

# UNIT-II

# Sight distance

## Overview

- ▣ The safe and efficient operation of vehicles on the road depends very much on the visibility of the road ahead of the driver. Thus the geometric design of the road should be done such that any obstruction on the road length could be visible to the driver from some distance ahead . This distance is said to be the sight distance.
- ▣ Sight distance available from a point is the actual distance along the road surface, over which a driver from a specified height above the carriage way has visibility of stationary or moving objects.

# Types of sight distance

- ▣ Stopping sight distance (SSD) or the absolute minimum sight distance
- ▣ Intermediate sight distance (ISD) is defined as twice SSD
- ▣ Overtaking sight distance (OSD) for safe overtaking operation
- ▣ Head light sight distance is the distance visible to a driver during night driving under the illumination of head lights
- ▣ Safe sight distance to enter into an intersection
- The most important consideration in all these is that at all times the driver traveling at the design speed of the highway must have sufficient carriageway distance within his line of vision to allow him to stop his vehicle

# sight distance depends on:

- ▣ Reaction time of the driver
- ▣ Speed of the vehicle
- ▣ Efficiency of brakes
- ▣ Frictional resistance between the tyre and the road
- ▣ Gradient of the road.

## sight distance depends on:

### Reaction time of the driver

- ❑ Reaction time of a driver is the time taken from the instant the object is visible to the driver to the instant when the brakes are applied.
- ❑ The total reaction time may be split up into four components based on PIEV theory.
- ❑ In practice, all these times are usually combined into a total perception-reaction time suitable for design purposes as well as for easy measurement.
- ❑ Many of the studies shows that drivers require about 1.5 to 2 secs under normal conditions. However, taking into consideration the variability of driver characteristics, a higher value is normally used in design. For example, IRC suggests a reaction time of 2.5 secs.



# Speed of the vehicle

- ▣ The speed of the vehicle very much affects the sight distance. Higher the speed, more time will be required to stop the vehicle. Hence it is evident that, as the speed increases, sight distance also increases.

# Efficiency of brakes

- ▣ The efficiency of the brakes depends upon the age of the vehicle, vehicle characteristics etc. If the brake efficiency is 100%, the vehicle will stop the moment the brakes are applied.
- ▣ But practically, it is not possible to achieve 100% brake efficiency. Therefore the sight distance required will be more when the efficiency of brakes are less.
- ▣ Also for safe geometric design, we assume that the vehicles have only 50% brake efficiency

# Frictional resistance between the tyre and the road

- ▣ The frictional resistance between the tyre and road plays an important role to bring the vehicle to stop.
- ▣ When the frictional resistance is more, the vehicles stop immediately. Thus sight required will be less.
- ▣ No separate provision for brake efficiency is provided while computing the sight distance.
- ▣ This is taken into account along with the factor of longitudinal friction. IRC has specified the value of longitudinal friction in between 0.35 to 0.4.



## Gradient of the road.

- ▣ Gradient of the road also affects the sight distance. While climbing up a gradient, the vehicle can stop immediately. Therefore sight distance required is less.
- ▣ While descending a gradient, gravity also comes into action and more time will be required to stop the vehicle. Sight distance required will be more in this case.

## Stopping sight distance

- ▣ **Stopping sight distance (SSD)** is the minimum sight distance available on a highway at any spot having sufficient length to enable the driver to stop a vehicle traveling at design speed, safely without collision with any other obstruction.
- ▣ **Safe stopping distance**-It is the distance a vehicle travels from the point at which a situation is first perceived to the time the deceleration is complete.
  - Drivers must have adequate time if they are to suddenly respond to a situation. Thus in highway design, sight distance at least equal to the safe stopping distance should be provided.
  - The stopping sight distance is the sum of lag distance and the braking distance.

