

Notes for Parents/Guardians:

About Supervising Teen Drivers



Make an effort to enjoy the learning process: Driving is a big step toward independence and your teen is entering a new phase of life. You'll both remember this experience for years to come.

Practice makes perfect: Studies show that the risk of a crash diminishes with experience. The more time you can spend driving with your teen, the less likely it is they'll crash when they begin to drive alone. Driving in a variety of circumstances is equally important. While you're driving with your teen, you should drive on all types of roads. Make sure your teen gets exposure to a variety of roadways and in different conditions as well: at night; in rain, fog and snow; and in heavy and light traffic.

Be a driving role model: it's not enough to say, "Do as I say." Children imitate their parents'/guardians' behavior, so your driving should be a good example for your teen to emulate. Be sure that you:

- Obey all traffic laws
- Correct any unsafe driving habits (driving aggressively, rolling through stop signs, accelerating through yellow lights, speeding, etc.).
- Refrain from using your cell phone or texting while driving.

Tips for teaching your teen

- **Seat belts** must always be worn.
- **Before each session**, discuss the goals of the day's lesson.
- **Before each new lesson**, review what was learned during the previous lesson.
- **Keep instruction simple and concise.** Say where to go and what action to take. For example: "drive to the corner and turn right"
- **The feedback** you give should be calm, precise and immediate. Be patient and alert at all times. Remember to give positive feedback when your teen succeeds!

Parental Pointers:

At the start of each driving lesson with your teen, leave your problems behind and make an effort to stay focused. Don't bring up touchy subjects such as grades, homework, boyfriends/girlfriends and anything else that might distract either of you from the task at hand.

- **When your teen makes a mistake**, which will happen often, do not criticize. Remain calm and simply repeat the maneuver until it's done correctly. To minimize their frustration, emphasize to your teen

that mistakes are a normal part of learning.

- **Remember that students learn at different paces.** Make sure your teen has mastered each skill before you move on to the next lesson, even if that mean repeating a lesson several times. Patience and practice will pay off in the long run.

Vehicle Control

Vehicle Control for Supervisors:

Teaching a new driver can be stressful, but knowing you have some control can help. Here are some skills that you, as a parent/guardian, can learn to help you maintain control from the passenger seat while teaching:

- **Emergency shifting:** in a quiet, large, level, empty area, practice shifting the transmission from drive to neutral.
- **Taking the wheel:** with an experienced driver in the driver's seat, in a quiet, large level, empty area, practice steering the car with your left hand from the passenger seat.
- **Mirrors:** adjust the mirror on the passenger sun visor so you can use it as a review mirror. If the right side mirror is properly adjusted, you can use it to monitor traffic to the rear from the passenger seat.
- **Awareness:** never assume everything is okay. Always check and re-check mirrors before you give instruction to your teen.
- **Emergency stopping:** practice stopping the car with the parking brake (if your vehicle's parking brake is located between the seats). This can be dangerous, even at low speeds and should only be used as a last resort.

Driving Has Changed

Chances are, today's cars are not as they were when you learned to drive. To teach your teen effectively, you need to know about a few important recent changes in how cars work, how we drive and how driving is taught.

Anti-lock Brake System (ABS): most newer cars offer ABS as either standard or optional equipment. ABS is a dramatic safety improvement that works by letting the tires rotate, rather than lock up, when the brake is engaged. This allows drivers to turn the car in an emergency stop. ABS should be used with firm, continuous pressure. The brakes may shake and grind when applied, which often concerns users- but this is a normal function of ABS.

Air bags: Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, which must be worn for the air bags to be effective. Since air bags deploy out of the wheel on impact, it's important to keep your hands and arms clear.

- **Steering wheel hand position:** most of us were taught to position our hands at 10 and 2 o'clock or 8 and 4 o'clock on the steering wheel. It's now suggested that you hold the wheel at 9 and 3 o'clock. This gives you better vehicle control.



Parental Pointers:

"Commentary driving" is a great communication tool. Coach your teen to describe their actions, thoughts and observations out loud as they drive. Through the learning process, ask them to verbalize what they see around them, including potential risks and any steps they need to take to avoid those risks.

Distracted Driving and More

Distracted driving involves any activity, such as cell phone use, that has the potential to distract someone from the task of driving. Distracted driving, alcohol, speeding and not wearing seat belts can lead to death and injury in crashes. Teens, who are still learning the complex skills of driving, are particularly susceptible to distractions while behind the wheel. Don't let your teen become another statistic. Here are the facts:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Mile for mile, teens are involved in 3 times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. And 1 in 3 teens who text say they have done so while driving.
- In 2009, almost 5,500 people were killed and almost a half million were injured in accidents related to distracted driving. That's 16 percent of all fatal crashes and 20 percent of all crashes resulting in injury for that year. And almost 1 in 5 of those deaths involved reports of a cell phone present.
- A Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study revealed that physically dialing a phone while driving increases the risk of a crash as much as 6 times. Texting is riskier still, increasing collision risks by 23 times.

To combat this growing epidemic, we suggest the following:

- **Set a good example:** kids observe and learn from their parents. Put your phone down while driving and only use it when you are safely pulled over.
- **Talk to your teens:** discuss the risks and responsibilities of driving and the danger of dividing their attention between a phone call and the road. Show them the statistics related to distracted driving and urge them to share what they learn with their friends.
- **Establish ground rules:** set up family rules about not texting while behind the wheel. Enforce the limits set by the graduated licensing program.
- **Sign a pledge:** have your teen take action by agreeing to a family contract about wearing seat belts, not speeding, not driving after drinking and not using a cell phone behind the wheel. Agree on penalties for violating the pledge, including paying for "tickets" or loss of driving privileges.
- **Other dangerous distractions:** in addition to cell phone use, distracted driving can include eating, grooming, driving, listening to or adjusting the radio, using the GPS, talking to passengers. Inexperienced drivers are particularly susceptible to these kinds of distractions.

Parental Pointers:

Teens tend to look away from the road and become distracted for longer periods than older drivers. It's important to train them to keep their eyes on the road ahead. Test your teen on how long they look away when doing various tasks inside the vehicle, such as tuning the radio. Coach them repeatedly on the importance of focusing on the road ahead.

Skill One:

Skill One: Before You Start the Engine

Goal: Teach your teen vehicle basics before actual driving begins

Location: Parked. This is a non-driving lesson.

Lesson One- Touring the Vehicle

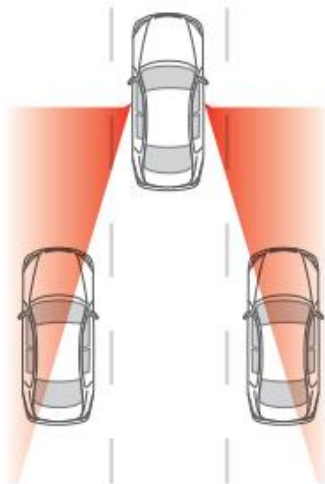
Walk around the outside of the car with your teen. Instruct them to look for leaks and hazards such as broken glass, and to make sure it's clear behind the vehicle as well as in front of the vehicle.

Have your teen practice these basic skills until they don't need help:

- Starting and stopping the engine
- Naming and operating all dashboard controls
- Checking oil level
- Checking wiper fluid
- Checking tire pressure

Lesson Two- Mirror Settings. The method below provides the best view of adjacent lanes for maximum safety.

- **Inside mirror:** Have your teen sit up straight in the driver's seat and adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the entire rear window. This is the main mirror for viewing what is behind the vehicle.



