

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

DEMONSTRATION DRIVE CHECKLIST

I will demonstrate and explain to you the things I will be looking for during your drive behind the wheel. Do you have any questions? Otherwise, I ask that you hold any comments or questions you may have about the commentary until I have completed my demonstration.

1. _____ Describe the best hand position on the steering wheel.
2. _____ Discuss the importance of scanning intersections before entry.
3. _____ When stopped at a light, explain why you allow the vehicle in front of you to move for several seconds before accelerating.
4. _____ Describe what you are looking for concerning parked vehicles.
5. _____ List some reasons for braking early.
6. _____ Describe the 4-second (or greater) following distance.
7. _____ Clarify why you leave a large distance between vehicles when stopped in traffic.
8. _____ Point out the poor driving habits of other motorists.
9. _____ Identify packs or clusters in traffic.
10. _____ Obtaining eye contact.
11. _____ Explain stale and fresh traffic lights.
12. _____ Define the lane of least resistance.
13. _____ Describe reasons for stopping one car length behind the crosswalk.

14. _____ Demonstrate and define the point of no return.
15. _____ Comment on why we check the mirror as we use the brake.
16. _____ Explain that the light is not green until the brake lights go out on the vehicle ahead of you and it starts to roll.
17. _____ Demonstrate the 15-second eye lead time.
18. _____ Stress that the mirrors should be checked every 5 to 8 seconds.
19. _____ Demonstrate and explain proper turn signal timing when changing Lanes or turning.
20. _____ Comment on your parking choices and the benefits of seeking alternatives to backing.

1. **Describe best hand position.**
 - Best hand position is ten and two, or nine and three.
2. **Discuss the importance of scanning intersections before entry.**
 - Keep your eyes moving.
 - Look left, then right, then left again.
 - Look left twice because normally, the first vehicle that could hit you would come from the left.
3. **When stopped at a light, explain why you allow the vehicle in front of you to move for several seconds before accelerating.**
 - Count one thousand one, one thousand two before you leave; this way you will be creating your 4-second following distance.
4. **Describe what you are looking for in parked vehicles.**
 - On streets with parked vehicles at curbside, do not use the lane nearest to them if an alternative lane is available, practical, and legal.
 - Parked vehicles keep one side of your cushion closed, and they may give you very little time to react.
 - If you must travel in the lane next to an occupied curb, scan for signs of danger including drivers in vehicles, tires turned outward, brake lights on, and of course, pedestrians.
5. **List some reasons for braking early.**
 - Early braking alerts people behind you and can give them more time to respond.
 - Time your turn signals to send an effective message about your intentions.
 - Be ready to quickly alter your plans. If your signals are not heeded, use your space cushion as your out.
6. **Describe the 4-second (or greater) following distance.**

To demonstrate how much space you should maintain, use this formula:

- For speeds up to 40 mph, you should have one second for every ten feet of vehicle length.
 - Example; to calculate a minimum proper following distance for a 40 foot vehicle traveling at 30 mph, count four seconds; one

thousand one...one thousand two...one thousand three...one thousand four.

- Start counting when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a fixed reference point such as a bridge or sign.
- If you reach the bridge or sign in less than four seconds, you are following too closely.

7. Clarify why you leave a large distance between vehicles when stopped in traffic.

- When stopped behind another vehicle, stay about 20 or 25 feet back.
- This leaves room to pull away without backing if a vehicle ahead stalls.

8. Point out the poor driving habits of other motorists.

9. Identify packs or clusters in traffic.

Leave Yourself An Out:

- Build a space cushion all around your vehicle – to the front, rear, and sides.
- Select a safe path through traffic and establish a 15-second lead time. Also, establish your proper following distance. By now, the front quarter of your space cushion is in place.
- Open the sides and rear by adjusting speed or changing lanes when safe and when legal. As you know, traffic tends to travel in clusters. Traffic packs are not only unsafe, they limit your options. Avoid them whenever you can.
- If a four-sided cushion is impossible, work to keep at least the front open for that all important visibility and stopping room. Then try to reopen at least one side to maintain maneuvering room.

