



Defensive Driving



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Defensive Driving

No other form of transportation makes such continuous demands upon the individual skill and concentration of an operator as does motor transportation. Every moving vehicle can be involved in an accident. Even a vehicle being driven on a straight, dry highway on a clear day risks an accident. It is important to be able to recognize potential accident situations, adjust to them, and avoid an accident.

Safe driving is not a matter of luck. Experience shows there is a sound and practical method of driving. Employing the concept of defensive driving will enable you to stay out of the majority of accident situations. Safe driving is the responsibility of all drivers!

This is especially true for SMSA Express couriers. Managing package pickup and meeting delivery commitments when faced with a host of traffic problems and road conditions is not always an easy task. This supplement describes the basics of defensive driving, which, when practiced, will produce safe drivers.



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Objectives

Given the Driving Awareness module, you will be able to:

- Define defensive driving.
- Distinguish an accident from an occurrence.
- Identify the basis for classifying an accident as preventable or non-preventable.
- Identify the common types of accidents tracked for international accident statistical purposes.
- Identify elements of the Standard Accident Prevention Formula.
- Identify accident-reporting procedures.
- Select the phrase that best describes driver attitude.
- Identify the most important passenger protection feature in the vehicle.
- Select checkpoints required to conduct a pretrip and/or a posttrip inspection.
- Match defensive driving commentary to driving scenarios.

Given the Driving Awareness module and a driving situation, you will be able to:

- Select the appropriate key from the “Five Keys of Defensive Driving.”
- Select the correct “Six Conditions Affecting Driving” coping and/or adjusting procedure.
- Determine how to maneuver the vehicle in a special situation.

All of the tasks above must be completed with 90% accuracy.

What Is Defensive Driving?

Defensive Driving is the technique of avoiding dangerous situations, anticipating the hazards (caused by other drivers, pedestrians, weather, road and other conditions) and taking the necessary action to prevent an accident.

Who Benefits From Defensive Driving?

- You and your family will benefit.
- The general public will benefit.
- SMSA will benefit.

The SMSA employee's failure to drive defensively may result in the following adverse consequences for:

SMSA Express

- Tarnished public image
- Reduced profits
- Possible loss of employee
- Increased insurance costs
- Law suits
- Loss of business

Customers and the general public

- Property damage, possible physical injury or loss of life
- Perception of SMSA as careless and unconcerned with the public's safety
- Loss of confidence in us to transport their packages safely
- Customers choose the competition

You

- Bad driving record
- Possible loss of wages
- Possible loss of job
- Possible injury or loss of life!

Defensive Driving Policy and Procedure

Accidents and Occurrences

SMSA classifies all vehicle incidents as either accidents or occurrences. Drivers for SMSA must be familiar with the requirements and qualifications required for a driving position. They must also know their driving responsibilities and all driving related policies and procedures. Driving employees must know what to do if an accident occurs.

What is an accident?

A vehicle accident is defined as any event involving a SMSA Express vehicle that results in personal injury or property damages and expenses exceeding a substantial equivalent amount, where driving error or mechanical failure contributed to or caused the accident.

What is an occurrence?

A vehicle occurrence is defined as any event involving a SMSA Express vehicle resulting in minimal damages or expenses. However, any gross disregard for safety is considered an accident.

Accident Costs

When a family loses a loved one in a fatal auto related accident, no real money value can be associated with that loss of life. SMSA Express realizes its people are our most valuable asset. For both of these reasons, we encourage a safety first attitude and require defensive driving training for all of our driving employees.

SMSA Express tracks the costs associated with accidents. The financial costs associated with accidents are classified as either direct or indirect costs.

Direct costs

Direct costs are those costs that can be attributed directly to an accident. Direct costs include the cost of medical expenses, repairing vehicle damage, and payment to other parties based on liability.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are not as easily defined. The indirect cost of an accident in our business would be the costs we incur as a result of the accident. Some examples of indirect costs are:

- Service failures
- Lost business due to dissatisfied customers
- Costs to cover operational needs (additional staffing, rental vehicles, etc.)

Indirect costs can be estimated to be as much as seven times the direct or actual cost of the accident.

Accident Classification

SMSA Express classifies accidents as either preventable or non-preventable.

Preventable

A preventable accident is one in which the driver failed to do everything possible to prevent the accident, including anticipating the hazard and applying the appropriate defensive driving procedures. As a professional driver, you accept more responsibility for driving than the ordinary motorist.

NOTE: SMSA Express drivers may be charged with a preventable accident even though they are not legally at fault.

Non-preventable

A non-preventable accident is one in which the driver did do everything possible (including anticipating the hazard) to avoid the accident. Your manager will make this determination.

International Accident Statistics

Your local safety specialist or regional safety manager is responsible for compiling accident information. Tracking this data helps us to know the most common types of accidents and when they occur.

Accidents are divided into 8 categories:

- Type 1:** Intersection collision
- Type 2:** Collision with vehicle ahead
- Type 3:** Vehicle hit from behind
- Type 4:** Struck parked vehicle or fixed object
- Type 5:** Sideswipe
- Type 6:** Vehicle struck while unattended/parked
- Type 7:** Backing
- Type 8:** Any other type of accident

How does this help? By creating awareness, we can better anticipate accidents before they happen.

Driver awareness is a big part of defensive driving.

Other Common Driving Errors

- Improper Lookout:** Entering a street without looking carefully for oncoming traffic
- Failure to Check Mirrors:** Changing location without checking for oncoming traffic from the rear
- Excessive Speed:** Driving faster than conditions allow
- Lack of Attention:** Daydreaming, sight-seeing, and internal distractions (radio, children, passengers, car phones, personal problems, etc.)
- Improper Action:** Choosing the wrong defensive driving maneuver for the situation (i.e., assuming a vehicle will turn before reaching you, will stop at stop sign, will yield or give way)

Accident Prevention

The ability to prevent an accident is based on effective decision making. As a professional driver, you must constantly adjust to current road conditions, safely manage every driving situation, recognize potential conflicts, and react in time. Statistics tell us over 50% of all accidents are preventable. Use the Standard Action Prevention Formula (listed below) to help you make more effective driving decisions.

Step 1 - Recognize the hazard

Be aware of what is occurring around you at all times. Anticipate what others might do.

Modify your driving accordingly. Remember, awareness is fundamental to driving. It separates the defensive driver from the other drivers on the road.

Step 2 - Recall the defense

Be aware of the conditions that surround you. Consider everything that could go wrong and plan accordingly. Decide what to do to avoid an accident before conditions favoring an accident occur. Do not assume drivers will be courteous or that they will abide by the rules. Exercise the most common defensive driving responses:

- Braking (to slow down or stop)
- Steering (to the left or right)
- Tapping the horn (to communicate your intentions or to make your presence known)

Step 3 - React correctly in time

Execute the proper defensive maneuver while you still have time to change the situation. This is referred to as response time. Remember a quick response is better than a slow response. Failure to respond may contribute or cause an accident. When you recognize hazards, know defensive driving maneuvers. Act in time and apply the accident prevention formula!

Accident Reporting Procedures

If you have an accident, you will need to follow policy and procedure.

NOTE: Refer to GUIDE for the Vehicle Accident Reporting procedure.

It is important that you maintain a professional attitude and respond appropriately to the

conditions at the accident scene. Knowing what to do in an accident situation will help you to remain calm.