The most effective way to deal with blind spots is to briefly turn and look.

- **Left-side mirror:** Have your teen lean their head toward the left-side window, and set the left mirror so they can barely see the side of the car. When they sit up straight, the car should no longer be visible in the mirror.

- **Right-side mirror:** Do the same to the right. Have your teen lean to the right over the car's center console, and set the right mirror so they can barely see the right side of the car.

Lesson Three—Checking Blind Spots

Additionally, teach your teen how to look over their shoulder to check the "blind spot" on each side of the car that cannot be seen in the mirrors.

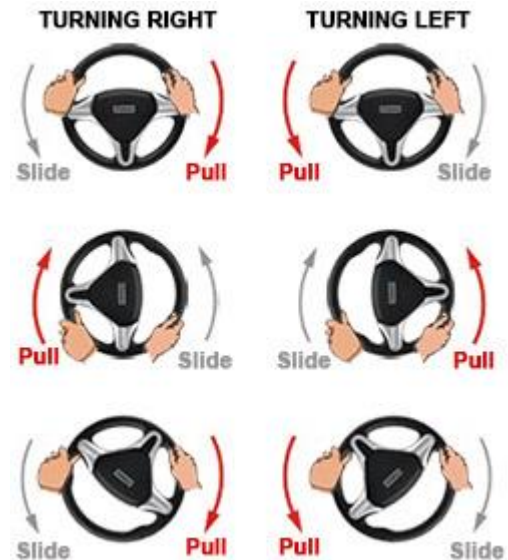
Lesson Four—Seating position: The proper seat position is important to safely control the vehicle. Your teen should sit with their back firmly against the seat. There should be at least 10 inches between the steering wheel and the driver’s chest, with the air bag pointing at the chest. The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the shoulders. Move the seat forward or backward so that the driver’s heel touches the floor and can pivot between the brake and accelerator. Shorter drivers may need a seat cushion or pedal extenders to sit safely 10 inches from the air bag. The head restraint should be at the center of the driver’s head.

Skill Two: Moving, Steering and Stopping

Goal: Teach your teen to consistently start, stop, and turn smoothly with full vehicle control.

Location: A large, level, mostly empty area.

1. Everyone in the vehicle must be properly buckled up.
2. Before starting, coach your teen to always signal and check mirrors and blind spots before changing the speed, position or direction of the car. Remind them when needed.
3. Have your teen drive around the perimeter of the lot several times at a slow speed. Have them stop and start frequently, practicing smooth hand-to-hand steering, braking and accelerating.
4. Pick several targets in the large, level, empty practice area, and have your teen drive to them at specific speeds. For example, "Drive to the stop sign at 15 mph." Focus on steady speed and smooth starts and stops.
5. Once your teen is braking smoothly, practice "hard, smooth stops" at slightly higher speeds (approximately 25–30 mph). Hint: Curling toes back just before braking results in smoother stops. It eases the pressure on the brake.
6. Practice turning techniques:
 - Ease off the accelerator or use the brake to reduce speed before entering a curve; use gentle acceleration to overcome inertia and pull the vehicle out of the curve.
 - Use smooth, continuous steering wheel movements when approaching a turn and when returning (controlled sliding) the wheel through the hands until the vehicle is in the proper post-turn position.Coach your teen to pick a target near the center of the intended travel path. This target can be used as a visual aid to aim at while steering through turns.



Parental Pointers:

New drivers tend to use the brake too much and the accelerator too little to control speed. Coach your teen about easing up on the gas pedal as a way to reduce the car's speed.

Skill Three: How Close are You?

Goal: Teach your teen how to tell where their vehicle is in relation to other vehicles or objects.

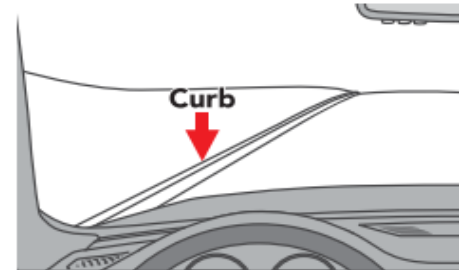
Location: A large, level, mostly empty area with clearly painted pavement lines and curbs.

Reference Points

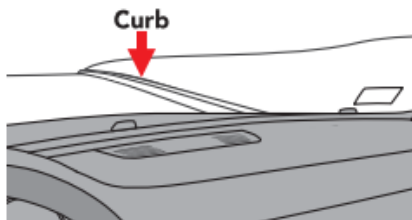
Explain to your teen that reference points are visual guides to help them judge the car's distance from curbs, lines, other objects, and vehicles.

Lesson One—Driver's side curb (or line):

- Choose a pavement curb (or line), and tell your teen that the goal is to pull the driver's side of the vehicle 6–12 inches away. Coach them to slowly pull up parallel to the line, getting gradually closer, and stop when they think they are 6–12 inches away. Have them look at where the line intersects in the front window.
- Have your teen put the car in park and get out to check if the driver's side wheels are 6–12 inches from the line. If it's not the right distance, have them do it again, checking the reference points.



View out the front windshield. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.



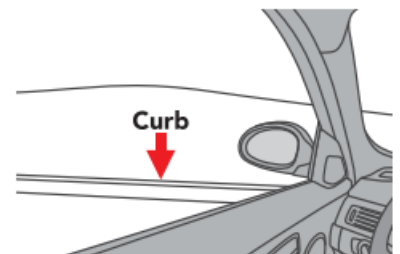
View out the front windshield. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

Lesson Two—Passenger's side curb (or line):

- Choose another curb (or line) parallel to the passenger's side, again pulling up slowly to within 6–12 inches. Use the same gradual pull-up method, but for this side, coach your teen to stop when the curb appears to intersect the center of the hood.
- Again, have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the tires are 6–12 inches from the curb. Keep practicing and making adjustments, noticing the reference point, until they can do it consistently.

Lesson Three—Front curb (or line):

- Teach your teen to align the front bumper between 6–12 inches from a pavement curb (or line). Have them drive slowly straight toward the curb. Coach them to stop when the curb appears under the passenger's side mirror.



View out the driver's side window. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

- Have your teen get out of the vehicle to check whether the front bumper is 6–12 inches from the curb. If not, have them adjust the reference point as needed and keep practicing.

Skill Four: Backing Up—GOAL (Get Out And Look)

Goal: Teach your teen how to safely drive backwards in a straight line and while turning.

Location: A large, level, mostly empty area.

Lesson One—Before moving the vehicle:

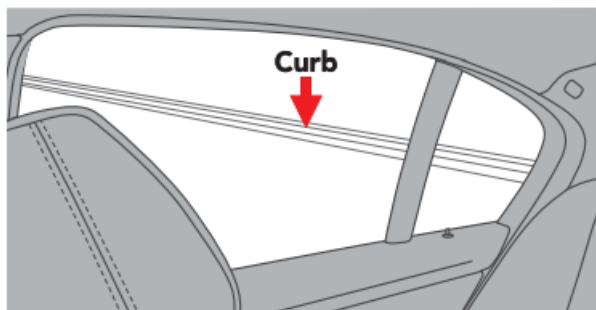
- Coach your teen that they must turn around and look backwards through the rear window when backing up. Using mirrors or backup cameras doesn't give a full view.
- Have your teen shift their hips and turn around until they get a good view behind the vehicle. They should drape their right arm over the back of the seat and grasp the top of the steering wheel with their left hand.

