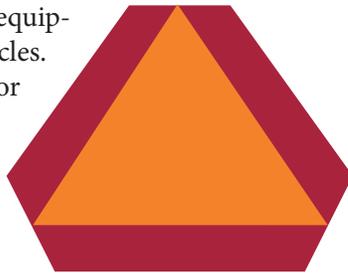




AEX-596-08

This Sign Means Caution: Driving Safely in Amish Country

This is a slow-moving vehicle sign and should be mounted on all farm machinery, including road construction equipment and animal-drawn vehicles. The sign should signal motor vehicle drivers to slow down. Vehicles displaying the slow-moving vehicle sign are prohibited by law to go faster than 25 mph.



Horses Are Not Machines

When approaching and passing a horse-drawn vehicle, remember that horses are unpredictable and even the most road-safe horse can spook at a fast-moving motor vehicle. Be sure to slow down and give buggies and horse-drawn equipment plenty of room when passing. Only pass when legal and safe.

Remember:

- **Rural Roads Are Not City Streets**
- **Even the Fastest Horse Is Slow**
- **Know “Closure Time”**
- **Horses Are Not Machines**

Driving in Amish communities is different than driving on other rural or urban highways. In Amish communities you will see horse-drawn buggies or equipment on the roadway as they travel to town or field.

Statistics show that more than 65 percent of all traffic deaths occur in rural areas and 50 percent of those deaths are on country roads. Ohio reports, on average, more than 140 buggy/motor vehicle crashes per year.

Rural Roads Are Not City Streets

Rural roads are often narrower or may vary in width more than city streets. A narrow road gives you less room to maneuver and can be especially dangerous when passing horse-drawn vehicles. A loose gravel or grass berm area can also be hazardous. Open ditches along rural roads are often deep and close to the road. Seemingly open roadways may have sharp dips or unexpected turns. In cold weather, a road shaded by trees or buildings may be icy because the sun has not shone on that part of the roadway. Blind corners created by wooded areas, corn fields, or other tall crops are also hazardous.

Normal speeds for horse-drawn buggies range between 5 mph and 8 mph. Horse-drawn vehicles may be even slower when pulling large farm equipment or when crossing intersections. Horses are not tractors or cars and will eventually become tired. Another hazard to consider is restricted vision from the driver of the horse-drawn vehicle. When pulling large loads of hay or other equipment, drivers may not be able to see cars behind them. Car drivers, therefore, need to be extra cautious when passing horse-drawn farm equipment. To avoid other possible collisions, car drivers should anticipate left-hand turns made by horse-drawn vehicles into fields and driveways.

Leave some space between your vehicle and a buggy stopped at a stop sign or light. Buggies may back up a few feet after coming to a complete stop. A good rule of thumb is to stop your vehicle far enough back so that you can see where the rear wheels of the buggy touch the road. This should give you 10–12 feet of clearance between you and the buggy. This rule does not apply to drivers of vans or mini-vans; they will have to remember to **STAY BACK**.

Even the Fastest Horse Is Slow Compared to Your Car

Knowing “closure time” is a safety factor that could save lives. “Closure time” is the time a driver has to recognize and respond when coming upon other vehicles.

Imagine traveling at 55 mph and coming upon a car traveling at 45 mph that is 500 feet (about 1/10 of a mile) ahead. After 6 seconds, you will have 412 feet to react before colliding with that car. However, if traveling at 55 mph and coming upon a horse-drawn vehicle traveling at 5 mph that is 500 feet ahead, you will have only 44 feet to react before colliding in the same 6 seconds. The car would hit the horse-drawn vehicle in just 6½ seconds. Therefore, immediately upon seeing the slow-moving vehicle emblem, slow down and prepare to pass with caution.

0 seconds



6 seconds



0 seconds



6 seconds



This Sign Means Caution, 6/93, Developed by Dr. T. L. Bean, Ms. A. J. Yarosh, Mr. T. J. Lawrence, and R. E. James. Reviewed by Dr. J. A. Gliem, Mr. R. L. Clason and R. Elaine Hitchcock.

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