Instructional Objectives: To develop an understanding of the nature of the traffic safety problem and to instill in each student a sense of responsibility for its solution.

(I) The Facts: United States Statistics:

A. In 2007, 41,059 fatalities were caused by motor vehicle crashes in the United States. This figure represents a small decrease over 1999.
B. Three out of four crashes happen within 25 miles of home
C. 68% of traffic deaths occur when a vehicle is traveling at speeds considered safe.
D. 2.5 million individuals each year are injured in the U.S.
E. Automobile Fatalities:
   1. Are one of the leading causes of death among people 44 and younger.
   2. Are the number one cause of on-the-job deaths.
   3. Cost the average employer nearly $160,000 per employee death.
   4. Are 2 ½ times greater in number than all fatalities caused by accidents in the home.
   5. Are ten times greater than fatalities caused by all other forms of transportation.
   6. Cost taxpayers an average $113.4 billion every year.

(II) The two leading causes of traffic FATALITIES in New York are:

1. Drugs and alcohol.
2. Speed.

These represent all crashes. Remember, alcohol is involved in approximately one-third of all traffic fatalities. You have probably heard the facts before -- driving while impaired or intoxicated is the number one traffic safety problem in the United States. In New York state, 1/3 of all highway deaths involve the use of alcohol or drugs. However, the facts and statistics don’t tell the whole story. Behind the numbers are thousands of lives cut short, permanent, disabling injuries, and families devastated because someone drove while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Driving safely after drinking alcohol or taking other drugs is simply not possible. Not every impaired or intoxicated driver causes a traffic crash; however, each one is dangerous, risking his or her life and the lives of others.

Young people, who have less experience with both alcohol and driving, are at the greatest risk. Drivers 16 to 20 years old are only about 7% of the driving population, but they’re involved as impaired or intoxicated drivers in 13% of all alcohol or drug-related accidents, and 18% of the fatal crashes involving alcohol or drugs. That’s one reason the license revocation penalties for young drinking drivers are more severe.

Because driving “under the influence” is so dangerous, the penalties for alcohol or drug-related violations are very tough and enforcement by police is a priority. New York law does not allow you to “plea bargain” your way out of an alcohol or drug-related driving offense. So if you drink and drive, your chances of being caught and convicted are very high.

(III) Point System

New York has a point system which helps identify drivers who commit several traffic violations in a short period of time. While each violation may not be serious enough itself to require suspension or revocation, several violations may indicate that action should be taken.

The points are charged against your record based on the date you commit the violation, not the date you are convicted in court.

Here’s what happens as you build up points:

7-10 points in 18 months:
You receive a warning letter from DMV.

11 or more points in 18 months:
You will be called to a DMV hearing after which your license or privilege may be suspended or revoked. You may be given the option of waiving your hearing and accepting suspension.

You can reduce your point total by up to 4 points and save up to 10% on automobile liability and collision insurance premiums if you take a DMV-approved collision prevention course.

Points are NOT removed or deleted from a driver’s record as a result of taking a collision prevention course. Point reduction is an internal New York DMV function and, therefore, a (-4) will not appear on the record. Point reduction means that the DMV computer will no longer count those points against the motorist toward future administrative action, but the points will remain visible on the record for approximately four years. After four years, the violations, convictions and points are generally purged from the record. However, more serious violations can remain on the record for up to 10 years.
Point reduction is based on the date of the violation. In order to be eligible, the violation has to have occurred within the eighteen month period prior to course completion. If there are no points on the record at the time of completion, they cannot be banked for future violations. For persons that do not attend a collision prevention course, their points will be considered active and counted against them for eighteen months; however, they will remain on record for approximately four years.

POINT SYSTEM

VIOLATION POINTS:

1. Speeding (mph over posted limit):
   1 to 10- 3 points
   11 to 20- 4 points
   21 to 30- 6 points
   31 to 40- 8 points
   Over 40-11 points

2. Reckless driving- 5 points

3. Failing to stop for school bus- 5 points

4. Following too closely (tailgating-) 4 points

5. Inadequate brakes- 4 points
   While driving employer’s vehicle- 2 points

6. Failure to yield right-of-way- 3 points

7. Violation involving traffic signal, stop sign or yield sign- 3 points

8. Railroad crossing violation- 3 points

9. Improper passing, unsafe lane change, driving left of center, driving wrong direction- 3 points

10. Leaving scene of a collision involving property damage or injury to an animal- 3 points

11. Safety restraint violation involving person under 16- 3 points

12. Any other moving violation- 2 points

Chapter 2
Factors Influencing Driver Performance

Instructional Objective: To identify the characteristics and behaviors of drivers and how they affect driving performance.

CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS OF DRIVERS ARE AFFECTED BY ATTITUDES AND HOW THOSE ATTITUDES AFFECT A DRIVER'S PERFORMANCE.

(I) Attitudes, habits, feelings, and emotions:

ATTITUDE: You have to make a conscious decision to be a safe driver.

Examples of Attitudes:

1. Immaturity:
   A. Characteristics - Emotional reactions carried to the extreme, such as rage, impatience, excessive happiness, and overconfidence.
   B. Behaviors - Aggressive driving, excessive risk taking, loss of self-control, and increase in the time to react to driving situations.
   C. Effects - Reduced attention span, poor judgment, and decline in performance levels, which all can lead to property damage and/or personal injury.

2. Maturity:
   A. Characteristics - Content, cheerful, optimistic, and discerning.
   B. Behaviors - Rational decision making, stability in emotional behavior, and consideration of driving environment.
   C. Effects - Increased attention span, good judgment, and increased performance levels. This is the attitude all drivers should take when driving a motor vehicle.

ATTENTION/ALERTNESS: A safe driver is never taken by surprise and is mentally prepared to deal with the unexpected at an instant's notice.
KNOWLEDGE/JUDGMENT/THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS: Safe driving requires you to make a constant stream of life-and-death decisions. Safe drivers demonstrate good judgment and are good decision makers. A safe driver not only needs to know and obey the rules of the road, but also must recognize that there are choices in every driving situation.

HABITS: While driving, operators of motor vehicles become accustomed to daily routines, such as the simple task of driving back and forth to work every day. This routine can dull the senses, thereby increasing the chances of a collision. Make sure to pay attention when driving your automobile. Driving is a complex task requiring good judgments and fast reflexes. When your senses are dulled, your reaction time could be delayed just enough turn a near miss into a serious collision.

FEELINGS/EMOTIONS: Feelings and emotions, such as stress, can distract drivers. Not paying attention is a major contributing factor in car crashes, and the wrong feelings or emotions while driving can cause this lack of attention.

(II) Alcohol and other drugs:

ALCOHOL: It has been estimated that as many as one in five drivers is operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol (not always to the point of intoxication). This is due in part to public acceptance of drinking in moderation and then driving. Even people who don’t condone drinking while intoxicated may feel it is okay to drive after a drink or two. Remember, even a driver who is not legally drunk is twice as likely to have a fatal collision as a completely sober driver.

ILLEGAL DRUGS: Your reaction time can be seriously impaired by drugs. Marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and other illegal drugs have much the same effect as alcohol on a driver's reaction time, as well as the driver's ability to make rational decisions. Even legal drugs can impair your ability to react. The antihistamines used for colds and allergies, the amphetamines, or pep pills, some people take to stay awake, the barbiturates used as sleeping pills, and the tranquilizers that help some people to relax are all legally available over the counter. It is against the law to drive while under the influence of either illegal and/or legal drugs.

(III) Physical condition:

PHYSICAL FITNESS: Physical fitness is a major aspect of being a safe driver. The use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs pose a serious health problem that can severely impair any person's ability to properly perform the driving task.

Examples of the physical condition and how it can affect driver performance:

1. Fatigue- Fatigue can be caused by a number of things, such as a lack of rest, improper eating, excessive physical labor, and the plush environment in today's automobiles.

   A. Effects - Increase in the driver's reaction time, lack of attention, and inaccurate predictions of the driving situation.
   
   B. Counter-Measures:
      1. Trip planning.
      2. Sufficient rest.
      3. Change radio stations to alter the environment.
      4. Roll down the window for fresh air.
      5. Increase safe driving space.

2. Illness- Illness, both permanent and temporary, has adverse effects upon the driving process. If you are ill, it is not a good idea to drive under any circumstances, and if you are taking medication, read the warning labels before you drive. Some prescription medications can seriously impair your driving ability. Remember that driving under the influence of a prescribed drug is illegal.

   A. Effects - Increase in the driver's reaction time, lack of attention, and limitations of physical movement through discomfort or pain.
   
   B. Counter-Measures:
      1. Do not drive unless you have to; and then pay extra attention to the driving environment.
      2. Pull off the road and rest frequently.
      3. Know your physical limitations.
      4. Increase your safe driving space.
      5. Drive at a reduced speed.

3. Age- The senses (vision, hearing, smell, etc.) tend to deteriorate with age. This makes driving that much more difficult and can turn a complex task into a deadly task.

   A. Effects - Increase in driver's reaction time, loss of attention, loss of vision, and impairment of visual and auditory signals.
   
   B. Counter-Measures:
      There are no counter-measures for aging, but there are some ways to combat physical and mental limitations associated with the aging process. See your doctor regularly. Prescription glasses and hearing aids help compensate for deterioration of the senses. Participate in driving courses that sharpen your driving skills. Increase your safe driving space. Exercise regularly to maintain your physical fitness.
4. Physical Disabilities- Physical disabilities such as vision impairment, hearing disorders, paralysis, and loss of a limb can limit your ability to properly operate a motor vehicle. Even heart and blood disorders can affect your driving. State agencies will license drivers with different types of physical disabilities on an individual basis.

A. Effects - Potential increase in driver's reaction time.

B. Counter-Measures:
   1. Specially equipped cars.
   3. Hearing aids.
   4. Prescription lens glasses.
   5. Increase your safe driving space.

5. Stress- Stress is a physical condition in which your blood pressure and heart rate increase. Diversions such as the central issue causing the stress can impair your driving ability.

A. Effects – Reduction in reaction time, vision impairment.

B. Counter-Measures:
   1. Medication.
   2. Relaxation.
   3. Isolation from day-to-day problems, such as an extended vacation.
   4. Increase your safe driving space.

(IV) Knowledge of driving laws and procedures:

In order to be the safest of drivers, you must understand and have knowledge of traffic laws and how they apply to the driving task.

