

# How to run circles around Stevens Center traffic island

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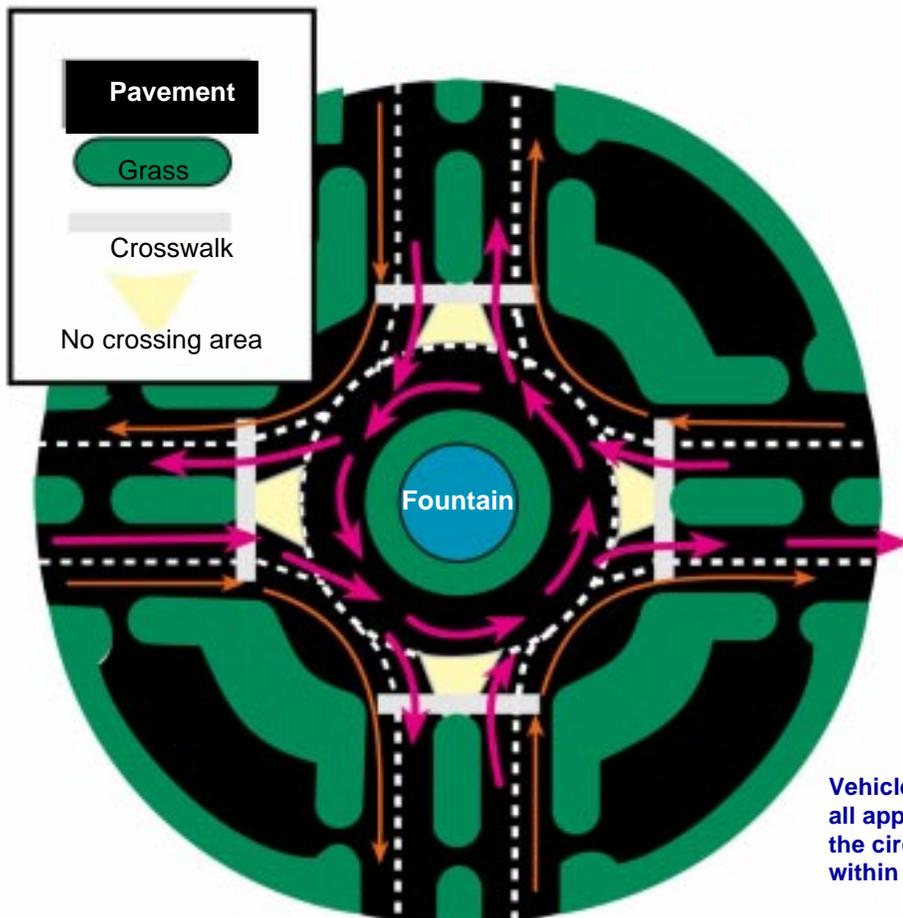
Have you ever been confused when you entered the traffic circle around the landscaped island at Stevens Center? Did you go round and round again before managing to steer your car out of the traffic circle? Were you confused as to who had the right of way?

The traffic circle is not a common feature on the streets in the Tri-Cities area, and upon first encounter, some motorists find it different and somewhat baffling.

Traffic circles are “traffic calming” devices. They are designed to slow automobile traffic and maintain a safe environment for automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Approximately one-third of automobile accidents and injuries occur at traditional intersections, where drivers make left turns, crossing the flow of oncoming traffic. Research has shown that traffic circles have resulted in an overall reduction in the number and severity of accidents, despite the lack of driver familiarity with this type of intersection.

The greatest benefit of the traffic circle is the reduction of many of the safety hazards of traditional intersections. The physical configuration of a traffic circle around a traffic island forces a driver to stop, proceed into a



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## How to run circles around Stevens Center traffic island, cont.

one-way circular pattern at a slow speed and exit the circle by turning right onto the desired street. Because the only movement at an entry or exit is a right turn, the frequency of accidents in traffic circles is reduced when compared to accident frequency at conventional intersections where motorists make right and left turns.

Now that you know how traffic is “calmed” by this device, how do you calmly drive around the traffic circle at Stevens Center?

### Driving in the circle

Vehicles entering the traffic circle on all approaches are required to yield to the circulating vehicles on the left within the circulating roadway. All vehicles circulate around the central island. Right-of-way rules help drivers decide how to handle traffic situations that are not determined entirely by signs or signals.

These rules are based on safety and courtesy. The right-of-way is something you give, not take. If another driver fails to follow these rules, you should yield the right-of-way for safety’s sake. Be patient, and remember that pedestrians always have the right-of-way!

### Turning right or exiting

All approaches in the right lane are for immediate right turns. You cannot be in the right lane and go around the circle. Remember to display your right turn indicator when exiting the traffic circle.

### Turning left

Approach in the left lane; do not turn left at the stop sign to enter the traffic circle. Follow the traffic circle counter- clockwise around until you reach your exit point, and follow the markings to execute the turn.

The next time you drive to or from Stevens Center, remember:

- The traffic circle is designed for your safety.
- Drive responsibly and safely! ♦