Virginia Department of Education

45-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide

Revised July 2026

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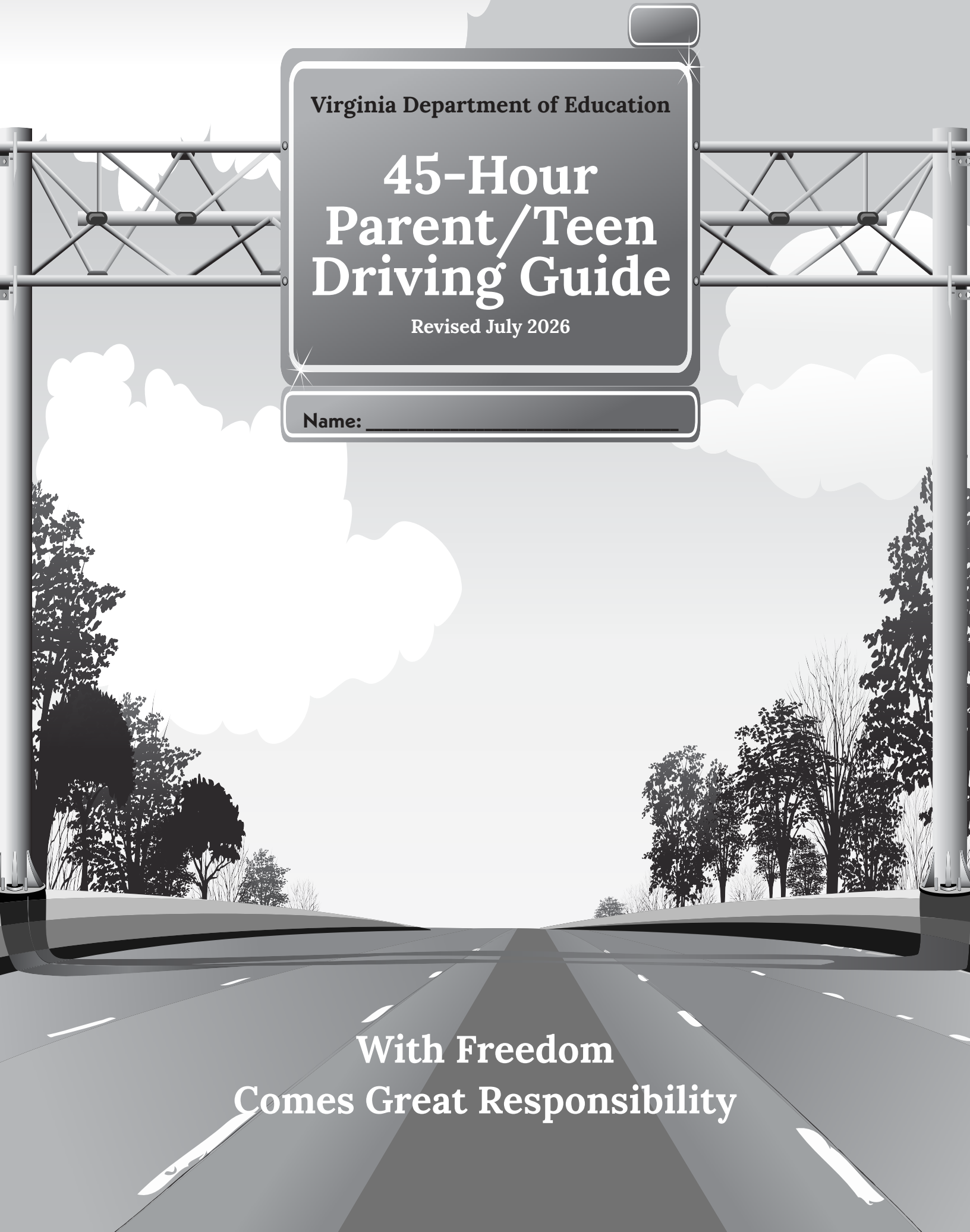

With Freedom Comes Great Responsibility

45-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide

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Parenting the Driving Experience

Your child has reached an important milestone: A LEARNER'S PERMIT. It is our hope that acquiring mature driving skills and judgment will be a rewarding experience for you and your teenager. With your involvement, it can also be a safe experience. This 45-hour parent/teen driving guide provides sample lessons and coaching tips to help you guide your child in making this step to adulthood more successful for both of you.

Cars do not crash; people crash them. The driver, especially the young driver, continues to be a weak link in traffic safety. Motor vehicle injuries account for more years of productive life lost by students than all other causes. In addition, hospitalization, rehabilitation, lost time from school, and other costs associated with long-term injuries create substantial emotional, physical, and financial problems for families. Research shows that in order for teens to remain collision-free, parents must model safe driving behaviors and invest in meaningful guided practice over a long period of time to turn safe driving skills into good driving habits!

To address traffic crashes involving teenagers, action was taken by the Virginia General Assembly to require parents, foster parents, or guardians to certify that their children have driven motor vehicles for **at least 45 hours, 15 of which must be after sunset,** before they are eligible for a temporary driver's license.

How do you teach a 16-year-old not to be a 16-year-old behind the wheel of an automobile? Unfortunately, there is no magic formula to prepare your teenager for the responsibilities of driving. Most teen crashes are caused by lack of experience and attitude, not poor driving skill. And teens who take more risks are setting themselves up to crash regardless of their driving skills. The ability to move a car skillfully is not the same thing as the ability to drive safely. Steering the vehicle is a relatively simple skill that most people can master in a short period of time. Driving is a complex psychomotor task requiring mastery of various performance skills. It requires processing and accurately evaluating risks in the driving environment, developing appropriate responses to minimize risks, and gaining experience to predict what action others may take.

This guide provides a systematic approach for coaching your child towards remaining collision-free in both low- and high-risk driving environments. The suggested lessons in this guide follow a sequential learning pattern that progresses from the parking lot to neighborhoods, to light



traffic, to rural highways, to expressways and then to city driving. Each lesson provides you with an estimated amount of time your child will need to achieve mastery; however, because students have different abilities you need to spend as much time as necessary to allow your child to master the skills before moving on to the next lesson. Periodically, you will be asked to evaluate your child's skills. Place "S" for **satisfactory** or "NP" for **needs practice** for the skills listed after each session. Please also record the time you invest practicing safe driving skills on the 45-hour driving log located at the end of this booklet. Give the completed log to your child's in-car teacher/instructor to document that your child has gained these driving experiences and worked on improving driving skills for at least 45 hours. This log must be completed prior to issuance of the 180-day temporary driver's license.

If neither parent has a valid driver's license, a friend or relative can conduct the guided practice sessions. Because parents and guardians play such a significant role in the development of safe driving habits and have the greatest influence on teen behaviors, parents should remain involved in the learning process as observers in the car during the guided practice sessions. Knowing your child is a skilled, safety-conscious driver will give you peace of mind in years to come.

In addition to sharpening your driving skills, it is our hope the guided-practice sessions presented in this guide will provide your child with a solid foundation to develop safe, collision-free driving habits that will last a lifetime. After each driving session, don't forget to evaluate your child's skills and document your driving time on the log.

The Juvenile Licensing Process Effective July 1, 2026

Eligibility for a learner's permit and 180-day temporary driver's license

To reduce young driver crashes and save lives, the Virginia General Assembly enacted the following graduated driver licensing (GDL) restrictions:

- To obtain a learner's permit, your under 18 child must have parent permission; be at least **15 years and 6 months old**; provide proof of identity, residency, and legal presence (be a US citizen or legally authorized to be in the US); and **pass the learner's permit sign and knowledge tests.**
- A Driver Privilege Card is a driver's license for Virginia residents who are non-US citizens that allows the applicant to become a legal driver without requiring proof of legal presence or U.S. citizenship. Students who have completed behind-the-wheel instruction will be issued a TDL by their teacher. The TDL issued by the school is not valid for non-residents and a letter from the DMV will direct them to go to their local DMV service center and take the road skills test.
- Approximately 50% of the teens who take the learner's permit test do not pass it on their first attempt. **After the third failure,** your child must **complete a classroom driver education course** or **take an eight-hour driver's manual course** before being able to **take the learner's permit test a fourth time.** Teens under 18 should be encouraged to take the learner's permit test PRIOR to completing classroom driver education. If your child passes a classroom driver education course after failing the learner's permit test three times, your child can take the permit test for the fourth time. Hopefully, your child will use DMV's online study guide, https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/licenses-ids/exams/practice-exam and pass the test on the first attempt! DMV offers the learner's permit test at the DMV's Customer Service Centers and some public high schools.
- Your under 18 child **must hold a learner's permit for nine months,** or until the learner's permit holder **turns 18** (whichever comes first). **A learner's permit allows your child to practice driving with a licensed driver at least 21 years old, or with a licensed family member at least 18 years old.**
- To obtain a driver's license in Virginia, your under 18 child must be at least **16 years and 3 months old;** practice driving with a learner's permit for at least **nine months;** complete **45 hours of guided practice, at least 15 of which were after sunset;** and successfully complete a **state-approved classroom and in-car driver education program.**
- The in-car teacher/instructor will administer the road skills test. If your under 18 child successfully passes the road skills test, meets all licensing requirements, and the parent grants the school permission, the in-car teacher/instructor will issue a 180-Day Temporary Driver's License to your child, which is a valid Virginia driver's license when accompanied by a learner's permit
- Per HB1224 and SB396: Effective January 1, 2027 first time applicants for a driver's license that are at least 18 years old, but less than 21 years old must hold a learner's permit for a minimum of 90 days and provide proof of successful completion of an approved Driver Education Course.

Graduated licensing restrictions for a learner's permit and temporary driver's license

- Virginia law prohibits driving with **more than one non-family passenger less than 21 years old until the student has held a temporary license for one year. After the first year,** the holder of a temporary license may operate a motor vehicle with up to three non-family passengers who are less than 21 years old when (i) the student is driving to or from a school-sponsored activity, or (ii) a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old is occupying the seat beside the driver, or (iii) in cases of emergency.
- Virginia law restricts licensed drivers younger than 18 years old from **operating a vehicle between midnight and 4 a.m.,** except when driving (i) to and from work; (ii) when accompanied by a parent or person in loco parentis, or by a spouse who is 18 years old or older; (iii) to or from an activity that is supervised by an adult and is sponsored by a school, civic, religious, or public organization; (iv) in cases of emergency when responding to fire or some other emergency as a volunteer firefighter or rescue worker.
- Virginia law **prohibits drivers from using any handheld personal communications device while driving a motor vehicle on the highways within the Commonwealth**, except in a driver emergency and/or the vehicle is lawfully parked or stopped.
- Virginia law requires drivers **younger than 20 years old to attend a driver improvement clinic if convicted of a demerit point offense (moving violation), or a seat belt or a child safety seat violation.**

The Parents' Role in the Juvenile Licensing Process



The family, not the school, is in the best position to have a sustained effect on minimizing risks faced by inexperienced drivers and encouraging responsible behavior. **Parents are in control of the licensing process and have the greatest influence on teen behaviors.** Parents must:

- Model safe driving behaviors.
- Grant DMV permission to issue your child a learner's permit and a driver's license.
- Grant the school permission to enroll your child in the in-car phase of driver education.
- Provide your child with at least 45 hours of guided practice, 15 of which must be after sunset.
- **Complete and sign the 45-hour log certifying that your child has completed 45 hours of guided practice, 15 of which were after sunset, and provide your DMV-issued driver license or identification number.** This certification is part of the driver's license application process, and anyone who certifies to a false statement may be prosecuted.
- Sign the 180-day **Temporary Driver's License** form and provide your DMV-issued driver's license or ID number.
- Notify your insurance agent when your child receives a 180-Day Temporary Driver's License.
- Determine when your child is ready to drive unsupervised.
- Continue to monitor your child's driving behaviors after receipt of a provisional license, reinforce safety belt use and limit or prohibit passengers and other driving distractions.
- Establish family driving rules that include no passengers, limited or no driving at night, and zero tolerance for cell phone use and text messaging while driving.
- Suspend your child's driving privileges if your child is not demonstrating safe, responsible behavior.

Parent Requirement

- The Code of Virginia (§ 22.1-205) requires an additional minimum 90-Minute Parent/Student Driver Education Component be administered as part of the classroom portion of the driver education curriculum. **In Planning District 8, which includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park, the parent/student driver education component shall be administered in-person.** Outside Planning District 8, the parent/student driver education component may be administered either in-person or online by a public school or a driver training school that is licensed as a computer-based driver education provider. **The participation of the student's parent or guardian in the parent/student driver education component shall be required in Planning District 8.** Outside Planning District 8, the participation of the student's parent or guardian in the parent/student driver education component shall be encouraged but shall not be required. To opt-out of participation in the 90-Minute Parent/Student Driver Education Component, parents must submit a 90-Minute Parent/Student Driver Education Component PARENTAL OPT-OUT FORM, https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/47384/638271752273400000. As the parent/student driver education component is a mandatory component of classroom driver education, the student is required to complete it with or without a parent. The program shall emphasize (i) parental responsibilities regarding juvenile driver behavior, (ii) juvenile driving restrictions pursuant to this Code, (iii) the dangers of driving while intoxicated and underage consumption of alcohol, and (iv) the dangers of distracted driving.

Parenting Tips for In-Car Guided Practice Sessions

Parental reinforcement of safe driving skills and good decision making will lead to safe driving habits that will last a lifetime.

- Enjoy your time together. Have fun! This is a great "bonding" opportunity. Focus on the driving task and leave family issues at home.
- When you drive, set a good example to model. Children learn from the choices that adults make. Always wear your safety belt. Try to correct any unsafe driving habits that you may have acquired; such as rolling through stop signs, accelerating through yellow lights, exceeding the speed limit, etc.
- Always check to make sure your child has the learner's permit, vehicle registration card, and insurance information when operating a vehicle.
- In a parking lot, practice steering the car with your left hand from the passenger seat.
- Practice shifting the transmission from Drive to Neutral from the passenger seat to regain control of the vehicle in the event your child panics and accelerates too much.
- Adjust the mirror on the passenger's sun visor so you can use it as a rearview mirror. If the right side view mirror is properly adjusted to reduce blind spot and glare for the driver, you can also use that mirror to monitor traffic to the rear from the passenger seat.
- Keep instructions simple and concise. First direct where to go, and then state the action to take (e.g., "At the next intersection, slow down and turn right.") Enhance verbal instructions with hands signals (e.g., make a fist, extend your thumb and point and move your hand/arm several times in the direction you want your child to go.)
- Before giving instructions check mirrors, and the space ahead and to the sides of the vehicle.
- Explain the objectives of the lesson and review what was learned in the previous lessons.
- If possible, the initial guided practice sessions should begin in a car with automatic transmission to allow your child to focus on mastering basic vehicle control skills.
- Select driving environments that complement the objectives of the lesson and your child's ability. Start in parking lots and progress to low volume neighborhood roads. Stay in a safe, low-risk driving environment as long as needed, and practice driving on routes that are familiar to your child.
- Feedback should be precise and immediate. Be patient, calm, and alert at all times. Make positive remarks frequently.
- If a mistake is made, repeat the maneuver taking your child step by step through the process, and then allow practice without any assistance.
- Have short, well-planned practice sessions. At the beginning, thirty minutes is the optimum period for learning. The first 20 minutes of each session should be used to introduce and practice new skills. Assess your child's understanding of the lesson objectives and skill acquisition during the second half of the session. Set high standards and evaluate each driving session together.
- **Encourage commentary driving!** This is the most valuable tool you have for checking how your child is processing the driving environment. Ask your child to "read the traffic picture aloud" describing anything that may affect your path of travel. For example, when your child changes speed, your child may say: "red light, check mirror, ease foot off accelerator and begin braking." Actually, you should hear "check mirror and ease off accelerator" a lot!
- Emphasize driving with a large anticipation zone by looking at least 20 seconds ahead. To determine 20 seconds ahead, select a stationary object in front of the vehicle and count how long it takes to reach that object. This will allow time to identify an escape route if needed, or an alternate path of travel.
- Play the "what if game"; what if a car suddenly changes lanes, stops, turns, etc.
- Reinforce that a green light means **search the intersection** before proceeding.
- Encourage your child not to panic if approached by an emergency vehicle, and to focus on looking for a safe area to pull over.
- Discuss the rules for passing a stopped school bus with flashing lights.
- Encourage your child to avoid making a difficult left turn whenever possible. There is a lot to learn in each lesson, so your child may need extra time to attain the necessary skills. Proficiency at each level is important before moving on to the next lesson.

