

A Lifesaving Checklist

1. THE BASICS

Remember to get your hands high on the wheel 9 o'clock 3 o'clock or above, but not together! Use the right foot for braking. Don't forget to signal, mirror and check your blind spot on all lateral maneuvers. Always in that order.

2. FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Remember you want a two second following distance for speeds of forty five miles an hour or less. We increase that distance to four seconds for speeds over forty five. In bad weather we may need six or eight seconds of following distance.

3. VISUAL LEAD TIME

How far we look down the road helps us to keep our car in a straight line path as well as forecast any problems we may encounter down the road. Twelve seconds is the accepted lead time for speeds of forty five mile or less. Twenty seconds is best for speeds of forty five miles an hour or more. At night remember not to "overdrive" your headlights. In other words, drive faster than your headlights project.

4. SAFETY RESTRAINTS

Always buckle your seat belt to help prevent the second collision. Also remember to lock your doors and adjust your headrest to the middle of your head.

5. ALCOHOL

Have the discussion and sign the agreement that you will never get behind the wheel after the consumption of alcohol. Both parent and teenager must sign the agreement. Always have a plan and stick to it in order to avoid getting behind the wheel after drinking

6. CELL PHONE

Zero tolerance, leave the cell phone home or lock it up. If you absolutely must use it pull over to a safe location out of traffic.

7. VEHICLE EMERGENCIES

Go over the basic vehicle emergencies that a young driver could encounter. These emergencies range from a tire blow out to a loss of steering. You can find all of these emergencies in my book “Save your Teenage Driver’s Life” or you can download them from the resources page at www.drivedredcoach.com. Remember not to panic. A good following distance and visual lead time will go a long way in preventing collisions.

8. ATTITUDE

Get your attitude under control before getting in your vehicle and then maintain this positive attitude as you drive. Allow nothing to bother you. You control the way you react to each and every situation.