Lesson Two—Practice backing up in a straight line

- Check all areas behind the vehicle prior to and while backing up.
- Grasp the steering wheel with the left hand and look over the right shoulder through the rear window.
- First release the brake, then use the accelerator gently, and only when necessary, to control speed. Keep it slow.

Lesson Three—Backing up in a Turn

- If turning to the left, grasp the steering wheel with the right hand, or with the left hand if turning to the right. Remind your teen to turn the wheel in the direction they want the car to travel.
- Look in the direction the car is moving through the rear side windows.
- Back into the turn slowly, first releasing the brake, then using the accelerator if needed.



The driver's view out of the back passenger window. Reference points will be different for everyone, depending on the vehicle and the height of the driver.

Lesson Four—Aligning Rear Bumper to a Curb

- Choose a curb (or line) for a target
- Have your teen back up toward the target, coaching them to stop when the curb appears near the middle of the rear right window when the curb appears near the middle of the rear right window when looking over their shoulder.

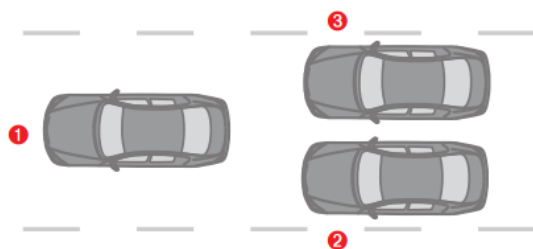
Parental Pointers:

Emphasize that backing up must be done at slow but consistent speeds. It's harder to maintain control of the car when it's in reverse.

Skill Five: Driving on a Quiet Street—Part One

Goal: Teach your teen to move and stop a vehicle safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

Location: Start in a large, level, mostly empty area. Move to a quiet neighborhood street. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice. Before moving out onto the road, make sure that your teen has reviewed the driver's manual and is familiar with street signs, signals, pavement markings, and yield and speed laws.



Most driving is done in lane position number one.

Lesson One—Commentary Driving
Coach your teen to use "commentary driving throughout this lesson, if possible.

Lesson Two—Lane Position

When you and your teen feel ready, move to a quiet street.

With your teen behind the wheel, first have them practice driving in three different lane positions. Do this for several miles, practicing each position at least 10 times:

Center position: (1) the most common position, with the vehicle centered within the lane. Coach your teen that they should stay in the center position under most circumstances.

Left position: (2) the vehicle positioned to the left side of the lane. This is best used when approaching a hill or curve.

Right position: (3) the vehicle positioned to the right side of the lane. This is usually done when making a right turn to allow for a safety margin on the left side of the vehicle.

Lesson Three—Intersections

Coach your teen on these techniques for safely approaching an intersection:

- Search for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and traffic signals.
- Check the rearview mirror for any potential hazards behind the car.
- If it's an intersection with traffic signals, identify who has the green light.
- If turning, put on the signal three to four seconds before making the turn.
- If a stop is required, stop behind the white stop line.
- Select the best lane for the intended direction of travel.
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other vehicles.
- When the light goes from red to green look: Left, Right Left

Parental Pointers:

Make sure your teen understands what to do if they encounter emergency vehicles. First, turn down the radio to listen for the direction of the emergency vehicle(s). Stay calm and pull over to the nearest curb, clear of intersections, and wait for the emergency vehicle(s) to pass.

Skill Five: Driving on a Quiet Street—Part Two

Goal: teach your teen to turn both right and left safely and with confidence on quiet roads.

Location: a quiet block of single-lane roads, ideally without traffic signals at the intersections.

Lesson One—Right Turns

When your teen is comfortable with lane positions and intersections, it's time to practice turns. Start with right turns. Have your teen drive clockwise around the block 10–12 times:

- Pick a line at the center of the intended travel path while steering through a turn. Make sure your teen does not fixate on one specific spot, but instead focuses on a broader path.
- Focus on smooth braking into the turn and acceleration out of the turn, as previously practiced in the large, level, empty area.
- Always check mirrors before turns and signal three to four seconds before turning.

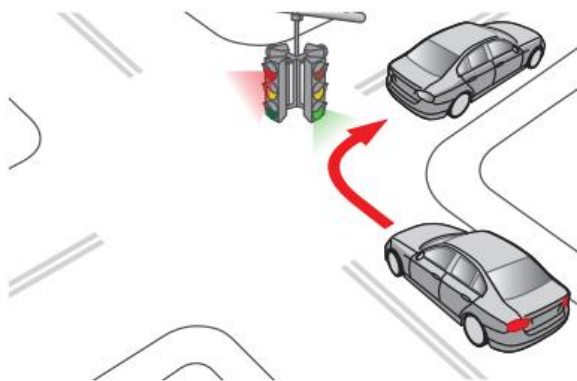
Lesson Two—Left Turns

- When your teen is proficient at right turns, move on to left turns. Have your teen drive counterclockwise around the block 10–12 times, coaching them on these techniques for safe left turns:
- Position the vehicle close to the yellow line in the middle of the road.
- If there is a stop sign or red light, stop with wheels pointed straight ahead before the stop line, crosswalk or intersection.
- Search the intersection in all directions for vehicles, pedestrians, signs, and signals.
- Select a gap in traffic and pull straight forward toward the middle of the intersection.

Coach your teen to avoid hesitating.

- Use the yellow line on the street being turned onto as a target. Turn into the travel lane closest to the yellow line.
- When the turn is complete, let the steering wheel slide back through the hands while maintaining contact with the wheel.
- Pick a new target 15–20 seconds ahead in the center of the travel path and accelerate gradually.

Be sure to practice with your teen in a variety of conditions, including at night and in inclement



Have your teen drive around the block making right turns 10–12 times. When they are proficient, drive around the block 10–12 times making left turns.

weather, as much as possible.

Parental Pointers:

Most drivers have a tendency to steer in the direction they look. If their eyes move to one side, the car may drift in that direction, too. Remind your teen to focus on a path line in the middle of their travel lane—and not fixate on lane lines or other objects. (Aim High in Steering)

Skill Six—Looking Ahead

Goal: Teach your teen to develop defensive driving techniques and higher-level visual and anticipatory driving skills before moving on to more complex driving situations. In order to avoid last-second reactions and spot potential hazards, have your teen always look 12–15 seconds down the road. When they are looking far enough ahead, they will be able to spot hazards early and be well prepared to react to them.

Location: Start on a quiet neighborhood street. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not use official state road test courses for practice. Move onto a road with light traffic when your teen is ready.

Lesson One—IPDE System

Teach your teen the IPDE system, a simple system to help new drivers recognize, anticipate and avoid risks before they turn into problems. IPDE stands for:

Identify potential risks, like oncoming vehicles, pedestrians, obstacles or intersections

Predict when and where there will be a conflict or problem.

Decide on the best course of action.

Execute that action.

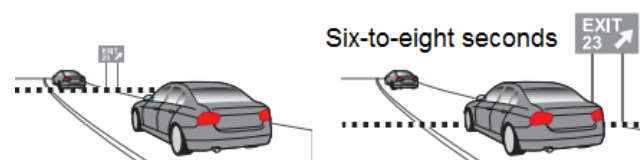
Have your teen use commentary driving as they practice the IPDE system. As they drive, ask them to verbally describe their thoughts and actions in order to identify potential risks they see, predict problems these risks could cause, decide what to do to avoid a problem, and then execute the maneuver.

Lesson Two—Stopping-Distance Rule

Teach your teen the stopping-distance rule, for the safest distance to stop behind another vehicle. When your vehicle stops, you should be far enough away from the car in front of you that you can see where its tires make contact with the ground. Any closer is too close.

