

## CHAPTER 2

## TRAFFIC CONTROLS

This chapter implements STANAG 2025.

Except when specifically directed otherwise, military and civilian drivers must comply with all civil traffic laws and ordinances. Civilian traffic police have full authority for regulating all traffic in towns and on public roads. Military police have full authority over all military vehicles wherever they may be.

### TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

Civilian and military police normally control traffic using a system of signs, signals, devices, and markings. When an authorized official (police, traffic warden military police) is directing traffic, obey his signals rather than traffic lights or signs. A traffic official usually signals traffic to stop by holding up his hands, palms toward traffic, and by giving a long blast on his whistle. To start traffic, he motions with his hand and arm toward the direction of travel, giving two initial short blasts on his whistle. He uses three blasts or a series of short blasts on his whistle to warn any motorists or pedestrians of unusual or dangerous conditions, approaching emergency, and so forth. At night, visual signals may be given with a flashlight or lighted traffic baton or wand. Flagmen at railroad crossings or road construction sites use flags or color-coded sign paddles. When driving in host nations, drivers need to understand the visual and audible signals used by traffic control personnel. (See Appendix A.)

### SIGNALS

You must be familiar with three categories of signals commonly used to control traffic. First, you must know the meaning and proper use of those hand signals common to both military and civilian drivers. Second, you must know the hand signals used by police to control traffic. Third, you must know the signals used to control military vehicles in convoy. (See Appendix B.)

### Signaling Distance

Always signal in advance of making a turn or stopping. If you do not signal until you have already started to turn or stop, you might as well not signal. By that time, it is too late for other drivers to take whatever action may be necessary. The law usually requires you to signal at least 100 feet in advance. This is the minimum distance. The faster you are going the farther in advance you should signal. Your signaling distance should never be less than the distance required for stopping or slowing down sufficiently to make a turn. For example, a signal for a stop when you are traveling 40 MPH should never be given less than 140 feet in advance of the stop. When driving on the open highway, a good rule is to give all signals at least 300 feet in advance.

### Hand Signals

Hand signals are given with the left hand and arm out the driver's window of left-hand drive vehicles (Figure 2-1). The signal for stopping and slowing down is given by pointing the arm and hand down, palm back. The left turn signal is given by pointing the arm and hand straight out, palm forward. The right turn signal is given by pointing the arm and hand straight up from the elbow, palm forward.

Make your signals clearly. You cannot be understood if you merely put your hand lazily out of the window. Be careful not to give signals that you do not mean. Some drivers rest their elbows on the windowsill and idly tap the top of the vehicle with their fingers. To drivers behind them, this may look like a right-turn signal. Other drivers let their hands trail out the window holding a cigarette. If you do this, the driver behind may think you are slowing down or stopping. If the vehicle you are driving has no turn signals and the cargo bed is wider than the cab, stretch your arm out as far as possible when signaling to make sure your signal is visible to the

driver following you. When giving a hand signal for a turn, finish signaling before you actually make the turn so that you can have both hands on the wheel.

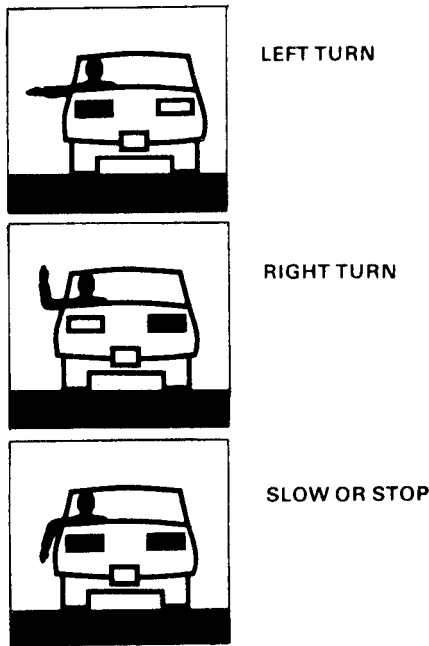


FIGURE 2-1. Driver Hand Signals.

