SMART 🚚 DRIVER®

July 2022

7 ESSENTIAL DRIVING TECHNIQUES

Truck drivers were asked to identify the driving skills they felt were most effective in preventing crashes. They agreed on the Essential 7 Driving Techniques. Read the information below and ask yourself how you can improve your driving style using these techniques.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Distracted driving involves any activity (including illness and fatigue) that diverts your attention away from driving.

BEST PRACTICES: While driving, do not use mobile devices, eat or drink, daydream, etc. Make quick glances to mirrors. Get plenty of rest. If driving, avoid medications that can cause drowsiness.

OBSERVE PROPER SPEED FOR CONDITIONS

Adjust your speed based on the environment, such as traffic volume, snow, rain, road construction, etc.

BEST PRACTICES: Reduce speed by at least 2-3 mph below the flow of traffic, not to exceed the posted speed limit. If conditions are unsafe to drive in, pull over until it is safe to continue.

MAINTAIN PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Trucks need more distance to stop than passenger vehicles need. Creating more space between the truck and vehicles ahead gives you more time to perceive and react to hazards.

BEST PRACTICES: Keep a minimum of six seconds behind the vehicle ahead and add one second more for each additional hazard present.

BE ATTENTIVE TO THE ROAD AHEAD

Traffic ahead can slow or stop abruptly; or a hazard may present itself unexpectedly, like a deer running across the road, requiring you to react suddenly.

BEST PRACTICES: Be prepared to stop suddenly. Watch for traffic slowing or stopping ahead, then get off the accelerator immediately and apply controlled braking.

REACT PROPERLY TO HAZARDS

Each hazard you encounter is unique, and the proper reaction can range from adjusting your speed and increasing following distance to pulling over until it is safe to continue driving.

BEST PRACTICES: A proper reaction to a hazard shouldn't put other drivers at risk. Be alert. Recognize the hazard. Know the defense.

YIELD THE RIGHT OF WAY

Forcing your vehicle into another driver's lane, blocking oncoming traffic, or preventing merging traffic from entering are examples of failing to yield the right of way.

BEST PRACTICES: Remember to drive defensively. Even if you have the right of way, yielding to other drivers may be necessary to prevent a crash.

MAINTAIN ONE LANE

Avoid frequent lane changes and stay in one lane as much as possible.

BEST PRACTICES: Before changing lanes, make sure it is safe and legal to do so. Use the mirrors and "Lean and Look" method to ensure the adjacent lane is clear, activate the turn signal, and then move over gradually.
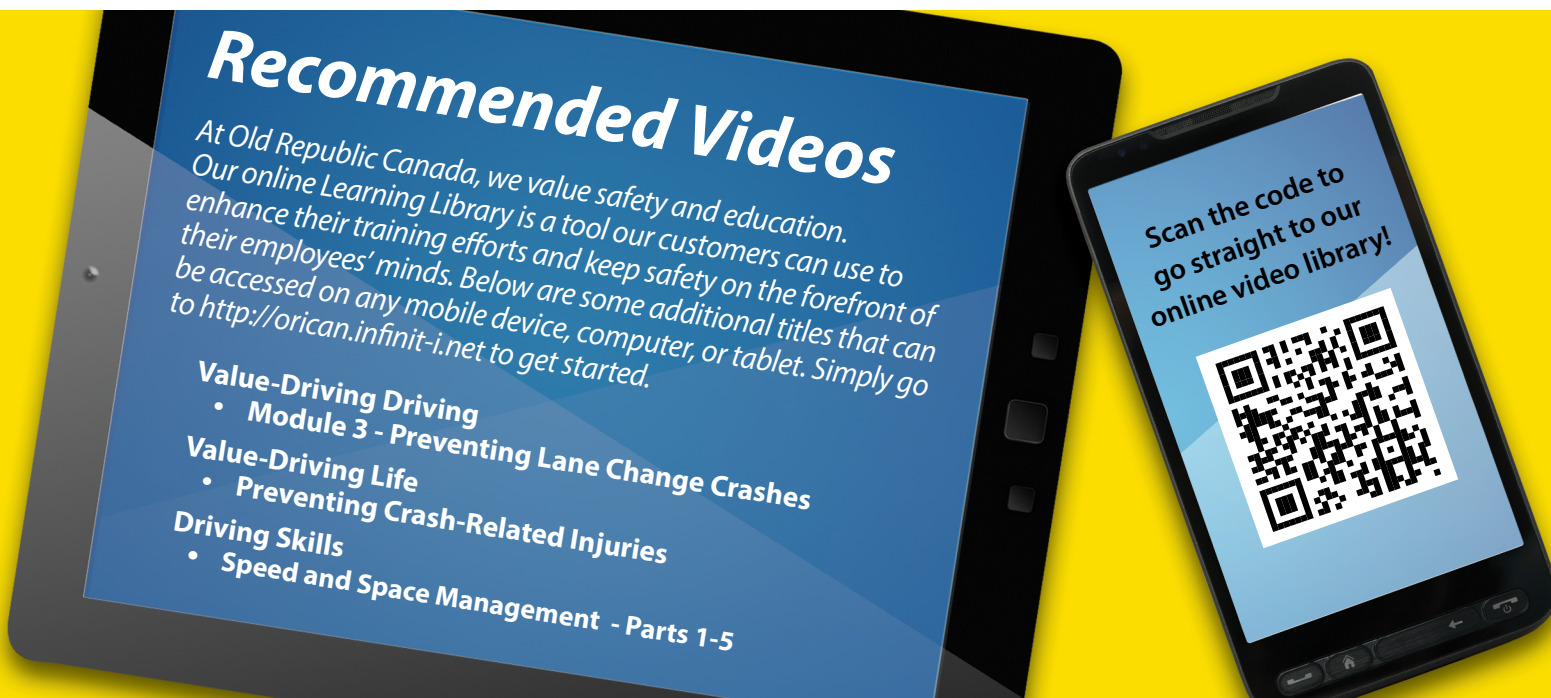
Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: _____   Driver's Signature: _____

Emp/Unit#: _____   Date: _____   Witness Name: _____

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

1. Trucks and passenger vehicles both require the same amount of space to stop.   True   False
2. While driving, you should not use a mobile device, eat or drink.   True   False
3. Even if you have the right of way, yielding to other drivers may be necessary to prevent a crash.   True   False

Recommended Videos

At Old Republic Canada, we value safety and education. Our online Learning Library is a tool our customers can use to enhance their training efforts and keep safety on the forefront of their employees' minds. Below are some additional titles that can be accessed on any mobile device, computer, or tablet. Simply go to http://orican.infinit-i.net to get started.

Value-Driving Driving
- Module 3 - Preventing Lane Change Crashes

Value-Driving Life
- Preventing Crash-Related Injuries

Driving Skills
- Speed and Space Management - Parts 1-5

Scan the code to go straight to our online video library!

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