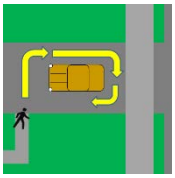
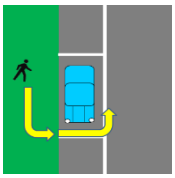
Being a safe, defensive, responsible driver starts with how you approach and enter your vehicle to knowing the location of and how to use all the instruments, controls, and devices. Before you get in and drive, you must make sure the vehicle is safe to drive. As the driver, it is your responsibility to know and check your vehicle condition. Vehicles in poor condition have a greater chance of breaking down which could result in a crash. Vehicles in poor condition also cost more to operate.

Some counties in Wisconsin require vehicles to have an emission inspection which is done at an inspection station that is authorized by the WI DOT. If your vehicle is required to have an emission inspection, the WI DOT will notify you.

Approaching Your Vehicle



If your vehicle is parked in a driveway or parking lot, take a quick walk around the vehicle to make sure the car is ready and safe to drive and that there are no items or people around.



If your vehicle is parked on the roadway, enter by walking around the front to see that your driving path is clear.

When making your walk around the vehicle, look for:

1) People by your vehicle – Make sure no one is close by or right next to your vehicle. Every year people are injured or killed because drivers did not check for people before moving it. If someone is attempting to enter your vehicle, from a distance, yell or press your panic button on the vehicle remote. Always keep yourself safe. Do not approach or attempt to keep them there until police arrive.
2) Animals by your vehicle – Animals will go by vehicles looking for food or the heat from vehicles that have just parked. Take a quick look around to make sure you don't scare an animal. Scared animals will defend themselves.
3) Fluid Leaks – Take a quick glance under your vehicle as you approach and walk around it. Are there any pools of fluids? Is there gasoline, brake or radiator fluid under the vehicle? If there are vehicle fluids under your vehicle and you think they may be from your vehicle, do not drive it until you have checked it out.
4) Damage to your vehicle – Check to make sure damage has not occurred to your vehicle while it has been parked. Make sure you check the right side for damage.
5) Debris and items around vehicle – Check for any debris or things on the ground around the vehicle. Things like glass, metal, wood with staples or nails in could easily damage a tire or two if you run them over. Also check for toys, bikes, lawn care equipment and other items that you could damage if you hit or run them over.
6) Items on or hanging from the vehicle – Check for things that may have been placed on your vehicle, like parking tickets or flyers. Also check to make sure you did not leave items like keys, phones, books, bags, or other items on top of the vehicle. Check for wires or car parts that may be hanging low underneath the vehicle.
7) Windows, Lights, and Mirrors – Check to see that your windows, lights, and mirrors are clean, clear, and not damaged. Dirty windows and mirrors can make it difficult to see things.
8) Tire Condition – Check to make sure your tires have enough air. Also check the condition of the tread and sidewalls. Bald or worn tire tread will increase your stopping distance and affect vehicle control. Check the owner's manual for proper tire pressure and check pressure at least every week. Not enough air pressure in your tires makes your engine work hard resulting in using more gasoline. It is estimated that underinflated tires consumes more than **2 million gallons** of gasoline a day in the U.S.

Entering Your Vehicle

Before you enter your vehicle, make sure there are no unwanted people or animals inside. Every year police respond to numerous calls of unwanted people and animals in vehicles. Always keep yourself safe. Don't attempt to remove the person or animal by yourself, go to a safe place and call the police.

Once you are safe inside your vehicle, make a check for any loose items that may be laying around. Any loose items could fly around inside the vehicle during a crash and injure or kill you or your passengers. Loose items could also end up on the floor by the gas and brake pedal and interfere with the proper operation of them.

Instruments, Controls, & Devices in your Vehicle

As the driver, you must be familiar with and how the instruments, controls, and devices inside your vehicle work. Many vehicle crashes have occurred because the driver took their eyes off the roadway to change the radio station, put a window up or down, change the heat or AC controls, or turn on or off the windshield wipers.

Safe, defensive, and responsible drivers take the time to learn where all the instruments, controls, and devices are and how they work or what information they give you. Remember vehicle instruments, controls, and devices will vary from vehicle to vehicle. Before driving a vehicle you have never driven before, take a few minutes to get to know the vehicle. Look around, see where things are.

Many vehicles have pictures or symbols to help you identify where controls are and any problems your vehicle may have. Don't ignore the lights on your dashboard. They are on for a reason.

