

## TWO LANE ROADS Be Extra Cautious

It's a shock when the freeway ends and you find yourself on a two-lane road. You may grow impatient with the slower traffic and want to take chances in order to maintain your speed.

This is a mistake. Almost twice as many fatal crashes take place on narrow rural roads as on the interstates, even though the bulk of cross-country traffic now follows the big highways. Know how to drive safely on back roads and you'll survive their dangers.

### **Speed Is Deadly**

The main cause of all traffic fatalities is excess speed, but it's even more true on rural highways.

It's far more risky to drive fast on a narrow highway than on a wider one. There are several reasons.

The faster you go, the harder it is to spot traffic hazards in time to respond to them. In addition, you have less room to take evasive action if something gets in your way.

Finally, there's the fact that opposing traffic is constantly whizzing by you with only a few feet to spare. Even a slight error of judgment can result in a head-on crash.

### **How to Improve The Odds**

Regardless of the posted limit, you should always avoid driving faster than traffic and road conditions allow.

When other drivers are eager to pass you, it takes discipline to maintain a safe following distance on a narrow highway. But it's important to do so. Maintain a proper interval. If others cut in front of you, drop back to re-open up the gap.

Keep your vehicle going in a straight line. Focus on an imaginary point in the middle of your driving lane, about a half mile ahead of you.

### **Evasive Action**

You face the constant danger that someone will cross the center line. Be prepared to take evasive action,

even if it means going off the highway.

Be most cautious when roadside conditions make this impossible. Slow down and avoid meeting an oncoming vehicle at any spot where you can't swing out to prevent a collision.

You're highly vulnerable on hills and curves. As you approach them, be mentally prepared for vehicles that may try to pass in a blind area.

### **To Pass or Not to Pass?**

The most dangerous moment on any narrow highway comes when you are passing another vehicle or someone is passing you. Follow these guidelines: Avoid passing if you can. If you must do it, watch for signs that tell you when it's safe. Once you've made up your mind to pass, complete the maneuver as swiftly as possible.

Signal before you pull out. Make sure the driver ahead of you knows what you plan to do. Check the



road ahead and behind. Be sure you have room to pass, but be equally sure that someone else isn't overtaking you at the same time.

### **Few Fender-Benders**

Drive with your headlights on. Stay as far to the right as it's safe to go. And remember: crashes on two-lane highways usually tend to be serious, because traffic is moving fast and there's little room for error. Under such circumstances, there are few fender-benders.