

# Safe-Driver Checklist

A guide for parents teaching their teens to drive.

Check Around VehicleTiresCas/Oil/Washer FluidGaugesBatteryAlcohol/MedicationMaintenance ScheduleWeather/Road ConditionsEmotions/Health/SleepinessPrecautions Getting in and OutBe a Thinking DriverTailgaters/HonkersWalk Around BackIILocate Ancillary Controls - Your teen should be able to locate the controls and explain how they work.ISeat Belt + How to FitPassenger Seat BeltsIHeadlights + SettingsIHeadrest + Proper PlacementOdometerSpeedometer + TachometerWindshield Wipers + SettingsHazard LightsI gnition Key/ButtonTurn On w/Out StartingSignal LightsSteering Wheel + CearsFuel GaugeHornHeater/DefrosterOil Pressure Warning LightTemperature ControlsSit 10 in (25cm) from Air BagCruise ControlStarting the VehicleNote Gauges - Gas/ServicingStarts Vehicle smoothlyMoving ForwardSteers StraightMaintains Directed Speed (10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60)Vess Both Hands - Correct PositionChecks Mirrors - Before Signalling, Changing Direction, Changing SpeedScans Or Hazards (People in Parked Cars, Children, Animals)Wheel Always Turns to Correct Foot on PedalControlled StopStops Behind Crosswalks or Stop LineOrrect Foot on PedalControlled StopStops Behind Crosswalks or Stop LineOrrect Foot on PedalCornes to Full StopStops Behind Crosswalks or Stop LineDistance Between VehicleComes to Full Stop </th <th colspan="7">Pre-Inspection/Discussion</th>	Pre-Inspection/Discussion						
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Position of Hands/BodyStraight LineReverse to the LeftReverse to the RightWalking Pace SpeedFront End Swing Out	Ţ	Looks Over Right Shoulder	Checks Mirrors and Sides				
	Position of Hands/Body		Reverse to the Left				
	Reverse to the Right	Walking Pace Speed	Front End Swing Out				
Parking	Parking						
Signals Signals & Checks Shoulder Straight-in Parking	Signals	Signals & Checks Shoulder	Straight-in Parking				
Reverse ParkingParking at AngleSets Parking Brake		Parking at Angle	Sets Parking Brake				
Curbs Wheels Properly Curbs Wheels Properly Down		Curbs Wheels Properly Down					
Up Hill (with/out curb) Hill (with/out curb)	Up Hill (with/out curb)	Hill (with/out curb)					
Parallel Parking							
Signals Looks Over Shoulder Yields to Other Traffic	Signals	Looks Over Shoulder	Yields to Other Traffic				
Start with one car then two		Start with one car then two					