## Electrical Signals

Almost all vehicles have at least one electrical signal—the stoplight at the rear which goes on when the driver depresses the brake pedal. The stoplight does not always take the place of the hand signal for stopping or slowing down. Many times you slow down without using your brakes. Many other times, especially if you are a good driver, you start using your brakes only in the last feet of travel. Furthermore, the stoplight may not be visible except to the driver of the vehicle immediately behind you.

## Turn Signals

These flashing-light signals are usually legal substitutes for hand signals, but there are times when they are hard to see. In late afternoon and early evening, the lenses may reflect the light of the sun, making it very difficult to tell whether the signals are flashing or not. On the other hand, a flashing-light signal is much more likely to be seen at night than a hand signal. The important thing is that the signal be clearly seen. Therefore, the method of signaling should depend on light conditions and legal requirements. A good rule is to use both hand

signals and flashing-light signals in the daytime (especially when the sun is low) and to use flashing-light signals at night.

## Emergency Flashers

Four-way flasher lights are used to warn other traffic of a vehicle halted due to an emergency in a traffic lane or on the shoulder adjacent to a traffic lane. When a vehicle halts in an authorized space, flasher lights are normally not used. Most states prohibit their use on a vehicle in motion except on emergency vehicles. Four-way flasher lights are not a substitute for warning devices contained in the highway warning kit.

For Air Force Only: Vehicles operating on the flight line, such as maintenance servicing vehicles, may use the four-way flasher where authorized instead of nonrevolving, pulsating hazard warning lights prescribed by TO 36-1-3.

## Horn

What should you do if you see a vehicle coming from the opposite direction turn suddenly out into your lane? Apply your brakes and blow your horn at the same time. Your horn is the best means you have of alerting a temporarily inattentive driver to your presence. It immediately enlists his aid in attempting to avoid a collision instead of leaving the whole burden on you. Use your horn also whenever you have to come out of a blind alley or driveway, when you come to curves on mountainous roads where visibility is limited, and immediately before backing.

Use your horn courteously. A long blast is usually unnecessary. Pressing the horn button lightly once or twice will ordinarily serve to get the attention of another driver or pedestrian. The only lawful use of the horn is as a reasonable warning device. Never use it to greet friends or express irritation at a delay or at another driver's errors.

## Other Signals

In addition to hand and electrical signals, drivers are constantly signaling to each other merely by the position of their vehicles on the road. When you see a driver move toward the center of the road you assume that he is about to turn left or pull out to pass. When you see him move toward the right, you assume that he is going to turn right or stop.

Whether you realize it or not, you are guided by the position signaling of other drivers. Misleading position signals are as dangerous as misleading hand signals. The driver who pulls to the right before turning left is inviting an accident because he is, in effect, misinforming other drivers of his intentions.

## TRAFFIC SIGNALS

No traffic signal is more important than the traffic light (Figure 2-2). Few drivers actually run through red lights. Their common sense usually keeps them from that. They speed up as they approach a green light to make sure they get through before it turns red; or when stopped at a red light, they watch the green light showing in the opposite direction and start to move into the intersection as soon as the yellow appears. This practice often results in an accident.

## TRAFFIC SIGNS

The United States is moving toward an international system of traffic signs that emphasizes pictures and symbols rather than written messages. Symbolic signs are not entirely new. The familiar curve and crossroad symbols have been used for many years. Symbols have several advantages over word messages. They provide almost instant communication to the driver since they can be

understood at a glance without having to be read. Also, they overcome language barriers. Familiarity with the symbolic signs will help military drivers operating in overseas areas. International signs and markings are discussed in Appendixes A and B (STANAG 2025).

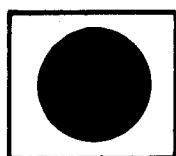
On signs that contain messages in words, color and shape provide the driver with information at first glance before he is close enough to read the words (Figures 2-3 through 2-6).

### International Traffic Signs

This system of road signs was agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport in September 1949. It was the United Nations' desire to ensure safety and to facilitate international road traffic by adopting a uniform system of road signaling. Although these signs are not military, Army personnel should be familiar with them since they are used in most overseas areas. Dimensions of signs are standardized in each country to ensure maximum uniformity. (See Appendix A.)

