose - stay on pavement.</p>
 <p><b>Sharp left curve</b> Road bends sharply left. Slow before you enter.</p>	 <p><b>Winding road</b> Series of curves ahead - reduce speed.</p>	 <p><b>Wrong way</b> Red + white WRONG WAY — road ahead closed in your direction. Turn around.</p>	 <p><b>Direction change</b> Black-on-yellow arrow — road ahead changes direction at an extreme angle.</p>	 <p><b>RR advance warning</b> Round yellow - railroad crossing ahead. Be ready to stop.</p>	 <p><b>Slow-moving vehicle</b> Orange + red triangle = vehicle going under 25 mph.</p>
 <p><b>Workers ahead</b> Orange diamond - people working on or near roadway.</p>	 <p><b>Curves ahead</b> Yellow warning - road curves coming. Reduce speed.</p>	 <p><b>Intersection type</b> Yellow warning - intersection layout ahead.</p>	 <p><b>Green left arrow</b> Protected left turn - oncoming traffic is stopped.</p>	 <p><b>Red right arrow</b> Do not turn right until light turns green.</p>	 <p><b>Hand signal - stop</b> Left arm extended down = stopping or slowing.</p>

## Sign-shape shortcuts

**Octagon** — Always means STOP - the only 8-sided sign.

**Triangle pointing down** — Always means YIELD.

**Diamond** — Warning of a hazard or road change ahead.

**Pennant (sideways)** — No-passing zone start, posted on your left.

**Round** — Railroad crossing ahead - prepare to stop.

**Pentagon** — School zone or school crossing.

# Rules of the road

## Right-of-way

**4-way stop** — First to arrive goes first; ties yield to driver on the right.

**Uncontrolled intersection** — Yield to vehicle on your right.

**Left turn** — Yield to all oncoming traffic until safe to turn.

**Pedestrian in crosswalk** — Always yield - marked or unmarked, on any corner.

**Blind pedestrian** — Must yield to guide dog or white/metallic cane. Do not honk.

**Pedestrian + guide dog** — Wait until they finish crossing before turning.

**Emergency vehicle** — Drive to right edge of road and stop until it passes.

**Traffic circle** — Driver already in the circle has the right-of-way.

**Police officer vs signal** — Obey the officer first, even if the light says otherwise.

**Stopped school bus** — Stop both directions on any NY road - no exceptions.

**Signal not working** — Treat the intersection as a 4-way stop.

**Pulling from curb** — Need a gap big enough to reach traffic speed.

## New York speed limits (VTL)

NYC default (no sign)	25 mph
Other cities / urban	30 mph
School zone (in session)	15-25 mph posted
State highway (no posted)	55 mph
Most NY thruways	65 mph

Minimum-speed signs	Keep traffic flowing
Construction zone	Obey posted - fines double
Following distance	3 seconds (ideal); 4+ in rain
Junior license curfew	No driving 9 pm - 5 am
Slow-moving vehicle	Under 25 mph (orange triangle)