Lesson Three—Six-Eight Second Rule

Teach your teen the six to eight-second rule for the appropriate following distance when driving behind other vehicles. This rule is an important safety measure designed to give drivers enough time to safely steer or brake to avoid problems that occur in front of them on the road.



Your front bumper should not pass before you've reach "six".

- Start counting when the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you passes an object.

- Count “one thousand ONE, one thousand TWO, one thousand THREE, one thousand FOUR, one thousand FIVE, one thousand SIX.”
- Your front bumper should not pass that same object before you’ve reached “six.” Have your teen practice the four-second rule at least 10–12 times, counting out loud to check whether their following distance is appropriate.

Pennsylvania Licensing

Learner's Permit

- Mandatory six months skill building before road test.
- Certification of 65 hours behind-the-wheel skill building, including no less than 10 hours of nighttime driving and five (5) hours of bad weather driving.
- Supervising adult must be 21 or older, or a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis or spouse at least 18 years of age and licensed with the same or higher class vehicle that appears on your Learner's Permit.
- Permit valid for one year.
- Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
- Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 M.P.H. or more over posted speed limit).

Junior License

- 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. driving restriction.
- Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
- You may not carry more than one (1) passenger under the age of 18 who is not an immediate family member unless your parent(s) or guardian(s) is in the vehicle with you. After the first six (6) months of driving on a junior license, the limit is increased to no more than three (3) passengers under the age of 18 who are not immediate family members unless your parent(s) or guardian(s) is in the vehicle with you. The increased limit does not apply to any junior driver who has ever been involved in a crash in which they were partially or fully responsible or who is convicted of any driving violation.
- Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 m.p.h. or more over posted speed limit).

Regular License Before Age 18

Possible with:

- Crash- and conviction-free record for 12 months.
- Completion of an approved driver's education course.
- If you have a regular license and you are under age 18, the following restrictions still apply:
 - Number of passengers must not exceed number of seat belts in vehicle.
 - Mandatory 90-day suspension for six-point or more accumulation, or a single high-speed conviction (26 m.p.h. or more over posted speed limit).

Skill 8: Parking

Goal: Teach your teen to master angle and perpendicular parking.

Location: Start in large, level, mostly empty areas. You will need angled and perpendicular spaces.

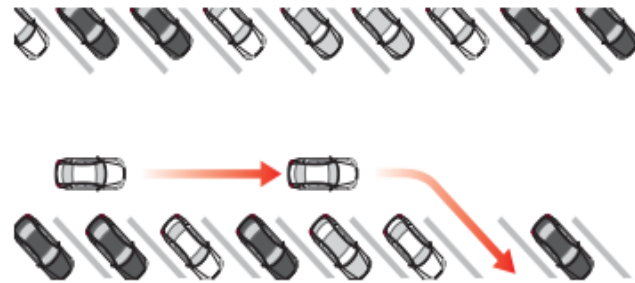
Before your teen starts parking practice, review “Skill Three: How Close Are You?” and “Skill Four: Backing Up.”

Lesson One – Angle Parking

The gentler turn makes this the easiest type of parking for new drivers.

Hint: Choosing a parking spot on the left side of the car can provide more room to maneuver and a better view of traffic when backing out

- Signal to indicate intent to turn into a parking space.
- Move forward until the steering wheel is aligned with the first pavement line marking the space.
- Look at the middle of the parking space and turn the wheel sharply at a slow, controlled speed.
- Steer toward the center of the space, straightening the wheel upon entry.
- Stop when the front bumper is six inches from the curb or from the end of the space.
- After you’ve parked, put the gear in park for automatic transmissions (for manual transmissions, put the car either in first or reverse) and set the parking brake. Shut off the ignition and remove the key. Check for traffic prior to getting out.



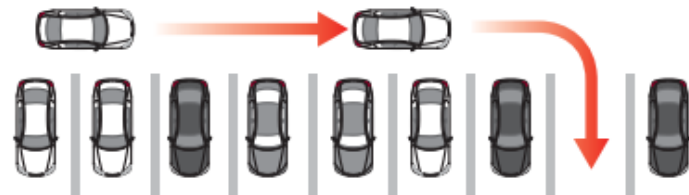
Turn when the front of your vehicle reaches the edge of the space. Stay alert for cars backing out to leave their space.

Lesson Two—Perpendicular Parking

The steps are the same as angle parking, but the sharper turn into perpendicular spaces may require more practice. Remember to park further away and pull through the spot.

Lesson Three – Exiting Parking Spaces

- With a foot on the brake, shift into reverse, which will signal that you will be backing up.
- Turn around to look for oncoming traffic.
- For **angled spaces**, back up straight until the driver’s seat is even with the bumper of the next vehicle on the turning side. For **perpendicular spaces**, back up straight until the windshield is aligned with the bumper of the next vehicle.
- Quickly turn the wheel in the direction that the rear of the car needs to go.



Turn when your outside mirror reaches the edge of the space. Always finish with your wheels straight and your car centered in the space.

- Glance forward to make sure the front bumper is clear of the car on the other side.
- When the front bumper clears the other vehicle, stop, shift into drive, and pull forward to complete the exit.

Parental Pointers:

Most drivers have a tendency to steer in the direction they look. If their eyes move to one side, the car may drift in that direction, too. Remind your teen to focus on a path line in the middle of their travel lane—and not fixate on lane lines or other objects. (Aim High in Steering)

Skill Nine: Multi-lane roads—Part One

Goal: teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

Location: a busier, multi-lane road. Choose a time with limited traffic, such as a weekend morning

Lesson One—Mirror Positioning, Monitoring and Blind Spots

Refer to skills one and two. Clearly seeing the adjacent traffic is especially important on multi-lane roads. Remind your teen to check the mirror positions when entering the car, and to constantly monitor traffic around them.

Lesson Two—Stopping Distance

Refer to skill six. Remind your teen that when stopping their vehicle behind another one, they should be far enough back to see where the other car's tires meet the road.

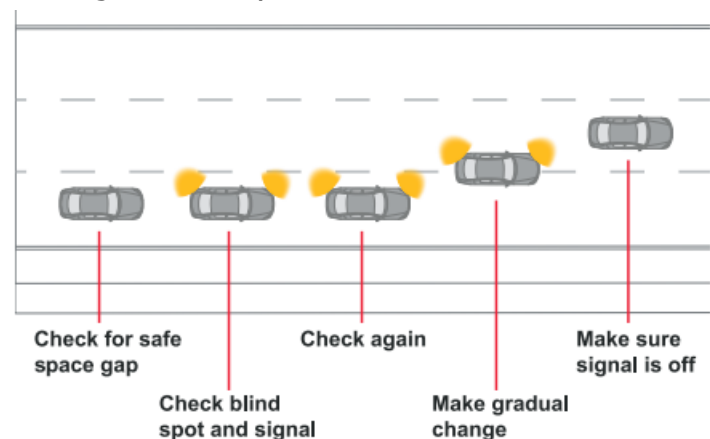
Lesson Three—Following Distance

Refer to skill six. Review the six-to-eight second following distance rule with your teen, emphasizing that increasing following distance is the single best way to reduce crash risk. This gives the driver visibility, time and space to avoid crashes.

Lesson Four—Safe Lane Changing

First, coach your teen not to change lanes unnecessarily. Studies show that while it may not look like it, most travel lanes flow at around the same rate. Changing lanes in an effort to save time doesn't actually save time, but it does increase crash risk.