### International Military Route Signs (NATO)

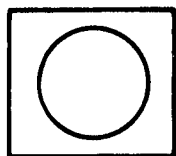
North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries have standardized road signs. These signs are shown and explained in GTA 55-3-20. (See Appendixes A and B.)



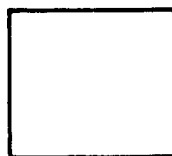
**RED**  
Stop—come to a complete stop before you reach the intersection, stop line, or crosswalk, and remain stopped as long as the light is red.



**FLASHING RED LIGHT**  
You must come to a complete stop, yield to oncoming traffic or pedestrians, then go when the way is clear.



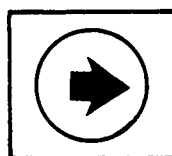
**YELLOW**  
Caution—an amber or yellow light is a warning that the light is about to change. If you have not entered the intersection, you should come to a safe stop. If you are already in the intersection, you should continue moving and clear it safely. Speeding up to "beat the light" is illegal and could cause an accident.



**FLASHING YELLOW LIGHT**  
You should slow down and proceed with caution.










**GREEN**  
Go—you may go through an intersection in the direction indicated by the signal if the roadway is clear.



**GREEN ARROW**  
You may proceed in the direction of the arrow if you are in the proper lane.

FIGURE 2-2. Traffic Signals.

	<b>RED</b> Stop, yield, do not enter, or wrong way.
	<b>YELLOW</b> General warning of what to expect ahead.
	<b>WHITE</b> Regulatory, such as speed limits.

	<b>ORANGE</b> Construction warning.
	<b>GREEN</b> Guide information, such as distance or direction.
	<b>BLUE</b> Motorist services.
	<b>BROWN</b> Recreation and scenic areas.

**USE OF COLOR IN SIGNS**

**Sign Shapes**

The shape of a traffic sign can tell you as much about the sign's message as its color. In poor visibility conditions, such as heavy fog, you may be able to make out only the shape of a sign.

**OCTAGON: STOP**

The octagonal (eight-sided) shape always means stop. You must come to a complete stop at the sign, stop line, pedestrian crosswalk or curb before entering an intersection.



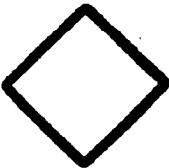
**TRIANGLE: YIELD**

Slow down—or stop if necessary—and give the right of way to vehicles crossing your path.



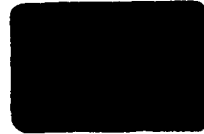
**DIAMOND: WARNING**

These signs warn you of special conditions or hazards ahead. You may have to slow down, so be ready.



**RECTANGLE: REGULATORY OR GUIDE**

Vertical signs are generally used to give instructions or tell you the law. In the horizontal position, the signs may give directions or information.



**PENTAGON: SCHOOL AND SCHOOL CROSSING**

The pentagon (five-sided) shape marks school zones and warns you about school crossings.

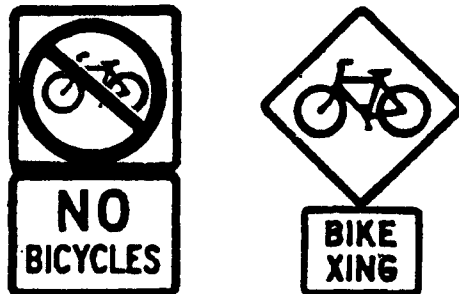


**CROSSBUCK & CIRCLE: RAILROAD CROSSING**

Both of these signs mean you are approaching a railroad crossing and should slow down, look and listen for trains.



