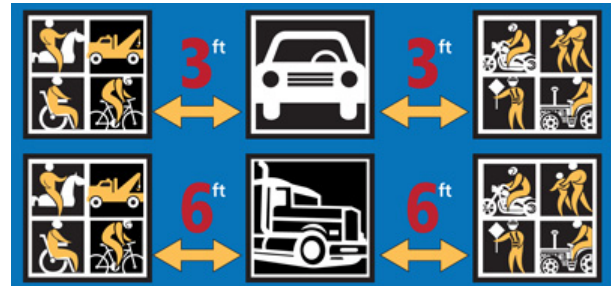


Safe Passing in Texas

About Safe Passing

Why is it important to protect all vulnerable road users?

Although all types of road users are at risk of being injured or killed in a road traffic crash, there are notable differences in fatality rates between different road user groups. In particular, the “vulnerable road users” are at greater risk than vehicle occupants and usually bear the greatest burden of injury. Children, elderly, and disabled people are particular vulnerable, as their physical and mental skills are either not fully developed or they are especially fragile. Children and older people are often overrepresented in traffic fatalities, especially as vulnerable road users.



Sadly, approximately 50 cyclists, 400 pedestrians and 500 motorcyclists are killed every year in Texas. Many of those fatalities could be prevented if this law were enacted. Although safety and basic humanity are key reasons for enacting the Safe Passing Bill in Texas, there are economic reasons as well. Other types of transport need to be promoted in Texas as the state grows in population. Much of the population will not feel safe enough to consider alternative transportation if they do not feel safe.

Who are “vulnerable road users”?

"Vulnerable road users" include a pedestrian, runner, physically disabled person, child, skater, construction and maintenance worker, tow truck operator, stranded motorist, equestrian, and person operating a bicycle, motorcycle, or unprotected farm equipment.

The group of vulnerable road users can be subdivided in a number of ways such as the amount of protection in traffic (e.g. pedestrians and cyclists) and the amount of task capability (e.g. the young and the elderly).

What protections does this bill provide?

This Safe Passing Bill will establish a standard safe passing distance of 3 ft (or 6 ft for Commercial Vehicles) that only applies when road conditions allow. It also prohibits the "right hook" (turning dangerously in front of a vulnerable road user) and failing to yield when making a left turn at an intersection.

Does the Safe Passing Bill have wide support in the state of Texas?

Yes. Safe Passing / Vulnerable Road User Ordinances with language stipulating a safe passing distance have been passed in 25 Texas Cities, including **Alamo, Alton, Austin, Beaumont, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Denton, Edinburg, El Paso, Fort Worth, Harlingen, Helotes, Houston, Laredo, McAllen, Mission, New Braunfels, Palmhurst, Pharr, Plano, San Antonio, San Juan, San Marcos, Waco, and Weslaco.**

From the FAQ's:

How are the safety distances determined? Why 3 feet for cars and 6 feet for commercial/large trucks?

The safety distances are consistent with existing safe driving practices. Currently the Texas Commercial Driver's handbook recommends commercial vehicles allow six feet because of the wind effect of a tractor trailer that can pull a cyclist three feet closer.

<https://www.biketexas.org/advocacy/safe-passing/overview>

**TEXAS COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVERS HANDBOOK
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Revised June, 2014**

14.6 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS SAFETY PRACTICES

3. Safe Passing of Two-Wheeled Vehicles.

Motorcycles and bicycles are lighter and more subject to wind effects than 4-wheeled vehicles are. Due to this, special care must be taken when passing.

a. Aerodynamic effects around a large vehicle can cause a two-wheeled vehicle to be suddenly pulled toward the larger vehicle by two or three feet, depending on the relative speed between the two vehicles. **You should always allow at least six feet to the left of the two-wheeled vehicle when you are passing.**

b. When passing a two-wheeled vehicle, do not attempt to share the lane with that vehicle. Move into the next or oncoming lane to pass. If there is oncoming traffic, then slow and follow the two-wheeled vehicle until oncoming traffic clears.