

CALIFORNIA

ENGLISH

PREPARING FOR YOUR SUPPLEMENTAL DRIVING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
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DMV'S GOAL

One of the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV's) major goals is to keep all drivers licensed for as long as it is safe for them to drive. Along with that goal is the responsibility to enhance highway safety by increasing driver competency. DMV recognizes that the independence and mobility that driving provides are important factors in the quality of life for most Californians.

DMV WANTS YOU TO PASS

Unlike the Driving Performance Evaluation (DPE), which is the basic Class C driving test, the Supplemental Driving Performance Evaluation (SDPE) is designed to evaluate the driving skills of applicants with vision or other physical or mental conditions that may affect their ability to drive safely. Many people take their SDPE without having sufficiently prepared or practiced, and then become very nervous because they don't know what to expect.

This study guide is designed and organized to provide you with a basic understanding of the SDPE driving test; prepare you to perform your best on a DMV driving test; and assist you in earning and preserving your safe-driving abilities. We hope that this study guide, along with other reference materials the department has available, will be a valuable tool in preparing you to perform your best the first time you take an SDPE driving test. DMV wants you to pass your SDPE driving test. Please read this study guide and the *California Driver Handbook*; then relax and do your best.

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DISTRACTIONS: A split second can change or end your life.



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SUPPLEMENTAL DRIVING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (SDPE)

The SDPE is designed to evaluate the driving skills of applicants whose vision or other physical or mental conditions may affect their ability to drive safely. This driving test may last between 30 – 40 minutes.

The SDPE driving test contains testing elements which include the following:

- **Multiple directions** – You will be given two sets of instructions at one time to see whether you can correctly understand and follow the directions. For instance, “*At the next street, make a left turn, and then at the first intersection make another left turn.*”
- **Additional lane changes** – You will be asked to make additional lane changes.
- **Concentration** – At certain times during your driving test, the examiner will speak with you. You should be able to respond without committing any driving errors.
- **Freeway driving** – You will be asked to merge onto the freeway and drive a short distance. If you do not wish to take this portion of the test, your driver license will be restricted to “no freeway driving.” Tell the examiner before the test if you do not want to drive on the freeway.
- **Destination trip** – You will be asked to drive a few blocks from the DMV office, and return to the office by the same route without help from the examiner.

DMV wants you to pass your SDPE driving test. You will be evaluated on your ability to drive safely and skillfully in different driving situations. At no time will the examiner try to trick you or ask you to perform any maneuver that is not safe.

WHO TAKES THE SDPE?

Applicants who are required to take an SDPE have usually:

- Not met DMV’s 20/40 vision test.
- Exhibited physical or mental conditions while renewing their license at a field office that might pose a safety concern.
- Have been referred from a Driver Safety Office because of a physical or mental condition or lack of driving skill.
- Been referred to DMV for a check of safe-driving ability by a law enforcement officer, physician, relative, or friend who is concerned about their driving ability.

A license may be issued to you if you score no more than 20 driving errors and do not make a critical driving error. A “critical driving error” is a dangerous or potentially dangerous driving maneuver.

If you have a medical condition or a physical limitation, a restriction may be placed on your driving record. A restriction is a driving limitation, such as “must wear corrective lenses while driving,” that is placed on your driver license and helps assure your and others’ safety, as well as the safe operation of your vehicle.

SDPE DRIVING TEST INFORMATION

For many individuals, having a driver license is essential to maintain their independence and current lifestyle.

If you are required to take a supplemental driving test, begin preparing yourself by also studying the *California Driver Handbook*, and practice, practice, practice. The more prepared you are, the better your chance of passing the driving test.

Your SPDE driving test may take 30 – 40 minutes. The driving test consists of basic maneuvers you will encounter while driving,

such as: Left and right turns, stops at controlled and uncontrolled intersections, straight line backing, lane changes, driving in regular traffic, and in some cases driving on the freeway.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT DURING THE SDPE DRIVING TEST?

After completing the SDPE driving test, the examiner will discuss the results with you. He or she will provide you with an explanation of any driving errors and offer suggestions on how to correct them to become a better driver.

Your SDPE driving test score and the results of your written, vision, and any other driving assessments will determine your eligibility for a driver license.

