

California DMV Permit Cheat Sheet

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Top 10 Most-Missed Topics

- Right-of-way at 4-way stops (first to arrive goes first; tie ' vehicle on the right)
- Who yields at an uncontrolled intersection (vehicle on the left yields to the right)
- Safe following distance (3-4 second rule in good weather; double in rain)
- Road sign shapes (octagon = stop, inverted triangle = yield, diamond = warning, pentagon = school zone)
- School zone speed limit and how to interpret flashing yellow lights
- When you must stop for a school bus (almost always, both directions, unless divided highway)
- Parking distance from fire hydrants (typically 15 feet)
- Parking distance from crosswalks / stop signs (typically 20 feet)
- BAC limits (0.08% adult, 0.02% under 21, 0.04% commercial)
- Hand signals for turning and stopping (left arm: up=right, straight=left, down=stop)

California-Specific Gotchas

- California requires FRONT and REAR license plates (CVC 5200(a)) — rear-only is WRONG in CA
- Hands-free only for drivers over 18; no phone use at all for under-18
- 'Move Over' law: move over or slow down for any emergency or utility vehicle with flashing lights
- Minimum following distance in fog: one vehicle length for every 10 mph of speed

Test Day Tips

- Arrive 15 minutes early — some DMVs stop accepting walk-ins before the posted close time
- Read every question fully before looking at answer choices — the DMV writes tricky distractors
- Skip and return — most DMV testing software lets you flag and come back to hard questions
- If you're stuck between two answers, pick the safer / more conservative driving behavior
- Don't guess on the first pass; use elimination. Guess only after you've gone through once

What to Bring

- Primary ID (birth certificate, passport, or permanent resident card)
- Proof of Social Security number (card, W-2, or pay stub)
- Two proofs of residency (utility bill, lease, school records, bank statement)
- Parent or legal guardian if under 18 (California requires parental consent for minors)
- Payment for the permit fee (check your state's current fee)
- Driver education certificate if required by your state

Ready to actually pass?

DMVPermit gives you the full California question bank, AI explanations for every answer, and spaced repetition that surfaces your weak spots. One payment, \$39.99.

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