- If possible, integrate practicing driving after sunset into each area of instruction.
- Parents/Guardians should record practice driving sessions using the 45-Hour Driving Log located at the end of this guide for easy access. The log indicates Date, Skills Practiced, Total Daytime Minutes, Total Nighttime Minutes, Total Minutes, Parent/ Guardian Initials, and Comments.

Driving in the 21st Century

Improvements in vehicle and highway design have increased highway safety. Many new cars are equipped with safety features that dictate basic vehicle control procedures. Your child must understand these new technologies, and the need for basic vehicle maintenance.

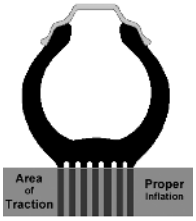
Tires, wheels, brakes, shock absorbers, drive train, steering and suspension systems function together to provide a safe, comfortable ride and better gas mileage.

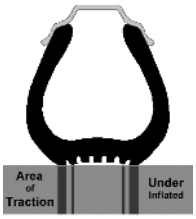
Seat Belts

Seat belts save lives and prevent injuries. Approximately 45% of vehicle occupants killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts. Buckling up not only dramatically increases your chances of surviving a crash, it also helps to prevent internal injuries by spreading the force of a collision across the pelvis (hips) and upper chest (sternum), which are two of the human body's strongest areas. Seat belts are designed to protect the brain and prevent spinal cord injuries. **Did you know that if your vehicle is traveling at 50 mph, hits an object and comes to an abrupt stop, inertia will continue moving your body at the same speed in the same direction?** In this situation, you will either be held in the seat by a seat belt; or if unbelted, your body will be slammed into the steering wheel, hit something else, or you will go flying face-first through the windshield at 50 mph. It only takes a few seconds to buckle up, and with coaching from parents wearing a seat belt quickly becomes a habit.

Effective July 1, 2025, House Bill 2475 requires all adult passengers in a motor vehicle equipped with a safety belt system to wear safety belts when the motor vehicle is in motion on a public highway (previously, adults were only required to wear safety belts in the front seat).

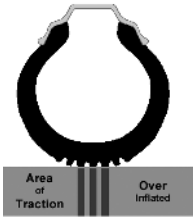
Changing traction conditions





Traction or adhesion is the grip the tires have on the road surface, which allows the vehicle to start, stop, and/or change directions. As speed increases, traction between the tires and the road decreases. Ice, snow or frost, wet surfaces or standing water, mud or wet leaves, uneven surfaces, sand, gravel, and curves decrease traction. Reduce speed in these conditions.

Tires



Tires are critical for vehicle control and good gas mileage. Tires should be inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended pressure printed on the vehicle's door placard or in the owner's manual, not the maximum limit listed on the tire sidewall. Under-inflated tires flex too much and build up heat, which can lead to blowouts or tread separation and peeling.

The actual size of the tire patch in contact with the road is about the size of a dollar bill. Vehicle control is dependent upon traction and the tires' response to acceleration, braking, and steering. The word traction refers, in general, to your car's ability to maintain adhesive friction between the vehicle (specifically, your tires) and the pavement. Vehicle control and performance is affected by the traction between the tire patches and the road surface. Without traction you have no control.

With this narrow margin of safety, it is important to check tire pressure and tread at least once a month. Proper tire tread reduces traction loss on wet surfaces by **channeling water through the tread.** Minimum tire tread depth can be measured by placing a penny in the tread, and if the tread does not reach the top of Lincoln's head, driving in wet weather is very dangerous. Properly maintained tires improve the steering, stopping, traction, and load-carrying capability of your vehicle.

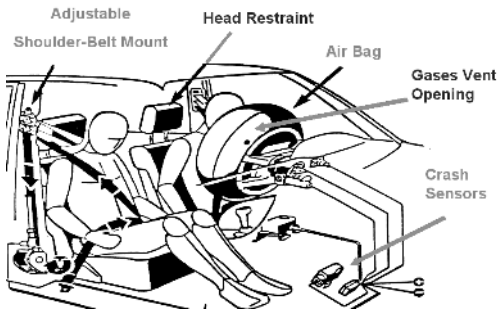
Tire Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS)

A tire pressure monitoring sensor is mounted directly on the wheels or tires, and continually monitors the pressure inside the tires, including

the spare tire. If the pressure falls 25% below the required inflation, a warning is sent via radio frequency from the tire-mounted transmitter to a sensor in the vehicle that sets off the warning light (tire/exclamation point icon) on the instrument cluster.

Driver and Front Passenger Air Bags

Are designed to inflate in a frontal impact. Drivers should sit at least 10 inches from the air bag because when the bag deploys it inflates to six or seven inches in size at speeds up to 200 mph. If you can, adjust the steering wheel to point the air bag at your chest, not your face. Always wear a safety belt and secure children in the rear seat. To reduce forearm and hand



injuries, place hands on the lower half of the steering wheel, with knuckles on the outside and thumbs along the inside of the rim of the wheel.

Side Impact Air Bags

Are designed to protect the torso and head in side impact collisions. Care should be taken not to sit too close to the door or to lean towards the air bag.

Brakes

Brake pads or shoes provide stopping power for your vehicle and should be in good working order. Refer to the owner's manual for recommended maintenance tips for your brakes.

Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)

Anti-lock braking systems automatically check if the system is working when the car is started. The anti-lock brake system light will come on momentarily if the system is functioning properly. To safely stop and maintain steering control in an ABS-equipped vehicle, teach your child to use firm brake pressure and maintain this pressure on the brake pedal even if the pedal pulsates or makes a grinding noise. The ABS system will rapidly engage the brakes up to 15 times a second to avoid lockup and allows the tires to keep rolling. Rolling tires allow you to steer—you cannot change direction if your tires are sliding. Have your child practice engaging the ABS system in a vacant parking lot before using this crash-avoidance technology in a real emergency.

Backup Camera

A rearview camera shows a simple video feed from a camera mounted on the rear of a vehicle. Some systems also have overlay distance and trajectory lines to help the driver judge vehicle position. The back-up camera's field of vision is directly behind the vehicle, and is at least 10 feet wide and 20 feet in length. Families touched by tragic back-over accidents, especially those involving children, have pushed hard to require back-up cameras in all vehicles.

Electronic Stability Control (ESC)

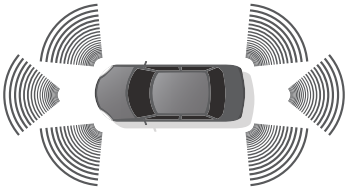
Is a computerized technology that improves the safety of a vehicle's stability by detecting and minimizing skids. When ESC detects loss of steering control, it automatically applies the brakes to help "steer" the vehicle in the direction the driver intended to go. Braking is automatically applied to individual wheels, such as the outer front wheel to counter oversteer or the inner rear wheel to counter understeer. Some ESC systems also reduce engine power until control is regained. ESC does not improve a vehicle's cornering performance, but it does help minimize the loss of control. ESC incorporates yaw rate control into the anti-lock braking system (ABS). Yaw is a rotation around the vertical axis (i.e., spinning left or right). Anti-lock brakes enable ESC to brake individual wheels. Many ESC systems also incorporate a traction control system (TCS or ASR), which senses drive-wheel slip under acceleration, and individually brakes the slipping wheel or wheels and/or reduces excess engine power until control is regained.

Traction Control Systems

Traction control systems monitor any difference in rotational speed between the wheels. This differential in wheel rotation may occur on uneven or slippery surfaces. When the system is activated, an automated combination of brake and/or engine speed comes into play to provide controlled acceleration and tire traction.

Blind Spot Monitoring Technologies

A blind spot monitor is a detection device that is usually mounted on the side view mirror or near the rear bumper. When one of these detectors notices another vehicle is too close, it warns the driver by flashing a light or making an audible sound. In advanced systems, the car will even steer itself into a safety zone.



Adaptive/Active/Autonomous/Intelligent Cruise Control

This technology helps the driver maintain a safe following distance by slowing down or speeding up the vehicle automatically. Adaptive cruise control uses a radar sensor to monitor the vehicle in front of your vehicle, and an onboard computer calculates the distance and relative speed to the vehicle ahead. When the space in front changes, the system will automatically send a message to apply brakes or accelerate back to the previously set speed.

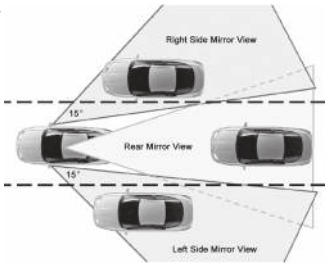
Lane Departure Warning System

A lane departure warning system uses a camera, usually mounted as part of the rearview mirror and warns a driver when the vehicle begins to move out of its lane when the turn signal is not on in that direction.

Lane keeping systems, automatically steer the vehicle away from the lane markings when it senses the tires have crossed the line. These systems rely on visible lane markings (not faded or covered with snow), and help to prevent collisions caused by drowsy or distracted drivers.

BGE Mirror Setting

Have your child adjust the inside rearview mirror so that it frames the entire back window and becomes the primary mirror for viewing what's behind the vehicle. Traffic safety experts recommend setting the side mirrors out approximately 15° to reduce the blind zone area and glare from headlights from the rear. Adjust the left side mirror by leaning your head slightly towards the left side window, and set the left mirror so that the driver can barely see the side of the car. To adjust the right side mirror, lean to the right over the center console, and then set the right mirror so the driver can barely see that side of the car. This side mirror setting **reduces the overlap** between the inside rearview and side view mirrors so **the driver can monitor the lanes next to the vehicle.** The driver must also monitor the blind spot area, not covered by the side view mirror, by turning head to check over the shoulder (head check).

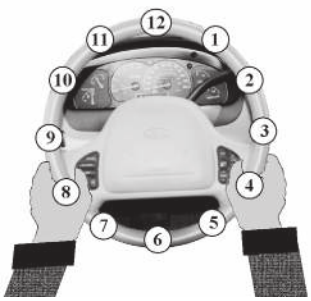


Steering Control

Due to changes in steering ratios and effort needed to turn the wheel, smooth, controlled steering requires a balanced hand position on the lower half of the steering wheel.

Hand Position on the Steering Wheel

Placing the left hand at the 8 o'clock position, the right hand at the 4 o'clock position and keeping the elbows at your side improves driver stability. It also **reduces unintended and excessive steering wheel movement** which is a primary cause of young driver fatalities.



This more natural seating position also helps the driver keep both hands on the wheel and reduces back pain often associated with driving for long periods of time.

Push-Pull-Slide Steering

This steering technique keeps both hands on the wheel at all times and reduces excessive steering wheel movement. In the event of a frontal crash this steering method also reduces the chance of injury to the arms and face because the arms do not cross over the center of the steering wheel where the air bag is housed.

To push/pull steer:

- When making a right turn, push the steering wheel with the left hand from the 8 o'clock position to the 10 o'clock position. Slide the right hand to the 2 o'clock position, and pull the steering wheel to the 4 o'clock position.
- When making a left turn, reverse this process.

  To straighten the vehicle, allow the steering wheel to slide (unwind) through the hands until the vehicle's wheels move to the straight-ahead position. At very low speeds, the driver may need to push the steering wheel to move the tires to the straight ahead position.

Tips for Driving in Adverse Conditions

Driver Inattention and Distractions

Driver inattention is a primary cause of crashes. Distractions (multitasking), such as interacting with passengers, talking on the phone, text messaging, setting the GPS, or adjusting the audio system, are especially dangerous for young drivers. Multitasking is a myth. Your brain can't do it, (e.g., you can't simultaneously talk on the phone and type a coherent email). When you switch from one task to another you are actually dividing your attention between multiple tasks. Teach your child to limit distractions by pulling safely off the road into a designated parking area to perform activities not related to the driving task.

Drowsy Driving

Drowsy driving is a form of impaired driving that negatively affects a person's ability to drive safely by severely limiting reaction time and decision-making skills. Fatigue or drowsy driving can be caused by a lack of sleep, a body's normal circadian rhythm and/or driving for long periods of time. Circadian rhythm is the body's natural "downtime". For most people, this is between 1 and 5 pm as well as around a person's normal bedtime.

To avoid drowsy driving take scheduled breaks, keep the vehicle cool and be aware of your body's "downtime". Drowsy driving is a serious problem for 16-24-year olds, who comprise 14 percent of all drivers, but are involved in 50 percent of fatigue/ drowsy driving-related crashes.

Glare

Sources of glare include headlights of oncoming or following vehicles, misaligned headlights, improperly loaded vehicles, a dirty windshield, paper on the dashboard, facing the sun at dusk or dawn, snow-covered landscapes, and traditional versus contemporary (BGE) side mirror settings. To combat glare, only wear sunglasses during the day, adjust sun visor as needed, keep windows clean, reduce speed, and look to the right-hand side of the road when meeting a vehicle with high beam headlights on.

Fog

During foggy conditions reduce speed; use low beams, windshield wipers, defroster/ defogger and flashers, as needed. Look for a safe area to pull off the road.



Reduced Visibility Due to Heavy Smoke, Rain or Snow

When driving in low visibility conditions, slow down, turn on windshield wipers; and make gentle steering, accelerating, or braking actions. Be alert for stopped vehicles on the highway, and be prepared for wind gusts or strong steady crosswinds. Turn on the radio to monitor weather and road conditions, and if possible, leave the roadway.



Flooded Roadways



Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle related. In severe rainstorms watch for flooding at bridges and low areas. Most vehicles will float. In fact, as little as two feet of water will "carry" most vehicles.

Hot or Cold Temperatures

Hot or cold temperatures place demands on tires, radiator coolant, hoses, connections, and drive belts and increase driving risks. Check these items prior to and after driving during these conditions.

Strong Wind Conditions

Strong wind conditions on bridges, through mountain passes and ravines, and when being passed by large trucks cause significant problems for drivers. Reduce speed, check traffic, be prepared to steer windward, and counter steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go.

