

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

The Washington Parent Guide to Teen Driving



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Parts of this guide were developed by the Idaho Department of Education and the State of Oregon. Permission has been given to revise and reproduce for Washington State. Special thanks go to the State of Montana, and Jessica Hartos for their contributions and input.

We provide this guide to help you teach good driving habits. It has information you can use to help reduce risk. The information in this guide is not intended to be comprehensive. Use good judgment when you adapt this information to different driving situations and conditions.

welcome

to the world of teen driving

We know you want to keep your children safe. Teens are much more at-risk than the rest of the population due to their inexperience at handling driving situations. The State of Washington passed intermediate licensing laws in 2001 to keep teens safe and it's working - the number of fatalities and collisions have gone down more than 30%.

One of the best ways to keep teens safe is to make sure they have had adequate instruction. Every hour of instruction keeps them safer on the road, especially as they pass through the later stages of intermediate licensing when you're not with them.

Recent research shows that parents report more driving practice time than their teen. We know that parents mean well, but unless you are keeping track of practice time, your teen may not be completing all of the required hours. It might be tempting not to keep a log or to report more driving practice than is actually completed, but don't give in, even if your teen says they are ready to take their test. It's important to track hours because the more practice you give your teen, the safer they are.

Did you know...?

It will take more than 15 minutes of practice-time every day for 6 months to complete 50 hours of practice-driving.

It will take more than 30 minutes of practice time every day for 6 months to complete 100 hours of practice driving.

Use the driving log in the center of this book to help you track your driving time together and your teen's progress.

Teens are sometimes so focused on getting their license, they don't have the restrictions fully in mind. Restrictions include not having friends in the vehicle and not driving between 1 am and 5 am. To help you and your teen know

the details and keep the restrictions handy, the last page of this manual lists the restrictions and has a space to record the date they end. You can cut out this page and post it on your refrigerator.

It's important for teens to know what will happen if they break the intermediate license rules. With that in mind, the other side of the page that you can cut out outlines some of the major things that can happen and how these can affect the driving privilege. As you already know, one of the best ways to teach teens responsibility is to outline both the rules and the consequences for breaking them. The cut-out may help to reinforce these.

A study completed in Oregon in January, 2005, reviewed the records of 16, 17, 18, and 19-year old drivers. It compared teens who took a formal driver education course to those who chose 100 hours of driving practice with their parents. For teens who took an approved driver education course:

The collision rate was **11-21% lower**.

The traffic conviction rate was **39-57% lower**.

The driver license suspension rate was **51-53% lower**.

The best teacher is a good role model. Responsible driving is one of the most important things you can do to keep your teen safe. We hope this guide will be valuable to both you and your teen throughout your learning experience.

the Washington parent guide to teen driving



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parents' role

in the world of teen driving

What is the Parent's Role in Teen Driving?

- Knowing the intermediate license laws
- Knowing all you can about teen driving
- Supervising your teen's driving
- Establishing family driving rules and limits

Fulfilling the parent's role in teen driving is very important. Being a good role model will allow you to:

- Know you are increasing your teen's ability to drive safely.
- Know first hand how your teenager is progressing toward becoming a better driver.
- Know where your teen is and that she or he is not taking unnecessary risks.
- Talk to your teen about substance abuse.

Washington's Intermediate License law increases the safety of teen drivers by giving them more time to gain valuable driving experience before becoming fully licensed. Under this law your teen will get a "restricted" license.

Instruction Permit

Your teen:

- Must be at least 15 and enrolled in a traffic safety education course.
- Must pass a written test if 15-1/2 and not enrolled in a traffic safety education course.
- May **not** drive unless another individual that has a valid license and at least five years of driving experience supervises while sitting beside the driver.

Intermediate License

Your teen:

- Must be at least 16.
- Must pass our driver licensing exam.
- Must hold an instruction permit for at least 6 months before applying for an intermediate license.
- Must complete at least 50 hours of supervised driving, and 10 of these hours must happen at night.
- For the first 6 months cannot carry passengers younger than 20 (other than immediate family).
- For the second 6 months cannot carry more than 3 passengers younger than 20 (other than immediate family).
- For the first year, cannot drive between 1 am and 5 am unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a licensed driver who is at least 25 years old.

Restrictions are automatically lifted after 1 year if your teen:

- Has not been involved in an auto collision
- Has not been convicted of or found to have committed a rules-of-the-road traffic offense or violated any of the intermediate license restrictions.

On your teen's 18th birthday, the license automatically becomes a basic driver license, without the intermediate restrictions. There is no need to visit a driver licensing office to change it.

What Parents Need to Know

Driving Risks

Driving can be a dangerous activity for anyone; however, it is more dangerous for young drivers. Novice teen drivers are involved in collisions more than any other age group. These are some of the reasons:

- **Young age/Lack of maturity:** Teenagers can make more errors in judgment than those in other age groups. Be aware that your teen is likely to drive differently and to take more risks when you are not in the vehicle.
- **Brain development:** Teens should be the world's best drivers. Their muscles are well toned, their reaction time is quick, and their eye-hand coordination is at a peak. Yet **collisions kill more teens than any other cause** — a problem, some researchers believe, that is rooted in the adolescent brain. A National Institutes of Health study suggests that the region of the brain that inhibits risky behavior is not fully formed until age 25.
- **Risky driving behaviors:** Teenagers may engage in risky driving behaviors. These include speeding, running red and yellow lights, running stop signs, tailgating, weaving in and out of traffic, not keeping a safe distance for merging or changing lanes, misjudging gaps in traffic, and misjudging the capability of their vehicle.
- **Distractions:** Any new or inexperienced driver is challenged when faced with distractions while driving. Music, cell phones, pets, and passengers should be left at home while your teen is learning to drive.



- **Driving inexperience:** Teenagers lack driving experience. It takes a **lot** of practice to be able to safely maneuver in everyday situations and unexpected circumstances. Teens show the greatest improvement within the first year and 1,000 miles of driving. They continue to improve through their first 5,000 miles of driving.

High-Risk Driving Conditions

- **Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs:** Drinking any — yes, any — amount of alcohol is impairing. Not only is the use of alcohol and illicit drugs illegal, the combination of alcohol or drugs and driving can be deadly.
- **High speeds:** For teen drivers (especially males), most severe collisions occur at high speeds. Collision risk, severity, and force increase as speed increases.
- **Passengers:** For teen drivers, as the number of passengers increases, teen collisions increase. Driving is a “new skill” for teens, and they need to pay close attention. Teen passengers can be a major distraction. They may encourage friends to speed, to show off, or to pay too little attention to driving.
- **Nighttime driving:** For teen drivers, the most severe collisions occur at night and on weekends. Night driving is a challenge for all drivers, and teen drivers do not have the experience to anticipate and react to nighttime conditions when visibility is poor. Make sure your teen gets plenty of practice driving with you at night and in all kinds of weather. Be aware that teenagers driving at night usually lack adult supervision, carry passengers, and drive at high speeds. All of these multiply risk.
- **Safety belt non-use:** Teen drivers and passengers use safety belts less than people in other age groups do. Safety belts are important because they keep people inside the vehicle where they are the safest.

supervise

your teen driver

Driver education is the beginning of the process of learning to drive. Teens also need many hours of practice to become safer drivers.

Tips for Supervising Teen Driving

Practice, practice, practice! Practice as much as possible, even after your teen gets a license.

- **Who:** Practice with only you and your teen in the vehicle. Other people or pets can distract both of you and can also add stress. Stay calm and focused. Mistakes are part of learning, and even though practice driving is serious, it should be interesting and engaging.
- **What:** You should practice the same driving skills that your teen is learning. Begin with basic skills such as turning, parking, and backing up. Then, practice more complex skills such as changing lanes and merging.
- **When:** In the beginning, practice during daylight hours with good weather. As your teen's skills improve, gradually expose them to different roads, weather conditions, and hours of the day.
- **Where:** In the beginning, practice in safe, low-risk driving areas. Start in empty parking lots or on remote roads. As your teen's skills improve, progress to quiet neighborhood streets and later to busier roads and highways.
- **Why:** Learning to drive is a complex and ongoing process. New drivers need a lot of practice to handle daily driving hazards and unexpected situations. Teens will show the greatest improvement in the first 1,000 to 5,000 miles of driving. Both parents and teens need to be dedicated and responsible to make the most of this time.

***The leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds
in Washington is due to motor vehicle crashes***

Use a Practice Driving Log

Use the driving log in the center of this book to track your teen's practice driving and progress.

Driver Education

Formal driver education may be the most important class teenagers take. Driver education promotes critical lifelong skills, proper safety belt use, alcohol- and drug-free driving, respect, courtesy, cooperation, and healthy behaviors and choices. The Washington driver training program is saving lives, reducing injuries, and dramatically reducing the negative impacts of teen driving by making our teens better and safer drivers.

