DEFENSIVE-DRIVING SKILLS

A. Complete each of the following sentences by writing the correct word or phrase in the space provided.

1. A driver who is tired, lazy, or unfocused is a ________ driver.

2. It is important to develop sound habits early on so that ________ becomes a routine rather than a chore.

3. ________ of traffic laws, signs, signals, and roadway markings is essential to defensive driving.

4. Although you cannot be expected to memorize the ________, you have a responsibility to become as informed as possible.

5. Asking ________ questions prepares you for possible emergencies and helps you avoid them entirely.

6. ________ on cars ahead tell you to prepare for sudden stops or changes in speed.

7. No matter where you are driving or what the road conditions are, you should always ________.

8. ________ in driving situations involves choosing the safest and most effective option available to you.

9. Although ________ driving will not necessarily make you a perfect driver, it will definitely make you a better driver.

10. Defensive driving means developing the ability to perform ________ driving maneuvers.

B. For each of the following components of the driving environment, provide examples of things you would consider to avoid potential hazards. Expand on the examples provided in the text with your own.

1. The type of road you are on: _______________________________________________________________

2. The weather: __________________________________________________________________________

3. Visibility: _____________________________________________________________________________
4. Vehicle condition: ________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Traffic conditions: _______________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

6. Other drivers: _____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

C. Select the word or phrase that best completes each of the following sentences and write the letter in the space provided.

_____ 1. Defensive driving requires:
   a. understanding of basic traffic laws.         b. good judgment.
   c. expecting the expected.                    d. All of the above.

_____ 2. You can manage most potentially hazardous driving situations by:
   a. honking your horn.                        b. flashing your brights.
   c. asserting your right-of-way.              d. staying alert.

_____ 3. If you encounter a road construction detour, you should:
   a. honk your horn to warn other drivers.     b. maintain your present speed.
   c. pull over to the side of the road.        d. expect other drivers to be confused.

_____ 4. Good judgment while driving in foggy weather is demonstrated by:
   a. not exceeding the maximum legal speed.    b. reducing your speed.
   c. asking a passenger for advice.            d. doing what other drivers do.

_____ 5. Teenagers are more likely than most adults to be involved in a collision because they:
   a. have less experience behind the wheel.    b. have less control of their bodies.
   c. are less easily distracted.               d. pay less attention to instruction.

D. CHECK IT OUT.

Find out what is required to obtain a copy of your jurisdiction’s vehicle code. Is it available on-line? Do you have to go to a law library? If you were to purchase a copy, how much would it cost and from whom would you order it? In the space provided, write down what you discover.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________


Instruct an inexperienced friend or family member to perform a complicated task that you do well, such as playing a musical instrument or hitting a tennis ball. Observe how that person does. Does he or she have difficulty coordinating their movements? Does he or she get better with practice? In the space provided, write down what you observe.

---

2-2 MANAGING TIME, SPACE, AND VISIBILITY

A. For each of the following sentences, circle T if it is true and F if it is false.

1. T F A defensive driver is one who has complete control over time, space, and visibility.

2. T F By increasing your following distance, you can significantly reduce the chance of a collision.

3 T F In ideal low-speed driving conditions, you should maintain a minimum following distance of 5 seconds behind another vehicle.

4. T F One way to gauge your following distance is to maintain a space between you and the vehicle ahead of you equal to one car length for every 10 miles per hour (15 km/h) that you are traveling.

5. T F Space cushioning allows you to have a better view of the driving environment.

6. T F Ideally, a space cushion should be at least three vehicle spaces to either side of you and one vehicle length ahead of you and behind you.

7. T F An effective way to get a tailgater to pass you is to slam on your brakes.

8. T F If you signal too early, other drivers may misinterpret your intentions.

9. T F Hand signals are one way to tell others that you intend to slow down, speed up, or stop.

10. T F It is dangerous as well as confusing to use your headlights during daytime hours.

B. What are the advantages of increasing your following distance?
C. In the space provided, list ten situations in which you should increase your following distance from 3 seconds to 4 or more seconds at low speeds.

1. __________________________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________________________
6. __________________________________________________________________________________________
7. __________________________________________________________________________________________
8. __________________________________________________________________________________________
9. __________________________________________________________________________________________
10. __________________________________________________________________________________________

D. Complete each of the following sentences by writing the correct word or phrase in the space provided.

1. Because __________ collisions are one of the most common types of motor-vehicle collisions, increasing your following distance is critical to defensive driving.

2. As a rule of thumb, maintain at least a __________ following distance at speeds between 40 and 60 miles per hour (65 to 100 km/h).

3. Use __________ seconds when testing your following distance to vehicles ahead of you.

4. Often, as a driver, you must __________ a space cushion around your vehicle by increasing and decreasing your speed or switching lanes.

