

# California Road Signs Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

|                        |                                                      |                                                       |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>36</b><br>Questions | —<br>Time limit                                      | <b>18+: 30 of 36 correct (6 e...</b><br>Passing score |
| <b>\$0</b><br>Exam fee | <b>California Department of...</b><br>Governing body |                                                       |

## The rule that reframes the rest

Basic Speed Law: you may never drive faster than is safe for current road conditions — whatever the sign says. The posted number is a ceiling for good conditions, not permission. A citation for 65 in a 65 zone can stand in heavy rain, with no lower sign posted and no crash required.

## California speed ceilings

- 65 mph on most California highways.
- 55 mph on a two-lane undivided highway, and 55 when towing a trailer — either condition alone gives the lower figure.
- 25 mph within 500 feet of a school while children are outside or crossing; some zones posted as low as 15 mph.

## School buses — a broad exception

Stop from either direction when red lights flash. Stay stopped until both: children safely across and lights stopped flashing. Either alone is not enough.

Exception: no stop needed if the bus is across a divided or multilane highway (two or more lanes each direction). No physical barrier required — lane count alone releases you. This is broader than most states.

Penalty: fine up to \$1,000, driving privilege suspended up to one year.

## Alcohol — the strictest under-21 figure

- 0.08 adult.
- 0.04 commercial — attaches to the vehicle operated, not the licence held.
- 0.01 under 21. Not.02. A 20-year-old at 0.02 is in violation.

First zero tolerance offence: driving privilege suspended one year — not six months.

Implied consent: driving is consent to testing; refusal suspends on its own track, so beating the charge does not save the licence. Only time lowers BAC.

## Permit and testing

- Learner's permit: 15½ but under 18. The half-year matters; the upper bound exists because this is the under-18 route.
- Three attempts at the knowledge test before you must reapply — and those three belong to one application.

## Right-of-way

1. Four-way stop: arrival order. Right-hand rule breaks ties only.
2. Left on a green ball: yield to oncoming. Only a green arrow grants priority.
3. All-directions flashing red: treat as an all-way stop.

## Signals

- Flashing red = stop sign.
- Steady yellow = red is coming; stop if safe. Too close to stop without hard braking? Continue through.

## Signs and lines (national)

- Octagon stop · downward triangle yield · diamond warning · pentagon school · circle railroad. One message per shape.
- Orange work zone · blue motorist services · brown recreational and cultural.
- White = same direction; yellow = opposing. Solid yellow on your side = no passing on your side. Read outward from your own lane.
- Following distance: three seconds good conditions; more in rain, at night, or loaded.

## Official sources

- California Department of Motor Vehicles — California Driver's Handbook — Section 7: Laws and Rules of the Road:  
<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook/laws-and-rules-of-the-road-cont1/>
- California Department of Motor Vehicles — California Driver's Handbook — Section 8: Safe Driving:  
<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook/safe-driving-cont2/>
- California Department of Motor Vehicles — Zero Tolerance — California DMV:  
[https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv?1dmy=undefined&urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fdmv\\_content\\_en%2Fdmv%2Fteenweb%2Fcrazy\\_btn3%2Ftolerance](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv?1dmy=undefined&urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fdmv_content_en%2Fdmv%2Fteenweb%2Fcrazy_btn3%2Ftolerance)

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Free practice questions for this exam: [www.everyexamprep.com/exams/california-road-signs/practice-test](http://www.everyexamprep.com/exams/california-road-signs/practice-test)