

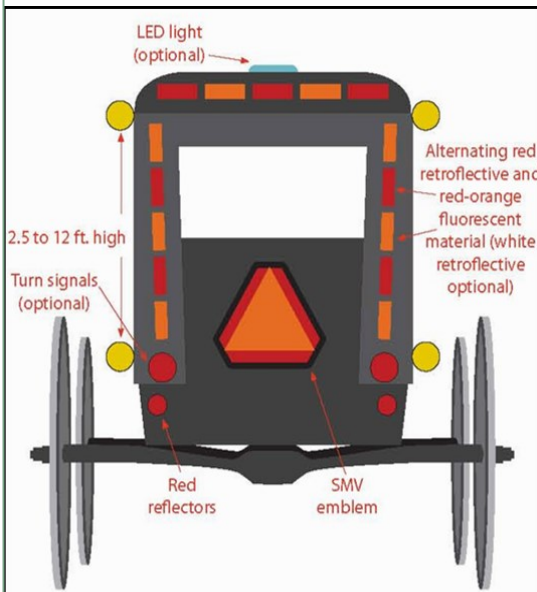
Extra care is needed at intersections with stop signs or signal lights. Buggies have a tendency to back up a few feet after making a complete stop at the stop sign. For this reason leaving ample space (10-12 feet) behind a stopped buggy is highly recommended. Extra attention by motorists is also recommended when buggies turn into driveways or fields.

### Slow Down and Enjoy the Ride

While rural roads may offer beautiful scenery and historic farmhouses, they can also present unfamiliar hazards to motorists.

In addition to slow-moving vehicles when driving along rural roads, drivers should be alert to other potential hazards, such as:

- Deep, open ditches close to the road.
- Sharp dips or unexpected turns.
- In winter, potential icy roadways.
- Hazardous blind spots created by wooded areas, cornfields or other tall crops.



**Markings, Lighting and SMV Emblem  
Used to Alert Motorists**

### References:

**Safe Driving in Amish Country.** Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, PUB 627 (6-08).  
[www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20627.pdf](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20627.pdf)

**Lighting and Marking Recommendations for Pony Carts and Other Low-Profile, Animal-Drawn Vehicles.** The Ohio State University, Extension Publication AEX-596.9.

**Lighting and Marking Recommendations for Animal-Drawn Carriages, Buggies and Wagons.** Virginia Cooperative Extension, Publication Number: 3006-1454.  
<https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/3006/3006-1454>



The AgrAbility Virginia Project provides direct education and on-site assessment to farmers and farm workers with disabilities, as well as to their family members.

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# Driving Safely in Plain Communities





# SAFE SHARING OF ROADWAYS BY BUGGIES AND AUTOMOBILES



**Be Patient and Courteous when Sharing the Road**

Slow and high-speed vehicles do not mix well on highways unless precautionary measures are taken by the operators of these vehicles. Automobiles running into slow moving vehicles on roadways are very common. Statistics show that the majority of the traffic deaths

from such accidents occur in rural areas and approximately 50% of those deaths occur on country roads.

The accident situation becomes more critical when the slow moving vehicle involved is animal drawn such as the buggies used for transportation in most Plain Communities. High incidents of buggy/automobile crashes occur in Virginia annually. The overall objective of this brochure is to familiarize the operators of buggies and automobiles with some specific steps they can take to minimize the number of accidents on highways.

## Use of the Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) Emblem

Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem (speeds less than 25 mph) developed by Ohio State University has



**Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem**

been helpful in reducing the number of SMV/automobile accidents significantly during the last three or four decades. In Virginia and in most other states the use of this emblem is required by law. When mounted on the back of the SMVs, it is found to be very effective in getting the attention of motorists following the SMV to slow down. The triangular

shaped SMV emblem has a reflective border around a fluorescent orange triangle. During the day, the bright, fluorescent orange triangle of the emblem alerts approaching motorists from more than 1,000 feet away. This can give motorists ample time to slow down. At night, the brightly glowing, reflective border of the emblem will get the attention of the motorists.

## Safe Sharing of Roads by Buggies and Automobiles

Buggies and automobiles can coexist on roads and operate safely if the operators involved follow certain safe practices. Most accidents involving buggies and automobiles on the road occur either because the motorists do not see the buggies quickly enough to react appropriately or because the motorists do not keep an adequate distance between themselves and a buggy. This part of the brochure provides specific recommendations that the drivers of the two types of vehicles can adopt to make the sharing of roadways safer.

## Recommendations for operators of buggies

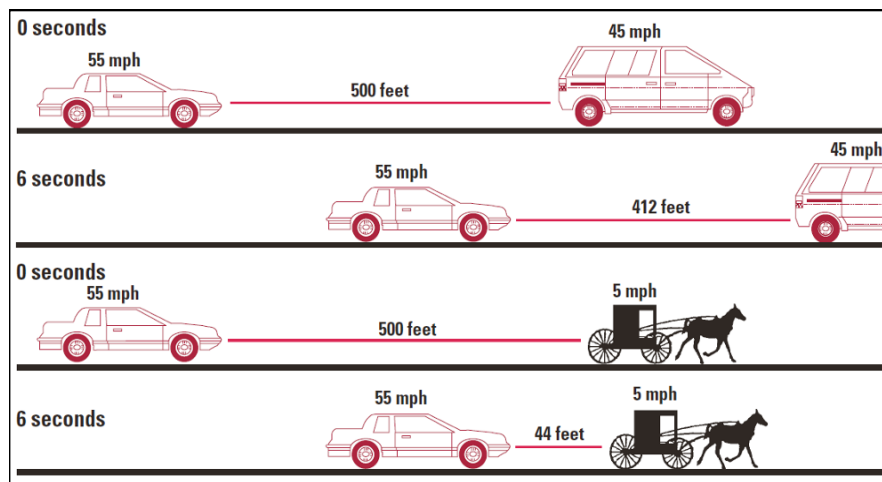
Horse-drawn buggies are dark and not clearly visible from a distance. Since they also travel at a relatively slow speed (less than 8 miles per hour), a motorist following a buggy may not have adequate time to slow down. There-

fore, it is extremely important to get the attention of motorists well in advance. A correctly placed SMV emblem alerts motorists quickly that they are approaching a SMV. While the emblem alone is effective, the use of reflective tape, and markings on the back, front and sides of the buggy also greatly enhance safety. Use of accessories such as head lamps, turn signals and amber flashers are also highly recommended. When accessories

are used, the operator must make sure that the batteries used to power them are fully charged. To assure full charge, at the end of each trip, the battery should be placed on a charger for charging.

## Recommendations for motorists

Motorist speed and reaction time are the primary causes of road accidents involving buggies and automobiles. Motorists get only a few seconds to react and slow down when a buggy is spotted on the road. The chart below illustrates this point more clearly. For example, it takes only six seconds to close the gap of 500 feet between an automobile and a horse-drawn buggy moving at the speeds of 55 and 5mph respectively. Therefore, it is extremely important that a motorist slow down immediately after spotting a slow moving vehicle. Even experienced horses pulling the buggy may be frightened with approaching vehicles. So, motorists should slow down to avoid frightening the horse. Also, allow plenty of room to pass safely and pass only when legally permitted and safe. (Never pass on hills and turns, etc.)



**Time Needed for Closing Gap between Two Vehicles Moving at Different Speeds**