**Figure 2-4. Use of Shape in Signs.**



**Figure 2-5. Regulatory Signs.**

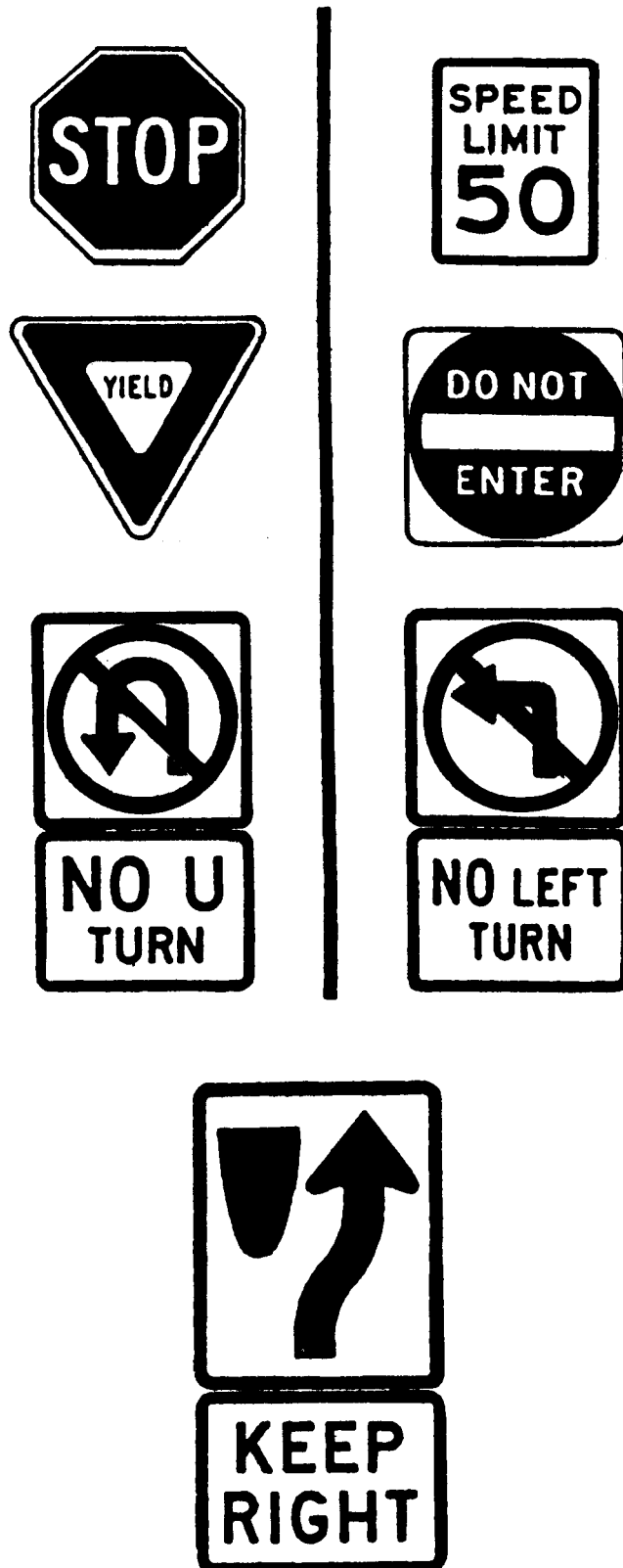


Figure 2-5. Regulatory Signs (Continued).

