

# Defensive Driver Training Program



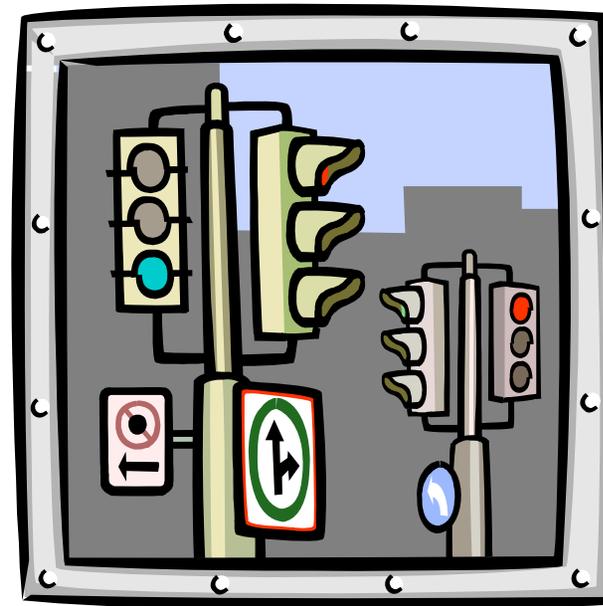
# Purpose

The purpose of the Vehicle Use Policy is to ensure that motor vehicles are operated safely while being used for or on behalf of your location.

## What Is Defensive Driving?

Defensive driving is:

- **Driving in a way that avoids conflicts** that may be caused by the mistakes of others while making **NO** mistakes yourself
- **It is also being prepared for and alert to possible hazards**



This Program follows applicable state driving laws and widely accepted driver safety practices.

# Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is anything that takes a driver's (1) **eyes** off the road; (2) **hands** off the wheel; or (3) **mind** off of driving.

Drivers that take their mind off the road experience inattention blindness. **This blindness causes tunnel vision and delays reaction times.** That's why using phones in "hands free" mode is still dangerous.



## Facts About Distracted Driving

1. **Distracted driving is the #1 cause of accidents.**
2. **Texting while driving is 6 times more likely to cause an accident than drunk driving.** Why? Because, at 55 mph, **texting is like driving** the length of a football field **blindfolded.**
3. Any type of distracted driving increases the chance of an accident. Here are some examples: Texting 23X; Reaching 9X; Reading 4X.

**The use of portable electronic devices while driving is strictly prohibited.** However, the use of navigation systems are permitted provided the they are set-up while the vehicle is not moving.

# Drug and Alcohol Use

The use of drugs and alcohol can severely impair your ability to drive safely. Judgment, reaction time, ability to determine distances, and vision can all be affected. Even the smallest amount of alcohol will reduce your concentration and perception, and your driving skills will suffer. The use of illegal drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited while driving. Prescription and over-the-counter medications can also have negative side effects. Don't take any medication and attempt to drive until you know how the medication affects you, and that it will not impact your ability to drive safely.

Alcohol and drugs impair:

- Ability to determine distances
- Reaction time
- Judgment
- Vision

Remember:

- Only time, not coffee, will sober you up
- Ride with a designated driver

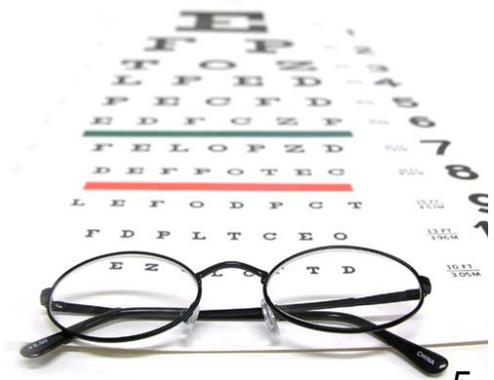
**Don't Drink or Take Drugs and Drive**



# Personal Conditions

As a driver, your physical health is an important part of being fit to drive. If you need glasses to drive, always wear them. Keep glasses clean and free of scratches, and always have sunglasses on hand for daytime driving. If you use hearing assistance devices, always utilize these when driving.

