

The National Parent-Instructor Driver Training

Basic Instruction for Effective, Structured Learning



Introduction

Welcome to the Parent-Taught Driver Education Program Technical Manual. This guide is designed to provide a structured and comprehensive approach to teaching new drivers. It includes checklists, instructional content, and space for notes to ensure a thorough learning experience. The aim is to equip both the instructor (parent/guardian) and the learner with the necessary tools to build safe and confident driving skills.

Module 1: Vehicle Familiarization and Pre-Drive Checks

Understanding Your Vehicle

- **Exterior Checks:**
 - Tires (condition, pressure)
 - Lights (headlights, taillights, turn signals)
 - Windshield and mirrors (cleanliness, cracks)
 - Body damage
- **Interior Checks:**
 - Seat adjustment (driver's position)
 - Mirror adjustment (rear-view, side mirrors)
 - Seatbelt functionality
 - Dashboard indicators and warning lights
 - Steering wheel and pedals (normal operation)
 - Gear shifter
 - Horn
 - Wipers and washer fluid
 - Heater/AC controls

Pre-Drive Checklist

- Vehicle exterior is free of obstructions.
- Tires appear properly inflated.
- All lights are clean and functional.
- Windshield and mirrors are clean.
- Driver's seat is adjusted for optimal reach to pedals and steering wheel.
- Mirrors are adjusted correctly.
- Seatbelt is fastened.
- Dashboard shows no critical warning lights.
- Parking brake is engaged (if applicable).

Notes:



“Confidence behind the wheel starts with preparation inside the vehicle.”



Module 2: Basic Vehicle Operation

This module focuses on the fundamental actions required to start, move, and stop the vehicle safely.

Starting the Engine

1. Ensure the parking brake is engaged.
2. Check that the gear shifter is in Park (P) or Neutral (N).
3. Insert the key and turn it to the 'ON' position. Wait for warning lights to extinguish.
4. Turn the key further to 'START' until the engine ignites. Release the key immediately.
5. Observe the dashboard for any warning lights.




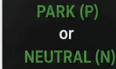


Moving and Stopping the Vehicle

- **Moving Forward:**
 - a. Release the parking brake.
 - b. Press the brake pedal gently.
 - c. Shift into Drive (D).
 - d. Release the brake pedal slowly, allowing the vehicle to creep forward.
 - e. Gently press the accelerator to increase speed.
- **Stopping:**
 - a. Release the accelerator pedal.
 - b. Gently apply pressure to the brake pedal.
 - c. Once stopped, shift into Park (P) and engage the parking brake.

Checklist:

- [] Engine started smoothly.
- [] Vehicle moved forward without lurching.
- [] Vehicle stopped smoothly.

STARTING THE ENGINE

1 ENGAGE THE PARKING BRAKE 	2 CHECK THE GEAR SHIFTER POSITION 	3 TURN THE KEY TO THE 'ON' POSITION 	4 TURN THE KEY TO 'START' TO IGNITE 	5 OBSERVE THE DASHBOARD 
✓ Ensure the parking brake is engaged. 	✓ Check that the gear shifter is in Park (P) or Neutral (N). 	✓ Insert the key and turn it to the 'ON' position.  Wait for warning lights to extinguish.	✓ Turn the key further to 'START' until the engine ignites. Release the key immediately.  Do not hold the key in 'START' for more than 5–10 seconds.	✓ Observe the dashboard for any warning lights. IF WARNING LIGHTS REMAIN ON: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your vehicle manual.• Address the issue before driving.• Seek professional assistance if needed.
 TIPS	 Always press the brake pedal when starting the engine in Park.	 Avoid pressing the accelerator while starting.	 Make it a habit: Check – Adjust – Fasten your seatbelt – Start.	

Module 3: Steering and Lane Control

Developing precise steering and maintaining lane position are critical for safe driving.