“Courier’s Vehicle Accident Report or Occurrence”

A copy of the Courier’s Vehicle Accident Report or Occurrence and other related materials should be in an envelope in the bulkhead of your vehicle. Complete the Vehicle Accident Report Form and follow the requirements in reporting an accident.

What to do when an accident occurs

1. Stop immediately to investigate. Notify the police.
2. Help anyone who is injured. Call the ambulance or doctor.
3. Protect the scene of the accident by placing warning devices and/or posting a person to warn traffic.
4. Protect your equipment and cargo from theft.
5. If possible, do not move your equipment until the police arrive.
6. Be courteous, but do NOT sign or discuss the accident with anyone except the police and the company adjuster.
7. Report to your supervisor at once by radio or phone.
8. Do not admit responsibility nor agree to pay for anything.
9. Protect yourself by obtaining witnesses, including the first persons to arrive.
10. If the other driver says you are not at fault, be sure to have him or her sign a document to prove so.

How to Complete the “Courier’s Report of Accident or Occurrence”

Fill in the information on this form as soon as possible. The report must be completed and submitted by the end of the next business day. The form will ask you for the date, time, location of the accident, conditions, witnesses, police officer’s name, etc. The form will also ask you to sketch the accident and use directional arrows. You will need to sign the form to verify the information you provided.

As mentioned earlier, your manager will decide whether or not the accident was preventable or non-preventable. Detailed information will help the manager to make a better judgment. On a larger scale, accurate information and accident reporting help SMSA defend itself during litigation.

Disciplinary action

Failure to perform duties as specified can result in disciplinary action for the employee. Some examples are:

- Failure to report an accident or occurrence to your manager
- Falsifying information on driving records at the time of hire
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on duty
- Failure to report traffic violations
- Driving a company vehicle on a suspended or limited license
- Involvement in a hit and run accident
- Failure to carry current operator’s license on person

How To Drive Defensively

A Driver's Attitude

A driver's attitude is the most important factor in a driver's performance. Drivers are primarily responsible for preventing accidents. A driver who is aware of and can adjust his attitude will have a better chance of avoiding an accident.

An attitude is a tendency to act in a certain way. It reflects a person's way of thinking or feeling toward other people, things, or themselves. Attitudes are expressed by our emotions. All emotions can affect the way we drive. Negative emotions (anger, frustration, impatience, etc.) may cause drivers to be aggressive, discourteous, disrespectful of laws, etc. Positive emotions (happiness, anticipation, excitement, etc.) may cause drivers to be distracted or inattentive.

The major causes of negative driving attitudes are:

- Conflict with: manager, spouse, fellow employee, customer, etc.
- Being regulated by someone else's schedule
- Our own unfulfilled expectations
- The actions of others

Driving habits can be a reflection of a person's personality traits. Driving habits (aggressive or courteous) may reveal what drivers think of themselves and what they think of others. However, there is one crucial aspect of driving that makes it different from other social situations: other people's lives are at stake. When a driver operates a vehicle in an unsafe manner, he or she is endangering everyone's well-being, including his or her own.

Drivers can develop better driving skills by being honest when evaluating their own habits and by practicing the following principles:

- Drive defensively
- Drive courteously
- Stay alert
- Develop self-control and patience
- Stay in good physical and mental condition

Seat Belts

The most important safety feature in your vehicle is the seat belt. It is SMSA Express policy that employees always wear seat belts while driving or riding in any company vehicle.



Why wear seat belts?

- Accidents - they can happen to you.
- SMSA requires it.
- It is the LAW in many countries.

Seat belt benefits

- They keep you from being thrown from the vehicle. The chances of surviving a crash are 5 times greater if you stay in the vehicle.
- Seat belts slow your body down with the car during a collision. The collision stops the car but the unrestrained body continues traveling at the original speed until stopped by the steering wheel, dashboard, windshield, etc. Hitting a steering wheel, dash, etc. at 48 kph (30mph) can be described as similar to effect of hitting the ground after jumping off a three story building.
- Seat belts help you to stay in control of the vehicle. Seat belts help you to stay alert.

When worn properly, you cannot slouch or slump in the seat. They also keep you securely positioned behind the steering wheel in case of sudden stops or turns.

Wear seat belts properly

- Lap Belt - Wear below your stomach, across your hips and be sure it is a snug but comfortable fit.
- Shoulder Harness - Wear loose enough to let your fist go between the belt and your chest.

NOTE: Seat belts do not work unless they are buckled. Buckle your seat belt before you start the engine.

THE FIVE KEYS OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING



Aim High in Steering



Get The Big Picture



Keep Your Eyes Moving



Leave Yourself An Out



Make Sure They See You

Introduction to the Smith System

The Five Keys of Defensive Driving are an adaptation of the Smith System Five Keys. They have also been called the Five Keys of Space Cushion Driving. Smith System is a company that specializes in driver training. Their program is used by nearly all major corporations employing on-road drivers.

Fundamental to the Smith System program is PREVENTION. Accident Prevention is the result of adopting three strategies:

- Space for the vehicle
- Visibility for the driver
- Time to make decisions (reaction time)

These strategies are present in each of the five keys of defensive driving. The following pages will explain each of the five keys and how they can be incorporated into your daily driving routine.

KEY #1. Aim High In Steering



A defensive driver sees where he will be long before he gets there. This allows the driver ample time to recognize potential conflicts or hazards and make adjustments. When driving, you receive visual stimuli continuously. Eye Lead Time refers to the distance an animal sees ahead. The faster the rate of travel, the greater the eye lead time required. Because you operate vehicles that move faster than your normal speed (walking), you will need to increase your eye lead time. A 15-second eye lead time is considered appropriate when operating a vehicle.

How to “Aim High in Steering”

1. Adjust your eye lead time to the speed at which you are traveling (in a city, 15 seconds or one block ahead-on highways, 30 seconds or the equivalent of two city blocks).
2. Allow yourself at least 15 seconds of eye lead time. Double your eye time whenever necessary.
3. Determine the status of distant traffic lights. Pace your driving between lights. A driver who races from one light to the next does not reach his destination any quicker.
4. Always reduce speed during periods of poor visibility.

KEY #2. Get The Big Picture



Getting the big picture means you are aware of what is happening all around your

vehicle. Your mirrors play a big part in establishing a 360 degree circle of awareness. The “Big Picture” includes everything you can see in front, to the sides, and to the rear of your vehicle. You must also learn to select those things that are relevant to your safety and reject those things that are not. A pedestrian at a crosswalk, a green traffic light a half mile ahead, and a stalled vehicle on the shoulder are all examples of relevant objects. Non relevant objects may be billboards, the airplane on the horizon, and traffic on the opposite side of a divided highway or carriageway.

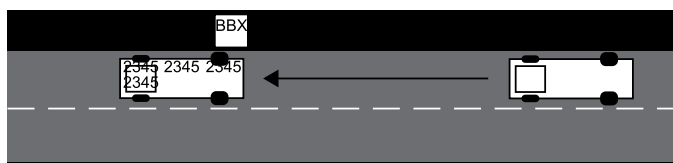
Following distance and vision barriers

The distance you travel behind other vehicles effects your ability to see ahead. When you follow too closely behind someone, their vehicle becomes a vision barrier. Even small vehicles or motorcycles can become vision barriers if they distract you. A four second following distance is usually adequate time to react to hazards. Poor conditions or a heavy load require you to increase the following distance to more than four seconds. See the four second rule diagram on the next page.