Notify your location if you have any medical conditions that may impact your fitness to drive. Keep in mind that even temporary medical conditions such as migraine headaches can affect your ability to drive safely. Don't attempt to drive if you feel your ability to do so safely is compromised by illness. If you become ill while driving, pull over in a safe area and assess whether you can continue your journey safely. If necessary, contact your location to be relieved of driving duties. Medications can relieve symptoms of an illness, but may also cause side-effects such as drowsiness.



# Fatigue and Stress

A recent study estimated that one in twenty-five drivers has fallen asleep at the wheel in the past month. Falling asleep while driving is responsible for over 100,000 accidents each year. Fatigued drivers have slower reaction times, have trouble paying attention to the road, and can have trouble making good decisions. Fatigue is often the result of not getting enough sleep, but can also be caused by shift work or medications.

Follow these precautions:

- Be especially careful during late night, early morning, and mid-afternoon hours
- Stop, take a nap, and drink coffee if you're tired
- Stop every so often over long distances
- Avoid medications that cause drowsiness



# Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection: Exterior

Start by taking a walk around the outside of the vehicle. Make sure there are no signs of damage, and that the trunk, hood, and doors are fully closed and secure. Also, check under the vehicle for leaks and to make sure the area is clear of debris or objects that could be run over. Next, take a look at the tires. Inspect for damage such as nails or cuts, and if tire air pressure looks low, check with a tire gauge and inflate as necessary. Turn on headlights and signals to ensure good working order, and make sure windows and mirrors are clean. Ensure windshield wipers are clear of debris and free of damage.

## Exterior

- Body
- Tires
- Signals & Headlights
- Windows & Mirrors
- Wipers



# Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection: Interior

Inspect the interior of the vehicle for cleanliness. Make sure trash is disposed of and personal items are stowed. Something as simple as a water bottle rolling across the floor can interfere with safe operation of the vehicle. Check that there is a functioning, accessible seat belt for each seat, and that car seats, if used, are properly installed. Safety equipment, including a spare tire, jack, and flashlight should be accessible. Turn the key in the ignition and look at the dashboard. Ensure the fuel level is adequate and there are no warning indicators



## Interior

- Cleanliness
- Seat belts
- Safety equipment
- Fuel level
- Warnings

# Seatbelts

According to PennDOT, reportable crash data, 78% of drivers were wearing seatbelts. 52% of vehicle fatalities were due to drivers NOT wearing seatbelts.

## **Seatbelts save lives, and it's the law!**

- Saved hundreds of thousands of lives
- Prevent crashing into steering wheel, dash, or windshield
- Keep you inside vehicle
- Protect body organs
- Improve chance of remaining conscious
- Keep you behind the wheel if you have to swerve or brake suddenly



# Starting

When beginning your drive, always check for pedestrians, oncoming traffic, or other hazards before entering the road. Use your turn signal to indicate the direction of your travel and join the roadway by accelerating smoothly. Take note of the posted speed limit and do not exceed it. Keep in mind that the posted speed limit is the maximum permitted speed, not a target. Driving conditions may require that you drive at a lower speed to remain safe.

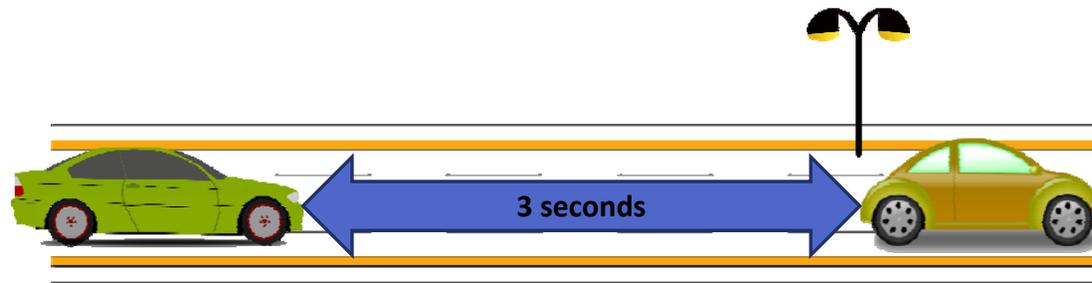
## Keep Alert and Be Prepared

- Keep your mind on your driving and your hands on the wheel
- Scan the road ahead for problems
- Check mirrors frequently
- Expect the unexpected
- Yield to other drivers who are determined to get there first



# Stopping

Always allow adequate stopping distance, whether you are traveling behind another vehicle, approaching a stop signal, or preparing to turn. **Maintain a safe following distance behind other cars by following the 3-second rule.**