You can expect to be treated with respect, fairness, and courtesy during the entire examination process. During the driving test, the examiner will give you directions in advance before asking you to turn or perform other maneuvers. The examiner will direct you to drive in traffic and determine when it is safe to perform all maneuvers, including backing your vehicle.

Be familiar with the vehicle that you will be using for your SDPE driving test. Prior to arriving for your SDPE driving test, know the locations of all the vehicle controls and how they work. If you share the vehicle with another driver, the driver's seat and mirrors should be adjusted before beginning your test.

Before the driving test begins, the examiner will ask you if you have any questions. If you do not understand any instruction given to you, be sure to tell the examiner.

The examiner will observe to see that you look for other traffic often, react to traffic and pedestrians in a safe manner, stop at the correct locations, follow all traffic signs and signals, and safely perform all maneuvers. He or she will also write notes as you drive; however, focus on your driving and not on the examiner.

Occasionally, the examiner will speak to you during the SDPE driving test. Answer the examiner and continue to concentrate on your driving. At other times, he or she will not speak to you except to give you directions. This is part of the testing process.

The purpose of an SDPE driving test is to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate that you can compensate for any limitations, including physical or mental conditions, which may affect your ability to drive safely. The SDPE will determine whether your driver license will be issued, renewed, restricted, suspended, or revoked.

ASSESSING YOUR DRIVING SKILLS & MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

YOUR DRIVING SKILLS

It is important to realize that every driver will eventually need to adjust their changing driving skills or abilities. If you have experienced any of the situations listed below, you may need to make adjustments to improve your driving abilities:

- Decreased confidence when making decisions.
- Increased agitation or irritation while driving.
- Easily distracted while driving.
- Getting lost in familiar places.
- Delayed response to unexpected situations.
- Confusion at exits.
- Depending on a “co-pilot” for judgment.
- Bad judgment when making left-hand turns.
- Not anticipating potentially dangerous situations.

- Failure to notice important activity on the side of the road and traffic signs or signals.
- Failure to stop at a stop sign or red light.
- Difficulty looking over your shoulder when backing up.
- Difficulty turning your head, and only using your mirrors when changing lanes, merging, pulling to and from the curb, and turning.
- Confusing the gas and brake pedals.
- Braking and accelerating at the same time.
- Near misses with other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Driving at inappropriate speeds.
- “Riding” the brake.
- Not signaling or leaving turn signal on.
- Incorrect signaling.
- Trouble navigating turns.
- Moving into wrong lane.
- Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason.
- Difficulty maintaining lane position (staying in the middle of the lane).
- Inappropriate parking.
- Hitting curbs.
- Car crashes.
- Scrapes or dents on the car, mailbox, or garage.
- Ticketed for moving violations or warnings.
- Other drivers often honk their horn at you.

ASK ANOTHER DRIVER TO REVIEW YOUR DRIVING SKILLS

Ask a trusted driver with a valid license to sit in the passenger seat and observe your driving.

Your observer should note any driving behaviors that make passengers feel uncomfortable and/or in danger, and critique your driving in a constructive manner giving you ideas and methods for improvement.

- **Do not be offended** by your observer's comments about your driving. You want your observer to be truthful. Remember, your observer's comments are not a personal criticism.
- **Listen thoroughly** to your observer's remarks. Be open to suggestions. If your driving errors are correctable, practice can help you correct or improve your driving skills.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Once you identify areas for improvement, practice performing them correctly. If certain driving maneuvers or situations confuse you, ask your observer or a driving instructor to review them with you.
- **Consider driving lessons and/or training classes.** You may want to take behind-the-wheel driver instruction from a licensed driving school. There are also mature driver courses that provide classroom instruction on defensive driving and California motor vehicle laws.

IS MY CAR RIGHT FOR ME?

A Good Fit

Checking to see that you and your car are a good fit is important for your safety and the safety of others. A good fit between you and your vehicle includes the following:

- A clear view over the steering wheel.
- Plenty of room between your chest and steering wheel, at least 10 inches (measured from the center of the steering wheel to your breastbone).
- A car seat that fits you comfortably and safely.
- Properly adjusted headrests.
- Easily reached gas and brake pedals.
- A seat belt shoulder harness that holds you in the proper position and remains comfortable as you drive.