5. If a __________ cannot or will not pass you, politely signal him or her to “back off” by tapping on your brakes to flash your brake lights.

6. Many collisions can be avoided simply by making your __________ known to other drivers.

7. Your __________ is a valuable safety feature that is both overlooked and overused as a communication tool.

8. The position of your vehicle communicates your __________ to other drivers.

9. You might use __________ in addition to turn indicators and brakes when bright sunlight decreases the visibility of your rear lights.

10. Use your ________ to tell other drivers that your vehicle cannot move or is moving very slowly.
E. When is it appropriate to use your horn?

F. When is it not appropriate to use your horn?

G. CHECK IT OUT.

Go out to an empty playing field with a friend. Have him or her run at top speed while you follow closely behind and, without warning you, come to an abrupt stop. To avoid a collision, veer off to the left or right if necessary. Repeat the exercise, each time increasing your following distance. How far behind did you have to follow to avoid a near collision with the other person when he or she stopped? Try the exercise again at night. Did you have to increase your following distance even more? In the space provided, write down the results of the exercise.

Find a safe spot to observe traffic at a crowded city intersection. Note when and under what circumstances drivers use their horns. How many used their horn inappropriately? How many used it as a legitimate communication tool? In the space provided, write down what you discover.
2-3 THE “SAFE” METHOD

A. Select the word or phrase that best completes each of the following sentences and write the letter in the space provided.

_____ 1. Which of the following is not part of the SAFE method?
   a. Seeking   b. Scanning
   c. Finding   d. Assessing

_____ 2. Your _______ are your best tool to identify traffic situations and road conditions.
   a. ears   b. eyes
   c. hands   d. None of the above

_____ 3. On highways and freeways, you should look between _______ down the road.
   a. 20 and 30 seconds   b. $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (500 m to 1 km)
   c. $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 miles (2½ and 3 km)   d. Both a and b

_____ 4. The OVS technique was developed by Howard L. Smith of the Ford Motor Company in the:
   a. 1950s.   b. 1960s.

_____ 5. Signs that a car at the curb is preparing to pull into traffic include:
   a. The hazard lights are on.   b. Smoke is coming from the exhaust pipe.
   c. The wheels are turned toward the curb.   d. All of the above.

B. When scanning ahead, why is it important to get the “big picture” of what is ahead of you?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

C. In the space provided, list each of the steps in the orderly visual search technique.

1. __________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________________________
D. As a driver, where do you get the knowledge needed to make good predictions?

E. In the space provided, describe some of the potential threats you might face in each of the following driving environments.

1. City streets: ________________________________________________________________

2. Residential neighborhoods: ________________________________________________

3. Rural highways: __________________________________________________________

4. Freeways: _______________________________________________________________

F. What should you do if you see no clear way of avoiding a crash?

G. What two options do you always have if you encounter danger on the road?
H. Complete each of the following sentences by writing the correct word or phrase in the space provided.

1. Never gaze ahead or _________ on an object for too long.

2. The OVS technique requires using selective glances in a constantly _________ pattern to monitor all the different areas around your vehicle.

3. Whether you use the OVS pattern or create your own system, remember to always keep your eyes _________.

4. As you travel, roadway conditions constantly _________.

5. Not every emergency has a perfect _________.

I. CHECK IT OUT.

Come up with your own scanning technique. In the space provided, describe the sequence and explain the reasoning behind it.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Interview a law-enforcement officer or driver of an emergency vehicle. What special defensive-driving techniques are they trained to use when traveling at high speeds when responding to a call? In the space provided, write down what you discover.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
CROSSWORD PUZZLE: DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Across
1. Scanning technique
3. “Expect the unexpected”
6. Defensive-driving strategy
10. Communicate your
12. ______ distance
14. Carry out a decision
15. Best way to improve driving skills

Down
1. Escape route
2. Look far ahead
4. Group involved in most collisions
5. Space
7. Follow too closely
8. Should not be used to greet friends
9. Predict problems before they happen
11. What new drivers lack
13. Skill that involves asking “What if?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What Happened?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of anticipation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used poor judgment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe following distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased following distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a space cushion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was tailgated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaled too early</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaled too late</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used hand signals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used brakes as warning device</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used horn as warning device</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used horn improperly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated intentions/lane position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated intentions/eye contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated intentions/body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used headlights during day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Flashed” brights as warning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Flashed” brights as courtesy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used emergency flashers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not scan far enough ahead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fixated” on object</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to see potential threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted potential threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improperly predicted outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctly predicted outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to find escape route</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found an “out”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed speed to avoid threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed direction to avoid threat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>