Parents, educators, state officials, students, and community members need to create powerful partnerships to support teaching and learning in every community. We need to guarantee that young drivers are taught preventive behaviors to manage risk. Since driving is a life-long skill, it is important to establish good habits early. Ask if your local school offers a driver education course. If not, there are driver training schools throughout the state. When your teen applies for a license, a Washington Traffic Safety Education Completion Certificate satisfies 30 hours of classroom and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training requirements. Your teen will still need to complete 50 hours of practice driving, and 10 of these hours must happen at night, with you or another licensed driver with at least 5 years of driving experience.

Each Time You Practice:

- **Be in the “practicing mood.”** Practice when both of you are in good moods, are well rested, and have enough time.
- **Adjust the mirrors, safety belts, seats, and steering wheel position before starting the vehicle.**
- **Always wear your safety belts.**
- **Come to a complete stop** at stop signs and at red lights.
- **Before moving from a stop**, look left, then front (straight ahead), and then right.
- **Keep your eyes moving.** Use your mirrors to check around and behind the vehicle every 6-8 seconds.
- **Keep at least a 2-4 second** space between your vehicle and others in traffic flow. Try to stay centered in your lane of travel.
- **Avoid the “No-Zone”** with trucks or buses. This is about 15 feet on all sides of the truck. If you cannot see truck drivers in their mirrors, they cannot see you either.
- **Speed increases braking distance.** Doubling your speed will quadruple your braking distance. The faster you’re going the longer it takes to stop.
- **Vehicle weight increases braking distance.** Doubling your vehicle weight will double your braking distance. If you are driving a large vehicle or towing a trailer, it takes longer to stop.



set family rules

and guidelines for driving

Washington law sets requirements for teen driving, but families need to establish further rules and limits for their teen drivers. Make sure that family rules are very clear from the beginning. Talk to your teen about driving every chance you get.

Use a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

Use a parent-teen driving agreement to establish rules and guidelines for your teen driver, and to make sure everyone is clear about them! A sample agreement can be found on our website at dol.wa.gov.

Driving Rules/Guidelines for Your Family

- **Require safety belt use:** This applies to your teen and all passengers at all times.
- **Prohibit alcohol and/or drug use:** This applies to your teen as the driver of any vehicle.
- **Prohibit riding with someone who has used alcohol or drugs:** This applies to your teen as the passenger in another vehicle.
- **Require compliance with speed limits:** Stress that this applies to all roads at all times because collisions at higher speeds kill.
- **Prohibit distractions while driving:** No cell phone use, eating, drinking, pets, or changing radio or CDs while driving.

- **Limit teen passengers:** According to Washington’s laws, with an intermediate license, your teen cannot drive with non-family passengers under age 20 for the first 6 months, and can drive with no more than 3 non-family passengers under age 20 for the second 6 months. Limiting passengers reduces distractions and the temptation of risky behavior.
- **Limit unsupervised night driving:** According to Washington’s laws, your teen cannot drive between 1 am and 5 am for the first year unless they are supervised. Statistics show that teens have a higher collision rate during these hours. Consider setting an earlier driving curfew, especially on the weekends, for the first 6 months your teen drives unsupervised.
- **Require a full report:** Ask for information about each trip before your teen leaves, including where they are going, with whom, and when they will return so that you know where they are.

Provide a Safe, Reliable Vehicle for Your Teen

- Mid- to full-size sedans and station wagons with smaller engines and airbags are safest for teen drivers.
- Under certain conditions, small trucks and SUVs may be more prone to roll-overs than other types of vehicles.
- High-performance cars may encourage teens to drive beyond their experience level.

Impose Consequences for Violating Rules and Ignoring Guidelines

- The consequence for violating rules or ignoring guidelines should be the loss of the driving privilege: for a day, weekend, week, month, etc., depending on the violation.
Consequences other than the loss of the driving privilege won’t send these messages as effectively: “You must be a responsible driver” and “I am serious about your following the rules and limits for driving.”
- Requiring your teen to complete additional supervised practice is an option worth considering.

Make consequences known: Set consequences for violations *before they occur* so that your teen knows what to expect. The following are common violations:

- Getting a speeding ticket.
- Coming home after curfew.
- Lying about whereabouts.
- Violating passenger restrictions.

before

you even begin

In 2005 Washington teens were twice as likely as other drivers to be involved in a collision. So, before you even get into the vehicle, make sure that both you and your teen understand the basics.

Teen Driver Training Orientation

Before you begin training, make sure you know common teen driving errors and ways you can help your teen be a better driver.

Top 10 Driving Errors

- Inattention to the path of travel
- Driving five or more miles per hour too fast for conditions
- Driving too fast through a curve
- Inadequate search or inattention at an intersection and failing to yield to cross traffic
- Improper evasive action — quick turn not done correctly
- Failure to look far enough ahead
- Failure to see action developing at the side of the roadway
- Following too closely
- Failure to yield right-of-way
- Being distracted

Aggressive Driving

Drivers who routinely speed, run red lights and stop signs, tailgate, and otherwise disregard the safety of other motorists are turning streets and highways into high-risk areas. Aggressive driving can easily escalate into road rage. We're all too familiar with stories of motorists who've killed or injured other drivers for seemingly trivial reasons.

When is it Aggressive Driving?

The following attitudes and behaviors indicate that problem driving behaviors are related to aggression rather than inexperience:

- Constant rushing, lane jumping, and the need to “get ahead.”
- Ignoring road signs and regulations.
- Constantly ridiculing and criticizing other drivers.
- Denying entry into your lane or preventing passing.
- Speeding past another vehicle, revving engine.
- Tailgating so others go faster or get out of your way.
- Honking, yelling, or making visible, insulting gestures.

When You Are Confronted by Aggressive Drivers:

- First and foremost, make every attempt to get out of their way.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge them by speeding up or attempting to “hold-your-own” in your travel lane.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- Report aggressive drivers to the proper authorities by giving a vehicle description, license number, location, and if possible, the direction of travel.
- If you have a cell phone and can use it safely, call 911.

Parent Tips for Training Your Teen Driver

Set a good example

You should always model correct, legal driving behavior for your teen driver. Also, make sure you and your teen are familiar with all controls and safety devices in each of the family vehicles.

Expect that your teen will make mistakes

Making mistakes is part of learning so be positive and calm. Try to separate physical errors (like turning the wheel too soon) from mental errors (like not detecting a problem) and coach your teen accordingly. Always praise correct driving behaviors.

Give directions clearly, calmly, and well in advance

Explain why and how to do things in a soft, steady voice.

Do not assume your teenager knows what you want them to do.

Stay focused and ready

Remember, you are the responsible driver of the car so constantly scan the driving scene and be ready to react to any driving situation.

- Make sure that you verbally guide your teen through situations well in advance of trouble
- If necessary, be ready to react to any driving situation and assist with verbal or physical steering guidance..

Vehicle Safety Features

It is important that you and your teen understand the safety features in each of your vehicles. **Together, read your vehicle manuals for information about, and the proper use of, vehicle safety features.**

Safety Belts

In 2005 and 2006, Washington averaged 471 traffic fatalities yearly. More than 1 in 3 victims were not wearing safety belts.

Washington law requires children under 8 years old to be in a child safety or booster seat unless they are 4'9" or taller. Children under age 13 must ride in the back seat where it is practical to do so. Air bags were designed to work for adult-sized people, and they can be lethal to children.

Each of the following can significantly reduce injuries in the event of a collision. **Practice each of these with your teen:**

- Read manufacturer's instructions for proper use of safety belts and car seats.
- Wear safety belts.
- Have children under age 13 sit in the back seat.
- Place children correctly in proper child restraints.

Air bags

Airbags and safety belts are designed to be used together. Air bags and safety belts keep you in the safest positions during a collision. Depending on your vehicle, you may have front or side air bags or both.

Air bags can deploy at speeds of up to 200 mph and temperatures of almost 500 degrees. The deployment and deflation happens faster than the eye can see. Front and side impacts will activate air bags.

Proper Procedures for Use

- Read vehicle manuals to know where airbags are located and when and how they deploy.
- Sit at least 10 inches from the steering wheel.

Does your Vehicle have Antilock Brake Systems (ABS)?

Most vehicles made in the last 10 years have antilock brake systems. ABS is designed to help a driver maintain control during emergency braking situations by keeping the tires from locking up. However, it does not make a vehicle stop more quickly. In fact, the rolling traction may produce longer stopping distances on some dry or limited traction surfaces such as loose gravel or fresh snow.

Some vehicles are equipped with ABS on all 4 wheels. Others, such as light pickup trucks, only have ABS on the rear wheels. Check your vehicle manuals to see if you have ABS and if so, on which wheels.

How Do You Use ABS?

Vehicles with ABS require the foot to remain firmly on the brake pedal when braking hard. This allows the system to automatically pump the brakes faster than any person could. The system usually activates at speeds above 10 mph.