POSITION YOUR MIRRORS TO MINIMIZE BLIND SPOTS

Before you start your vehicle, adjust the mirrors to reduce blind spots and allow you to see as much as possible:

- Adjust the rearview mirror so it is positioned to allow viewing through as much of the rear window as possible.
- Next, adjust the left side-view mirror so you can see the side of your vehicle and road.
- Adjust the right side-view mirror so you can see the side of your vehicle and road.

Now you should have a clear view of a vehicle as it approaches and passes you, by using your mirrors and turning your head.

ADAPTIVE DEVICES CAN HELP

If your vehicle is not a perfect fit, adaptive devices and features are available to help you compensate for any physical changes you may be experiencing, and make the vehicle more comfortable and safe to drive.

All drivers can adapt to factors that affect their driving by making changes to their vehicles for a better fit. These adjustments will make drivers more comfortable and in better control of their vehicles. Some devices that do not require any special training include:

- Easy-locking seat belts.
- Extra-loud turn-signal indicators.
- Visor extenders.
- Steering wheel covers to improve grip on the steering wheel.
- Seat and back support cushions to relieve back pain or improve your ability to see clearly through the windshield.

Other adaptive devices that may require training on how to use them include:

- Larger, panoramic rear and side mirrors.
- Pedal extenders.
- Leverage handles to assist in opening a car door.
- Hand controls.
- Seat lifts to help get in and out of a car.
- Car lifts and carrying devices for a wheelchair or scooter.
- A steering device to aid in grabbing the wheel and making turns easier.
- Audio prompts to assist drivers with adaptive technology.

Before purchasing adaptive devices, you should have a thorough evaluation by either a **driving rehabilitation specialist** or another professional to ensure you get the right equipment, proper installation, and receive adequate training, if applicable.

To learn more about adaptive devices and programs available to assist you in evaluating how well you and your vehicle work together, contact the American Automobile Association (AAA), at **www.AAA.com** or 1-800-922-8228, or the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), at **www.AARP.com** or 1-888-687-2279, or an occupational therapist or driving rehabilitation specialist.

CARFIT PROGRAM

CarFit is a program designed to help you and your personal vehicle fit better. It was developed through collaboration among the American Society on Aging, AARP, AAA, and the American Occupational Therapy Association. The CarFit brochure is available at **www.seniordrivers.org/pdf/carfit.pdf**.

CarFit offers drivers:

- The opportunity to determine how well their personal vehicles “fit” them.
- Information and materials for community-specific resources and activities to make their personal vehicles “fit” better, enhance their safety as drivers, and/or increase their mobility in the community.

The program uses a team of trained event coordinators and health professionals who work with each participant at a scheduled CarFit event.

In addition to CarFit, AAA also offers a free online self-assessment screening tool called Roadwise Review, on its website at **www.AAA.com**. This tool allows drivers to measure eight functional abilities necessary for safe driving.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SDPE DRIVING TEST

The first step to prepare for your SDPE driving test is to review the following DMV publications to refresh your memory about the laws and rules of the road. These publications can also be found on the DMV website, at www.dmv.ca.gov or call 1-800-777-0133 for a copy.

- *California Driver Handbook*
- *Senior Guide for Safe Driving*
- *California Parent-Teen Training Guide*
- *California Motorcycle Handbook (if applicable)*

Sample tests and driving videos are also available that show the top ten reasons why applicants fail the driving test. Various driver license brochures on the DMV website at www.dmv.ca.gov or 1-800-777-0133 are also handy references.

The second step to prepare for your SDPE driving test is to practice your driving skills and driving test maneuvers with a licensed professional or person who can point out any errors you make and discuss how you can improve your driving skills.

DRIVING MANEUVERS

Practice the following driving maneuvers:

BACKING UP THE CAR

Practice on a wide residential street with little or no traffic, or in a parking lot with no obstacles or vehicles. Follow the steps below:

1. Put your left hand on top of the steering wheel.
2. Place your foot on brake.
3. Shift to reverse.

4. Check in all directions for traffic.
5. Release parking brake.
6. Place right hand on the back of the seat and look over right shoulder through the rear window.
7. Release the foot brake slowly. Apply accelerator if needed, and be ready to brake to control the speed of the car.
8. Occasionally look quickly to your left.
9. Move slowly and avoid sudden movement of the steering wheel.
10. Turn the wheel to the right, if you need to back up to the right. Turn the wheel to the left, if you need to back up to the left.
11. Press the footbrake gently to stop.
12. Shift to park.

