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- Summary
The turn signal is an important safety feature that helps prevent accidents by letting other drivers and pedestrians know the intentions of the driver.

The turn signals are typically located on the front and rear of the vehicle and are activated by a lever on the steering column.

When a driver intends to make a turn, they activate the turn signal by moving the lever up or down, depending on the direction they want to turn. This triggers a flashing light on the front and rear of the vehicle that indicates to others on the road that the driver is planning to turn in a particular direction.

It is important for drivers to use their turn signals properly and at the appropriate time to avoid confusion and prevent accidents on the road.
According to a study conducted by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), drivers who fail to use their turn signals accounts for over 2 million accidents annually. Comparatively, distracted driving accounts for around 950,000 accidents annually. Many drivers do not appreciate the importance of turn signals.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that failure to use turn signals is one of the most common causes of accidents, accounting for approximately 2% of all crashes.

NHTSA also reports that drivers who fail to signal their turns or lane changes are more likely to engage in other unsafe driving behaviors, such as speeding or distracted driving.

A survey conducted by Response Insurance found that roughly one-third of drivers fail to use turn signals when changing lanes, and nearly half fail to signal when making a turn.

The use of turn signals has been shown to reduce the likelihood of being involved in a collision by up to 40%, according to a study by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.
Benefits of Using a Turn Signal

➢ Improved communication: Turn signals help drivers to communicate their intentions to other drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists on the road. Proper use will make it easier for others to anticipate their movements and avoid collisions.

➢ Increased visibility: Turn signals are often accompanied by flashing lights, which can help to increase the visibility of the vehicle, especially in low-light conditions or bad weather.

➢ Reduced confusion: Without turn signals, it can be difficult for other drivers to know whether a vehicle is planning to turn or change lanes. This can lead to confusion and unpredictable driving behavior.

➢ Compliance with traffic laws: Using turn signals is not only a good safety practice, but it is also a legal requirement in many places.
How Do You Signal?

➢ **Signal early (before starting/making a maneuver).**
  ▪ This sends a signal that you’re about to change lanes or turn so that other drivers can slow down and allow more following space.
  ▪ If you signal late (i.e., as you’re making your move), you’re not giving enough notice to make a difference – the other drivers may run into you before they realize what you’re doing.

➢ **Allow the signal to run through multiple cycles.**
  ▪ Give yourself a few seconds (a couple cycles of the signal) *before* making a move. One blink of your signal isn’t enough to catch someone’s attention.
  ▪ Allow the signal to cycle four or more times to be sure that others spot the signal.

➢ **Judge your timing carefully in congested streets or where there may be confusion.**
  ▪ If there are multiple streets, driveways, or entrances between you and where you want to turn, wait until you have passed them to signal.
  ▪ Similarly, if another vehicle is about to enter the street between you and where you plan to turn, wait until you have passed it to signal your turn.
When to Signal: Pulling Out from the Curb

Before leaving a parking spot on the side of the street, it is important to indicate you’re about to merge into traffic. After getting in your car, activate your turn signal in the direction you wish to merge. For instance, if you are parked on the right side of the street and you wish to merge into the lane parallel to your vehicle on the left side:

1. Activate your left-hand turn signal by pulling down on the signal lever.
2. Check your side mirror to ensure there is space in the flow of traffic to pull out, then turn your wheel hard to the left and accelerate gently.
3. Return the signal lever to the neutral (starting) position by pushing up gently on it.
When merging onto the highway, accelerate quickly so that you attain the speed appropriate for highway driving. About halfway down the on-ramp, flick your left-hand turn signal on. This will demonstrate that you want to get over, but remember, you do not have the right-of-way when merging. Be careful when merging into high-speed traffic.

While some highways are constructed in such a way that there is no other option but to merge, some on-ramps turn into independent lanes which connect to the next exit if it is nearby. In either case, using your turn signal will alert other highway drivers to your desire to merge, and will give them time to slow down or change lanes in order to let you do so.

Look out your left-side window when merging into highway traffic. This will allow you to see where cars are relative to you, and you will be able to time your merge better. Check your rear-view mirror and left side mirror as you merge in order to identify a gap in the flow of traffic.

Once you’ve found your gap, merge quickly to the left. Spend no more than 2-3 seconds moving from the on-ramp to the highway.
When to Signal: While Changing Lanes

➢ Activate the turn signal at least five seconds before you wish to change lanes.

➢ Don’t switch the signal on for just one or two flickers. Place it in the locked position just as you would when making a turn.

➢ If all is clear, turn your wheel slightly toward the lane you wish to merge into. Once you’re completely within the boundaries of the lane, move your left hand to your turn signal lever and switch it off.

➢ Do not cross multiple lanes of traffic with a single activation of your turn signal. If you know you need to cross many lanes, give yourself the adequate time and space to do so. Plan your lane merges ahead of time.
The consequences of failing to signal, or signaling late, can include any of the following:

- a “near miss” (a collision that didn’t quite happen)
- a “safety complaint report”
- a ticket with fines and increased insurance costs

Signaling is a habit, and it should be reinforced whenever you drive. If you’re alone on the highway, signaling is still complying with the law – even if no one else sees you do it.

Be careful – most drivers don’t use their signals consistently.

Even if the other drivers ignore your signals, you should provide the warning.

Overall, turn signals are a crucial safety feature that helps to prevent accidents, reduce confusion, and promote safe driving behavior. It is important for drivers to use them regularly and for other road users to be aware of their meaning and significance.