- **With ABS on all 4 wheels**, do not pump the brakes. Keep firm pressure on the brake, and if needed, steer away from the hazard using a minimum amount of steering.
- **With ABS on the rear wheels only**, the front wheels can lock up. Pump the brakes to avoid lock-up.

Know the Vehicle

You and your teen need to be familiar with the vehicle controls and should be able to make certain that the vehicle is safe to operate.

Vehicle Controls

In each of your vehicles, have your teen practice and then demonstrate the ability to operate each of the following without looking at the controls:

- Transmission
- Turn signals
- Headlights—low and high beams
- Climate controls
- Defrost—front and back
- Door locks
- Window controls
- Parking brake—set and release levers
- Brake and gas pedals

Vehicle Readiness

In each of your vehicles, have your teen practice and then demonstrate the ability to make certain that the vehicle is safe to operate. Check that the:

- Windows and headlights are clear
- Tires are properly inflated
- Mechanical condition has been checked regularly
- Loose objects get secured in the trunk
- Parking brake works
- Signal lights and brake lights work

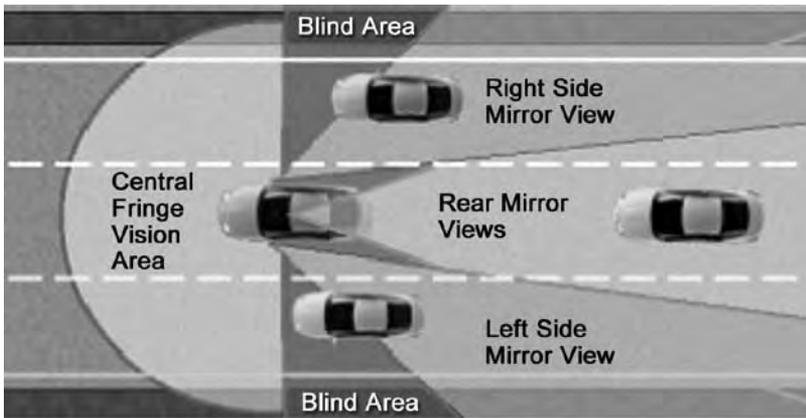
Blind Spots

Coach your teen to be aware of blind spots and regularly scan them.

They should:

1. Check to the rear with the inside mirror.
2. Check to the sides with the side-view mirrors.
3. Make a blind spot check in the area slightly beyond the driver's peripheral field of vision.
4. Look out of the front side windows, not the rear side windows, when checking the mirror blind spot areas.

New drivers tend to move the steering wheel in the direction they move their head. Watch for this and correct if necessary.



An Exercise to Become Familiar with Blind Spots



The following exercise shows the area around the vehicle the driver cannot see:

- While your teen is sitting in the driver's seat with the engine off, get out of the vehicle and stand close to the front bumper facing the driver.
- Begin taking steps backward and have your teen tap the horn when he or she can see your feet.
- Place a cone or cup in that spot. This is the pavement area in front of the vehicle that cannot be seen when looking out of the windshield.
- Ask the driver to use the inside mirror and/or to look over the right shoulder, and repeat this process to the rear of the vehicle.
- Walk backwards from the passenger doors on the left and right sides of the vehicle and place cups or cones to mark the side areas visible to the driver.
- Have your teen measure these distances and record them.

basic

driving skills

The basic driving skills in this section are the cornerstone of safe and responsible driving. Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate these basic driving skills.

Automatic or Manual Transmission?

If possible, new drivers should first learn the basic controls in a vehicle with automatic transmission and then learn to drive a standard shift vehicle.

Steering Control

Modern vehicles require very little steering to turn. Look at the steering wheel as a clock face and place your left hand between 8 and 9 o'clock and right hand between 3 and 4 o'clock. These are the desired hand positions that help keep you from turning the wheel too sharply.

To reduce forearm and hand injuries, hands should be placed on the lower



half of the steering wheel, with knuckles on the outside and thumbs stretched along the rim of the steering wheel.

Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate the following three steering techniques:

Pull-Push Steering

Use pull-push steering for most turning maneuvers. Put your hands in the 8 and 4 o'clock positions. Pull down with one hand and push up with the other. This results in smooth steering and reduces the potential for too much steering, which can lead to loss of control. Keep the hands and thumbs on the outside of the wheel.

Hand-Over-Hand Steering

Use hand-over-hand steering when steering movements are critical. Use it when parking, making sharp right turns, and correcting a skid. Use quick movements when beginning the maneuver, and then use slow smooth movements when straightening the wheel. Steering errors are directly related to vision errors.

One-Hand Steering

Use one-hand steering for backing maneuvers that do not require full left or right turns, or when operating vehicle controls for information, safety, or comfort.

Speed Control

Speed control techniques are used to make smooth starts, stops, and turns. These improve fuel efficiency and personal comfort. These keep the vehicle balanced, increasing vehicle



control and decreasing risk to yourself and others. *Cruise control is not recommended for the beginning driver.*

Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate the following acceleration and braking techniques:

Light Acceleration

Light acceleration is achieved by putting light pressure on the gas pedal. Use it to make smooth starts and to begin turns that require a stop.

Progressive Acceleration

Progressive acceleration is achieved by steadily increasing pressure on the gas pedal. Use it to get your speed up to the limit. Continue to apply the gas until you have reached your desired speed, then use steady, even pressure to keep it.

Cover Brake

Cover braking is achieved by placing the ball of your right foot so that it “hovers” over the brake pedal. Use it when you anticipate braking.

Controlled Brake

Controlled braking is achieved by applying firm, steady, and even pressure on the brake pedal. Use it in non-emergency situations. Apply the brake to the point of resistance, then use steady, even pressure.

Trail Brake

Trail braking is achieved by slightly decreasing pressure on the brake pedal. Use it during the last two seconds of a stop in order to avoid any jerky sensations, to back up, to inch forward, to drive at a walking pace, and to begin a moving turn.

Threshold Brake

Threshold braking is achieved by applying maximum force to the brake pedal without locking the wheels. Use it in emergency situations.

Lane Positions

Lane positions refer to where your vehicle is in the lane (it does not refer to changing lanes).

Lane positions are used to communicate your intentions to other drivers and position your vehicle for a driving maneuver.

Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate the following three lane positions:

Lane Position 1

Lane position 1 is in the center of the lane. This position allows for the best separation and distance from obstacles (such as vehicles, curbs, and so on) to the right and left.

Use lane position 1 for normal driving conditions if you have no plan to change driving maneuvers.

Lane Position 2

Lane position 2 is the left side of the lane. This position allows for the best separation from obstacles on the right and helps to improve your **line of sight**.

Use lane position 2 for left turns and parking on the left.

Lane Position 3

Lane position 3 is the right side of the lane. This position allows for the best separation from obstacles on the left and helps to improve your **line of sight**.

Use lane position 3 for parking on the right.



Following Time

Following time is important for many reasons. You need enough distance between you and the vehicle in front of you to have time to react in an emergency.

Make sure your teenager learns, practices, and can demonstrate the ability to judge speed and distance by using following time.

Determine Following Time

To determine following time, watch as the vehicle in front of you passes a stationary object, such as a road sign. Then, start counting “one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, three-one-thousand, four-one-thousand,” until you reach the same object. “One-one-thousand” is about one second.

Maintain 2-4 Seconds of Following Time

Follow at 2 or more seconds when traveling at speeds under 30 mph.

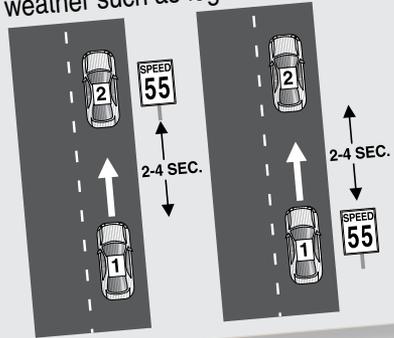
Follow at 4 or more seconds when traveling:

- At speeds over 30 mph
- In congested traffic
- In poor weather conditions
- Behind a motorcycle, truck, or bus

Definitions

Line of sight: what you can see in any area you are looking. If you are going forward it is the area you can see in the front of the vehicle. If you are backing it is the area you see to the rear.

Line of sight obstacles: anything that restricts your view and the ability to gather accurate information. Examples include curves in the road, hill crests, bushes, signs, parked vehicles, large vehicles, and inclement weather such as fog and rain.



Make Speed and Space Adjustments

- Anytime the driver in front of you reduces speed, adjust your following time so you can see at least 12-15 seconds ahead.
- When traffic or environmental conditions warrant, increase following time.
- Change position within the lane to increase **line of sight**.

Searching Skills

A common cause of poor driving and collisions is failing to see the problem. Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate searching skills including: searching intersections, and reading signs, signals, markings, and the instrument panel. One-third of all collisions happen at intersections.

See a Clear Path

Before you step on the gas, always choose your **path of travel** and be sure that it is clear before moving the vehicle in that direction.

