MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

"DRIVING SAFETY"

Part of the "SAFETY MEETING KIT SERIES"

Quality Safety and Health Products, for Today...and Tomorrow
OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- Most of us travel the roads every day.
  - In cars, vans, or trucks.
  - We drive to and from work.
  - Duties may include sales calls, deliveries or servicing the needs of customers.

- Driving can seem routine, but the roads can be very hazardous.
  - Traffic accidents are the number one cause of death on the job.
  - More than 40,000 lives are lost each year.
  - Over two million injuries are caused every year by traffic accidents.

- Fortunately, most accidents can be prevented.
  - By having the proper attitude.
  - With good driving skills.
  - By having a well-maintained vehicle.

- Safe driving starts before you get behind the wheel, so inspect your vehicle before you hit the road.
  - Make sure that the tires are properly inflated.
  - Check your tire treads with a penny.
  - If you can see the top of Abe's head, then your tires should be replaced.
  - If you do a lot of "wet weather driving", where additional tread can make a major difference, use a quarter and George Washington's head.

- All vehicles should carry basic emergency equipment.
  - Spare tire, tire iron and jack.
  - Accident warning indicators.
  - Jumper cables.
  - A flashlight.
• You should adjust the vehicle to suit your body... for both comfort and safety.
  — Position the seat so your back is has good support and your feet can reach the pedals.
  — Adjust the mirrors to minimize "blind spots"... areas around the vehicle that you cannot see without turning your head.

• Always wear your seat belt!
  — It will double your chance of surviving an accident.
  — A crash at 30 mph without a seat belt is like falling off of a three-story building.

• Take the time to become familiar with a new vehicle.
  — Go for a spin around the parking lot.
  — Check for blind spots.
  — Test the steering... bigger cars and vans make wider turns.

• Try the brakes.
  — See how much room you'll need to stop at various speeds.
  — Vehicles with heavy loads will need more stopping distance.

• You need to be mentally prepared to operate a motor vehicle.
  — Fatigue and frustration are major causes of accidents.
  — Never start out on a trip if you aren't wide awake and alert.
  — If you get tired while driving, take a break and rest.

• More than half of all fatal accidents involve alcohol or drugs.
  — As little as one drink can slow reflexes and impair judgment.
  — Even legal drugs can impact your reaction time.
  — So don't drive "under the influence" of drugs or alcohol.

• Obey speed limits and traffic signs at all times.
  — They're posted for a reason.
• The faster you drive, the more dangerous the conditions.
  — Reduced "reaction time" and increased "stopping distances" are a dangerous combination.
  — A crash at 78 mph is twice as violent as one at 55 mph.
• Create a "safety cushion" around your vehicle when in traffic.
  — Leave enough open space to maneuver in an emergency.

• First look at your "following distance".
  — When a car ahead of you passes a landmark, count how many seconds it takes you to reach that same point.
  — If less than four seconds, slow down and back off.
  — If you're driving a larger or heavier vehicle you'll need more room to stop, so adjust your following distance accordingly.

• Watch for brake lights several cars ahead of you.
  — This early warning allows you to brake sooner.
  — Many fender benders can be avoided this way.

• You also need to have plenty of "side space".
  — Try and stay in the center of your lane.
  — Give passing traffic plenty of leeway.

• To be completely safe you have to pay attention to the traffic behind you as well.
  — Glance at your mirrors periodically to keep tabs on other vehicles.

• If someone is tailgating you, slowly reduce speed and let them pass.
  — Otherwise, you could be rear-ended if you need to make an emergency stop.
• Traffic signs and lines on the road indicate when it's legal to pass other vehicles.
  — It's not just the law, but a matter of safety.
  — If the lines are solid, you can't see far enough ahead to spot oncoming traffic.
  — So if the sign says "DO NOT PASS", then don't pass.

• Before you pass another vehicle "look before you leap."
  — Check both the road ahead and behind.
  — Signal your intention to pass before pulling out.

• Pass quickly and don't lag in the other driver's blind spot.
  — If you can't see the driver in their mirror, then they can't see you.
  — Don't "cut off" the other vehicle by jumping back into their lane too soon.
  — Wait until both headlights from the other vehicle appear in your rearview mirror, then signal and return to your original lane.

• Sharing the road with trucks and buses "ups the stakes".
  — Trucks are longer, wider and heavier.
  — Tractor trailers can weigh as much as 80,000 pounds (that's 40 times as much as subcompact car).