MAJOR DRIVING ERRORS:

A. Failure to obey traffic laws.
B. Failure to maintain your vehicle - if you do not take care of your vehicle it may break down, leave you stranded, and become an obstacle in the roadway; it's a misdemeanor to operate a vehicle that is unsafe if it endangers other people.
C. Discourtesy to other drivers/combativeness.
D. Lack of driving knowledge.
E. Bad judgment/poor decision making.

(V) Understanding the driving task:

USA - A PROFESSIONAL DRIVING SAFETY SYSTEM (Understanding - Skill - Attitude)

U-nderstanding - The safe driver understands that driving requires the vehicle operator to evaluate a rapidly unfolding landscape of driving situations and to make a constant stream of life-and-death decisions. The safe driver understands that the driving environment is hostile. The safe driver understands that he/she has to get it right every time he/she gets behind the wheel.

S-kill - The safe driver employs the key word SCOPE:

1. S-can long and wide.
2. C-oncentrate
   A. on the driving task.
   B. on the unfolding driving landscape.
   C. on all threats (immediate, developing, and potential).
3. O-rganize driving threats in their order of urgency. Safe drivers develop a fine-tuned sense of urgency.
4. P-lan a driving maneuver to deal with each individual threat. The choice of which driving tactic to employ is based on the driver's training, experience and skill level. Road conditions, light, weather, and traffic and the amount of time (urgency) available to execute are also important factors. A driver has four basic tactical maneuvers to choose from:
   a. Steer.
   b. Brake.
   c. Accelerate.
   d. Communicate.
5. E-xecute the driving tactic in time to prevent a crash.
A-ttitude - A safe driver understands that most of the driving skills required to be safe are mental. Being a safe driver is a state of mind. You have to choose to be a safe driver. Safe drivers make the right choices. Attitude is the catalyst that makes the USA Driving Safety System work.

You should always check:

A. The weather, traffic, and road conditions.
B. Signs, signals, and road markings, as well as vehicles and pedestrians.
C. For all objects that are critical and could cause you to slow down, speed up, or turn.
D. Far enough ahead to be able to react to unexpected traffic situations.
E. Your rearview mirror every 5 seconds - be aware of blind spots and make a head check (a quick look over your shoulder) before changing lanes or pulling out to pass.

Chapter 3
Traffic Laws and Procedures I

Instructional Objectives: To identify the requirements of and the rationale for applicable driving laws and procedures, and to convince drivers to comply with the laws on a voluntary basis.

(I) Passing:
PASSING TECHNIQUE:

A. KEEP TO THE RIGHT - NEVER DRIVE ON THE LEFT HALF OF THE ROAD WHEN:

   1. Pavement markings prohibit driving on the left (a no-passing zone).
   2. There are two or more traffic lanes in each direction.
   3. Within 100 feet (about five car lengths) of or driving through an intersection or railroad crossing.
   4. On a hill, curve, or any other place where vision is limited.
   5. Within 100 feet of a bridge, viaduct, or tunnel.

B. KEEP TO THE RIGHT HALF OF THE ROAD EXCEPT:

   1. When passing another vehicle on a two- or three-lane street.
   2. When driving on a one-way street.
   3. When the right half of the road is blocked.

C. BASIC SAFETY RULES WHEN PASSING LEFT OR RIGHT:

   1. Make certain the way is clear.
   2. Give the proper signal before changing lanes.
   3. Tap your horn when necessary to avoid surprising the driver ahead.
   4. Avoid cutting in too quickly if you must return to your original lane.

D. PAVEMENT MARKINGS REGULATING PASSING:

   1. Broken Yellow Line: You may cross it to pass, but only if it is safe.
   2. Broken White Line: You can cross and drive in any lane.
   3. Single Solid White Line: Crossing a single solid white line should be avoided if possible.
   4. Double Solid White Line: Never cross a double solid white line when used as a lane separation.
   5. Solid Yellow Line: Do not cross unless it is used for a turn lane.
   7. Solid Yellow Line with Broken Yellow Line: Passing is allowed on the side of the line that is broken.

E. PASSING ON A TWO LANE ROAD:

   1. Stay well back from the car ahead so you can see ahead. Check rearview and side mirrors, also turn your head and look back. (This is called a head check.) Someone may be passing you or may be in a blind spot. Signal left.
   2. Check well ahead for “No-Passing Zone” and oncoming cars. Be sure you have time and space enough to overtake the car ahead and return to the right lane before an approaching car comes within 200 feet of you.
   3. Tap your horn when necessary to alert the driver ahead.
   4. Pass on the left and do not return to the right lane until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle. Wait until you can see in your rearview mirror the car you have just passed, before returning to your original lane.
   5. Signal right to return to the right lane. Be sure to turn your signal off.

F. PASSING ON THE RIGHT: In many states you may pass on the right, but only under conditions permitting such movement safely. Pass on the right when:

   1. The road is clear of parked cars or other objects and the road is wide enough for two or more lanes in each direction.
   2. You are on a one-way road.
   3. The car you are passing is slowed or stopped on the main traveled portion of the highway, is disabled, or is preparing to make a left turn. Do not pass on the right by driving off the paved portion of the highway.
G. WHEN YOU ARE PASSED:

1. Do not increase your speed. Slow down slightly.
2. Keep in your lane.
3. On the left and the lanes are not marked, move to the right as far as you safely can.
4. Make it as safe and as easy as you can for the other driver to pass you.
5. If you find that many vehicles are passing you on the right on a multi-lane road, you should move to the right lane and allow them to pass on your left.

(II) Right-of-way and intersections:

RIGHT-OF-WAY:

There are times when a driver must yield the right-of-way. Knowledge of who has the right-of-way and showing courtesy to other drivers are the keys to successfully negotiating intersections. FAILURE to yield the right-of-way is one of the most frequent causes of fatal car crashes. The right-of-way is given; it is never taken.

WHEN TO YIELD:

A. Drivers traveling on a single- or two-lane road must yield at intersections to:

1. Traffic on a divided road.
2. Traffic on a road with three or more lanes.

B. Drivers traveling on an unpaved road must yield to traffic on any paved road with which it intersects.

C. Drivers approaching intersections not controlled by signs/signals, by multi-lane markings, or by pavement markings must yield to the right.

D. Left turns: Always yield to oncoming vehicles.

E. Drivers on private roads or driveways must yield to all other traffic or pedestrians.

F. Drivers approaching a T-intersection from the street that dead ends at the intersection must yield to traffic on the through street.

G. Drivers on frontage roads of a controlled access highway must yield to:

1. Traffic entering the road from the controlled access highway.
2. Traffic leaving the road to enter the controlled access highway.

H. Drivers on roads divided into three or more lanes all traveling the same direction (one-way road) entering a lane from the right must yield to a driver entering the same lane to the left.

I. Yield to:

1. All pedestrians whether they are walking legally or not.
2. All other traffic or pedestrians on the cross street at yield signs.
3. All emergency vehicles.

INTERSECTIONS CONTROLLED BY SIGNS/SIGNALS:

A. Know what the signs/signals communicate to you and to other drivers.
B. Obey them.
C. Be alert.

1. Other drivers may not be as knowledgeable as you are.
2. They may ignore the signs/signals.

(III) Turns:

A. SEVEN STEPS IN MAKING A GOOD TURN:

1. Make up your mind before you get to the turning point. Never make a last-minute turn.
2. Look behind you to both sides to see where other vehicles may be changing lanes.
3. Move into the proper lane as soon as possible. The faster traffic is moving, the sooner you should do this. If you cannot get into the proper lane at least within one-half block before your turn, you should not turn but continue straight ahead.
4. Give the proper turn signal at least 100 feet before you make your turn. If you are using a hand signal, maintain it until you are close enough to the intersection for others to know what you intend to do. Do not maintain the signal while actually making the turn — you need both hands on the wheel.
5. Slow down to a reasonable turning speed. Do not use the brake or clutch while actually turning.
6. Make the turn correctly. This will be easy if you are in the proper lane and are proceeding slowly enough at the time you begin to turn.
7. Finish the turn in the proper lane.
B. MAKING A RIGHT OR LEFT TURN:

1. HOW TO MAKE A RIGHT TURN:
   a. Well ahead of the turning point, signal a lane change, and when it is safe, move your vehicle to the far right lane.
   b. Begin right turn signal and start slowing down at least 100 feet from the corner.
   c. Look both ways before starting to turn.
   d. Keep as close as possible to the right edge of the road. Turn the steering wheel, using the hand-over-hand method.

2. HOW TO MAKE A LEFT TURN:
   a. Well ahead of the turning point, signal a lane change, and when it is safe, move your vehicle close to the center lane.
   b. Begin left turn signal, and start slowing down at least 100 feet from the corner.
   c. Look right and left before starting to turn. Stay to the right of the center line as you enter the intersection. Yield the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction.
   d. Complete the turn into the corresponding lane.

C. MAKING A LEFT TURN FROM OR ONTO A ONE-WAY STREET:

   1. If you are turning left from a one-way street, turn from the left lane, or the left side of a single lane, as close as possible to the left curb or edge of the road.
   2. If you are turning left onto a one-way street, enter that street in the lane where you will not interfere with traffic already using the street. If the road you enter has two lanes you must turn into its left lane.

(IV) Stops:

When approaching a stop sign, the law requires you to stop before the front of your car reaches the crosswalk, stop lines, or intersection. You have come to a complete stop when you feel a slight jerk and you notice the front of your vehicle tilting downward while braking and then lifting to its normal position. If you stop behind other vehicles at the intersection, you must stop again before you reach the crosswalk, stop lines, or intersection. That gives you a view of traffic on the intersecting roadway.

(V) Speed limits:

The safe driver travels with the flow of traffic and always obeys both the minimum and maximum speed limits. Speed limits are set for ideal conditions:

A. Safe drivers do not drive faster than is safe for existing conditions.
B. Do not drive slower than the posted minimum speed.
C. Advisory speeds are posted on curves.
D. Special zones have different speed limits at different times of the day. Example: School Zones.
E. Speed is a major factor in determining stopping distance.

Chapter 4
Traffic Laws and Procedures II

(VI) Railroad crossings:

Railroad crossings are indicated by a round sign. These signs are yellow with black letters “RR” and “X” symbol. CROSS BUCKS -- MOTORISTS MUST TREAT RAILROAD CROSS BUCKS EXACTLY THE SAME AS A YIELD SIGN.