Turn Your Head

Before turning the steering wheel, turn your head in the direction you intend to travel. When you look to see what is in your **path of travel** before you move the vehicle in that direction, there should be no surprises and no need for quick, unplanned maneuvers, such as slamming on your brakes or making sudden lane changes.

Check Your Blind Spot

Do a chin-to-shoulder turn of your head before you pull into traffic, or change lanes.

Do a 360 Degree Search

Physically turn your head and body to look all the way around your vehicle before you move in reverse or parallel park.

Search Area for Potential Problems

Look for any changes or obstacles. Search 20-30 seconds ahead of the vehicle to gather information about your **path of travel**. Search 12-15 seconds ahead of the vehicle to plan your **path of travel** and keep 2-4 seconds following time.

Check the Rearview Mirror

Check the rearview mirror after seeing a change to conditions ahead of you, before and after braking, while stopped in traffic, before and after turning, and before and after changing lanes.

Definitions

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Path of travel: the area you want the vehicle to go to.

Path of travel obstacles: anything that interferes with your vehicle going where you want it to go. Examples include stop signs, speed bumps, yield signs, red or yellow traffic lights, pedestrians, motorcycles, bicycles, animals, and vehicles to the front, rear, and side.

Communication with Other Drivers

Always communicate your intentions to other drivers. Make sure your teen knows the communication options and when to use them.

Turn signals: Use turn signals to communicate in which direction you plan to travel.

Lane positions: Use lane positions to communicate your plans to change driving maneuvers.

Headlights: Use headlights to be more visible to others.

Horn: Use the horn whenever it can prevent a collision. Do not use it to encourage someone to drive faster or get out of your way, to greet friends, or around blind pedestrians, bicyclists, or when approaching horses.

Use of Headlights

Washington law requires headlights to be on from 1/2 hour after sunset until a 1/2 hour before sunrise. You must also use headlights any time conditions make it difficult to see other people or vehicles.

Low Beam Headlights

Use low beam headlights when traveling:

- At all times if possible
- During the day, especially at dawn or dusk
- On heavily traveled roads with traffic going in both directions
- At night in well-lit areas
- In fog, rain, snow, or mist
- When following 300 feet or less behind another vehicle

High Beam Headlights

Use high beam headlights when traveling at night in dimly lit areas when there are no oncoming vehicles.

Switch From High to Low Beams

Switch from high to low beams when a vehicle approaches you in the opposite direction at night. Washington law requires you to dim your high beams whenever an oncoming vehicle is within 500 feet.

If the other driver fails to switch to low beams, you need to slow down, use **lane position 3**, and move your eyes to the right edge of the road until the vehicle passes. **Do not look into oncoming headlights or flash high beam lights at others.** Headlight glare can temporarily blind you.

Definition

Lane position 3: the right side of the lane.

step-by-step

maneuvers

The step-by-step maneuvers in this section are similar to those taught in formal driver education classes in Washington.

First Things First

It is important to start with the proper procedures for entering the vehicle, making adjustments, starting the vehicle, and securing the vehicle. Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate these procedures before you begin practice driving.

Entering the Vehicle

Be Well Rested and Alert

Never drive a vehicle when you are tired or sleepy, emotionally upset, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter medicines).

Have Key In Hand

When you know you are going to your vehicle, have your key out in your hand. For your personal safety, **never** search through your clothes or purse for your keys at your vehicle. Spend as little time as possible trying to open your vehicle.

Approach with Awareness

As you approach your vehicle, check around it. Then, look inside to ensure no one has entered your vehicle and is waiting for you. You should park in well-lit areas away from places where someone could be hiding (bushes, vans, and so on). Your personal safety could be at risk!

Lock All Doors

The moment you enter your vehicle, lock all doors before you insert the key into the ignition. Someone can easily jump into an unlocked vehicle.

Insert the key into the ignition but do not start it yet!

Making Adjustments

Adjust Seat Position

1. Place the seat so that your torso is at least 10 inches from the steering wheel, and your arms are bent less than 90 degrees at the elbow.
2. Put the ball of your right foot on the brake pedal. From your foot position, make sure you have full range of motion in your ankle, can fully depress the brake without your heel coming off the floor, and can pivot on your heel to put the ball of your foot on the gas pedal.
3. Make adjustments for best vehicle control and personal comfort.

Adjust Safety Belts

- Put the seat back up straight.
- Sit up straight with your hips and back against the seat.
- Adjust the lap portion of the seat belt low across your hips and pelvis—**never** across your stomach.
- Adjust the shoulder portion across your chest and collarbone—**never** across the front of your neck or face, behind your back, or under your arm.
- Make sure the lap and shoulder belts are snug.

Adjust Wheel Tilt

If you have an adjustable steering wheel, tilt it down so that the top of the wheel is no higher than the top of your shoulders.

Adjust Head Restraint

To best protect you from whiplash injuries, you should adjust the head restraint so that the top is no higher than the top of your ears.

Adjust the Mirrors

This technique significantly reduces the size of typical blind spots. This setting is great for eliminating headlight glare too!

- **To adjust the driver-side mirror**, place your head against the driver's side window and adjust the mirror out until you can just see down the left side of your vehicle.
- **To adjust the passenger-side mirror**, lean your head to the right and in line with the inside rearview mirror. Then adjust the right outside mirror out until you can just see down the right side of the vehicle.
- **To adjust the rearview mirror** sit straight up with your hips and back against the seat, and adjust to get the best view out the back window.

Note: Mirrors do not completely eliminate **blind spots**. Always do a chin-to-shoulder turn of your head to check **blind spots** before ever making a lateral maneuver.

Definition

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Starting the Vehicle

1. Make sure the transmission is in "PARK" and the parking brake is set.
2. Place your right foot on the brake and hold it down.
3. Turn the key halfway to the "ON" position and allow the onboard computer to boot up.
4. Check gauges and warning lights.

5. Then turn the key the rest of the way to the “START” position and release immediately.
6. Keep your headlights on when necessary to be visible to other drivers.
7. Turn on other necessary accessories – climate control, wipers, and so on.
8. Before entering traffic, release the parking brake and signal. Check mirrors, look over your shoulder to check your blind spot and go when clear.

Secure the Vehicle After Driving

1. Place your right foot on the brake and hold it down.
2. Set the parking brake.
3. Shift the transmission to “PARK.”
4. Turn off all accessories – lights, wipers, climate control, and so on.
5. Turn off the vehicle and remove your key from the ignition.

Backing

Backing increases the risk of a collision because it is more difficult to see obstacles behind you. Backing also requires space to maneuver because your back tires do not turn.

When given the choice, position your vehicle so you can pull forward instead.

Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate proper backing procedures.

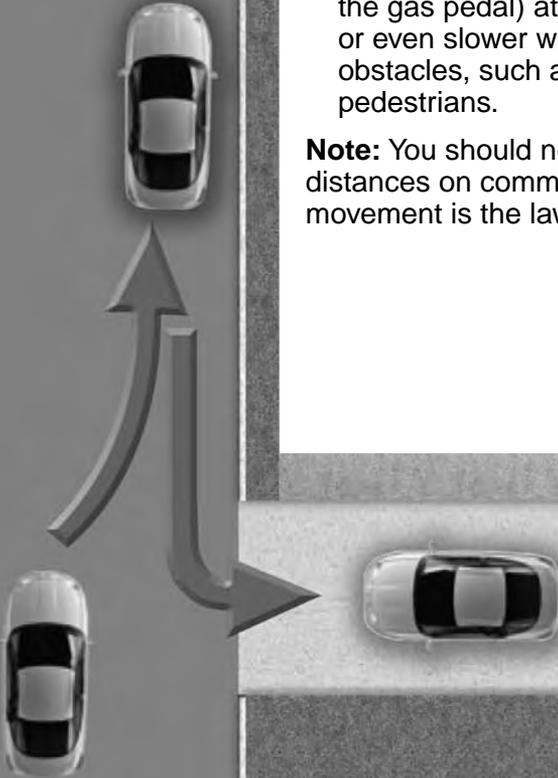
Common Errors

- Improper body position
- Speed is too fast
- Fails to check that the path of travel is clear
- Fails to look back during the maneuver until the vehicle is **completely stopped**
- Steers incorrectly

Backing Up Straight

1. Put your right foot firmly on the brake pedal.
2. Shift to “REVERSE” and release the parking brake.
3. Do a **360 degree search** to make sure it is **all clear!**
4. Yield to **all** pedestrians and vehicles.
5. Hold the steering wheel at the 12 o'clock position.
6. Twist your body and look over your right shoulder continuously while backing with occasional side to front glances.
7. **Trail brake** (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) at a walking pace or even slower when you are near obstacles, such as vehicles and pedestrians.

Note: You should never back up long distances on common roadways—forward movement is the law!