• Never follow a truck or bus too closely.
  — That will make it difficult to see around them, and you won't have enough warning if there's trouble ahead
  — Adjust your following distance so you have more time to react.

• Because trucks and buses are longer, you'll also need more open road to pass them.
  — And because they're wider, you need to make sure to stay far over in your lane when you do.
  — Watch out for "buffeting" (large vehicles can create strong wind currents that can push you off course).

• Trucks and buses also have bigger blind spots than cars.
  — You don't want to ride beside them any longer than necessary.
  — So when you pass them, you want to do it as quickly as possible.
• Never cut off a truck.
  — They need more stopping distance than a car.
  — At 50 mph, a loaded truck needs 300 feet, the length of a football field, to come to a complete stop.

• If you encounter a school bus, there are several things to remember.
  — On a two-lane road, if the bus is stopped with its red lights flashing you must stop as well.
  — This is required whether you are behind the bus, approaching it from the front, or on an intersecting road.

• On three or four-lane roads state laws vary.
  — Most states require that traffic in all directions still stop, unless there is a median or guardrail dividing the highway.
  — If there is a median, oncoming traffic can keep going.

• Once you are stopped, you must wait until the bus's flashing lights go off and any swing arms are retracted before you can start moving again.

• When you're driving behind a school bus, it's always smart to allow some additional stopping distance.
  — School buses make stops at locations you might not normally expect, such as railroad crossings and in front of students' houses.

• When you are stopped behind a school bus, allow a little extra room.
  — Just in case students or their parents will be crossing the road.

• Even though there are fewer vehicles on the road, more than half of all accidents occur at night.
  — At dusk, turn on your headlights to make it easier to be seen.
  — Use high beams as much as possible.
  — Only switch to low beams when you are behind other vehicles, facing oncoming traffic, or driving in snow or fog.

• Slow down so you don't over-drive your headlights.
— Even with your high beams on, you can only see so far in the dark.
— If you drive too fast, you won't have enough reaction time if you encounter a problem.

• Adverse weather conditions can dramatically affect how we should drive. Before you venture out into the elements:
  — Listen to the radio for road conditions.
  — Allow extra travel time.
  — Plan to use alternate roads.

• It's important to see and to be seen in bad weather.
  — Clear off the windshield, headlights, tail lights and turn signals for maximum visibility.

• The roads can be slippery in wet and snowy weather.
  — Reduce speed and increase following distances.
  — Apply brakes sooner, and press down slowly and gradually.
  — Slow down before turns and curves.
  — Avoid puddles and icy patches whenever possible.

• "Friction" between tires and the road surface is what normally keeps you on course.
  — Friction propels you forward and allows steering.
  — If you lose friction, you lose control.

• Skidding occurs when one or more wheels momentarily lose friction with the road.
  — When this happens, "momentum" takes over and the vehicle begins to spin.

• Don't slam on the brakes. This will destroy whatever friction… and control… you have left.
  — Instead, ease your foot off the gas pedal.
  — Steer in the direction of the skid.
  — If the back of the vehicle skids to the right, then steer towards the right.
  — If the car then skids to the left, steer to the left.

• "Hydroplaning" occurs when water lifts the tires completely off the road surface.
  — Ordinarily, tire treads channel water out of the way.
— The faster you go, the more water there is that needs to be channeled.
— At high speeds, even small puddles can overpower the treads and cause hydroplaning.

• Don't brake, but ease off the gas pedal.
  — As you slow down, your wheels will "reconnect" with the road surface.
  — This will return control of your vehicle.

• No matter what the conditions, you need to be 100% focused on your driving.
  — Even in the best of circumstances there's a lot going on that you have to pay attention to.

• In recent years "distracted driving" has become a major issue for:
  — Law-makers.
  — Companies whose employees drive while on the job.

• There are three main types of distractions:
  — "Visual"…taking your eyes off the road.
  — "Manual"…taking your hands off the wheel.
  — And "cognitive"…taking your mind off what you're doing.

• Now-a-days there are all too many things that can cause these types of distractions, such as:
  — Talking on a cell phone.
  — Texting.
  — Eating or drinking.
  — Talking to passengers (particularly children).
  — Using a navigation system or reading a map.
  — Changing the radio station, CD or your playlist.
• In fact, we routinely do so many of these things that more than 20% of the crashes that result in injuries involve distracted drivers.
  — This is an increase of more than 50% in the last four years.