- ▣ **Lag distance** is the distance the vehicle travelled during the reaction time  $t$  and is given by  $vt$ , where  $v$  is the velocity in m/sec.
- ▣ **Braking distance** is the distance travelled by the vehicle during braking operation.
- ▣ For a level road **braking distance** is obtained by equating the work done in stopping the vehicle and the kinetic energy of the vehicle. If  $F$  is the maximum frictional force developed and the braking distance is  $l$ , then work done against friction in stopping the vehicle is  $F l = f W l$  where  $W$  is the total weight of the vehicle. The kinetic energy at the design speed is

$$\frac{1}{2} m v^2 = \frac{1}{2} \frac{W v^2}{g}$$

$$f W l = \frac{W v^2}{2g}$$

$$l = \frac{v^2}{2gf}$$

- SSD = lag distance + braking distance and given by

$$SSD = vt + \frac{v^2}{2gf}$$

- where  $v$  is the design speed in m/sec,  $t$  is the reaction time in sec,  $g$  is the acceleration due to gravity and  $f$  is the coefficient of friction.

## Coefficient of longitudinal friction

Speed, kmph	<30	40	50	60	>80
$f$	0.40	0.38	0.37	0.36	0.35



- ▣ Ascending gradient of say +n%, the component of gravity adds to braking action and hence braking distance is decreased. The component of gravity acting parallel to the surface which adds to the the braking force is equal to  $W \sin \alpha \approx W \tan \alpha = Wn/100$ . Equating kinetic energy and work done:

$$\left( fW + \frac{Wn}{100} \right) l = \frac{Wv^2}{2g}$$
$$l = \frac{v^2}{2g \left( f + \frac{n}{100} \right)}$$

Similarly the braking distance can be derived for a descending gradient. Therefore the general equation is given by Equation

$$SSD = vt + \frac{v^2}{2g(f \pm 0.01n)}$$

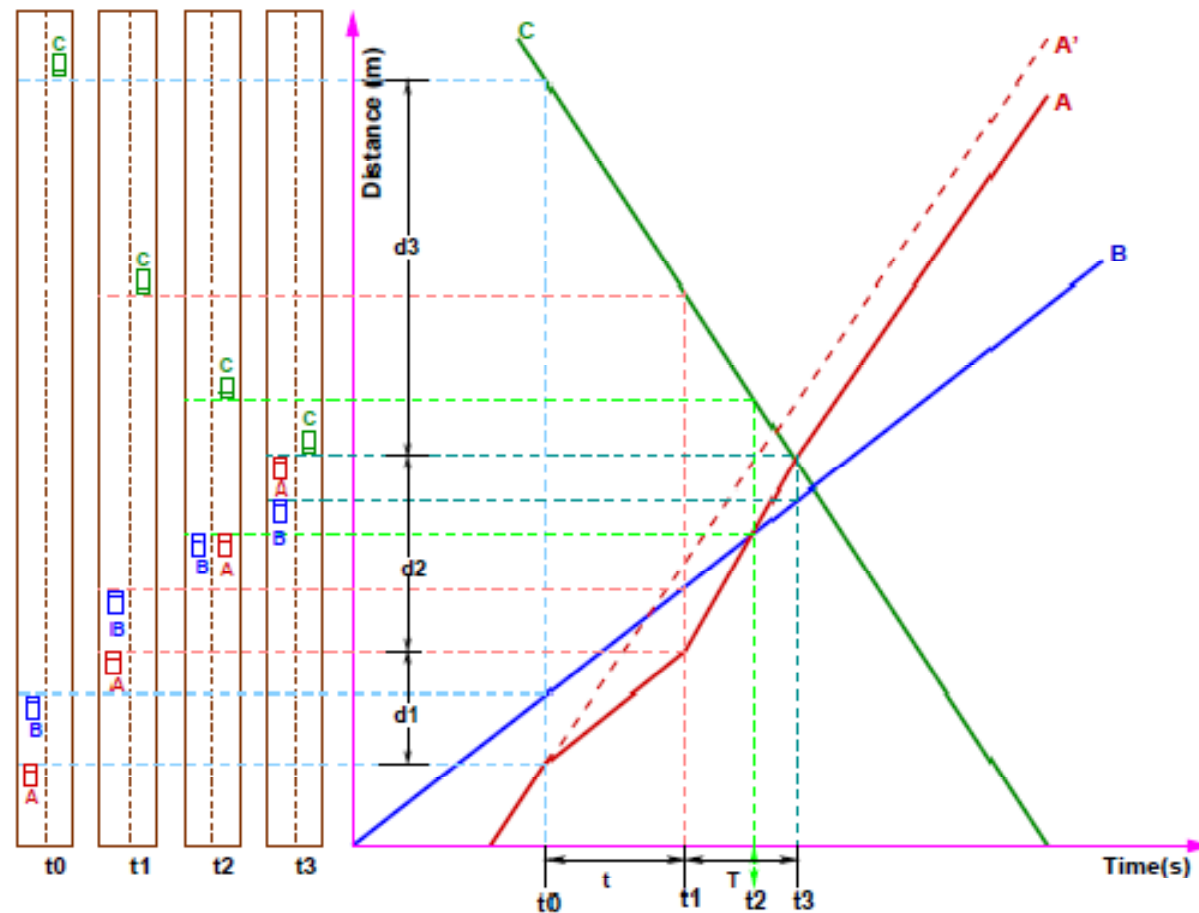
## Overtaking sight distance(OSD)

