

## I'm a good driver..."

Why do you think some people are able to drive for years without an accident, driving in the same conditions as those who do have accidents? Are they "better" drivers? How does "being a good driver" fit into the equation when so much of the driving task (and subsequent accidents) is math and physics? Perception time. Plus, being very alert and using all 5 Keys of the Smith System, like the following distance rule (4-6 second rule), Get the Big Picture, Aim High, Keep Your Eyes Moving, etc. Perception time is the time it takes for you to perceive and identify a problem, decide what to do, and then react. Here's an example:

At 60 MPH (one mile per minute), your vehicle is traveling 88 feet per second. If you determine that you need to stop immediately ("perception"), it will take ½-second (44 feet) to ¾-second (66 feet) to get your foot off the accelerator onto the brake, and another ¼-second (22 feet) for the brake lining to get to the brake drum.

In this example, you've already covered a lot of ground and the vehicle hasn't even started to brake yet. Actual braking distance varies greatly, depending upon the road surface, vehicle weight, tires, temperature, speed, and other factors. In a truck, it can be 300 feet. On a slick road, it can be many times that distance. At night, your headlights may only shine out about 300 feet, so you may not be able to see something stopped in the road in the time it takes to actually stop.

## SLOW DOWN!

Slowing down reduces all of these factors. Slower speeds mean more time to perceive a problem, less braking distance and fewer feet covered. If you do hit something, the energy absorbed is far less, resulting in much less damage and injury, and you have much more control. Forces increase geometrically with speed. For example, forces at 40 MPH may be twice that at 20 MPH, but only a 10 MPH increase may double the distance again. By 60 MPH, these forces start doubling at only 5 MPH faster. Slow down just a little and you reduce damage and injury potential dramatically. Slow down at night, and you increase the time necessary to see a hazard.

Some people know how to drive right, so why do they ignore the things they've learned? They may say either, "I didn't think it would happen to me", or, "I didn't know how violent even a small accident could be." If you know how, do it. If you don't know, learn.

# Safety Brief

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This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_ Trainer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Class Participants:

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