

STREET SMARTS

A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO TRAFFIC SAFETY

- ❖ The Art of **MERCING**
- ❖ Tips from **TROOPER JACK**
- ❖ Safety at the **CROSSWORDS**
- ❖ What the Heck IS A **J-TURN?**
- ❖ Are You a Good **PASSENGER?**
- ❖ Teaching Your **TEEN TO DRIVE**
- ❖ How Did *They* GET A **LICENSE?**
- ❖ Beat the **BREAKDOWN BLUES**

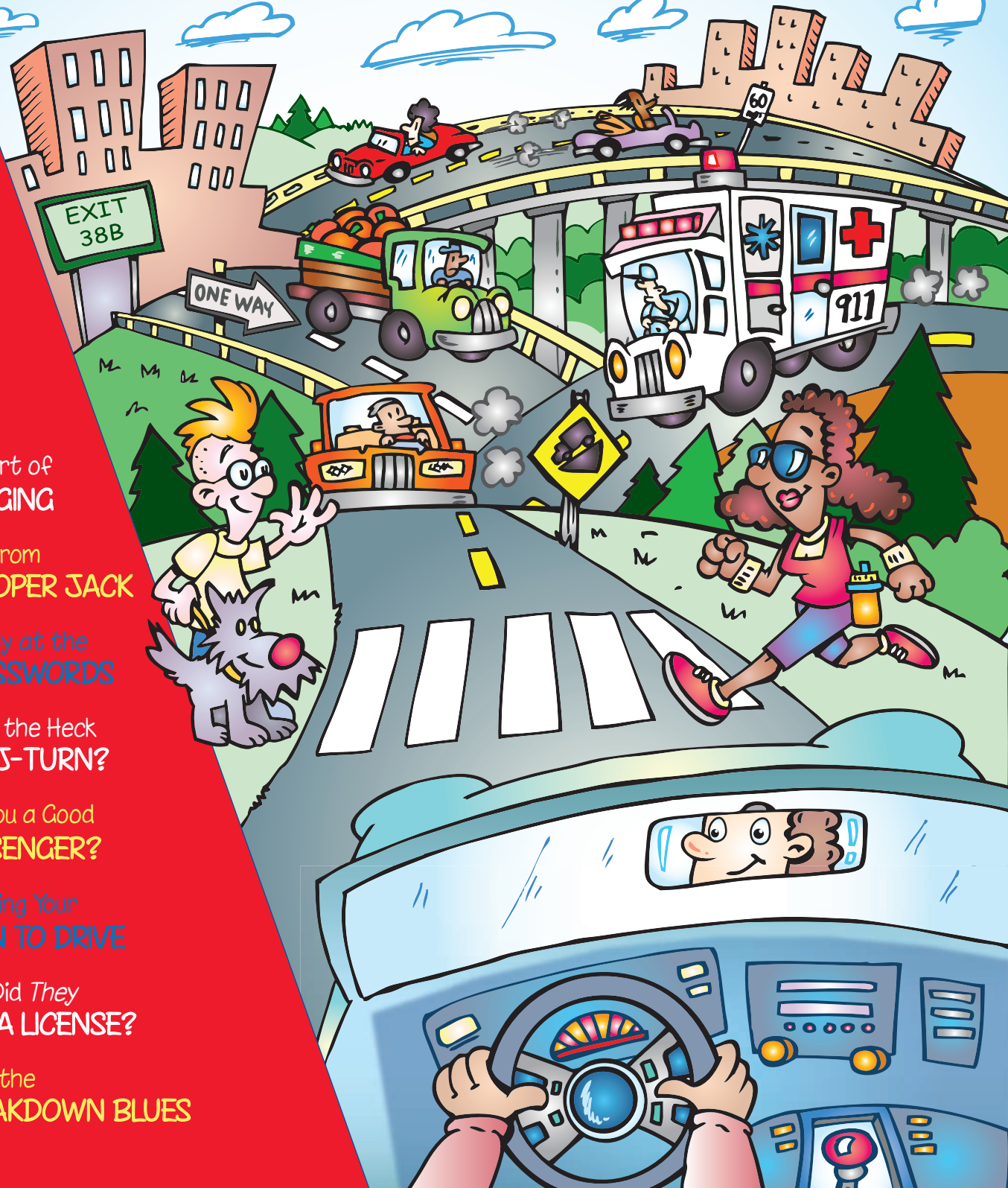


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ARE WE THERE YET?

As a group, are we safer than ever on our roads?
Absolutely.

Are we satisfied?
Absolutely not.

Crashes, serious injuries and deaths have dropped dramatically. We know the reasons: safer roads and vehicles, effective legislation, enforcement and EMS response, and – the big one! – the fact that most of us are making better choices behind the wheel. The question is: how low can we go? Do we dare to aim for zero?

We think the answer is yes. We know the factors involved in a crash and the most common is the driver's behavior. That's where you – and this booklet – come in. Use it to find fresh insights on important driving issues. The practical tips and tools that follow can help you make better choices, increase your ability to drive safely and decrease your chance of a crash. Use them to jumpstart your street smarts!

StreetSmarts is a publication of AAA and the Minnesota Safety Council. Additional funding provided by the Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS).

Designer: Aimee Libby

Illustrations on front cover, back cover, page 9 and page 12 by Harry Pulver, Jr.

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IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

