Guide 16: Communication Options

Demonstrate Effective Use of:

• Signal Lights
Signal lights should be used 5 seconds before making any change in speed or direction to give others enough time to see it and respond.

• Headlights
During daytime, it's a good practice to drive with your headlights on. **T**urn on your headlights when you use the windshield wipers. Flashing headlights can warn oncoming vehicles of some danger they are driving into.

• Brake Lights
A tapping of the brake pedal flashes the brake lights to warn traffic to the rear of a slow-down or stop. When stopped, if you see a car approaching from the rear at a fast rate, tap the brake pedal to alert the driver to respond to the situation.

• Horn
Use the horn in a short tapping manner rather than a long sustained blast. To use the horn effectively you must see the situation early enough to get a response.

• Lane Position of Other Cars
By reading the position of other vehicles you can be tipped off to what is likely to happen. For example: You see a car change from the right lane to the left lane and begin to slow down; you can expect that a left turn will eventually be made.

• Speed Control of Other Cars
A driver's speed can communicate to you what will be taking place. For example, if a car pulls out of a side road and doesn't accelerate in a normal brisk manner, you can expect that driver to soon make a turn.

• Hand Signals
Hand signals are necessary if the signal lights are not functioning. There are also times when a hand signal communicates more effectively than the signal lights, such as if you're attempting to enter a long line of slow moving bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Timely Communications

• Send Messages , timely
Communication must take place early enough for others to receive and act upon the signals that you send.

• Receive Messages , timely
You must read others' communications in a timely manner to gain control of the situation and not be forced into making a high-risk, surprised response.

Respond To Communications

When you effectively receive communications from others in the traffic environment, your actions should demonstrate the principles of Zone Control.

Get Commitment

Anytime you are attempting to communicate with others you must not assume that your intentions are known until you get a commitment. To get a commitment is to receive a message from others that they acknowledge you.

Be Effectively Courteous To Others

There is so much stress that creeps into our lives unnecessarily. One way to minimize stress is to eliminate some of the competitive situations that occur while driving. If you set your goal to strive for one or two situations each day when you can be courteous to others, it can put you into a win-win situation. You help someone, which in turn gives you a good feeling, as compared to trying to compete with someone and losing. Spread some goodwill; be courteous!

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Guide 17: Approaching Intersections

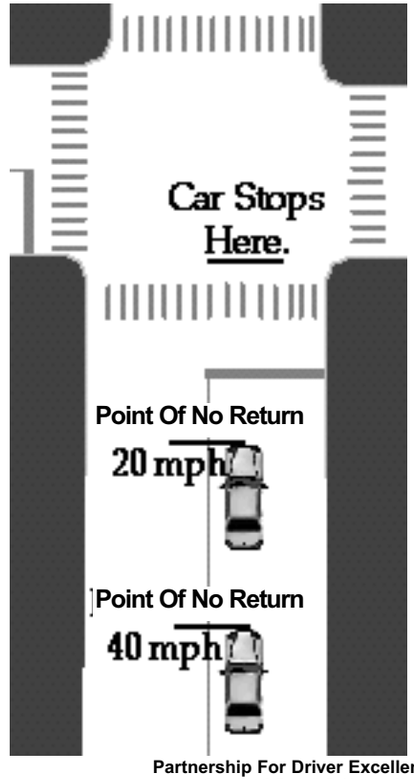
1. See Intersection In Target Area
Awareness of an approach to an intersection should begin while looking to the target area and evaluating the targeting path.

2. Check The Rear Zone
Any time there is the possibility of a stop in traffic, check the rear zone's status.

3. Select Best Lane and Position
Based upon the conditions, and your destination, select the best lane and lane position.

4. Search Left, Front, Right Zones
While moving, checks of the left and right zones are made at a 45-degree angle. Checks at a 90-degree angle are made while stopped. And, it is very important to check the front zone for open space before or while moving.

5. Speed Control For LOS-POTs
Cover the brake, or apply the brake, when a reduction of control in any zone is detected.



6. Locate Point-Of-No-Return
The Point-Of-No-Return is that point at which you can no longer stop without entering the intersection, which occurs when the car is 2 seconds away from the intersection. Speed will affect the length of space consumed per second. The faster you are traveling, the more space you will occupy per second. At 20 mph the car travels almost 30 feet per second. At 40 mph it travels almost 60 feet per second. The slower you approach an intersection the more time you will have before making a commitment to enter the intersection. When there are LOS-POT blockages in an intersection, reduce speed.

7. Stopping: No Car In Front
When you are the first car approaching an intersection, there are three possible stop positions.

- **Staggered Stop** refers to stopping or preparing to stop, at a point where you can see the stop line to the front of your car. This will place your car approximately 15 feet before the line.
- **Legal Stop** is at the stop line.
- **Safety Stop** is at the curb line to best see traffic.

8. Stopping: With Car In Front
• See Rear Tires At Ground
When stopping to the rear of another vehicle, stop where you can see it's rear tires touching the pavement. This will place your vehicle 12-15 feet away.
•Delay Moving 2 Seconds
After the vehicle in front begins to move, wait a two-second count before putting your vehicle in motion.

9. Stopped In Traffic
Being stopped in traffic is a high-risk situation that can be neutralized by awareness of the rear zone's status. Unstable Rear Zone is present when there are no vehicles stopped in back and there is the possibility of approaching traffic. The "Sand Barrels" are cars stopped to our rear that would absorb some of the impact of a rear crash.