Safe Interaction with Law Enforcement

If stopped by a police officer, teach your child to:

- Remain calm;
- Pull the vehicle to the side of the road in a safe location and park;
- Turn on the flashers;
- Turn on your vehicle's interior lights at night;
- Turn off the engine, radio, and any other device that could block communication with the officer;
- Lower your window to communicate with the officer who, for safety reasons, may approach the vehicle on the driver or passenger side;
- Keep safety belts fastened and ask passengers to keep their belts fastened;
- Stay in the vehicle. Do not get out unless the officer asks you to;
- Keep hands in plain view, preferably on the steering wheel, and ask passengers to keep their hands visible so the officer can see them at all times;
- Do not make any movement that will make the officer think you are hiding or reaching for something.
- Carry proper identification: a valid driver's license, proof of vehicle registration and proof of insurance; and if the officer asks for these documents, tell the officer where they are and reach for them slowly, keeping one hand on the steering wheel;
- Ask to see identification if the officer is driving an unmarked car or not in uniform;
- Answer the officer's questions fully and clearly; and
- If you disagree with the officer, do not discuss your point of view at that time - you will have your chance to make your case in court.

Blue Envelope Program



Virginia's Blue Envelope Program is a voluntary initiative that helps drivers with autism spectrum disorder during traffic stops. A blue envelope, that can be picked up at any DMV location, holds important documents (like registration and insurance cards) and is kept in the vehicle. The envelope also includes communication tips for both the driver and the police officer, and contact information, if desired. The goal is to reduce stress, lower anxiety, and make interactions smoother and safer for everyone involved.

How to Use the Tools/ Resources

Before you begin the driving sessions with your teen driver, please complete the parent/teen driving agreement on pages 11 and 12. This agreement should be revisited often and amended as needed. This agreement establishes family rules and restrictions and sets limits on initial driving privileges to mitigate exposure to risk.

Towards the end of the guide, you will find the "Parent Teen Seat Belt Safety Agreement". Complete this agreement with your child after Sessions 1 and 2 when explaining the dangers and consequences of non-safety belt use. You will also find the "Parent Teen Agreement for No Drug Impaired Driving". Complete this agreement with your child after Sessions 31-45 when explaining the dangers of underage drug impaired driving.

Written Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

Parents have the greatest influence over teen driving behavior. Setting initial limits on teen drivers is key. But once privileges are granted, they are hard to take away. Parents must establish "family laws" that place limits on when, where, and with whom your children may drive. Don't assume state laws will keep your child safe. State laws represent the minimum restrictions placed on new drivers. Family laws, on the other hand, crafted by the parent, the person who knows the child the best, will make your child much safer. Family laws should include protections such as no cell phones, no text messaging, no passengers, no night driving and zero tolerance for tickets. Parents who have a car waiting in the driveway for their child may want to rethink that arrangement because, according to the research, your child will be twice as likely to be in a crash. By having a "family car" your child will have to ask to borrow it. This provides parents with the opportunity to review family rules and restrictions, and control access to the vehicle making the teen driver much safer.

Teens who have **written contracts that outline family rules, and set limits on initial driving privileges**, such as no driving at night and no passengers, and have established clear consequences for breaking the rules, are much less likely to engage in risky driving, have crashes, or get a ticket. Parents and teens should have a written driving contract, and agree upon:

- Rules and consequences
- Driving limits
- Where and when the teen can drive
- Financial responsibilities
- How privileges can be increased and
- **Drug Impaired Driving** - Teens who do not receive a message that their parents find underage substance use completely unacceptable are 5 times more likely to use than teens who do.

Parent/Teen Driving Agreements put your family's rules in writing and establish expectations and consequences. To help with this process we have included a Parent/Teen Driving Agreement, No Underage Drug Impaired Driving Agreement, and Safety Belt Use Agreement for your consideration.

Scan this QR code to access engaging in-car activities designed by teachers for parents and teen drivers.

SCAN ME

Parent/Teen Driving Agreement

The intent of this agreement is to avoid any misunderstandings concerning our family driving rules. Together we will agree to vehicle use and operation rules, and the consequences for breaking any of these rules.

Financial responsibilities - determine what percentage each person will be responsible for:

Vehicle costs	**Teen**	**Parent**
Fuel costs	_____	_____
Maintenance costs	_____	_____
Taxes and registration fees	_____	_____
Monthly insurance costs	_____	_____
Total costs:	_____	_____

Vehicle Maintenance - determine the teen's responsibility for each of the following:

Check fluids: _____

Check tire pressure: _____

Clean vehicle: _____

Consequences for:

Ticket: _____

Safety Belt Violation: _____

Crash: _____

Curfew Violation: _____

Failure to provide destination or time of return: _____

School achievement:

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Passenger Restriction:

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Cell phone/messaging:

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Allowing others to drive the vehicle:

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Other: _____

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Other: _____

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Other: _____

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

Other: _____

Agreement: _____

Consequences: _____

This agreement may be amended at any time.

_____ _____

Teen Driver Date Parent/Guardian Date

As part of Virginia's graduated driver licensing laws (GDL), teen drivers must complete 45 hours of behind-the-wheel practice with a parent or guardian, 15 of which must be after sunset, before being eligible for a temporary driver's license. Below is a partially completed sample driving practice log. This sample log provides guidance for how parents should document the required 45-hours of practice driving each driving lesson. Blank 45-hour driving logs are located at the end of this guide. Once you have completed and documented 45 hours of guided practice with your teen driver, please give the log to your child's behind-the-wheel teacher/instructor. The behind-the-wheel teacher will be providing a minimum of 7 hours of in-car instruction, 7 hours of observation, administering the final road skills evaluation, and issuing a 6-month temporary driver's license. The in-car teacher's lessons follow the same skill progression as provided in the 45-hour Parent/Teen Guide.

Sample 45-Hour Driving Log

For easy access, blank logs are located at the end of the 45-Hour Parent/Teen Driving Guide.

Total Daytime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____ Total Nighttime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____

Date	Skills Practiced	Total Daytime Minutes Driven	Total Nighttime Minutes Driven	Total Mileage	Parent/ Guardian Initials	Comments
9-1-2025	Getting Ready to Drive Starting the Vehicle	20	12	8		Remind Stacey to align her seat with a comfortable heel pivot before adjusting the mirrors. Stacey did not have her foot on the brake to allow the car to start.
9-2-2025	Placing Vehicle in Motion	30	24	20		We worked on putting the car in gear and lifting the foot off the brake to allow small slow movements of the vehicle. We need to practice this more.
9-5-2025	Stopping Vehicle in Motion	15	8	13		Stacey needs practice with smooth braking. She pushes the brake abruptly causing us to jerk forward.
9-8-2025	Steering Securing the Vehicle	40	16	35		Stacey puts her fingers in the steering wheel. She needs to keep her hands at 8 and 4. We need to practice allowing the steering wheel slide through her hands as it unwinds. Make sure you come to a complete stop before putting the car in park.

I certify that _____**Student Name**_____ has completed 45 hours of guided practice, 15 of which were after sunset. It is illegal for anyone to give false information in connection with obtaining a driver's license. This certification is considered part of the driver's license application, and anyone who certifies to a false statement may be prosecuted. I certify that the statements made and the information submitted by me regarding this certification are true and correct.

Parent Signature	**Date**	**DMV Customer ID Number**
Parent/Foster Parent/Guardian's signature	Date	Parent/Gaurdian's Driver's License or DMV-issued identification number

Sessions 1 and 2: Getting Ready, Starting, Placing the Vehicle in Motion, and Stopping

Types of Collisions

Driver error is the primary cause of collisions. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Speed/reckless driving;
- Distracted, drowsy, drunk/drugged driving;
- Following too closely;
- Disobeying traffic signs or signals; and
- Poor skills, weather, vehicle failure, road design, night driving and road obstructions.

Head-On Collisions have a higher rate of fatalities than other collisions and are more likely to occur on two-lane highways, narrow lanes, curved roads, and in construction zones.

Rear-End Collisions

Rear-End Collisions are one of the most common types of multiple-vehicle collisions. Vehicles stopped in traffic and tailgaters contribute to many of these collisions. Adverse conditions, such as dense fog or smoke, heavy rain, and snow increase risk because of reduced visibility.

Side-Impact Collisions

Most vehicles cannot withstand a side impact. If your vehicle is in danger of being hit on the side, your best option is to accelerate out of danger (if the way ahead is clear) rather than apply brakes.

Sessions 1 and 2

Sessions 1 and 2 will introduce your child to the instrument panel, vehicle controls, and mirror blind zones. Please invest at least 2 hours to work on these skills. You will need the owner's manual, a measuring tape, cones, plastic cups or chalk to use in these and future lessons.

Begin in a large, level parking lot free of obstacles. Use the checklist at the end of Sessions 1 and 2 to help organize your lessons and evaluate your child's driving skills.

- Show your child how to check tire pressure, engine oil, antifreeze, and other fluid levels.
- Prior to entering the vehicle, coach your child to check for fluid leaks, broken glass, objects behind the vehicle, etc. Enter the vehicle and review interior controls. Turn on the ignition switch without engaging engine, and discuss the function of the warning lights, gauges, and accessories. Ask your child to operate and explain all controls, and to simulate continuously monitoring the path ahead while operating each control.
- Discuss how proper seating position is essential for optimizing control of the vehicle. Your child should be taught to sit with his or her back firmly against the seat with at least 10 inches between the steering wheel and his/her chest. The steering wheel should be positioned so the air bag points towards the driver's chest. The top of the steering wheel should not be higher than the top of the driver's shoulders.
- Adjust the seat so the heel of the foot maintains contact with the floor when pivoting the foot between the brake and accelerator pedals. Short drivers may need a seat cushion or pedal extenders to sit at least 10 inches from the air bag.
- Adjust the head restraint to align with the center of the back of the driver's head.
- Adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the entire rear window and explain how it is the primary mirror for viewing traffic behind the vehicle. Adjust side mirrors to see the lanes next to your vehicle and reduce headlight glare at night from the drivers behind you. See Mirror Setting (BGE) on page 7.
- Seat belts prevent injuries when worn properly. Improper use may cause injuries. Place the lap portion of the seat belt low and snug across the hips. The shoulder portion should be worn snug across the chest away from the neck and face.
- Practice starting the engine and adjusting the sound system, temperature, and other accessories.
- With the right foot firmly on the brake and the parking brake engaged, explain when each gear is used.
- If the vehicle does not have daytime running lights, turn on the low-beam headlights.
- Have your child continue pressing the brake pedal, release parking brake and shift to Drive.

Moving the Vehicle

Explain the following to your child:

Smooth Accelerating-requires a gradual increase in pressure on the gas pedal until the appropriate speed is reached. Then, maintain the same amount of pressure to keep speed consistent.

Smooth Braking-uses a "medium" pressure, at first, followed by softer brake pressure until your vehicle gently rolls to a stop at the designated point.

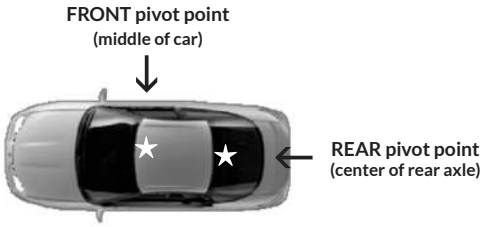
Both smooth accelerating and smooth braking require that only your toes and ball of your foot press the appropriate pedal while your heel maintains contact with the floorboard.

Smooth Steering-with hands at 8 and 4, gently move the steering wheel using push-pull-slide to direct the vehicle to your target.

Practice smooth accelerating, braking and steering. First, have your child continue pressing the brake pedal, release the parking brake and shift to Drive. Second, tell your child to identify a target. Third, have him/her release brake pressure and with no acceleration, move the vehicle toward a target in the parking lot. Finally, ask your child to drive around the perimeter of the lot focusing on the target ahead while maintaining a constant speed and practicing push-pull-slide steering.

When practicing turning, coach your child to reduce speed prior to a turn; to use slight acceleration when reaching the middle of the turn; and to allow the steering wheel to slowly unwind while tracking the vehicle on the intended path of travel, in the proper lane position. Discuss the vehicle's pivot point for left and right turns, which on most cars is even with the driver's seat. Continuously coach your child to focus on looking at and steering toward a target far ahead of the vehicle in the center of the intended path of travel. Your child will use these skills when slowing, turning and accelerating at intersections/curves.

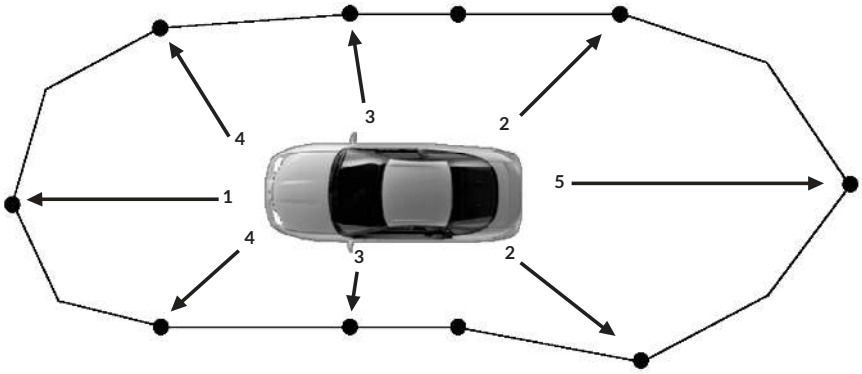
Have your child practice commentary driving whenever he/she changes speed or position. At intersections coach your child to say, "clear left, clear right, clear left, clear ahead" while moving. Make sure your child signals and checks mirrors/blind zones prior to changing speed, position or direction.



This activity demonstrates that there is a large area around the vehicle that the driver cannot see while sitting in the driver's seat. With your child sitting in the driver's seat with the front windows down and engine off, get out of the car and stand close to the front bumper facing your child.

1. Begin walking backward and ask your child to tap the horn when he/she can see your feet. Place a cone, cup or mark this spot with chalk to illustrate the pavement area in front of the vehicle that cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
2. Ask your child to look over the right shoulder, and repeat this process by walking away from the right rear of the vehicle. Repeat to the left.
3. Walk backward from each of the front passenger doors and mark the pavement area not seen by your child.
4. Repeat this process by walking backward from the right and left front corners of the vehicle.
5. Finally walk backwards from the rear of the vehicle and mark the area your child cannot see.

Ask your child to measure and record these distances on the illustration below. Discuss why it is important for your child to know that there is a large area of pavement you cannot see from the driver's seat (e.g., to avoid running over objects, pedestrians, etc.).



Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 1 - 2

Area around the vehicle that the driver cannot see (record distance in feet)

____ Distance in front of the vehicle that the driver cannot see
____ Distance to the rear of the vehicle that the driver cannot see
____ Distance to the left side of the vehicle that the driver cannot see
____ Distance to the right side of the vehicle that the driver cannot see

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for needs practice for the following skills:

Getting Ready to Drive

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness; checks for fluid leaks, tire condition/position, etc.
____ Locks doors, places key in ignition or key fob in center console, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Adjusts head restraints, seat and steering wheel position
____ Adjusts mirrors to reduce blind spots
____ Identifies vehicle controls (refer to owner's manual for explanation)
____ Checks to see if parking brake is set

Starting the Vehicle

____ Pivots heel and places foot securely on brake pedal
____ Demonstrates proficient use of ignition switch or starting device
____ Starts the vehicle and demonstrates ability to select/use appropriate accessories
____ Puts headlights on both day and night to increase safety
____ Releases the parking brake and makes appropriate gear selection for movement

Placing Vehicle in Motion

____ Visually identifies open space and target before moving foot from brake to gas
____ Looks well ahead of the vehicle at the target to identify the path of travel
____ Communicates with other roadway users
____ Puts the vehicle in motion smoothly and uses commentary driving

Stopping Vehicle in Motion

____ Searches ahead of the vehicle to determine deceleration or braking needs
____ Checks rear zone space prior to braking
____ Uses controlled braking efficiently with heel of foot on floorboard
____ Applies adequate force at the beginning of the braking process
____ Eases off brake pressure during the last second of braking to reduce vehicle pitch
____ Brings the vehicle to a smooth stop
____ Checks the rear zone space during and after braking

Steering

____ Uses a balanced 8 and 4 hand position on the steering wheel
____ Uses the push-pull-slide steering method effectively
____ Turns head and visually checks target area prior to turning
____ Visually checks the rear/side view mirrors and mirror blind areas

Securing the Vehicle

____ Sets parking brake; shifts into appropriate gear before removing foot from brake
____ Turns off appropriate accessories prior to turning off ignition and removing key
____ Visually checks traffic flow before opening door
____ Locks doors and activates alarm system if the vehicle is equipped with this device

I certify that _____ has spent at least two hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 3-5: Stopping and Steering, Knowing Where You Are

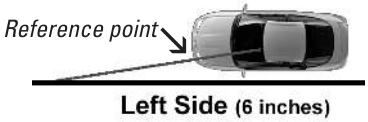
Sessions 3-5 focus on learning the correct procedures for moving, stopping and steering the vehicle at different speeds, and using reference points to perform precise vehicle maneuvers. Invest at least 3 hours learning/practicing these skills, and measure your child's progress using the checklist provided on the next page. Begin in a large, level parking lot that is free of obstacles. Place cones or other "targets" at selected locations on the lot.

Begin the lesson by having your child practice stopping and steering around the perimeter of the lot at 10 and 15 mph. Using commentary driving, have your child verbalize the critical elements of smooth push-pull-slide steering and stopping. Coach your child to ease off the accelerator or use the brake to reduce speed before entering a curve, and to use slight acceleration (to overcome inertia) to "pull" the vehicle out of the curve. Practice these skills using a figure eight pattern. Novice drivers have a tendency to overuse the brake and under use the accelerator to control speed, so coach your child to only use the brake to reduce speed quickly.

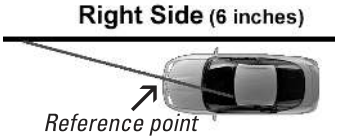
Ask your child to move the vehicle to specified targets in the parking lot at 10 and 15 mph. Discuss smooth acceleration, proper speed, and smooth stops. Explain to your child that easing pressure off the brake just before coming to a stop results in smoother stops by shifting some of the vehicle's weight from the front to the rear tires. Practice performing smooth stops at low and higher speeds.

Reference Points: To know exactly where the vehicle is positioned on the roadway, and to perform a task successfully every time, your child must learn how to align a part of the vehicle with a reference point (curb, pavement marking, side view mirror, etc.). Have your child practice this critical skill by successfully establishing left, right, and front reference points 8 or 10 times during each session.

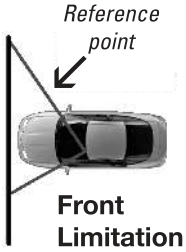
Left-Side Reference Point: To teach your child to align the vehicle 3-6 inches from a pavement line or curb on the driver's side of the vehicle, ask your child to stop when **the line or curb appears to intersect a point on the hood located about one foot from the left edge of the car.** After attempting to stop the vehicle in this position using the left-side reference point, your child should place the vehicle in Park, set the parking brake, turn off the engine, and get out of the vehicle to check whether the vehicle is 3-6 inches from the line or curb. If it is not, your child should adjust vehicle position and identify the location of the "personal" reference point which may vary depending on the vehicle, seating position, height of the driver, etc. Practice this skill until mastery.



Right-Side Reference Point: To align the vehicle 3-6 inches from a pavement line or curb on the passenger's side of the vehicle, ask your child to stop when **the pavement line appears to intersect the center of hood.** After stopping, your child should get out of the vehicle to check whether the tires are 3-6 inches from the line and make adjustments as needed to establish the "personal" reference point.



Front Reference Point: To align the front bumper 3-6 inches from a pavement line or curb, the driver should stop when **the line or curb appears under the passenger side mirror.** Ask your child to get out of the vehicle to check to see whether the front bumper is 3-6 inches from the pavement line or curb. If needed, adjust vehicle position and evaluate the side mirror reference point. Practice until mastery.



Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 3 - 5

During session 5, parents should begin evaluating whether their children can perform the tasks below without any coaching. Your child should also be able to explain why each step is important.

Check if these skills are becoming habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness; checks for fluid leaks, tire condition/position, etc.
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Makes proper adjustments
____ Identifies and operates all controls
____ Follows steps to put vehicle in motion
____ Properly secures the vehicle

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Moving the vehicle – check if these behaviors are automatic

____ Uses commentary driving
____ Places heel on floor and accelerates smoothly
____ Uses a balanced 8 and 4 hand position on the steering wheel
____ Looks well ahead of the vehicle at the target to effectively monitor the path of travel
____ Maintains lane position
____ Exhibits smooth push-pull-slide steering
____ Checks inside rearview mirror before braking and stops smoothly

Maintaining speed

____ 10 mph
____ 15 mph
____ Demonstrates hard and soft braking for a smooth stop at various speeds

Using reference points

____ Aligns the vehicle 3 – 6 inches from a line or curb on the driver's side of the vehicle
____ Aligns the vehicle 3 – 6 inches from a line of curb on passenger's side of vehicle
____ Stops with the front bumper 3 – 6 inches from a pavement line or curb

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 6 and 7: Backing

Many novice driver crashes are backing crashes since few opportunities to practice and improve backing skills are provided. Backing from one target to another allows your child to practice body positioning for effective visual monitoring and tracking, as well as both steering and speed control skills. While back up cameras may provide feedback and assistance, drivers should become proficient in "technology-free" backing skills.

One-Hand Steering

Movement of the steering wheel with one hand is recommended for backing maneuvers that do not require full left or right turns. Backing and steering with one hand requires shifting one's hips and seating position so the driver's head can be turned to search the area in front and establish targets behind the vehicle. Mirrors enhance the visual search field while backing, but they do not provide depth perception, and mirrors limit the driver's field of vision. Sharp turns at low speeds while backing may require using both hands. Since it is more difficult to steer and maintain control of the vehicle when moving backward, emphasize always backing at slow speeds, and frequently glancing forward to check the vehicle's position. **Reverse is a more powerful gear than Drive, so coach your child to use the accelerator pedal carefully, if at all.**

To practice backing the vehicle in a straight line, ask your child to:

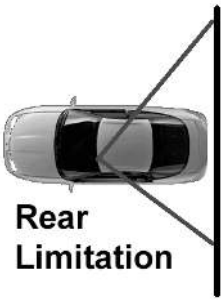


- check all areas behind the vehicle before backing;
- pivot on heel, place the right foot on the brake, and shift to Reverse;
- grasp the steering wheel at 12 o'clock with the left hand;
- shift hips and seating position to look over right shoulder through the back window; ease off the brake, and control speed;
- coach your child to make frequent quick checks to the front to monitor vehicle position; and stop at the designated point.

To practice backing and turning the vehicle, have your child:

- grasp the steering wheel at 12 o'clock with the **right hand if turning to the left, or with the left hand if turning to the right;**
- look in the direction you are moving through the left or right rear, side, and back windows, and monitor the inside rear tire tracking next to the curb with side view mirrors;
- keep speed slow, and remind your child that when backing and turning the front of the vehicle is moving in the opposite direction; and
- coach your child to make frequent quick checks to the front and sides to monitor vehicle position.

Rear Bumper Reference Points:
To align the rear bumper 3-6 inches from a line or curb, the driver should stop when the line or curb appears near the middle of the rear right window when looking over the right shoulder. After stopping, have your child get out of the car to see whether the rear bumper is 3-6 inches from the designated line. If necessary, adjust the vehicle's position as needed, and re-establish the rear side window reference point from the inside of the car.



When backing around a corner to the left, the driver looks over the left shoulder and begins turning when the corner of the turn aligns with the rear left tire. Use your side view mirror to track the left tire around the corner. If a lot of steering is necessary, the driver may need to use hand-over-hand steering.

When backing around a corner to the right, the driver uses the rear limitation reference point to determine when to begin steering to the right. Coach your child to frequently monitor the front of the vehicle when backing and turning.

Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 6 and 7

Check if these skills are becoming habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Identifies controls
____ Follows procedural steps to put vehicle in motion
____ Controls speed
____ Uses commentary driving

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Backing straight

____ Checks all areas around the vehicle prior to putting it in Reverse and while backing
____ Pivots foot to brake pedal and shifts to Reverse
____ Grasps steering wheel at 12 o'clock with left hand
____ Looks through the back window and targets path of travel
____ Uses accelerator and brake effectively for speed control
____ Demonstrates smooth and controlled steering techniques
____ Makes frequent quick checks to the front
____ Stops with rear bumper 3-6 inches from a designated line or curb using reference points
____ Stops vehicle completely before turning back around to face the front of the car

Backing and turning

____ Searches all areas prior to putting the vehicle in Reverse and while backing
____ Demonstrates effective one-hand, push-pull-slide and hand-over-hand steering techniques as appropriate
____ Searches path of travel and looks at target through rear, side, and back windows
____ Keeps speed slow using idle speed or slight acceleration
____ Makes frequent quick checks to the front and sides opposite the direction of the turn, and looks at the inside rear tire using the side view mirror
____ Stops at the rear tire pivot point prior to turning
____ Steers toward the target gradually
____ Looks to the rear, checks front and stops at designated line
____ Stops the vehicle completely before turning around

Securing the Vehicle

____ Properly secures the vehicle

I certify that _____ has spent at least two hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 8-10: Turning, Lane Position, and Visual Skills

Sessions 8 – 10 require knowledge of signs, signals, pavement markings, right of way rules, and speed limits. Review the Virginia Driver's Manual (https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/licenses-ids/exams/manual)to prepare for these sessions.

During these three sessions start in a parking lot and practice 10-15 right and left turns into parking spaces and at intersections from stopped and moving positions. Left turns should be "squared" and right turns should be "rounded." Emphasize proper signals, mirror checks, speed and steering control, use side view mirror reference point for turns, and look far ahead of the vehicle at selected targets in the center of the path of travel. Encourage your child to search the driving environment and not to fixate on any one thing. Prior to progressing to driving in low-risk neighborhoods, your child should be able to demonstrate the ability to move and stop the vehicle smoothly, maintain a given speed, and steer with reasonable precision. Once your child has mastered these skills, begin practicing right and left turns in a residential area.

Selecting adequate gap in traffic is a very difficult skill and requires a lot of practice! Coach your child to **look at the approaching vehicle's tires in contact with the pavement** (not at the body of the car), **to judge the distance and speed of the approaching vehicle.** Using commentary driving while sitting in the parking lot, ask your child to practice judging the speed and distance of approaching traffic by identifying vehicles that they think they can safely pull in front of or behind.

When turning out of a parking lot, coach your child to identify a target 20 and 30 seconds ahead of the vehicle in the closest lane. Using commentary driving, ask your child to explain what he or she sees (potential risks) and the proper reaction to them. Also focus on enhancing awareness of signs and pavement markings, which provide important visual search clues for early risk identification and reference points for mastering vehicle maneuvers. If the road has pavement markings, tell your child to look as far ahead as possible, keeping the pavement marking on the driver's side in the peripheral field of vision, and not to look down at the lines when trying to "center the vehicle." Looking at the pavement directly in front of the vehicle often causes the vehicle to "drift" in the lane. **Drivers steer in the direction they look,** and any eye motion away from the target area in the center of the path of travel 20 – 30 seconds ahead of the vehicle should be a quick glance. Coach your child to continuously search far ahead of the vehicle and not to fixate on anything at the sides of the path of travel.



Using commentary driving while approaching an intersection, have your child describe:

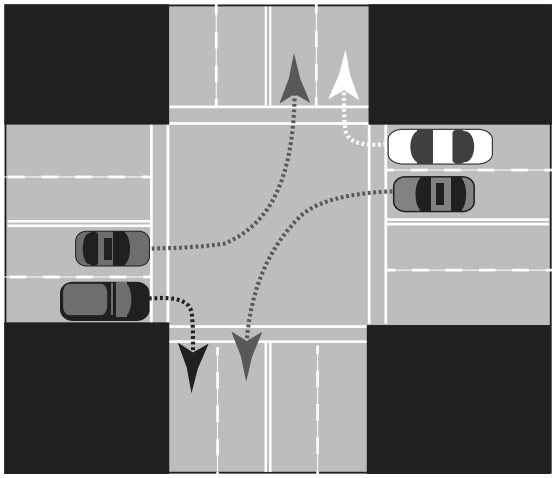
- how to search all areas of the intersection for vehicles, pedestrians, traffic controls, etc.;
- how to check traffic to the rear, before putting on turn signal 4 seconds before turning;
- who must yield at a signal-controlled intersection by identifying who has the green light; and
- how to select the best lane, lane position, and yield to pedestrians and other vehicles.

Right Turns from A Stop

The following steps are used when turning onto one-way or two-way streets.

- Position the vehicle 3 feet from the curb (any closer the rear tire may hit curb).
- Stop with the front bumper even with the stop line or curb line, and angle the front of the vehicle slightly to the right in position to move into the path of travel.
- Search intersection to the left, right, front, left, and back to the right, and yield to traffic in the intersection.
- Look at the tires, not the body, of the approaching vehicle and select a large gap in traffic.
- After identifying a gap, accelerate without hesitation while looking at target.
- Using push-pull-slide steering, move forward and begin turning the steering wheel when the vehicle's right-side mirror appears to be aligned with the curb.

- Select a target that is 20-30 seconds ahead in the center of the closest open lane, encourage your child to accelerate gradually, and allow the steering wheel to recover by letting it slide through the hands.



Right of way is a gift. You do not have it unless someone gives it to you!

Left Turns on Two-Way Streets from a Stop

- Begin by positioning the vehicle 3-6 inches from the yellow line or median in the middle of the road.
- Stop with wheels pointed straight ahead behind the stop line, pedestrian crosswalk, or before entering an intersection.
- Search the intersection to the left, front, right, and back to the left, and look for vehicles making a right turn on red in your target area.
- Select a gap in traffic, avoid hesitation, move **straight forward** towards the middle of the intersection.
- Use the yellow line on the left in your target area, yield to oncoming traffic and turn when the front bumper appears to approach the yellow line.
- Mid-way through the turn, allow the steering wheel to slide through your hands until front wheels are straight, and you are in the travel lane closest to the yellow line or median.
- Select a new target 20-30 seconds ahead in the center of the path of travel and continue accelerating gradually to a safe travel speed.

Invest time practicing left turns and judging gaps in traffic. Left turns cross in front of oncoming traffic and are extremely dangerous for novice drivers. During the first year of driving, coach your child to avoid left turns whenever possible. The inability to judge gaps in traffic causes T-bone crashes.

Roundabouts

At first, most drivers feel anxious when they approach a roundabout. But studies show after drivers use roundabouts, they like them because traffic is constantly flowing through the intersection. Roundabouts help reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions because of low speeds, one-way travel, and there's no incentive to speed up to try to beat the traffic light. Drivers must yield to pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles already in the roundabout before entering, but they are not required to stop if there is no traffic in the roundabout. When driving on multi-lane roundabouts you must yield to both lanes of traffic and choose your lane in the same way you would in a traditional multi-lane intersection. To go straight or right, get in the right lane.

Right Turn:

(When taking the first exit): Keep right, use right lane and right turn signal on approach and through the roundabout.