How to “Get The Big Picture”

1. Use your eyes and your mirrors to create a 360 degree circle of awareness.
2. Avoid being boxed in. Do not drive behind objects that may be vision barriers.
3. Adjust your speed to poor conditions or for a heavy load.
4. Make and execute decisions early. Use relevant and non relevant information to aid your decision making (people, signs, controlled Intersections, etc.).
5. Ensure your following distance is appropriate for the driving condition.

To calculate following distance, use the 4 second rule:



1. Pick a fixed object that the vehicle in front of you has not yet passed.
2. When the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you passes the fixed object, begin counting, “onethousand one, one thousand two, etc.”
3. When the front bumper of the vehicle you are driving reaches the fixed object, stop counting. If you reach the fixed object before the count of one thousand (four seconds), you are following too closely.

NOTE: In wet or slippery conditions, allow at least five to six seconds. Vehicles with heavy loads require longer stopping distances. Drivers should increase their space cushion accordingly.

KEY #3. Keep Your Eyes Moving



Eye movement is necessary to recognize hazards. A fixed or blind stare can cause you to lose your high aim and big picture. A fixed stare occurs when you look at one particular object or area for more than a few seconds. A blind stare occurs when you stare at nothing in particular. This is sometimes referred to as daydreaming. Staring keeps a driver from giving proper attention to possible danger from the sides or the rear of the vehicle.

Good drivers constantly size up the big picture. They use their peripheral vision to detect objects of interest and movement. They turn and focus their central vision to obtain more detailed information. This constant scanning in front, behind, and to the sides allows drivers to constantly evaluate the traffic picture.

Mirror scans

The professional driver observes nearly as much through the vehicle mirrors as through the windshield. The only way to know what is happening around your vehicle is to do a full eye scan of the mirrors every five to eight seconds. Mirror scans also help eliminate the possibility of fixed or blind stare driving. Use caution in using mirrors. Objects may be closer than they appear or blind spots may occur.

How to “Keeping Your Eyes Moving”

1. Do not let your eyes pause on any object for longer than two seconds.
2. Check one or more mirrors every five to eight seconds.
3. Check mirrors before changing lanes, turning, slowing or stopping.
4. Periodically check instrument panels (oil, fuel, temperature).
5. Scan major and minor intersections/junctions before entry. Look left-right-left. You look

left twice because you drive on the right side of the road. This makes it more likely that you will be hit by cross traffic on the left side.

KEY #4. Leave Yourself An Out



Expect the unexpected!! When a driver makes mistakes, other drivers need time and EXIT room to react. Space is the margin of safety which protects you from other drivers.

By creating a good margin of space in front, to the sides, and even to the rear of

your vehicle you are establishing what is called a “space cushion” of safety. “Space cushion driving” will allow for a way out in a conflict situation. As a defensive driver you should not only anticipate every possibility, but plan an “escape route” for each.

How to “Leave Yourself An Out” (establish and maintain space cushion driving)

1. Choose the lane of least resistance. This is the lane that has the least amount of obstacles.
2. Once in the lane of least resistance, establish a 15-second eye lead time (KEY #1) and a
4. second following distance (KEY #2). This will create a space cushion around your vehicle.
3. Make regular driving adjustments to maintain your space cushion. Avoid traffic clusters and adjust your speed to keep a space cushion at the sides and rear of your vehicle.
4. Avoid tailgaters. Let others pass you or change lanes to maintain a space cushion. In extreme cases, you may need to pull off the road until the tailgater passes. Avoid streets where vehicles are parked on the right side of the road. Parked vehicles limit your right side space cushion.
5. Leave appropriate space (15-foot/4.5 meter suggested space cushion) in front of the vehicle when you stop. This space provides:
 - A way around the vehicle in front of you if it should stall
 - Extra room in case the vehicle ahead rolls backward
 - Extra room in case you are hit from the rear

6. Pause two seconds before accelerating from a stopped position. This will immediately establish a space cushion and the proper following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.

KEY #5. Make Sure They See You



Traffic is a group of individual drivers manipulating their vehicles on common

roadways. At times, you must depend on another driver's ability, courtesy, and /or obedience to traffic laws. Assuming the other driver will perform the appropriate maneuvers is asking for trouble. When another driver makes a wrong move, either they didn't see you or they thought they had enough time/room to make their move safely.

How to "Make Sure They See You"

- Tap you horn. Normally, use a friendly tap. Your goal is to alert others of your presence. If you suspect you will need to send a warning, cover the horn with your hand to be ready to communicate the hazard.
- Use your headlights. Headlights can be effective during the day.
- Brake early to activate brake lights. This will give the drivers behind you more time to react.
- Use hand signals. They can be effective.
- Use turn signals early. Activate signals 30 to 91 meters (100 to 300 feet) in advance of a turn. Be careful you do not confuse drivers trying to exit driveways or streets on the same side. They may pull in front of you because they assume you intend to turn into their location.
- Stay out of other driver's blind spots. Blind spots are those areas on either side of the vehicle that a driver cannot observe even with the aid of a mirror.

THE SIX CONDITIONS AFFECTING DRIVING

Light



Road



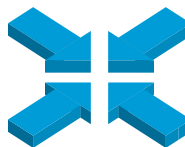
Vehicle



Weather



Traffic



Driver



NOTE: These potentially hazardous conditions influence and affect your ability to operate a vehicle safely. Special skills are required to overcome these hazards. Some of these skills will be discussed on the next few pages. The most important skill is to be able to recognize that these hazards exist.



The Light Condition

Light affects your ability to see and the ability of others to see you. Sometimes there is not enough light and sometimes there is too much.

Night driving

Accident risk is greater when you cannot see. At night your pupils become wide to allow as much light in as possible. When driving at night:

1. Slow down. You will increase the time you have to react to hazards.
2. Allow adequate stopping distance. Do not overdrive your headlights. Your area of visibility is greatly diminished at night.
3. Use high beams when you can. Avoid blinding others. Dim your lights before they become a problem for others. General Rule: Do not use high beams if you are within 152 meters (500 feet) of another vehicle.
4. Make sure the windshield, headlights, and reflectors are clean and properly adjusted.

When blinded by the bright lights of an oncoming driver, it takes four to seven seconds for your pupils to readjust. Try this:

1. Look down or slightly to the right of the right lane or edge marking to maintain vehicle position.
2. Slow down and increase your following distance. Do not turn on your brights to get back at the other driver. This could invite a deadly head-on collision.

Day driving

When driving in bright sunlight:

1. Clean windshields and windows to minimize glare.
2. Tilt the sun visor all the way forward, then bring it back slowly until your eyes are adequately shaded. Keep the visor pointed away from you to avoid possible eye injury.

3. Wear sunglasses that block ultra violet rays and glare. Sunglasses can also help reduce snowblindness. Grey lenses block glare.

Dusk, dawn, fog, smog or sandstorm

1. Reduce your speed. Give yourself more time to react to hazards.
2. Allow adequate stopping distance.
3. Drive with your lights on. Low beams are recommended.
5. Clean and properly adjust windshield, headlights, and reflectors.