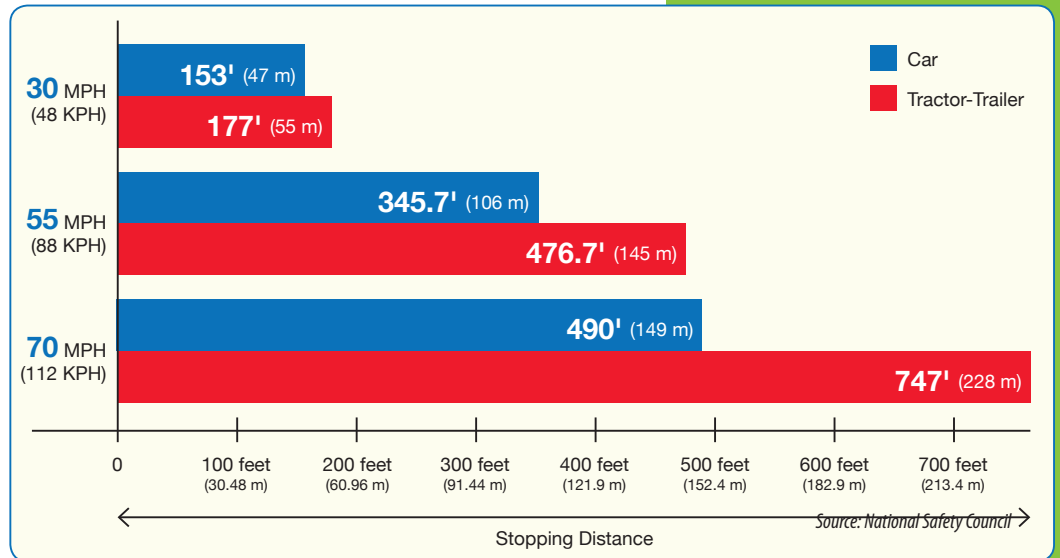
We get it! You're in a hurry and you figure going "just a little" over the speed limit is going to make all the difference. Well, it could make a difference if you get a ticket – your insurance rate could go up and your cash could go down! And it could cost your life if you crash. But – will it really save you much time? Let's say you're going to travel 30 miles, under ideal conditions. Here's how long it will take:


- At 55 miles per hour: 32.7 minutes
- At 65 miles per hour: 27.7 minutes – 5 minutes saved
- At 75 miles per hour: 24 minutes – 8.7 minutes saved



The faster you drive, the less time and distance you have to respond to whatever pops up on the road ahead. Your reaction time doesn't speed up just because your vehicle does! And by the time you react – about one second for most drivers, assuming you're not distracted – you've gone a lot farther at 75 mph than you would at 55 mph.

And one more thing: speeding isn't just about driving over the posted limit; it's also about traveling too fast for the conditions – rain, snow, darkness. Any of those factors can reduce your control and ability to respond effectively. So why risk it for those few minutes? Slow down!





A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

Slip sliding away. Did you know your tires' grip on the road is greatly reduced when the road surface is wet? Meanwhile, stopping distance increases significantly. To avoid a crash when the pavement is wet, slow down and increase your following distance.





ONE CRASH = THREE COLLISIONS

Most people think of a car crash as a single event, but in fact, it has three stages:

- 1) A vehicle crashes into another car, a tree or some other object.
- 2) People in the car who aren't wearing seat belts are thrown against the dashboard, windshield, the back of seats or other passengers.
- 3) Internal organs slam into bone: brain into skull, stomach into spine, lungs into rib cage, heart into sternum.

Seat belts and child safety seats hold us in place and spread crash forces over the strongest parts of our bodies. They help ensure that we remain conscious and keep us from being thrown and crushed by the vehicle. Airbags work with seat belts. They prevent the head from swinging through the whole range of motion and damaging the neck – but they can't do the job of a seat belt. You need both!

Airbags activate at about 200 miles per hour in less than one second. The following tips will help prevent airbag injuries.

Drivers:

- Wear your seat belt snug across your hips with the shoulder belt across your chest.
- Sit at least 10-12 inches away from the steering wheel/front airbag.
- Hold the steering wheel at 9:00 and 3:00 or 8:00 and 4:00.
- Keep objects away from the path of the airbag.

Passengers:

- Don't place your feet on the dashboard or other items in the path of the airbag.
- Sit about 22-24 inches away from the airbag. The passenger side airbag is larger and comes out with more force than the drivers' side airbag.
- Seat all children under age 13 in the back seat. Use a child safety seat that is correct for your child's development and size until they are at least four feet nine inches tall – that's when they can "graduate" to using just the seat belt.



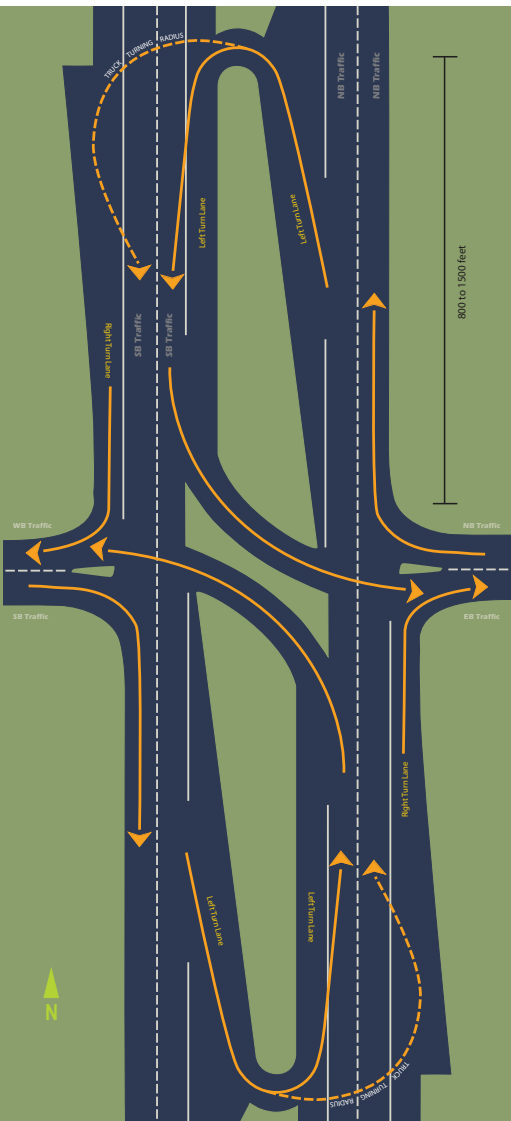
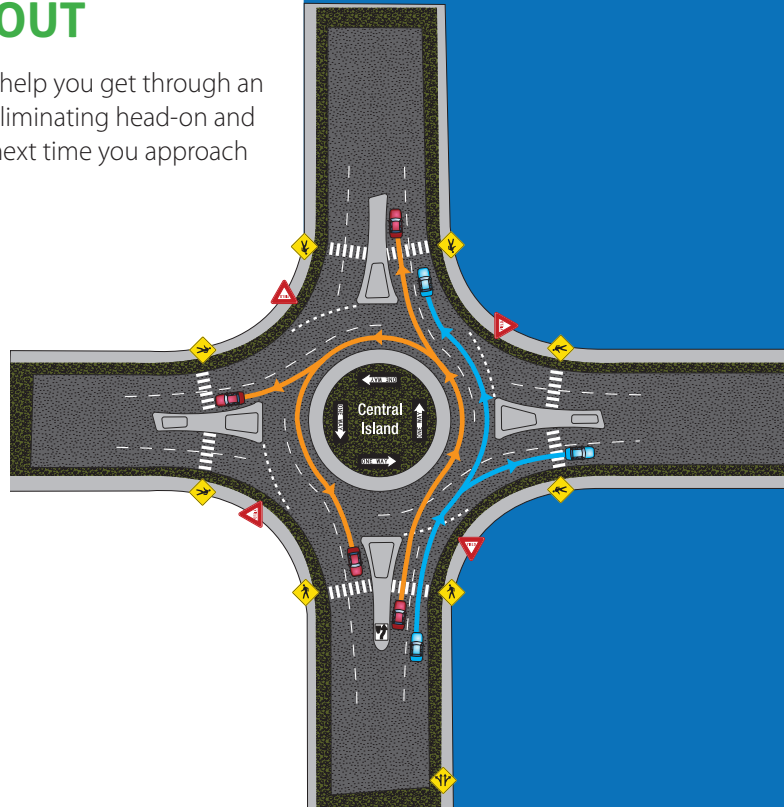
A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