PARKING LOT DRIVING

- Check traffic and pedestrians when entering, exiting or driving in a parking lot.
- Drive slowly.
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.

TURNS

Practicing Turns

Practice turning in an area without busy traffic or many pedestrians. Practice right turns first.

Approaching a turn

- Check traffic ahead. Look to your left, right, and rear before you reach a corner. Look toward or make eye contact with other drivers or pedestrians.
- Start your turn signal at least 100 feet before a turn. Signaling too early or too late may confuse other drivers. If you must change lanes to make a turn, always signal.
- When approaching a turn, reduce your speed and apply the brakes smoothly.
- Proceed through the turn unless you are required to stop. Do not hesitate or stop unnecessarily.

Stopping before you turn

- If you need to stop before you make a turn, leave enough room in front of you. You should be able to see the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you or have enough room to go around the other vehicle if necessary (i.e., the vehicle stalls, etc.).
- Always stop at the stop line painted on the road. If there is no painted line, stop before the crosswalk.
- When turning left, keep the wheels of your vehicle straight until you start the turn; otherwise, you could be pushed into oncoming traffic if you are hit from behind.

Completing the turn

- Check for traffic ahead and to the left and right before beginning the turn.
- Accelerate at a safe speed through the turn.
- Enter and complete the turn in the correct lane. Do not turn so wide or short that your turn interferes with other lanes of traffic.

Right Turns

Approach the turn in the right lane. Merge into the right lane and remain in that lane until the turn is completed. Try the following step-by-step instructions:

1. Slow down as you approach the turn.
2. Turn on the right turn signal.
3. Check traffic ahead, behind, and to the sides. At the intersection look left, right, and left again. If you are merging into a bike lane, look over your right shoulder before merging.
4. Obey all signs and/or traffic signals.
5. Yield to pedestrians.
6. If possible, place the front of your car two or three feet from the curb before beginning the turn.
7. Steer hand-over-hand to the right when the front bumper enters the intersection.
8. End the turn in the lane closest to the curb.
9. Unwind the steering wheel as the front end of the car enters the proper lane, and then straighten the car in the lane.

Left Turns

Follow these steps to practice left turns:

1. Slow down when approaching the turn.
2. Turn on the left signal.
3. Check traffic ahead, behind, and to the sides. At the intersection look left, right, and left again.
4. Obey all the signs and/or traffic signals.
5. Yield to pedestrians.
6. Glance over your left shoulder.

7. Steer the car into the left turn lane, the left part of the lane, or the left turn center lane.
8. Slow to a safe speed.
9. Glance left, ahead, right, and left again.
10. Never turn the wheel until you are ready to make your left turn.
11. Glance left and turn wheel to the left to enter the new street.

INTERSECTIONS

Use the following step-by-step directions for signal-controlled intersections and for uncontrolled or “blind” intersections.

Directions for Signal Controlled Intersections (Cross traffic is controlled by a red light, stop sign, or yield sign):

1. When approaching an intersection with a signal light, even if the light is green, be ready to brake and keep plenty of room between your car and the car ahead of you. Do not enter an intersection, even when the light is green, unless there is enough space to completely cross the street before the light turns red. If traffic causes you to block cross traffic, you can be cited.
2. Always use your turn signal, if you plan to turn.
3. Look left, right, and left again for cars on the cross street before entering the intersection.
4. Check for pedestrians and yield to any pedestrian crossing at a street corner or crosswalk.
5. Watch oncoming traffic for cars making illegal left turns.

Uncontrolled (no signs or signals) and Blind Intersections

When you approach an intersection and you cannot see traffic on the cross street from either direction (or at least 100 feet) because a building or other object blocks your view, slow to 15 miles per hour; this is a blind intersection.

1. Slow to a speed which will allow you to stop safely.
2. Look for pedestrians and cross traffic.
3. Look for approaching cars on side streets.
4. Look left, right, and left again for traffic before entering the intersection.
5. When entering the intersection, look left, right, and ahead for approaching traffic.
6. If the road is clear, cross the intersection.