- ▣ The overtaking sight distance is the minimum distance open to the vision of the driver of a vehicle intending to overtake the slow vehicle ahead safely against the traffic in the opposite direction.
- ▣ The overtaking sight distance or passing sight distance is measured along the centre line of the road over which a driver with his eye level 1.2m above the road surface can see the top of an object 1.2 m above the road surface.

# The factors that affect the OSD

- ▣ Velocities of the overtaking vehicle, overtaken vehicle and of the vehicle coming in the opposite direction.
- ▣ Spacing between vehicles, which in-turn depends on the speed
- ▣ Skill and reaction time of the driver
- ▣ Rate of acceleration of overtaking vehicle
- ▣ Gradient of the road

# Time-space diagram: Illustration of overtaking sight distance



- ▣ The x-axis denotes the time and y-axis shows the distance travelled by the vehicles. The trajectory of the slow moving vehicle (B) is shown as a straight line which indicates that it is traveling at a constant speed. A fast moving vehicle (A) is traveling behind the vehicle B. The trajectory of the vehicle is shown initially with a steeper slope.
- ▣ The dotted line indicates the path of the vehicle A if B was absent. The vehicle A slows down to follow the vehicle B as shown in the figure with same slope from  $t_0$  to  $t_1$ . Then it overtakes the vehicle B and occupies the left lane at time  $t_3$ . The time duration  $T = t_3 - t_1$  is the actual duration of the overtaking operation. The snapshots of the road at time  $t_0$ ;  $t_1$ , and  $t_3$  are shown on the left side of the figure. From the Figure , the overtaking sight distance consists of three parts.



- ▣  $d_1$  the distance travelled by overtaking vehicle A during the reaction time  $t = t_1 - t_0$
- ▣  $d_2$  the distance travelled by the vehicle during the actual overtaking operation  $T = t_3 - t_1$
- ▣  $d_3$  is the distance travelled by on-coming vehicle C during the overtaking operation (T).  
Therefore:

$$OSD = d_1 + d_2 + d_3$$

- ▣ It is assumed that the vehicle A is forced to reduce its speed to  $v_b$ , the speed of the slow moving vehicle B and travels behind it during the reaction time  $t$  of the driver. So  $d_1$  is given by:

$$d_1 = v_b t$$

- Then the vehicle A starts to accelerate, shifts the lane, overtake and shift back to the original lane. The vehicle A maintains the spacing  $s$  before and after overtaking. The spacing  $s$  in m is given by:

$$s = 0.7v_b + 6$$

- Let  $T$  be the duration of actual overtaking. The distance travelled by B during the overtaking operation is  $2s + v_b T$ . Also, during this time, vehicle A accelerated from initial velocity  $v_b$  and overtaking is completed while reaching final velocity  $v$ . Hence the distance travelled is given by:

$$d_2 = v_b T + \frac{1}{2} a T^2$$

$$2s + v_b T = v_b T + \frac{1}{2} a T^2$$

$$2s = \frac{1}{2} a T^2$$

$$T = \sqrt{\frac{4s}{a}}$$

$$d_2 = 2s + v_b \sqrt{\frac{4s}{a}}$$

- ▣ The distance travelled by the vehicle C moving at design speed  $v$  m/sec during overtaking operation is given by:

