



Traffic Circles 101

The purpose of this brochure is to answer many of the misconceptions with regard to negotiating intersections with traffic circles. As you read through the different scenarios in this brochure reflect back on your own experiences driving through traffic circles.

What are some of the basic rules for negotiating intersections with traffic circles? First, slow down well in advance of reaching the circle; the right-of-way is equal for all approaches; the higher volume street does not have a preferential right-of-way over the lower volume street.

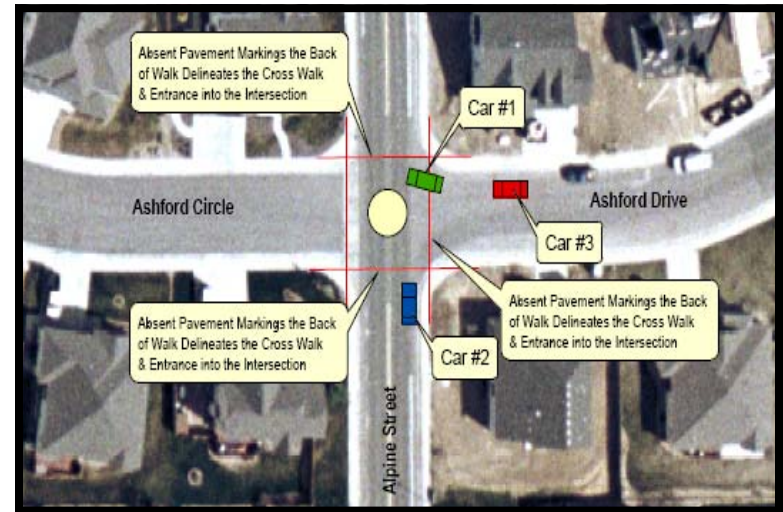
Second, you must yield to the cars that are already in the circle/intersection.

Third, you must yield to the car on your left. Please note, this is different than the normal right-of-way rule during which the car on the right has the right-of-way when two cars reach an unsignalized intersection at the same time.

Fourth, never turn left under the circle. One must always negotiate traffic circles in a counter-clockwise direction.

While it's impossible to prevent all automobile accidents, following these simple rules should minimize conflicts with other drivers.

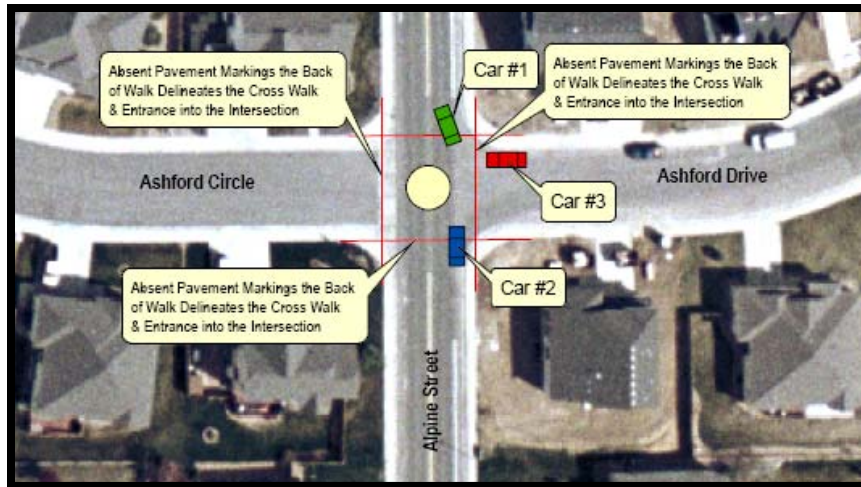
Traffic Circle Scenario #1



While drivers on the left typically have the right-of-way in a traffic circle situation, in the first scenario Car #1 has the right-of-way because it is already in the circle/intersection.

Which car do you think has the right-of-way in Scenario #2?

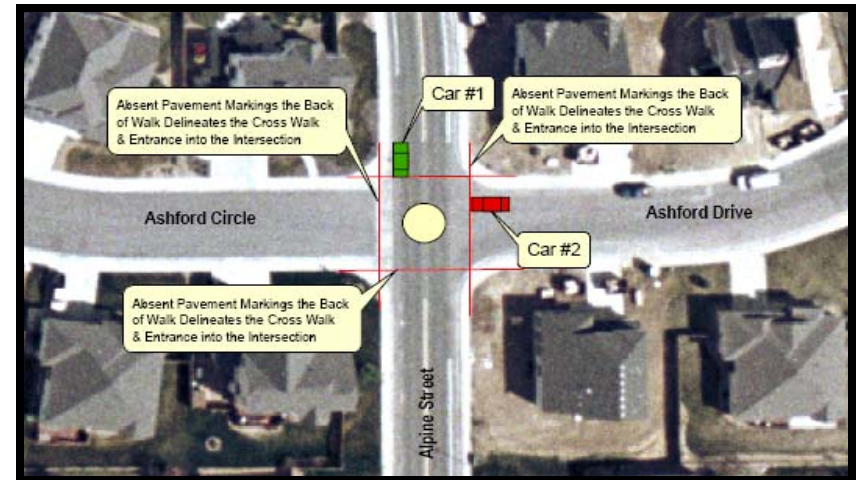
Traffic Circle Scenario #2



In this scenario Car #1 is still in the intersection, but is in the process of exiting the intersection/circle. Consequently, any car with the right-of-way may enter the intersection if it is safe to do so.