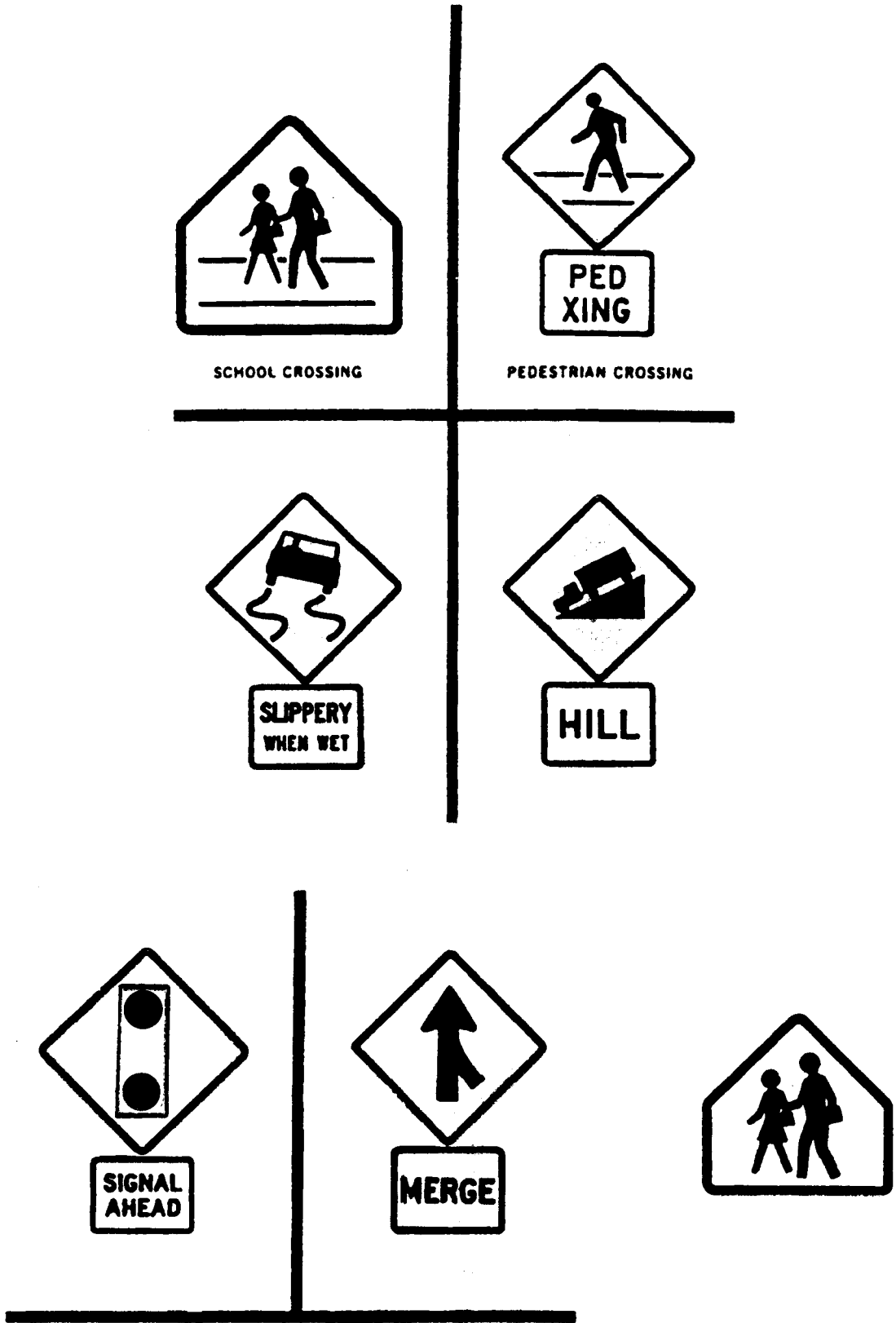


Figure 2-6. Warning Signs.