Roundabouts

A roundabout is an intersection where traffic travels around a central island in a counterclockwise direction. Vehicles entering or exiting the roundabout must yield to vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

1. Slow down as you approach the intersection.
2. Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the roadway.
3. Watch for signs and pavement markings that guide you or prohibit certain movements.
4. Enter the roundabout when there is a big enough gap in traffic.
5. Drive in a counterclockwise direction. Do not stop or pass other vehicles.

6. Use your turn signals when you change lanes or exit the roundabout.
7. If you miss your exit, continue around until you return to your exit.
8. If the roundabout has multiple lanes, choose your entry or exit lane based on your destination.

CHANGING LANES

Follow the steps below to make sure that a lane change is made safely:

1. Check the traffic ahead.
2. Glance in mirrors for breaks in the traffic.
3. Check the blind spot by looking over your shoulder into the lane you wish to occupy.
4. Signal. Check the mirror and look over your shoulder again to make sure the space is empty.
5. Change lanes by moving into a break in traffic flow.
6. Steer to center the car in the new lane.
7. Turn off your turn signal.

Mark Down Points to Watch for:

1. Failing to check rear view mirror.
2. Failing to look over your shoulder.
3. Checking over shoulder too long, while the car drifts from its path or gets dangerously close to other vehicles.
4. Not knowing if there is enough room to change lanes.

KEEPING SPACE AROUND THE CAR

Most drivers do not see “the big picture” as they should because they follow too closely, and the car ahead blocks their view of the road.

Good drivers maintain a safe “space cushion” to see more of what is happening in traffic. The more space they allow between their car and the car ahead, the more time they will have to see a hazard or accident down the road. This allows the driver more time to stop and avoid a collision or other hazard.

Keep at least a **three-second “cushion”** of space when following other vehicles. When the vehicle ahead passes a sign or other object near the road, count “one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three.” If you pass the same object before completing this count, you are following too closely. Allow more space between you and the car in front of you by letting up on the accelerator, until you increase your distance to see.

When crowded by a tailgater, allow extra room between your car and the car ahead of you. Allowing more following distance gives you and the tailgater more time to react in an emergency. When it is safe, move to the right lane and allow the tailgater to pass.

When you follow too closely and another driver “cuts” in front of you, the normal reaction is to slam on your brakes and swerve out of the way. Swerving out of the way most often results in cutting someone else off or possibly driving off the roadway. It might also result in the car behind you crashing into you or other cars around you.

If another driver “cuts” in front of you, it is better if you take your foot off the gas. This will give you space between your car and the other driver without swerving into another lane. Do not overreact if you are cut off. Plan your emergency escape route before the emergency happens.

Avoid driving in the blind spot of other drivers. The other driver may not see your car and could change lanes, causing a collision.

Practicing in Traffic

1. Make sure you signal each time you make a turn or merge into another lane.
2. Slow down or speed up when necessary.
3. Keep a “cushion” of empty space around the car. It is important to stay a safe distance behind the car ahead.
4. Always be a courteous driver. Yield space to drivers who are trying to change lanes, etc.
5. When you first begin practicing in traffic, look for hazards and plan an emergency escape route in the event of an emergency.
6. Obey all traffic signs.

PARKING

Parking on Hills

Practice parking on hills with little or no traffic. At first, park in areas without other parked cars.

Parking Downhill

(If there is no hill, practice on a flat road.)

1. Stop your car about six to eight inches from the curb.
2. Shift to neutral and allow the car to roll forward slowly. Control your speed with the brake.
3. As the car moves, quickly turn the steering wheel toward the curb.
4. Stop when the front right wheel touches the curb, or when the wheel is four to six inches on the shoulder.

5. Set the parking brake, shift to park, and release the foot brake.
6. Shut off the engine.

Parking Uphill with a Curb

(If there is no hill, practice on a flat road.)

1. Stop the car about six to eight inches from the curb.
2. Shift to neutral and let up a little on the brake. At the same time, turn the steering wheel away from the curb. Allow the car to roll backward slowly, controlling speed with the brake.
3. Stop when the back part of the front right tire touches the curb.
4. Set the parking brake, shift to park, and release the foot brake.
5. Shut off the engine.