Ask your teen to list valid reasons to change lanes. Good answers include: to make a turn,



When changing lanes, always recheck traffic with a glance over the shoulder at the blind spot.

to avoid an obstacle, to exit the road, to park, or to pass another vehicle.

Have your teen practice these lane change steps:

- Check traffic to the rear and the sides for an appropriate gap.
- Signal to indicate intention to change lanes.
- Recheck traffic, including a glance over the shoulder at the mirror blind spot area.
- Maintain speed or accelerate slightly before and during the lane change.
- Gradually move into the new lane.
- Adjust following distance, using the six-to-eight second rule.

Parental Pointers:

Motorcycles, bicyclists and pedestrians are more difficult to see than cars because they are smaller—and drivers tend to focus on looking for cars. Traffic, weather and road conditions require cyclists to react differently than car drivers. It can be difficult for young drivers to judge and predict their actions.

Parental Pointers:

Left turns are one of the hardest maneuvers for teens to master. Be patient. New drivers often have difficulty judging the speed and distances of multiple lanes of oncoming traffic. Practice judging oncoming vehicles' distance from your vehicle by counting out loud the time it takes for them to reach your car from a designated point.

Skill Nine: Multi-Lane Roads—Part Two

Goal: teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on busier, more complex, multi-lane roads.

Location: a busier, multi-lane road. Choose a time with limited traffic such as a weekend morning.

Lesson One—Right Turns

Start with right turns, which are fairly simple. Right turns are always made from the right lane of the current road to the first, open lane of the new road. Look for signs and signals that indicate whether "right on red" is allowed.

Lesson One—Left Turns

Left turns should almost always begin and end in the closest lane to the right of the yellow line. The yellow line in the lane being turned into should be your teen's target. There are three types of left turns:

- **Protected left turns** with a designated left turn and left turn signal
- **Semi-protected left turns** made from a center or shared turn lane
- **Unprotected left turns** made from an active travel lane

Protected left turns should be made from the designated lane when the left turn signal displays a green arrow, using the yellow line in the lane being turned into as the steering target.

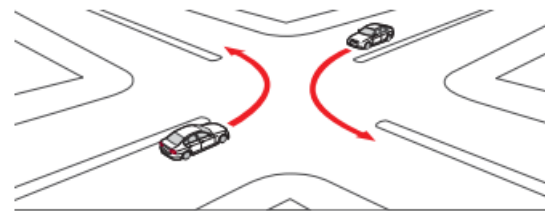
For **semi-protected** and **unprotected left turns**, coach your teen on these steps:

- Make sure the vehicle is in the correct lane to make a left turn
- Signal the turn and begin to slow down at least 100 feet from the intersection
- Move carefully into the intersections. Don't turn the wheel until you're ready to make the turn.
- Yield to any vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians
- Where there is sufficient space with no oncoming traffic, move ahead into the turn
- Choose a steering path lane in the middle of the closest lane to the right of the yellow line

Lesson Two—Safe Passing Procedures

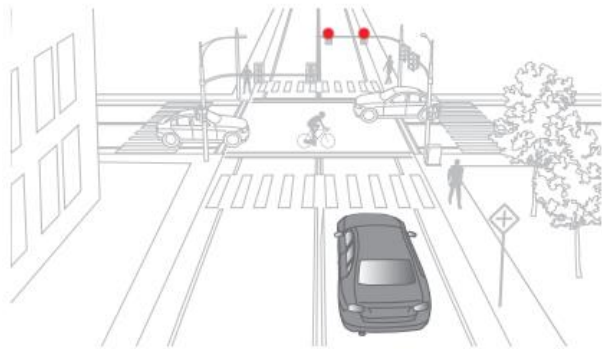
Discourage your teen from passing other cars unnecessarily. If passing is necessary, the following steps should be observed:

- Position your vehicle more than six-to-eight seconds behind the vehicle to be passed



Don't turn the wheel until you're ready to make the turn.

- Check mirrors and blind spots for oncoming traffic
- Check the passing lane ahead to make sure there's plenty of space before you try to pass
- Signal intent to pass and accelerate quickly to match the speed of traffic flow.
- While passing, monitor the space in front of and behind your vehicle and check to rearview mirror for the front of the passed car
- When you see the headlights of the passed car in the rearview mirror and your vehicle is well clear, signal intent, gently and slowly move back to the original lane, cancel signal and maintain speed.



Looking ahead, identifying and anticipating potential problems is crucial for safe driving.

Skill Ten—City Driving—Part One

Goal: teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving. Note: city driving takes hundreds of hours, if not several years, to master.

Location: busy, urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

Skill Review

Since the busy, crowded environment of city driving is challenging for new drivers, this is a

good time to review key driving skills. **The most important skill for drivers is the ability to make good decisions.** City driving forces drivers to make lots of decisions quickly. The three things they need to drive safely in the city are:

- **Visibility:** to see potential problems in all directions
- **Space:** to maneuver around obstacles and avoid hazards
- **Time:** to anticipate risks and make adjustments to speed or position

Lesson One—Maximizing Visibility and Space

As you practice, have your teen focus on making decisions that will maximize visibility and space around the vehicle, increasing the available reaction time.

- **Looking ahead (refer to Skill Six):** congested city driving leaves very little room for error. Identify and anticipating potential problems is crucial.
- **Covering the brake:** coach your teen that when they spot a hazard, they should “cover” the brake by taking their foot off the accelerator and holding it over the brake. This will prepare them to slow down or stop suddenly. Make sure they don’t “ride” the brake. Riding the brake confuses other drivers and puts unnecessary wear on the brakes.

Lesson Two—Identifying Hazards

As you begin city driving practice, have your teen drive through several blocks to identify and name common hazards on busy, congested streets. Ask them to describe how they will safely deal with each hazard they identify.

Parental Pointers:

Keep reminding your teen that constant awareness and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely on city streets. Emphasize the idea that a green light means, “scan the intersection first, and then go”

Such hazards may include:

- Parked cars, cars entering or exiting parking spaces and car door opening
- Delivery trucks stopping suddenly, with drivers racing to and from the trucks
- Buses making frequent

stops, loading and unloading passengers

- Blind alleys, with cars or cyclists darting out
- Pedestrians and cyclists moving unpredictable, crossing streets illegally, etc.
- Aggressive drivers competing for lane space and parking spots
- Stop-and-go traffic flow

Skill Ten—City Driving—Part Two

Goal: teach your teen to drive safely and confidently in the complex environment of city driving. Note: this is not a goal that will be achieved in a single session. Spend as much time as possible with your teen practicing safe city driving skills.

Location: busy urban streets. Start at times when traffic is light, moving on to heavier traffic times as your teen gains practice.

Lesson One—Avoiding Obstacles

Focus on lane position to avoid obstacles: city driving involves many circumstances in which travel lanes are shared, congested and partially or fully blocked. During practice sessions on busy roads, have your teen identify these steps to safely avoid obstacles:

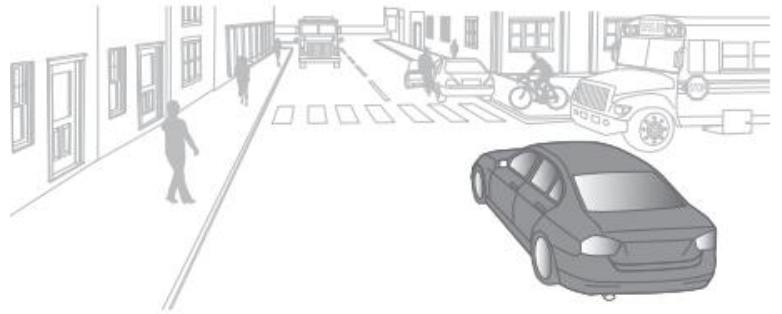
- Identify right-lane obstacles, such as stopped buses, parked cars, delivery trucks and cyclists
- Identify left-lane obstacles, such as vehicles waiting to make a left turn or cars traveling in the opposite direction drifting over the center line
- Identify the least-congested travel lane. *Hint: on a three-lane road, this is usually the center lane*
- Position the vehicle in the lane at the greatest distance possible from any obstacles.