Steering Techniques

- **Hand Positioning:** Maintain a '10 and 2' or '9 and 3' o'clock position on the steering wheel for optimal control.
- **Smooth Inputs:** Make gradual, smooth turns of the steering wheel. Avoid jerky movements.
- **Hand-Over-Hand Steering:** Used for sharper turns, allowing continuous rotation of the wheel.
- **Push-Pull Steering:** Also used for smooth turns, where one hand pushes the wheel up and the other pulls it down.
- **Returning to Center:** As the turn is completed, guide the steering wheel back to the center position smoothly.

Maintaining Lane Position

- **Visual Focus:** Look ahead, not just at the road directly in front of the car. Focus on where you want to go.
- **Lane Markings:** Use lane lines as a guide. Aim to keep the vehicle centered between the lines.
- **Awareness:** Be aware of other vehicles and potential hazards in adjacent lanes.

Practice Scenarios:

- [] Driving straight on a clear road.
- [] Making gradual left turns.
- [] Making gradual right turns.
- [] Maintaining lane position in light traffic.

Notes:

Correct Hand Position

The safest modern hand position is **9 o'clock and 3 o'clock**.

STEERING WHEEL AS A CLOCK

CORRECT HAND POSITION 9 AND 3 O'CLOCK

Maximum control and better leverage
Hands stay on the outside of the airbag path for greater safety

ALTERNATE SAFE GRIP 10 AND 2 O'CLOCK

Acceptable alternative, but less common in modern driving schools.

WHY PROPER HAND POSITION MATTERS

- Better control and stability of the vehicle
- Faster, safer reaction in emergencies
- Less fatigue on arms and shoulders
- Keeps hands away from the airbag's direct path

SAFETY FIRST: Adjust your seat and mirrors, buckle up, and keep both hands on the wheel in the correct position for maximum safety and control.

Module 4: Speed Management and Braking

Understanding and controlling speed is paramount to safe driving and collision avoidance.

Speed Management

- **Adhering to Limits:** Always obey posted speed limits. These are set for safety based on road conditions and potential hazards.
- **Adjusting for Conditions:** Reduce speed in adverse weather (rain, snow, fog), at night, in heavy traffic, or when approaching hazards (intersections, pedestrian crossings).
- **Maintaining Safe Following Distance:** Use the 'three-second rule' (or more in poor conditions) to ensure adequate stopping distance from the vehicle ahead.
- **Anticipation:** Anticipate potential slowing or stopping situations ahead to avoid sudden braking.

Braking Techniques

- **Gentle Braking:** For normal slowing, apply smooth, gradual pressure to the brake pedal.
- **Firm Braking:** In situations requiring a quicker stop, apply firm, consistent pressure to the brake pedal.
- **Emergency Braking:** In a true emergency, apply maximum pressure to the brake pedal (and steer if necessary to avoid an obstacle). Modern ABS systems will prevent wheel lock-up.

Checklist:

- Practiced gentle braking.
- Practiced firm braking.
- Maintained safe following distance.
- Reduced speed appropriately for conditions.

MAINTAINING SAFE FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Use the 'three-second rule' (or more in poor conditions) to ensure adequate stopping distance from the vehicle ahead.

THE THREE-SECOND RULE

- 1 Choose a fixed object ahead (e.g., sign, tree, light pole).
- 2 When the vehicle ahead passes the object, start counting.
- 3 If you pass the same object before you finish counting to three, you are following too closely.

1001...1002...1003

ANTICIPATION

Anticipate potential slowing or stopping situations ahead to avoid sudden braking.

LOOK FAR AHEAD Scan the road far ahead for potential hazards.	WATCH FOR BRAKE LIGHTS Brake lights ahead may indicate slowing or stopping.	OBSERVE TRAFFIC FLOW Slower traffic, lane changes, and merging vehicles affect your speed.	CHECK FOR HAZARDS Pedestrians, cyclists, animals, and road conditions can cause sudden stops.	BE PREPARED Adjust your speed and be ready to slow down safely.
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THINK AHEAD. STAY ALERT. DRIVE SAFE. Good anticipation + safe following distance = more time to react and stay safe.

