

CONTROVERSIES IN TSE

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ISSUE: Blind Spot Checks: SMOG, MSH, SMHC, or Signal 1-2-3?

SMOG: Signal, Mirror, over the Shoulder, Go.

MSH: Mirror, Signal, Head Check.

SMHC: Signal, Mirror, Head Check.

Signal 1-2-3: Signal, (1) big mirror, (2) side mirror, (3) head check.

I thought that I would be able to find a lot of justification for each of these techniques and find one that is 'Best Practice'. I found that each method has pros and cons and many times it depends on the situation. There seems to be, just like with most competencies that we teach, there is more than one way. Just because it is in a text book or on the internet does not always mean it is best practice.

Once you move the turn signal lever up or down it takes a few seconds for the light to start flashing, a few more seconds for the people around you to see it, and a few more for them to react by slowing down, speeding up or changing direction. That is why I feel it is important to get your signal on well in advance and sometimes the other person *might* just let you in.

The other part of this issue is depending on your speed and how much traffic there is you will have to be evaluating the space around you more frequently. You may have to check your driving environment several times before moving over. For instance, is there an entrance lane coming in or other hazards?

One thing I don't see mentioned in **SMOG, MSH, and SMHC** is checking the center rearview mirror, then the side mirror (in the direction you want to move), then check the blind spot. What if the vehicle behind you decides to lane change the same time as you?

Here is the only part covered by the RCW's.

RCW 46.61.305: When signals required — Improper use prohibited.

(1) No person shall turn a vehicle or move right or left upon a roadway unless and until such movement can be made with reasonable safety nor without giving an appropriate signal in the manner hereinafter provided.

(2) A signal of intention to turn or move right or left when required shall be given continuously during not less than the last one hundred feet traveled by the vehicle before turning.

However, on the freeway at 60 MPH, you travel about 90 feet per second, is one second sufficient time for signaling a lane change. It seems like that is what most people do. Their signal comes on when they are half way through their lane change—not before.

Drive Right text says when entering traffic from the curb to check for traffic ahead and to the rear, look over your shoulder, signal, and check rear view again. For freeway lane changing it states to Signal then check blind spot by looking over shoulder.

Wiki Answers.com says shoulder check first, then signal.

SMOG: The issue I see with this technique is that students of the age we are working with take things literally. With the word GO, they may go whether they have a closed zone or not. Gerry Apple uses this technique and it is successful for him and his students. He also says that he teaches them not to go if they have a closed zone. Is there still a margin for error with the student's interpretation of the last word being "GO"?

MSH: This technique seems that the signal would come on too late at higher speeds. Also, there should be another mirror check before the head check (MSMH). But wouldn't it be better to check your blind spot twice?

SMHC: Even with this technique the student has to be able to evaluate the zone he/she plans to occupy to determine if it is open or closed. This one should be SMMHC to include the center and side mirrors. I prefer this method because of the words used. I also teach the students that the center rearview mirror is # 1, the side mirror is # 2, and the blind spot is # 3 which is the same as the Signal 1-2-3 technique. I tell them you might hear me say signal, mirror head check, or Signal 1-2-3 (and I can point to the mirrors at the same time). That is faster and I have found the students seem to catch on much quicker. At higher speeds they still have to do several (SMHC) checks (scope out) the traffic situation around them before making a determination.

Signal 1-2-3: The drive school that Skeet Gaul works at uses "Signal, one, two, three" which is to: Signal first then 1. Check the big mirror, 2. Check the side mirror and 3. Head Check and then go if it's safe.

My recommendations:

1. Get the signal on well in advance, time for it to activate, time for others to see it and time for others to react.
2. Depending on speed and amount of traffic, scope out the traffic situation/environment around you.
3. Start the checks with the center rearview mirror, then side mirror and then blind spot.

<http://www.WikiAnswers.com>

Drive Right 10th Ed.

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