It can be tempting to pass vehicles on congested streets, when obstacles or traffic volume slow traffic. However, this can be dangerous, due to closely spaced intersections, irregular traffic flow, cars entering and exiting parking spots, etc. Coach your teen to avoid passing on busy city streets.

Lesson Two—Deadly Distractions

What happens inside the car can be just as dangerous as what happens outside. **Engaging in distracting activities while driving can be deadly, especially for young drivers.** Ask your teen to list dangerous driving distractions. Their answers should include:

- Talking or texting
- Changing radio stations, shuffling/streaming music—or dialing a phone
- Passengers, pets or objects moving in the car
- Eating, driving or smoking
- Putting on makeup or looking in the mirror



Remind your teen to stay alert, scan their surroundings, and not fixate on any one thing.

Parental Pointers:

City driving skills take a long time to acquire. Spend as much time and drive in as many circumstances with your teen (night, inclement weather) as you are able. Plan trips to less-familiar places where you might not normally travel.

Coach your teen to avoid distracting activities whenever possible, but especially in busy, congested environments. Remind them to focus on keeping as much space as possible around the vehicle at all times.

Skill Eleven: Highway Driving—Part One

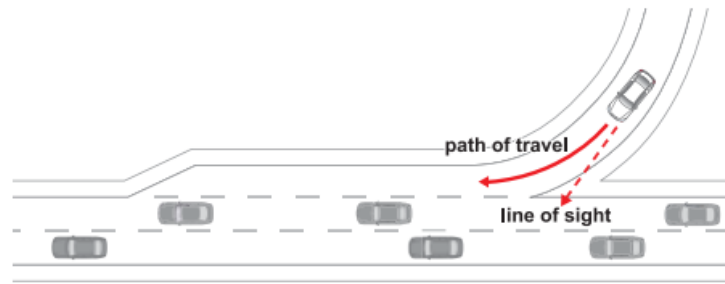
Goal: teach your teen highway basics and how to safely enter and exit a highway.

Location: start on a multi-lane highway with easily-accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

Lesson One—Observation

Before your teen gets behind the wheel on the highway, have your teen spend some time on highways with you as the driver and your teen as the passenger. Emphasize the importance of looking ahead to anticipate potential problems and explain key highway features such as:

- The different kinds of interchanges
- The meanings of highway signs and signals
- The meanings of different lane lines and markings



There is plenty of time to merge. If a gap doesn't present itself immediately, adjust your speed in order to find one.

Lesson Two—On-Ramp Segments

Explain the three segments of on-ramps and how they're used:

- **Entrance area:** this stretch allows the driver time to search the highway and evaluate how much space they have to enter and what speed is needed.
- **Acceleration area:** the driver brings the vehicle up to the speed of highway traffic flow.
- **Merging area:** the driver uses this space to merge into the traffic flow.

Lesson Three—Merging

Teach the steps for merging onto a highway:

- Check for on-ramp speed signs
- At the entrance area, make quick glances at the highway, scanning for vehicles and entry gaps
- In the acceleration area, signal to show intent to enter the highway and adjust speed to match traffic flow
- In the merging area, enter the flow of traffic, checking mirrors and blind spots
- Turn off the turn signal and begin looking ahead to anticipate problems or upcoming lane changes
- Do not completely stop in the entrance area unless absolutely necessary

Parental Pointers:

Practice merging and exiting 10-12 times each or more if needed for your teen to feel comfortable. Keep coaching your teen that constant awareness and looking ahead are the keys to learning to drive safely.

Lesson Three—Exiting

Teach the steps for exiting a highway

- Identify the exit well ahead of time
- Scan traffic for problems when approaching the exit, but don't slow down on the highway
- Start to signal four to six seconds before reaching the ramp
- Upon entering the ramp, tap the brakes and begin rapidly reducing speed
- Slow down to the posted exit ramp speed limit before reaching the curve

Skill Eleven: Highway Driving—Part Two

Goal- teach your teen to maneuver safely in complex highway driving environments at higher speeds.

Location: start on a multi-lane highway with easily-accessible exits, at a time when traffic is light, such as a weekend morning. Move on to practice at heavier traffic times when your teen is ready.

Lesson One—Steering Techniques

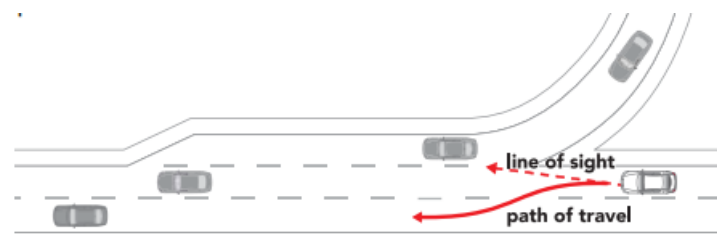
Once on the highway, coach your teen on steering techniques. At fast highway speeds, excessive steering can be dangerous and lead to loss of control. Remind your teen to steer gently on highways.

Lesson Two—Lane Changing

In the high-speed, complex highway environment, lane-changing skills are very important. Have your teen spend several miles practicing the lane-changing and passing skills previously learned in Skill Nine :Multi-Lane Roads”, until they are comfortable performing them at highway speeds.

Remind your teen to:

- Watch for merging vehicles and move one lane left to make space for them when needed
- Change lanes one at a time only
- Watch mirrors for tailgaters and move to another lane to let them pass



For the first several lane changes you may need to talk your teen through the decision-making process. Double-check all mirrors to make sure that the lane is clear.

Lesson Three—Following Distance Rule

Review the six-to-eight second rule for following distance learned in “Skill Six: Looking Ahead.” Additionally, coach your teen to use a six-to-eight second rule for these highway driving circumstances:

- Merging onto a highway
- Changing lanes
- Exiting a highway

Lesson Four—Vehicle Speed

Coach your teen to adjust travel speed and vehicle position based on weather and road conditions. Once your teen is comfortable with and proficient at highway driving in good conditions, spend some practice time on highways under more challenging conditions, such as rain. Coach them to always use appropriate caution, as conditions can change quickly.

Lesson Five—Plan a Short Day Trip

Consider planning some short day trips with your teen to a destination two or three hours away. Have them drive there and back. Find an event or place that you will both enjoy and have fun.

Highway hypnosis: this condition can result from driving for a long period of time. Remind your teen that it is important to stay alert when driving. To avoid driving in a dulled, drowsy, trance-like state, take frequent breaks and stop if you begin to feel tired.

Velocitation: this is caused by slowing down after driving fast for a long time. The change makes you think that the car is going much slower than it actually is, leading you to drive faster than you intended. Don't be misled. After slowing down, make sure to check your speedometer regularly.

Parental Pointers:

Early in the training process, parental instruction tends to focus on vehicle handling. As your teen's skills improve, try to focus on “higher order” instruction, such as scanning ahead, hazard detection and anticipating the other driver's behavior.