A. Drivers must slow down anytime they approach a railroad crossing.
B. If a train is approaching, the driver must stop!

If the red lights are flashing and the gates are up, you must stop at the tracks before proceeding with caution. If the gates are down and there is no train in sight, you are not allowed to go around the gates. At ungated crossing, you must stop at least 15 feet from the rail closest to you.

CAUSES OF GRADE CROSSING COLLISIONS:

A. DRIVER COMPLACENCY is the primary cause. You must have broken the law in order to have a grade crossing collision.
B. STOPPING ON RAILROAD TRACKS: Whether you are stuck in traffic on the tracks, or your car stalls on the tracks, if a train is coming, exit the car quickly and do not take anything with you. Run towards the train at an angle away from the tracks; this should keep you safe from debris and injury.
C. PEOPLE DRIVING INTO THE SIDES OF TRAINS: 26% of all railroad crossing crashes involved people driving into the sides of trains.
D. MISJUDGING THE TRAIN’S SPEED. Large objects traveling at a constant rate of speed do not appear to change in size at a constant rate. Example: Standing on a platform, watching a train arrive.
E. DEPTH ILLUSION: Parallel lines (railroad tracks) converging on the horizon create an illusion of depth just like when an artist draws a cube.
F. IGNORANCE OF GRADE CROSSING LAWS.
G. IMPATIENCE.

(VII) Categories of traffic signs, signals, and highway markings:

TRAFFIC LIGHTS:

A. STEADY RED: STOP
B. STEADY YELLOW: Be alert, proceed with caution, and/or prepare to stop.
C. STEADY GREEN: GO IF IT IS SAFE, and be aware of stale green lights. A stale green light is a traffic light that has been green for a long period of time and will change soon. Anticipate changes in traffic lights.
D. FLASHING RED: Stop, then proceed cautiously.
E. FLASHING YELLOW: Slow down and proceed with caution.

THE PURPOSE OF SIGNS:

A. Warn.
B. Guide.
C. Inform.
D. Regulate.

SIGN COLOR (TELLS THE PURPOSE OF THE SIGN):

A. Red: Stop or prohibition.
B. Green: Indicates movement is permitted, direction, and guidance.
C. Blue: Services, guidance.
D. Yellow: General warning.
E. White/Black: Regulation.
F. Orange: Construction and maintenance warning.
G. Brown: Public recreation, scenic places

SIGN SHAPE (TELLS WHAT THE SIGN MEANS):

A. Octagon: Exclusively for stop signs.
B. Horizontal Rectangle: Generally for guide signs.
C. Equilateral Triangle: Exclusively for yield signs.
D. Pennant: No-passing zone.
E. Diamond: Exclusively to warn of existing or possible hazards on roadways or adjacent areas.
F. Vertical Rectangle: Generally regulatory signs.
G. Pentagon: School advance and school crossing signs.
H. Round: Railroad advance-warning signs.

PAVEMENT MARKINGS:

A. Crosswalks: Solid lines are painted across roadways to indicate crosswalks. You are to stop before these lines. However, if you happen to stop in the middle of a crosswalk, do not back up. Stay where you are and let pedestrian traffic walk around you.
B. Stop Lines: Solid lines painted across the pavement to indicate where you are supposed to stop. You must stop behind these lines.
C. Diamond symbol: Used to designate reserved lanes for buses, HOV's (High Occupancy Vehicles), such as car-pools and van-pools, bicycles, or other special vehicles. You may not enter and use these lanes unless your vehicle complies with the occupancy or other requirements of the accompanying regulatory signs for the times the special conditions are in effect. When used to designate reserved lanes on city streets, sections of the solid white line separating the diamond lanes from the regular lanes may be replaced by dashed white lines. In these locations, non-HOV's may enter the HOV lane if they make a right turn at the next intersection. Bus lanes and HOV lanes are used to promote the most efficient use of limited street and highway capacity by assuring that vehicles with the highest priority move the fastest.

TRAFFIC OFFICERS:

Directions given by traffic officers take precedence over signs, signals or pavement markings. If a traffic officer signals you to stop at a green light, for example, you must stop. If an officer signals you to drive through a red light or stop sign, you must do so.

Among those authorized to direct traffic are police officers, peace officers such as on-duty auxiliary or fire police, highway work area flag persons, and school crossing guards.

(VIII) Pedestrians:

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DRIVERS:

A. Check for pedestrians crossing in the middle of the street.
B. Check for pedestrians who disregard or misjudge traffic signals and walk on “don’t walk” lights.
C. Be extra careful around schools, playgrounds and residential areas.
D. Be aware of the special needs of the elderly and pedestrians with disabilities.
E. You must yield to pedestrians when turning.
PEDESTRIAN RULES:

A. Obey all traffic and pedestrian control signals.
B. Do not cross the street between two intersections.
C. Use sidewalks when available, and do not walk in the street.
D. Walk on the side of the road facing traffic if there are no sidewalks. Step off the pavement when a car approaches; they should be on your right.
E. Yield the right-of-way to all vehicles if you cross a street at any point other than within a crosswalk at an intersection.
F. Keep right when crossing at a crosswalk.
G. Do not stand in the roadway to solicit a ride, contributions or business.
H. Do not suddenly walk or run into the street.
I. Wait on the curb, not in the street, until the traffic signals change to green or read “walk.”
J. Always wear white or light-colored clothing or carry a light reflector when walking at night.
K. Look both ways before crossing the street and before stepping from behind parked cars.
L. Get in or out of cars on the curb side of the road.
M. Never stand in the road to hitchhike or conduct business with passing motorists.

(X) Improved shoulders:

A driver may operate a vehicle on an improved shoulder to the right of the main traveled portion of the roadway as long as necessary and when the operation may be done in safety:

A. To stop, stand or park.
B. To accelerate prior to entering the main travel lane of traffic.
C. To decelerate prior to making a right turn.
D. To overtake and pass another vehicle that is slowing or stopped on the main traveled portion of the highway, is disabled or is preparing to make a left turn.
E. To allow other vehicles to pass that are traveling at a greater speed.
F. When permitted or required by an official traffic control device.
G. At any time to avoid a CRASH.

(X) Occupant restraints:

Wearing safety belts is required by law. The driver and front seat passengers in a car or truck are required to wear safety belts. The law also requires that children under 10 years of age be secured no matter where they ride in the vehicle. Children 4 years of age and younger must be secured in a federally approved child safety seat. If a passenger under 16 years of age is not properly protected, the driver can be fined. The maximum fine for each seat belt violation involving a person under age 16 is at least $25 and up to $100.

(XI) Law enforcement and emergency vehicles:

You must yield the right-of-way to:

A. Police cars.
B. Fire trucks.
C. Ambulances.
D. All other emergency vehicles.

When a driver sees and/or hears a siren, bell, klaxon or flashing red light, the driver should immediately pull off the roadway to the right and stop. If traffic prevents you from stopping, slow down and leave a clear path so the emergency vehicle can safely pass on your left.

Rule 1: Do not follow within 500 feet of a fire truck answering an alarm or an ambulance when the flashing red lights are on.
Rule 2: Do not drive into or park in the same block where a fire truck has answered an alarm.
Rule 3: Do not park where you will interfere with the arrival or departure of an ambulance at the scene of an emergency.

When stopped by a police officer, you should:

1. Remain in the vehicle.
2. Keep hands in plain sight.
3. Don’t make any sudden movements.
4. Obey the officer’s instructions.

SCHOOL BUSES:

School buses provide one of the safest modes of transportation available. The most dangerous place for the students is not inside the bus, but outside the bus while it is loading and unloading students.

OVERHEAD AMBER WARNING LIGHTS:

These lights will be activated when the school bus is preparing to load or unload children. As a driver, if overtaking this bus, you should reduce your speed to at most 25 MPH and be prepared to stop. These amber lights will stay on until the door of the bus is opened.
OVERHEAD RED STOP LIGHTS/STOP ARM:

When the bus driver opens the side door of the bus, the red stop lights and stop arm will be activated.

A driver must stop and remain stopped until the school bus driver has retracted the stop arm and has deactivated the red warning lights. This stop should be made a reasonable distance from the bus. A driver must make a complete stop when approaching a stopped school bus in the opposite direction on a highway, even if it is divided by a median or physical barrier.

(XII) Other laws as applicable (i.e., financial responsibility/ compulsory insurance):

The Safety Responsibility Act was enacted to ensure all drivers are financially responsible for the death, injury, or property damage they may cause while operating a motor vehicle. All owners and/or operators of motor vehicles in New York must have at least the minimum amount of liability insurance as follows:

A. $25,000 against injury to one person.
B. $50,000 against injury to two or more persons.
C. $50,000 against death of one person.
D. $100,000 against death of two persons.
E. $10,000 against property damage.

Coverage limits refer to death, injury or damage related to any one collision. Every owner and/or operator of a motor vehicle in New York is required, as a condition of driving, to furnish, upon request, evidence of financial responsibility to a law enforcement officer or to another person involved in a collision. The following list includes what is acceptable proof of financial responsibility:

A. Original liability insurance policy (or a copy) reflecting the minimum amounts previously listed; or
B. A written instrument issued by the insurance company that includes:
   1. The name of the insurance company.
   2. The policy number.
   3. The policy period.
   4. The name of the insured.
   5. The policy limits or a statement that the coverage complies with the minimum amount of liability insurance required by the Act; or
C. An insurance binder that indicates the owner and/or operator is in compliance with the Act.

Non-Resident Responsibility:

Anyone, even a non-resident, who drives or permits their vehicle to be driven in New York, must be able to prove that he or she has adequate liability insurance on that vehicle (New York minimum coverage). If you are a non-resident and cannot provide such proof, your privilege to drive in New York may be revoked for at least one year.

Work Zone Safety

Instructional Objectives: Students will be able to define a work zone and be able to identify the hazards a highway work zone presents. Students will be able to discuss strategies for driving safely through a work zone. Work area is defined in the Vehicle and Traffic Law (Section 160) as “That part of the highway being used or occupied for the conduct of highway work, within which workers, vehicles, equipment, materials, supplies, excavations or other obstructions are present.”