NOTE: When leaving or entering a dark tunnel, allow time for your eyes to adjust to the changing light

conditions. When entering a dark tunnel: slow down, turn on your lights, and remove your sunglasses. When leaving a dark tunnel: reduce your speed, put on your sun glasses, and turn off your lights.

The Road Condition

----- The condition of the road can affect your ability to steer, stop, and maneuver your vehicle safely.

Examples of road conditions:

- Curves, hills, tunnels, bridges
- Type of pavement, width of pavement, surface condition (cracks, holes, bumps)
- Number of lanes
- Construction
- Road markings
- Type of road (dual carriageway, motorway)

How to cope with adverse road conditions

1. Plan your driving route. Avoid roads that might be in poor condition (if possible).
2. Adjust your speed to compensate for hazardous road conditions. Posted speeds are for automobiles in ideal conditions, not trucks.
3. Reduce speed when entering a turn or cresting a hill. Visibility is reduced.
4. Bridge surfaces vary. Steering, braking, and maneuvering can be affected by the surface your tires contact. Freezing conditions may exist. Wind may affect steering on bridges.

NOTE: City express or motorways are often in better condition than country or rural roads.





The Vehicle Condition



Vehicle inspections allow you to ensure the vehicle is in safe operating condition. Pre-trip and post-trip inspections are vehicle inspections performed by the driver of the vehicle before going on road or after all stops have been completed.

The VIR, shown below, is used to record pre-trip and post-trip inspections, as well as vehicle maintenance actions performed by mechanics.

Note: Refer to GUIDE for the Vehicle inspection Report.

Employee Name						
Employee No.		Date:				
Vehicle Make:		Reg. No:				
Reason for Inspection (Tick block)	Vacation Handover	<input type="radio"/>	End of Lease	<input type="radio"/>	New Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Return from Vacation	<input type="radio"/>	Leaving company	<input type="radio"/>	Other (Explain)	
INSTRUCTIONS:						
The vehicle must be inspected by both parties and marks and condition of vehicle to be indicated on drawings below, plus notes made of any damages						
 						
 						
Notes:						
Employee Name:				Signature:		
SMSA Admin Mgr/Sup Name				Signature:		

Pretrip:

You must perform a pre-trip for your vehicle everyday prior to loading the vehicle. Why? If a problem is found during the pre-trip inspection, you will not have to transfer freight from one vehicle to another.

A pre-trip is a visual inspection of the vehicle, which should take only three to five minutes. Check for mechanical defects, outer body damage, the three fluid levels (engine oil, radiator coolant, and windshield washer fluid), safety equipment, and proper vehicle documentation.

Why pre-trip the vehicle?

1. It's the Law - Some countries require SMSA and all motor carriers to do a pre-trip inspection on each vehicle on a daily basis.
2. SMSA Policy - The policy states that every driver must pre-trip and post-trip each vehicle driven by the driver. This is documented on the driver's Vehicle Inspection Report.

NOTE: If the driver does not perform a pre-trip or post-trip, he/she should not sign the VIR.

To do so would be considered falsifying company documents and the employee could be terminated.

3. Preventive Maintenance - Imagine destroying an engine because you did not check the oillevel, or cracking the engine block because there was not enough coolant in the radiator. Small problems can become big repairs if not attended to promptly.
4. Good Safety Sense - Can you truly be a defensive driver without checking your vehicle's equipment and safety features?
5. Noting Body Damage Before Using the Vehicle - Other people drive the same vehicle. You do not want to be blamed for vehicle damage you did not cause. Cover yourself!

Pre-trip Inspection Checklist

Update the pre-trip section of the VIR as you complete each section.

(1) When approaching the vehicle

- ☐ Look under the vehicle for any fluid leaks, such as engine coolant, oil, or transmission fluid.

(2) Starting on the driver's side

- ☐ Open the door and ensure the emergency brake is applied.
- ☐ Remove VIR booklet, review prior usage, and sign.
- ☐ Turn on headlights and emergency 4-way flashers.
- ☐ Pull the hood release knob (if located in the cab).

(3) Move to the left front of vehicle

- ☐ Check the left front tire for cuts and tread wear.
- ☐ Check wheel lug nuts, and valve stem.
- ☐ Check the left mirror and body for damage.
- ☐ Check lights and reflectors.

(4) At the front of the vehicle

- ☐ Lift and secure the hood in an upright position.
- ☐ Check oil, coolant recovery tank, and windshield washer fluid levels.
- ☐ Visually check the condition of the battery terminals and cables.
- ☐ Visually check the belts and hoses. (Never pull on belts or hoses.)
- ☐ Close the hood. Visually inspect the clearance lights, windshield, windshield wiper blades, logo decals, body condition, bumper, and, when applicable, license plate, dangerous goods (DG) placard, and antenna.
- ☐ Check headlights and 4-way flashers.

Step 1

Approaching Vehicle

Step 2

Driver's Side

Step 3

Front Left of Vehicle

Step 4

Front of Vehicle

Step 5

Right Front of Vehicle

Step 6

Right Side of Vehicle

Step 7

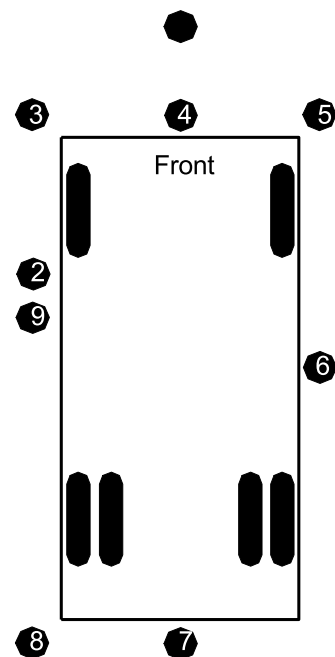
Rear of Vehicle

Step 8

Rear Left of Vehicle

Step 9

Cab (Driver's Side)

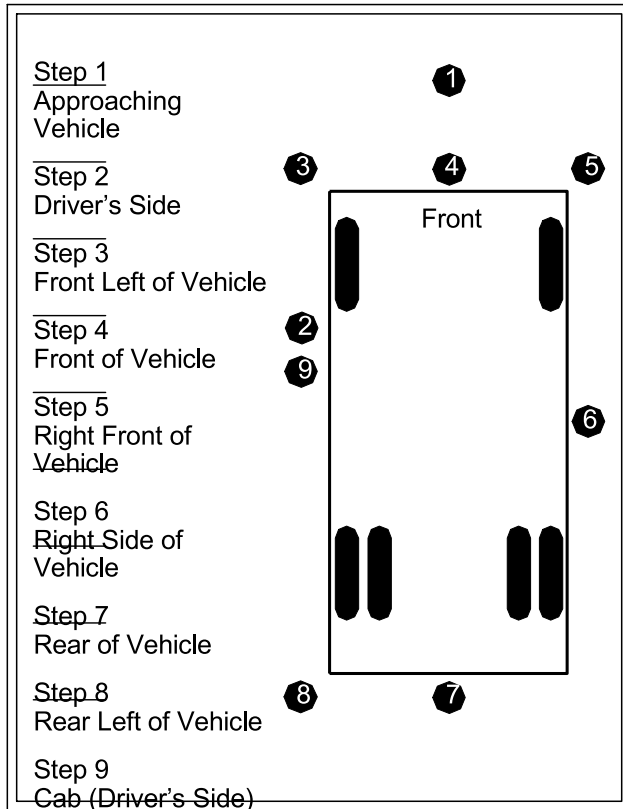


(5) Move to the right front of the vehicle

- ☐ Check the right front tire for cuts and tread wear.
- ☐ Check the wheel lug nuts, and valve stem.
- ☐ Check the right mirror and body for damage.
- ☐ Check lights and reflectors.