• Cell phones have become such a serious problem that many states have banned the use of hand-held phones while driving.
  — Most states also ban texting.
  — Nationally, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration prohibits commercial vehicle drivers from texting wherever they’re driving.

• Many companies are also instituting their own bans on the use of cell phones while on company business.

• You can combat distracted driving yourself in a number of ways.
  — Set your car radio, or preload your CD’s or playlists before you start your journey.
  — Make sure that children have everything they need before you leave.
  — Set up your navigation system or mark out your trip on a map ahead of time.
  — Be sure everyone is buckled up.

• You should also turn off your cell phone while you're on the road.
  — If you’re expecting an important call, leave the phone on but don't answer it when it rings (pull over at the next safe location and check your voice-mail).
  — Get off the road to make calls, text or to grab a bite to eat.

• Most of all take your time and be patient.
  — Nothing is so important that you should risk your and others' lives to "do it now".

• In addition to being distracted, people always seem to be in a hurry when they’re in their car.
  — Another phenomenon that has become more prominent in recent years is "road rage".

• With the volume of traffic on most roads, getting somewhere quickly can be nearly impossible.
— This often leads to frustration...sometimes on our part, sometimes on the part of drivers with whom we share the road.

- Couple this with the aggressive driving styles that more and more people seem to have adopted, and too many situations turn into "road rage".
  — People yelling at one and other.
  — Using obscene gestures.
  — Wielding their vehicles like weapons.

- We need to know how to deal with "road rage" on two fronts.
  — Within ourselves.
  — On the part of other drivers.

- It starts with avoiding any aggressive driving of our own. Here are some helpful hints.
  — Plan ahead and allow enough time for delays should they occur.
  — Give your driving your full attention.
  — Don't take your frustrations out on other drivers.
  — Remember that driving isn't a "contest"
  — Realize that you can't control the actions of the drivers around you...you can only control the way you react to them.

- If you are the victim of "road rage", there are some other things that you should remember.
  — The other driver could have made an honest mistake (so give them the benefit of the doubt).
  — Don't retaliate (it's not worth risking your life for).
  — Always be polite and courteous, even when other drivers aren't.

- Most importantly, never make eye contact with an angry driver.
  — Often a challenging look from you is all they need to increase their rage.
• If another driver is harassing you, try to get away from them as quickly as possible.
  — Leave the road you're on and take an alternate route.

• If they follow you, drive to the nearest police station.
  — Let the officer on duty know what is going on.
  — File a report.

• Adverse road conditions, distractions and road rage aren't the only causes of driving emergencies.

• A "blow out" is a rapid loss of air from a tire.
  — A vehicle will pull to the side of the flat tire due to increased friction.

• Don't hit the brakes.
  — Accelerate instead (this will give you more power and more control).

• Then do four things:
  — Keep a firm grip on the wheel.
  — Compensate for the "pull" by steering the other way.
  — Slow down and turn on the hazard flashers.
  — Stop at a safe, level area and fix the tire.

• Traffic accidents can happen to even the safest drivers. If you're involved in one:
  — Stay calm and keep your head.
  — Don't move the vehicles unless someone is in immediate danger.
  — Turn off your engine and turn on your hazard flashers.

• Check to see if everyone is okay.
  — Don't move anyone who is injured.

• Never leave the scene of an accident.
  — Call the police or have a passer-by notify authorities.
• Be ready with your driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
  — They should always be with you when you drive (it's the law in virtually every state).
  — You'll need to exchange this information with the other driver and show it to the police.

• Get the name, address and telephone number of anyone who witnessed the accident.
  — Make a note of the responding police officer's name, badge number and department.
  — Be sure to get a copy of the police report

• If the accident happened while you were working, or in a company vehicle, report it to your supervisor immediately.

** SUMMARY **

• Driving can be dangerous, but most accidents can be prevented. To review:
  • Familiarize yourself with your vehicle before you drive.
  • Keep your eyes and mind on the road.
  • Always maintain a "safety cushion" around your vehicle.
  • Pass with care.
  • Use your headlights from dusk to dawn, including the high beams.
  • Proceed with caution in inclement weather.
  • Stay calm. Don't take out your frustrations on other drivers.
  • Know what to do in case of an accident or other emergency.
  • Like every other part of your life, driving comes with responsibility. So know what you need to do to drive safely.