Backing Turns

1. Put one hand at the 12 o'clock position and turn your head in the direction you intend the rear of the vehicle to travel.
 - **When turning the rear of the vehicle to the right**, look back over your right shoulder.
 - **When turning the rear of the vehicle to the left**, look back over your left shoulder.
2. Continue to look over your shoulder and trail brake (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) while moving at a walking pace.
3. Begin the turn when the center of the rear tire is aligned with the curb or edge of the road.

Definitions

360 degree search: physically turn your head and body to look all the way around your vehicle.

Trail brake: a slight decrease of pressure on the brake pedal.

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Path of travel: the area you want the vehicle to go to.



Backing into a Driveway

- Signal once you've found a place to pull over.
- Check your rearview mirror and **blind spot** for traffic and pedestrians.
- Leave the traffic lane and stop within 18 inches of the curb.
- Shift to "REVERSE" and complete a **360 degree search** to make sure it is **all clear**.
- Look over your shoulder and **trail brake** (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) move at a walking pace.
- Begin the turn when the center of the rear tire is aligned with the curb.

Backing Out of a Driveway

1. With your right foot on the brake pedal, shift to "REVERSE."
2. Do a **360 degree search** to make sure it is **all clear**.
3. Look over your shoulder and **trail brake** (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) at a walking pace.
4. Stop short of your intended **path of travel** (for example, before a sidewalk or the roadway). Stop before entering the roadway and make sure you yield to all traffic and pedestrians.
5. Do another **360 degree search** and when clear, continue to look over your shoulder and **trail brake**.
6. Begin the turn when you think the center of the rear tire is aligned with the curb.
7. Complete the turn in the smallest amount of space.
8. Step on the brake and shift to "DRIVE."

Parking

Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate parking in different situations.

Note: Parking is ALWAYS prohibited in the following situations:

- In front of driveways
- Within 15 feet of fire hydrants
- In or near intersections
- On a sidewalk or crosswalk
- Within 30 feet of a traffic signal, stop sign, or yield sign
- Within 20 feet of a pedestrian safety zone

Entering Angle Parking

Common Errors When Entering Angle Parking

- Fails to signal
- The vehicle is too close to parking space on the side
- Fails to see traffic in the rear
- Speed is too fast
- Fails to target to the center of space

Proper Procedures for Entering Angle Parking

1. Signal.
2. Slow or stop the vehicle at least 6-8 feet from the parking space.
3. Check your **blind spot** on the side of the parking space for traffic and pedestrians.
4. Begin turning when you can see the center of the parking space without your line of sight (or view) cutting across the parking line.



- 
5. Drive very slowly and turn the wheel sharply toward the center of the space.
 6. Once you enter the space, straighten the wheels and center the vehicle in the space.
 7. Stop even with the curb or parking line.
 8. Secure your vehicle.

Exiting Angle Parking

Common Errors When Exiting Angle Parking

- Fails to check rear
- Fails to signal
- Speed is too fast
- Fails to look back while backing
- Starts turning before bumper is cleared

Proper Procedures for Exiting Angle Parking

1. With your foot on the brake, shift to "REVERSE."
2. Do a 360 degree search and yield to all traffic and pedestrians.
3. Look over your shoulder and trail brake (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) at a walking pace.
4. Check your front for clearance.
5. Begin turning when your front bumper is even with the rear bumper of the parked vehicle to your left or when the dash of your vehicle appears to clear the vehicle to the side.
6. Continue to look to the rear while backing into the nearest lane.
7. Stop smoothly and shift to "DRIVE."

Perpendicular Parking

Common High-Risk Errors

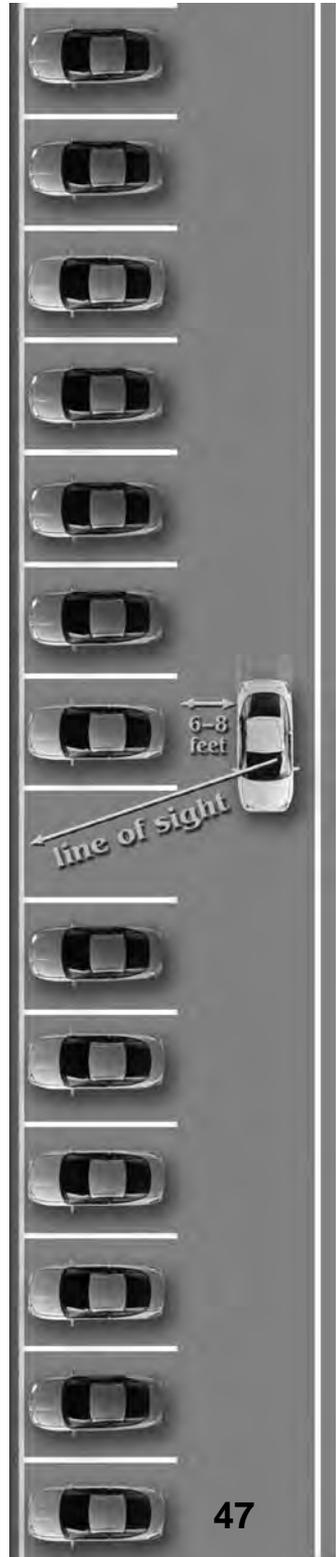
- Fails to approach and align to space correctly
- Fails to search for, communicate with, or yield to other traffic
- Speed is too fast
- Forgets to shift to “REVERSE”
- Fails to straighten wheels and align in middle of space

Proper Procedures for Perpendicular Parking

- Signal and get 6 to 8 feet from the parked vehicles or as far to the left of the lane as possible.
- Check traffic behind you.
- Drive very slowly and turn the wheel sharp to the right of the space.
- Check your right rear fender for clearance.
- Straighten the wheel when you are centered in the space.
- If necessary, shift to “REVERSE” and creep back slightly turning the wheel to the left.
- Use a forward reference point to avoid hitting a curb.

Consider Backing into the Space

- It's safer to drive out of a space
- Requires less time and space
- Better view when leaving the space
- Avoids backing out into traffic
- Others are more likely to let you out



Backing into Perpendicular Parking Space

Common High-Risk Errors

- Fails to approach and align to space correctly
- Fails to search for, communicate with, or yield to other traffic
- Speed is too fast when turning to a 45 degree angle or backing
- Forgets to shift to "REVERSE"
- Fails to straighten wheels and align in middle of space

Proper Procedures for Backing into Perpendicular Parking

1. Signal to the right.
2. Slow the vehicle and approach the space 3 feet from the parking space.
3. Stop when the driver's body appears to be aligned in the center of the parking space.
4. Signal to the left and check for traffic and pedestrians.
5. Drive very slowly and turn the wheel fast to the left and move to a 45-degree angle to the space.
6. Stop. Shift to reverse.
7. Look over right shoulder to check alignment into space.
8. Drive very slowly and turn the wheel sharp toward the center of the space.
9. Once you enter the space, straighten the wheels and center the vehicle in the space.
10. Stop even with the curb or parking line.



Advantages of Backing into the Space

- Requires less time and space.
- Better line of sight while leaving the space.
- Avoids backing out into traffic.
- Others are more likely to let you out into traffic flow.

Parallel Parking

Entering a Parallel Parking Space

1. Check the rearview mirror and signal.
2. Stop 2-3 feet beside the front vehicle and line up rear bumpers.
3. Shift to “REVERSE.”
4. Look over your shoulder and **trail brake** (do not accelerate using the gas pedal) at a walking pace.
5. Look back while inching back and turn wheel fully toward the curb.
6. When the vehicle is 45 degrees to the curb, and your front wheels align with the back wheels of the other vehicle, straighten the tires and slowly back up in a straight line.
7. Check the front of your vehicle to make sure it clears.
8. When your left rear bumper is even with the rear vehicle left front bumper, turn wheels sharply left and continue to inch back.
9. When parallel to the curb, straighten wheels and center your vehicle in the space.

Exiting a Parallel Parking Space

1. Reverse and inch back until you can see the front vehicle’s rear tires.
2. Check your **blind spot** for pedestrians and traffic.



3. Signal and yield to other traffic.
4. Search your intended **path of travel** and enter the nearest travel lane when clear.
5. Cancel signal and check rearview mirror.