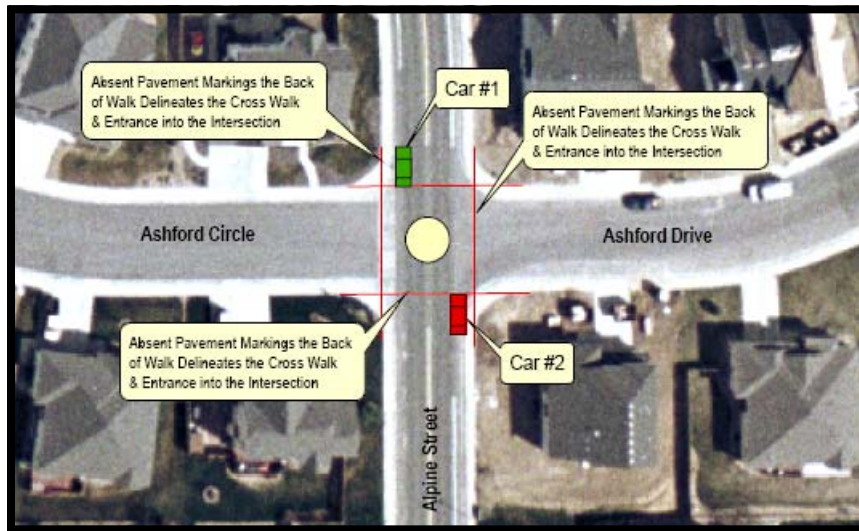
What about Cars #2 and #3? In this case, Car #3 must yield to Car #2. Car #2 is both in the intersection/circle AND on Car #3's left. Car #3 must wait until Car #2 has past Car #3's point of entry before proceeding into and through the circle.

Traffic Circle Scenario #3



In this scenario, Cars #1 & #2 reach the intersection at the same time. Because Car #2 is to Car #1's left, Car #2 has the right-of-way. However, even though Car #2 has the right-of-way the driver of Car #2 would maximize their safety by not insisting on it. If you insist on your right-of-way, you may be setting yourself up for an accident. Not only should drivers consider right-of-way in their decision-making process, but also other factors like road conditions, visibility and the approach speeds of cross traffic. As in all things in life, common sense should prevail.

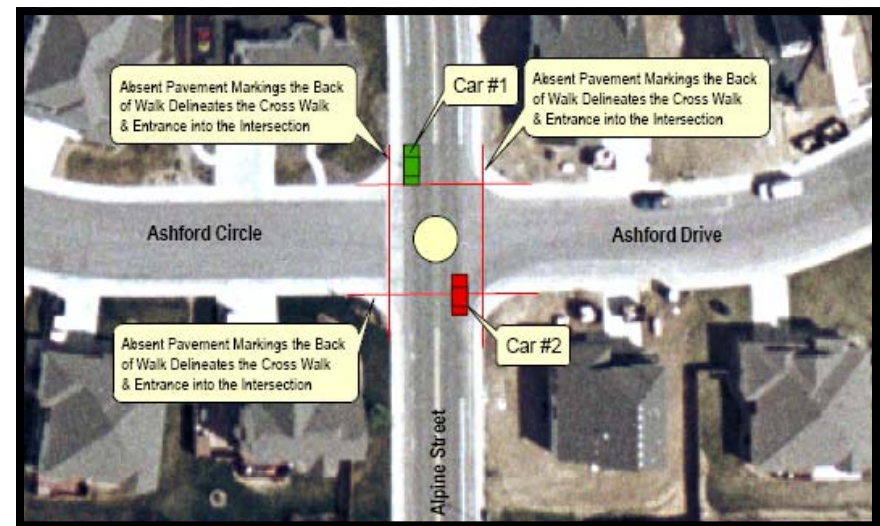
Traffic Circle Scenario #4



In “Scenario #4” Cars #1 & #2 are approaching the circle from opposite directions and reach the intersection at the same time. Both cars may proceed through the circle at the same time without yielding. As in all cases, the drivers should exercise reasonable caution.

What about scenario #5?

