

Rules of the road

- The dance proceeds counter-clockwise around the dance floor. Typically there is an outside lane and often a second and third inside lane.
- Navigating in a peaceful, cooperative way ensures that everyone is feeling safe and able to focus on their partners and their dance and not having to spend their time protecting their partners from potential harm. The following protocol is very similar to driving on a highway:
- Leaders, if you are entering the floor when people are dancing it is considerate to make eye contact with the leader that you want to dance in front of. He will make eye contact with you and nod his permission to enter the floor. This way he will know you are there and provide space for you to dance. Followers, leaders are responsible for your safety, so allow your partner to lead you on to the dance floor when he deems it safe to do so.
- The dance floor is a communal space. Leaders stay aware of the couples around you. Take note of the speed that the couples are moving collectively and dance within the established speed of the floor, filling gaps ahead of you, while not tailgating the couple in front of you. If possible, keep two steps behind the person in front of you. That way if they need to back up they can.
- On crowded dance floors, stopping for long periods of time to do numerous dance patterns is rude since it stops the line of dance and will frustrate leaders behind you. This is similar to stopping on the autobahn.
- We only pass a couple under extreme circumstances, not as a general rule. If a dance couple in front of you stops, be patient and dance in place until they move. If they are there for a very long time, you can choose to dance around them if you have space.
- Refrain from cutting across lanes or weaving from lane to lane.
- Do not cut through the center of the floor.
- Leaders never back up against the line of dance unless they have to. However, if absolutely necessary, one step back is alright if there is space.
- Do not take large steps that take you into a neighboring lane or too close to the person dancing next to you. Everyone needs their space respected so that they can dance in comfort without feeling encroached upon.
- In traditional milongas, show-boating in the middle of the floor (or anywhere else) is not a respected activity. In a social context, milongueros firmly believe that tango is danced for yourself and your partner only – never for an audience. They dance for each other and what they are creating. They do not diminish their dance by using it in the service of their egos.