(6) At the right side of the vehicle

- ☐ Check operation of the passenger door and window.
- ☐ Check side cargo door operation (panel van).
- ☐ Check right side lights and reflectors.
- ☐ Check fuel tank cap, and type of fuel. (Can be either side of the vehicle.)
- ☐ Check body condition and logo decals.
- ☐ Check DG placard, when applicable.
- ☐ Check the right rear tire(s) for cuts and tread wear.
- ☐ Check wheel(s) lug nuts and valve stem.



(7) Move to the rear of the vehicle

- ☐ Check body and logo decals.
- ☐ Check the reflectors and overhead clearance lights.
- ☐ Check the condition of interior cargo area.
- ☐ Check rear cargo door operation.
- ☐ Check rear bumper and license plate (include light).
- ☐ Check rear lights and 4-way flashers. ☐
- Check backing sonar sensors (if so equipped).
- ☐ Check DG placard, when applicable.

(8) Move to the left rear of the vehicle

- ☐ Check the fuel tank cap (can be on either side of the vehicle).
- ☐ Check body condition and logo decals. ☐
- Check lights, reflectors, and rear bubble (convex) mirror.
- ☐ Check left rear tire(s) for cuts and tread wear.
- ☐ Check wheel(s) lug nuts, and valve stem.

(9) Enter the cab (driver's side)

- ☐ Inspect fire extinguisher seal and charge, and safety reflectors (triangles). ☐
- Check operation of the door and window.
- ☐ Check operation of driver's seat and safety belts.
- ☐ Check for the accident report packet, registration, insurance card, emergency response book, hazardous permits, and other required regulatory permits.
- ☐ Start the engine, and scan the gauges and warning indicator lamps. (Only allow the engine to run long enough to complete the in-cab pre-trip checks.) ☐
- Listen for abnormal engine noises. ☐ Check for abnormal amount of movement in the steering wheel.
- ☐ Check operation of windshield wipers and washer.
- ☐ Check horn for operation.
- ☐ Check high beams (bright lights) and high-beam indicator.
- ☐ Turn off headlights and emergency 4-way flashers.
- ☐ Check operation of turn signals.
- ☐ Check the heater, defroster, and fan.
- ☐ With emergency brake applied, place the vehicle in forward gear and accelerate slightly to test brake resistance.
- ☐ Release emergency brake, roll forward, and check operation of foot brake.
- ☐ Check operation of brake lights, and backup lights through reflection or using the buddy system.
- ☐ Check operation of the radio equipment and microphone.
- ☐ Check the backing sonar unit (if so equipped). If required, make sure the DG placards are in the vehicle.
- ☐ Back vehicle to parking space (tap horn before backing).
- ☐ Turn engine off, remove the key and secure the vehicle.
- ☐ Sign the VIR to verify completion.

Post-trip:

The post-trip inspection is also mandatory and is performed in a similar manner to the pre-trip. Check the Vehicle Inspection Checklist for specific checkpoints.

The following areas are not needed on the post-trip:

1. Check the oil and coolant levels
2. Start the engine
3. Check the radio
4. Check the seat belts

The post-trip is not as extensive as the pre-trip, but it is just as important. At the end of the day, the courier must also complete the Vehicle Inspection Report by filling in and noting any defect or damage incurred, and entering his/her signature and employee number.

If the vehicle breaks down:

1. Check the overall safety of the situation. Get as far out of the flow of traffic as possible.
2. Set your reflector triangles appropriately.
3. Call the station and give your exact location and vehicle problem.
 - Use your radio if possible.
 - If you do not have a radio, secure your vehicle and go to the nearest phone.
4. Return to your vehicle and wait until help arrives.

SMSA requires that emergency warning devices be set out any time the vehicle becomes disabled. SMSA uses orange reflector triangles. The reflectors must be set out far enough from the stopped vehicle to give sufficient warning for another driver to see and react to avoid a collision.

The Weather Condition



When battling the various weather elements for traction, visibility, and vehicle control, your best weapon is GOOD JUDGEMENT. You must be able to decide when conditions are too bad to drive. There are four basic weather conditions.

1. Sunshine

Sunshine poses no real threat to visibility. Simply wear sunglasses or pull down the visor to protect your eyes from sun that is too direct or causes a glare. However, sunshine equates to HEAT. Heat has an effect on the control you have over your vehicle.

How to control your vehicle

- Maintain the speed limit or lower. Stay alert.
- If the engine begins to overheat-sacrifice by turning off the air conditioner. Roll down the window and run the heater to help drain heat from the engine. If this does not work, pull over and turn off the engine. Check the hoses. Do NOT remove the radiator cap until the engine has cooled. Notify dispatch and/or your station as soon as possible.

2. Rain

Rain creates two types of hazards: (1) It reduces traction (lifts oil from the road surface, creates mud and/or freezes) between the road and your tires, and (2) it reduces your visibility from within the vehicle.

Reduced traction

When rain FIRST BEGINS, reduce your speed. The rain brings the oil on the road to the surface causing the road to become dangerously slick. Even in a hard rain, it takes half an hour to wash the oil from the road. Accidents most often occur at the onset of wet weather.

How to maintain traction

- Reduce speed when rain begins.
- Increase your space cushion, four to six seconds.
- Keep the pedals dry, free of moisture and mud.

- Turn on low beams. Whenever the windshield wipers are on, you must also turn on your headlights.
- Use the defroster/air conditioner to keep the windows free of fog. Use a cloth or paper towel when necessary.
- Watch out for pedestrians because they may not see you from under their umbrellas.
- In cold weather, be extra careful. The roadways may be wet, but bridges and overpasses, being five to six degrees colder, may be iced.

Visibility

In heavy rain with little or no visibility, pull off the road as far as possible and stop. Turn on your emergency flashers.

Flooding

Drive through running water ONLY if you are certain of the water's depth and the road under the water. When out of the water, test your brakes. If needed, apply the brakes lightly until they dry.

Hydroplaning

This occurs when the tires of your vehicle lose contact with the road. The vehicle rides on a thin layer of water between the tires and the road.

Why hydroplaning occurs

- Speed too fast for conditions
- Standing water
- Tires unable to displace water fast enough

- Low tread and /or low air pressure
- Too much weight concentrated at the rear of the vehicle

How to prevent hydroplaning

- Adjust speed.
- Ensure tires have the proper tread and air pressure.
- Distribute weight/load evenly throughout your vehicle.
- Avoid puddles, especially on curves.
- Avoid sudden steering/braking movements.
- Drive in the tracks of leading vehicles. DO NOT TAILGATE!

3.Fog or Sandstorm

Fog is a hazardous condition which results when there is warm weather and high humidity. It is very unpredictable and can show up without any warning. Fog can last for a few feet or a few miles.

Tips for driving in fog

- Slow down.
- Use low beams. Using high beams will “blind” you because fog reflects light.
- Try to see the edge of the pavement/road for guidance.
- Pull over and stop if fog is too thick. To help prevent an accident, get off the road as far as possible and turn on emergency flashers.