Common Parallel Parking Errors

- Approaches too close or too fast
- Fails to shift to “REVERSE”
- Fails to look back while moving back
- Begins turning too early
- Fails to check front swing for clearance

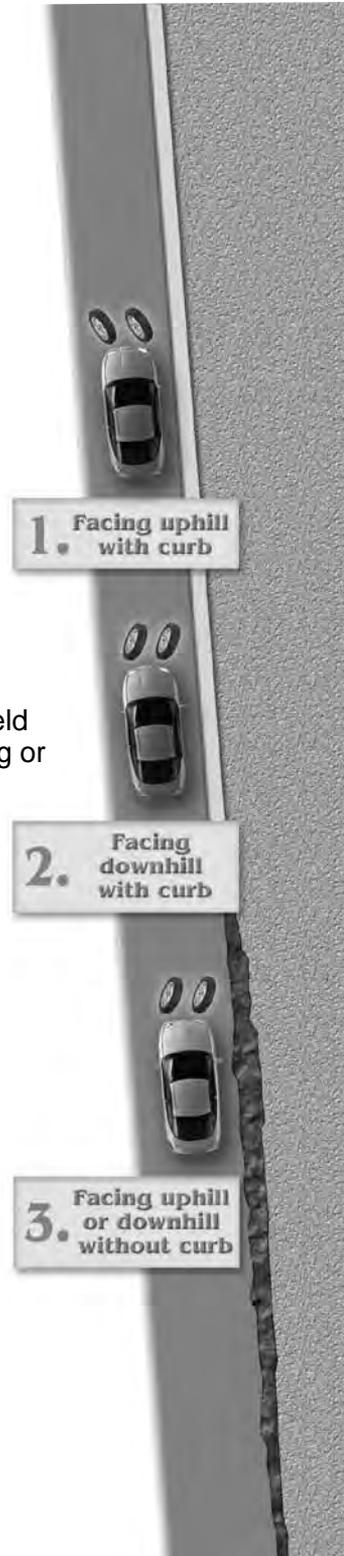
Parking on Hills

Common Errors for Parking on Hills

- Fails to search for, communicate with, or yield to other traffic and pedestrians when entering or exiting the roadway
- Speed is too fast on approach
- Fails to set parking brake when securing the vehicle

Good Habits/Proper Procedures for Parking on Hills

1. Choose a legal space and signal.
2. Check your review mirror and **blind spot**.
3. Apply the brake and approach parallel to and 12 inches from the curb.
4. Make a smooth stop and shift to “NEUTRAL.”



5. Turn the wheels in the proper direction.

- **If facing uphill with curb**, turn wheels left, toward the roadway (Figure 1.)
- **If facing downhill with curb**, turn wheel right, away from the roadway (Figure 2.)
- **If there is no curb**, turn wheels right, away from the roadway (Figure 3.)

6. Secure vehicle by shifting to “PARK” and setting your parking brake.

Definitions

Trail brake: a slight decrease of pressure on the brake pedal.

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Path of travel: the area you want the vehicle to go to.

Turns

Make sure your teen practices and can demonstrate proper right and left turns. As you practice:

- Stop at intersections at the marked stop line. If there is no line, then stop at the crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, then stop at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where you have a view of approaching traffic.
- **Always** look to the left, to the front, to the right, and then to the left again before entering any intersection.
- Make **all** turns from the nearest legal lane into the nearest legal lane!

Right Turns *With* a Required Stop

Common Errors for Right Turns *With* a Required Stop

- Stops over legal stop area
- Fails to turn head before turning wheel
- Turns wheel before starting forward motion
- Turns into wrong lane
- Travels in or cuts across the bike lane
- Travels in on-street parking spaces

Proper Procedures for Right Turns *With* a Required Stop

1. Signal, check mirrors and **blind spot**. Check the right blind spot to move right and the left blind spot to move left.
2. Use **controlled braking** and allow enough space on the right to avoid hitting the curb when turning, about 3 feet from the right edge of the roadway. Be careful not to drive in parking spaces or bike lanes.
3. Stop and search the intersection for vehicles, pedestrians and hazards.
4. Turn your head in the direction of the turn before turning the wheel.
5. Use **light acceleration** and begin to turn when the dashboard is aligned with the curb.
6. Straighten and use **progressive acceleration** to target speed.
7. Check rearview mirror.

Right Turns *Without* a Required Stop

Common Errors for Right Turns *Without* a Required Stop

- Late or no signal use
- Confusion of right-of-way, fails to yield
- Fails to search intersection in all directions
- Fails to search before turning wheel
- Turns into incorrect lane
- Accelerates too early

Definitions

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Controlled brake: firm, steady, even pressure on the brake pedal.

Light acceleration: light pressure on the gas pedal.

Progressive acceleration: a steady increase in pressure on the gas pedal.

Trail brake: a slight decrease of pressure on the brake pedal.

Proper Procedures for Right Turns *Without* a Required Stop

1. Signal, check mirrors and **blind spot**. Check the right blind spot to move right.
2. Use **controlled braking** in a position about 3 feet from curb, parked vehicle, parking space or bike lane.
3. Search intersection in all directions for vehicles, pedestrians and hazards.
4. Turn your head in the direction of the turn *before turning the wheel*.
5. Begin the turn when the dashboard is aligned with the curb.
6. **Trail brake** until halfway through the turn.
7. Straighten and use **progressive acceleration** to target speed.
8. Check rearview mirror.



Left Turns *With* a Required Stop

Common Errors for Left Turns *With* a Required Stop

- Fails to make a complete stop
- Stops over the legal stop point
- Stops too close to the vehicle ahead
- Fails to yield to pedestrians
- Cuts across the center yellow line when turning left

Proper Procedures for Left Turns *With* a Required Stop

1. Use **controlled braking** and approach in **Lane Position 2**.
2. Stop at the marked stop line, pedestrian crosswalk, or at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where you have a view of approaching traffic
3. Search the intersection for vehicles, pedestrians, and hazards.
4. Turn your head in the direction of the turn *before turning the steering wheel*.
5. Begin turn when your line of sight (or view) to the center of your intended lane does not cut across the curb line.
6. Use **light acceleration** while turning the steering wheel.
7. Straighten and use **progressive acceleration** to target speed.
8. Check rearview mirror.

Left Turns *Without* a Required Stop

Common Errors for Left Turns *Without* a Required Stop

- Confusion of right-of-way
- Late or no signal
- Fails to check blind spot
- Fails to search the intersection for traffic and pedestrians
- Too much steering
- Late steering recovery
- Turns into an incorrect lane
- Brakes too hard
- Accelerates too soon or too much

Proper Procedures for Left Turns *Without* a Required Stop

1. Signal, check mirrors and **blind spot**.
2. Use **controlled braking** and **Lane Position 2**.
3. Search the intersection for vehicles, pedestrians, and hazards.
4. Turn your head in the direction of the turn *before turning the wheel*.
5. Begin turning when the front bumper is even with the curb line.
6. Turn into the **nearest** legal lane of travel.
7. **Trail brake** until halfway through the turn.
8. Straighten and use **progressive acceleration** to reach the proper speed.
9. Check rearview mirror.

Definitions

Controlled brake: firm, steady, even pressure on the brake pedal.

Lane position 2: the left side of the line.

Light acceleration: light pressure on the gas pedal.

Progressive acceleration: a steady increase in pressure on the gas pedal.

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Trail brake: a slight decrease of pressure on the brake pedal.



Bicycles on the Roadway

- Obey speed limits. Excessive speed is a factor in a high number of collisions involving cyclists.
- Be aware of how wide your vehicle is when passing a cyclist. Don't pass too close.
- You may move your vehicle into a bike lane to make a right turn if it is unoccupied. You may not use the bike lane for a right turn if it is occupied by a bicyclist. It's illegal and may impede a cyclist. Remember, cyclists cannot stop as fast as you can.
- Cyclists can travel at high speeds, often as fast as other traffic. Don't assume there is more time to turn in front of a cyclist than in front of a vehicle.

complex

driving skills

AFTER your teen masters starting and stopping the vehicle, backing, parking, and turns, then practice more complex driving skills. Make sure your teen learns, practices, and can demonstrate advanced driving skills to your satisfaction.

Changing Lanes

Common Errors When Changing Lanes

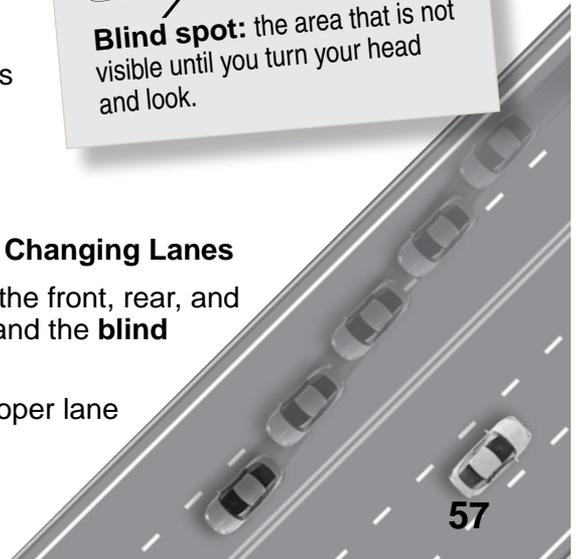
- Fails to check front, rear, and sides for a stable gap
- Too little space or time to move into the new lane
- Fails to signal
- Steers too quickly, too much or not smooth and gradual into the new lane
- Needless slowing
- Fails to cancel signal
- Exceeds speed limit
- Crosses multiple lanes at one time
- Drifts while checking blind spot

Definition

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Proper Procedures for Changing Lanes

1. Check mirrors and to the front, rear, and sides of your vehicle and the **blind spot** for a stable gap.
2. Signal and use the proper lane position.