NOTE: When parking uphill on a street without a curb, turn the wheels clockwise so the vehicle will roll away from the center of the road if the brakes fail.

FREEWAY DRIVING

Entering the Freeway

1. Be in the proper lane for the on-ramp you want.
2. While still on the ramp, check your mirrors. Watch traffic in the lane you will be entering. Also, watch for cars to the rear and sides if there is more than one lane merging. Remember—you do not have the right-of-way.
3. Turn on your signal.
4. Look for a gap in the traffic. Adjust your speed to match that of cars on the freeway.
5. Do not slow or stop unless necessary.

6. When you reach the freeway, look over your shoulder before moving into a gap in the first lane.
7. Do not cross over any solid line while merging.

On the Freeway

1. Keep up with traffic as much as possible without exceeding the speed limit. Yield to faster traffic. Stay to the right, as much as possible.
2. Maintain a proper “space cushion.” Use the three-second rule described on page 17 for following distance and adjust your lane position as needed for traffic conditions.
3. Watch for merging traffic at on-ramps.
4. Signal and look over your shoulder before changing lanes.
5. If you see traffic slowing ahead, “tap” your brake pedal several times to warn drivers behind you. Do this even though you do not need to brake yet. This “tapping” will warn drivers behind you to slow down.

Leaving the Freeway

1. Move into the proper exit lane at least one-half mile before the exit. Do not wait until the last minute. You may cause a collision if you change lanes in a hurry or miss your exit.
2. Signal four or five seconds before the off-ramp.
3. Once on the off-ramp, slow down to the posted speed limit.
4. Do not cross over any solid line when exiting.

DRIVING HAZARDS

When You See a School Bus

When you see flashing red lights on a school bus, stop at a safe distance away from the school bus, and remain stopped until the red lights stop flashing. Traffic in both directions must stop,

unless you are on the other side of a divided highway, or median, which may be a concrete island. School buses are now required to flash the red lights at all stops.

Be cautious around stopped school buses, even if the red lights have stopped flashing. Assume a child might dart out in front of you. **Suggestion:** Treat school buses as school zones; drive 25 mph or less when children are present.

Railroad Crossings

When you drive close to a railroad crossing, look and listen for trains in both directions. Be ready to stop, if necessary. You should expect a train on a track at any time, day or night. Never stop on a railroad track. Usually by the time a train conductor sees you, it will be too late for the train to stop. When traffic is heavy, wait off the tracks until you are sure you can drive over the tracks without getting stuck on the tracks due to traffic stopping in front of you.

When You Cannot See Due to Fog, Rain, or Snow

The best advice for driving in the fog is “DON’T.” Do not use your high-beam headlights in the fog because they create glare and reduce visibility. Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears. If you must drive, then slow down and turn on your low-beam headlights. Never drive with just your parking or fog lights. Increase your following distance and be prepared to stop within the space you can see in front of your vehicle.

Avoid changing lanes and passing other vehicles unless absolutely necessary. Listen for traffic you cannot see. Use your wipers and defroster as necessary for best visibility with your headlights. If the fog becomes so thick that you can barely see, pull completely off the road. Do not continue driving until you can see better. Turn off your lights when you are not on the road, or someone may see your taillights and drive into you.

In heavy rain or snowstorm, you may not be able to see more than 100 feet ahead. When you cannot see any farther than that, you cannot safely drive faster than 30 mph. You may have to stop from time to time to wipe mud or snow off your windshield, headlights, and taillights.

When you drive in snowy areas, carry tire chains (used to provide traction when driving through snow and ice) in case you find yourself in conditions where you cannot drive without them. Make sure you carry the correct number of chains and that the chains fit your tires. Learn how to put on the chains before you need to use them.

Slow down at the first sign of rain, drizzle, or snow on the road. This is when many road pavements are most slippery because oil and dust have not been washed away. Turn on your lights when visibility is poor—even in daylight. Always be sure to turn on your headlights when using the windshield wipers.

NOTE: You must turn on your headlights if snow, rain, fog, or low visibility (1,000 feet or less) require the continuous use of windshield wipers – it’s the law.