Straight Ahead:

Select the appropriate path or designated through lane before entering the roundabout. Use right turn signal when passing the exit before the one to be taken.

Left or U-Turn:

Enter the roundabout from the left side of the entry or the designated left turn lane and use your left turn signal on approach. Keep to the left in the roundabout until you need to exit. Use right turn signal when passing the exit before the one to be taken.



Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 8-10

Check if skills have become habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Identifies controls and follows procedural steps to put vehicle in motion
____ Checks mirrors frequently
____ Uses commentary driving
____ Properly secures vehicle

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Vehicle position and steps for right turns

____ Selects the best lane and lane position and understands the correct path of travel
____ Uses proper signals and positions vehicle 3 feet from the curb for a right turn
____ Stops with the front bumper even with curb or behind stop line
____ Angles vehicle slightly to the right when stopped at curb for a right turn
____ Uses side view mirror even with curb as reference point to begin right turn
____ Establishes target in path of travel in closest open travel lane
____ Selects gap in oncoming traffic and avoids hesitation
____ Controls speed until reaching apex of turn and accelerates towards target
____ Uses proper push-pull-slide steering techniques
____ Turns into the closest open travel lane and establishes new target in path of travel
____ Successfully navigates a roundabout

Vehicle position and steps for left turns

____ Selects the best lane and lane position and understands the correct path of travel
____ Uses proper signals and positions the vehicle 3-6 inches from the center line to prepare for a left turn
____ Uses front bumper approaching yellow line as reference point in target area to begin the left turn
____ Selects gap in oncoming traffic and avoids hesitation
____ Controls speed until reaching apex of turn and accelerates towards target
____ Uses proper push-pull-slide steering techniques
____ Turns into the closest open travel lane and establishes new target in path of travel

Visual skills

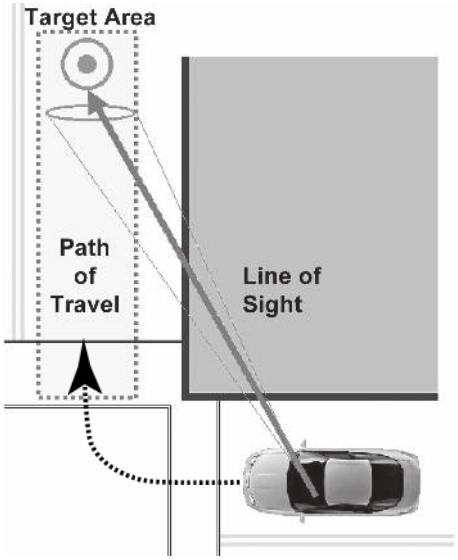
____ Looks 20-30 seconds ahead of the vehicle
____ Selects and looks at target in the center of the path of travel
____ Recognizes and explains meaning of signs by their shape, color and message well in advance
____ Understands meaning of yellow and white pavement markings
____ Understands meaning of solid and broken pavement markings
____ Recognizes a green arrow, left turn only, yellow flashing light or arrow, and no left turn signs
____ Searches all areas of the intersection identifying open, closed and changing areas [see the section on SEE iT]
____ Effectively judges speed of approaching traffic and makes good gap selection
____ Yields to pedestrians and oncoming traffic
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 11-13: Searching Intended Path of Travel

In a residential area, or, if ready, on roads with light traffic, continue working on improving visual skills, negotiating curves, and right and left turns. Practice using reference points, judging space in seconds, identifying a target, and searching the target area and path of travel. Ask your child to comment prior to changing speed or position.



Novice drivers have the tendency to monitor the road immediately in front of the vehicle. **The target** they should be monitoring is an area or object that is located 20-30 seconds ahead of the vehicle in the center of the path of travel, and is what the driver steers toward. The target can be a car, a block ahead, a traffic signal, a crest of a hill, etc. To practice this skill, use commentary driving for two to three minutes, and have your child identify targets and potential risks. Having a target helps your child:

- visually track the space that the vehicle will be occupying;
- look far ahead to search for and manage risks;
- improve steering accuracy to perform proficient vehicle maneuvers.

The **SEEiT** system: **S**earch, **E**valuate, and **E**xecute **i**n **T**ime, is a simple space management process your child should use to control driving risks. When **Searching** the path of travel, your child should look for open, changing, and closed areas. An example of an open area is an area with no other road users. Examples of a closed area would be stopped traffic, stop sign, red light, pedestrians, etc. Examples of a changing area would be a car pulling out of a driveway, a yellow light, a left-turning vehicle, a bicyclist, etc. Ask your child to use commentary driving to **SEARCH** and **EVALUATE** changing or closed space when approaching intersections, and then demonstrate how to **EXECUTE** a speed or position change **in Time** to manage risks.

You can steer around a risk in less time than it takes to brake and stop to avoid colliding with the risk. That is because the distance needed for steering is much shorter than the distance needed for stopping. Coach your child to look for open spaces that can be used as "escape routes" and not at what he/she is trying to avoid. Drivers steer in the direction they look. If you coach your child to look for and create space around the vehicle, your child is much less likely to crash.

Judging Space in Seconds

To calculate space in seconds, have your child select a fixed object, count one-one thousand, two-one thousand, etc., until the driver reaches the object. Ask your child to practice judging space in seconds at different speeds and discuss escape routes and stopping distances. Drivers have the most control over the space in front of the vehicle.

Emphasize that on dry surfaces:

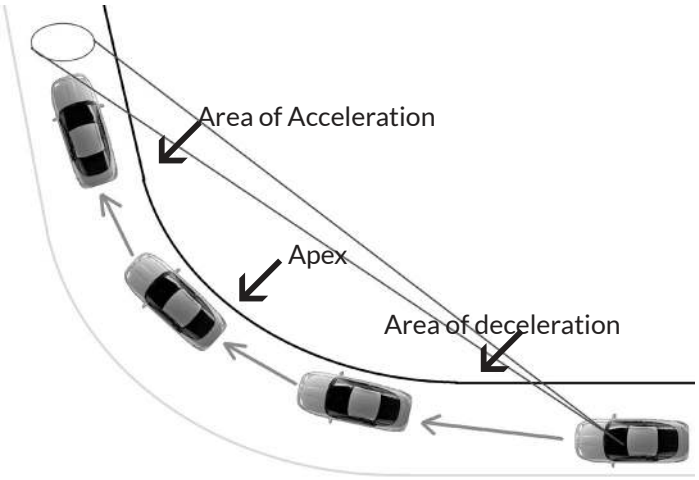
A three-second following interval at speeds under 45 mph provides the driver time to steer and brake out of problem areas.

A four-second following interval at speeds under 70 mph provides the driver time to steer and brake out of problems.

Move Over Law

Virginia's Updated Move Over Law requires drivers to move over or slow down for stopped vehicles that have their hazard lights on, display road flares or other warning signs. Previously, drivers only had to move over for emergency vehicles.

Target



Coaching your child to maintain control of the vehicle through a curve.

Discuss warning sign speeds for curves which are calculated based on the angle and bank of the curve. On approach, position the vehicle in the lane to try to establish a sightline to the apex (middle) and the exit of the curve. Reduce speed (inertia) before entering the curve, and slowly reduce the pressure on the brake until reaching the apex (middle) of the curve. At the apex, coach your child to begin applying light acceleration to enhance centripetal force to keep the car moving along the circular path towards the target.

The sharpness/bank of a curve in addition to the vehicle's speed, weight and height affect vehicle control. Traction loss when entering a curve is often caused by excessive speed, braking, or steering. Front tire traction loss (referred to as "understeer,") causes the vehicle to "plow" straight ahead when the tires do not respond to steering input. "Oversteer" is when the rear tires lose traction and slide from one tire to the other. This causes the car to turn more than the amount of steering input, and one of the rear tires tries to lead (fishtailing).

Vehicle Balance

The distribution of the vehicle's weight on all four tires is called vehicle balance. Ideal balance and tire patch size are only reached when the vehicle is motionless. As soon as acceleration, deceleration, steering, or a combination of these actions occur, vehicle balance and the distribution of vehicle weight on the tires changes. However, when the vehicle is traveling at a constant speed, and the suspension is set on center, steering and traction control are considered to be in balance.

Pitch, Roll and Yaw

Vehicles operate in three dimensions centered on the vehicle's center of mass – longitudinal, vertical and horizontal axes. Changes in the location of the vehicle's center of mass, relative to its track, determines load transfer between front and rear, as well as side to side. The vehicle will experience pitch, roll or yaw usually as the result of the suspension reacting to turns, acceleration and road conditions.

Changing vehicle balance from side to side (roll)

Steering, road design, vehicle height, and lean can affect a vehicle's side-to-side balance. For example: steering to the right shifts the vehicle weight to the left, and in extreme circumstances the vehicle may rollover. Rotation around the vertical axis of the vehicle is called roll.

Changing vehicle balance from front to rear (backward pitch)

Acceleration causes the weight or center of mass to transfer toward the rear tires of the vehicle. More rapid acceleration will result in greater weight transfer and reduced front tire traction. Rotation around the front-to-back axis of the vehicle is called pitch.

Changing vehicle balance from rear to front (forward pitch)

When brakes are applied, weight or center of mass is transferred toward the front of the vehicle. If braking is hard, there is a noticeable drop of the hood and reduced rear tire traction.

Changing the vehicle's rear load to the right or left (yaw)

Hard, sudden steering, braking, a slippery road surface, or right or left elevation of the roadway can affect vehicle balance and result in the loss of rear tire traction. When the vehicle losses traction to the rear, the vehicle may slide to the left or right. Left or right rotation around the axis is called yaw.

Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 11-13

Check if behavior has become a habit

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Uses proper signals
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Maintains and adjusts speed to flow of traffic to maintain adequate space cushion
____ Uses commentary driving

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Searching the Intended Path of Travel (evaluate these skills using commentary driving)

Target
____ Identifies an object or area in the center of the intended path of travel
____ Identifies and adjusts speed at entrance, apex and exit of curve

Space Management (Uses SEE-iT process)
____ Searches the space the vehicle will occupy at least 20-30 seconds ahead
____ Continually evaluates the immediate travel path
____ Adjusts speed and/or position to maintain open space to the front and sides of vehicle
____ Maintains a 3-4 second following interval at all times (space cushion)

Identifies Open, Closed or Changing Spaces
____ Identifies travel path as open, closed or changing, and adjusts speed and position as needed

Searches Intersections
____ Searches for open zones/space to the left, front, and right when approaching and entering intersections
____ Identifies closed or changing zones/spaces and makes necessary speed and/or lane adjustments
____ Stops in proper position; stops completely/tires are motionless
____ Yields and understands right-of-way rules
____ Comments prior to changing vehicle speed or position

Curves
____ Positions the vehicle to increase line of sight
____ Slows to the speed posted on the warning sign before entering curve
____ Slowly lightens pressure on the brake until reaching the apex (middle) of the curve
____ Applies light acceleration to pull the car out of the curve towards target

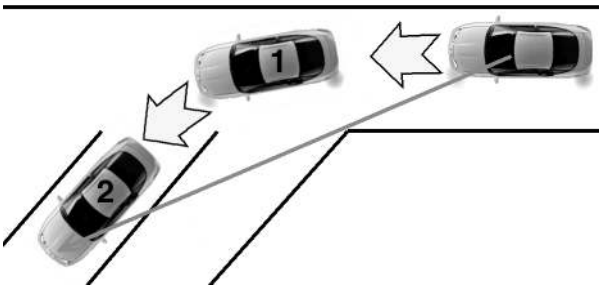
Securing the Vehicle
____ Properly secures vehicle

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 14-16: Parking

Sessions 14-16 focus on learning the correct procedures for angle, perpendicular, and parallel parking using reference points and commentary driving. Begin Session 14 in a large, level parking lot free of obstacles. During each session have your child practice angle, perpendicular, and parallel parking on the right and the left side 8-10 times.



Angle Parking Steps

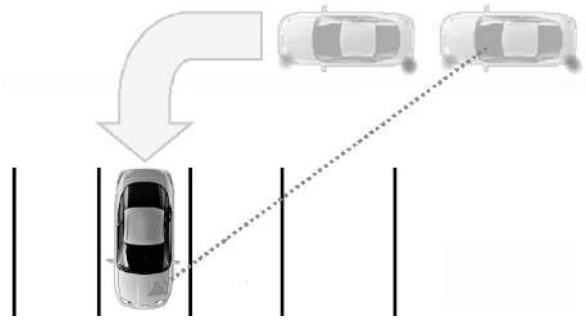
- Signal intention and position the vehicle 3-4 feet from the space in which the vehicle will be parked.
- Move forward until the side view mirror appears to align with the first pavement line of the space.
- Using a slow controlled speed, visually target the middle of the parking space and turn the wheel rapidly.
- Steer toward the target inside the space. When the front wheels are inside the space begin straightening the tires. Stop when the front bumper is 3-6 inches from the curb or end of the space.
- If you have a choice, parking on the left gives you more room to maneuver and a better view of traffic when you back out of the space.

Exiting an Angle Parking Space

- Place foot on brake, signal in the direction you will turn steering wheel, shift to Reverse, look over your shoulder to search your path of travel.
- Back straight until your vehicle's front bumper is even with the back bumper of the vehicle next to you, and slowly begin turning the steering wheel in the direction you want the rear of the vehicle to go.
- Monitor your front bumper on the opposite side of the direction you are turning using quick glances to the front.
- When your front bumper has cleared the space by several feet, stop, and shift to Drive.

Perpendicular Parking Steps (parking at a 90-degree angle)

- Signal intention and position the vehicle 5-6 feet away from the space.
- Move forward until the side view mirror appears to align with the first pavement line of the space.
- Turn the wheel rapidly left or right while controlling speed.
- Steer towards a target in the center of the space and begin straightening the wheels when the front tires are inside the space.
- Position the front bumper 3-6 inches from the curb or end of the space.



Exiting a Perpendicular Space

- Place foot on brake, signal intention, shift to Reverse, and look through the rear window.
- Back until your front bumper is even with the rear bumper of the vehicle located on the turning side. Begin turning the steering wheel in the direction you want the rear of your vehicle to go.
- Monitor your front bumper on the opposite side of the direction you are turning.
- When your front bumper clears the back of the vehicle by several feet, stop, and shift to Drive. Establish a target in your intended path of travel.

Parallel Parking Steps (parking on the right)

- Signal that you are stopping and turning.
- Stop 2-3 feet next to and slightly behind the car in front with your rear right tire even with the other vehicle's back bumper.
- Shift to Reverse. Check traffic behind, and back slowly steering sharply to the right.
- Stop when the side view mirror is in line with the rear bumper of the vehicle you are parking behind or when you can see the right headlight or tire of the car behind in your side view mirror.
- Back slowly until your front bumper clears the back bumper of the vehicle you are parking behind.
- Continue backing slowly while steering rapidly to the left using quick glances to the front and the rear of the vehicle until the vehicle's wheels are straight.
- Center vehicle in space. Wheels should be 6-12 inches from the curb.

Exiting a Parallel Parking Space



- Brake, shift to Reverse, and ease back as near as possible to the vehicle behind you.
- Check traffic, signal, and shift to Drive.
- Move forward slowly while steering rapidly out of the space.
- Begin straightening wheels when your vehicle's front seat is even with the back bumper of the car in front, look at the target in the center of your path of travel and begin accelerating.