Choose a fixed object in the distance, such as a light post or tree. When the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you crosses that object, begin to count... one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. You should be able to count to 3 before your front bumper passes the object. If you don't make it to 3, you need to increase your following distance. While counting to 3 is considered a minimum, maintaining a following distance of 4 is even safer. **For wet roads or other hazardous driving conditions, increase the following distance to at least 6 seconds and to at least 8-10 seconds in snow!**

# Backing Up

When possible, walk around your vehicle before backing up. Children and small objects are difficult to see from the driver's seat. Scan mirrors and backup cameras, then turn around to look out the rear window when backing up. Back up at a slow speed, and be prepared to stop quickly if a hazard arises. Where possible, avoid backing up situations by parking on the street, instead of a driveway, or by pulling through the parking space in front of you in a parking lot.

- **Backing up has major blind spots that can be 3 times the length of the vehicle**
- When parking you should attempt to position your vehicle to avoid backing up.
- Check around your vehicle before backing up **EACH AND EVERY TIME.**



# Intersections

Everyone knows that green means go and red means stop, but to safely navigate an **intersection**, whether at a traffic signal or stop sign, it's important to remember some special signals and the right-of-way rules.

## Traffic Signal

- A green arrow indicates that you have the right-of-way, whereas a green circle means that you must yield to oncoming traffic when turning.
- A red arrow means stop until a green arrow or signal appears. You may not turn against a red arrow.
- A flashing red signal should be treated as a stop sign.
- If a traffic signal is not working, all traffic should treat the intersection as if it has 4-way stop signs.

## Stop Sign

- **The first person to stop has the right-of-way and may proceed first.**
- If more than one car stops at an intersection at the same time, the vehicle farthest to the right has the right-of-way.
- If neither of the first two scenarios apply, then the vehicle that is going straight should proceed first.
- Always come to a full stop at every stop sign.



*Remember, only proceed through any intersection after any pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles have cleared.*

# Changing Lanes

Sometimes it is necessary to change lanes when driving, such as if your lane is coming to an end, you would like to pass the car in front of you, or you need to move into another lane to make a turn. Follow these steps for a safe lane change:

1. **Make sure there are no pedestrians or other vehicles in the way.**
2. Turn on your turn signal and leave it on for the duration of the lane change.
3. Make sure there is enough open space in the lane to move into it without disrupting the flow of traffic.
4. **Check your mirrors and windows and be aware of any blind spots created by your vehicle.**
5. Once you have completed the lane change, turn off your turn signal.



# Parking and Leaving the Vehicle

Vehicles should be parked in areas designated for parking, and in valid, marked spaces. The emergency brake should be set on manual transmission vehicles. All windows must be closed and doors locked. Try to park in a well-lit area. Your location is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any driver owned motor vehicle or personal property stolen from a motor vehicle.



# Rain

Rainy conditions can not only limit visibility, but create slippery conditions. **Hydroplaning occurs when the vehicle's tires lose contact with the pavement, resulting in a skid. It can happen at speeds as low as 35 mph. To avoid hydroplaning, reduce speed and don't make sudden moves such as sharp turns or hard braking.** You should also refrain from using cruise control in rainy conditions so that you have better control of the vehicle.

**If you do start to skid, continue looking and steering in the direction that you want to go. Don't turn "into the skid."** Never attempt to drive through moving water if you cannot see the ground through it, and **never attempt to drive through a large puddle of uncertain depth.**



***46% of weather related accidents happen during rainfall while only 17% happen during snow.***

*Why? People don't recognize rain as a serious driving hazard and, therefore, do not adjust their driving behaviors accordingly. Respect the rain!*



# Snow and Ice

Winter weather can limit visibility and create a slippery ride. To make the most of visibility, be sure to clear snow and ice from all areas of the vehicle before you drive. This includes all of the windows, the headlights and signaling lights, side view mirrors, even the roof – you don't want snow from the roof sliding onto your windshield while you're driving and blocking your view. Increase your safe following distance and reduce speeds according to the conditions. A three-second following distance on dry pavement should be increased to 8-10 seconds in snow. Remember that it's harder to start and stop in snow. Accelerating and decelerating lightly will help to keep traction and prevent wheels from spinning or skidding.