Some facts about road work zones:

• As states and the federal government focus on rebuilding/ refurbishing the highway system in the post-interstate era, more work zones will be set up each year; more work zones mean more risk of crashes and deaths (832 people died nationally in work zones in the year 2007);
• The most common crash in a highway work zone is the rear-end collision;
• Speeding ticket fines are doubled in work zones;
• Enforcement of traffic laws in work zones is maintained 24 hours a day; work zone speed limits are enforced even if no work is underway;

Traffic enforcement is enhanced in work zones because of all the potential risks and dangers. Driving situations that a motorist may encounter as a result of the establishment of a work zone:

• Lack of shoulder and/or median areas that usually serve as safety areas.
• Lanes reduced in width.
• Lanes merging and subsequently reduced in number.
• Speed reduction.
• Changing lane patterns.
• Detours to unfamiliar routes.
• Large construction or maintenance vehicles to the side of the road that may obstruct vision.
• Highway workers standing and working near traffic.
• Slow moving construction vehicles.
• Drivers slow to reduce speed and/or merging at the last possible moment.
• Aggressive drivers disregarding the work zone restrictions.
• Drivers not using common sense in the work zone area.
• Some work zones are mobile – such as line painting and road patching operations. These zones move along the highway until the work is completed. Obey the signs until you have passed the one that states you have left the work zone.

Some suggestions for driving safely through a work zone:

• Diamond shaped orange warning signs are posted in advance or work zone areas. Pay attention to these signs!
• A “flagger ahead” warning sign may be posted as you approach the work zone. Obey the flagger’s directions; a flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so you can be cited for disobeying his/her directions.
• When you see flashing arrow panels or “lane closed ahead” signs, merge as soon as possible.
• Slow down as soon as the signs tell you to.
• The most common crash in the highway work zone is the rear end collision, so leave plenty of space between you and the car in front of you (the 2-second rule would be best).
• Stay calm and expect the unexpected.
• Observe all posted signs until you see the one that states you have left the work zone.

If you already know of the existence of a work zone, you may want to plan an alternative route.

Chapter 5
Special Skills for Difficult Driving Environments

Instructional Objectives: To identify how special conditions affect driver and vehicle performance and to identify techniques for management of these conditions.

I) Inclement weather:

When it is foggy, the best rule is not to drive at all, but if you must, these safety precautions will help:

A. Sharply reduce your normal driving speed.
B. Reduce speed still further when you see headlights or taillights ahead. The vehicle showing taillights may be a vehicle being driven down the center of the roadway, a vehicle stopped, or a vehicle barely moving at all.
C. Be prepared to stop for an emergency.
D. If the fog is so thick you cannot safety drive at least 10 MPH, pull completely off the highway or stop at a rest area, service station, or other parking place.
E. Use low-beam headlights or, if you have them, fog lights. High beams often reflect back into your eyes and blind you.
F. As in night driving, use the edge line, or, if necessary, the right side of the road as a guide. Remember what the white and yellow pavement markings indicate, since you may not be able to see the highway signs until it is too late to react.
G. Leave early enough to avoid the need to hurry.

2. WIND:

A. Wind can be a problem for all drivers and especially dangerous for trucks, recreational vehicles, campers, and drivers towing trailers. Driving at a slower speed is the best defense.
B. When meeting large trucks and buses, be prepared to make steering corrections for sudden changes in wind.

3. SNOW AND ICE:

A. Equip your car with snow tires or chains to enhance traction. Vehicles equipped with snow tires will slide more on icy road surfaces than those with commercial tread. All-wheel-drive vehicles without chains generally perform better than two-wheel-drive vehicles with chains on the rear wheels. Chains give good bite in snow but slide and slip on ice or packed snow.
B. DO NOT change speed or direction suddenly.
C. Watch for ice on bridges and in shady areas.
D. Increase your space ahead by tripling or quadrupling the seconds that you follow the vehicle ahead (cars - 6-8 seconds).
E. Keep your windows clear so that you can see and communicate with others.
F. Slow gradually and smoothly before stopping or turning.
G. Never lock your brakes. You have no steering control unless the wheels are turning.
H. DO NOT use cruise control.

Management of driving in snow and ice without the use of snow tires or chains:

Driving in snow and ice without the proper equipment is very dangerous. These conditions present multiple hazards because you have very little control over your car as the result of a lack of traction.

Driving techniques for snow and ice:

Slow, controlled actions are the key to driving in snow and ice. Do not turn your wheel sharply or brake hard; this will cause the car to skid. Instead, plan your turns will in advance, and when slowing down, use a pulsing or pumping motion with your brakes. To put your car in motion, you should ease down on the accelerator to increase the limited amount of traction. Cars with manual
transmissions should be driven in the next highest gear when compared to normal circumstances. This reduces the torque at the wheels and will increase traction. If the car starts to slide, take your foot off the accelerator and turn your wheel in the direction of the skid. You should not apply your brakes. Hard braking will lock your wheels and worsen the skid.

4. RAIN:

A. Increase your safe space. Double the seconds that you follow the vehicle ahead (cars - 4 seconds).
B. Use your headlights on low beam.
C. Wait a short time after the rain starts before you turn on your windshield wipers. This will avoid smearing your windshield. (Replace the blades when they smear or streak the windshield.)

CAUSES OF HYDROPLANING:

A. Under/Over-inflated tires.
B. Speed.
C. Water depth on road.
D. Lack of tread depth on your tires.

SUPER-HYDROPLANING (hydroplaning on an oil slick):

In many places rainfall happens on an irregular and infrequent basis and does not wash the oil and grease from the road. This creates an opportunity for super-hydroplaning that does not exist in areas that receive regular rainfall.

(I) Traffic congestion:

A few common-sense rules to follow when dealing with traffic congestion:

A. Always signal your intention to change lanes, and look to make sure the way is clear.
B. When you see someone attempting to change lanes, let him/her in. Being courteous makes traffic flow a lot smoother for everyone.
C. When you are driving on the feeder road, give the right-of-way to cars exiting the freeway.
D. Don’t block intersections. This will lead to gridlock and slow traffic down much more.
E. Stay calm and be patient; you’ll get there.

(III) City, urban, rural and expressway environments:

1. RURAL HIGHWAY DRIVING:

A. Nationally, almost two times the number of traffic deaths occur on rural highways than on city streets.
B. Rural surface hazards:
   1. Unpaved roads.
   2. Gravel.
   3. Dirt.
C. Roadside hazards:
   1. Signs.
   2. Driveways.
   3. High-speed cross traffic.
   5. Narrow or soft shoulders.
   7. Slow-moving vehicles.
D. Speed is a major contributing factor to death on rural highways.

2. CITY DRIVING:

A. When driving in a high density area, reduce your speed in order to:
   1. Give yourself more time to study the traffic ahead and to identify potential threats.
   2. Give yourself more time to analyze and to select the best driving tactic.
   3. Increase your reaction time.
B. Scan far ahead in traffic:
   1. Look for traffic hazards and potential threats.
   2. Leave enough safe space to maneuver.
   3. Be prepared for the unexpected.
   4. Keep in mind the big picture.
C. Cover the brake when:
1. Driving next to parked cars.
2. You see red brake lights ahead.
3. Approaching intersections.

D. Vehicle position:
   1. Drive with the flow of traffic within legal speed limits.
   2. Avoid driving in another driver’s blind spot.
   3. Avoid side by side driving whenever possible.
   4. Do not drive in bunches.

E. Plan ahead - choose a safe route based on the time of day and the volume of traffic:
   1. Through streets vs. side streets.
   2. One-way streets vs. two-way streets.
   3. Toll roads.

F. Special problems associated with city traffic:
   1. Parked or temporarily stopped cars obstructing your view of the cross traffic.
   2. Detours.
   3. Two-way left turn center lanes.
   4. One-way streets.
   5. Pedestrians and bicyclists.

3. FREEWAY DRIVING:

A. Entering the freeway:
   1. Cars on the freeway do not have to yield to cars entering the freeway.
   2. Increase speed to merge with the flow of traffic.

B. Choose the proper lane:
   1. Right-hand lane:
      a. Driving minimum speed.
      b. Driving slower than the normal speed.
      c. Exiting the freeway.
   2. Middle or left lane:
      a. Driving the speed limit or faster than other traffic.
      b. The left-hand lane is for faster traffic.

   3. After choosing your lane:
      a. Stay in the middle of your lane.
      b. Do not weave in and out of traffic.
      c. Use the 2-second following rule.
      d. Adjust speed to allow other cars to enter the freeway.

C. Exiting the freeway:
   1. Plan your exit
      a. Move into the proper lane well in advance.
      b. Exit signs are usually 1,000 yards ahead of the exit turnoff.

2. SLOW DOWN ON THE EXIT RAMP UNTIL YOU ARE TRAVELING AT THE CORRECT SPEED FOR THE STREET YOU WILL BE ENTERING.

(IV) Reduced visibility conditions - hills, fog, curves, light conditions (darkness, glare, etc.):

1. BACKING RULES:
   A. Do not trust your rear and side mirrors. They have large blind spots.
   B. Always look over your shoulder when backing.
   C. Keep one foot on the brake when backing.
   D. Back slowly.
   E. Remember, you cannot see below the level of your trunk (be careful of small children who may wander behind your car).
2. DANGEROUS LIGHT CONDITIONS:

   A. Night driving: Driving at night is more dangerous than driving during the day, yet most people do not receive any special night driving training.

   Overdriving your headlights:

   Headlights illuminate the roadway only for a limited space, thereby causing reduced visibility. You can drive at a speed requiring a longer stopping distance than that same distance lit by your headlights. Combine this with reaction time and stopping distance, and the simple answer is to slow down when driving at night.

   1. Never drive when sleepy.
   2. At night you cannot see as far, and your peripheral vision is drastically reduced.
   3. Slow down.
   4. Be sure you can stop within the distance lighted by your headlights.

   B. Fog: (Addressed Under Weather)

   C. Rain: (Addressed Under Weather)

   D. Hills and curves: Hills and curves pose visibility problems in all hours of the day. Your headlights at night will not bend over hills or around curves, and during the day, you still can’t see around or over these obstacles. Be extra careful when approaching these obstacles. Remember, always anticipate the worst. Do not make driving decisions such as passing, accelerating, or changing lanes based upon what you cannot see.