Can you identify the following dashboard lights? Check your vehicles owner's manual if needed.


1._____


2._____


3._____


4._____


5._____


6._____

7._____


8._____


9._____

10._____

11._____


12._____


13._____

14._____


15._____


16._____


17._____


18._____


19._____

20._____

What devices or controls are the following symbols found on?

21._____

22._____

23._____

24._____

25._____

26._____

27._____

28._____

29._____

30._____

31._____

32._____

33._____

34._____

35._____

What do the following symbols mean?

36._____

37._____

38._____

39._____

40._____

41._____

42._____

43._____

44._____

45._____

Remember that the location of instruments and dashboard lights will vary from vehicle to vehicle.

What are the following instruments?

A._____ **B.**_____ **C.**_____ **D.**_____ **E.**_____

Know Your Vehicle Check List

It is very important that you know and understand the controls of the vehicle that you will be driving. With your vehicle parked at home, sit in the driver's seat and have one of your parents or licensed adult check off each item below as you locate it or describe its use.

( ) Seat Belt	( ) Seat Adjustment	( ) Interior Lights
( ) Heater / Air Controls	( ) Mirrors	( ) Radio / CD Player
( ) Head Restraint	( ) Cruise Control	( ) Gas Pedal
( ) Sun Visor	( ) Foot Brake	( ) Speedometer
( ) Ignition Switch	( ) Odometer	( ) Steering Wheel
( ) Fuel Gauge	( ) Turn Signal	( ) Temperature Gauge
( ) Windshield Wipers	( ) Oil Pressure Gauge	( ) Horn
( ) Check your Engine Light	( ) Gearshift	( ) Hood Release
( ) Parking Brake	( ) Headlights	( ) Have or Have Not ABS Brakes
( ) Spare Tire Location	( ) High/Low Beam Lights	( ) Parking Lights
( ) Emergency Flasher	( ) Instrument Panel Lights	( ) Rear Window Defogger

Any added information unique to your vehicle. Ex. –Clutch, Gas Tank location.

( )_____ ( )_____ ( )_____

( )_____ ( )_____ ( )_____

Your Name: _____ Adult Signature: _____

Mechanical Problems

At some point every driver is going to have to deal with some type of mechanical problem with the vehicle. How you deal with these problems can mean the difference between life and death. Any time you have a mechanical problem while driving, the main thing to remember is to stay calm. Your main goal is to bring the vehicle to a safe stop quickly.

As the driver, it is your responsibility to make sure the vehicle is mechanically safe to drive. Do not drive a vehicle that you think may or does have mechanical problems.

If your vehicle does have mechanical problems and you can no longer drive it, pull to the right most part of the roadway if you cannot get the vehicle off the roadway. Always attempt to get the vehicle in a safe place. Call the local police to let them know why the vehicle is there and what your plans are for removing it.

Flooded Engine – The main reason for the engine to get flooded is from drivers pressing the gas pedal while attempting to start the engine. If the engine does get flooded, you may have to have the vehicle towed to the service center and worked on by a mechanic.

Accelerator (gas) Pedal Sticks – If the accelerator sticks while driving, simply apply the break as firmly as you can. Do not slam on the brake, you could lose control of the vehicle. If applying the brake does not slow you down enough, shift into a lower gear or neutral. If that still does not work, slowly apply the parking (emergency) brake until your vehicle comes to a stop. The main reason for stuck accelerator pedals is the floor mat bunching up behind and catching on the accelerator pedal.

Brake Failure – The main reason for brake failure is not having enough brake fluid in the brake fluid reserve. Like other fluids your vehicle slowly consumes brake fluid. Check the brake fluid reserve at least one a month. If you do have a brake failure while driving, stay calm, and first pump the brake pedal to see if you can build up brake fluid pressure. If that does not work, downshift to a lower gear or shut the engine off and slowly apply the parking (emergency) brake. As a last resort, rub your tires along the curb to slow you down. *(Rubbing your tires against curb could result in tire failure.)*

If the ABS braking system fails you will still have regular brakes to stop the vehicle.

Steering Failure – Very rarely will you have to deal with total steering failure. If anything you may encounter power steering failure. If this happens, slow down and use more effort in turning the steering wheel in the direction you wish to go. It may be hard to turn but it will still turn. If total steering failure does occur, stay off the foot brake and slowly apply the parking (emergency) brake.