Turns Figure 8 Turns	Begins and Ends Turn in	Signals in Advance and Slows
rigure o runns	Correct Lane	for Turn
Doody to Broke	Sees and Reacts to Hazards	Yields to Pedestrians
Ready to Brake		
Practice Right	Practice Left Residential	Yields Right-of-Way
Residential Turns First	Turns	
Safe Approach in	Space Between Vehicles	Accepts Legal Right-of-Way
Intersection		
Blocked Intersection	Look L, R, L	Judge Traffic
Traffic		
Stay Straight on Left Turn	Center Left Turn Lane	
Defensive Driving		
Checks Mirrors	Checks Mirrors Before	Checks Cross Streets Before
Frequently	Braking	Intersections
Checks Signal Lights and	Keeps Eyes Moving (Sides-	"Space Cushion" around
Signs	Middle)	Vehicle
Follows at Safe Distance	Scans ahead 12 seconds	
Intersections		
Be Ready to Brake	Assess Risks (Traffic,	Yellow Light
	Pedestrians, etc.)	
Blind Intersections	Roundabouts	Flashing Lights
Changing Lanes		
Signals	Checks Mirrors	Checks Over Shoulder/Blind
5		Spot
Does not Drift Out of	Identifies Break in Traffic	Safe Distance from Vehicles
Lane		in Front
Changes Lanes Safely	Passing Stationary	Traffic Calming Measures
	Vehicles/Hold Back Position	
Freeway		
Checks Traffic Flow	Signals	Times Entry
Checks Over Shoulder	Accelerates into Gap	Signals Early and Slows Down
		on the Exit Ramp to Posted
		on the Exit Ramp to Posted
	Avoid Blind Spots of Other	Speed
Adjust to Road	Avoid Blind Spots of Other Drivers	
Adjust to Road Conditions	Drivers	Speed Checks Mirrors
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines	Drivers 3-sec Space Cushion	Speed       Checks Mirrors         Watch for Merging Traffic
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines Responds to Traffic	Drivers	Speed Checks Mirrors
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines Responds to Traffic Slowing	Drivers 3-sec Space Cushion	Speed       Checks Mirrors         Watch for Merging Traffic
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines Responds to Traffic Slowing One-Way Streets	Drivers 3-sec Space Cushion	Speed       Checks Mirrors         Watch for Merging Traffic
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines Responds to Traffic Slowing One-Way Streets Look at road signs to	Drivers 3-sec Space Cushion	Speed       Checks Mirrors         Watch for Merging Traffic
Adjust to Road Conditions Solid Lines Responds to Traffic Slowing <b>One-Way Streets</b> Look at road signs to help identify	Drivers 3-sec Space Cushion	Speed       Checks Mirrors         Watch for Merging Traffic
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Miscellaneous			
Gravel Roads	Potholes	Hills	
Weather Conditions – Snow, Rain, Fog, Sun, Wind, Extreme Heat, Hydroplaning, Extreme Cold	Night Driving	U-Turns	
Motorcycles & Bicyclists	Road Markings	Construction Zones	
Reflections off of Windows/Vehicles			

# ADDITIONAL TIPS TO REVIEW:

WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE BECAUSE OF FOG, RAIN, OR SNOW

- The best advice for driving in the fog is "DON'T." But if you have to, don't use your high-beam headlights in the fog because they create glare and reduce visibility. Only use your low-beam headlights in the fog. Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears.
- If you must drive, then slow down and turn on your low-beam headlights. Never drive with just your parking or fog lights. Increase your following distance and be prepared to stop within the space you can see in front of your vehicle. Avoid crossing or passing lanes of traffic unless absolutely necessary. Listen for traffic you cannot see. Use your wipers and defroster as necessary for best vision.
- Turn on your lights when visibility is poor-even in the daylight hours.
- Note: You must turn on your headlights if snow, rain, fog, or low visibility (1,000 feet or less) require the continuous use of windshield wipers.
- In a very heavy rain or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. You may have to stop from time to time to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.
- When you drive in snowy areas, carry chains in case you find yourself in conditions where you cannot drive without them. Make sure you carry the correct number of chains and that they will fit your drive wheels. Learn how to put the chains on before you need to use them.
- Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. This is when many road pavements are most slippery because oil and dust have not been washed away.

### DRIVING ON SLIPPERY ROADS (Wet, Icy, gravel, or dirt roads)

- Drive more slowly and stay farther behind the vehicle ahead.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid quick stops. "Pump" the brakes to slow or stop.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Shift into a lower gear before going down a steep hill.
- Avoid especially slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, and deep puddles.

#### DRIVING IN WIND

- Drive slower than normal when it is very windy.
- Lighter vehicles, vans, and trucks with broad, high sides are sometimes blown out of their lane. House trailers are in special danger of shifting.
- If possible, avoid driving next to other vehicles.
- Grasp the steering wheel firmly. Be prepared to correct steering as wind force changes.
- Keep the windows closed.

### QUICK STOPS AND SKIDS

Avoid sudden stops. If your vehicle has four-wheel ABS, apply firm pressure on the brake pedal.

**Note:** To determine if a vehicle has ABS, review your owner's manual. There may also be an illuminated ABS symbol on your dashboard immediately after starting the engine.

If you stop quickly or your vehicle begins to skid, and your vehicle:

- Has just rear-wheel ABS (common in light trucks), ease up on the brake pedal with just enough pressure to allow the front wheels to roll again so you can steer.
- Has rear-wheel drive and goes into a skid, stop braking and turn the steering wheel into the direction of the skid.
- Has front-wheel drive, steer where you want to go and carefully accelerate to keep the vehicle moving.
- Does not have ABS, lightly and briefly "pump" the brakes. To pump the brakes, you should:
  - 1. Push the brake pedal hard.
  - 2. As the vehicle begins to skid, quickly let up on the brake. Push it down again quickly.
  - 3. Use this quick, pumping action until the vehicle is stopped.

