

## Chapter 10

# Characteristics of Rural Traffic

10.1 Characteristics of Rural Traffic

10.2 Using Basic Skills in Rural Areas

10.3 Passing and Being Passed on Rural Roads

10.4 Rural Situations You Might Encounter

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# Characteristics of Rural Traffic

- Wide open spaces & less traffic are common in rural areas.
- After driving for a long period of time, you might assume that conflicts will not occur.
- Collisions account for twice as many highway deaths as collisions in urban areas





# Roadways

Rural roads are constructed with many different types of materials.

Some paved

Shoulders wide or narrow

Surfaces can be smooth or  
in poor condition

Be alert, conditions can  
change suddenly



# *Speed*

- Determining a safe speed is critical for safe driving on rural roads. Speed affects:
- Your line of site
- Your stopping distance
- Your vehicle control
- The amount of damage and injury  
In the event of a collision

Posted speeds are the maximum speeds allowed

When conditions are not good, safe speeds are used.

Use your common sense.



# Traffic Controls



Signs, Signals, and Markings – Direct, Regulate, Inform, and Regulate

Provide Advance Information and Warning of –  
Hazards that you cannot yet identify  
Major intersections ahead  
Unusual or hazardous conditions  
(curves, animals crossings)  
Traffic channeled into reduced space





# Applying IPDE Process

- Rural Driving typically involves driving at higher speeds
- The faster you drive, the greater your chance of being in a severe collision
- Less time to identify and respond to a situation or hazard
- May be forced to make an emergency response
- Sudden responses at higher speeds increase risk of losing control of vehicle
- Must manage your speed
- Slower you travel, the more time you have to solve problems  
(One or two additional seconds can make a great difference)



# *Driving on Two-Lane Roads*

Knowing about some common, but important, characteristics of rural roads will help you handle them safely

## Curves



## Intersections



## Hills







What do the signs indicate about the curve ahead?



What type of restrictions does the tree-line create?



Multiple lanes of traffic



Posted speed limits are usually higher



## Driving on Multilane Roads

Intersections rather than ramps



# Driving on Multilane Roads

## Multilane Roadways with Centerlines

- May only have a yellow line separating traffic
- Never cross solid yellow line or double yellow line, except to turn left

## Divided Roadways

- Traffic moving in opposite directions separated in some way
- Median – an area of ground separating traffic that moves in opposite directions

## Lane Choice

- Drive in right lane when possible
- Left lane used for passing or preparing to turn left

## Turning at an Intersection

- Turn right from right lane
- Turn left from left lane
- Look for special turn lanes
- Signal in advance

## Entering a Multilane Road

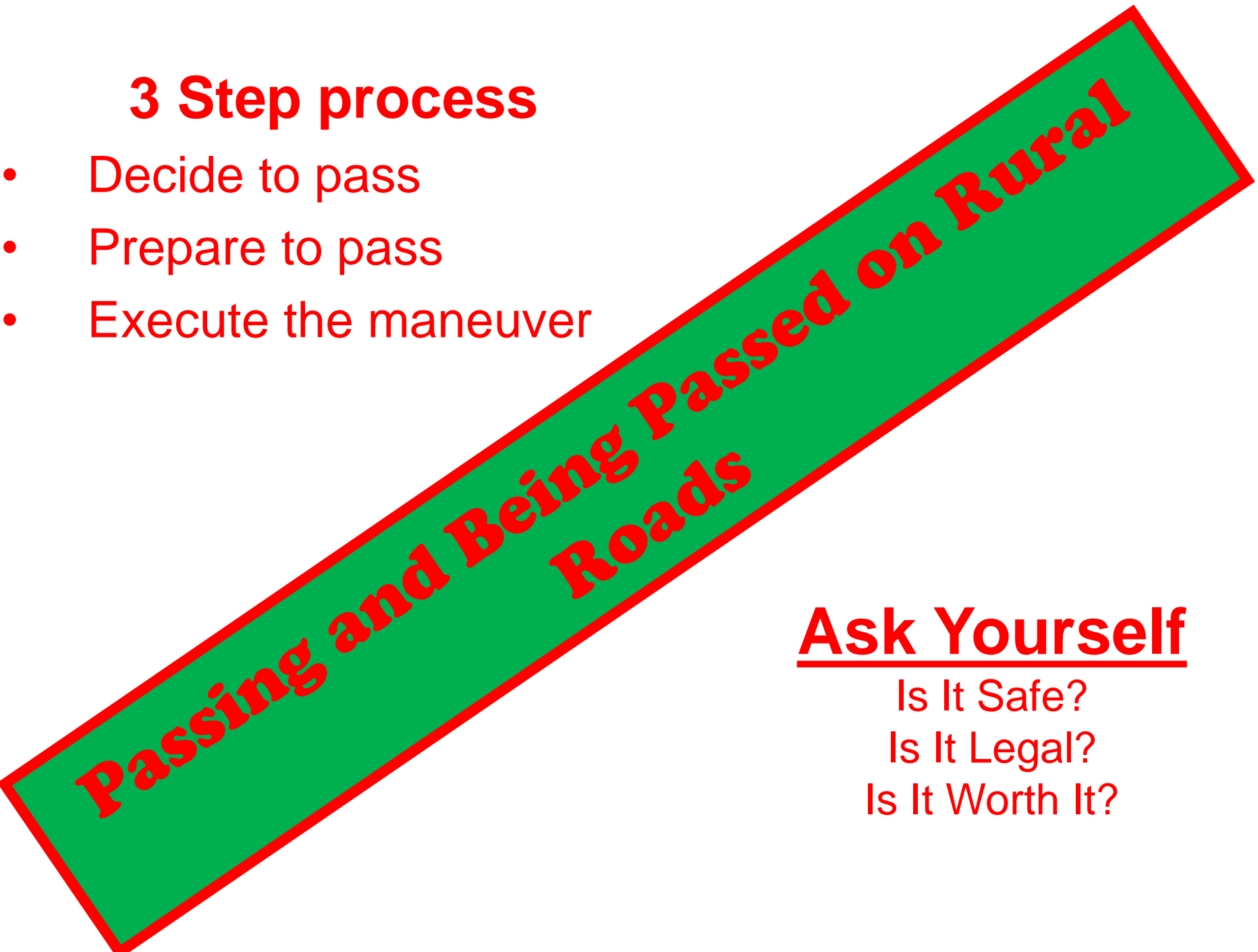
- Oncoming drivers may not see you due to line-of-sight restrictions





