

Safe Driving Lesson Plan

Defensive Driving

Grade level: 10-12

Subject area: Driver's Ed

Duration: 20-50 minutes

Objectives:

Students will do the following:

- Study the potential dangers, risks, and statistics associated with a variety of road safety issues such as speeding, driving while distracted, and driving while drowsy.
- Discuss ways in which behaviors affect safe driving and ways to improve driving safety.

Materials:

- Impact Posters
- Impact Probability Wheel
- Impact DVD mini-documentaries

Procedures:

Define defensive driving, and why it is important. A lapse of attention is the single largest cause of crashes, and in particular those accidents which involve drivers not far from their own homes. Drivers who are traveling on familiar roads often relax their attention more than they should. Driving defensively means learning to read situations before they fully develop.

Discuss the following:

The National Safety Council's three-step formula for avoiding collisions:

1. Recognize the hazard. A driver should continuously evaluate the conditions that may cause her/him to lose control of the car: scan the road ahead, check their mirrors every three to five seconds, and keep their attention focused on driving.
2. Understand the defense. Drivers always need to be fine-tuning their driving skills and learning how to deal with hazardous situations. Drivers also need to develop the ability to control emotional reactions and remain objective about other drivers' behaviors;
3. Act correctly, in time, before the situation gets out of control. That may mean reducing speed, increasing the following distance, taking a different route or refusing to drive at all if a situation is too risky (i.e., if the driver has been drinking, is too tired, or passengers are being disruptive).

Ten Common driving errors:

1. Speeding
2. Failure to wear a seat belt
3. Inattentiveness
4. Distraction inside the vehicle (i.e., cell phone use, changing a cd, talking with passengers)
5. Incorrect assumptions about other drivers (i.e., assuming the other driver will yield right-of-way)
6. Tailgating, following too closely
7. Failure to yield right-of-way, including not checking for traffic before changing lanes or entering a traffic flow, improper turning procedures, etc.
8. Failure to obey traffic signals and signs
9. Driving while fatigued
10. Driving a vehicle that is not well maintained (i.e., poor tires, brakes, etc.)

Discussion Questions:

1. How important is it that you always pay attention to what is around you? Why?
2. A defensive driver anticipates danger to avoid accidents. Give examples of defensive driving.
3. Another important part of defensive driving is clearly communicating your existence and intentions to other drivers. What are ways of doing that?
5. What is the two-second rule?
6. How can passengers help with defensive driving?
7. What actions should a driver take when road conditions are poor?
8. Is defensive driving something that only new drivers should practice? Why or why not?