Skill Twelve: Driving on Rural Roads

Goal: teach your teen to drive safely and with confidence on two-lane rural roads

Location: a two-lane rural road. Coach your teen to notice and respond to these hazards.

Large/slow vehicles: slower trucks, farm vehicles and road maintenance equipment are likely to make wide turns at unmarked entrances. Use caution and make sure the driver can see your vehicle before passing.

Sharp drop-offs and gravel shoulders: one of the most common driving hazards is running off the road. The urge to overcorrect is strong and often results in a serious crash. If you run off the road, follow these steps to ease your vehicle back onto the road:

- Do not turn the wheel; continue to drive straight
- Take your foot off the accelerator
- Find a safe place to reenter the road
- Turn on your turn signal and re-renter the road when it is clear

Blind spots: trees, cornfields, buildings and hills can block a driver's view of oncoming traffic or traffic entering from the side. Identify blind spots to better anticipate and prepare for potential dangers.

Uncontrolled intersections: they are not controlled by yield or stop signs. Use caution, slow down and prepare to stop for oncoming traffic. The vehicle on the right has the right of way. The vehicle on the left should yield.

Animals: if unable to stop for an animal crossing the road, do NOT swerve—swerving makes it hard to keep control. The most serious crashes happen when drivers swerve into oncoming traffic or roll into a ditch.

If you see an animal, slow down and prepare to stop. Always be on the lookout, especially at sunrise and sunset. October and November are peak months for deer crashes—the most common type. Deer travel in groups; if you see one, look for more

Hills and curves: these are often steeper and sharper on rural roads than on Interstate highways. Before reaching the crest of a hill or curve, slow down, move to the right side and watch for traffic. Remember- REDUCE SPEED TO VISIBILITY.

Railroad crossings: always slow down, look both ways and prepare to stop. Many railroad crossings are marked only with a round yellow railroad crossing ahead warning sign and a white X-shaped railroad crossing. There may not be flashing lights, warning bells, crossing gates or pavement markings.

Parental Pointers:

Crashes on rural roads account for 57 percent of all traffic fatalities. Help your teen understand that some road conditions and driving hazards are unique to rural roads.

Skill Thirteen: Roundabouts

Roundabouts are becoming more common in the U.S. because they provide safer and more efficient traffic flow than standard intersections. Statistics show that roundabouts reduce fatal crashes by about 90%, reduce injury crashes by about 75% and reduce overall crashes by about 35%, when compared to other types of intersection control.

Driving a roundabout:

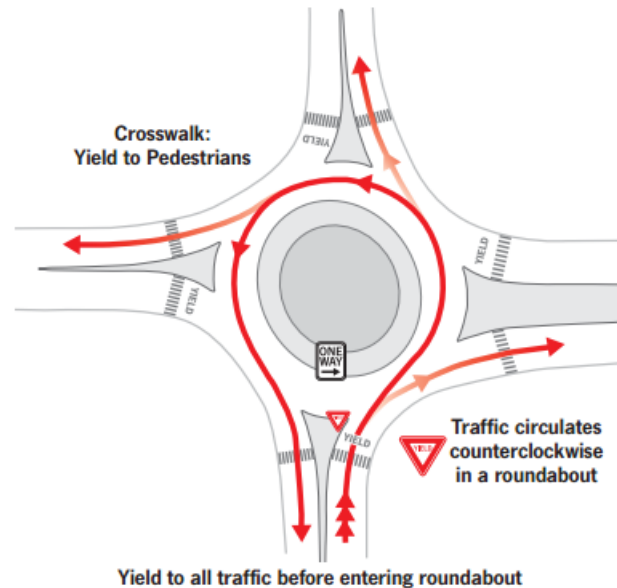
- **Slow down.** Obey traffic signs and pavement markings
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Yield to traffic on your left already in the roundabout
- Enter the roundabout when there is a safe gap in traffic
- Keep your speed low within the roundabout
- As your approach your exit, turn on your right turn signal
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclist as you exit

Emergency vehicles in the roundabout:

- always yield to emergency vehicles
- If you have not entered the roundabout, pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass
- If you have entered the roundabout, continue to your exit, then pull over and allow emergency vehicles to pass
- Avoid stopping in the roundabout

Driving a roundabout with two or more lanes:

As you approach the roundabout, it is very important to observe the signs and pavement markings to determine which lane to use before entering. Black and white signs on the side of the road and white pavement markings on the road will show the correct lane to us. In general, if you want to make a left turn, you should be in the left lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as left turn lanes. If you want to make a right turn, you should be in the right lane or other lanes that are signed and marked as right turn lanes. If you want to go straight, observe the signs and pavement markings to see what lane is correct.



This example shows the traffic movement patterns through a one-lane roundabout. The one-lane roundabout is known as one of the safest and most efficient intersections.

Practice in Other Conditions

For new drivers, it can be challenging to drive in new and unfamiliar conditions such as inclement weather, different times of day, and varying traffic volume. It's best that you are there with your teen to provide guidance in these situations before they experience them on their own.

Night driving: A driver's reaction depends on their vision, which is limited at night. This makes it more difficult to make judgments and see pedestrians, bicyclists and other obstacles. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Glare from oncoming headlights makes it difficult to see. Looking toward the right side of the road and flipping the rearview mirror can help to reduce headlight glare.
- Headlights should be turned on before the sun goes down to make the car more visible.
- High beams should only be used when other drivers won't see them, such as on isolated roadways with little traffic.
- To compensate for reduced visibility, drive more slowly and at a greater following distance.

Wet/slippery roads: To reduce risk on wet and slippery roads, coach your teen to practice the following:

- Turn on the wipers as soon as the windshield becomes wet.
- Turn on the low-beam headlights; this helps others see you.
- Drive 5 to 10 mph slower than normal and increase your following distance to eight to ten seconds
- Be more cautious, and slow down on curves and when approaching intersections.
- Turn the defroster on to keep windows from fogging over.

If you must make adjustments while driving, make sure the road ahead is clear before looking down at the dashboard - and look away for only a second or two.

Hydroplaning: Hydroplaning occurs as a result of water on the road that is deeper than the tire tread. This layer of water reduces friction with the tires and can result in the loss of control. If you can see deep water on the road, reflections on the pavement, or the car ahead leaves no tracks on the water, these are indications your car could hydroplane. Slow down.

Fog: Use low-beam lights or fog lights if your vehicle has them. Don't use high beams - they reflect off the fog, causing glare and reduced visibility. Slow down until your speed matches your ability to see, even if it means slowing to a crawl.

Snow: Make sure your vehicle is clear of snow and ice before driving. Driving can cause snow/ice to slide and block your view, or fly off and strike other vehicles. Other tips to keep in mind:

- When starting to drive in snow, keep the wheels straight ahead and accelerate gently to avoid spinning the tires.

- Decrease your speed to make up for a loss of traction. Accelerate and decelerate gently, and be extra careful when braking.
- Stopping distances can be 10 times greater in ice and snow. Begin the slowing-down process long before anticipating a stop at an intersection or turn. Brake only when traveling in a straight line.
- Look ahead for danger spots, such as shaded areas and bridge surfaces that may be icy when the rest of the road is clear.
- Stay far behind the vehicle ahead so you will not need to come to a sudden

Continuing Education

Learning doesn't stop when your teen has received their license. It's important to continue teaching and building upon the skills they have learned. As you continue the supervision process, think about these three areas of focus:

- **Spend as much time as possible driving** with your teen.
- **Drive in a wide variety of conditions** (weather, time of day, different traffic volumes, etc.).
- **Focus on "higher order" learning:** scanning ahead, recognizing hazards, and learning to anticipate the behavior of other drivers.