$$d_3 = vT$$

- ▣ The the overtaking sight distance is

$$OSD = v_b t + 2s + v_b \sqrt{\frac{4s}{a}} + vT$$



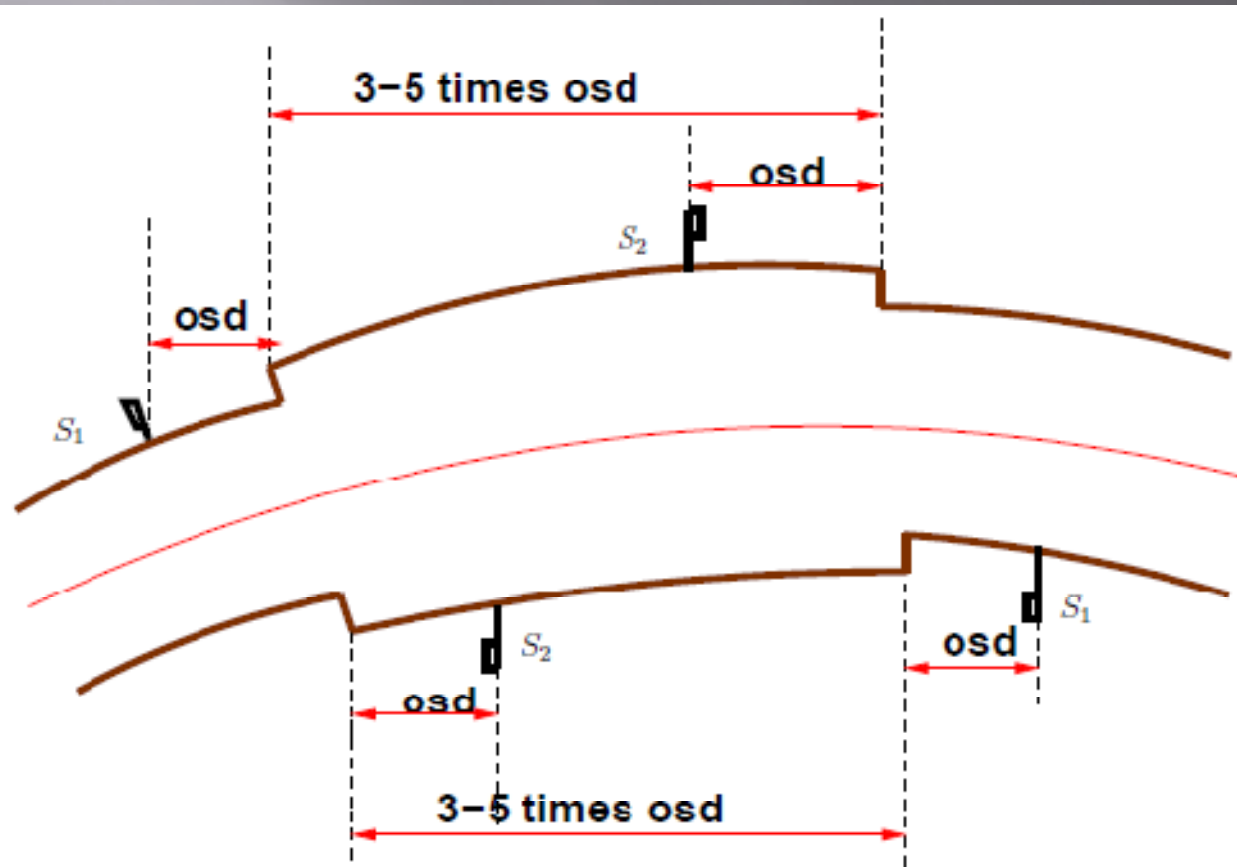
# Maximum overtaking acceleration at different speeds

Speed (kmph)	Maximum overtaking acceleration (m/sec <sup>2</sup> )
25	1.41
30	1.30
40	1.24
50	1.11
65	0.92
80	0.72
100	0.53

- ▣ On divided highways,  $d_3$  need not be considered
- ▣ On divided highways with four or more lanes, IRC suggests that it is not necessary to provide the OSD, but only SSD is sufficient.

### *Overtaking zones*

Overtaking zones are provided when OSD cannot be provided throughout the length of the highway. These are zones dedicated for overtaking operation, marked with wide roads. The desirable length of overtaking zones is 5 times OSD and the minimum is three times OSD (Figure 2).