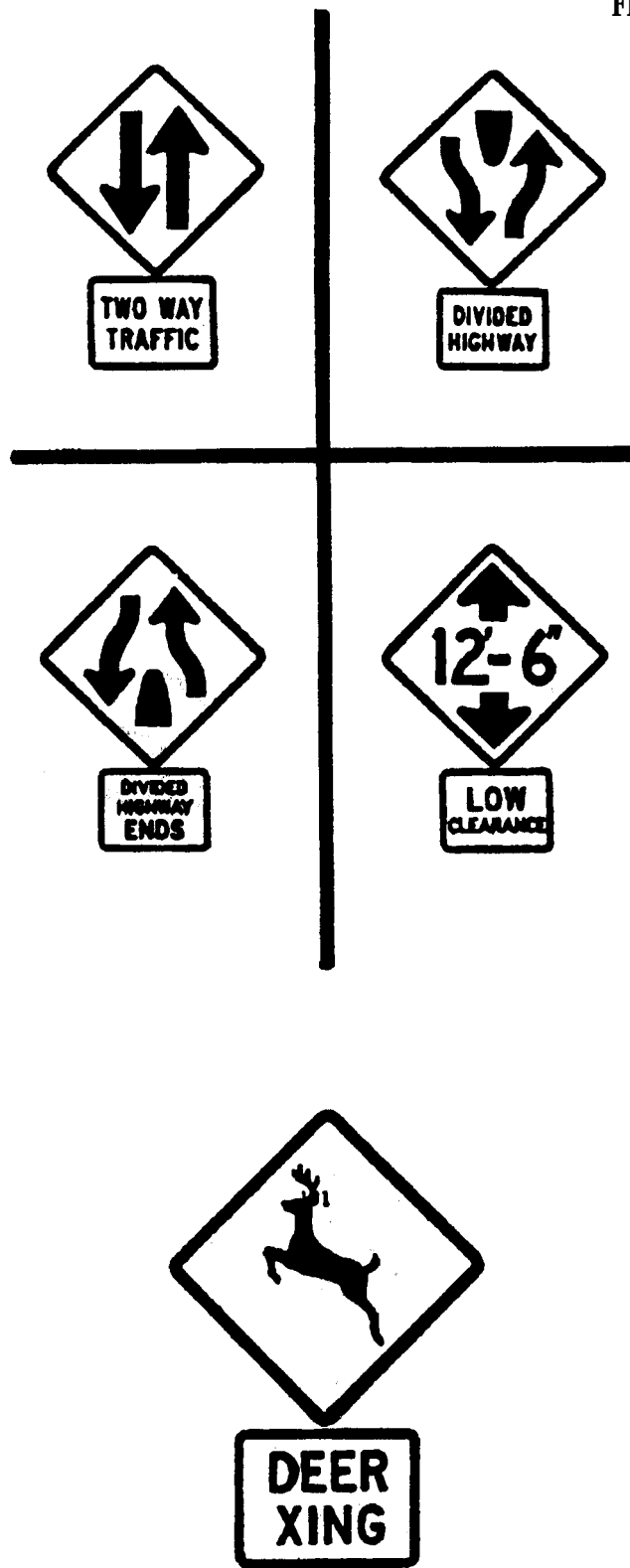


Figure 2-6. Warning Signs (Continued).

## PAVEMENT MARKINGS

Road markings guide and warn drivers, as well as regulate traffic. Markings may be either yellow or white and used alone or in combination. Each has a different meaning. Yellow centerlines indicate that there is two-way traffic flowing in opposite directions. White lines separate lanes of traffic going in the same direction.

Pavement markings are widely used to control the flow of traffic (Figure 2-7). These markings may be used to indicate—

- The middle of the road.
- Nonpassing and passing zones by using a solid line for a nonpassing zone and a broken line for a passing zone.
- Crosswalks, reduced speed zones, school zones, and approaches to railroad crossings.