Don't rush to get through that yellow light. Chances are you'll end up running a red. About 700 people are killed and 130,000 injured by red light running each year. So slow down, honor the yellow and stop safely.

GETTING 'ROUND A ROUNDABOUT

See that roundabout coming up? Don't panic! Roundabouts help you get through an intersection more safely by slowing traffic and pretty much eliminating head-on and right angle crashes. They also help traffic to flow better. The next time you approach a roundabout, remember:

- Slow down when you approach a roundabout.
- To enter the roundabout, yield to vehicles already in it, wait for an open space and pull in.
- Drive in a counter-clockwise direction until you reach your exit. Stay in your lane within the roundabout and use your right-turn signal to indicate your intention to exit.
- Don't stop or pass.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- If an emergency vehicle approaches, exit the roundabout immediately and then pull over.



WHAT THE HECK IS A J-TURN?

The “j-turn” is a new option that is safer than traditional roadway intersections on a four-lane highway. The basic concept is that vehicles on the road that is intersecting the highway cannot go straight through the intersection or take a left from the far side of it – they are forced to turn right. Drivers can then make a U-turn a short distance downstream and continue on with their intended movements. You'll have to travel slightly further to get where you want to go, but it can take less time than waiting for a safe gap to cross the intersection or turn left from it. Left turns may still be allowed for through traffic on the highway.



A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

If driving requires 100% of our attention, driving around intersections requires 150%! Pedestrians, cross traffic, cars

changing lanes, cars turning on red, turn lanes, traffic signals – intersections are typically the most dangerous place you'll drive, so they require all your attention . . . and more!

THE ART OF MERGING

❖ **True or false?** A driver merging into traffic has the right of way.

Answer: False!



Vehicles in the lane you're entering have the right of way. You've got to fit in! So, adjust your speed and position to avoid a crash. Start looking early for an opening. Let other drivers know what you plan to do by using your turn signal.

In a work zone? Avoid sudden slowdowns and fast lane changes when you first see the "lane closed ahead" sign. Those actions can actually lead to serious crashes and road rage. In fact, work zones are safer when motorists use both lanes until reaching the defined merge area and then take turns with other drivers to safely and smoothly ease into the remaining lane.

YIELD TO THE EMERGENCY!

It's the law! Move over (if it's safe to do so!) or slow down for emergency vehicles stopped alongside the road. But what if they're approaching you from the front or rear? You're required to pull over and slow down or stop. You never know where that vehicle is heading, so don't block roadways or driveways when you pull over. At a crowded intersection, move with the other vehicles so you can make a path. If no one is moving, stay put – the emergency vehicle will go around. The key is, let them get through. They don't call them "emergency" vehicles for nothing!



A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

Ever sit around thinking about blind spots? Me neither. But we should keep them in mind when driving. Many crashes could be avoided by doing a quick check of your blind spots. And remember,

semis, fire trucks and delivery trucks have bigger blind spots, so help those drivers out by staying visible – if you can't see the driver in the truck's mirror or window, the driver can't see you.

RIDDLE ME THIS!

Why did the turtle cross the road?
To get to the Shell Station!

What do monsters make with cars?
Traffic jam!

What did the traffic light say to the car?
Don't look now. I'm changing!

What do you do when you see a spaceman?
Park your car in it, man!

❖ WHO WINS?

What happens if a fire truck and a police car, both on emergency runs, get to an intersection at the same time – who yields?

❖ ANSWER:

The police car yields to the fire truck, which is heavier and harder to stop.

A SMOOTH FIT FOR A SAFE RIDE

Is your car a good fit? It's not just about comfort – it's about safety, too! Whether you're driving a new car or an Old Faithful, the following tips can help:

Learn about the technologies that are in your vehicle and practice using them before you drive – check your owner's manual for help.

In the driver's seat you should have a clear line of sight at least three inches above the steering wheel. The steering wheel should be no higher than your shoulders. Need a lift? Raise the seat position with automatic controls, or tilt or telescope the steering wheel. Keep at least two inches of space between the top of your thighs and the bottom of the steering wheel so you can move between the pedals easily.

Your chest should be at least ten inches from the steering wheel/front airbag. This is the closest recommended distance – any closer and the airbag may not work properly and you run a greater risk of injury from the activated airbag. But you need to sit close enough to the gas and brake pedals to be able to depress them completely and move your foot easily between them.

For a quick but comprehensive check of how well you and your vehicle work together, see www.Car-Fit.org.

If you're touching the pedals with only the tips of your toes, adjust the seat position or use pedal extenders to reach the proper distance.

Adjust the head restraint so that the center of it is against the center of your head, not your neck. If the head restraint is too low or too high, it may not provide the proper support.

Your seat belt should rest against your shoulder and hip bones, not your neck and stomach. Manually adjust the position of the belts or use seat belt extenders.