Parking on a Hill

When parking uphill or downhill, coach your child to place the vehicle in REVERSE or FIRST gear for manual transmissions, and PARK for automatic transmissions, and make sure the parking brake is properly engaged. To further ensure that the vehicle does not roll into traffic, turn the front wheels:

- towards the curb **when parking downhill;**
- towards the road edge **when parking uphill without a curb;** and
- away from the curb **when parking uphill with a curb.**

Evaluating Skills and Competencies for Sessions 14-16

Check if skill has become a habit

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Avoids hesitation
____ Uses commentary driving

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Angle Parking

____ Signals intention
____ Approaches space at proper distance (3-4 feet)
____ Aligns the vehicle's side view mirror with the reference point
____ Controls speed and monitors all four corners of the vehicle
____ Selects target to center the vehicle in the space
____ Controls speed and steers towards the target
____ Positions the front bumper 3-6 inches from the curb or end of the space

Exiting Angle Parking Space

____ Signals intention
____ Aligns the vehicle with the reference point before turning the steering wheel
____ Controls speed and monitors the path of travel
____ Steers into closest lane after the front tire clears the back of the parked vehicle

Perpendicular Parking

____ Signals intention
____ Establishes proper distance (5-6 feet) from parked vehicles
____ Uses reference point to begin turn (side view mirror aligns with the first pavement line of the space)
____ Controls speed and steers toward target in center of space
____ Centers vehicle in the space
____ Positions the front bumper 3-6 inches from the curb or the end of the space

Exiting a Perpendicular Parking Space

____ Controls speed and monitors all four corners of the vehicle and path of travel
____ Signals intention and aligns vehicle with the proper reference point before turning the steering wheel
____ Steers into proper lane after the front tire clears the back of the parked vehicle

Parallel Parking (on the right)

____ Signal intention and stop the vehicle 2-3 feet parallel to the car in front of the space
____ Shift to Reverse
____ Steer sharply right until side view mirror is even with rear bumper of other vehicle
____ Stop and straighten wheels
____ Back straight until vehicle's front bumper is even with back bumper of other vehicle
____ Continues moving back while steering sharply left
____ Center vehicle in parking space, 6-12 inches from the curb

Exiting Parallel Parking Space

____ Backs as near as possible to the vehicle parked behind the space
____ Checks traffic, signals, head check, and shifts to Drive
____ Controls speed and steers out of the space
____ Straightens wheels gradually when front seat aligns with the back bumper of vehicle in front

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

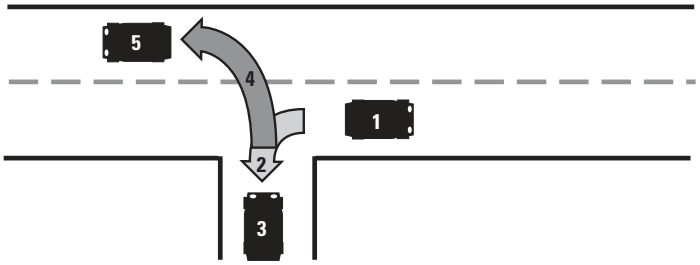
Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 17 and 18: Turnabouts

Sessions 17 and 18 will focus on recognizing the different types of turnabouts and selecting the appropriate type of turnabout for a given situation. Begin Sessions 17 and 18 in a large, level parking lot free of obstacles, and practice 2-point, 3-point, and U-turns. Progress to a lightly traveled residential area, and focus on visual search skills, turns, and practice doing each turnabout at least 10 times.

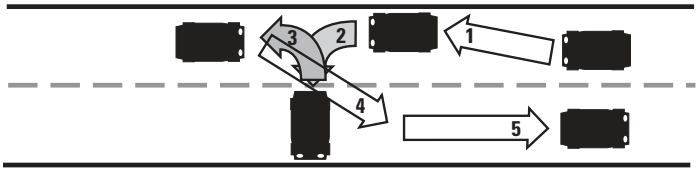
The easiest and safest way to change directions is to drive around the block. If that is not an option, practice changing directions using the following turnabouts:

Two-point turnabouts require the driver to head into, or back into, a driveway on the same side or on the other side of the roadway to reverse direction. The safest way to execute a 2-point turnabout is by backing into a driveway on the same side of the street.



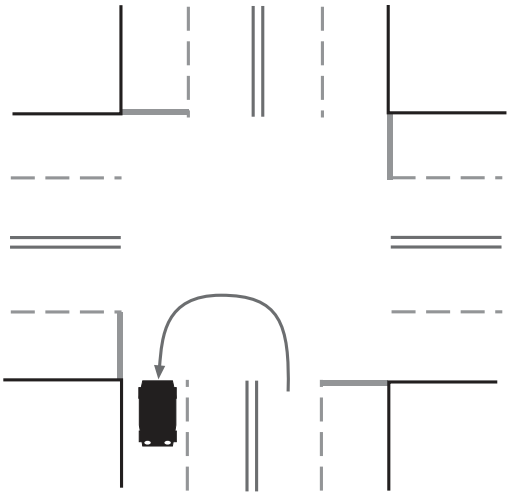
Three-point turnabouts are an option if no driveway is available, traffic is light, and the available space prevents a U-turn.

- To begin a 3-point turnabout, position the vehicle next to the curb on the right.
- When safe, move forward while turning the wheel sharply to the left towards the opposite side of the road. Stop approximately a foot from the curb.
- Shift to Reverse. Check traffic and back slowly turning the wheel rapidly to the right until your front bumper is in the center of the road.
- Shift to Drive, target the center of your path of travel and accelerate.



U-turns are very dangerous because you cross the paths of multiple lanes of traffic, and therefore not allowed at all intersections.

- On a two-way multiple-lane highway, the driver begins the U-turn in the left lane closest to the center line or median.
- The driver completes the turn in the lane furthest to the right in the opposite flow of traffic.
- Target the center of your path of travel and accelerate to the appropriate speed.



Skills and Competencies Checklist for Sessions 17-18

Check if behavior has become a habit

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Maintains a safe following distance at all times (space cushion to front)
____ Uses commentary driving at all times to provide evidence of level of skill
____ Properly secures vehicle

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Approach to Intersections

____ Identifies and responds appropriately to open/closed spaces by changing speed or position
____ Checks and manages space to the rear
____ Establishes and maintains proper lane usage and reduces speed
____ Searches left, front and right zones for changes to line of sight and path of travel. Identifies open and closed spaces before entering intersection
____ Safely stops and effectively manages risks when necessary

Turnabouts

____ Selects the appropriate type of turnabout for a given situation
____ Searches for signs prohibiting U-turns and left turns
____ Demonstrates and explains the proper starting position
____ Demonstrates and explains the proper forward position
____ Searches left, front, and right to determine open spaces
____ Uses proper signals
____ Controls speed
____ Looks through the turn at target before turning the steering wheel
____ Identifies a target at the end of the turnabout in the path of travel
____ Avoids hesitation
____ Successfully executes several 2-point turns
____ Successfully executes several 3-point turns
____ Successfully executes several U-turns

Visual and Commentary Driving Skills

____ Looks well ahead of the vehicle by describing targets in the path of travel
____ Identifies open space
____ Searches for signs prohibiting left turn or U-turn
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Judges adequate gap in traffic prior to executing maneuver

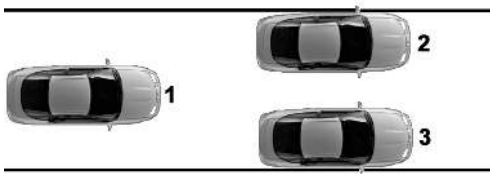
I certify that _____ has spent at least two hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 19-21: Multiple Lane Roadways

Sessions 19-21 focus on lane position, lane changing, following distance, and mirror blind zones. If possible, choose a time to practice driving on four-lane roadways when traffic is minimal.

There are several lane position choices a driver can select without changing lanes. Practice driving in lane position 1, 2 and 3 several times during each session, and discuss situations that require a buffer of space.



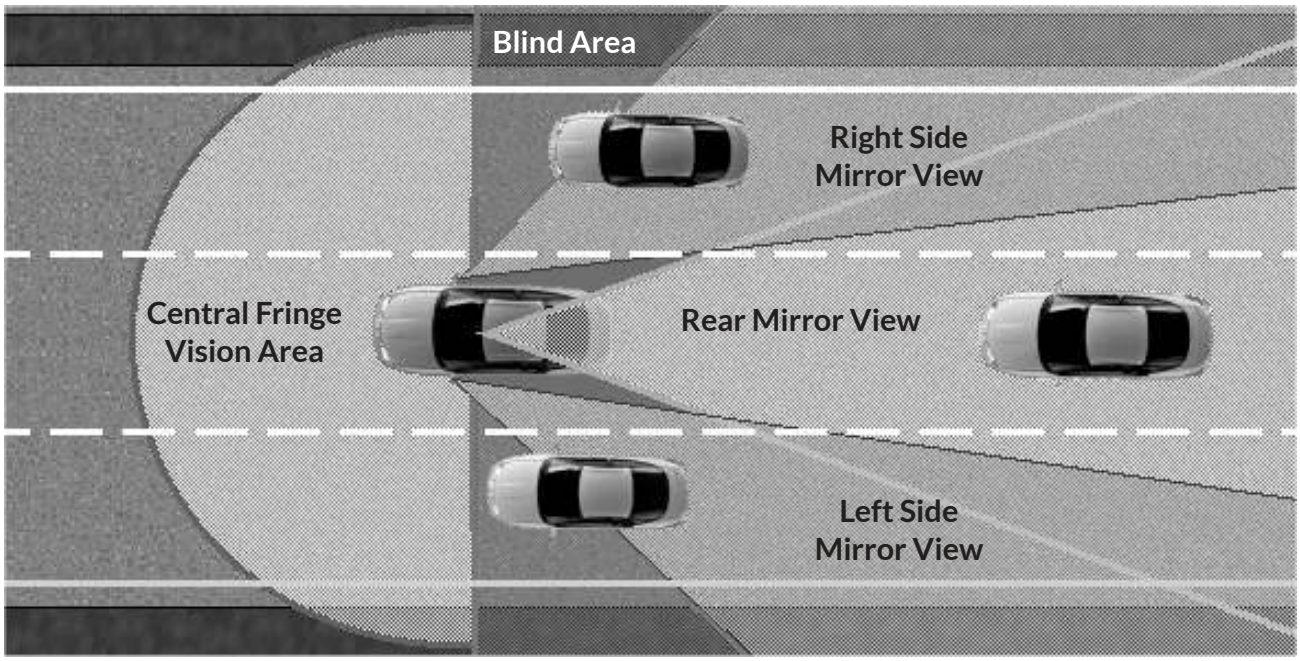
Position 1: The vehicle is centered in the lane and is the lane position most often used.

Position 2: The vehicle is 6-12 inches from the lane line on the driver's side. This is the lane position used for a left turn, to avoid obstacles in the lane, etc., as it allows for a margin of safety on the right side of the vehicle.

Position 3: The vehicle is 6-12 inches from the passenger-side pavement line or curb, and this lane position is the best position to approach a hill or curve, or when you need more space to the left.

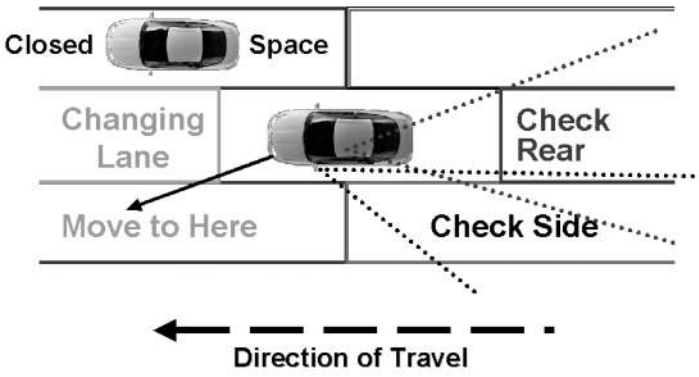
The space in front of the vehicle is the space over which you have the most control. Maintaining at least a 3 to 4 second margin of space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead provides the driver with visibility, time, and space to avoid frontal crashes, and time to steer or brake out of dangerous situations at moderate speeds. Coach your child to accelerate or decelerate when the 3 to 4 second gap increases or decreases. This will also help your child maintain and/or travel at the speed of the flow of traffic. When stopping behind another vehicle, coach your child to stop in a position to see the rear tires of the car in front touching the roadway surface. This provides a space cushion if hit from behind, better sight distance to monitor the area ahead, and room to maneuver around a disabled vehicle.

Mirror blind zones - When learning to ride a bike, your child was taught to check over the shoulder in the area next to and behind the bike to make sure there are no cars. As a driver, coach your child to monitor the area to the rear using the inside mirror, to the sides using side view mirrors, and to check the blind zone by glancing quickly over the shoulder in the area in the outer fringe of the driver's peripheral field of vision. New drivers have a tendency to move the steering wheel in the same direction that they move their head. Coach your child to focus on not moving the steering wheel when making the head check by keeping both shoulders square to the steering wheel.



Checking traffic for a lane change

Changing lanes - Ask your child when he/she would need to change lanes. Answers may include: to avoid an obstacle in the lane, to prepare for a turn, exit the highway, or pass another vehicle. Emphasize that passing another vehicle on a two-lane, two-way roadway is extremely dangerous and often unnecessary.



Practice changing lanes 15-20 times during these three sessions. Steps to safely change lanes:

- check traffic flow to rear and sides using mirrors for appropriate gap;
- signal intention by placing gentle pressure on the turn signal lever;
- recheck traffic flow to the rear, sides, and front; steady hands and make a quick glance over the shoulder to check blind zone area;
- maintain speed or accelerate slightly before and during the lane change;
- make a gradual move into the lane (front and rear tires should glide almost simultaneously across 3-5 broken pavement lines);
- regain space around the vehicle and adjust following distance as needed.

Right turns are always made from the right turn lane(s), or the travel lane closest to the right and they end in the closest open lane. Review Sessions 8-10 for steps to skillfully execute a right turn.

Left turns pose a much higher risk than right turns for your child because they cross directly in front of the path of oncoming traffic. New drivers also have difficulty judging the speed and distance of multiple lanes of oncoming traffic - invest time practicing this skill.

- Ask your child to look at the other vehicle's tires in contact with the road, not at the body of the car, and estimate space and distance in seconds
- When making a left turn from a two-way four-lane street, begin and end the turn in the lane closest to the yellow line. Invest time practicing how to negotiate protected and unprotected intersections, determining who must yield, and identifying vehicles turning right on red.
- Protected left turns are made from a turn lane marked with an arrow and left-turn traffic signal, and the oncoming traffic has a red light. An unprotected left turn is dangerous because it is made at an intersection without a left-turn arrow or signal, and the oncoming traffic has a green light.
- Using commentary driving, ask your child to explain the traffic controls at each intersection and demonstrate awareness of who has the green and red lights.

Passing and being passed - Ask your child to explain the legal responsibilities of the passing driver and the driver being passed. Using commentary driving, have your child practice the safe passing steps below:

- position your vehicle a safe distance behind the vehicle being passed;
- check ahead to make sure you have plenty of space before you try to pass;
- signal intentions, check mirrors and blind zone area over shoulder;
- accelerate to an appropriate speed - make sure your child does not exceed the posted speed limit;
- while monitoring path of travel, use the rearview mirror to look for the front of the car being passed;
- signal intentions; after seeing the front of the vehicle you are passing in your rearview mirror, change lanes, cancel signal, and maintain speed.

NOTE: Teach your child to help drivers pass safely. Explain why this is not a good time to become competitive!

Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 19-21

Check if skills have become habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Maintains an adequate following distance
____ Uses proper signals
____ Controls speed

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Lane Change/Passing

____ Uses mirrors and checks traffic flow behind and to the sides
____ Signals intention
____ Rechecks traffic flow to the rear and sides using mirrors to confirm an adequate gap
____ Checks blind zones by turning head to look over shoulder
____ Avoids hesitation
____ Maintains speed or accelerates slightly before and during the lane change
____ Moves gradually into the lane (tires cross 3-5 broken lines)
____ Checks rearview mirror and identifies the front of car being passed to safely return to lane
____ Adjusts following distance as needed and regains space around the vehicle

Vehicle Position – Right/Left Turns

____ Selects the best lane and lane position
____ Positions the vehicle in lane position 3 for a right turn (6 to 12 inches from the curb)
____ Stops the vehicle with the front bumper even with curb line, crosswalk or behind stop line
____ Angles wheels slightly to the right before stopping at the curb line for a right turn
____ Keeps wheels straight and positions vehicle 6-12 inches from the center of the road to prepare for a left turn – lane position 2
____ Maintains at least a 3-second space cushion in front of the vehicle at all times
____ Recognizes and adjusts position and/or speed when being tailgated

Visual and Commentary Driving Skills

____ Looks and searches well ahead of the vehicle
____ Selects and looks at a target towards the end of the turn
____ Recognizes regulatory and warning signs by shape and explains meaning of each sign
____ Understands the meaning of yellow and white pavement markings
____ Understands the meaning of solid and broken pavement markings
____ Searches all corners of the intersection for risks
____ Selects targets 20-30 seconds ahead in the center of the path of travel
____ Judges gap in traffic for right and left turns
____ Identifies protected and unprotected intersections
____ Explains each lane position and appropriate reference points for turning, changing lanes and passing
____ Monitors and makes appropriate adjustments for safe interaction with other highway users

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 22-24: City Driving

Sessions 22-24 focus on driving on urban roadways. During these sessions have your child use commentary driving to explain the importance of searching ahead, lane position and the hazards associated with parked cars and traffic congestion.

Making safe driving decisions is an important skill! In city traffic drivers make 50-60 decisions per mile. These decisions incorporate factors such as visibility, space, time, and adequate traction to cross, turn, and pass. Coach your child to focus on controlling speed and maximizing space around the vehicle, especially to the front to enhance visibility, space and time in congested high risk driving environments. Emphasize that using effective search skills and avoiding distractions is essential when driving in this environment.

Have your child identify some **city driving hazards.** Examples of city driving hazards include:

- parked cars, cars entering or exiting parking spaces, doors opening, etc.;
- delivery trucks stopping suddenly, drivers racing to and from the trucks, etc.;
- buses, loading and unloading passengers;
- blind alleys, cars or bicyclists darting out of alleys;
- pedestrians moving to and from office buildings or stores, crossing streets, etc.;
- limited sight distance;
- more intersections spaced at shorter intervals;
- aggressive, impatient drivers competing for lane space or parking spaces; and
- stop and go traffic flow.

During these sessions, ask your child to use commentary driving to identify potential risks ahead of the vehicle.

When your child identifies a hazard, he/she should reduce speed, cover the brake to be prepared to stop or slow suddenly, and identify an alternative path of travel. Covering the brake involves taking the foot off the accelerator pedal and holding it over the brake pedal. Remind your child not to rest the foot on the brake pedal as this may confuse other drivers and add unnecessary wear to the brakes. Identifying an alternate path of travel allows your child to steer into an open space and avoid a hazard.

Lane position and lane selection - have your child select the lane position that provides the greatest amount of space between the vehicle and a potential hazard. Ask your child to identify the least congested lane. On a three-lane roadway, the middle lane usually has the smoothest flow of traffic. Hazards in the right lane include stopped buses, bicyclists and vehicles entering/exiting a parking space. Hazards in the left lane include vehicles waiting to make a left turn, oncoming vehicles crossing over the center line, etc.





The dangers of changing lanes in city traffic include:

- limited space;
- intersections spaced at shorter intervals;
- cars pulling into or out of parking spaces;
- stop and go traffic flow;
- pedestrians;
- oncoming drivers drifting over the center line.

During these sessions, ask your child to use commentary driving to identify potential risks 20-30 seconds ahead of the vehicle.

Distractions while driving can be deadly, especially for young drivers. Ask your child to give examples of driving distractions.
Typical driving distractions include:

- setting or looking at the GPS, or reading a text;
- dialing or talking on the phone;
- passengers and pets;
- selecting music or adjusting accessories;
- eating, drinking, smoking;
- searching for an item in a purse, glove compartment, backpack, etc.;
- having book bags slide off the seat or carrying other unrestrained items in your car;
- engaging in intense or emotional conversations;
- putting on makeup or looking at yourself in the mirror;
- driving an unfamiliar vehicle without first adjusting the mirrors and seat, selecting entertainment options, locating the lights, windshield wipers, or other vehicle controls.

In heavy traffic, continuously coach your child to actively search the traffic scene for potential risks, avoid distracting activities, focus on keeping as much space as possible around the vehicle at all times, and not to fixate on any one thing.

Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 22-24

Check if skills have become habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Covers the brake when necessary
____ Maintains at least a 3-4 second space cushion in front of vehicle at all times
____ Minimizes distractions

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Approach to Intersections

____ Identifies and selects correct lane position
____ Checks space behind frequently and reduces speed if vehicle behind is too close
____ Establishes proper lane positions to enhance sight distance and space cushion
____ Stops safely when necessary
____ Identifies changing space and adjusts speed to arrive in an open zone (e.g., green light)

Visual and Commentary Driving Skills

____ Looks well ahead of the vehicle
____ Recognizes signs by shape and color
____ Understands the meaning of signs and pavement markings
____ Identifies potential risks ahead of the vehicle
____ Selects and looks at appropriate targets at various stages of a turn
____ Effectively judges gap in traffic
____ Uses proper signals
____ Avoids hesitation
____ Controls speed

City Driving

____ Turns into the correct lane
____ Searches and evaluates potential hazards
____ Selects appropriate lane position
____ Covers the brake when space ahead changes
____ Maintains a margin of safety at all times
____ Looks for pedestrians and monitors parked cars
____ Identifies alternate paths of travel

I certify that _____ has spent at least three hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 25-28: Expressways

Sessions 25-28 focus on higher speed driving environments. Traffic flow on expressways is fast, can be heavy, and at times is unpredictable. Expressways are limited-access highways because they have certain locations, called interchanges, where vehicles enter and exit. They have a relatively low frequency of crashes, but when a collision does occur injuries may be severe because of the higher speed.

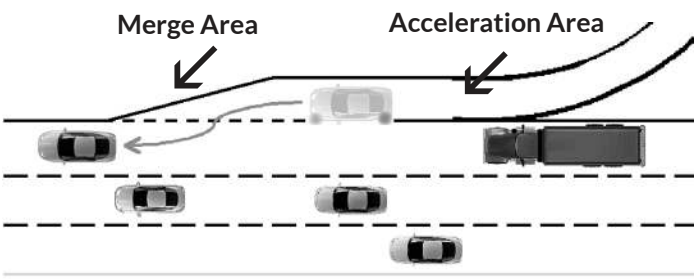
Make sure your child understands the different kinds of expressway interchanges, signs, signals, lane markings, speed limits, and the importance of maintaining a 20-30 second visual lead.

Entering an expressway

Expressway entrances have three areas: the entrance ramp, the acceleration lane, and the merge area. The entrance ramp and acceleration lane give the driver time to evaluate the speed of traffic and search for available space that can provide adequate gaps in traffic before entering the expressway. Entrance ramps may be uphill, downhill, or level with the expressway. Each of these ramp conditions presents a different challenge for the driver when searching for gaps in traffic on the expressway. Using commentary driving, have your child practice entering and exiting the expressway several times during each session using the steps below.

Steps for entering the expressway:

- Have your child tell you the ramp speed and explain warning signs;
- On the entrance ramp, ask your child to begin searching for gaps or open spaces in the traffic flow on the expressway to begin the process of identifying the vehicle that they will pull in front of or behind;



- In the acceleration lane, coach your child to signal to indicate a desire to enter the expressway and use commentary driving to identify the vehicle he/she will merge in front of/behind.
- In the merge area, cross 3-4 broken lines to enter a gap and join traffic on the expressway;
- Cancel signal and adjust speed to blend with the flow of traffic; and
- Establish space in front of and around your vehicle and select a new target 20-30 seconds ahead.

Steps for exiting the expressway:

- Make sure your child knows and identifies the exit number well in advance;
- Move into the lane closest to the exit ramp;
- Monitor traffic to the rear and **coach your child not to reduce speed until he/she is in the deceleration lane;**
- Signal intentions 4-6 seconds in advance of the exit ramp;
- Enter the exit ramp by crossing the first broken line, and rapidly reduce speed on the ramp;
- Continue decelerating to the posted speed limit before entering the curve on the ramp; and
- Make sure your child is prepared to stop or yield at the end of the ramp.

Expressway Safe Driving Tips

- Adjust vehicle position and speed to align with road traffic and weather conditions.
- Maintain a minimum 4-second following interval when merging onto the expressway, changing lanes, and exiting the expressway.
- Use minimal steering inputs at higher speeds to adjust lane position, change lanes, enter, or exit the expressway as excessive steering can easily lead to a loss of control.

- Adjust vehicle position to make room for vehicles entering the expressway by moving out of the lane next to the merging area if it is safe to do so.
- Always move over one lane at a time when moving across multiple lanes.
- Be alert for crosswinds when driving on bridges or through open mountain passes.
- If the driver behind is tailgating, increase your 4-second following interval and, if possible, change lanes.
- Driving in a straight line at the same speed for a long period of time may cause a condition known as “highway hypnosis”, which is driving in a dulled, drowsy, trance-like condition.
- Determine if the exit is on the right or left side of the expressway by the position of the exit number located at the top of the sign in a corner.

Route Numbers Have Meaning

- Most routes are one- and two-digit numbers.
- North-South routes have odd numbers.
- East-West routes have even numbers.
- The greater the even number, the farther north the road is in the United States.
- The greater the odd number, the farther east the road is in the United States.
- Exit numbers correlate with mile marker numbers.

Alternate routes are usually three-digit numbers, with the last two numbers designating the main two-digit route.

- If the first digit is even, the alternate route is a loop that goes around a city.
- If the first digit is odd, the alternate route goes into a city.



Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 25-28

Check if skills have become habits

____ Approaches the vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Uses commentary driving
____ Secures vehicle properly

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Entrance Ramp and Acceleration Lane

____ Checks for ramp speed and warning signs and adjusts accordingly
____ Maintains safe speed on entrance ramp to maximize search time and options
____ Uses turn signal to warn drivers of merging traffic
____ Evaluates gap in traffic on expressway prior to entering
____ Reaches expressway traffic speed while on the acceleration lane

In the Merge Area

____ Maintains speed/acceleration
____ Checks front, rear, and left rear areas around the vehicle
____ Identifies gap/space

Entering the Flow of Traffic on Expressway

____ Merges in front of or behind target vehicle
____ Cancels signal
____ Establishes space around vehicle and new target in path of travel

On the Expressway

____ Selects proper lane and lane position
____ Maintains at least a 4-second space cushion at all times
____ Searches path of travel 20-30 seconds ahead of the vehicle
____ Adjusts speed for weather and traffic conditions

Exiting

____ Knows exit number and identifies it well in advance
____ Checks traffic behind and signals well in advance
____ Moves into the lane closest to the exit
____ Does not reduce speed on the expressway
____ Significantly reduces speed once on the exit ramp
____ Prepares to stop or yield at the end of the ramp

I certify that _____ has spent at least four hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 29-30: Crash Avoidance

Sessions 29 and 30 focus on practicing crash avoidance skills that incorporate vision, steering, and vehicle braking techniques in a safe driving environment. Conduct the following drills in a large, level parking lot free of obstacles. Place cones or other "targets" at selected locations on the lot. Using the drills below, practice compensating for side to side, front to rear, and rear to front vehicle weight shifts that affect vehicle balance and performance.

Straight line emergency braking

Coach your child to accelerate to 15-20 mph and stop in the shortest distance possible. This sudden braking will cause the vehicle load to shift from the rear to the front wheels. If the vehicle is equipped with anti-lock brakes and goes into the hard braking mode, coach your child to maintain or increase pressure on the brake pedal even if the pedal pulsates or makes a grinding sound. If the vehicle is not equipped with anti-lock brakes and the brakes lock and tires begin to slide, coach your child to release just enough pressure to get the wheels rolling again. Once they are rolling again, have your child reapply brake pressure. Practice emergency braking several times.



Emergency braking in a curve (A more advanced drill)

In an area free of obstacles, set up a series of cones or other markers to simulate a curve in the roadway. To maintain vehicle control, ask your child to decrease the vehicle's speed prior to entering the curve, visually target the exit point, and to accelerate midway through the curve. Now have your child approach the curve without reducing speed, and coach your child to try to regain vehicle balance. Do this exercise several times to reinforce the importance of reducing speed before entering a curve.

Progress to having your child approach the curve without slowing down and tell your child to stop abruptly in the middle of the curve. This will cause the weight of the vehicle to transfer to the front tire on the outside of the curve, and that front tire may slide (under-steer) straight ahead. If the tire begins to slide, coach your child to gently release brake pressure to get the tires to roll to regain steering control. With limited weight on the inside rear tire, this tire may also lose traction. If this occurs, ask your child to look in the direction he or she wants the vehicle to go and steer in that direction. Mastery of emergency braking and trying to maintain vehicle balance and control requires a lot of practice.



Hydroplaning (A more advanced drill)

This happens when a film of water collects between the tires and the road surface and can occur at slow speeds depending on tire pressure, tire tread, angle of the turn, and water depth. Simulating hydroplaning can be done on a rainy day in a large parking lot free of obstacles. Using two cones or another object, have your child "draw" a figure eight around the objects at slow speeds. Have your child gradually increase speed to the point of hydroplaning (rear yaw movement). When this occurs, coach your child to reduce speed to gain tire traction and to look and steer in the direction he or she wants the vehicle to travel.

Dangers of Speeding and Reckless Driving

Reckless driving and speeding significantly increase the risk of fatalities, severe injuries, and loss of vehicle control. Speeding gives you much less time to react and it dramatically increases the distance your car needs to stop. Speeding also makes it much harder to steer around obstacles or handle sharp curves without skidding or rolling over. Even a small increase in speed drastically multiplies the force of a crash. This means collisions become far more destructive and deadly. Standard safety features, like seatbelts and airbags, are only designed to protect you at certain speeds. If you are going too fast, they can no longer protect you effectively.

Off-road recovery

Unfortunately, running off the road is a frequent cause of fatal crashes in Virginia. Drivers are startled by the sound from the tires and steering wheel movement when they run off the road, and they may panic and try to get off the shoulder and back onto the paved surface quickly. This often results in excessive steering and loss of control. With practice, safe off-road recovery is not a difficult skill to master.