   E. Glare: Can occur during both day and night from objects such as the sun, reflective surfaces and bright lights.

(V) Roadway conditions:

1. EXAMPLES OF DANGEROUS ROAD CONDITIONS:

   A. Curves
   B. Soft shoulders
   C. Potholes
   D. Narrow roads
   E. Construction work
   F. Railroad crossings
   G. Low-water crossings

Chapter 6
Physical Forces That Influence Driver Control

Instructional Objectives:

To identify the physical forces that affect driver control and vehicle performance.

(I) Speed control (acceleration, deceleration, etc.):

1. ENERGY:

   A. A vehicle’s energy of motion doubles when its weight doubles.
   B. When a vehicle’s weight doubles, the vehicle needs about twice the distance to stop.
   C. A vehicle’s energy of motion is proportional to the square of its increased speed.
   D. When the vehicle’s speed doubles, the vehicle needs about four times the distance to stop.
   E. When the vehicle’s speed triples, the vehicle needs about nine times the distance to stop.

2. SPEED CONTROL EFFECTS:

   A. Acceleration: When accelerating your vehicle, you are increasing the car’s energy. Keep in mind that the faster the car is moving, the longer it will take for the vehicle to stop. Your car will respond differently at faster speeds, so you must adjust the way you accelerate, decelerate and steer.

   B. Deceleration: When decelerating your vehicle, you are decreasing the car’s energy. Keep in mind that the slower the car is moving, the less time it will take for the vehicle to stop. Your car will respond differently at lower speeds, so you must adjust the way you accelerate, decelerate and steer.

(II) Traction (friction, hydroplaning, stopping distances, centrifugal force, etc.):

A. Friction: When you are driving and you have to make a sudden stop, you are relying on friction. Friction is critically affected by your brakes, tires, the road surface and speed.

B. Stopping Distances: To determine the total distance it takes to stop your car in a driving emergency, you must add your reaction time to the distance it takes for your brakes to stop your car at a given speed. Reaction time is the distance your car travels in the time it takes for you to identify the threat, decide that the best driving tactic is to apply the brakes, and move your foot to the brake pedal.
C. Centrifugal Force: The force that pushes a car away from the center of a curve.

D. Hydroplaning: When your car starts to slide on an emulsion of oil and water on a concrete or asphalt roadway. The tires, in effect, lose their contact with the pavement and therefore lose the benefits of friction.

E. Traction: The friction, or gripping power, between a tire and the roadway on which it moves. Traction is affected in one way or another by friction, stopping distance, centrifugal force, and/or hydroplaning. An increase in any or all of these factors will decrease the amount of traction that your car will have. By decreasing a car’s traction, you are thereby decreasing the amount of control you have over the car.

(III) Force of impact (momentum, kinetic energy, inertia, etc.):

1. FACTORS THAT AFFECT CAR HANDLING:
   - A. Inertia: Makes an object stay in motion or remain in place.
   - B. Kinetic Energy: The energy of motion. Example: The faster a car travels, the more kinetic energy it will have and the harder it will be to control.
   - C. Centrifugal Force: The force that pushes a car away from the center of a curve.
   - D. Gravity: Uphill and downhill effects.

Every time you increase one of these factors, you directly increase the force at which you will impact an object. By increasing the force of impact, you increase the risk of injury or death in a collision.

2. FACTORS AFFECTING IMPACT:
   - A. Speed: The speed you are traveling. When you increase the speed at which you hit an object, you directly increase the force of impact. By increasing the force of impact, you increase the risk of injury or death in a collision.
   - B. Weight: The total weight of the car, including the passengers. When you increase the weight of an object, whether it is the object you are driving or the object you are about to hit, you increase the force of impact. By increasing the force of impact, you increase the risk of injury or death in a collision.
   - C. Distance between impact and stop: How far your car has to travel between the time you put on the brakes and the time you reach impact. When you increase how far your car has to travel between the time you put on the brakes and the time you reach impact, you increase the ability of your car to slow down before reaching the point of impact. You are therefore decreasing the force of impact. By decreasing the force of impact, you decrease the risk of injury or death in a collision.

3. ENERGY ABSORBING FEATURES:
   - A. Front and rear crash areas.
   - B. Energy absorbing bumpers.
   - C. Side door beams.
   - D. Reinforced windshield.
   - E. Energy absorbing steering wheel.
   - F. Padded dash.
   - G. Head restraints.
   - H. Air bags.
   - I. Safety belts.
   - J. Antilock brakes.

All these features assist in decreasing the force of impact and increasing the driver’s control and the vehicle’s performance. They decrease the force of impact by providing a cushion between yourself and the object of collision.

Chapter 7
Perceptual Skills Needed for Driving

Instructional Objectives: To identify the factors of perception and how the factors affect driver performance.

(I) Visual interpretations: To operate a motor vehicle safely, the driver needs to possess good perceptual skills. In other words, the driver needs to be able to receive messages by sight, sound, touch and smell, then translate these messages into meaningful conclusions.

When drivers misinterpret visual clues, they will increase their perception time and decrease the amount of time they have to react to a situation. By decreasing the time they have to react, they increase the chance of serious injury or death in a motor vehicle collision.

PERCEPTION TIME: The amount of time it takes to identify a situation and classify it as safe or unsafe.

LACK OF ATTENTION IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF TRAFFIC CRASHES.

About 90% of what a driver identifies in a traffic scene is through his/her sense of vision.
Hearing: Our sense of hearing contributes to the driving process in a number of ways. It will allow us to hear approaching emergency vehicles, it will allow us to notice if there are any strange noises coming from the car, and it will allow us to sense the warnings of other vehicles, such as a car horn.

Touch: Our sense of touch aids in our driving task by allowing us to feel certain conditions of the road through the steering wheel. Think of the steering wheel as an extension of your fingers. It allows you to feel any vibrations coming from the car. Other examples include the feeling of the steering being out of alignment or noticing a flat tire.

Smell: Our sense of smell assists us in driving by allowing us to detect certain conditions in the driving environment, such as the smell of burning too much gas, burning rubber, or even the smell of rain.

Reaction abilities (simple and complex): Reaction time is the time it takes a driver to act after identifying a hazard. (The average driver requires 3/4 of a second.) Reaction distance is the distance a car travels during the driver’s perception and reaction time.

By “reaction” we mean:

A. Seeing the danger
B. Making a decision on what action to take to avoid a collision
C. Taking the action based on that decision.

Driver performance is affected by inadequate reactions by increasing a driver’s perception time and decreasing the time a driver has to react to a situation. This decrease in reaction time leaves the driver little or no time to respond to a dangerous situation.

Judging speed and distance:

3-SECOND SAFE FOLLOWING RULE:

At any speed use the 3-second safe following rule to determine if you are far enough behind the vehicle you are following. Use the 3-second safe following rule only in dry weather. In wet weather, increase your safe following distance.

A. Observe the vehicle ahead of you pass some fixed point, such as an overpass, sign, fence, corner, or other marker.
B. Begin counting off the seconds it takes you to reach the same point.
C. If you reach the mark before you have counted off 3 seconds, you are following too close.

It makes sense to increase your following distance by:

A. Adding at least 2 seconds:
   1. When roads are wet.
   2. When carrying a heavier than normal load.
   3. At night.
B. Adding at least 3 seconds when the roads are covered with snow and slush.
C. Adding at least 6 seconds when ice covers the road.

How to judge speed: In order to properly judge a vehicle’s speed, one must have a point of reference to compare the vehicle to. A driver’s perception of moving objects around him/her, fixed objects near the roadway in relation to the amount of time it takes to reach that fixed object and the vehicle’s speedometer, must all be taken into consideration. A misinterpretation of any of these may result in inadequate judging of a driver’s safe space and can increase the likelihood of a collision.

Chapter 8
Defensive Driving Strategies

Instructional Objectives:

To identify the concepts of defensive driving and demonstrate how they can be employed by drivers to reduce the likelihood of crashes, deaths, injuries and economic loss.

(I) Trip planning:

1. PLANNING DAILY TRIPS:
   a. Don’t drive if you’re not feeling well.
   b. Avoid driving at dawn and dusk.
   c. Make sure your vehicle is properly equipped
   d. Don’t drive while taking medication that can affect your reaction or judgment.
   e. Choose a familiar route.
   f. Avoid poorly maintained or unmarked roadways.
g. Do your best to avoid congested areas.
h. Try to avoid driving during peak rush hours.
i. Try to avoid driving in bad weather.
j. Keep your car in good working order.

2. PLANNING LONGER TRIPS:

   a. Get a good night's sleep before starting out.
   b. Set realistic goals for daily mileage.
   c. Leave when congestion is lightest.
   d. Avoid driving at dawn or dusk.
   e. Don’t take stimulants to stay awake.
   f. Eat lightly but regularly.
   g. Take periodic rest stops.
   h. Share the driving if possible.

(II) Evaluating the traffic environment:

When driving, always evaluate your traffic environment by scanning far ahead:

Safe drivers scan far ahead for any person, vehicle, animal or anything else that might cause them to slow down, speed up, or turn. They identify any of these things as potential threats. Safe drivers usually scan 12-15 seconds up the roadway.

Safe drivers are alert and constantly aware of that is going on around them. Most of what you do as a driver is in response to what you see. You should check:

1. The weather, traffic and road conditions.
2. Signs and signals and road markings as well as vehicles and pedestrians.
3. For all objects that are critical and could cause you to slow down, speed up or turn.

(III) Anticipating the actions of others:

Anticipate: When safe drivers identify a threat, they anticipate what could happen. They always anticipate the worst. For example, if they see a person entering a parked car ahead, they anticipate that the driver will pull out in front of them without looking.

Drivers who have to constantly react to unexpected traffic situations may not be checking far enough ahead to identify critical objects.

Identify as critical objects: persons, vehicles, and animals that could move into your path or that could cause you to change your speed or lane position. Do not allow yourself to be taken by surprise.

   A. Act out a plan. Think ahead. The safe driver plans an entire trip in advance.
   B. Do not be forced to react. (don’t allow other drivers to force you to do something).
   C. Watch other vehicles.
   D. Check your rearview mirror every 5 seconds, and be aware of blind spots. Make head checks before changing lanes or pulling out to pass.
   E. Never be taken by surprise.

(IV) Decision making:

KNOWLEDGE/JUDGMENT/THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS: Safe driving requires you to make a constant stream of life-and-death decisions. Safe drivers demonstrate good judgment and are good decision makers. A safe driver not only needs to know and obey the rules of the road, but also must recognize that there are choices in every driving situation.