Reduce blind spots by adjusting your mirrors. The rearview mirror should show as much of the rear window as possible. The left and right side mirrors should just barely show the side of your vehicle.

Finally, think about how many people drive your car. If there are other drivers, make sure each makes their own adjustments to the seat, steering wheel and mirrors before driving.



A CUTTING EDGE STORY!

A juggler, driving to his next performance, is stopped by the police. "What are those machetes doing in your car?" asks the officer.

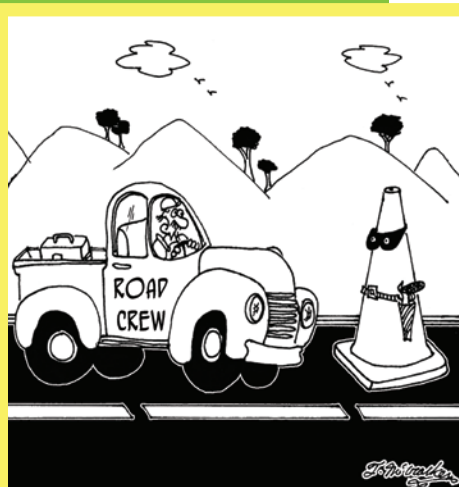
"I juggle them in my act."

"Really?," says the doubtful officer.

"Let's see you do it."

The juggler gets out and starts tossing and catching the knives. Another man driving by slows down to watch.

"Wow," says the passer-by. "I'm glad I don't drink and drive. Look at the test they're giving now!"



THE CONE RANGER



A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

Nice fuzzy dice. But they don't belong on your mirror. Vision obstructions are dangerous – that includes a poorly placed GPS. Keep your line of sight completely clear.

TOP TRAVEL TIPS

Where can you get the best bang for your maintenance buck? AAA suggests a focus on the following five vehicle parts to reduce the chance of breakdowns:

- **Battery cables/clamps/terminals.** Keeping the battery maintained not only prolongs its life, but also helps prevent breakdowns.
- **Engine oil.** Ignore this at your peril – too-low levels, the wrong oil or infrequent changes can destroy an engine.
- **Antifreeze/coolant protection.** Avoid freezing up in the winter or overheating in the summer – both can result in costly damage to the car.
- **Brake fluid.** Old fluid at low levels can reduce effectiveness or cause complete brake failure. A leak in the brake line can cause a vehicle fire if the fluid drips onto a heated surface such as a catalytic converter.
- **Tires.** Improperly inflated or bald tires can increase stopping distance and increase the chance of a collision.

Before you go:

- Always let people know where you're going, when you should arrive and what route you'll be taking.
- Check your map or prepare your GPS before you get underway.
- Keep doors locked, seat belts buckled and children safe and secure in properly installed safety seats.
- Pack and store items safely in your glove box or trunk; in case of a crash, loose items can become projectiles.

If your car breaks down:

- Move your vehicle off the road safely away from traffic. Keep everyone in the vehicle. Lock the doors.
- Roll down the window just far enough to respond to questions until law enforcement arrives.
- If you can't move your vehicle off the road, ask all passengers to exit the vehicle when it is safe to do so, and stand away from traffic.
- Raise the vehicle's hood, tie a white cloth to a door handle or use reflective triangles.

BEAT THE BREAKDOWN BLUES

Are you ready for an emergency? A little advance planning can make a big difference when you're stuck on the side of the highway. Create an emergency kit and secure it inside your car or your trunk. Include the basics:

- Booster cables
- Cell phone and charger
- Tow rope and bungee cord
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Emergency reflectors
- Non-perishable food items like energy bars and bottled water
- Blanket or sleeping bag

Secure the kit so it won't fly around in a crash. And let's hope you never need it!