Maintaining traction on snow and ice puts driving skills to the test. Falling snowflakes decrease visibility by sticking to your vehicle and by reflecting light. Snow may also hide objects lying on the road surface. Under these conditions, the control of your vehicle is greatly decreased. Ice decreases vehicle control even more. During snow and ice situations, remember to:

- Reduce your speed to avoid skidding.
- Increase your space cushion.
- Clear snow and ice from all windows.
- Be aware that ice forms more quickly and lasts longer on bridges and in shady spots.
- Test the traction by lightly applying the brakes at slow speed to get the “feel” of the road.
- Use ultraviolet blocking sunglasses to combat glare.

Skidding

This is a major problem associated with snow and ice. If you begin to skid, steer in the same direction as the skid. Take your foot off the brake. This will give you better control of your front wheels. Shifting to lower gears will help slow the vehicle while not impeding your ability to steer.

How to avoid a skid

- Slow down. Drive at reduced speeds.
- Greatly increase space cushion.
- Avoid sudden acceleration or stops.
- Tap brakes or press and release to stop. Begin stopping much sooner than normal.

The Traffic Condition



Traffic conditions are created by the number of vehicles and pedestrians using the road or street, and by how well the road has been engineered to accommodate the amount of traffic present at a given time. Traffic conditions are also influenced by the time of day, day of the week, time of year and by environmental factors.

Adjusting to traffic conditions

- Yield right of way to a pedestrian.
- Allow motorcycles as much road space as you would a car or truck.
- Be ready for wind turbulence when passing large trucks or campers.
- Plan your driving route to avoid congestion.
- Drive with traffic to avoid passing.
- Check your mirrors every five to eight seconds to take note of traffic conditions behind the vehicle.
- Utilize the horn. Properly alert others of your presence.
- Stay clear of large vehicles that obstruct your view. Do not drive in their blind spot.
- Maintain a space cushion of at least 4 seconds between you and the vehicle ahead. If tailgated, increase your space cushion to provide room for a longer, slower stop.

NOTE: Because traffic conditions can trigger emotional reactions among drivers, the SMSA Express driver seeks to influence others by showing courtesy and consideration to other motorists at all times.

The Driver Condition



Driver condition refers to your physical, mental, and emotional fitness to drive. It is the most important of the six driving conditions, because a driver in top physical, mental, and emotional shape can adjust to all the other conditions and to the errors of others as well. Ninety-six percent of all accidents are attributed to human error.

Adverse driver conditions

- Alcohol - Alcohol adversely affects judgment, reaction time and coordination.

Possession or drinking of alcohol is prohibited in the country.

- Age - Know your limitations and adjust to them.

- Persons Under 25 have good physical condition but lack experience and mature judgment.
- Persons Over 40 have a decrease in the ability to see well at night.
- Persons Over 65 have diminished physical and sensory capabilities but have wisdom gained from experience.
- Attitude - Aggressive “me first” personalities frequently cause collisions.
- Drowsiness and fatigue - Do not drive when you are tired.
- Drugs - Know the effects of prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and drug combinations on driving ability. Use of illegal drugs is against Corporate Policy and is grounds for termination.
- Physical impairment - Poor vision or hearing, muscle weakness, uncontrollable epilepsy, heart disease and diabetes can increase your driving risk.
- Emotions - Anger, frustration, and worry reduce concentration. Even joy and excitement can take your mind off the driving task.

The Driving Commentary

A running (driving) commentary is a verbal description of what a driver is seeing, what a driver is doing in response to what is seen, and the reason for the action taken. This is a complex skill that requires an individual to:

- Recognize the hazards
- Know the defense
- Act correctly in time
- Provide a commentary that describes the reasons driving choices are made

Driving Commentary Checklist (Phrases and Usage)

<input type="checkbox"/> Adjusting Speed To Visibility	Vehicle speed is determined by driving conditions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Aim High In Steering	Seeing far in advance of the vehicle.
<input type="checkbox"/> Big Picture	A 360-degree circle of awareness around a vehicle.
<input type="checkbox"/> Vision Barrier	Any object that blocks your path of vision.
<input type="checkbox"/> Blind Spots	Areas that cannot be seen from a vehicle even with mirrors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Blind Stare	Staring at nothing in particular or daydreaming.
<input type="checkbox"/> Brake Early	Warns others behind you of potential hazards and may indicate the possible need to stop.
<input type="checkbox"/> Convenient Lane Change	Change to the lane of least resistance, not necessitated by a specific hazard.
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Lane Change	Lane change necessitated by a specific hazard.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact	One way of communicating with others to make sure they see you.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eye Lead Time (ELT)	Look ahead to where you will be in 15 seconds. This depends on vehicle speed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Stare	Staring pointedly at one object.
<input type="checkbox"/> Following Distance	The distance between your vehicle and the one ahead.

Driving Commentary Checklist (Continued)

<input type="checkbox"/> Keep Your Eyes Moving	Frequent eye movement necessary to recognize hazards
<input type="checkbox"/> Lane Of Least Resistance	Traffic lane with the fewest vehicles or hazards
<input type="checkbox"/> Left-Right-Left	Scan all major and minor intersections to detect hazards
<input type="checkbox"/> Make Sure They See You	Includes all activities to communicate your intentions to others
<input type="checkbox"/> Mirror Scan	Term that refers to checking one or more mirrors at least every 5-8 seconds
<input type="checkbox"/> Lift and Cover	Defensive technique used to prepare for stop if conditions warrant. Performed prior to reaching the point of no return at intersections.
<input type="checkbox"/> Pacing	Adjust speed to the condition of traffic lights to reduce stopping and starting
<input type="checkbox"/> Point Of No Return	The location at which you can no longer safely stop your vehicle when the traffic light changes.
<input type="checkbox"/> Space Cushion	Distance between your vehicle and other vehicles or objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Stale Green	A traffic light that has been green for some time and is likely to change suddenly.
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Clusters	Packs of vehicles moving as a group in the same direction usually with little or no space cushion.
<input type="checkbox"/> Two Second Pause	Slight pause before accelerating from a stopped position. Creates front space cushion and appropriate following space.

NOTE: These driving commentary terms are part of the language spoken by SMSA Express Couriers. Managers or Driver Instructors may ask you to demonstrate a running commentary as part of a defensive driving or performance check ride. Demonstrating driving commentary requires you to evaluate your own actions and describe them to others-a very complex skill. With practice, you can become very proficient in giving a driving commentary.

Driving Situations

The Six Driving Conditions, together with the Five Seeing Habits, are the framework for defensive driving. Mastering the skills needed to drive safely provides the defensive driver with the basic ability to travel safely from one location to another. Getting a vehicle from point A to point B requires the driver analyze and maneuver through common driving situations.

The situational elements of driving are:

- Intersections
- Turns
- Tailgating
- Blind Spots
- Passing
- Parking
- Backing

1. Intersections

An intersection is a danger point where pedestrians, roads, and other vehicles meet and cross paths. One third of all traffic accidents, and about 40% of all urban accidents, happen at intersections

Three Types of Intersections:

1. Controlled Intersection

- Traffic light (red, green, yellow)
- Four way stop
- Policeman

2.Semi-Controlled Intersection

- One or two stop signs at an intersection
- Flashing red light
- Flashing yellow light
- Yield sign

3.Uncontrolled Intersection

- No lights
- No signs
- Driveways
- Parking lots
- Residential areas

Procedures for going through an intersection:

STEP 1 Reduce speed.