### IF YOUR BRAKES FAIL

If your brakes fail, you should:

- 1. Downshift into a lower gear.
- 2. If your vehicle:
  - Has four-wheel ABS, apply firm pressure on the brake pedal.
  - Has just rear-wheel ABS (common in light trucks), ease up on the brake pedal with just enough pressure to allow the front wheels to roll again.
  - Does not have an ABS, pump the brake pedal.
- 3. Apply the parking brake, but be ready to release it if the vehicle begins to skid.
- 4. Remember you can still steer and swerve. You could steer into bushes or something soft.
- 5. Sound your horn and flash your lights to warn other drivers.
- 6. When you no longer need to change direction and have stopped, turn off the ignition. (Turning off the key locks the steering wheel of many vehicles, so do NOT turn off the ignition until you come to a complete stop.)

### DRIVING IN EXTREME HEAT

- Watch the temperature gauge for overheating.
- Avoid driving at high speeds for long periods.
- Use low gear in "creeping" traffic.
- Turn off the air conditioner, if the engine is overheating.

#### HYDROPLANING

If water on the road is deeper than the tread of the tires, a fast-moving vehicle may glide over the water and not touch the road surface. This condition is called hydroplaning. If you can see reflections on the pavement, or the vehicle ahead leaves no tracks on the water, your vehicle could hydroplane.

To avoid hydroplaning:

- Drive slowly.
- Maintain good tire tread.
- Have your tires properly inflated.
- If possible, steer around water.
- If you hear a sloshing sound from the tires, especially when changing directions, slow down.

### DRIVING IN EXTREME COLD

If you have not added antifreeze, the water in the radiator may be freezing. Your engine will overheat if this happens. After starting the engine, watch the temperature gauge for signs of overheating. Use the defroster or slightly open your windows to keep them from "fogging up."

# TIRE BLOWOUT

Teach your teen to always keep both hands on the wheel. If a tire goes flat suddenly, you need both hands to control the vehicle. If you have a sudden tire blowout, you should:

- 1. Hold the steering wheel tightly and steer straight ahead.
- 2. Slow down gradually. Take your foot off the gas pedal slowly, but do not hit the brakes.
- 3. Let the vehicle slow to a stop, completely off the road.
- 4. Apply the brakes when the vehicle is almost stopped.

### WHEN YOU ARE STUCK IN SNOW OR MUD

- 1. Shift into a low gear and keep the front wheels straight.
- 2. Gently step on the gas pedal.
- 3. Avoid spinning the wheels. Drive forward as far as possible.
- 4. Shift into reverse and slowly back up as far as possible. Do not spin the wheels.
- 5. Shift into a low gear again and drive forward.
- 6. Repeat a forward-backward motion until the vehicle rolls free.
- 7. In deep mud or snow, put boards, tree branches, etc., under the tires. Never do this when the tires are spinning.

You may avoid getting stuck if you always carry chains in your vehicle. Put chains on the tires before driving in snow or mud.

#### STUCK ACCELERATOR

If your accelerator becomes stuck, you should:

- 1. Shift to neutral.
- 2. Apply the brakes.
- 3. Keep your eyes on the road.
- 4. Look for a way out.
- 5. Warn other drivers by honking and flashing your emergency lights.
- 6. Try to drive the vehicle safely off the road.
- 7. When you no longer need to change direction and have stopped, turn off the ignition. (Turning off the key locks the steering wheel of many vehicles, so do NOT turn off the ignition until you come to a complete stop.)

Disclaimer: This checklist was created by myself as a parent looking for a structured way to teach my teens to drive. It has not been vetted by a professional and does not claim to be the correct information to support correct procedures when learning to drive. This checklist may not be all-encompassing with everything you should cover with a new driver. It is only offered as a starting resource. It is intended to accompany any training you plan to do with a new driver and we encourage you to register your child/new driver for professional driving lessons. Do your own due diligence to ensure that your new driver not only has the skills required to pass their road test, but that they also have the skills to handle all situations on the road. We wish you luck and hope you find this helpful.