When practicing offroad recovery, coach your child to stay off the road until vehicle speed is reduced and you can safely ease back on to the paved surface with minimal steering.

a. One way to practice "staying off the road" is to have your child drive on a rumble strip for a period of time and to tolerate the noise and excessive steering wheel movement.
b. Another (more advanced) way is to practice off road recovery on a straight section of roadway with little traffic and a gravel, dirt or grass shoulder that is even with the road surface. Do not practice this skill on a road that drops off at the edge or has potholes or obstacles on the shoulder because your child can easily lose control and do serious damage to the tires, wheels, or underside of the vehicle. Even at slow speeds, dirt or loose gravel may reduce traction causing the vehicle to slide or skid. Always practice this skill at a slow speed. Ask your child to:

- move the right front and rear tires onto the shoulder and steer the vehicle parallel to the roadway;
- remove foot from the accelerator pedal and DO NOT brake; and
- check traffic and use minimal turning of the steering wheel to ease back on the roadway at a SLOW speed.

Evaluate Skills and Competencies for Sessions 29-30

Check if skills have become a habits

____ Approaches vehicle with awareness
____ Enters the vehicle and makes appropriate checks and adjustments
____ Locks doors, fastens safety belt, and checks all occupants for safety belt use
____ Checks mirrors before slowing or stopping
____ Avoids hesitation when performing tasks and uses commentary driving often
____ Controls speed and steering input

Place "S" for satisfactory or "NP" for "Needs Practice" for the following skills:

Straight line braking

____ Stops immediately on command
____ Adjusts brake pressure to avoid wheel lockup
____ Maintains firm pressure on the brake pedal when in ABS hard-braking mode
____ Stops vehicle safely in the shortest distance possible

Braking in a curve

____ Enters curve without reducing speed and regains control of vehicle without stopping
____ Performs controlled stop in the middle of the curve

Hydroplaning

____ Reduces speed, looks and steers in the direction the driver wants to go

Off-road recovery

____ Remains off-road until speed is reduced, and vehicle control is established
____ Eases vehicle onto the paved surface

I certify that _____ has spent at least two hours practicing the above tasks.

Parent/Guardian's signature _____ Date _____

Sessions 31-45: Driving After Sunset

Driving after sunset presents a new set of challenges for your child, such as reduced visibility and glare. Invest time practicing driving skills after sunset on low-volume roadways that your child has practiced driving on during daylight. **Use the skills learned in Sessions 6-28 to design your lessons for the 15 hours of night driving.**

Vision is severely limited at night. The headlights' short, narrow beams limit the driver's view of the area ahead, and the area to the sides may not be visible at all. Dirt on the headlight lenses can further reduce the effectiveness of headlights by as much as 75%. When driving at night your child will also find it difficult to determine the size, speed, color, and distance of objects. Coach your child to look at the outer fringes of the headlight beams to get the best view possible of potential dangers ahead and to the sides of the vehicle. Emphasize the need to reduce speed and increase following distance. Also encourage your child to avoid using a light inside the car because that further reduces your ability to see risks in the path of travel at night.

Overdriving your headlights

Overdriving your headlights occurs when the vehicle's stopping distance is greater than the area illuminated by the headlights. To determine whether you are "overdriving your headlights," ask your child to select an object, and the moment the headlights pick it up, begin counting off 6 seconds. If the object is still ahead of the vehicle when you reach 6, you are driving at a safe speed. If you have passed the object, you are driving too fast. Remind your child that posted speed limits are calculated for daylight driving and may be too fast for nighttime conditions.

Blinded by the headlights of oncoming cars

When an oncoming vehicle approaches at night, coach your child to look towards the right-hand side of the lane, and to make brief, frequent glances at the target ahead, keeping the light from the oncoming car in the outer fringe of the driver's vision.

Glare recovery

Glare recovery is the time it takes your eyes to adjust after being blinded by a bright light. When driving at night oncoming vehicle headlights are the primary source of glare. Glare is also caused by the headlights of cars behind you. Adjust your inside rearview mirror to the "night" setting, and side view mirrors to a position that reduces glare by using



the BGE method described on page 7. Dirt on the windshield (both inside and outside) also causes glare, as dirt on glass reflects rays of light, either from the sun or headlights.

Driving while fatigued

Drowsiness makes drivers less attentive, slows reaction time, and affects a driver's ability to make decisions. Driving while fatigued has been compared to driving while intoxicated. Being awake for 16 hours or more causes the brain to function at the same level as a brain that is legally intoxicated. Unfortunately, teens have schedules that cause them to be sleep deprived. For example: a high school student gets up for school at 6 am; goes to school and attends after-school activities; comes home, eats dinner, heads to a friend's house at 9 pm; and then leaves the friend's house at midnight. This student has been up for 18 hours, and if this student drives, the student is an impaired driver. Teens require at least 9 hours of sleep, yet most teens get less than 6.5 hours each night. Young drivers are at highest risk for drowsy driving, which causes thousands of crashes every year. Young drivers comprise 14% of all drivers, yet they are involved in half of the crashes caused by driving while fatigued. Teens are most tired and at risk when driving in the early morning, or late at night. Make sure your child is fully rested before getting behind the wheel.

The 45-Hour Driving Log at the end of this guide should be used to document the state-required 45 hours of guided practice with a parent or guardian, **15 of which must be after sunset.**

You, Your Teen Driver and Drug Impaired Driving

Be Concerned About Teen Drug Impaired Driving

Underage drinking has been shown to damage normal brain development. Alcohol, cannabis and other drugs impair motor coordination, impulse control, memory, judgment, and decision-making. Underage substance use puts youth at risk for school failure, criminal justice involvement, illicit drug use, and interpersonal violence.

Drug impaired driving has a severe and fatal impact on Virginia roadways, contributing to hundreds of tragic accidents each year. In 2024 alone, the state recorded 250 drug impaired driver fatalities, highlighting a growing crisis. The severity of the issue is further underscored by the fact that over 55% of all roadway users who are seriously injured or killed in Virginia traffic accidents test positive for one or more drugs. Among these cases, cannabinoids, or active THC, are the most frequently detected substances, showing up in roughly 31% of those fatal drug-related crashes.

Parents Are the Key to Good Decision Making Related to Drug Impaired Driving

Research has shown that young people are less likely to use alcohol, cannabis or other drugs when parents are involved in their lives and have close relationships with them. Adolescents are less likely to use and have alcohol, cannabis or other drug- related problems when their parents set clear rules and expectations about drinking /using cannabis or other drugs, have good parent-child communication, and discipline consistently. Parents' drugged behaviors and favorable attitudes about using may influence adolescents to initiate and continue alcohol, cannabis or other drug use. Conversely, parents who exhibit DUI behaviors may promote youth drinking/cannabis or other drug use and DUI behaviors. Parental permissiveness is positively and consistently associated with substance use and negative substance use consequences as youth transition to college or adulthood.

Parental involvement, however, with a focus on monitoring and restricting what new drivers are allowed to do – e.g. through creating, signing and following through on parent-teen driving agreements – has been shown to prevent drug impaired driving. A sample agreement concerning family expectations related to drug impaired driving is included in this manual.

Be Mindful of Friends, Social Media, and Siblings

There is no doubt that substance use is largely driven by sociability, and that peer pressure can be central and integral to the majority of substance use experiences. Peers, older siblings or friends often supply alcohol, cannabis or other drugs to underage substance users; teens that use alcohol, cannabis or other drugs often select peers that also use these substances. Be aware that postings by peers on social media may further promote alcohol, cannabis or other drug use.

Have the Conversation with Your Teen About Drug Impaired Driving

Dialogue with teens is essential to:

- afford them the resources and skills to make good decisions;
- counter erroneous thinking. For example, after using alcohol, cannabis or other drugs they felt that they are "not that impaired"; therefore, the risks and potential consequences of driving will not be significant;
- overcome the fear of calling you or other trusted adults to get a safe ride home; and
- accept the social consequences of refusing to get in a car with drug impaired friends or family.

MADD offers a free Power of Parents Handbook at https://madd.org/power-of-parents/. The handbook touches on the issues mentioned above and provides extensive information and suggestions to support positive parenting conversations with youth about substance use.

Parent/Teen Agreement on No Drug Impaired Driving

I have had a conversation with my parent(s) about drugs and alcohol and understand their expectations.

I understand that drug use may damage my brain and that it increases the likelihood of:

- Damage to car;
- Damage to other property;
- Personal injury—minor or lasting;
- Death;
- Being charged with purchasing, having, or underage drug use;
- Being charged with driving while under the influence;
- Fines;
- Car insurance costs going up to unaffordable rates;
- Reduced college and career options;
- License revocation; and
- Jail time.

I promise that I will respect laws about alcohol, cannabis and other drugs. This means:

___ I will drive only when I am alcohol, cannabis and drug free.
___ I will never allow any alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs in the car.
___ I will not ride in a car with a driver who has had any amount of alcohol, cannabis or other drugs.
___ I will call my parents or another responsible adult if I need a safe ride home.

If Agreement Violations Occur

___ Drove after drug impaired driving
___ Allowed alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs in the car.
___ Rode with a driver who has been drinking, using cannabis or other drugs.

Consequences Will Include

No driving for _____ (period of time).

Other: _____

Driver Pledge

I agree to follow the aforementioned rules and restrictions. I understand that my parents will impose penalties, including removal of my driving privileges, if I violate this agreement. I also understand that my driving privileges may be increased as I gain experience and demonstrate that I am a safe and responsible driver.

Driver_____ Date _____
Teen's Signature

Parent Pledge

I also agree to drive safely and be an excellent role model.

Parent_____ Date_____
Parent or Guardian's Signature

Parent_____ Date_____
Parent or Guardian's Signature

You, Your Teen Driver and Safety Belt Use

Be a role model by always wearing your safety belt. Have regular conversations about the dangers and consequences of non-safety belt use. The use of safety belts is the single most effective means of reducing fatal and nonfatal injuries in motor vehicle crashes. Teens have a higher fatality rate in motor vehicles crashes than any other age group. The majority of teens involved in fatal crashes were unbuckled.

Don't let your teen become a statistic!
Help them understand why safety belt use is important.
Set consequences for non-compliance.

Parent-Teen Seat Belt Safety Agreement

This safety belt agreement covers the operation of the family vehicle and all other passenger vehicles that I drive or ride in and includes the following:

I Understand the Following: (teen must initial to confirm agreement)

____ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens of all ages.

____ Wearing a safety belt is the most effective action I can take to protect myself in the event of a crash.

____ Wearing a safety belt is required by law and I will follow all traffic safety laws.

Seat Belt Safety Rules: (teen must initial to confirm agreement)

____ I will wear my safety belt at all times and in all seats (including the back seat) when driving or riding in a passenger vehicle.

____ I will require that all passengers wear their safety belts.

Driving is a privilege, not a right, and it can be suspended.
Failure to follow the Safety Belt Agreement will result in the loss of driving privileges for a minimum of one week.

Driver _____ Date _____
Teen's Signature

As a role model, I also pledge to wear my safety belt at all times and have all passengers do the same.

Parent _____ Date _____
Parent or Guardian's Signature

Cell Phone Applications to Limit Distracted Driving

Cell phones put friends, family, cameras, email, texts and even the Internet at our fingertips 24 hours a day. They also represent a big risk to new teen drivers because of the distraction that they can cause. Fortunately, there are many apps available for cell phones that provide protection from distracted driving by offering a variety of services such as texting-auto response, GPS-activated text/call shutdown, automatic call forwarding to voicemail and more.

Note: The Virginia Department of Education does not endorse any of the applications nor guarantee a driver's safety by using these applications.

Many apps are available to limit distracted driving. Searching app stores for Apple or Google can help you determine which app may be best suited to your situation/phone type.

Final Notes

Parents, your teen is watching your driving habits. Reinforce good habits for your teen by consistently wearing your seatbelt, obeying speed limits, and putting your phone away when behind the wheel. Aim for guiding your teen through at least 45 hours of supervised practice across diverse environments, including heavy traffic, highways, and inclement weather. After your teen receives their provisional driver's license, occasionally accompany them to a new driving environment to increase their level of comfort and confidence.

When choosing a vehicle for your teen to drive, pick one that is heavier (minimum of 2750 lbs.) and avoid smaller cars, sports cars and high horsepower vehicles that may tempt speeding. Studies show that teens drive more responsibly when they sign a formal contract with their parents. See the parent/teen contracts on pages 45 and 46.

Contract topics include:

- **Restrict Passengers:** Crash risks multiply with every additional teen in the car. Allow zero or only one teen passenger for the first 6 to 12 months.
- **Ban Distractions:** Impose a zero-tolerance rule for texting, using GPS, or adjusting music while driving. Distraction is a leading factor in teen crashes.
- **Enforce Curfews:** Because most fatal teen crashes happen at night, set a firm driving curfew (e.g., no driving between 9 PM and 4 AM).
- **Buckle Up, Every Time:** Teens have the lowest seatbelt usage rates of any age group. Make it clear that the car does not shift into gear until everyone is buckled.
- **Drive Sober:** Establish strict consequences for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which is completely illegal for minors and extremely dangerous.

Please photocopy log sheets as necessary.

45-Hour Driving Log

Total Daytime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____ Total Nighttime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____

Date	Skills Practiced	Total Daytime Minutes	Total Nighttime Minutes	Total Minutes	Parent/ Guardian Initials	Comments

I certify that _____ has completed 45 hours of guided practice, 15 of which were after sunset. It is illegal for anyone to give false information in connection with obtaining a driver's license. This certification is considered part of the driver's license application, and anyone who certifies to a false statement may be prosecuted. I certify that the statements made and the information submitted by me regarding this certification are true and correct.

_____ _____ _____

Parent/Foster Parent/Guardian's signature Date Parent/Gaurdian's Driver's License or DMV-issued identification number

Please photocopy log sheets as necessary.

45-Hour Driving Log

Total Daytime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____ Total Nighttime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____

Date	Skills Practiced	Total Daytime Minutes	Total Nighttime Minutes	Total Minutes	Parent/ Guardian Initials	Comments

I certify that _____ has completed 45 hours of guided practice, 15 of which were after sunset. It is illegal for anyone to give false information in connection with obtaining a driver's license. This certification is considered part of the driver's license application, and anyone who certifies to a false statement may be prosecuted. I certify that the statements made and the information submitted by me regarding this certification are true and correct.

_____ _____ _____

Parent/Foster Parent/Guardian's signature Date Parent/Gaurdian's Driver's License or DMV-issued identification number

Please photocopy log sheets as necessary.

45-Hour Driving Log

Total Daytime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____ Total Nighttime Safe Driving Practice Hours _____

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_____ _____ _____

Parent/Foster Parent/Guardian's signature Date Parent/Gaurdian's Driver's License or DMV-issued identification number

ROAD MAP TO A **VIRGINIA DRIVER'S LICENSE**

1 15 AND 6 MONTHS LEARNER'S PERMIT TEST

Upon turning 15 and 6 months you can take the two-part learner's permit test at the DMV via a walk-in or appointment.

2 PRACTICE

Now that you have your learner's permit, you'll need to drive 45-hours (15 after sunset) with a parent/guardian. Please see your Driver Education teacher for a 45-hour log.

DRIVER EDUCATION 3

You will be offered Driver Education in 10th Grade. You AND your parent/guardian will also need to attend a 90-minute parent-teen driver presentation in order to obtain a DEC-1 or DEC-8 card (needed for behind the wheel).

4 BEHIND THE WHEEL

After holding your permit for 9 months and completing classroom driver education you will register for behind the wheel at your high school (where offered) or through a private company.

5 GETTING YOUR LICENSE

Upon completion of Behind the Wheel, the instructor will issue a TDL-180 which in combination with a learner's permit will be your Driver's License until yours is mailed to you. If you don't receive your license within 6 months, please contact your BTW instructor.

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