Module 5: Observation and Hazard Perception

Developing keen observational skills and the ability to anticipate hazards is crucial for preventing accidents.

The SIPDE Process

SIPDE is a defensive driving strategy:

- **Search:** Continuously scan the road and your surroundings for potential hazards.
- **Identify:** Recognize potential threats (e.g., a child running towards the street, a car braking suddenly).
- **Predict:** Anticipate what might happen next based on the identified hazards.
- **Decide:** Determine the safest course of action.
- **Execute:** Carry out your decision (e.g., brake, steer, accelerate).

Areas to Scan

- **Forward:** Road ahead, traffic, pedestrians, signs.
- **Sides:** Oncoming traffic, parked cars, pedestrians, cyclists.
- **Mirrors:** Rear-view and side mirrors for traffic behind and to the sides.
- **Blind Spots:** Always check blind spots before changing lanes or turning.

Observation Practice:

- Practiced scanning road and surroundings.
- Identified potential hazards.
- Anticipated actions of other road users.
- Practiced using mirrors frequently.

Notes:

SIPDE: A DEFENSIVE DRIVING STRATEGY		
<p>S SEARCH Continuously scan the road and your surroundings for potential hazards.</p>		<p>YOU SHOULD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan left, center, right • Check mirrors • Look far ahead • Be aware of all road users
<p>I IDENTIFY Recognize potential threats (e.g., a child running towards the street, a car braking suddenly).</p>		<p>EXAMPLES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian stepping out • Vehicle braking suddenly • Car merging into your lane • Road conditions changing
<p>P PREDICT Anticipate what might happen next based on the identified hazards.</p>		<p>YOU SHOULD THINK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could this person do? • What could that vehicle do? • How might road conditions change? • What are my risks?
<p>D DECIDE Determine the safest course of action.</p>		<p>CHOOSE THE SAFEST OPTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down? • Change lanes? • Stop? • Sound the horn? • Be ready to act.
<p>E EXECUTE Carry out your decision (e.g., brake, steer, accelerate).</p>		<p>TAKE ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brake smoothly • Steer safely • Accelerate if needed • Stay in control

SIPDE = STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE. Good drivers anticipate. Great drivers prevent.

Module 6: Lane Changes and Turns

Mastering lane changes and turns safely requires proper technique and awareness.

Lane Changes

1. **Check Mirrors:** Check rear-view and side mirrors for traffic.
2. **Signal:** Activate your turn signal in the direction of the lane change.
3. **Blind Spot Check:** Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot.
4. **Smooth Steering:** If clear, steer smoothly into the adjacent lane.
5. **Cancel Signal:** Turn off your signal once you are in the new lane.
6. **Adjust Speed:** Match the speed of traffic in the new lane.

Making Turns






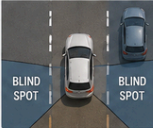

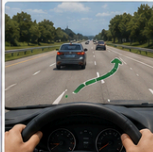








- **Preparation:** Slow down, check mirrors, and signal your intention.
- **Positioning:** Position your vehicle correctly in the appropriate lane before the turn.
- **Execution:** Turn the steering wheel smoothly. For right turns, stay close to the curb. For left turns from a two-way street, turn into the lane closest to the center line.
- **Completion:** Straighten the wheel as you complete the turn and accelerate gently.

Checklist:

- Practiced safe lane changes.
- Practiced right turns.
- Practiced left turns.
- Used signals correctly.
- Checked blind spots.

LANE CHANGES: STEP-BY-STEP

A safe lane change keeps you and others safe. Follow these steps every time.