STEP 2 Cover brake, look left-right-left prior to entering the intersection.

STEP 3 If clear, proceed through the intersection.

Who goes first at controlled intersections?

- **Traffic light**

The driver with the green light. The yellow light is a signal to slow to a stop (not to “beat the light”).

•Four way stop

The first vehicle to reach and stop at the intersection. When two or more vehicles arrive at the intersection at the same time, the vehicle on your right goes first.

•Police officer

The officer directs the traffic flow.

Who goes first at semi-controlled intersections?

- Vehicles on the road without the directional signals or signs.
- Vehicle reaching the directional sign first.
- When two or more vehicles arrive at the same time, the vehicle on your right proceeds first.

Who goes first at uncontrolled intersections?

- No one has the right of way.
- The law says the vehicle on the left shall yield to the vehicle on the right. In a collision, the driver on the left can be ticketed for failure to yield the right of way.
- At a private drive or parking lot entrance/exit, the vehicle entering the public street must yield.

Additional intersection situations:

yield sign

Approach a yield sign by removing your foot from the accelerator, covering the brake pedal, and looking left-right-left for traffic. Be prepared to stop.

yellow light

Prepare to stop. In many places it is against the law to drive through a yellow light if you have enough room to stop.

“stale green” light

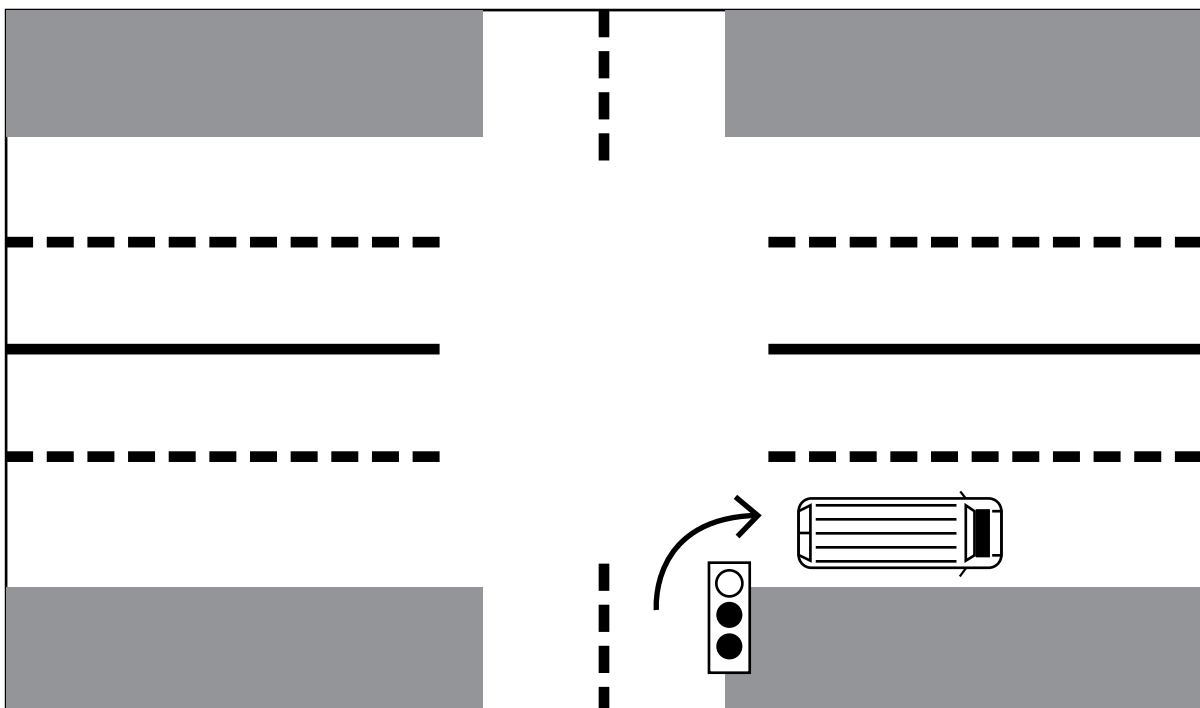
Describes a light that has been green for a while and may be red when you get to the intersection. Lift and cover as you approach the intersection.

NOTE: Emergency vehicles always have the right of way!

2. Turns

Right turn procedures:

1. As you approach the intersection, get in the right lane nearest the curb at least 100 feet (about 6 car lengths) before your turn.
2. Check your side mirrors. Turn on directional signals. Slow down gradually.
3. Stay close to the curb or edge of the road. This discourages bicyclists, motorcyclists, and drivers of small cars from passing you on the right.
4. Check both left and right mirrors to see who is behind you. Also check for pedestrians on the sidewalk before you turn.
5. Do not “swing wide” as you begin your turn.
6. Turn into the lane nearest the curb after completing your turn.
7. Check your mirrors to see who turned with you and their location.

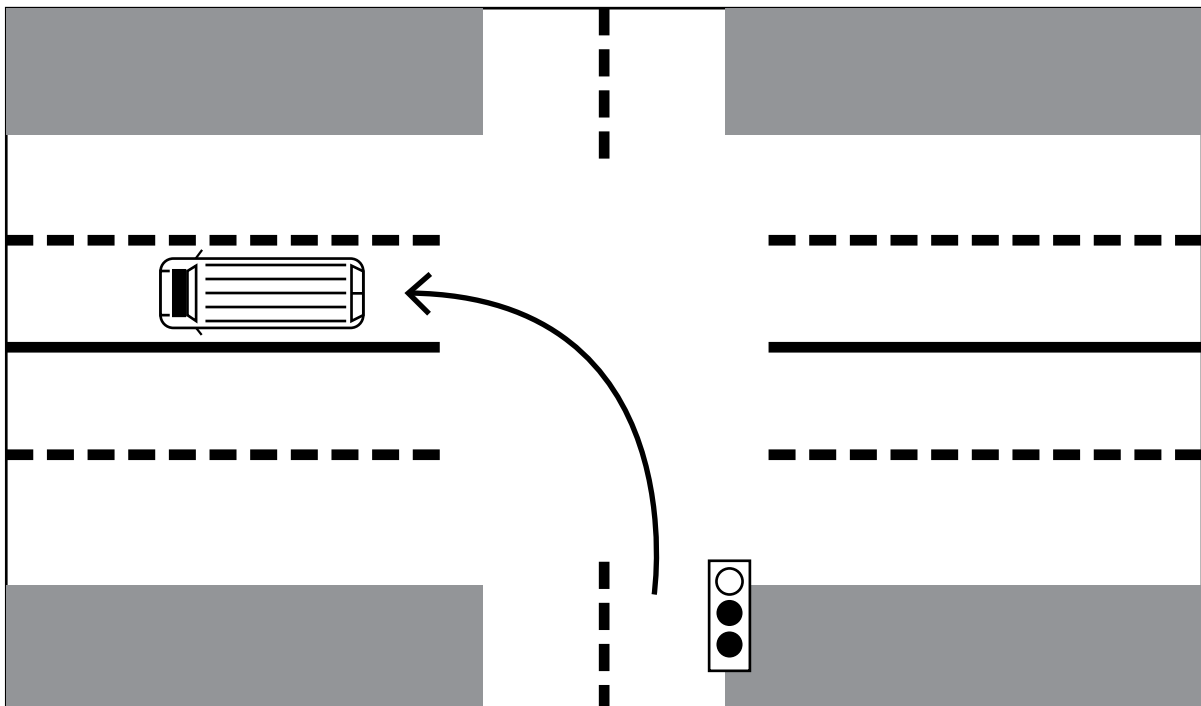


Left turn procedures:

1. As you approach the intersection, get in the lane nearest the center line at least 100 feet (30meters) before your turn.
2. Check your side mirrors. Turn on directional signal. Gradually slow down, stopping if necessary.
3. Keep the wheels straight. If you are struck from the rear with your wheels turned, you will be pushed into on-coming traffic and a possible head-on collision.
4. Do NOT enter the intersection prior to the turn.
5. Let traffic clear the intersection. Check your mirrors to ensure that no one is trying to pass you. Turn into the lane nearest the center line.
6. Check your mirrors to see who turned with you and their location.