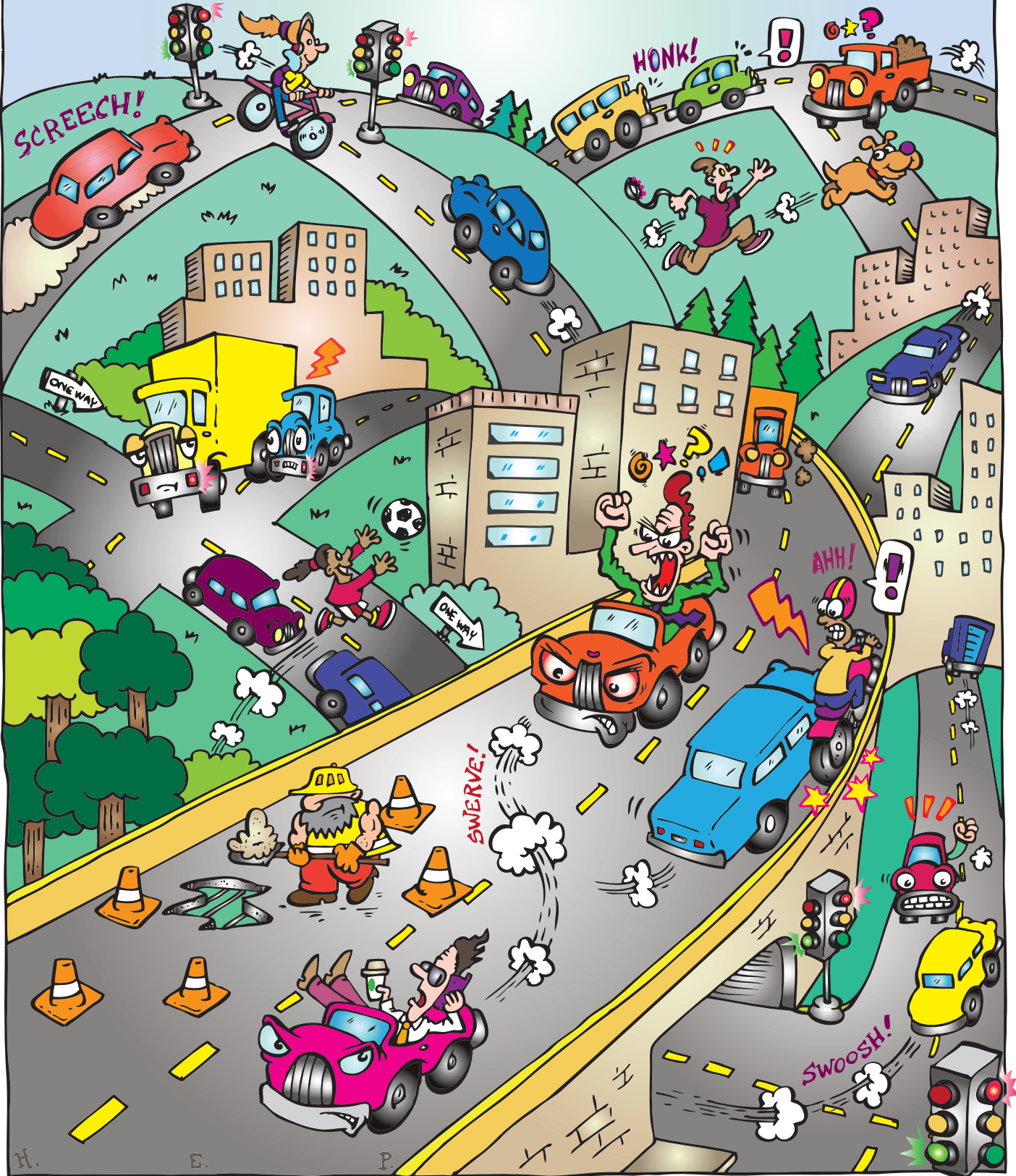


A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

All clear? When you wash your vehicle, don't forget the inside of the windows. A film naturally forms on the inside of vehicle windows. If you don't clean them regularly this film will affect your ability to see clearly, particularly at night.

Defensive drivers are alert and ready to react. We've scanned these roadways and found 15 hazards. See if you can find all of them. *Answers on page 19*

SPOT THE HAZARD!



H. E. P.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING 101

So why do you need to think about defensive driving? Here's one big reason: we get so comfortable behind the wheel we sometimes forget that driving safely is our number one job. So – a few defensive driving basics to keep responsible, common-sense driving tactics fresh in our minds:

1. Constantly scan the road ahead and around your vehicle to stay alert and prepared to respond to hazards.
2. Check mirrors and blind spots often, and always signal before turning, changing lanes and entering or exiting roadways.
3. Prepare for safe driving. Think about what you'd do in hazardous situations and know how to safely respond.
4. Always buckle up and make sure that everyone else in the vehicle is buckled up too.
5. Focus on driving. Adjust mirrors, program your GPS, check traffic conditions and put away that cell phone before you get on the road.
6. Plan ahead to leave plenty of travel time. Adjust your driving to roadway, weather and traffic conditions.
7. Stay alert. No drowsy driving, no texting, no cell phone conversations, no multi-tasking. Don't do things that take your hands off the wheel, your eyes off the road or your mind off your driving.
8. Leave a safe following distance – at least three seconds, and even more in poor driving conditions.
9. Don't drive impaired – by fatigue, alcohol or drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter medications).
10. Planning a night of partying? Use – or be – a designated driver.
11. Follow traffic signs and signals. Don't run a red light or roll through a stop sign. Yield as directed, with special attention to pedestrians, bicyclists and emergency vehicles.
12. Use extra caution when passing. If it's necessary to pass, be sure you can do so without speeding and can safely return to your lane when you've completed the pass.
13. Keep your vehicle in good repair and your windows clean and clear.



HOW DID THEY GET A LICENSE?

Can you believe those other drivers? Cutting you off, yakking on their cell phones, totally clueless. Why can't they just follow basic courtesy on the roads? Like . . .

- ❖ When you change lanes or merge into traffic, use your signal and give yourself plenty of space.
- ❖ Don't cut off other drivers. It's rude – and dangerous!
- ❖ Don't tailgate. Allow at least a three-second space between your car and the car ahead – even more if the weather is bad.
- ❖ Pay attention to your driving. Don't slow down traffic or make others change lanes because you're trying to multi-task behind the wheel.
- ❖ Don't respond to aggressive drivers. Put as much space between your vehicle and theirs as possible. Don't make eye contact, don't make gestures and don't honk your horn just because you're irritated. Be strong . . . resist!

The thing is – when you let the actions of other drivers affect the way you respond, you're putting them in the driver's seat . . . of *your* vehicle! You can't control how those other folks drive, but you can control how you respond to them. That'll help you get where you're going safely.



DANGERS OF DISTRACTED AND DROWSY DRIVING

Distracted driving and drowsy driving have a lot in common. We know that both are dangerous, but what exactly happens? Well, our perceptions, judgments and actions are affected:

- **Perception** – we’re slower to perceive important traffic events, for example, a child chasing after a ball into the street.
- **Judgment** – we’re slower to make decisions. It’s going to take us longer to figure out how to avoid the child chasing the ball.
- **Action** – we’re slower to respond or change our course or brake quickly. We may hit that child rather than swerving or braking.
- Warning systems begin scanning for blind spots when a turn signal is activated, and beep if anything is present.
- If you need to brake suddenly, emergency brake assist systems help maintain control of the vehicle.
- Adaptive headlights adjust to curves and oncoming vehicles to improve visibility.

New technologies in vehicles can help

- Forward collision warning systems use sensors to judge speed and the distance to the vehicle ahead of you. The system can warn you or actually begin to brake your vehicle for you.
- Lane departure warning systems send a warning to the driver if the vehicle begins to cross the painted lane markings without a turn signal being used.



But beware the temptation to rely on these tools to save us! If distractions or drowsiness interfere with basic driving tasks, pull off the road. Deal with distractions or take a nap and re-focus. The basic rules still apply: keep your eyes on the road, your hands on the wheel and your mind on the task of driving.

Find these frequent driver distractions in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

Q	V	K	M	P	N	G	M	D	D	S	Z	Q
R	T	I	L	X	M	X	R	Z	E	Y	L	T
Z	M	T	N	C	H	A	T	I	X	P	Y	N
C	K	Z	L	A	O	D	R	J	M	E	T	N
K	Q	H	B	B	T	F	L	D	Q	E	E	R
L	K	T	L	M	H	T	N	N	H	L	C	W
C	Q	L	P	C	G	P	E	A	C	S	H	D
B	I	P	N	L	P	X	R	N	J	L	N	W
B	D	E	T	H	S	R	Z	P	T	Q	O	T
K	R	J	G	X	I	K	F	N	V	I	L	X
F	R	H	M	E	E	C	F	I	D	O	O	Q
X	M	P	D	X	R	T	B	P	Q	T	G	N
T	A	L	O	C	Z	T	R	M	F	Q	Y	N

Word Bank:

- BFF
- billboard
- chat
- cola
- Fido
- french fries
- GPS
- harried
- inattention
- sleepy
- technology
- text

WORD
FIND!