Driving on Slippery Roads

When you drive on wet, icy, gravel, or dirt roads you should:

- Drive slowly and stay further behind the car ahead.
- Slow down as you approach curves and intersections.
- Avoid quick stops. “Pump” the brakes to slow or stop.
- Avoid fast turns.
- Shift to low gear before going down a steep hill.
- If brakes get wet, dry them by pressing the gas and brake pedal at the same time, so the car drives against the pressure of the brakes.

- Avoid slippery areas, such as ice patches, wet leaves, oil, and deep puddles.

Driving in Wind

Drive slower than normal when it is very windy. Lighter cars, vans, and trucks with broad, high sides are sometimes blown out of their lane. House trailers are especially in danger of shifting. If possible, avoid driving next to other vehicles. Grasp the steering wheel firmly. Be prepared to correct steering as wind force changes. Keep the windows closed.

SAFE DRIVER CHECKLIST

Locate the Controls

Locate the following controls and explain how they work:

- 4-way flashers.
- Emergency and parking brakes.
- Headlights.
- Heater/defroster.
- Horn.
- Windshield wipers.

Before Starting the Vehicle

- Adjust your mirrors.
- Fasten your seat belt.

Starting the Vehicle

- Ensure the vehicle is in “Park” or “Neutral.”
- Your foot is on the brake.
- Start the vehicle smoothly.

Moving Forward

- Use your turn signal.
- Look over shoulder before pulling into traffic.
- Use both hands on opposite sides of the steering wheel.

Stopping

- Stop when necessary behind crosswalk or limit line.
- Use correct foot on brake pedal.

Turns

- Signal and slow down for turns.
- Begin and end turns in the correct lane.
- When necessary, yield the right-of-way.
- When safe, accept legal right-of-way.
- See and react to hazards.

Backing

- Before moving, survey the surroundings for possible obstacles.
- Look back over right shoulder when backing.
- Check mirrors and glance quickly to the side while backing.

Changing Lanes

- Signal.
- Check mirrors.
- Check over your shoulder before entering traffic.
- Change lanes safely.

Parking on Hills

- Signal.
- Turn your wheels to the curb, as stated on pages 18-19.
- Set parking brake.

Entering and Exiting the Freeway

- Check traffic flow.
- Signal.
- Time entry into the freeway.
- Check over your shoulder to merge and accelerate to the speed of traffic.
- Adjust speed to road conditions.
- When exiting on the exit ramp, signal early and slow down to the posted speed limit.

Defensive Driving Techniques

- Check mirrors frequently and before braking.
- Check cross streets before entering intersections.
- Check signal lights and signs.
- Keep eyes “moving” (watch sides and middle of the road).
- Keep a “space cushion” around your car.
- Follow at a safe distance.
- Always be courteous.

WHAT HAPPENS FOLLOWING AN SDPE DRIVING TEST FAILURE?

The examiner may stop the driving test and score a failure if you:

- Do not look for or react to other traffic or pedestrians when necessary for safety.
- Do not slow down or look at uncontrolled intersections (no traffic lights or signs indicate the right-of-way).
- Violate any law, including but not limited to:
 - Driving under or over the posted speed limit.
 - Disobeying a traffic sign or signal.
 - Driving in a lane meant for oncoming traffic.
 - Turning into or from an improper lane.
 - Failing to yield the right-of-way.
- Perform any dangerous act, including but not limited to:
 - Driving up and over the curb.
 - Not having control of the vehicle.
 - Failing to enter an intersection on a green light, when it is safe, and the light changes to red.
 - Having a collision.
 - Demonstrating a lack of driving skill, ability, or knowledge.

If you do not pass your driving test, you can usually retake the SDPE driving test again.

You should **wait at least two weeks** before making another driving test appointment. This will allow you to:

- Re-examine study materials,
- Practice the skills or maneuvers that need improvement,

- Take driving lessons, and/or
- Take a driver refresher course.

If necessary, you will be provided with a temporary driver license or a restricted license. The restricted license requires that you be accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older, and/or be accompanied by a licensed driving instructor or a registered occupational therapist.

If the examiner determines that you are an unsafe driver with an uncorrectable physical and/or mental impairment or a lack of skill to operate a vehicle safely, your driver license will be immediately revoked and you will be unable to retest.