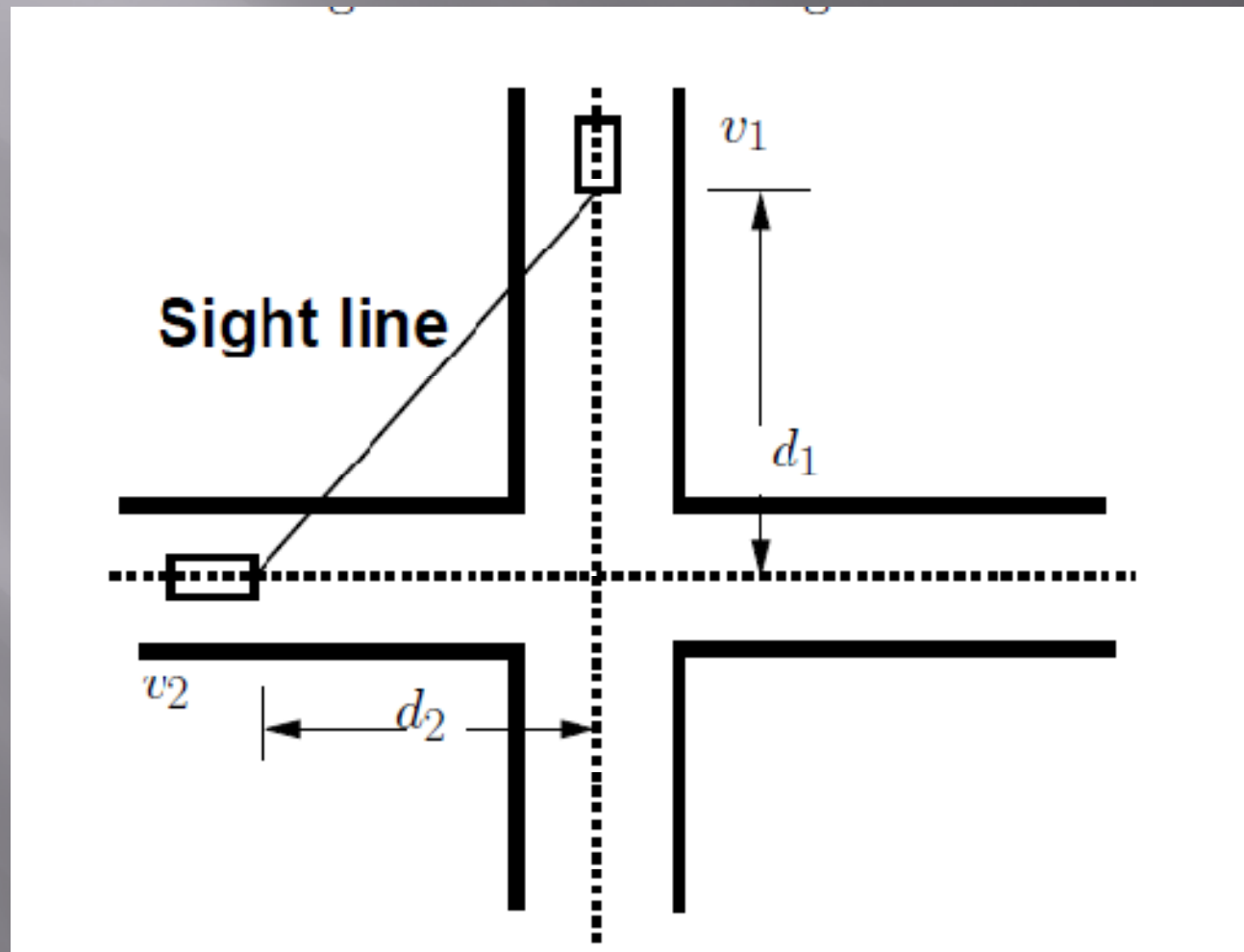


$S_1$ – Overtaking zone begin

$S_2$ –End of Overtaking zone

Overtaking zones

Sight distance at intersections



## Sight distance at intersections

- ▣ At intersections where two or more roads meet, visibility should be provided for the drivers approaching the intersection from either sides. They should be able to perceive a hazard and stop the vehicle if required. Stopping sight distance for each road can be computed from the design speed. The sight distance should be provided such that the drivers on either side should be able to see each other. Design of sight distance at intersections may be used on three possible conditions
  - ▣ Enabling approaching vehicle to change the speed
  - ▣ Enabling approaching vehicle to stop
  - ▣ Enabling stopped vehicle to cross a main road