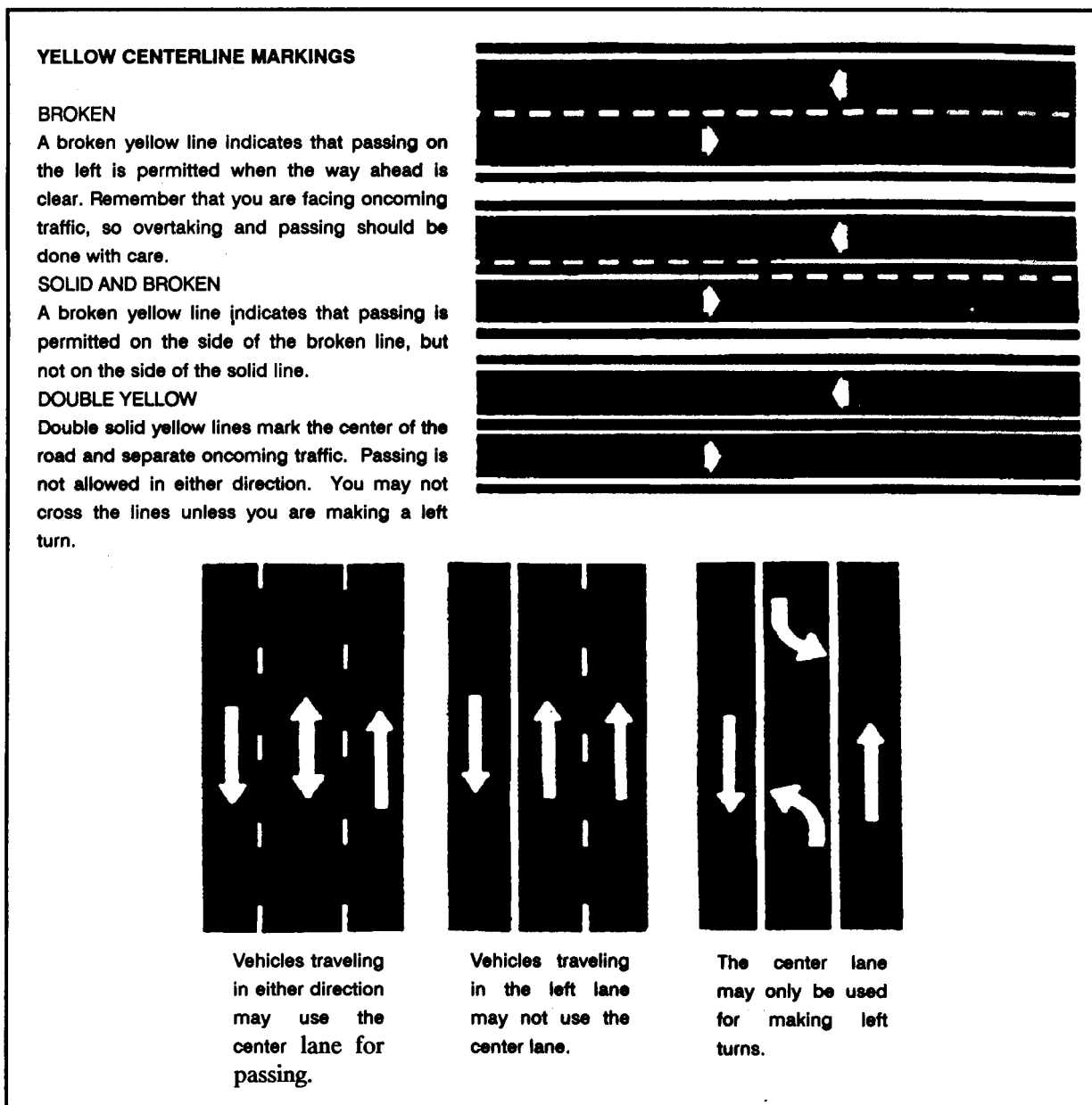


FIGURE 2-7. Pavement Markings.

**WHITE LINE MARKINGS****BROKEN**

Broken white lines separate lanes of traffic going in the same direction and may be crossed with care.

**SOLID WITH TURN-LANE ARROW**

Solid white lines are used for turn lanes and to prevent lane changes near intersections. Arrows are often used with the white lines to indicate which turn may be made from the lane.

If you are in a lane marked with a curved arrow and the word **ONLY**, you must turn in the direction of the arrow. If your lane is marked with both a curved and a straight arrow, you may either turn or go straight.

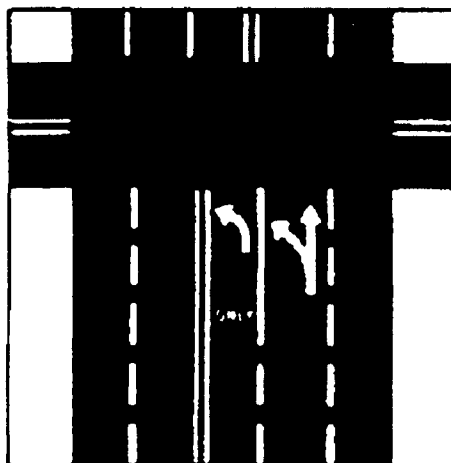


FIGURE 2-7. Pavement Markings (Continued).