

The Fifteen Good Driving Habits

These can eliminate thousands of crashes and hundreds of crash-related injuries and death.

The final exam and road test centers around this list of defensive driving principles. Start learning these concepts now and prepare yourself to begin developing these habits on the range and on the road during practice driving with your parent/guardian, adult passenger, or CHHS road instructor.

1. **Ready to Drive:** Vehicle in safe condition, **Safety belts on**, proper seating position, doors locked, headlights on (if necessary), and make a safety check around vehicle.
2. Focus on using the **IPDE and Smith System** principles. (Always look 12 to 15 seconds ahead and anticipate the other drivers or obstacles.)
3. Make **smooth, gradual starts and stops**.
4. Use **9 and 3** or **8 and 4** hand position to **reduce chances of air bag injury**. Use **hand-over-hand** and/or **push-pull** steering combined with the **controlled slippage** technique.
5. When your foot goes on the brake, **make a quick glance in the rearview mirror**.
6. **Use turn signals** for at least 3 seconds before all turns or lane changes.
7. **Cover the brake** when possible conflict arises to allow for greater reaction time.
8. Adjust speed and position to **keep empty space to the side**.
9. Before moving your vehicle in any direction, **check surrounding zones and blind spots**. When turning, make a **“last glance”** to the direction opposite of where you are turning just **AFTER you begin the turn**.
10. When you see a red light, reduce speed to time for a **safe stop or for smooth arrival into a green light** and before entering any intersection, **make sure the left, front and right is clear**. And use the **“point of no return” philosophy**.
11. During straight backing, **look to the rear until completely stopped**. During backing and turning, look to the rear, **but make quick glances forward** to check as the vehicle swings out. During final backing, **look to the rear until completely stopped**.
12. **Keep two to five seconds of following distance** when trailing a vehicle.
13. When stopped behind a vehicle, **see its rear tires touching the road**.
14. **Eliminate unnecessary driving distractions** and reduce stress by **being courteous**, rather than competitive, while driving.
15. **Obey all traffic laws, signs, signals, and roadway markings**.