

New York Pre-Licensing Course

Module Review: Safe Driving Habits



In this module, you learned the difference between a habit and a skill and why you need to develop both to be a safe driver. You covered some important defensive driving skills such as using the space cushion system, communicating with other drivers, checking blind spots, and properly using safety belts and child safety restraints. You can now explain the dangers of driving while drowsy or distracted and list some strategies you can use to avoid doing both.

Some important takeaways from this module include:

- Habits are actions you have taken so regularly that you no longer need to think about them. Skills are applications of knowledge you have developed through practice. Safe driving requires some of both.
- Blind spots are areas in which your vision is blocked or partially impaired, such as the rear quarters your vehicle. Make it a habit not to rely only on mirrors but to look over your shoulder before moving your vehicle.
- The total time required to stop a vehicle once a driver sees a hazard is made up of perception time, reaction time, and braking distance.
- Covering the brake— allowing your foot to hover over the brake pedal when you anticipate you may need to stop quickly —can help reduce stopping distance.
- The five steps of the space cushion system are designed to keep you alert and safe:
 1. Watch far ahead.
 2. Get the big picture
 3. Keep your eyes moving.
 4. Leave an escape.
 5. Make sure others see you, and communicate your intentions to others on the road.
- Safety belts minimize the effects of the second collision— when the occupants are either held back by the seatbelt and/or airbag or thrown forcefully against a surface inside the vehicle — and work with air bags to protect occupants.

- Always wear a safety belt properly with the lap belt low across your hips and the shoulder belt across your chest/over your shoulder. Never move the belt under your arm or behind your back, and never twist or roll the straps.
- New York State Vehicle & Traffic Laws require all drivers, all front seat passengers, and all occupants under the age of 16 to be properly restrained in a moving vehicle.
- Children under 8 years old must ride in child safety seats, booster seats, or restraint systems appropriate for their age, height, and weight.
 - Infants under 22 pounds and 25 inches in length must ride in rear-facing seats in the back seat of the vehicle.
 - Infants and toddlers between 22 and 40 pounds may ride in a convertible child safety seat (one that is designed to accommodate both rear-facing infants and front-facing toddlers) or a seat made specifically for toddlers.
 - Children between 4 and 8 years old who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds may ride in booster seats.
- Drowsiness or fatigue caused by lack of sleep, untreated sleep disorders, and some medications can impair drivers in ways that are similar to driving while drunk.
- A distraction is anything that diverts attention. This may include activities such as eating/drinking, grooming, and using cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Using a cell phone while driving is especially dangerous, because it involves all three types of distraction: visual, manual, and cognitive. Using a cell phone or portable electronic device while driving is against the law in New York State.