

Getting Around on National Forest Roads



Getting around on National Forest roads is different from driving on a city street, or State Highway.

This brochure tells how to determine road conditions from signs, maps, and road entrance conditions. This will help you choose which National Forest roads will best fit your vehicle capabilities and the driving experiences you desire. It also provides safe driving information.

You will find out about . . .

- How route markers help describe conditions.
- Which roads are not suitable for automobiles.
- Which roads are safe for logging use only.
- Using turnouts and other safety tips.



Please remember ...

- Most National Forest roads in Oregon and Washington are low-standard, one-lane roads with turnouts for meeting oncoming traffic. Many roads on the east side of the Cascade Mountains are not graveled. Most roads are not maintained or snowplowed in winter weather.
- Food, gas, and lodging are seldom available along National Forest roads.
- Encounters with logging trucks are likely, even on weekends.
- Driving rules used on State Highways apply to National Forest roads.
- The first step for enjoyable travel is to obtain a map of the National Forest you plan to visit. Maps are sold at Forest Service offices, through the mail, and at Nature of the Northwest web site www.naturenw.org. For a minimal fee, information on roads, trails, campgrounds and more is at your fingertips.

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The route markers shown below identify the two types of National Forest roads maintained for passenger car use. These

markers are posted at the entrance of primary and secondary routes. Primary routes usually offer the better choice for the traveler. Secondary routes may not be as smooth or maintained as well.

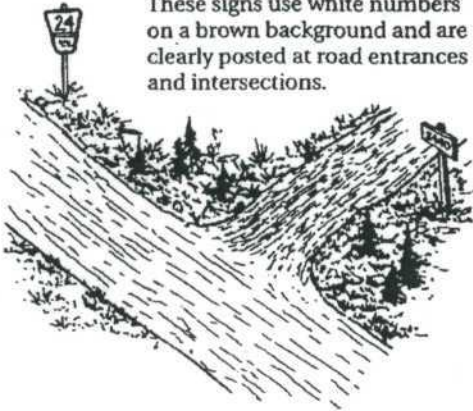


National Forest primary route marker.

National Forest secondary route marker.



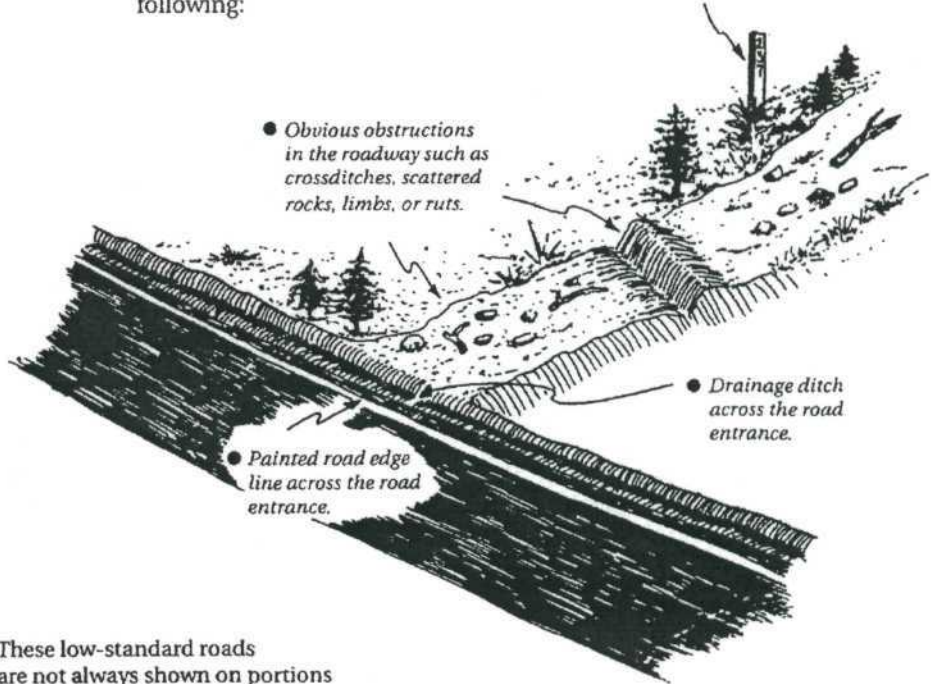
These signs use white numbers on a brown background and are clearly posted at road entrances and intersections.



Roads not suitable for passenger car use can be identified by one or more of the following:

● Route markers numbered vertically or placed away from road entrance.

● Obvious obstructions in the roadway such as crossditches, scattered rocks, limbs, or ruts.



● Drainage ditch across the road entrance.

● Painted road edge line across the road entrance.

These low-standard roads are not always shown on portions of some National Forest maps.

If you choose to drive these roads, plan to encounter rocks and boulders, road washouts, downed trees and brush encroaching on the roadway.

For safety, use a vehicle suitable for rough travel and carry extra equipment such as axe, shovel, gloves, and extra fuel.



Some roads are for commercial use only.

When the following sign is up, you should not use the road even though it may look well maintained.

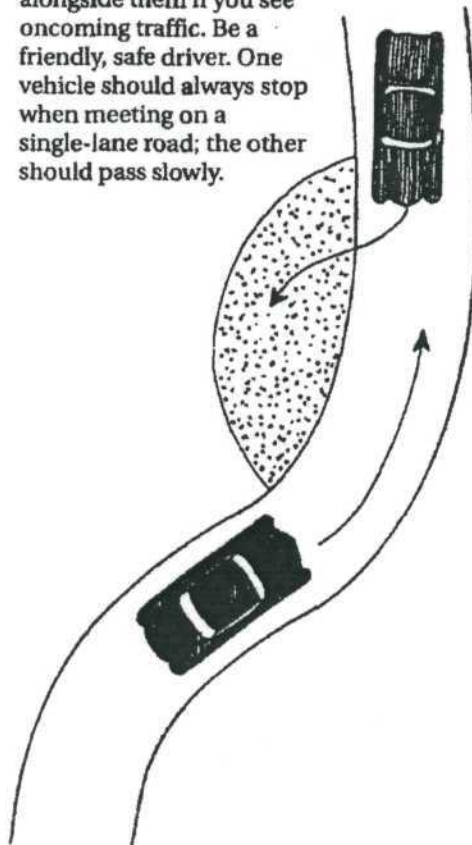


These roads are planned for commercial activities and heavy truck use that is likely to be more hazardous than commercial use on other roads without this sign. Check with the nearest National Forest office to see when these roads will be available for firewood gathering or other uses.



Turnouts

When driving on one-lane National Forest roads, watch for turnouts and be prepared to stop and wait in, or alongside them if you see oncoming traffic. Be a friendly, safe driver. One vehicle should always stop when meeting on a single-lane road; the other should pass slowly.



Safety Tips

Drive at a reasonable speed; most National Forest roads are low-standard roads and are not designed or maintained for high speeds. Your line of sight is often obstructed by trees, brush, hills, or sharp curves, and your vehicle cannot stop as quickly on gravel or dirt surfaces as on paved streets.

Remember, when driving on single lane roads, vehicles will be approaching you in the same lane. Your available stopping distance is less than half the distance to an oncoming vehicle.

- Drive defensively.
- Keep to the right.
- Expect to meet logging trucks, even if the road is not signed.
- Don't drive in the dust of other vehicles.
- Park well off the road, but don't block turnouts.

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