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Guide 18: Rear Zone Control

1. Use Of Mirrors

• After Seeing A Zone Change
After you see a Zone Change — especially to the front — check the rear view mirror to know how to best control the rear zone if a slow-down or stop is to take place.

• Before and After Braking
When your foot brakes, your eyes should go to the rear view mirror by habit.

• While Stopped, Sand Barrels
As more cars stop in back, the risk of injury from a rear impact decreases. The stopped vehicles in back act as sand barrels (like the yellow ones seen at some highway exits) to absorb the force of impact. Continue to check the rear until at least two vehicles are stopped to your rear.

• Before & After Making Turns
This helps to give an update of rear zone conditions immediately before and after entering a new traffic pattern.

• Before & After Lane Change
Look for fast approaching traffic.

• Use All Mirrors Effectively
This includes the inside rear view mirror, the two outside side view mirrors, and convex mirrors when available.

2. Check Blind Areas

Even with side view mirrors there is a blind area where another vehicle alongside you may not be detected. There are three ways to compensate for the mirror's blind areas before moving the vehicle into a new side position.

• Convex-Mirror Check
A convex mirror is curved to give a wider view than existing mirrors. When added to the vehicle outside mirror it will eliminate the blind areas not seen in the flat mirror.

• Over-The-Shoulder Check
Requires a brief head movement and a rolling of the eyeballs in the direction you intend to move. This increases the range of your fringe vision to detect vehicles.

• Move Your Head Forward
A head movement of 8-10 inches forward and slightly away from the mirror, while checking the mirror, will increase the angle of your view to detect vehicles.

3. See Rear Zone Changes

• Fast Closing Vehicles
When you see a fast closing vehicle behind you, tap the brakes to get the driver's attention.

• LOS Blockages
A large vehicle following closely to your rear will prevent you from detecting vehicles that will be pulling alongside you. When you are stopped around a curve, you may not have a good sight distance to your rear; which may also prevent rear approaching traffic from seeing you.

• Tailgater Types
Listed below are the three types and characteristics of tailgaters.

• Charger Excessive speed on approach; Competitive; Wants to pass you; May force an opportunity to pass.

• One Pacer Travels at one pace (below, at, or above speed limit); Gradual approach to your vehicle; Will close gap as you slow; Will stay back as you increase speed; Doesn't pass at first opportunity.

• Habitual Consistently tailgates; Will stay with you on speed increase; Highly distracted (talking to passenger, etc.); Most dangerous of all tailgaters.

4. Aware Of Rear Condition

• Open Rear Zone
No one closer than two seconds, and at least 12 seconds visual sight line.

• Closed Rear Zone
You do not have an open zone.

• Unstable Rear Zone
An open or closed zone that has the potential to become worse.

5. Take Action For Control

Taking an effective action in speed adjustment, lane positioning or communication can increase the control of the rear situation.

6. Effective Speed Control

Effective speed control means taking the best option available, i.e. the worse the rear zone, the slower the speed.

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Guide 19: Stopping In Traffic

1. See Closed POT- at least 12 seconds ahead
See the condition of your target area. Ask yourself, "Is it open or closed?" If your target area is open, continue to search for the condition of your travel path. When you see a closed POT in your front zone, it should activate your Alert Switch telling you to check your other zones.

2. Check Rear Zone
When the front zone is closed, you want to immediately check the rear zone to determine what your options are.

3. Try To Time Arrival Into Open Zone
As you look to your target area (at least 12 seconds ahead) and see that the front zone is closed, you are in an excellent strategic position to make slight adjustments in your speed that will give the closed zone time to open for your vehicle. If you make an attempt to enter an open zone, you will gain independence from what other traffic is doing. Very often, one driver after another plays follow-the-leader, and they drive at the same speed into a closed zone because the mind was never engaged, and a bad rather than good habit made the driver feel okay about his performance.

4. Communicate to Rear –– Tap Brake Lights
When the front zone is closed, and you see a car to your rear, you have an opportunity to detect whether the driver is a tailgater, and which type of tailgater. You have a wonderful opportunity to test the effectiveness of tapping the brake pedal as a communication that you will be slowing or stopping. Observe how the driver responds to your communication.

5. Begin Braking Without Delay
The sooner you begin the braking process the more time you have to control the situation.

6. Control the Rear Zone
When you recognize which type of situation you have to the rear — open, closed or unstable — and you detect the condition at least 12 seconds before you need to stop, you will have many options to control the rear zone. If you look into your rear view mirror only as you slam your brakes on, you will have no options for controlling the rear zone.

7. Gradual Approach to Stop Location
A gradual approach into a stop situation puts you in a win-win situation. You will use the least amount of fuel, you will put the least amount of wear on your tires and braking system, and you have the best opportunity to control the traffic to your rear. Most of all, you will be developing a good habit that will eventually occur even when you don't think about it.

8. Make Smooth Stop
Making a smooth stop is a good habit to acquire. When jerky braking does occur, it will be felt as undesirable.

9. Monitor Rear Until Two Cars Are Stopped In Back
When you are stopped in traffic, an approaching driver may not perceive your car as stopped. Be aware of the danger until you have at least two cars stopped in back.

10. With A Car In Front

• Stop To See Tires
When you are able to see the rear tires of the car in front, you are approximately 12-15 feet to its rear. This gives you independence to get around a stalled car, or be pushed into empty space if rear-ended.

• Use 2-Second Delay With Start-Up
When the car in front of you moves, wait 2 seconds before putting your car into motion.

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