Headlight Failure – With the new design of headlight systems, this almost never happens. The number one reason for headlights going off is the driver accidently hitting the light switch to the off position. If your headlights do go out, slow down, move to the right side of the roadway and check the headlight switch. If you still don't have lights, try getting your high beams or parking lights. Also try the hazard lights or fog lights if your vehicle has them.

Engine Stalls or Fails while Driving – Not letting the vehicle engine warm-up enough is the main reason for vehicle engines to stall or fail while driving. If it does stall or fail, slow down, move to the right of the roadway and attempt to restart the engine. If it does not restart, you will need to move off the roadway the best you can.

Emergencies

Dealing with emergencies is as simple as dealing with other situations while driving. Stay calm and remember the 3 basic things you can do. 1. Change your speed, 2. Change your direction, 3. Communicate with others. You may do one, two or all three of these things to handle emergencies.

Loss of Traction (skids) – At some point your tires are going to lose traction, which puts the vehicle into a skid. If you do start to skid, the first thing to do is stay off the brake. Most skids are caused by stopping and/or turning to fast or hard. Steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. Avoid hard braking while in the skid.

Flat Tire – Number one cause of tire failure is hitting things in the roadway. If you do have a tire go flat while driving, grip the steering wheel firmly and keep the vehicle going straight, slowly reduce speed and brake gently. Do not brake hard. Find a safe area to stop so you can change the flat tire. Most new tires will allow you to still drive on them when flat for a short distance but will damage the tire to the point of replacement.

Before changing any tire read the owner's manual for the proper jack placement and operation.

Front tire goes off roadway – If one of your tires goes off the roadway, don't panic or swerve. It could result in a collision. Stay calm and gradually slow down while keep a firm grip on the steering wheel. When you have the vehicle in control, gently guide the vehicle tire back onto the roadway. Try to avoid rubbing the edge of the tire on the edge of the roadway. This could result in tire failure.

Engine Compartment Fire – The main cause of engine fires is improperly jump starting the vehicle when you have a dead battery. If your engine is on fire, stop the vehicle in a safe area away from flammable items, shut the engine off, get you and your passengers out, and call 911 for help. Never attempt to go back into the vehicle to recover personal items.

Passenger Compartment Fire – Smoking materials is the main reason for passenger compartments fires. If the passenger area of the vehicle is on fire, don't open your window. The fire will go towards the open window. Stop the vehicle in a safe area and get you and your passengers out of the vehicle and call 911 for help. Never attempt to go back into the vehicle to recover personal items.

Vehicle in your Lane Heading towards You – Drivers not paying attention is the major reason for vehicles going into oncoming traffic lanes. Always be attentive to oncoming vehicles and where they are in there lane. If an oncoming vehicle does come into your lane, stay calm, slow down, move your vehicle to the right side of the roadway, and flash your lights or honk your horn to get the other driver's attention. If you have to, drive right off the roadway to avoid being hit head on. It is better to have a "glancing blow" then hitting head on.

Vehicle Crashes

Vehicle crashes do occur. If you are a safe, defensive, and responsible driver you will reduce your chances of being involved in a vehicle crash. Drivers must do everything possible to avoid crashes. Most crashes are a result of drivers not paying attention to the driving path and the task of driving. When problems do arise, drivers panic or over react to the situation resulting in a crash.

Types – There are different types of vehicle crashes you could be in. You could be involved in a head on, rear end, sideswipe, T-bone, off center, or roll over collision. The most deadly types of collisions are the head on and T-bone. Speed up or drive right off the roadway to avoid being involved in a head on or T-bone collision. The different types of collisions result in different types of injuries to people and damage to vehicles.

Dealing With – The first thing you must do if involved in a crash is to stop. Your vehicle does not always stop when involved in a crash. Do whatever you can do to keep the vehicle from crashing into another vehicle, object, or

person. If the vehicle can be moved find a safe place to bring the vehicle to a stop so other vehicles don't crash into your vehicle. If you have warning devices like flares or reflective triangles, use them to warn other vehicles approaching.

Once your vehicle is in a safe place, check your passengers for injuries if you have any. Also check the other driver and their passengers for injuries or problems. If anyone is injured, make sure emergency rescue or the police have been called.

