

# VISUAL SKILLS

**Smith System** - five steps for gaining and maintaining space for the car and visibility for the driver. This system teaches the driver where and what to look for and allows a “space cushion” around the car giving the driver ample time to react to events around him.

1. **Aim High In Steering-** In the city, it is best to look at least one full block ahead. On highways, look more than a half mile ahead. (Compare driving to basic activities that the student knows - bike riding “you wouldn’t look at the tire” or walking, “you don’t look at your feet” etc.).
2. **Get the Big Picture** - while “aiming high”, the student should also be looking from sidewalk to sidewalk.
3. **Keep Your Eyes Moving** - tell the student to take selective glances for Important Information. This should be done systematically and at opportune times. It is critical to emphasize that the rear view mirror should be checked every 3-5 seconds. This is difficult for the new driver, therefore, as an instructor, you **MUST** be diligent in reminding your student Then, add in dashboard checks ~which reiterates the importance of knowing where everything is at a glance).side mirrors etc.
4. **Make sure Others See You** - the reason behind this is simple If others see you, you won't be hit. A survey taken, shows that in any collision, the first response of one party is: “I didn’t see them”. Communication is accomplished in various ways:
  - brake lights - your stopping
  - turn signals - your change of direction
  - emergency flashers - you’re in trouble or moving too slowly
  - backup lights – you’re in reverse
  - headlights/taillights - you’re here
  - horn - teach a “friendly tap”. Just to make others aware that you’re there
  - eye contact - teach your student to look at the other driver - not just the car. This will eliminate some of the confusion that occurs at Intersections etc.
  - body movement - explain to the student that you can predict another drivers actions by the way he moves i.e.: a driver that is looking over his left shoulder may be ready to turn left or change lanes
5. **Leave Yourself An Out** - simply means always making sure you have an “escape route”. This would encompass proper following distance, not riding in other drivers blind spots and moving with the flow of traffic. While this sounds basic, It is sometimes difficult for a new driver to master.

### AFTER ENTERING THE CAR

1. LOCK DOORS
2. ADJUST SEAT
3. ADJUST MIRROR
4. FASTEN SEAT BELT

### STARTING THE ENGINE

1. CHECK TO SEE THE PARKING BRAKE IS SET
2. CHECK THE FOOT BRAKE AND HOLD FIRMLY
3. CHECK TO SEE THE GEAR SHIFT IS IN PARK
4. TURN KEY TOWARDS THE ENGINE.
5. LISTEN TO THE SOUND OF THE STARTER.
6. WHEN THE SOUND CHANGES RELEASE THE KEY.

#### NOTE:

DO NOT DEPRESS THE GAS PEDAL ON AN AUTO WITH FUEL INJECTORS, BEFORE STARTING THE ENGINE.

### LEAVING THE CURB

1. HOLD FOOT BRAKE FIRMLY.
2. SHIFT TO DRIVE.
3. RELEASE PARKING BRAKE.
4. SIGNAL
5. LOOK IN MIRROR (OUTSIDE IF GOING TO THE LEFT, INSIDE IF GOING TO THE RIGHT)
6. LOOK OVER PROPER SHOULDER
7. PLACE HEEL ON THE FLOOR OVER THE GAS PEDAL AND ACCELERATE SLOWLY.

### BLIND UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTION

1. WHEN APPROACHING COVER BRAKE, SLOW TO 15 MILES PER HR. CHECK 6 AREAS BEFORE PROCEEDING.

### RETURNING TO THE CURB

1. SIGNAL
2. GLANCE INTO REAR VIEW MIRROR
3. LOOK OVER RIGHT SHOULDER
4. STEER TO CURB AND BRAKE SMOOTHLY

### CHANGING LANES

1. CHECK THE LANE YOUR IN (1-2 OR 3)
2. CHECK THE REAR VIEW MIRROR AND SEE THE LANE YOU INTEND TO CHANGE INTO IS CLEAR.
3. SIGNAL (This can be done 1st, rather than 3rd).
4. LOOK INTO PROPER MIRROR (LEFT OR RIGHT).
5. LOOK OVER PROPER SHOULDER
6. CHANGE WHEN SAFE
7. CANCEL BLINKER

### IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR SAFE DRIVING

1. AIM HIGH IN STEERING
2. KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING
3. ALWAYS LOOK LEFT AND RIGHT BEFORE STARTING FROM A STOPPED POSITION. (REMEMBER THE 6 COUNT)
4. WHEN STOPPING BEHIND A CAR ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOUR CAN SEE THE BACK TIRES OF THE VEHICLE IN FRONT.
5. KEEP A THREE SECOND INTERVAL FROM THE CAR IN FRONT IN CITY DRIVING AND A THREE TO FOUR SECOND INTERVAL ON THE FREEWAY.
6. DON'T DRIVE IN OTHER CARS BLIND SPOT.
7. ALWAYS GET EYE CONTACT WITH PEDESTRIANS AND DRIVERS THAT CAN CAUSE YOU PROBLEMS.
8. WHEN MAKING A RIGHT TURN; AFTER LOOKING TO THE LEFT, LOOK BACK TO THE RIGHT BEFORE PROCEEDING. (6 count)
9. WHEN MAKING A LEFT TURN, KEEP YOUR CAR STRAIGHT, NEVER TURN YOUR FRONT TOWARDS THE ONCOMING CAR.
10. ALWAYS LOOK FOR AND DRIVE IN THE FREE FLOWING LANE.
11. WHEN DRIVING ON A ONE WAY STREET DRIVE IN THE CENTER OR RIGHT LANE AND ONLY ON THE LEFT LANE IN ORDER TO MAKE A LEFT TURN.,
12. BEFORE APPLYING THE BRAKE CHECK YOUR REAR VIEW MIRROR IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE DRIVER BEHIND ENOUGH TIME TO STOP.
13. LEARN TO LOOK THROUGH OBJECTS (THROUGH WINDOWS OF CARS, THROUGH SHRUBS, UNDER CARS)