Options:

1. Stop/slow down.
2. Steer right/left.
3. Communicate.
4. Do nothing.

(V) Implementing necessary maneuvers:

SAFE DRIVERS know what to do in every type of driving situation:
* Select the right driving tactic to safely deal with the situation
* Execute it in time to prevent a crash.

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CHECK:

A. The weather, traffic, and road conditions.
B. Signs and signals and road markings as well as vehicles and pedestrians.
C. For all objects that are critical and could cause you to slow down, speed up, or turn.
D. Far enough ahead to be able to react to unexpected traffic situations.
E. Check your rearview mirror every 5 seconds. Be aware of blind spots and make head checks before changing lanes or pulling out to pass.

(VI) Compensating for the mistakes of other drivers:

BREAK DOWN RISKS: A safe driving tactic is to break down the known risks and take these risks one at a time if possible.

GREATEST THREAT: Identify the greatest threat. When you cannot break down the risks and must deal with two or more threats at the same time, decide which is the greatest threat and give that threat the most safe space.

SAFE SPACE TO THE SIDES: You need safe space to the sides. If there are other vehicles, pedestrians, or objects in the space on both sides, you are boxed in. Your ability to respond to a situation ahead is limited to speeding up or slowing down. You can keep safe space to the sides by adjusting your speed or lane position. You can:

A. Avoid driving alongside other vehicles on multilane streets for any length of time.
B. Keep as much safe space as possible between yourself and oncoming cars.
C. Keep safe space between yourself and parked cars. Watch for car doors opening, pedestrians stepping into the street, etc.

TAILGATERS: Safe space behind is almost as important as safe space ahead. A driver that tailgates you limits your ability to slow rapidly in case of an emergency ahead. Although the driver behind you has more control over the space than you, there are things you can do. You can:

A. COMMUNICATE with the driver behind by using your turn signals, brake lights, and by moving your vehicle into another lane.
B. ALLOW more space ahead by increasing the following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
C. MOVE to the right lane of a multilane highway to allow the tailgater to pass.
D. REDUCE your speed to encourage the driver behind to pass.

Do not be so concerned with the tailgater that you lose concentration on what is happening in front of you.

(VII) Avoiding common driving errors:

MAJOR DRIVING ERRORS:

A. FAILURE to obey traffic laws.
B. FAILURE to maintain your vehicle. If you do not take care of your vehicle, it may break down, leave you stranded and become an obstacle in the roadway. It is a misdemeanor to operate a vehicle that is unsafe if it endangers other people.
C. DISCOURTECY to other drivers/combativeveness.
D. LACK of driving knowledge.
E. BAD judgment/poor decision making.

There is a very easy way to avoid and compensate for these major driving errors. The first thing a driver must do in driving defensively is to have a mature attitude when undertaking the driving task. Drivers should then:

1. Always scan the road at least 12-15 seconds ahead and identify critical objects.
2. Be aware and alert to the driving environment and try to anticipate how the critical objects in your intended path of travel could affect you. Anticipate the worst.
3. Use good judgment in determining safe driving tactics. This will help you to act in a crisis situation instead of being forced to react.
4. Break down the risks and try to deal with them one at a time if possible.
5. Identify the greatest threat and give that threat priority.
6. Finally, maintain your safe space and implement necessary driving maneuvers to find the path of least resistance.

(VIII) Interaction with other road users (motorcycles, bicycles, trucks, pedestrians, etc.):

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DRIVERS REGARDING PEDESTRIANS:

A. Check for pedestrians crossing in the middle of the street.
B. Check for pedestrians who disregard or misjudge traffic signals and walk on “don’t walk” lights.
C. Be extra careful around schools, playgrounds and residential areas.
D. Be aware of the special needs of the elderly and pedestrians with disabilities.
E. You must yield to pedestrians when turning.

SHARING THE ROAD WITH TRUCKS: Safe drivers treat bigger, heavier vehicles with respect. Many drivers are afraid to have a truck alongside or following behind. Here are a few suggestions to help you share the road safely with trucks.

A. Do not travel in the truck’s blind spots, either to the right or left. This is especially important if you drive a small car.
B. If you plan to pass a truck, you will need to start your pass farther back than when passing a car. Remember, it will also take longer to complete the pass because of the truck’s length. Be sure you have plenty of clear road ahead.
C. Stay as far away from a truck as possible when one is passing you or you are passing the truck. Big trucks can create a wind strong enough to make you think you are losing control.
D. If a truck comes up behind you at a high rate of speed and you are on a mountain road or long downgrade, get out of the way as soon as possible. The truck may have lost its brakes.
E. Trucks have more trouble braking and stopping on slippery roads because of their size. Give them room to maneuver.
F. If it is raining and water is standing on the road, remember that spray from a truck passing you or that you are trying to pass will seriously reduce your vision. Move as far away from the truck, in your lane, as you can.
G. If a truck starts to signal for a right turn, stay out of the way. You could be smacked by the trailer if you are between the truck and the curb.

BICYCLE RIDERS: Bicycle riders are required to obey the same rules and laws that other drivers do. Many do not, so a safe driver must practice courtesies when driving near bicyclists:
A. Tap your horn before passing a bicyclist.
B. Signal turns and stops early to warn the bicyclist.
C. Drive wide of a bicyclist when passing.
D. Use low beams at night when approaching a bicyclist.
E. Watch bicyclists carefully for any sudden, unexpected moves or for any indication that they may lose their balance.

MOTORCYCLES: Motorcycles are required to obey the same rules of the road as any other vehicle. They present special problems for cars and trucks.
A. They are smaller than cars and can be driven in several different positions in a traffic lane, making them difficult to see and hard to predict.
B. Motorcycles are unstable.
C. When driving around a motorcyclist, signal and execute your maneuvers well in advance to communicate your intentions to the motorcycle rider.
D. The majority of car/motorcycle collisions take place at intersections.
E. When following a motorcycle, increase your following distance.

ROAD RAGE: Road rage is an emotional state of anger or hostility, resulting from an incident involving the use of a motor vehicle, which escalates into violent criminal acts, or threats or attempts of violent acts. Road rage may include provocative behavior intended to intimidate or harass others or instill fear in them. Aggressive driving is not road rage. However, aggressive driving can escalate into road rage. Aggressive driving generally involves traffic infractions while road rage generally involves crimes. Road Rage contributes to violent and dangerous driving conditions.
The following behaviors constitute road rage behavior:
• Verbal provocations – yelling, cursing, excessive horn honking, rude or obscene gestures and threats which may lead to:
  • Vehicular actions – cutting off, extremely close tailgating, blocking maneuvers, pursuing or chasing, running another vehicle off the road, deliberate ramming or bumping of another vehicle which may lead to:
  • Actions outside the vehicle – exiting the vehicle to threaten, frighten, attack, fight and hurt another motorist, pedestrian, cyclist, etc.

Tips to avoid becoming a target of road rage behavior:
• Don’t make obscene gestures.
• Don’t abuse your horn.
• Don’t block the passing lane.
• Don’t block the right-hand turn lane.
• Don’t tailgate.
• Don’t stop in the road to have a chat with another driver or a pedestrian.
• Use signals when switching lanes.
• Don’t take other driver’s mistakes personally.
• Avoid eye contact with the driver trying to engage you.
• Smile and be courteous – avoid conflict at all costs.
• Do not exit the vehicle to argue or otherwise engage another motorist or pedestrian.

Aggressive drivers:
• Under stress, aggressive drivers have different physical reactions than other drivers; they respond to a stressful situation with physiological responses associated with hostility.
• People who tend to engage in aggressive or hostile acts when driving are more affected by mood than other drivers. Being in a bad mood appears to have an adverse effect on driving behavior and this effect appears to be most pronounced among unsafe drivers.

Average drivers:
• Blood pressure rises among average drivers experiencing the emotion of rage.
• Facial muscles tighten while experiencing anger or rage.

The average driver can reduce road rage potential by reducing stress while driving.

Suggestions for reducing stress:
• Leave yourself plenty of time to get to your destination.
THE LAW

Reckless Driving: “...driving which unreasonably interferes with the free and proper use of the public highway, or unreasonably endangers users of the public highway.” Reckless Driving is a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of 5 points.

Criminally negligent homicide. “A person is guilty of criminally negligent homicide when with criminal negligence, he causes the death of another person.” (in the case of road rage this would result through the use of a motor vehicle). This is a class E felony. Maximum sentence is 1 1/3 to 4 years imprisonment.

Assault in the first degree. “A person is guilty of assault in the first degree when: With intent to cause serious physical injury to another person, he causes such injury to such person or to a third person by means of a deadly weapon or a dangerous instrument (in this case a motor vehicle); or under circumstances evincing (indicating) a depraved indifference to human life, he recklessly engages in conduct which creates a grave risk of death to another person, and thereby causes serious physical injury to another person.” This is a class B violent felony. Maximum sentence is 25 years imprisonment.

A person could also be charged with Assault in the second degree (a class D violent felony with a maximum sentence of 7 years of imprisonment) or Assault in the third degree (a class A misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of 1 year imprisonment).

Manslaughter in the first degree. A person is guilty of manslaughter in the first degree when, “With intent to cause serious physical injury to another person, he causes the death of such person or of a third person.” This is a class B violent felony. The maximum sentence is 25 years imprisonment.

Manslaughter in the second degree. A person is guilty of manslaughter in the second degree when, “He recklessly causes the death of another person.” This is a class C felony. The maximum sentence is 5 to 15 years imprisonment.

For the felony convictions listed here, a fine of up to $5,000 may be levied in addition to the term of imprisonment. A felony conviction also carries a mandatory surcharge and victim assistance fee of $210.

The Vehicle and Traffic Law also requires the revocation of the driver’s license of anyone convicted of a homicide or assault arising out of the operation of a motor vehicle (or motorcycle) or criminal negligence in the operation of a motor vehicle resulting in death, whether the conviction was had in this state or elsewhere.

Chapter 9
Driving Emergencies

Instructional Objective: To identify common driving emergencies and their counter-measures.

(I) Driving Emergencies:

The single most important rule in any emergency is don’t panic. You have a better chance of handling the emergency safely if you don’t let fear take over. In most emergencies, you will have a second or two to think before you act.

Here is what to do in various emergency situations:

VEHICLE APPROACHING HEAD-ON IN YOUR LANE:

Slow down, pull over to the right and sound your horn to alert the other driver. Don’t swing over to the left lane. The other driver may suddenly recover and pull back into that lane too.