3. Check your **blind spot** again.
4. Maintain your speed or increase speed if necessary — **Never slow unless you need to.**
5. Move to the new lane purposefully and gradually at a slight angle.
6. Adjust speed to surrounding traffic.
7. Cancel the turn signal.
8. Check the rearview mirror.
9. Create separation or “open space” to the front, rear, and sides of your vehicle.

Passing

Common Errors When Passing

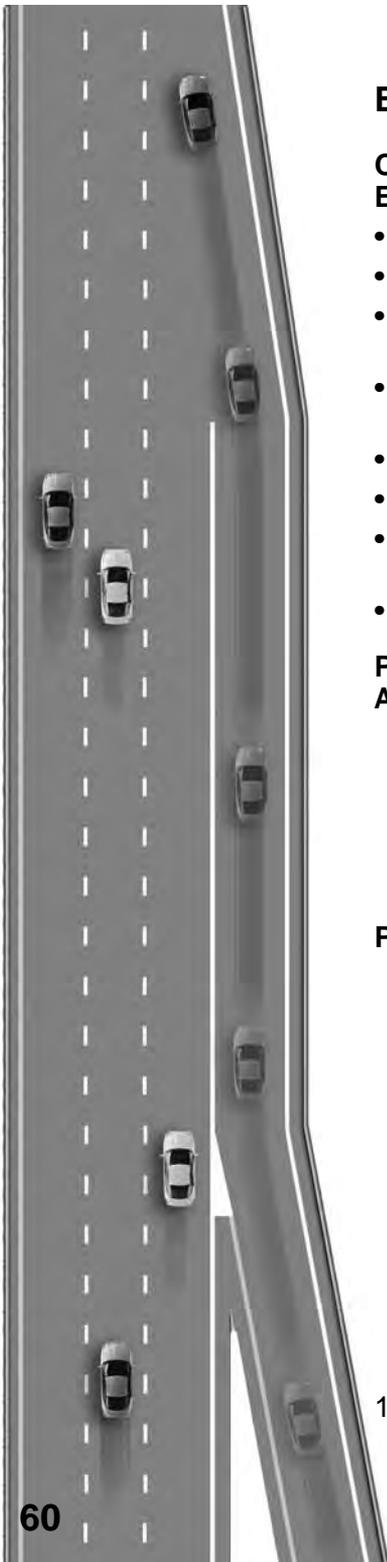
- Not looking ahead for a clear path
- Fails to signal
- Accelerates too soon
- Tailgates a vehicle before passing it
- Drives too slow while passing
- Steers too quickly or too much into the passing lane
- Returns to the lane too soon
- Fails to cancel the signal
- Exceeds the speed limit
- Passes needlessly
- Passes in a no-passing zone

Definitions

Blind spot: the area that is not visible until you turn your head and look.

Path of travel: the area you want the vehicle to go to.

Path of travel obstacles: anything that interferes with your vehicle going where you want it to go. Examples include stop signs, speed bumps, yield signs, red or yellow traffic lights, pedestrians, motorcycles, bicycles, animals, and vehicles to the front, rear, and side.



Entering the Freeway

Common Errors When Entering the Freeway

- Drives too slow
- Fails to signal
- Fails to yield to other vehicles already on the freeway
- Fails to check traffic to the front and rear
- Drifts while checking traffic
- Poor gap judgment
- Turns the steering wheel too sharply
- Fails to cancel the turn signal

Proper Procedures for Acceleration Lane

1. Check all mirrors.
2. Keep 4+ seconds of space to the front of you.
3. Accelerate smoothly and briskly to match traffic flow.

Proper Procedures for Merging

4. Communicate your intentions with signals and lane position.
5. Check the front and rear, and the **blind spot** for a stable gap in traffic in your intended **path of travel**.
6. Merge smoothly into the gap in traffic.
7. Adjust speed to surrounding traffic.
8. Cancel the turn signal.
9. Check the rearview mirror.
10. Create separation or “open space” to the front, rear, and sides of your vehicle.

Exiting the Freeway

Common Errors When Exiting the Freeway

- Fails to see the exit ramp in advance
- Reduces speed before the exit ramp
- Fails to signal
- Fails to check the rearview mirror
- Fails to reduce speed on the exit ramp
- Fails to cancel the turn signal
- Cuts over from left lane at the last minute

Proper Procedures for Exiting the Freeway

1. Plan for the exit—read the signs.
2. Move to the proper lane well in advance.
3. Signal, and check the rearview mirror.
4. Maintain speed until you enter the exit lane.
5. Enter the exit ramp and use **controlled braking**. Reduce speed to posted speed or less.
6. Adjust your speed and lane position. Prepare to stop or turn.
7. Check the earview mirror.

Note: Adjust procedures for the following:

- Traffic stopped on the exit ramp
- Short deceleration lane
- Very slow ramp speed
- Other drivers following you at high speed or close distance



Railroad Grade Crossings

Common Errors at Railroad Crossings

- Does not take railroad crossing seriously
- Fails to **look and listen** for oncoming trains
- Fails to ensure **all** tracks are clear
- Stops too close to the tracks
- Races to beat crossing arms when the lights flash

Proper Procedures for Railroad Crossing

1. Slow down, whether the lights are blinking or not, and check the rearview mirror for traffic behind you.
2. **Look and listen** for oncoming trains.
3. Check the number of tracks and look down each track in both directions.



4. If a train is coming or the crossing lights are blinking, stop at least 15 feet from the tracks or at the stop line.
5. When the tracks are clear as far as you can see in both directions, cross the tracks.
6. When you cross railroad tracks, make sure you can cross without having to stop on the tracks.

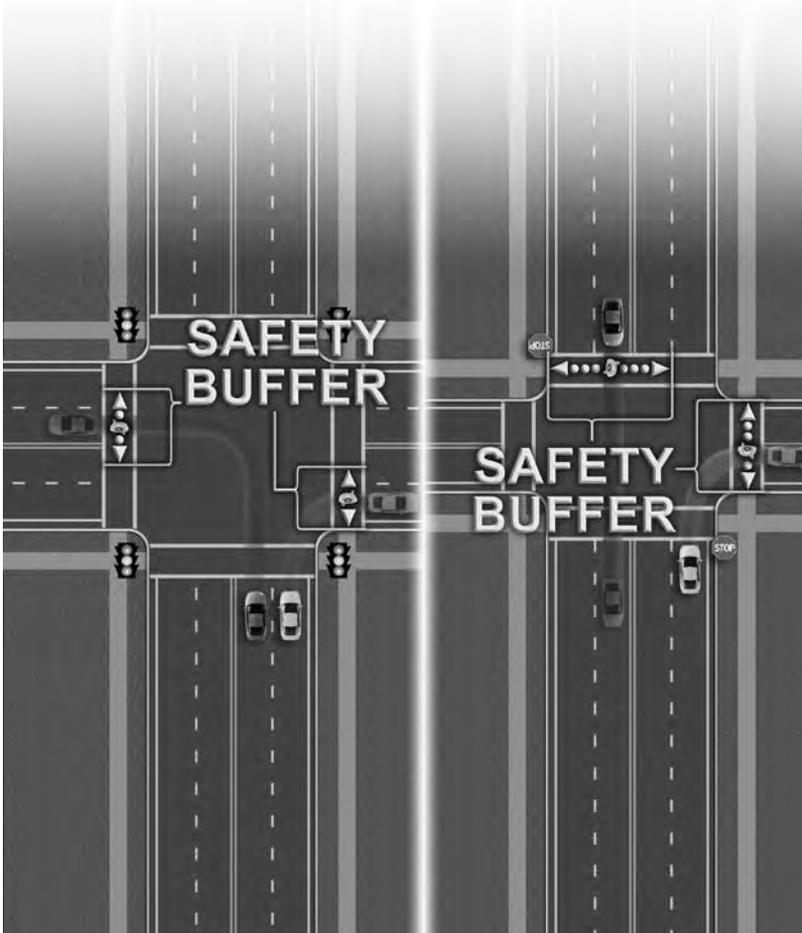
School Zones

- Be alert at all times for children and pedestrians in school zones.
- Follow the signs or flashing lights that warn you that you are approaching a school or school crossing.
- Obey the slower speed limits.
- Signs may be posted telling drivers that traffic fines are higher in school zones.



Crosswalks

Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right-of-way at crosswalks and intersections, whether the crosswalk is marked or not. Vehicles approaching an intersection must stop when a pedestrian or bicyclist is in their half of the roadway. Vehicles turning into an intersection must stop if a pedestrian or bicyclist is within one lane of their half of the roadway. Once the pedestrian or bicyclist is beyond one lane of their half of the roadway, the vehicle may go.



Night Driving

Preparation

Give your teen planned and practical night-driving experience. Set time when you will both be free from other obligations. Create a relaxed atmosphere. Select a local route that your teen has driven on before. Keep in mind the topics you need to cover.