If there is only property damage, stay calm and start collecting information about the crash. The more information you have about the vehicles and people involved in the crash, the easier it is going to be to deal with later. Get the names and addresses of all people involved including passengers in all vehicles. If they have a driver's license, record the driver' license number. Always be polite and courteous when dealing with others involved. Also get:

- ✓ *Description of other vehicles*
- ✓ *Names and addresses of any witnesses*
- ✓ *Location of Crash (Street name and block number)*
- ✓ *Weather conditions at time of crash*
- ✓ *Location of traffic signs or signals*
- ✓ *VIN (Vehicle Id Number) of each vehicle*
- ✓ *License Plate Numbers of each vehicle*
- ✓ *Pictures of crash and crash area*
- ✓ *Insurance Company & Policy Information*
- ✓ *Road Conditions at time of crash*

If you have a crash with a vehicle that is parked and the driver or owner is not around, attempt to locate the driver or owner. If you are unable to locate the driver or owner of the vehicle, leave a note on the vehicle with your name and contact information and then contact the local police to report the crash to them. If you leave the crash scene without reporting it to the police, you may get a citation for leaving the scene of a crash.

Reporting – Once a collision does happen, you need to determine if the crash needs to be reported to Police and/or the WI DOT. If someone is hurt or killed in the crash, you must call the police. You must also report the crash to police if there is $1000 or more in damage to any one person's property or $200 or more damage to government property such as utility poles, fences, signs, guard rails, etc.

WI LAW – requires you to file a Driver Report of Accident Form within 10 days of the crash to the WI Department of Transportation/Division of Motor Vehicles if you are involved in a crash that results in injury, death, or $1000 or more damage to any one person's property and/or $200 or more damage to any government property if the law enforcement agency dealing with the crash does not file the report for you.

Safety Belts and Child Safety Seats

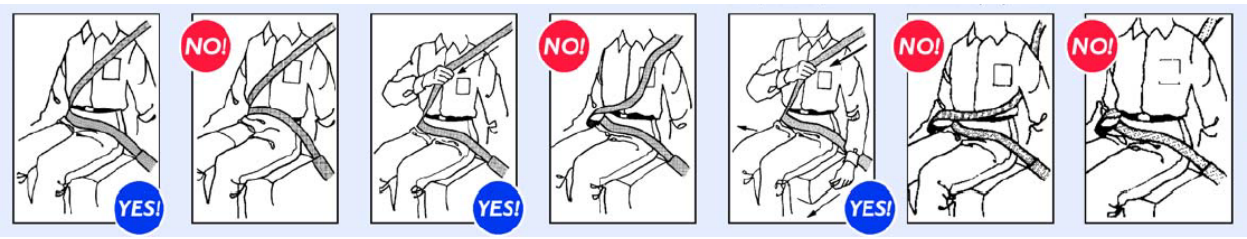
Wisconsin law requires everyone to wear safety belts in vehicles manufactured after January 1, 1972. Wisconsin has a primary seat belt law, meaning drivers can be stopped and cited if anyone in the vehicle is not wearing a seat belt. Those in violation are subject to a fine. If you are still under the GDL rules, and are convicted of "Failure to Fasten Seat Belt", your GDL restrictions will be extended for an additional 6 months or until you turn 18 years of age, whichever comes first.

It is important for you and your passengers to use safety belts. Studies have shown that if you are in a crash while using safety belts, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. Protect yourself by buckling up every time you get into a vehicle, whether you are the driver or a passenger.

Before you move the vehicle, always make sure you and your passengers are using safety belts or child restraints. If you are stopped and have a passenger under the age of 16 years that is not using a safety belt or child restraint, the driver of the vehicle will receive a ticket for that person or persons.

If you vehicle has two-part safety belt system or an automatic shoulder belt, be sure to wear both the lap and shoulder belts. If you only wear one of the belts and you are involved in a crash, you could slide out of it and be hurt or killed. Wearing both belts greatly reduces your risk of injury.

The lap belt should fit snugly across your hip bones just under your belly button. The shoulder belt should be worn across the chest. It should be snug enough that you can fit your fist between the belt and your chest. Never put the shoulder belt under your arm, or leave it so loose it hangs over your arm.



In addition to reducing injury, safety belts help you keep control of the vehicle when you are the driver. If you are stuck from the side or make a quick turn, the force could push you sideways. You cannot steer the vehicle if you are not behind the steering wheel in control of the vehicle.

Safety belts are still required to be worn even if your vehicle is equipped with air bags. While air bags are good protection against hitting dashboard, steering wheel or windshield, they do not protect you if hit from the rear of side (unless your vehicle is equipped with side-impact air bags), or if the vehicle rolls over. Air bags will not keep you behind the steering wheel in a crash, but a safety belt will.