DISTRACTION INFRACTIONS

WHEE...!

Once there was a snail who was tired of being slow. He went out and bought a really fast sports car and had the dealer paint a big red "S" on each side of it. His fellow snails asked him why he had painted the big red "S" on his beautiful new car. With a big smile, he replied "Simple. When people see my car go zooming down the road, I want them all to say – 'Hey, look at that S-car go!'"

ARE YOU A GOOD PASSENGER?

Drivers are responsible for getting everyone there safely, but passengers don't have to take a back seat when it comes to safety. If you're a passenger:

- Always wear a seat belt.
- Don't upset or distract the driver; no drama, no hassles, no nagging.
- Help navigate: Read the map and road signs, watch the road, look for gas stations and rest stops as needed, and make sure the driver is aware of his or her surroundings.
- Avoid loud talking, loud music and noises – they're distracting and affect a driver's concentration.
- Take charge of the cell phone: Receive and make calls for the driver.
- Keep feet off the dashboard and sit upright. And – no body parts hanging out the window!
- Never ride with a driver who has been drinking, taking drugs or is drowsy.
- Help young passengers to adjust and wear seat belts, and supervise children in the rear seats (kids under age 13 should sit in the back).



TEACHING YOUR TEEN TO DRIVE

You may not know it, but your teen has been learning driving skills from you since the day you first buckled that baby into a car seat! When teens are ready to drive, it's more important than ever that you set a good example. Believe it or not, teens say that their parents are their most powerful role models. When you follow the rules of the road it's likely your teen will too.

Research shows that when parents set clear rules, pay attention to where their teens are going and with whom, and communicate in a supportive way, their kids are much less likely to crash and much more likely to buckle up, drive sober and put down the cell phone. Consider using a parent/teen driving agreement.

So, use your power as a parent to set limits and expectations – create a contract with your teen and stick to your word. Be aware of the factors that put teen drivers at greater risk, including lack of experience in identifying hazards, risk taking, speed, distractions and driving at night, among others. Focus on the positive. Provide lots of opportunity for driving practice – even after your teen gets a license. Help your teen navigate the challenges of becoming an experienced and skilled driver.

Find resources that support teens and parents through the entire process of learning to drive at www.TeenDriving.AAA.com



SAFETY AT THE CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

- 2 Tells you where to go!
- 5 Modern boon and bane
- 6 No time for a nap
- 7 New traffic safety "hook"
- 12 Smart following distance
- 15 Passed illegally
- 18 Denver country roads crooner
- 19 Sign of a well-mannered driver
- 21 One of the Strauss family
- 23 Famous TV defense attorney
- 24 AAA service
- 28 Big coffee container
- 29 Keeps you in your place
- 30 They go back and forth to work
- 31 America's road
- 32 Where traveling is illegal

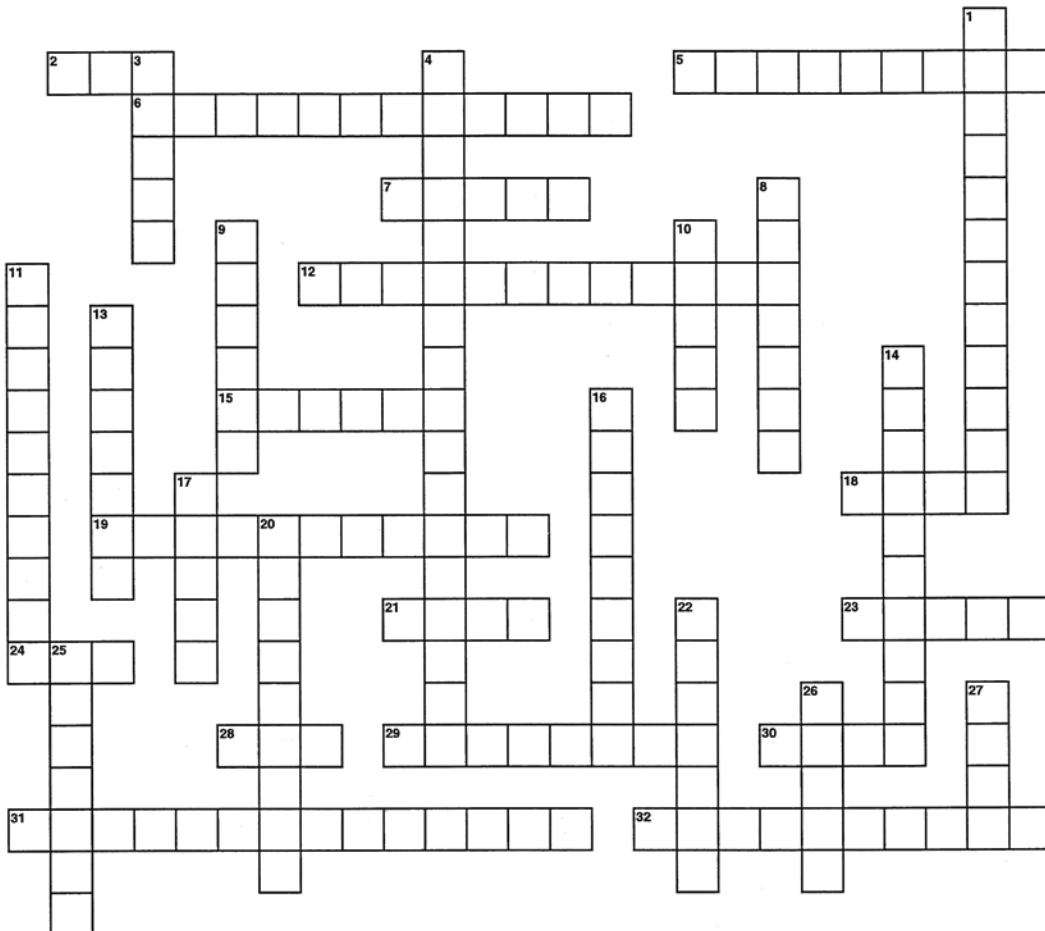
DOWN

- 1 Dangerous place to meet
- 3 Taylor who's a fresh face
- 4 Princely conveyance
- 8 In football and driving, look before _____
- 9 A wicked light
- 10 Famed Indy family of old
- 11 "Yes" classic
- 13 The best defense is a good one
- 14 Traffic safety quest to the bottom
- 16 _____ driving
- 17 "On the Road _____"
- 20 "Buggy" byway
- 22 Sally's wheels
- 25 Sneaky cause of driver drowsiness
- 26 Taylor who's got a friend
- 27 Band travel