Now that your teen has become proficient in the basic operational skills of driving, it is essential that you ensure they be exposed to a wide variety of driving circumstances and conditions. Make a point of finding circumstances to drive with them that they have not yet experienced, and do it for all types of roads – quiet neighborhood streets, multi-lane roads, and highways. Drive with them at different times of the day, in poor weather, and with varying levels of traffic. It's much better that they experience these conditions with you, rather than alone or with other teens.

Much of what has been discussed to this point has related specifically to the basic skills your teens will need to be a safe driver. Now, your goal is to ensure your teen is thinking intelligently and making the right decisions as a driver. Sometimes after teens become proficient with the basic skills, parents/guardians will often "step back," becoming less involved in their teen's supervision. But there's still a lot to learn; their teen's education is not complete.

Be clear with your teen that the training process is ongoing and that you will continue to provide input into their development so that you both stay in the learning/teaching mode.

Even the best new drivers are likely to make mistakes. These mistakes are great teachable moments for "higher order" instructions. So instead of saying, "Stop sooner," advise your teen to try to focus on looking ahead and anticipating events, with an emphasis on good judgment, good decision making, and hazard perception. The shift from a basic comment to a more advanced focus is perhaps the most essential element of educating your teen at this point in the learning process.

As your teen drives, talk to them about specific hazard areas, possible areas of conflict, and blind spots where trouble may hide. Teens tend not to be as good at anticipating these trouble areas as experienced drivers. A good exercise is to have your teen describe the blind spots and possible areas of conflicts they see. It will let you know that they are thinking, anticipating and driving intelligently.

Parental Pointers:

Even after your teen is licensed, use your time driving with them to instill habits of good judgment, accurate hazard anticipation and smart decision-making.

Beyond the Basics:

Teens Biggest Dangers

Newly-licensed teens crash much more often than older, more experienced drivers. These are the circumstances that are the most common trouble areas for young drivers.

Other teens: Research is clear on the fact that risky teen driving behaviors increase in the presence of teen passengers. A teen who is driving with other teens in the car is more likely to crash. And the more kids there are in the car, the stronger the likelihood of a crash. This is the primary reason many states have passed laws that restrict the ability of teens to drive with their peers.

Seat belts: The unfortunate reality is that teens buckle up far less frequently than adults. Recent studies show that belt use amongst teens is the lowest of any age group, just 76 percent compared to a national average of 85 percent. In fact, that same year, the majority (58 percent) of young people 16 to 20 years old involved in fatal crashes were unbuckled.

Drugs and alcohol: Teens are at far greater risk of death in an alcohol-related crash than the overall population. This is despite the fact they cannot legally purchase or publicly possess alcohol in any state. When alcohol is added to the inexperience of teen drivers, the results can be deadly. Drunk male teenage drivers are 18 times more likely than a sober male teen driver to be killed in a single-vehicle crash. Drunk female teenage drivers are 54 times more likely to be killed than a sober counterpart.

Fatigue: As teens get older their bedtimes get later, but waking times do not tend to change. From age 13 to 19, nightly sleep is reduced by 40–50 minutes. Teen drivers who sleep less than eight hours a night are 33 percent more likely to crash than teens who get more than eight hours of sleep. This lack of sleep results in depressive moods, more risk-taking behaviors, and lower grades. It further reduces a person's ability to process information, be attentive, and have good reflexes, which are all crucial driving skills. Studies have shown that

being awake for 18 hours has a similar impact to having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08.

Distracted driving: A driver's primary responsibility when behind the wheel is to focus on the act of driving. Any behavior that distracts from that activity increases the risk of a collision. In this age of electronic communication, the dangers of distractions have increased significantly. Use of electronic devices for any purpose, to send or receive communications, to surf the web, to view images, video, or anything at all, should absolutely be avoided.

Inexperience: Just as it takes years to perfect any skill – athletic, artistic or otherwise – it also takes years to be a truly good driver. Until teens are much more experienced, they run a greater risk of crashing, being hurt, and potentially dying. A driver's license makes them a driver. Experience makes them good drivers.

Night driving: For teens, the most severe crashes occur at night and on weekends. Night driving is challenging for all drivers, but novice drivers do not have the experience to anticipate and react when visibility is reduced. When teens drive at night, it is more often with a lack of adult supervision, with other teen passengers and at high speeds—all of which increase risk.

Parental Pointers:

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) systems are intended to provide teen drivers with practice under the safest conditions, exposing them to more situations only as their skills are experience grows.

Sharing the Road

Sharing the road means being a courteous, alert and knowledgeable driver, making the roads safer for all. Bicycles, motorcycles, buses, trucks and pedestrians all deserve a share of the road.

Bicyclists and Motorcycles:

Motorists must be on the lookout for cyclists and anticipate sudden and unexpected moves from them. Motorcycles are entitled to the same full lane width as other vehicles.

Bicycles and motorcycles are smaller, harder to see and can move faster and stop faster than expected. Their control is more easily hampered by road defects and debris. You should watch for bicycles and motorcycles, use extra caution when driving around either and increase your following distance.

Pedestrians:

Pedestrians are those people standing, walking or using a wheelchair on public streets, highways and private property. Pedestrians have the right-of-way at crosswalks and intersections whether the crosswalks are marked or not.

Cutting in front can cut your life short: If you cut in front of another vehicle, you may create an emergency-braking situation for the vehicles around you, especially in heavy traffic. Trucks and buses take much longer to stop in comparison to cars. When passing, look for the front of the truck in your review mirror before pulling in front and avoid braking situations

Watch your blind spots – the “No-Zones”: Large trucks have blind spots, or No- Zones, around the front, back, and sides of the vehicle. Avoid being caught in a truck’s No-Zones. If you can’t see the truck driver in the truck’s mirror, the truck driver can’t see you.

Avoid squeeze play: Be careful of trucks making wide right turns. If you try to get in between the truck and the curb, you’ll be caught in a “squeeze” crash. Truck drivers sometimes need to swing wide to the left in order to safely negotiate a right turn. They can’t see cars directly behind or beside them. Cutting in between the truck and the curb increases the possibility of a crash. So pay attention to truck signals, and give them lots of room to maneuver.

Construction Zones: Work zones can be very dangerous, especially when traveling on the highway. It’s important to be alert and prepared to slow down or stop in a work zone. Slowing down and allowing others to merge will ensure a safe passage through work zones. Here are a few tips on work zone safety:

- **Stay alert:** Work zones are busy places where construction vehicles and workers are always moving. Be alert, and stay on the safe path that is designated throughout the work zone.
- **Take your cues from trucks:** Work zones often pop up suddenly. If you are not paying attention to the signs, you could find yourself in a serious accident. Since trucks have a height advantage and can see ahead of traffic, their brake light activity can provide a good signal of a slow-down or work zone ahead.
- **Merge gently:** Aggressive drivers can be extremely dangerous while driving in work zones. Work zones require time and courtesy. For a smooth passage through work zones, allow others to merge in front of you. Be especially considerate to trucks. They require more space to merge and are the least maneuverable vehicles on the road.

Parental Pointers:

When you hear sirens and see flashing lights, you should get out of the way as quickly and safely as possible. First, check the traffic around you and slow down. If traffic allows, signal and then pull to the right, clear of an intersection and stop. Remain there until the emergency vehicle has passed.