1 CHECK MIRRORS Check rear-view and side mirrors for traffic.   Check inside mirror, then left and right side mirrors.	2 SIGNAL Activate your turn signal in the direction of the lane change.    Signal at least 3-5 seconds before you change lanes.	3 BLIND SPOT CHECK Look over your shoulder to check your blind spot.    Always check your blind spot. Mirrors can't see everything.	4 SMOOTH STEERING If clear, steer smoothly into the adjacent lane.    Steer gently and smoothly. Avoid sudden moves.	5 CANCEL SIGNAL Turn off your signal once you are in the new lane.    Turn off your signal after the lane change is complete.	6 ADJUST SPEED Match the speed of traffic in the new lane.    Maintain a safe following distance and match the flow of traffic.
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BE SAFE. BE AWARE. BE COURTEOUS. | Plan ahead. Signal early. Check twice. Drive safely.

Module 7: Parking

This module covers various parking maneuvers.

Parallel Parking

1. Signal and pull up alongside the vehicle in front of the space, about two feet away.
2. Reverse slowly until your side mirror is aligned with the other car's rear bumper.
3. Turn the steering wheel sharply towards the curb and continue backing up.
4. When your vehicle is at a 45-degree angle to the curb, turn the steering wheel sharply away from the curb and continue backing.
5. Straighten the wheel and center your vehicle in the space.

Perpendicular Parking (e.g., Parking Lot)

1. Signal and position your vehicle alongside the parking space you intend to enter.
2. Turn the steering wheel towards the space and begin to reverse slowly.
3. As your front bumper clears the vehicle next to you, turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction to straighten your vehicle in the space.
4. Continue backing until the vehicle is properly positioned.

Parking Checklist:

- Practiced parallel parking.
- Achieved proper distance from curb/other vehicles.
- Practiced perpendicular parking.
- Parked within the lines.

Notes:



PARKING CHECKLIST:



- Practiced parallel parking.
- Achieved proper distance from curb/other vehicles.
- Practiced perpendicular parking.
- Parked within the lines.



GOOD PARKING HABITS = SAFE DRIVING

PRACTICE. PATIENCE. RESPONSIBILITY.
BUILD SKILLS TODAY. DRIVE SAFELY TOMORROW.



Module 8: Driving in Different Conditions

Adapting driving techniques for various conditions is essential for safety.

Night Driving

- Use headlights on low beam when following or meeting other vehicles.
- Use high beams when no other vehicles are present to improve visibility.
- Be aware of reduced visibility and increased reaction time.
- Avoid staring directly at oncoming headlights.

Driving in Rain/Snow

- Reduce speed significantly.
- Increase following distance.
- Ensure wipers are working and tires have good tread.
- Be cautious of hydroplaning (tires losing contact with the road due to water).
- If skidding occurs, ease off the accelerator and steer in the direction of the skid.

The infographic features a dark background with a night cityscape and a full moon. At the top left is a Texas state outline with a star. The title 'NIGHT DRIVING' is in large white letters, with the tagline 'SEE WELL. DRIVE SMART. STAY SAFE.' below it. On the right is a circular logo for 'SAFE DRIVERS STRONGER TEXAS' with a star. The infographic is divided into four horizontal sections, each with an icon, text, and a small image:

- Section 1:** Icon of a low beam headlight. Text: 'Use headlights on low beam when following or meeting other vehicles.' Image: A car driving at night with its low beams on.
- Section 2:** Icon of a high beam headlight. Text: 'Use high beams when no other vehicles are present to improve visibility.' Image: A road at night with high beams illuminating the path.
- Section 3:** Icon of an eye. Text: 'Be aware of reduced visibility and increased reaction time.' Image: A road at night with a yellow diamond warning sign.
- Section 4:** Icon of a headlight with a red prohibition sign over it. Text: 'Avoid staring directly at oncoming headlights.' Image: A car at night with a red prohibition sign over its headlights.

At the bottom left is a shield icon with a star. At the bottom center is the text: 'GOOD HABITS. BETTER VISIBILITY. SAFER NIGHTS.' On the right side, there is a 'Drive Safe Get Home TEXAS' sign and a speed limit sign for 65 mph. The background also shows a car's dashboard with a speedometer reading 55 mph.

