

1.2 – Getting Ready to Drive Activity Directions

Approach with Awareness

First, demonstrate how to hold the key as you approach a vehicle: the bulk of the keys held tightly in your fist and the tip of one key extending out between your index finger and middle finger. Trying to find a key in a purse or pocket wastes time and distracts your attention away from the scene around you. More importantly, remind them that this exercise will help them mentally prepare to drive as they are approaching the vehicle!

Rear-in Seating

Have the learners pretend their chair is the driver's seat of their vehicle. Have the learners slouch down in their chairs so the weight of the body is centered on the tail bone rather than the buttocks (a position that comes very naturally to many), and ask if they have ever observed a driver who sits in the driver seat like that. Ask, "Where is the lap belt and shoulder harness positioned when seated in this manner? Where would the body travel during a frontal impact?" Direct them to lean slightly forward. Have them push their buttocks all the way into the seat and sit up straight and repeat the previous questions. With butt-in seating, it is more likely that a driver will wear a belt, and that the belt will fit properly and effectively restrain the driver.

Have them slouch once again and, space permitting, direct learner to put the feet and knees together, extend the legs straight out and off the floor. Now keeping the hands free, have them repeatedly lean to the left and right.

Once again, direct them to lean slightly forward. Have them push their buttocks all the way into the seat and sit up straight and repeat the leaning left and right process. Ask which seating position provided the best stability and the best balance. Make the point that with butt-in seating, one has more stability in the seat and the best chance of controlling the vehicle.

Adjust Seat with Heel on Floor at Brake

Props needed to simulate brake and accelerator pedals: 2 Styrofoam cups for each learner; one for the brake and the other for the accelerator pedal

Ask learners if we adjust the seat with the foot on the brake pedal or the gas pedal. (Most will say gas pedal.) Adjust the seat with your foot on the brake. If you can reach the brake pedal, you can always reach the gas.

Ask learners to get their rears in their seats. Direct them to extend their right leg so that the knee is slightly bent and the right heel of their shoe is firmly on the floor at the brake. Explain that braking action is normally an ankle action. (Rather like tapping your toes to a musical beat.) The ankle is a hinged joint and works best when it aligns with the knee and hip, so no twisting is involved in its movement. Ask the learners to see that their shoulder aligns with the hip, the hip with the knee, and the knee with the ankle.

Explain that one does not want to be too near or too far from the pedal, as this reduces the controllability one has over the vehicle. When seated too far from the brake, the heel will come off the brake when pressure is applied. When seated too near the pedal, the ankle will feel tight when no brake pressure is applied. When seated correctly, one will be able to apply full braking power with the ankle without the heel coming off the floor, yet still have some range of motion when resting the ball of the foot on the brake, which enables the driver to pivot the ball of the foot freely from the brake to the gas.

When moving the ball of the foot to the gas pedal, pivot the knee from the hip and the ball of the foot. The position of the leg when using the gas and brake should be slightly different.

Correct seating position and pedal usage is the beginning of learning how to make smooth stops and

starts, and it minimizes the chance that one will confuse one pedal for another.

Have learners demonstrate these behaviors:
Left foot on dead pedal
Right foot on brake with heel firmly on floor, joints in alignment
Not too near or too far from pedal
Ability to pivot from brake to gas

Importance of Day-Use Headlights

Props: Large LED Flashlight and black piece of thin cotton cloth

Ask for a volunteer and have him or her stand at the front of the room facing the class. Stand to the side close to the volunteer, holding the flashlight parallel to the floor, at his or her eye level just to the outer edges of the learner's peripheral field of view. Direct the learner to focus on an object across the room; ask him or her to maintain that focus throughout the demonstration. Turn the light on and ask is the light on or off. Now conceal the light with the black cloth. Explain the cloth simulates dark shadows on a bright and sunny day. The flashlight simulates a car. With the flashlight off, ask, "can you see the car?" Then depress the on switch illuminating the lamp but not "clicking" to the on position. Ask, "can you see the car now?" Repeat the process a few times to increase the learner's awareness for what he or she is able to see out of the corner of the eye. As you do so, have the learner say when the light is on and off.

Now move away from the learner so that you are positioned 45 degrees to their right or left and are located at the edge of the room. Again direct the learner to focus on the object formerly used and maintain that focus.

Repeat the light on/off process.

Ask the class what the advantage is of using headlights during the day. They should readily answer the car is more visible to others, effectively reducing the risk of not being seen by others.

Variation:

Provide very small LED flashlights to a few learners in the class. Tell them to turn on the flashlights, hold them discreetly at waist level. Have the entire class form two lines of traffic and move forward in opposite directions. As they pass one another, they will naturally detect the "vehicles" with illuminated "headlights."

Make the point that their vehicles will be more visible to others when they turn on their headlights. Remind them the instruction vehicle they will be driving is required by law in Oregon to have the headlights activated at all times of the day and night.

1.4 – Vision Control Activity Directions

Thumb Wrinkle Activity

Start with your thumbs together. You can see the wrinkles on your thumb very clearly. That's your central vision. As you move your thumbs out, you will gradually lose the clarity of the wrinkles, although you can still see the thumb. When you can still see your thumbs but can't make out the wrinkles – about shoulder width – you are at the edge of your fringe vision.

1.5 – Motion Control Activity Directions

Balance Discovery Activity: Let's test that out!

Ask students to demonstrate what it feels like to be in a car with a driver who:

- slams on the brake
- takes off too fast
- makes a turn or a lane change too fast or too sharp

Make the point that failing to control the balance of a vehicle is a culturally common high-risk behavior. Managing vehicle balance is at the core of low-risk driving skills and can prevent many problems.

Moving Inch by Inch...

Have students stand with both feet together, moving forward one inch at a time. Then have them move at a regular walking pace.

1.6 – Steering Control Activity Directions

Hand Position and Steering Control

Props: Simulated Steering Wheels

Direct the class to get correct seating position in their individual “driving compartments.” Have them practice the following:

- Control Position – 8 & 4 or 9 & 3, knuckles out and thumbs up, not wrapped around the wheel; shoulders relaxed, arms slightly bent at the elbow (arms off the desk or table)
- Hand-over-Hand Steering Technique – Turning and recovery
- Push-Pull (or Pull-Push) Steering Technique – Turning and recovery

Observe the techniques used by individuals. Give positive feedback when performance is correct. Coach those who are having trouble until they are successful.

Repeat this exercise a couple of times in each direction