Generally, children must be properly restrained in a child safety seat until they reach age 4 and in a booster seat until age 8. The law includes the following four-step progression for effective child safety protection in vehicles.

1. Rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat* is required when the child: ❖ Is less than 1 year-old or ❖ Weighs less than 20 pounds.	**2. Forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat* is required when the child:** ❖ Is at least 1 year-old but less than 4 years-old ❖ Weights at least 20 pounds but less than 40 pounds.
3. Booster seat is required when the child: ❖ Is at least 4 years-old but less than 8 years-old ❖ Weighs at least 40 pounds but less than 80 pounds ❖ Is not 57 inches (4 feet, 9 inches) or taller.	**4. Safety belt is required when the child:** ❖ Is 8 years-old or older or ❖ Weighs 80 or more pounds or ❖ Is 57 inches or taller.

** Child safety seat must be in the back seat if the vehicle is equipped with a back seat.*

Exemptions:

- Children whose body size, physical condition, or medical condition makes safety restraints unreasonable are still exempt from the booster seat and safety belt laws.
- There no longer is a "personal needs" exemption allowing the child to be removed from a safety restraint to attend to the child's personal needs, such as feeding or diapering, while the vehicle is moving.

If a child, because of weight, age, or height, falls into more than one of those categories, the child must be transported according to the requirements of the more protective category listed above.

Never secure a child in the front passenger seat, especially if the vehicle has air bags. If you are in a crash and the air bag deploys, your child could be injured even though they are in a child safety seat. Some vehicles come equipped with a switch to de-activate the passenger side air bag; however, studies show children are safer in the rear seat.

For more information on child safety seats, contact the Wisconsin Information Network for Safety at: http://www.wcpsa.com/ or call 1-866-511-9467

Top five myths and facts about seat belts

Myth #1: I don't need to wear a seat belt when driving at slow speeds or on short trips.

Fact: Most crash deaths occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds of less than 40 mph.

Did You Know? Fatal injuries to unrestrained motorists have occurred in vehicles traveling as slow as 12 mph. An unbelted person hitting a windshield in a 40-mph crash would feel the same force as hitting the ground after falling off a five-story building.

Myth #2: If I wear a seat belt, I might get trapped in my car if it catches on fire or becomes submerged under water.

Fact: Crashes involving fire or water occur in less than one half of one percent of all crashes. The greatest danger to vehicle occupants is from the impact of the crash itself.

Did You Know? Those wearing a seat belt are more likely to be uninjured and conscious after a crash, allowing them to get out of the vehicle quickly.

Myth #3: If I don't wear a seat belt I'm not affecting anyone but myself. If I'm injured or die in a crash from not wearing a seat belt, that's my business!

Fact: Deaths and injuries that result from non-use of seat belts cost everyone in the form of higher insurance premiums, medical costs, property damage, and loss of productivity. Plus, the emotional cost to victims' families is too great to measure.

Did You Know? Wisconsin citizens pay millions of dollars each year for car crash victims. Citizens not involved in crashes pay three-fourths of that cost.

Myth #4: I don't need to wear a seat belt because my vehicle has air bags.

Fact: Air bags are designed to work in combination with seat belts, providing supplemental protection during certain types of crashes. Seat belts help to properly position occupants to maximize the airbags' benefits and help restrain occupants during the initial impact and any following collisions.

Did You Know? Air bags inflate at a speed of over 100 mph. An unrestrained or improperly restrained occupant can be seriously injured or killed by the force of an activated air bag.

The risk of injury is greater in the front seat for children, with or without an air bag. Research shows it is best for children age 12 and under to ALWAYS ride in the back seat.

Myth #5: I might be saved if I'm thrown clear of the crash.

Fact: Being thrown to safety in a crash is almost impossible. Your best bet for survival is to be securely held in place by the seat belt.

Did You Know? You are 25 times more likely to be killed in a crash when thrown from a vehicle. You may be thrown through the windshield and into another vehicle or fixed object, scraped along the pavement, or even crushed by your own vehicle.

Do seat belts really help in a crash? Yes! Seat belts are the most effective safety feature on vehicles; however, nearly one in five Americans fail to regularly wear their seat belts when driving or riding in a motor vehicle. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of injury by 50 percent. For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and injury by 65 percent.