Night Driving and Headlights

Switch to low beams when approaching another vehicle. If the other driver fails to switch to low beam, slow and move to lane position 3. Don't look directly into the headlights; look to the right edge of the road until the vehicle passes.

You need 2-4 seconds to stop. If you can't see beyond your vehicle's headlights within this range, slow down. You may be "driving blind."

High beam headlights in good condition illuminate about 350 feet.

Low beam headlights in good condition illuminate about 182 feet.

- If you travel at 50 mph with low beam headlights, you can see about 2-1/2 seconds of lit roadway (182 feet) and you need a total of 190 feet to stop your vehicle.
- If you travel at 30 mph, you can see a little more than 4 seconds ahead with low beam headlights and 8 seconds ahead with high beam headlights.
- If you travel at 60 mph with high beam headlights, you can see only 4 seconds ahead.
- To gather critical information you need to see 12 to 15 seconds ahead. Look well beyond the headlights in lit areas. In rural areas, choose speeds that give you the best chance to get the information you need to make critical decisions.

Skid Recovery

Skidding can happen at any time, on any surface, while braking, accelerating, or steering. You are no longer supposed to steer in the direction of the skid. Instead, steer toward the **path of travel**. This will allow you to focus on the front of your vehicle and the path that you want to travel.

Proper Procedures for Skid Recovery

1. As you drive, always focus on the **path of travel**.
2. The instant you detect the vehicle skid, turn the steering wheel back toward the **path of travel**.

Note: It is important to get the vehicle back on the **path of travel** before it gets 15 to 25 degrees off. That is your point of no return. Once the skid reaches that angle, the vehicle is going to keep going in the direction of the skid.

Don't give up – stay off the pedals, keep your eyes on the target, and keep working to get the vehicle under control.

Driving in Bad Weather

- Drive slower than you would in good weather
- Leave more space between your vehicle and those ahead
- Drive with your headlights on
- Don't use cruise control

Check weather conditions on your travel route. Use the Department of Transportation website www.wsdot.wa.gov.

Be sure to carry chains or have traction tires on your vehicle.



emergencies

—How to handle them

Vehicle Malfunctions

Hood Flies Up

1. **Look through the space** at the bottom of your windshield to keep an open line of sight.
2. **Steer to the side of the road.**
3. **Secure the hood.**

Engine Fails

This could happen when the engine quits running completely, becomes flooded, overheats, or is simply out of gas. In the event of an engine failure:

1. **Stay off the brake** – you may need the momentum to pull off the road – steer firmly.
2. **Keep eyes on open target area.**
3. **Use an open palm** to shift to neutral and attempt to restart – if that fails take an open escape path.
4. **Turn off the ignition.**

Accelerator Sticks

This could be caused by a broken spring, or the pedal being stuck in the down position. In either case:

1. **Shift to neutral – use an open palm.**
2. **Search for an escape path.**
3. **Steer smoothly.**
4. **Brake gently.**
5. **Pull off the roadway.**
6. **Turn off the ignition.**

Brakes Fail

A brake failure can be a complete loss of brakes or only the loss of power brake. If the brakes quit working:

1. **Keep your eyes on the target area.**
2. **Control the steering.**
3. **Rapidly pump the brakes.**
4. **Shift to a lower gear.**
5. **Use the parking brake to slow or stop.**
6. **Find a soft collision area** if necessary.

Tire Blow Out

Blowouts can cause serious damage to vehicles and injury or death to occupants.

1. **Aim to the target area**—where you want the car to go.
2. **Reduce speed gradually:**
 - Maintain balance
 - Stay off the brake
3. **Control the steering.**
4. **Find a safe place to pull off the road.**

Engine Fire

If the vehicle catches on fire:

1. **Steer out of traffic and away from buildings and people.**
2. **Have everyone leave the vehicle immediately and move away.**
3. **Do not open the hood.**

If You Have a Collision

1. **Stop immediately.** Do not leave your vehicle where it can block traffic unless it's so damaged it can't be moved.
2. **Turn off the ignition** to avoid the possibility of a fire.
3. **Aid the injured** and give first aid if necessary. Never move an injured person unless there is danger of fire or another collision.
4. **Prevent further damage by warning oncoming traffic** with flares or reflectors.
5. **If it is an emergency, call 911.**
6. **Exchange information.** Be sure to get:
 - Names and addresses
 - Driver license numbers
 - License plate numbers
 - An insurance company name, address, telephone number, and policy number
7. **Note the names of passengers and their positions in the car.**
8. **Record the names and addresses of witnesses.**
9. **File a collision report** when necessary. Washington requires a collision report be filed with the Washington State Patrol when:
 - Damage to any vehicle is over \$700 as a result of damages from this collision.
 - Injury or death results from the collision.
 - Damage to any person's property, other than a vehicle involved in the collision, is over \$700.

If You're Stopped by Law Enforcement

1. Be prepared to show your:

- Driver license
- Vehicle registration
- Proof of insurance

2. Wait for the officer to ask you for these documents before you reach for them.

3. Tell the officer where you will get the items from:

"My registration is in the glove box, may I get it now?"

what happens

if your teen messes up?

What Happens Until Age 18?

Until then:

- For the first violation – a warning letter is sent to the parent or guardian
- For a second violation – your teen’s license will be suspended for six months (or until age 18 if that comes first), and the parent or guardian receives a copy of the suspension
- For a third violation – your teen’s license will be suspended until age 18 and the parent or guardian receives a copy of the suspension.
- **Any** amount of alcohol in the blood is considered Driving Under the Influence (DUI). If your teen is arrested for DUI and:
 - **Fails a breath test** – Your teen’s license will be revoked for one year or until age 21, whichever is longer. If there has been a prior alcohol-related offense within the last seven years, the license will be revoked for two years.
 - **Refuses to take a breath test** – Your teen’s license will be revoked for one year.

Tough Penalties for First-Year Convictions

During the first year, with an intermediate license, if your teen commits any traffic violation or is in a collision, the passenger and nighttime restrictions will continue until age 18.

the rules

for intermediate licenses

What is Needed to Qualify for a License

To get a license your teen must:

- Have an instruction permit for at least six months.
- Complete an approved traffic safety education course and at least 50 hours of supervised driving practice, and 10 of these hours must happen at night.

The supervising driver must be someone who is at least 21 years old and has had a valid driver license for at least five years.

After Your Teen Gets a License

Here are driving restrictions:

- For the **first six months**, your teen can't drive with people under the age of 20 unless they are a member of your immediate family. This means no friends.
- For the **second six months**, your teen can't drive with more than three people under the age of 20 unless they are members of your immediate family.
- For the **first year**, your teen cannot drive between 1 am and 5 a.m.

The above restrictions will end on _____.

If these rules are not followed, your teen could get a ticket and pay fines or have the license suspended and your insurance rates could go up. Driving comes with responsibility. Remember, driving is a privilege – not a right.

Safe-driving

agreement

Parent and Teen Safe-Driving Agreement

We, the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the teen driver agree:

The teen driver will: *(check all that apply)*

- drive safely and obey all traffic laws.
- not operate any vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ensure everyone in the vehicle wears a seat belt.
- follow all intermediate license restrictions.
- not send or read text messages or talk on a cell phone while driving.
- share driving plans—destination and times.
- call if expecting to be more than 30 minutes late.
- not drive after 10 p.m. unless given permission.
- not consume alcohol or drugs.
- not ride with a driver who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and will seek other transportation or call a parent or guardian at any hour from any place for a safe ride.
- not let anyone else use the vehicle.
- be allowed to use the vehicle based on the following grades earned at school:

The parent(s) or guardian(s) will: *(check all that apply)*

- drive safely and obey all traffic laws.
- not operate any vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- track the teen driver's behind-the-wheel practice and progress using a practice driving log.
- listen to the teen driver's explanations or concerns regarding the vehicle or the terms of the agreement.
- provide respectful feedback when accompanying the teen driver in a motor vehicle.
- serve as a good role model when operating a vehicle.
- coach good driving skills and habits to the teen driver.
- not ride with a driver who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and will seek other transportation as needed.
- take the teen driver home at any hour from any place, without conflict or question at that time, though a discussion of the event would happen later.

If the teen driver violates this agreement or commits one of the following traffic offenses vehicle privileges will be lost for the following number of days: *(fill in days for each)*

- _____ First offense
- _____ Preventable collision
- _____ Second offense
- _____ Serious traffic violation
- _____ Third offense
- _____ Drug or alcohol offense

Other conditions or responsibilities agreed to:

X	_____	_____
Teen driver signature		Date
X	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian signature		Date
X	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian signature		Date

We will review this agreement on _____ .
Date

The Washington Parent Guide to Teen Driving

This guide supports the important partnerships between state driver licensing, driver education, teen drivers, and their parents. It is our hope that this information will help you to help your teen become a safe and responsible driver.