10. Demonstrate obtaining eye contact.

Make sure they see you:

- Eye contact is an excellent means of communication, and it can bring desired results.

11. Explain stale and fresh traffic lights.

- A fresh light is one you saw turning green.
- A stale light is one you did not see turn green; therefore you have no idea when it will turn red.

12. Define the lane of least resistance.

- Avoid traveling behind large profile vehicles that can prohibit you from having your 15-second lead time.
- This increases your ability to deal with the unexpected and to prevent the ultimate surprise, a collision.

13. Describe reasons for stopping one car length behind the crosswalk.

- When stopped first in line at a traffic light, stay back far enough to see the entire crosswalk in your windshield.
- This leaves you a cushion of space if the vehicle behind you were to rear end you.
- Pedestrians can go undetected if you stop too close to the crossing.

14. Demonstrate and define the point of no return.

- Show at what point you have to decide when it is safer to stop.
- Show when it would be safer to go through what may become a red light while the vehicle is still in the intersection.

15. Comment on why we check the mirrors as we use the brake.

- To see if the vehicles behind you are receiving the message of your intentions.
- To attempt to create a cushion of space at the rear of your vehicle.

16. Explain that the light is not green until the brake lights go out on the vehicle ahead of you and it starts to roll.

- It does not matter if the light is green; you cannot move until the vehicle in front of you moves.
- It takes about 1 second for each car in line to go when the car in front of them moves.

17. Demonstrate the 15-second eye lead time.

- Utilizing the 15-second eye lead time is as simple as scanning farther ahead.
- At 30 miles per hour, you should see at least a block and a half ahead.
- At 50 miles per hour, you should see about a quarter mile ahead.

18. Stress that the mirrors should be checked every 5 to 8 seconds.

- Keep your eyes moving, every two seconds.
- The formation of this habit is critical to your information gathering abilities as you scan the large areas around you.
- Most people can see about 90 degrees to each side for a total picture of about 180 degrees.
- Only 3 degrees can be seen clearly by your central vision.
- Don't let your eyes pause on any object for more than two seconds.

19. Demonstrate and explain proper turn signal timing when changing lanes or turning.

- Time your turn signals to send an effective message about your intentions.

20. Comment on your parking choices and the benefits of seeking alternatives to backing.

- Plan your departure upon your arrival.
- Avoid backing at all costs.
- Plan your departure so you can pull forward out of your parking spot.
- Leave yourself an out.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

DEMONSTRATION SKILLS COURSE

-**Right Turn**

- reference points
- tail swing

-**Forward Serpentine**

- reference points
- mirror usage

-**Backward Serpentine**

- reference points
- mirror usage
- vehicle control

-**Tail Swing along Curb**

- up to 36 in tail swing
- objects along the curb (signs, mail boxes, students)

-**Backing**

- blind spots
- the distance before you see vehicles behind you

DEFENSIVE DRIVING QUIZ

1. True False Road hazards, poor weather, vehicle collisions, and conflict are some of the worst possible conditions a driver can face.
2. True False Fog, snow, and rain can reduce visibility and increase the risk of accidents and breakdowns.
3. True False One of the dangers of driving in snow and ice is a decreased chance of skidding.
4. True False In fog, you should use only high-beam headlights.
5. True False When driving in snow and ice, do not apply the squeeze technique if your vehicle has anti-lock brakes.
6. True False In drive wheel skids, keep your foot off the accelerator but step on the brake.
7. True False Keep an emergency kit in the vehicle containing items such as a bag of salt, sand, or kitty litter.
8. True False When your vehicle hydroplanes, the tires deflect water and allow better traction with the road.
9. True False One of the dangers of night driving is that darkness impairs your ability to judge distances, movements, and colors.
10. True False When driving at night, compensate for your reduced vision by slowing down and leaving at least 30 feet between you and the vehicle ahead.
11. True False A breakdown basic is to turn on your hazard warning lights and interior lights.
12. True False You are in a truck's NO-ZONE if you can see the drivers face in the truck side mirrors.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING QUIZ ANSWERS

1. ☒ True ☐ False Road hazards, poor weather, vehicle collisions, and conflict are some of the worst possible conditions a driver can face.
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