“Night driving requires maturity, patience, and constant awareness. Slow down, stay alert, and always leave yourself time to react.”

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General Safety and Best Practices


















This section covers overarching principles for safe driving.


- **Defensive Driving:** Always assume other drivers might make mistakes. Be prepared to react.
- **Distraction Avoidance:** Never use a mobile phone, eat, or engage in distracting activities while driving.
- **Seatbelts:** Ensure all occupants wear seatbelts at all times.
- **Road Rage:** Remain calm and avoid engaging with aggressive drivers.
- **Vehicle Maintenance:** Regularly check tire pressure, oil, coolant, and lights.
- **Planning Routes:** Familiarize yourself with the route beforehand to reduce stress.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Know how to handle a flat tire or other minor roadside emergencies.

Final Checklist:

- Practiced defensive driving techniques.
- Avoided all distractions.
- Ensured seatbelts were used.
- Maintained calm demeanor.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING: DRIVE SMART, STAY SAFE

<p>1 DEFENSIVE DRIVING Always assume other drivers might make mistakes. Be prepared to react.</p>  <p> Stay alert and scan your surroundings.</p> <p> Maintain a safe following distance.</p> <p> Expect the unexpected.</p> <p> Be prepared to react quickly and safely.</p>	<p>2 DISTRACTION AVOIDANCE Never use a mobile phone, eat, or engage in distracting activities while driving.</p>  <p> Put your phone away and out of reach.</p> <p> Finish eating before you drive.</p> <p> Keep your focus on the road.</p> <p> FOCUS ON DRIVING. IT CAN WAIT.</p>	<p>3 SEATBELTS Ensure all occupants wear seatbelts at all times.</p>  <p> Buckle up every time, every trip.</p> <p> Ensure all passengers are buckled up.</p> <p> Seatbelts save lives. It's the law.</p> <p> BUCKLE UP EVERY TIME.</p>	<p>4 ROAD RAGE Remain calm and avoid engaging with aggressive drivers.</p>  <p> Stay calm. Don't take it personally.</p> <p> Give them space and let them go.</p> <p> Avoid eye contact, gestures, and arguing.</p> <p> Your safety is more important.</p> <p> STAY CALM. STAY SAFE.</p>
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 Good drivers protect themselves and others. Drive defensively. Arrive safely. 

Conclusion and Next Steps

This manual has provided a structured framework for national parent-taught driver education.

We provide an in-depth instructional guide used by countless instructors across the United States.

Consistent practice, patient instruction, and a focus on safety are key to developing a competent and responsible driver.

Continue reviewing these modules and practicing the skills learned.

Remember to consult local driving laws and requirements for obtaining a driver's license.

Safe driving!

“A responsible teen driver understands that safety is not accidental – it is the result of attention, preparation, and good decisions behind the wheel.”

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CONGRATULATIONS ON TAKING THE NEXT STEP!

You've reached the end of this Parent-Taught Driver Education Instructor Guide.

*Stay Safe.
Drive Smart.
Go Far.*



THIS MANUAL HAS PROVIDED
a structured framework for parent-taught driver education.



CONSISTENT PRACTICE, PATIENT INSTRUCTION, AND A FOCUS ON SAFETY
are key to developing a competent and responsible driver.



CONTINUE REVIEWING THESE MODULES AND PRACTICING THE SKILLS LEARNED.
Learning to drive is a journey—practice makes progress.



REMEMBER TO CONSULT LOCAL DRIVING LAWS AND REQUIREMENTS
for obtaining a driver's license.



GOOD DRIVERS ARE MADE—NOT BORN.

Thank you for investing your time and effort in building a safer future on the road.

BE PATIENT. BE POSITIVE. BE PRESENT.

Your guidance today shapes a lifetime of safe driving tomorrow.