STALLING ON RAILROAD TRACKS:

If a train is approaching, unfasten your seat belt, get out of the vehicle and off the tracks, as far away from them as you can. Run in the direction the train is coming from. If you run in the same direction the train is heading, you may be hit with debris when the train strikes your vehicle. If you are absolutely sure no trains are near, open your window to listen for an approaching train, and try to start the engine. If that fails, shift to neutral and push the vehicle off the tracks.

GOING INTO WATER:

A vehicle will usually float for a while, and you should have time to get out before it starts sinking. Unfasten your seat belt, and escape through a window. Opening a door would cause water to rush in, and the car could turn over on top of you.

If the vehicle sinks before you can get out, climb into the rear seat. An air pocket may form there as the weight of the engine pulls the vehicle down nose first. When the vehicle settles, take a breath and escape through a window. As you rise, air pressure will build in your lungs. Let it out in small breaths through your nose or lips as you surface. Don’t hold your breath tightly or try to blow air out. Just allow the air to escape naturally.

HOT WIRES:
CARS OFTEN MAKE CONTACT WITH HOT ELECTRICAL WIRES BY:

A. Crashing into electrical poles and having the wires fall on the car.
B. Driving into hot wires that are either lying on the road or hanging low.

CAR CATCHES FIRE WHILE DRIVING:

1. Steer off the road immediately, to an open area away from buildings and/or people.
2. Turn off the ignition to cut the electrical power to the engine.
3. Get any passengers out of the vehicle and as far away as possible.
4. Assess the situation to determine if it is a serious car fire or a small fire you can deal with yourself. NOTE: You must have a fire extinguisher to be able to deal with any type of car fire. If you don’t, stay away from the car.
5. If you can deal with the fire, use a rag to protect your hands when opening the hood.
6. Turn the fire extinguisher directly on the location of the fire. REMEMBER: Water is not effective in oil and fuel fires.
7. Wait for help to arrive. Never work under the hood while the engine compartment is hot.

(II) Off-road recovery, paths of least resistance:

RECOVER FROM A SKID:

1. Take your foot off the gas immediately.
2. Don’t slam on your brakes.
3. Turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid.

RUNNING OFF THE PAVEMENT:

1. Grip the steering wheel tightly and take your foot off the accelerator.
2. Don’t hit the brakes hard: make sure to brake carefully.
3. Don’t try to swing back onto the pavement.
4. After speed is reduced, turn your wheel and drive carefully back onto the pavement.

Path of least resistance: The path of least resistance in any situation, whether it be a head-on collision, side impact collision, or swerving to avoid an emergency, is the escape route that, if followed, will decrease the risk of injury and damage to the drivers and vehicles involved.

(III) Mechanical functions (tires, brakes, steering, power, lights, etc.):

FLAT TIRE OR BLOWOUT:

A. Grip the wheel firmly.
B. Take your foot off the gas.
C. Gently apply the brakes.
D. Steer straight ahead and stop.

LOSS OF WHEEL: This is a situation similar to a blowout. The warning signs are often the same: a thumping noise and/or a pulling to one side. The same basic rules also apply for recovering control.

BRAKE FAILURE:

It is important to know what kind of brakes are installed in your car - standard/disc brakes or Antilock Brake System (ABS).

A. Don’t panic.
B. Standard/disc brakes -- Pump the brakes and try to build up enough pressure to stop the car. ABS -- Press down hard and hold down -- do not pump.
C. Shift to a lower gear.
D. Cautiously apply your foot/hand parking brake.

GAS PEDAL STICKS:

A. Concentrate on steering. Keep your eyes on the road.
B. Lift the accelerator with your toe from the underside of the pedal. DO NOT bend down to lift the accelerator with your hands.
C. If the above measures do not work, then:
   1. Hit the brake hard.
   2. Shift to neutral.

LOSS OF VEHICLE POWER WHILE DRIVING:

A. If emergency flashers are working, turn them on.
B. Shift the car into neutral.
C. Do not turn your ignition off; this may lock up your steering wheel.
D. Position yourself to exit traffic.
E. Although steering and braking may be difficult, they will still function, so use them to the best of your ability.
F. If necessary, use the emergency brake to assist in braking and/or shift to a lower gear if you have a manual transmission.
VEHICLE BREAKDOWN:
A. Move your car off the pavement. (If you can’t get the car off the roadway, get everyone out of the car.)
B. Turn on your emergency flashers; raise the hood; if at night, turn on the inside light.
C. What should you do if you see a light flashing on the side of the road?
   1. Move into the lane farthest away from the flashing light.
   2. Reduce your speed.
   3. Observe the scene carefully.
   4. Be prepared for the unexpected.

STEERING FAILS:
A. Ease up on the accelerator.
B. Wait until the car slows down, then apply brakes gently to avoid changing directions.
C. Bring your car to a smooth stop.

HEADLIGHTS FAIL
If the highway is lighted, get off the roadway and move onto the shoulder or other available space as rapidly and as safely as you can. If the highway is dark, immediately put on your emergency flashers and get off the roadway. If all lights fail, try to stay on the pavement until you slow down enough to get off the roadway slowly.

HOOD FLIES UP
Take your foot off the accelerator immediately and brake smoothly as you ease onto the shoulder of the road. You will have to depend on the view from your left window for steering reference, but on some cars you may be able to peek through the gap under the hinge edge of the hood. Make it a habit after a service station stop to check to see that the hood is securely latched.

Chapter 10
Occupant Restraints and Protective Equipment

Instructional Objective: To identify the rationale for having and using occupant restraints and protective equipment.

Safety Belts Make a Difference:

(I) Legal aspects:

Front seat belts are required equipment if seat belt anchorages were part of the original equipment of your automobile. This applies to most cars on the road today. The law requires the driver and front seat passengers to wear seat belts when driving. The law also requires that all children under 7 (unless they are more than 4 ft., 9 in. tall) years of age be restrained by a federally approved infant carrier that itself is restrained by seat belts. The law also requires that all children under the age of 10 be restrained by seat belts no matter where they are in the vehicle. In choosing a safety seat for your child, remember four important points.

The seat must:
1. Have a seal of federal approval.
2. Fit properly in your car.
3. Be the proper size for your child.
4. Be in the back seat.

One out of four children killed in car crashes is crushed by adults who failed to buckle their safety belts. Even if you are buckled up, if your child is in your lap the physical forces involved make it practically impossible to protect your child. Death has been recorded in crashes as slow as 12 mph. A 12-lb. child becomes a 240-lb. force in the arms of the person holding the child in a 10 mph car crash.

(II) Vehicle control:

Drivers wearing safety belts have more control over their cars in emergency situations and are therefore more likely to avoid a crash.

If you are involved in a collision, your safety belts are designed to keep you well within the safety zone area built into today’s automobiles, allowing you better control of the vehicle in avoiding secondary and tertiary collisions.

By making the impact of the first crash work on you sooner, belts give you the benefit of dissipation of the forces of impact by the car itself. By taking the forces of impact quickly, the belt dissipates those forces through a relatively safe medium (the belt itself) instead of through a dangerous medium (glass or steel).

Proper use of a safety belt is very important during pregnancy.

1. Seat should be upright. Extend the latch plate and belt as far as you can, attaching the buckle until it clicks. If a longer belt is needed, extenders are available from automobile dealers, usually at no cost.
2. Position the lap belt as low on your hips as possible, under the abdomen and unborn child. It should settle snugly around your hip and pelvic bones and across your upper thighs. There should be no slack in the lap belt portion. Refer to your owner’s manual for more information.

3. Position the shoulder belt over your shoulder, collar bone, and down across your chest. Many cars offer a comfort feature in this system that will allow a small amount of slack. It works like a window shade. Pull the belt out at least five inches and let it retract. Pull it out again about an inch and release.

(III) Crash protection:

Safety belts make a difference:

A. Approximately 15,000 to 16,000 people who did not buckle up die annually in cars, light trucks, or vans equipped with safety belts.
B. About 50% of these people could have been saved if they wore safety belts.
C. Safety belts cut your chances of being killed or maimed in a crash by about 50%.

Safety belts help occupants in five ways:

A. There is a "ride down" in which the belt begins to stop the wearer as the car is stopping.
B. The belt keeps the head and face of the wearer from striking objects such as the steering wheel rim, windshield, interior post, or dashboard.
C. The belt spreads the stopping force widely across the strong parts of the body.
D. Belts prevent vehicle occupants from colliding with each other.
E. Belts help the driver maintain vehicle control, thus decreasing the possibility of an additional crash.

(IV) Operational principles (active and passive):

Passive Restraint: Requires no operation by driver or occupants.
Active Restraint: Requires operation by driver or occupants.

MANUAL SEAT BELTS: Active Restraints

Operational Principles:

1. Seat should be upright. Extend the latch plate and belt as far as you can, attaching the buckle until it clicks. If a longer belt is needed, extenders are available from automobile dealers, usually at no cost.
2. Position the lap belt as low on your hips as possible. It should settle snugly around your hip and pelvic bones and across your upper thighs. There should be no slack in the lap belt portion.
3. Position the shoulder belt over your shoulder, collar bone, and down across your chest. Many cars offer a comfort feature in this system that will allow a small amount of slack. It works like a window shade. Pull the belt out at least five inches and let it retract. Pull it out again about an inch and release (since seat belt mechanisms vary, please consult your owner's manual).

AIR BAGS: Passive Restraint.

Operational principles: Air bags are a safety device designed for front end collisions whereby they instantly inflate upon impact to protect the driver and/or occupant.

AUTOMATIC SAFETY BELTS: Passive Restraint.

Operational principles: Automatic safety belts are designed so that the driver and occupant do not have to manually buckle their safety belts. These belts are self-adjusting and lock upon impact.

(V) Air bags and other protective equipment:

AIR BAGS: Many newer-model cars come equipped with driver-side airbags and/or passenger-side airbags. This equipment is designed to protect the individual in a cushion of air that absorbs the force of impact and protects the individual from striking hard objects directly in front of him/her. Drivers and passengers should position their car seat as far to the rear as is comfortable to reduce the impact of the opening shock of the bag. Air bags and properly adjusted safety belts are the most effective combination of protective equipment in today's cars.