USE THESE WORDS:

- AbbeyRoad
- Again
- Candle
- Cellphone
- Defensive
- GPS
- Intersection
- James
- John
- Jturn
- Leaked
- Levi
- Littleredcorvette
- Mason
- Mustang
- Offense
- Onthecourt
- OTCmeds
- Passing
- Roundabout
- Saws
- Seatbelt
- Signalturns
- Swift
- Threeseconds
- Tour
- Tow
- Unser
- Urn
- Venturahighway
- Whiledriving
- Zerodeaths

Answers on page 19



THE RISKS OF RURAL ROADS

Think you can let down your guard on rural roads? Not on your life! Most fatal crashes occur on wide-open rural roads. Be alert for common hazards:

- If you see a critter on the road, don't swerve! Slow down and stay in your lane. That gives the animal time to move along, or lessens the impact if you do crash.
- Watch for slow moving vehicles – on the road, entering the road, on the sides, and at driveways. Approach them cautiously and pass when it's safe to do so.
- Keep an eye out for recreational vehicles like all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Watch the roadside, shoulders and ditches for potential roadway crossers.
- Pavement edge drop-off can be an issue – that's when the shoulder is lower than the road. If your vehicle partially leaves the road, don't slam on your brakes and don't overcorrect. Stay calm, slow down and get back on the road when it's safe.
- Use extra caution on two-lane roadways. Don't crowd the center line and slow down on curves. Pass only when necessary and never in a no-passing zone.



SPOT THE CHANGES: A PATRIOTIC PUZZLE



Can you spot the six changes in this classic car parade photo?
Answers on page 19

SAY CHEESE!

A motorist was mailed a picture of his car speeding through an automated speed enforcement zone. A \$40 speeding ticket was included. Being cute, he sent the police department a picture of \$40. The police responded with another mailed photo – of handcuffs!

SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE A SIGN



The U.S. Department of Transportation sets standards for roadway signs. Different colors and shapes mean different things.



Fluorescent green = alert to school zones, pedestrians and bikes
 Green with white letters = directions and distance to different places
 Blue = information signs, alerting you to rest areas, hospitals, campgrounds and more
 Brown = guidance to recreation or cultural sites



Have you noticed that more and more roadway signs in the United States use symbols rather than words? Symbols provide instant communication, break down language barriers and are becoming standard for traffic control devices throughout the world.



NATURE TRAIL



Shapes:

Long rectangles = traffic regulations
 Octagons = stop
 Inverted triangles = yield
 Diamond = warning
 Wide rectangles = guidance, directions, distance
 Circles = railroad crossing



Here's some help to interpret the traffic sign code!



Colors:

Red = stop, yield or caution
 White = regulatory, such as speed limits or no left turn
 Yellow = warning, like railroad crossing signs
 Orange = temporary traffic control such as around road construction



WEATHER-WISE DRIVING

The weather doesn't cause crashes – but drivers who don't adjust for it can expect a bumpy ride. To improve your driving forecast, plan ahead:

- Keep the windshield clean (inside and out) and washer fluid levels high.
- Clear snow, frost and ice off all windows, head and tail lights, hood and roof.
- Make sure tires are properly inflated and that you have good tread depth.
- Use your headlights, even during the day. It helps you be seen by other drivers.
- Prepare an emergency kit and secure it inside the vehicle or trunk.

Outwit wet weather

- Don't drive through standing water – it could be deeper than you think.
- Don't use your cruise control – it's harder to maintain control.
- Don't pump anti-lock brakes – they're already doing that for you.
- Don't brake hard or turn sharply – you might lose control.
- Slow down, increase following distance and brake steady.

In a skid?

- If hard braking caused your skid, take your foot off the brake.
- Ease off the gas.
- Steer in the direction you want to go. Don't oversteer.
- When you straighten out, gently increase speed.
- Stay calm. Overreacting is the surest way to lose control.



A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

In a fog? And I'm not just talking about before that first cup of coffee. If you're driving in fog, use your low beam headlights. In day fog it might not help you see, but will help others see you.



WATCH OUT FOR THE OTHER GUY!

You can often tell when a driver might be impaired. Watch for these signs:

- ❖ Weaving, swerving or straddling the center line.
- ❖ Driving on the wrong side of the road.
- ❖ Stopping for no reason, braking irregularly or inconsistent speed.
- ❖ Turning abruptly or responding slowly to traffic signals.
- ❖ Driving with the window down in cold weather.
- ❖ Driving with headlights off at night.

If you spot a driver you think may be impaired, alert law enforcement that there is an unsafe driver on the road and follow at a safe distance, if possible.

IMPAIRMENT AND DRIVING – DON'T MIX!

It's not only alcohol that impairs driving . . . prescription and over-the-counter medications, and lack of sleep can impair your ability to drive a vehicle just as much or more than alcohol!

The thing is – impairment affects four of the abilities we need most when we drive: judgment, alertness/attention, vision and reaction time. And judgment is the first to go! So:

- Never drink and drive. Have a plan before you go out: designate a driver, use a cab or public transportation. And remember, there are no shortcuts to getting sober – it's time that eliminates alcohol from your system.
- Monitor your prescription drug use. Use the recommended dosages and always check the labels for side effects that can impair driving. If the medication could impair your driving abilities, don't drive.
- Avoid driving drowsy. Make sure you're well-rested before long drives. Try not to drive long distances at night.

Roadwise RX is a tool designed to help you learn more about your medications and how they may affect your driving. See www.roadwiserx.com.

BRAKING NEWS...

