

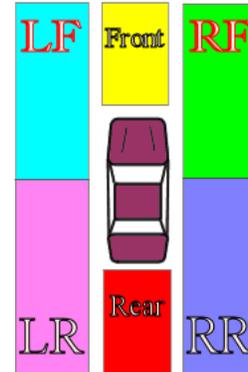
Managing Time and Space

Risk

If cars travelled on tracks and never had to interact with other vehicles – we wouldn't have over 30,000 traffic fatalities in the U.S. each year and we wouldn't need driver education.

But cars do not travel on independent tracks or have 100% crash avoidance systems built in - yet – so understanding the risks involved in driving is essential to staying safe and alive.

Falling into a false sense of security is a big problem as drivers become more and more comfortable behind the wheel. Soon, they forget that they are driving a 2,000 pound rolling missile and allow their attention to drift to more interesting things, like a text message or music or video player.



The six zones around any vehicle include front left, front, front right, left rear, rear, and right rear.

What do you do about these six zones? While driving, always be aware whether these zones are “open” or “closed” – meaning there is or isn't something blocking that zone.

IPDE

Driving is a very busy activity. It is so much more than simply stepping on the gas and steering. In driver education we like to say we could teach a monkey to drive but it would not be able to have the focus or make the smart choices required to be a SAFE and SKILLED driver. This is because driving is primarily a thinking task.

One of the skills necessary to stay aware of the ever-changing conditions around you while you drive is to use “IPDE” (identify, predict, decide, execute). While driving you must constantly “identify” important objects and situations that might affect you, “predict” what might happen, “decide” how you will react if necessary, and then “execute” that reaction if necessary.

Since “prediction” is an essential part of the IPDE process but you can usually only predict what you've experienced, getting good at IPDE will take time.

Zone Control

The Zone Control system helps you control the six areas around your vehicle at all times. Combined with the IPDE process, you will be able to practice good visual habits that will help you enjoy low-risk and low-stress driving.

POT – LOS Restrictions

Closed zones come in the form of “POT” (path of travel) or “LOS” (line of sight) restrictions. Your path of travel is where your vehicle is headed and will be momentarily unless a change of direction or speed is required. Your line of sight is what you see ahead where you are looking.

Orderly Visual Search Pattern

Driving down the road knowing about IPDE and Zone Control is not enough. Your job as a responsible driver is to use IPDE and Zone Control to manage the time and space around your vehicle. In order to do this you must use an orderly visual search pattern.

An orderly visual search pattern is a process of searching around you - dangerous areas first - in a routine manner. Look ahead and to the side about 5 seconds – checking the front left, center, and front right zones - then about

15 seconds ahead – again searching your front zones and including driveways and intersections for possible zones that may close. Finally, search all the way to your “target area” – the location furthest down the road that you are headed for. You should look for possible hazards – a car that might cross the intersection – a car door that might open – or a pedestrian that might turn and cross the street without looking first. If you always expect the unexpected you will be prepared.

While checking the front zones is critical to your safety, checking your rearview and side mirrors regularly as well is also important! In Idaho about 13% of all crashes occur because one vehicle is following another too closely and over 4,000 tickets are written for following another too closely. And remember that motorcycles, bicyclists, and small vehicles can quickly enter your blind spot without you seeing it unless you check your rear zones regularly.

What to Look For

- Open zones
- Other vehicles
- Pedestrians
- Road construction
- Roadway conditions
- Change from multi-lane to single lane
- Change in lane width
- Parked vehicles
- Children playing
- Busy intersections
- Traffic controls

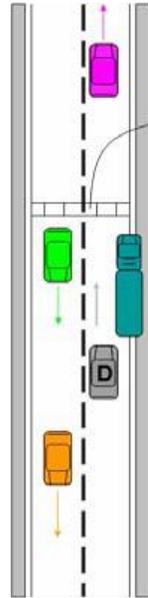
Hazards

Always **eliminate** hazards if possible, by changing lanes or choosing a different route. But if you can't eliminate a hazard try to **minimize** it. Put more distance between yourself and the hazard. Slow down, pay more attention, or even stop.

There will often be more than just one hazard on the road and you will need to **separate** hazards. Adjust your speed so you can deal with one hazard at a time and then decide which hazard deserves your immediate attention.

When hazards can't be eliminated, minimized, or

separated, you must **compromise space** by giving as much space as possible to the greatest hazard. In the diagram below, car “D” has a large truck blocking his lane but oncoming traffic only a few feet to his left.



The driver can't eliminate the truck or oncoming car, can't minimize either, and doesn't have enough time to separate them. So the driver of car “D” decides that hitting the small car would do more damage than hitting the parked truck, so he slows down and drives as close to the parked truck as he can until the small car goes by. He then returns to the center of the lane, lane position 1.

Commentary Driving

Commentary driving is a way of thinking out loud while driving. Just talk through what you are seeing, thinking, and planning to do behind the wheel. This is a great way to practice IPDE and Zone Control but more importantly, it helps your instructor or supervising driver (during the six months of supervised driving) realize how you are processing what you are seeing. Often, in driver education, the instructor has to assume the student driver is seeing and thinking the same things she is – but assumptions aren't good enough when it comes to safety. Help your instructor out by doing some commentary driving and asking a lot of questions.

Idaho Public Driver Education

REVIEW QUESTIONS HOMEWORK PACKET 3

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions based on what you learned from the homework packet.

1. In your opinion, what is the most important step in the IPDE process. Why?
2. What does “POT” stand for?
3. What percentage of Idaho crashes occur because one vehicle is following another too closely?
4. If your instructor tells you to “compromise your space here” (he/she will probably not use this exact wording) what does he/she mean?
5. What is the main purpose of commentary driving?
6. Which is more – the leading cause of teen deaths in America (car crashes at 37%) or the total of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th causes of teen deaths in America? By how much?