INFANTS, CHILDREN & AIR BAGS: Airbags open at 200 mph. Infants and children may be hurt or killed by air bags. The safest place for them is in the rear seat of a motor vehicle, secured in safety seats or by safety belts (an infant in a rear-facing safety seat - or any other kind of safety seat - should never ride in the front seat of any motor vehicle equipped with a passenger-side air bag). Children who do ride in the front seat should never be allowed to stand in their parents’ lap.

HELMETS: Motorcyclists are not protected by a shell of metal and do not have the added protection of safety belts. The only protection that can be provided for a motorcyclist is a crash helmet. The law requires that a helmet be worn at all times by any person riding a motorcycle.

Chapter 11
Alcohol and Traffic Safety
Instructional Objective: To identify the effects of alcohol on roadway users.

(I) Physiological:

PHYSICAL FITNESS: Physical fitness is a major aspect of being a safe driver. The use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs pose a serious health problem that can severely impair any person's ability to properly perform the driving task.

DRINKING/DRUGGING AND DRIVING:

A. Each year, both state and national statistics indicate that about one-third of all traffic fatalities are caused by alcohol-impaired driving. Ethyl alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug in the United States.
B. In all states, a person may be convicted of “Driving while intoxicated” with a blood alcohol concentration of .08%, and the penalties for this offense include fines, imprisonment, and loss of the driving privilege.
C. In general, blood alcohol concentration and the accompanying impairment of essential bodily functions is primarily dependent upon a person's size and the amount of alcohol ingested in a given period of time.
D. Loss of driving ability and the accompanying probability of a traffic collision increase dramatically as a person's blood alcohol concentration increases.
E. Use of any drug may adversely affect driving ability. Taking more than one drug at a time is particularly dangerous since each can add significantly to the impact of the other, especially when one of the drugs is alcohol.

THE ALCOHOL/DRUG RELATED TRAFFIC SAFETY PROBLEM:

A. A drug is any substance, prescribed or otherwise, legal or illegal, ingested or injected, in expectation of achieving a more desirable physical and/or mental state.
B. Drug use means taking any drug in any amount under any circumstance. A drug user is anyone who uses any drug for any reason.
C. Alcohol related traffic crashes are those in which ethyl alcohol was found to be present in one or more of the drivers involved. Alcohol-impaired-driving crashes are those in which the amount (BAC) of ethyl alcohol was .08% or greater.
D. In New York, the legal definition of intoxicated is having a blood alcohol level of .08% or not having normal use of mental and physical faculties by reason of the introduction of alcohol, a controlled substance, a drug, or a combination of two or more of these substances into the body.
E. DWI is used as the abbreviation for “Driving While Intoxicated,” and DUID stands for “Driving Under the Influence of Drugs.” DUI stands for “Driving Under the Influence.”

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE DRIVING PROCESS:

A. Scanning far ahead: About 90% of what a driver identifies in a traffic scene is through the sense of vision. Levels of alcohol as low as .03% BAC can lessen one’s muscular control by relaxing the fine eye muscles and thereby adversely affecting visual acuity, depth perception, peripheral vision, color recognition and night vision.
B. Anticipation: The ability to foresee or anticipate what is likely to happen depends on one’s ability to accurately process the information previously identified. Alcohol impairs mental functions.
C. Decisions: As with anticipation, the decision phase involves the brain and the thinking process, and experimentation has shown that levels as low as .045% BAC reduce these abilities up to 15%. Of particular concern is the willingness of a driver to take greater risks after drinking. Alcohol tends to produce more uninhibited and aggressive behavior and thus poor driving decisions.
D. Executing the selected driving tactic: While alcohol affects a driver’s judgment and thinking first, it will eventually impair motor skills (muscle coordination) necessary for maintaining vehicle control.

Extensive research on loss of driving ability and increase in collision probability resulting from consumption of alcohol has yielded the following results:

A. Driving performance is impaired up to 30% at a BAC of only .05%.
B. Even at .02% BAC, a driver's ability to clearly see and distinguish moving objects is noticeably impaired.
C. Eye-hand-foot coordination is impaired at BAC levels as low as .03%.
D. The ability to detect low-contrast, low-illumination objects is usually impaired at BAC levels of .08%.
E. Peripheral vision is impaired by 10% at .05% BAC.
F. The more complex the driving situation, the greater the degree of impairment that will result from a given BAC level. Thus, alcohol, even in small doses, reduces the “time sharing” efficiency of the brain.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ARE AFFECTED BY:

A. Body size: Larger persons have a greater volume of blood than smaller people and will generally acquire a lower BAC from a given quantity of alcohol. However, additional body weight in the form of fat is not helpful as alcohol is not soluble (will not dissolve) in fatty tissue.
B. Alcohol content: The more alcohol a given drink contains and the more drinks one consumes in a given period of time, the higher BAC it will produce.
C. Drink size: A larger serving will usually contain more alcohol and produce a higher BAC than a smaller one.
D. Drinking time: All other factors being equal, the shorter the time period in which drinking occurs, the higher one's BAC will be. Conversely, the longer the period of time after drinking, the lower the BAC becomes.
E. Amount of food ingested: Although no food will absorb or neutralize alcohol, it may initially coat the stomach lining and slow absorption somewhat. However, this situation is only temporary, as virtually all of the alcohol will eventually be absorbed into the bloodstream.
(II) Psychological:

A. Attention: The ability to concentrate, especially on several sources of incoming information, is diminished.
B. Memory: Inability to store and retain information has been found to occur with a BAC as low as .03%.
C. Emotions: Control tends to be lost as more alcohol is consumed.
D. Aggression: Aggressive behavior tends to be enhanced, especially in males, when placed in a competitive situation.
E. Tolerance: Especially in the early stages of intoxication, some people learn to compensate by developing coping mechanisms that mask the effects of alcohol, such as not participating in those activities that might reveal their impairment.

(III) Legal aspects:

A person commits an offense if the person is intoxicated while driving or operating a motor vehicle in a public place, and the offense is punishable by (1) a fine of not less than $300 and not more than $2,500; and (2) confinement in jail for a term of up to 1 year (assuming a first conviction for a DWI/DWAI not resulting in injury or death).

If it is shown at the trial that the person has previously been convicted of DWI or DWAI, the offense is punishable by (1) a fine of not less than $500 and not more than $10,000; and (2) confinement in jail for a term of up to 7 years.

(IV) Synergistic:

EFFECTS OF OTHER COMMON DRUGS ON THE DRIVING TASK:

A. Marijuana: Classified as a mild hallucinogen, it primarily affects the way the user perceives things. Currently, marijuana is second only to alcohol as the drug most often found in the bodies of accident victims. In recent years, the strength of marijuana (amount of the psychoactive ingredient THC) has increased significantly because of improved growing methods. It can act as a stimulant or depressant, depending on the user's mood and experience with the drug. Studies on the effects of marijuana on driving performance have resulted in the following findings:
1. Complex reaction time is slowed, giving the driver less time to avoid hazards.
2. Errors in recognition and interpretation of traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings are more likely.
3. In producing a more passive behavior, there is a tendency to drive at slower speeds than normal, which can interfere with the movement of other traffic.
4. Attention span and the ability to concentrate on several things simultaneously are lowered.
5. Accurate judgment of time and distance relationships are lessened, causing problems in allowing adequately for passing, following, and stopping distances.
6. Combining marijuana with alcohol produces a synergistic effect that results in driving performance which is significantly worse than that experienced when either of the drugs is taken alone.

SYNERGISM: The effects of taking two or more drugs at the same time can result in more than a "one-plus-one" effect. In other words, the total effect of combining drugs may be greater than and quite different from that expected from the sum of their individual effects. Any time alcohol is mixed with another drug, it is likely to produce a synergistic effect.

B. Cocaine: Classified as a stimulant, it can produce extreme mood swings, from feelings of joy and happiness to violent hallucinations and severe depression. The following information is provided to explain the various aspects of this drug:

1. Both usage and cocaine related deaths in the U.S. have increased dramatically since 1980.
2. Side effects of blurred vision and slowed glare recovery impair perception and thus reduce a person's ability to drive safely.

C. Over-the-counter drugs: Also referred to collectively as non-prescription drugs, they include such items as aspirin, sleeping aids, antihistamines, cold remedies, and products containing caffeine. Although they account for 70% of all legal drug purchases, they can and do adversely affect driving performance. By law, their label must provide adequate directions for use including recommendations for operating machinery, which should be strictly followed.

D. Prescription drugs: As with the previous group, directions are provided for their use and should be strictly followed, not only to accomplish the intended purpose, but also to limit dangerous and undesirable side effects. As with any other drug, excessive usage can be harmful. Depending on the drug, a person's ability to stay alert and react to hazardous driving situations can be adversely affected.

E. Inhalants: These are a diverse group of breathable chemicals (usually solvents) that produce psychoactive vapors or fumes. Although not usually considered drugs, the effects of inhalants include impaired vision and judgment, reduced muscular control, lower blood pressure, heart irregularities, inflammation of the nasal passages and lungs, wheezing and coughing, and asphyxiation, in severe cases. Their intoxicating effects are immediate and can last from 15 to 45 minutes after inhaling has stopped.

(V) Counter-Measures:

If you're old enough to drive a motor vehicle, it's assumed that you are mature enough to make rational decisions. The old adage "Everything in moderation, nothing in excess" is a creed we could all live by when it comes to drinking. We recommend that you do not drink and drive, but if you do, drink in moderation and realize the potential consequences of your actions.

DRINKING IN MODERATION: You must set a limit in advance on how much you are going to drink. Avoid drinks with high alcohol concentration. Leave part of the drink in the glass. Sip slowly. Try not to consume more than one drink per hour. Be aware of your physical and emotional condition.
COUNTER-MEASURES that reduce the risk of driving under the influence:

1. Access to a designated driver or taxi.
2. Eating prior to and during drinking.
4. Drink in moderation.
5. Be aware of your physical and emotional condition
6. Don’t drink.
7. If you do drink, don’t drive.

Chapter 12
Summation

PURPOSE OF DRIVER SAFETY COURSES:

1. SAVE lives.
2. REDUCE injury.
3. MAKE you a safer driver.

SAFE DRIVERS:

1. HAVE a good driving attitude.
2. KNOW the rules of the road.
3. KNOW what actions to take during a life-threatening driving situation.
4. MAKE good driving decisions.
5. DON’T drink/use drugs and drive.
6. WEAR safety belts.

A SAFE driver is a SMART driver.