## Lane markings & changes

**Solid yellow** — No passing on your side of the road.

**Broken yellow** — Passing allowed when the way ahead is clear.

**Double solid yellow** — No passing in either direction.

**Two double yellows** — If 2 ft apart - treat as a solid wall - never cross.

**Solid white** — Cross only if traffic conditions require it.

**Broken white** — Lane change OK when safe.

**Edge line angles inward** — Road is narrowing - merge with care.

**Before any lane change** — Check mirrors AND look over your shoulder.

## Turning & signaling

**Signal before turn** — At least 100 ft before the intersection.

**Right turn setup** — Start in right lane, end in the lane closest to curb.

**Left turn 2-way to 1-way** — End up in the left lane of the one-way street.

**Right on red** — Allowed after full stop EXCEPT in NYC unless a sign permits it.

**Red arrow** — No turn until the arrow turns green - even after a stop.

**Green left arrow** — Protected turn - oncoming traffic is held.

**Yellow light** — Be prepared to stop before the intersection.

**Hand signal - left** — Arm straight out the window.

**Hand signal - right** — Arm bent up at the elbow.

**Hand signal - stop / slow** — Arm bent down at the elbow.

## Following, passing & emergencies

**Following distance** — Minimum 2 sec back in good weather; 3 sec is the recommended rule of thumb.

**Tailgater behind you** — Slow down slightly and stay in your lane - let them pass.

**After passing** — Return right when you can clearly see the front of the passed vehicle in your mirror.

**Passing on the right** — OK on a multi-lane highway if no signs forbid it.

**Vehicle waiting left** — You may pass that vehicle on the right when safe.

**Brake failure** — Downshift, pump pedal, use parking brake, find a soft shoulder.

**Move-over law (NY)** — Slow + change lanes for stopped emergency, tow, or construction.

**Emergency flashers** — Use when your vehicle is broken down on the roadway.

## Sharing the road & railroad

**Motorcyclist** — Smaller size makes them hard to see - check blind spots.

**Bicyclist** — Must ride on the right side. Pass with extreme caution.

**Bicycle at night** — Must have a front headlight AND a red taillight.

**Truck blind spot** — If you cannot see the truck's mirrors, the driver cannot see you.

**Buses at all RR crossings** — School buses and occupied passenger buses must stop.

**Diamond placard vehicles** — Hazmat carriers must stop before crossing tracks.

**RR in slow traffic** — Do not enter until there is room across for your whole vehicle.

# Safety, DWI, parking & test-day

## New York DWI quick-facts

DWI - adult BAC	0.08 % or higher	Commercial driver BAC	0.04 %
Aggravated DWI	0.18 % or higher	Refuse chemical test	License revoked + fine
DWAI - alcohol	0.05 - 0.07 %	Rx + OTC drugs	Can be DWAI-Drugs - any impairment
Under-21 (Zero Tolerance)	0.02 %	Alcohol burn-off rate	About 1 drink per hour

## Hazardous conditions (winter, rain, fog, night)

### DO

- + Brake EARLIER than usual on snow, ice, or wet pavement
- + Increase following distance to at least 3-4 seconds when slick
- + Use LOW beams in fog, snow, or heavy rain
- + Look toward the right edge of your lane if oncoming high-beams blind you
- + Slow before entering a curve - never brake mid-curve
- + Pull off the road if visibility or fatigue gets unsafe
- + Tap brake pedal lightly to warn drivers behind you

### DON'T

- Use HIGH beams in fog - the glare blinds you
- Make fast turns or hard stops on slippery roads
- Drive just as it starts raining (oil + water = most slick)
- Drive on worn or bald tires - they hydroplane
- Back up without checking mirrors AND turning your head
- Eat, drink, or smoke while driving - all are distractions
- Drive significantly slower than traffic - it causes crashes

## Parking distances & hill rules (NY)

Parallel-parked from curb	Max 12 in (1 ft)	No Standing sign	Stop only for pick-up / drop-off
Downhill - any curb	Wheels TOWARD curb	No Parking sign	Stop only to load / unload
Uphill - with curb	Wheels AWAY from curb	Disabled space	Permit required - even for a
Hill - no curb	Wheels toward road edge	NYC alternate-side	Move car on posted street-cleaning days
Crosswalk	Never park inside one	Before leaving curb	Signal + turn head to check traffic

## Equipment & vehicle rules

**Seat belts** — Required for driver and ALL passengers in moving vehicles.

**Child <8 or <4 ft 9 in** — Must use a child safety seat or booster.

**Handheld phone** — Illegal at any age - hands-free only for adults.

**Junior license + phone** — Let the call go to voicemail - any use is illegal.

**Tire pressure** — Under-inflation hurts handling, mileage, AND tire life.

**Insurance** — NY requires liability insurance - carry proof in the car.

**Headlights** — On from dusk to dawn and whenever wipers are on.

**Repeat violations** — License suspension AND insurance hike both possible.

## NY permit test-day cheat box

Exam length	20 questions	5-Hour pre-license course	Required before road test
Passing score	14 of 20 (70 %)	Supervised driving (under 18)	50 hours (15 after dark)
Sign questions	Must get 2 of 4 correct	Junior license hours	No driving 9 pm - 5 am
Permit fee (covers all)	About \$80	Retake wait	Same day allowed in most offices

## Last-minute test-taking tips

Read every option before you pick - NY likes to bury a partially-correct answer between two clearly wrong ones. When two answers seem right, choose the more cautious action ("slow and yield" beats "speed up to merge"). Sign questions are pure pattern: shape + color usually tells you the answer before you read the words. NYC drivers - remember that right-on-red is ILLEGAL in the city unless a sign says otherwise; that single rule trips up out-of-borough test-takers every week. The exam is not timed by question, so save tough ones for last.