There was a man who was addicted to brake fluid, but he was in denial. He said he could stop at any time.

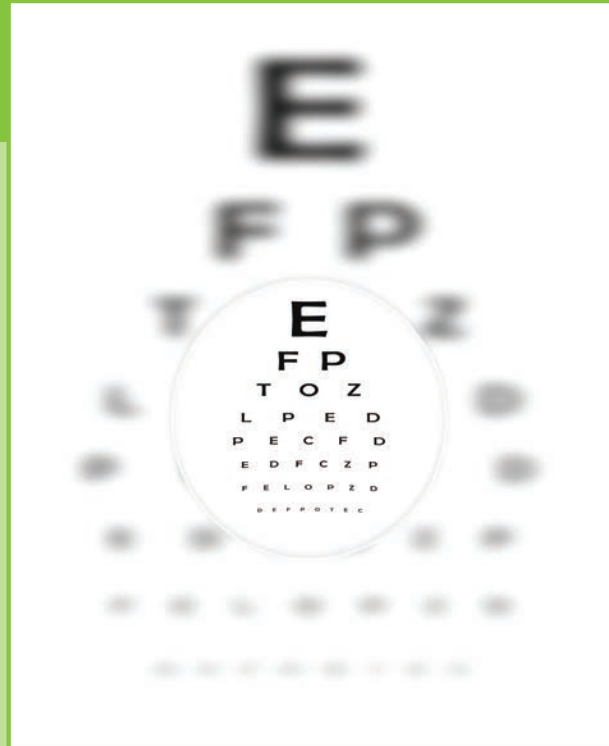
SEASONED DRIVERS: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

We've all seen it or experienced it personally – those changes that naturally occur with age. (And they start younger than you think!)

We become less flexible, so checking blind spots is more difficult. Our eyes require more light to see – up to 10 times more at 60 than when we were 20. Judging speed and distance is harder. Reaction times slow. Those changes can have a big impact on our driving. By recognizing and accepting them, we can make adjustments to our driving that will increase our safety.

Drivers of any age should self-regulate their driving. Tired? Don't drive. Been drinking? Don't drive. But setting these limits is even more important as we age. If you're uncomfortable making that left turn, then turn right and alter your route. Or drive a couple blocks up to that protected left turn lane with a signal. Can't see at night? It's simple. Don't drive. Adjust your schedule so you have all your appointments and errands done before dusk.

And the hardest one requires you to be honest with yourself. When you can't drive safely any longer, *you* decide that it's time to hang up the keys. It will be much less stressful than family members having to make that tough decision for you.



AT YOUR FINGERTIPS . . .

www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com is a comprehensive web site for seasoned drivers and their families. You'll find tools that:

- Evaluate and improve driving ability.
- Create awareness of mind and body changes.
- Help maintain mobility and independence.
- Keep you driving safely for as long as possible.

"THE TALK"

If you find yourself in the position of having that "time to quit driving" talk with a parent or family member, a few things to remember:

- ❖ As hard as it is for you to say it, it's harder for the older person to hear it.
- ❖ You may feel comfortable with family support, but the big family gathering isn't the right place. No one likes to feel ganged up on.
- ❖ Be prepared. Be ready to offer alternatives for transportation.
- ❖ If public transportation is the option, be prepared to ride along a few times to increase their comfort level.
- ❖ Make sure the reason for their driving issues isn't something that can be fixed . . . like a trip to the eye doctor or a change in medication.
- ❖ Reverse the roles. How would you feel if you had to stop driving right now?
- ❖ It won't be easy, but if you do it with compassion this bitter pill is easier to take.

CRASH SMARTS: WHAT TO DO IF IT HAPPENS

Despite your very best efforts to drive safely, it happened. You were involved in a crash. What do you do now? The most important thing to remember: Don't do anything to put yourself – or anyone else – at additional risk. So:

- Move out of the roadway if you can. You don't need to leave the vehicles where they are. The police will be able to figure out what happened.
- Determine if anyone is hurt so when you call the police you can advise on the need for an ambulance. In some circumstances, you may be instructed to simply exchange information with the other driver. Let the police dispatcher make that decision, not the other driver.
- Remain calm. Agitating an already tense situation will solve nothing.
- If witnesses stop, but won't wait for the police, get their names and contact information to provide to the police.
- Don't discuss the crash with anyone. Wait for the police.

The key is to stay safe. If you don't feel safe, remain in your vehicle and wait for the police, provided you are out of harm's way. If the other driver tries to leave, don't try to stop them. Get their description and license plate number and provide it to the police.



A TIP FROM TROOPER JACK

Pedestrians, vehicles, bikes, running kids, shopping carts, even horses! Parking lots are crazy. Slow down. Check your blind spots when backing, check them again, and then when you are done, check them again. If you're a pedestrian, always assume the vehicle driver doesn't see you.

WE'RE NOT ALONE

We've all seen them – drivers who never learned that kindergarten lesson about sharing. Here's what you need to know when you're on the road with . . .

Motorcyclists

- Seems obvious, but – *look* for motorcycles.
- Check your blind spots.
- Be aware that a motorcycle may seem farther away or moving faster than it actually is.
- Allow more following distance.

Bicyclists

- Make room – keep at least three feet away from bicyclists when passing them.
- Watch for bicyclists at driveways, alleys and intersections.
- Be extra alert in neighborhoods and around schools.

Big trucks

- Trucks create wind gusts. Keep both hands on the wheel when you pass a truck or it passes you.
- Leave at least a four-second following distance. If you're stopped behind a truck on a hill, stay back – it may roll back as the driver eases off the brake.
- Leave space if a trucker is signaling to change lanes.
- Stay out of the truck's blind spots – front, back, sides.

Pedestrians

- Watch for kids, especially around school buses.
- Yield to pedestrians in marked and unmarked crosswalks.
- Be alert when turning corners.

TRAFFIC TANGLE MAZE

Getting from here to there can be challenging, especially on unfamiliar roads. Plan ahead: Create an online map and directions, use your GPS and give yourself plenty of time. Can you find your way through this traffic tangle?

Answer on page 19



Making Minnesota A Safer Place To Live
Chapter of the National Safety Council



Iowa-Illinois Safety Council



Chapter of National Safety Council
Your Safety & Health Leader