DRIVER TRAINING INFORMATION

You may take a driver training refresher course which includes classroom instruction on defensive driving and California motor vehicle laws. Driver training refresher courses are also available online. You may also want to consider behind-the-wheel driver instruction from a licensed driving school to help you improve your driving skills, or seek assistance from a driver rehabilitation specialist or occupational therapist.

MATURE DRIVER IMPROVEMENT COURSE

You may be able to improve your driving skills by taking a driver refresher training course. These courses can be taken in a classroom or online.

A DMV approved Mature Driver Improvement Course provides instruction on defensive driving, safe driving practices, and the laws and rules of the road. Information is also provided on the effects of medication, fatigue, alcohol, and visual/auditory limitations on your driving ability. A list of DMV approved Mature Driver Improvement Courses can be found on the DMV

website at: **www.dmv.ca.gov**. Under the Driver License tab go to ‘Quick Links’, and click on “How to” and Miscellaneous’, and then ‘Mature Driver Improvement Program’ for the listing. You may also call DMV at 1-800-777-0133.

Benefits

Mature drivers, 55 or older, who successfully complete an approved Driver Improvement course may qualify for reduced motor vehicle insurance premiums. Check with your insurance company.

California law allows insurance companies to determine the percentage of premium reduction. The insurance carrier can refuse to give a reduced rate to those who have poor driving records. You may want to ask your insurance company about your eligibility.

Course Time

The Mature Driver Improvement course requires classroom time of at least six hours and forty minutes. This time may be scheduled in one or two sessions to obtain a DMV certificate for your insurer as proof of course completion.

The AARP Driver Safety Program is the nation’s first and largest refresher course for drivers age 50 and older. The course is designed to help you:

- Tune up your driving skills and update your knowledge of the rules of the road.
- Learn about normal age-related physical changes and how to adjust your driving to allow for these changes.
- Reduce your traffic violations, crashes, and chances for injuries.

- Qualify for an auto insurance premium reduction or discount. Specific state insurance laws vary – please consult your insurance agent for specifics in your state.

You can find more information about the AARP Driver Safety Program on the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Driver Safety web pages at: www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_ed or 1-888-687-2277.

BEHIND-THE-WHEEL “REFRESHER” TRAINING FOR ADULTS

There are several licensed driving schools in California that provide behind-the-wheel “refresher” training for adults. These driving schools offer lessons for adults who want to learn how to drive or feel a need to brush-up on their current driving skills before taking the DMV SDPE driving test.

To attend a driving school, contact any licensed driving school in your area and ask if a behind-the-wheel refresher course for adults is offered. You may also want to visit the California DMV website at: www.dmv.ca.gov and go to Online Services, choose Occupational License Status Information and search for driving schools in your area.

Role of Occupational Therapy

Staying connected to your community is an important part of your well-being. Driving allows you to continue to be independent.

Changes in our physical, mental, and visual abilities can challenge our continued ability to drive safely. Occupational therapists have the skills to evaluate an individual’s overall ability to operate a vehicle safely.

A trained occupational therapist can help drivers determine how a physical or mental condition may be affecting their ability to drive safely, and then help develop and implement a plan for how they may drive safely despite their limitations.

To find a driving rehabilitation specialist near you, try one or more of the following resources:

- The Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialists, at (919) 529-1830, or at the website: **www.aded.net**.
- The American Occupational Therapy Association's Older Driver Resource Center at: **www.aota.org/olderdriver**.
- You may also call hospitals and rehabilitation facilities in your area.

RESTRICTED DRIVER LICENSE

DMV places restrictions or conditions on a person's driver license when necessary to ensure that a person is driving within his or her ability. Unnecessary restrictions are never imposed. Any restriction(s) placed on your driving privilege will be reasonable and necessary for your safety and the safety of others.

The most common restriction to a person's driver license is vision-related and usually requires the driver to wear corrective lenses. Other common restrictions include, but are not limited to:

- No freeway driving.
- Driving a vehicle with an additional right side mirror.
- Driving from sunrise to sunset (no night driving).
- Time of day restriction (for example, not during rush hour traffic).
- Area restriction (for example, to your physician, church, grocery store, etc.).

Mail to: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP Code: _____

