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GOING FULL CIRCLE

Traffic roundabouts make dangerous intersections safer for drivers. Here's how to navigate them with ease.

Communities across America are acknowledging the impressive safety benefits of modern traffic roundabouts. Smaller in scale and designed with sharper curves than old-fashioned rotaries or traffic circles, they force traffic to slow down.

Compared to the rest of the world, the U.S. has been slow to accept driving in circles. To date, about 2,600 traffic roundabouts have been built across the country, contrasted with more than 30,000 in France alone.

Research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) shows that roundabouts reduce collisions by slowing traffic and eliminating left turns in front of oncoming traffic.

"Where a roundabout has replaced traffic signals or four-way stops, head-on collisions have been virtually eliminated," says Dave Melton, industry director of transportation with the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety. "And fender benders that do occur tend to be a lot less severe."

How do you successfully go through a roundabout without getting yourself into a spin?

- 1 Slow down as you approach**, and yield to traffic coming from your left that's already within the roundabout.
- 2 Keep moving.** If there's no approaching traffic, you're not required to stop, so ease into the circle. Once inside the roundabout, don't stop unless it's to avoid a collision.
- 3 Want to take the first exit?** Stay in the right lane—and always use your turn signal.

If you're in a multilane roundabout, stay in your lane and plan your exit strategy early. Avoid the inside lane next to an 18-wheeler or any vehicle with a long trailer. They need extra room and can cut into the inside lane during tight turns.

→ **VISIT www.iihs.org/research/qanda/roundabouts.html** for more information about roundabouts and their safety record.

*Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