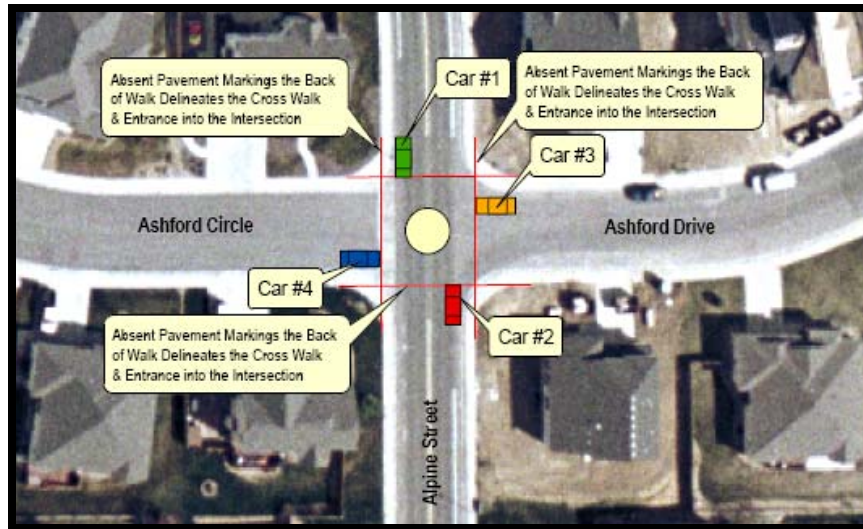
Traffic Circle Scenario #5



In Scenario #5, Car #2 has the right-of-way because it is in the intersection/circle.

Car #1 must wait to proceed until Car #2 crosses Car #1’s point of entry by negotiating around the circle or exits the circle by either turning right or proceeding straight.

Traffic Circle Scenario #6



In this scenario, 4 cars reach the intersection at the exact same time. Technically, all cars have the right-of-way because they are all on someone else's left.

The drivers should make eye contact with one another, (especially the driver to their left), and offer a visual clue as to their intentions. Waving the driver to their left through as they wait would be the safest thing to do.

Traffic Safety Tips

Traffic Safety Tip: "Always Wear Your Safety Belt & Properly Restrain Children"

According to the National Traffic Safety Administration, safety belts could save almost 50% of the lives lost each year. Colorado law requires adults to wear safety belts. The law also requires infants to ride in a rear-facing child safety seat until they are at least one year old or weigh at least 20 pounds and children ages one to four years old that weigh from 20 pounds up to 40 pounds to be restrained in a forward facing child safety seat.

Traffic Safety Tip: "Don't Drink and Drive"

A large percentage of traffic fatalities are caused by drunk drivers. In Colorado you are legally intoxicated if you have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08. If you are going to drink and drive, do so in moderation or bring a designated driver along with you.

Traffic Safety Tip: "The Street is NOT a Playground"

The street is an inappropriate place for children to play. Children should be directed to stay out of the street at all times; to play only in their yards; to never go out into the street or cross the street without looking left, then right then left again. Streets are designed for the efficient movement of automobile traffic and in many cases bicycle traffic. They are not designed nor intended to be used as playgrounds.

Traffic Safety Tip: "Look Left, then Right, then Left Again Before Crossing the Street"

Many pedestrians believe that they have an unlimited right-of-way and that automobile drivers must stop for them if they are standing at the side of the road. This isn't the case. Pedestrians are required to wait until there is a sufficient gap in traffic such that they can cross the street safely without causing a conflict with automobiles. Drivers should not stop for pedestrians waiting on the curb. Drivers should only stop for pedestrians if they are already in the process of crossing the street. Only when the road is clear of traffic should a pedestrian attempt to cross.

Traffic Safety Tip: "Where there's a ball, there's a kid"

If you're driving in a neighborhood and you see a ball roll out into the street, a child is probably not far behind. Prepare to stop. Expect a child to run into the street to retrieve their ball.

Traffic Safety Tip: "Drive the Speed Limit"

For every mile per hour, your car is traveling 1.47 feet per second. At 25 mph your car is traveling over 36.75 feet per second. Reaction time for most people is 3/4 of a second. The reaction distance for a car traveling 25 mph is calculated as follows: (25 mph x 1.47 feet x .75) = 27 feet. This figure does not include braking distance which is affected by things like weather. Keep this in mind because at any time, a child could dart out behind a parked car and the faster you're going, the greater the risk that you won't be able to stop in time.

Traffic Safety Tip: "Keep Your Dog and Cat on a Leash"

The Longmont City leash law requires all dogs to be on a lead and under control of their owner if not in a fenced yard. While the leash law doesn't apply to cats, cat owners are also encouraged to keep their feline friends on a lead. Pets weighing only a few pounds are no match for a car that weighs several thousand pounds, even if the car is traveling slowly.