## 3 Step process

- Decide to pass
- Prepare to pass
- Execute the maneuver



## Ask Yourself

- Is It Safe?
- Is It Legal?
- Is It Worth It?

# Preparing to Pass

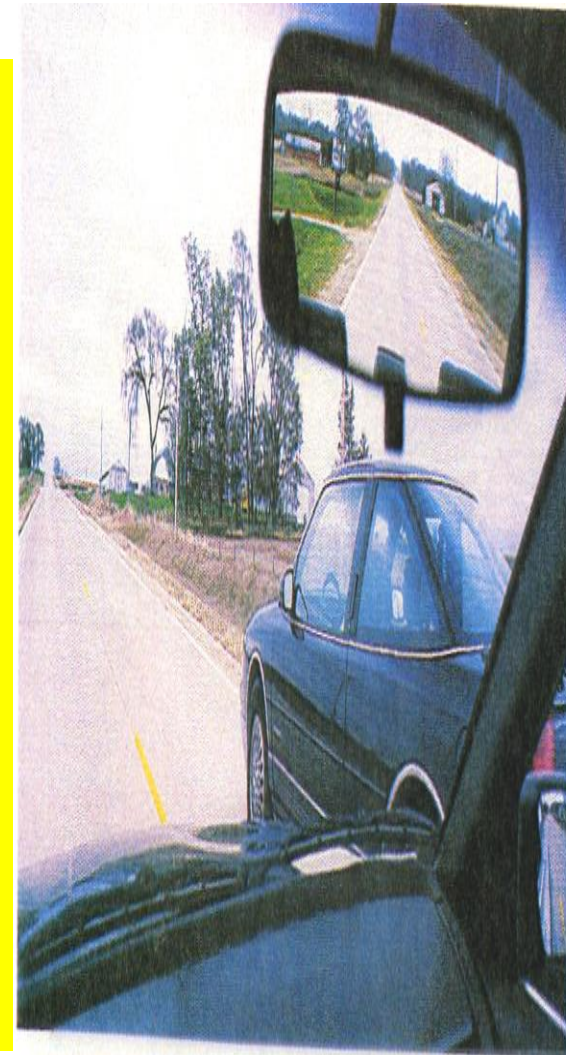
Take these actions when preparing to pass:

1. Is the vehicle ahead of you going slower than the posted speed?
2. Is it likely to be making a turn?
3. Check the roadway signs and markings.
4. Look ahead to your target area.
5. Check the roadway conditions.
6. Check your rearview mirrors.
7. Check your blind spots over your left shoulder.



# Executing a Pass on 2 Lane Roads

1. Get into position - at least 3 seconds of following distance
2. When safe - signal left and glance over left shoulder
3. Change lanes smoothly
4. Accelerate at least 10mph faster than other vehicle, not faster than the posted speed limit
5. Make final evaluations, notice problems, decide what to do
6. Maintain speed
7. Signal right lane change
8. Return smoothly and don't slow down
9. Cancel signal, adjust speed and lane position





# No Passing Situation

- Line of sight restricted ( curves)
- Space is narrow, closed front zone
- Cross-traffic is present
- Uphill
- Intersections
- Within 100 ft of railroad crossing
- Bridge or underpass
- If you exceed speed limit
- Weather conditions
- Multiple vehicles ahead (pass one at time)
- If you cannot complete before the start of a no-passing zone

# Rural Situations

1. Slow moving vehicles
2. Animals
3. Meeting oncoming traffic
4. Meeting traffic at night
5. Railroad crossings

