

Lesson 4: Hitting the Road

Drive defensively.

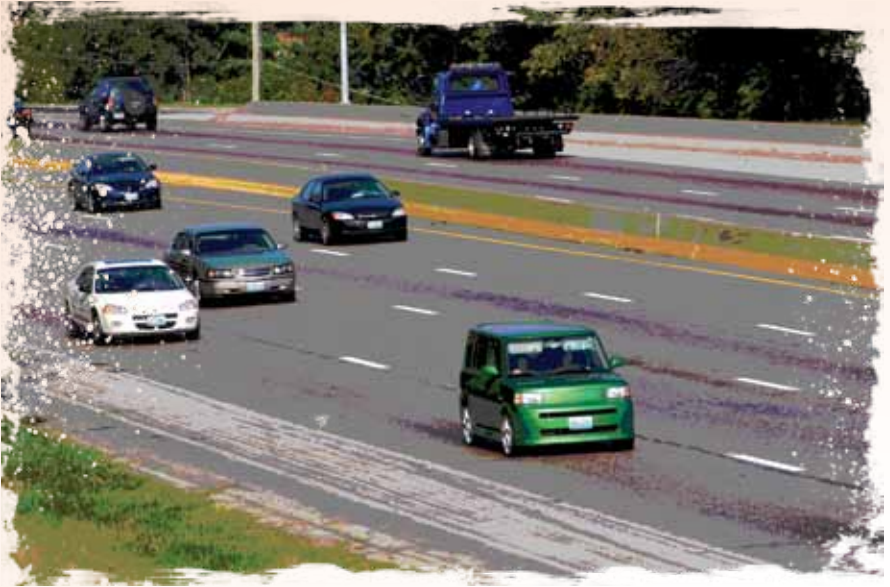
Avoid danger by recognizing danger signs early and communicating with other drivers. Constantly scan the area you are driving so you can anticipate and react to any problems that might arise.

Parent's Tip: Start your teen's driving lessons on less-traveled roadways. Don't take your new driver night driving until he or she has mastered the basic driving skills.

Look Ahead

The path in front of the driver is the most important, but drivers need to be aware of what is happening on all sides of the vehicle. Scanning the highway 20 to 30 seconds ahead gives the driver time to decide what actions may need to be taken. In heavy traffic, the driver should watch for brake lights three or four vehicles





ahead in order to have time to react. Also, don't forget to use the rear-view and side-view mirrors to access situations on all sides of the vehicle.

Keep Your Distance

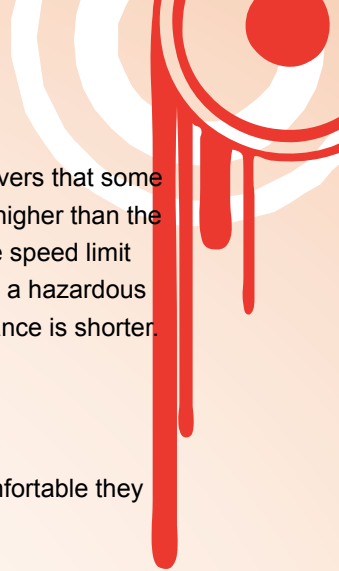
In normal conditions, the vehicle should stay three to four seconds behind the vehicle in front. When the vehicle in front passes a stationary object, count "one one-thousand, two one-thousand, etc." Your vehicle should not pass the object until the three to four second count is completed.

If it is dark or raining, the distance should be at least four seconds. If there is ice or snow on the ground, stay at least six seconds behind. This will give you plenty of braking distance in hazardous conditions.

Watch Your Speed

The signs posted on the side of the road for the speed limit are there to tell drivers the **maximum**





speed allowed by the law. The limit also informs drivers that some roads are too curvy or dangerous to travel speeds higher than the posted speed limit. In some weather conditions, the speed limit is too fast and the driver should slow down to avoid a hazardous situation. Reaction time is shorter when visual distance is shorter. Driving at the appropriate speed means driving:

- According to traffic and weather conditions.
- Within the posted speed limit for the roadway.
- Within the driver's abilities, if the driver is uncomfortable they should slow down or ask someone else to drive.
- Within the vehicle's capabilities.

Pay Attention to Your Lane Position

Keep your vehicle in the center of the driving lane, not on the edges. Small steering adjustments will need to be made to ensure proper positioning, do not jerk the steering wheel. Both hands should remain on the steering wheel when making a sharp turn.

Don't forget to periodically check all mirrors to keep track of what is happening on all sides of the vehicle and use head checks for blind spots!

Parent's Tip: Remember to lead by example. When you follow the rules of the road, your new driver is likely to do the same. Wear your safety belt, obey the speed limit, don't drive distracted and never drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.



Lesson 4 Checklist

- Watches sides and middle of road
- Checks rear view and side mirrors frequently
- Follows at a safe distance
- Drives at an appropriate speed
- Keeps vehicle in center of driving lane
- Checks blind spots