U-turns:

U-turns are against the law in most locations and are to be avoided.



3. Tailgating

Tailgating is driving so closely behind another vehicle that one cannot stop or swerve in an emergency.

Prevention:

1. Follow the four second rule.

When the driver ahead of you passes a fixed marker (sign, pole, etc.), begin counting:

“one thousand one . . . one thousand two . . . one thousand three . . . one thousand four . . .”

If you reach the marker before you have finished counting, you are following too close. Slow down and count again.

2. Safe following distances (space cushion):

- 4 seconds for dry conditions
- 5-6 seconds for wet, slippery conditions
- Extra weight increases the distance needed to stop.

Defensive action:

When someone is tailgating:

- Gradually slow down.
- Allow the trailing vehicle to pass you.
- Open up additional space cushion between you and the vehicle in front of you. The gradual slowing will allow the tailgater to react and avoid hitting the rear of your vehicle while you have enough space to avoid rear-ending the vehicle in front of you.
- If the trailing vehicle continues to follow too closely, pull over and let the tailgater proceed.

4. Blind Spots

Any area behind, in front and on either side of the driver that cannot be seen, even with the use of mirrors, is a blind spot. Changing lanes without checking the blind spot invites an accident with the vehicle behind you or a side-swipe with the car beside you.

Before changing lanes:

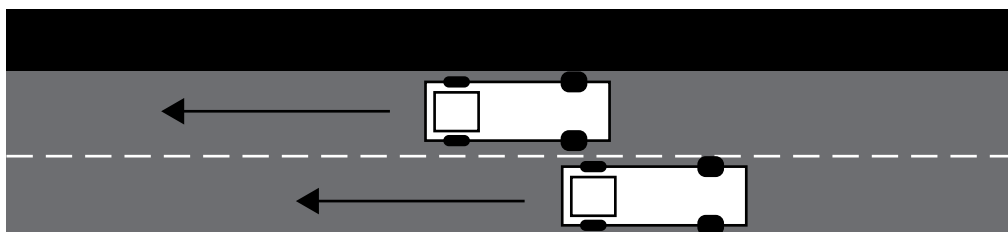
- Check your mirrors.
- Engage your directional signal.
- Change lanes slowly and cautiously.
- In a van, be especially careful switching lanes to the right.

NOTE: Motorcyclists, small vehicles, and pedestrians are likely to disappear in blind spots. Look carefully for them.

Remember you can be the vehicle in another driver's blind spot.

- Avoid riding in that position.
- If it is unavoidable in heavy urban traffic, watch carefully for any indication the driver might change lanes suddenly in front of you.
- Tap your horn to alert the driver to your presence.
- If your vehicle is equipped with one, use the oval backing mirror to see if someone is riding close behind you.

Blind Spot



5. Passing

Safe passing procedures:

1. Establish a 3-second space cushion.
2. Check for hazards, both on and off the road.
3. Check the mirrors and move toward the center line. Be prepared to drop back and try again.
4. Check ahead for clear, safe passing distance.
 - 9-10 seconds when passing cars or vans.
 - 13-15 seconds when passing trucks and buses.
5. Signal left.
6. Check blind spots.
7. Overtaking the vehicle:
 - Accelerate into the passing lane. Check for hazards both on and off the road. Drop back if necessary.
 - Accelerate 10-15 mph faster than the vehicle you are passing.
 - Check the front wheels of the vehicle you are passing for signs it may be drifting into your lane. (If the vehicle drifts into your lane, tap your horn or flash your headlights.)
 - Check mirrors.
8. Returning to the right hand lane.
 - Check mirrors. Look for the vehicle you have passed.
 - Signal right - return to lane.
 - Enter lane and maintain passing speed.
 - Turn off right turn signal.
 - Gradually reduce speed to the speed limit.

When someone passes you:

- Maintain constant speed.
- Move to the right side of your lane.
- Slow down if the passing driver creates a hazardous situation.

6.Parking

Helpful hints to avoid problems with parking:

- Avoid double parking.
- When parking, leave a forward space cushion.
- Avoid backing after parking.
- Position the vehicle beyond driveways, intersections, crosswalks.
- Set the parking brake.
- Place the transmission in the proper gear.
- Park 8-12 inches away from the curb.
- Perform accurate and safe parallel parking maneuvers.
- Avoid congested parking lots.
- Avoid parking in alleys.
- Avoid areas where there is a lot of activity.
- Avoid commercial strip parking and convenience store parking.

When leaving your vehicle after you have parked:

- Turn your wheels into the curb (if you are on the street).
- Set the parking brake.
- Remove the keys from the ignition.
- Lock the vehicle.

When returning to your parked vehicle:

- Walk behind the vehicle. Look for obstructions.
- Remove any warning signs, cones, or chocks.
- Put on your seat belt, start engine, check mirrors, remove brake, and signal your intention to pull out.

7. Backing

Avoid backing whenever possible. Backing is the most frequent type of accident at SMSA.

Rules for backing:

1. Back only when necessary.

Situations may change before or after returning to the vehicle. Backing may be unavoidable.

2. Check around the vehicle before backing.

Check before you enter the vehicle or if you forget, leave the vehicle to make a visual check.

3. Back first.

Perform all backing procedures before completing any paperwork or leaving the vehicle.

4. Check your mirrors.

Check both mirrors prior to and while backing to judge distances and to determine if it is safe to continue backing.

5. Sound your horn.

Prior to placing the gear selector in reverse, tap your horn twice and continue to tap the horn while backing to alert others of your presence.

6. Back to the sight side of your vehicle.

When backing, a driver's blind side is on the passenger side of the vehicle. The field of vision on the passenger side is less than from the driver's side. When backing into

an alley/driveway, position the vehicle's driver side closest to any structure. Use the directional or flasher signal. This will alert others.

7. Back slowly.
 - Speed control is important in backing
 - Use a reliable guide when available to help you back.
 - Keep backing distance to a minimum.
8. Use a buddy, if available.

Success in backing depends on five important driving abilities:

- Correct posture
- Seeing with the mirrors
- Steering
- Speed control
- Position of the vehicle

A perfect trip is one completed without any of the following:

- Collisions
- Traffic violations
- Vehicle abuse
- Excessive schedule delays
- Acts of discourtesy

Every time you have a perfect trip, the following people benefit from your professional driving skills and attitude.

- YOU
- YOUR FAMILY
- SMSA
- THE GENERAL PUBLIC



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