## Stuck in Snow:

- Finesse rather than power
- Clean snow away from vehicle
- Keep wheels as straight as possible
- Provide additional traction
- Check traffic
- Slowly accelerate to get back to the road



# Fog

Fog reduces visibility – your ability to see other vehicles and hazards, and the ability of other drivers to see you. **When driving in foggy conditions, decrease your speed, turn headlights on the low beam setting and use fog lights if your vehicle has them.** You may also need to use your windshield wipers or windshield defroster if your windows start to fog.

The best advice for driving in the fog is **don't**.  
Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears.

If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see,  
pull completely off the road.

Do not continue driving until you can see better.



# Sun Glare

Sun glare can be a significant factor for drivers, especially just after sunrise or just before sunset. At these times, the sun is low in the sky and your car's sun visor may not be effective. **To minimize sun glare risks, keep both the inside and outside of your windshield clean. Sunglasses, especially those with polarized lenses, are also helpful.**



# Pedestrians

Drivers and pedestrians sometimes share the road, and they also share the responsibility for staying safe. **Watch out for pedestrians at all times and remember that pedestrians always have the right-of-way.**

- **Always follow the posted speed limit, especially in neighborhoods and school zones.**
- Conditions such as rain, fog, or darkness can limit visibility of pedestrians. Reduce speed and be alert for pedestrians in these conditions.
- **Be especially careful in driveways where pedestrians may be crossing.**
- **Reduce your speed as you approach a crosswalk and prepare to stop.**
- When stopping at a crosswalk, leave enough room for pedestrians to safely pass in front of your vehicle and for other drivers to see the pedestrians you have stopped for.
- Never block a crosswalk.



# Driving at Night

Driving at night presents special hazards. Depth perception and peripheral vision are impaired, and lights from oncoming traffic can temporarily blind drivers. Even with headlights, visibility is much reduced compared to daytime driving, giving less time to spot and react to hazards.



## Tips for driving at night:

- Be sure headlights and windshield are clean for maximum visibility.
- Tilt the rearview mirror upwards to the glare reducing nighttime setting.
- Avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights.
- Reduce speed to compensate for limited visibility.

# Aggressive Drivers

An aggressive driver is defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as an individual who "commits a combination of moving traffic offences so as to endanger other persons or property."

Speeding, tailgating, cutting off traffic, passing on the shoulder, and accelerating to get through a yellow traffic signal are a few examples of aggressive behaviors. Confronting another driver in an angry manner, such as with inappropriate gestures and yelling, is also behavior of an aggressive driver.



Avoid Road Rage!

Aggressive Behavior	How you can avoid it	How to handle other drivers
<b>Cutting off</b>	Always use your turn signals, and allow plenty of space when merging into an adjacent lane.	If someone cuts you off, slow down to allow a safe following distance.
<b>Tailgating</b>	Always leave a safe following distance between you and the car in front of you. See the "Stopping" section of this document.	If someone is tailgating you, gently decrease your speed slightly to encourage them to pass you. If you are not in a passing zone and feel threatened, pull over in a well-lit area and allow the car to pass you.
<b>Speeding</b>	Allow plenty of time to reach your destination, factoring in weather and traffic conditions.	Don't be intimidated by other drivers or feel that you need to stay with the flow of traffic that is speeding. Don't exceed the posted speed limit.
<b>Confrontational behavior</b>	Avoid making eye contact with the other driver. Even a small gesture such as shaking your head could be seen as confrontational.	If another driver tries to engage you with angry gestures or words, give an apologetic smile and wave, and try to put some distance between you.

# Summary

**Safe drivers follow the rules of the road, obey posted speed limits, traffic signs and signals, and always wear a seatbelt.** Safe drivers keep their vehicles well-maintained and avoid distractions, such as cell-phone use, while driving. They ensure their fitness to drive by avoiding alcohol and drugs and are aware of signs of fatigue. Safe drivers recognize real and potential hazards and know how to avoid them.

Safe driving starts with you, the driver. In this defensive driver training program, you have learned about safe driving rules. As an “approved” driver, you are responsible for maintaining your fitness to drive, and for letting a supervisor know if you have any concerns. By conducting pre-trip vehicle inspections and following the safe driving procedures outlined here, you’ll be ready to face the hazards of the road. If you have any questions or need additional information, please talk with a supervisor.