

DRIVING TECHNIQUES

- Scan all road signs for information. Should have some idea of location and direction of travel.
- Always drive according to your risk and keep a cushion of safety from other vehicles:
Narrow county roads with no oncoming traffic – keep towards the center of the road. On main two-lane roads – keep to the right in your lane closer to the edge line. City driving with parked vehicles on the right – keep towards the centerline. On multi-lane roads – when in the right lane, keep to the right in your lane. When in the left lane, keep to the left in your lane.
- When approaching rural stop signs, make “3 sets of looks”. **1st look** - 200-300 yds. away - check left & right for large vehicles that might turn your way – if so, will need to stop back further to allow for their turn. **2nd look** – as approaching your stop you should be assessing - Is it a 2-way stop? 4-way? Is there a larger vehicle turning in my direction? As you slow to your stop - glancing back & forth to identify view obstructions and look for vehicles. Stop where you have your best view. **3rd look** – look left & right again for traffic prior to pulling out. **VERY BAD HABIT TO STARE STRAIGHT AHEAD WHEN STOPPING AT A RURAL STOP SIGN THEN LOOK LEFT & RIGHT AFTER STOPPING. GREATLY INCREASES CHANCE OF MISSING A VEHICLE BEHIND A POLE, SUPPORT POST OR OTHER OBJECTS.**
- When stopping to make a right turn, consider prestart your turn as you stop (don't have to turn as sharp and gets front of vehicle out of the way for a vehicle approaching from the right to turn left).
- When stopping behind another vehicle – stay back one car length (should be able to see the bottom of the rear tires and a few feet of pavement).
- When slowing to stop or turn, ALWAYS check rearview mirror - make sure traffic behind is slowing.
- When pulling out onto the roadway (especially a multi-lane road), be very careful of traffic in additional lanes if another driver motions you to pull out.
- In town, at stop signs and traffic lights, stop prior to the first white line (stop bar or crosswalk) - state law. Recommend to ignore stop bars on rural roads and exit ramps due to many set back to far where there is a view obstruction.
- When approaching railroad crossings – you should glance left & right for a train. **DO NOT RELY ON THE GATES AND LIGHTS TO WORK** (they have been known to malfunction).
- When stopping – practice coasting more in advance (improves gas mileage & less wear on brakes).
- Curves – start coasting prior to curve ahead sign, brake (if needed) prior to a curve - release brake and steer through the curve. **DO NOT BRAKE IN THE CURVE!**
- On rural roads, when slowing to make a left turn, check left outside mirror for traffic that might be passing you.
- When #1 at a red light that turns green, when taking off, glance left then right for cross-traffic that may run the red light.
- **STAY FOCUSED AHEAD WHEN COMING INTO A CURVE OR WITH ONCOMING TRAFFIC!!!**
- If you need to make control adjustments (radio, wipers, AC, etc) - use separate 1/2 second glances.
- Use cruise control on longer straight roads - cover your brake when potential threats (car waiting to pull out, oncoming vehicle weaving, or approaching a hill crest).
- When approaching an onramp, be aware of traffic around you in case you need to change lanes due to merging traffic. Check for ramp traffic as soon as possible.
- Rural 4-way stops with crops or other view obstructions, make sure to check further down the road for the threat of high-speed vehicles that might not stop.
- When following another vehicle, keep a 4 second following distance (good roads).
- When following a truck or vehicle with a trailer hauling equipment - increase following distance.
- Watch for debris / pot holes / road kill – steer to avoid.
- Parking lots – pull through 1st space in to next space to face out (avoids having to back out).
- Practice backing into perpendicular parking spaces - much safer to pull out than to back out.
- Hand position – 10 & 2 or 9 & 3 around traffic. 8 & 4 on rural straight roads or longer drives.

Practice hand-over-hand steering!

(beneficial for many situations including maneuverability and parallel parking)