



CONTROVERSIES IN TSE

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Issue: Should We Teach Students to Make 'Double Stops'?

Nowhere in the RCW's does it say that double stops are required at intersections with stop signs. **RCW 46.61.190** says that after coming to a complete stop at the correct stopping position we must "yield the right of way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another road way so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard..." The word 'yield' is clarified in the Washington State Driver's Guide as meaning you "must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian, on foot or in a wheelchair, or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances"(p.40). Furthermore, **RCW 47.36.110** says that when a person approaches an intersection that has a stop sign, that the person is required to stop. Then, "A person stopping at such a sign shall proceed through that portion of the highway in a careful manner and at a reasonable rate of speed not to exceed twenty miles per hour.

We can certainly see if an intersection we are about to enter is clear or not. But if we have a closed Line of sight (LOS), it's what we can't see that might hurt us. The question becomes, "How will we know if the intersection is about to become a closing path of travel (POT) by an approaching vehicle we can't see, due to a closed LOS?" We don't know the vehicle is coming, but if we just trust what we see in front of us and enter the intersection, a collision will occur and it will be our fault because we "failed to yield". The law doesn't care that we couldn't see the vehicle coming. So, after we have executed a complete stop at the correct stop location, for any initial pedestrians or vehicles, the law puts the responsibility on each driver to determine if the intersection will be clear when we enter it.

So, it makes sense that after making our correct and complete stop, we should proceed with caution to determine if our Path of travel is open or closing. Proceeding with caution doesn't mean that we have to stop again, completely. If we can make the determination that our POT is open, while still rolling, then we may proceed safely into the intersection, without making a second stop.

The problem becomes, what do you teach young students, whose scanning skills and gap judgment and are not equal to more experienced drivers?

ISSUE: Should we teach students to make double stops

PROS:

- By requiring students to double stop, it gives inexperienced drivers more time to determine if their POT is open or closing.

CONS:

- We are teaching something that is not required by law.
- It impedes traffic flow from behind.

BEST PRACTICE

Although it's not the letter of the law to teach students to make double stops, there is no law against it either. It is in fact obeying the law by "proceeding in a careful manner". The most important thing to teach is... the importance of making a correct initial stop at the correct place, and then not proceeding until a clear LOS is established. It doesn't hurt anything to encourage them to make a second stop at that point. It gives them more time to process the situation. Making a safe determination to enter an intersection far outweighs the impedance of traffic flow from behind.

RCW 45.61.190

Vehicle entering stop or yield intersection.

(2) Except when directed to proceed by a duly authorized flagger, or a police officer, or a firefighter vested by law with authority to direct, control, or regulate traffic, every driver of a vehicle approaching a stop sign shall stop at a clearly marked stop line, but if none, before entering a marked crosswalk on the near side of the intersection or, if none, then at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where the driver has a view of approaching traffic on the intersecting roadway before entering the roadway, and after having stopped shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard during the time when such driver is moving across or within the intersection or junction of roadways.

RCW 47.36.110

Stop signs, "Yield" signs-Duties of persons using highway.

In order to provide safety at intersections on the state highway system, the department may require persons traveling upon any portion of such highway to stop before entering the intersection. For this purpose there may be erected a standard stop sign as prescribed in the state department of transportation's "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways." All persons traveling upon the highway shall come to a complete stop at such a sign, and the appearance of any sign so located is sufficient warning to a person that he or she is required to stop. A person stopping at such a sign shall proceed through that portion of the highway in a careful manner and at a reasonable rate of speed not to exceed twenty miles per hour. It is unlawful to fail to comply with the directions of any such stop sign. When the findings of a traffic engineering study show that the condition of an intersection is such that vehicles may safely enter the major artery without stopping, the department or local authorities in their respective jurisdictions shall install and maintain a "Yield" sign.

RCW 46.61.365

Emerging from alley, driveway, or building

The driver of a vehicle within a business or residence district emerging from an alley, driveway or building shall stop such vehicle immediately prior to driving onto a sidewalk or onto the sidewalk area extending across any alleyway or driveway, and shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian as may be necessary to avoid collision, and upon entering the roadway shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching on said roadway.

Washington State Driver's Guide

The law says who must *yield* the right-of-way, it does not *give* anyone the right-of-way. You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian, on foot or in a wheelchair, or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.

Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right-of-way at crosswalks and intersections, whether the crosswalk is marked or not. Drivers must yield where necessary to avoid striking pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing the road.