

Unit 1

The Driving Task

Chapter 1
You Are the Driver

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Chapter 1

You Are the Driver

You Are the Driver!

Imagine you are going to your senior. You've worked hard to get this far, and now it's time to celebrate. Your driving privilege is one of the things that makes this moment possible. Beyond this moment, driving will play an important part in your life. How important do you think it is to maintain a good driving record?

This chapter introduces you to driving and the responsibilities that go along with it. You will also learn how driver education and driver's licensing programs can help you become a responsible, low-risk driver.

1.1

You Are Part of the System

1.2

Your Driving Task

1.3

Your Driving Responsibilities

1.4

Your Driver's License



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Objectives

1. Describe the three parts of the highway transportation system (HTS).
2. Tell how the HTS is regulated.

You are about to take a driver education course, apply for your driver's license, and join the millions of others who share our country's roads. If you grow to meet this challenge, you will have a lifetime filled with many new opportunities. Your key to this exciting future will be your ability to master the new skills needed to manage the conflicts and risks associated with driving.

In everyday life, there are many types of conflicts and risks. But, the main **risk** in driving is the possibility of having a conflict that results in a collision.

The Highway Transportation System

When you drive, you will become part of a massive system called the **highway transportation system**, or HTS. The HTS has three parts: people, vehicles, and roadways. The purpose of the HTS is to move people and cargo from one place to another in a safe, efficient, and economical manner.

Of all transportation systems, the HTS is the most complex. It has the greatest variety of users, including drivers, passengers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The HTS has a wide range of roadways from simple rural lanes to complex multi-lane urban roads and expressways.

People

The people who use the HTS by walking, driving, or riding are

called *roadway users*. Roadway users vary greatly in their ability to use the system.

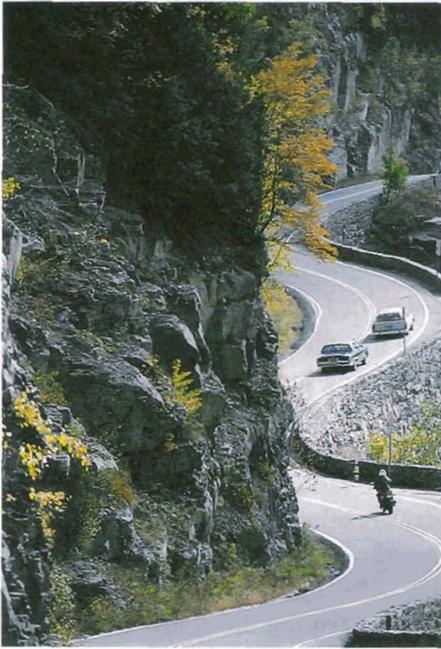
While most individuals consistently drive in a safe, low-risk, responsible manner, others do not. Drivers with good skills sometimes operate their vehicles when they are overly distracted, tired, ill, or impaired by alcohol. To protect yourself and others in these situations, you will have to be the one to take responsibility for avoiding trouble.

Vehicles

Think about the wide range of vehicles that use the HTS. Mopeds and motorcycles are small and have little protection. At the other extreme is the tractor-semitrailer weighing tons. In between are cars, vans, small trucks, buses, campers, farm vehicles, and construction equipment. During this course, you will be called on to develop special skills to lower risk and avoid conflicts when interacting with these vehicles.

Roadways

Roadways of the HTS vary from dirt lanes to complex multilane expressways. Common conditions such as rain, nighttime, or rough pavement, can become major problems. It is up to you to maintain control of your vehicle at all times and in all conditions.



The highway transportation system consists of a complex mix of people, vehicles, and roadways.

Regulating the HTS

Drivers who operate their vehicles in a responsible, low-risk manner are the most important part in the HTS. To make sure this happens, all states grant individuals the privilege of driving on their roads by issuing them a driver's license. By passing a licensing exam, you agree to obey traffic laws in exchange for the privilege of operating a motor vehicle on public roads.

Many federal, state, and local government agencies help regulate the HTS. The federal government has established the National Highway Safety Act with a set of traffic-safety guidelines. Federal, state and local governments in turn enforce these national guidelines:

- Laws are passed to make up the **vehicle code**.

- Enforcement agencies assure that laws are obeyed.
- Motor vehicle departments set rules to assure that driver and vehicle standards are met.
- Courts decide whether drivers charged with violating the laws are guilty or innocent.
- Highway traffic engineers plan, build, and maintain the complex system of roadways.

Review It

1. What are the parts and purpose of the HTS?
2. How is the HTS regulated?

1.2 Your Driving Task

Objectives

1. Explain how social, physical, and mental skills work together in your driving task.
2. Name the four steps in the IPDE Process.

The driving task includes all the social, physical, and mental skills required to drive. To perform the driving task with low-risk results, you must develop habits for

- using knowledge and visual skills, as shown in the picture
- obeying traffic laws
- judging time and space
- anticipating how your car will respond under normal and emergency conditions

Social Skills

Like other social tasks, driving requires you to interact successfully with people. If you are a courteous driver, you not only obey traffic laws, but you make an extra effort to work with other drivers. Without courtesy and cooperation, low-risk driving is impossible.

All drivers bring their own problems and skill levels to your shared driving world. A big part

of your driving task will be applying your social skills to these types of situations so that everyone avoids conflicts.

Physical Skills

You must learn the physical skills of driving so well that they become natural habits. Then you can focus your attention on the social and mental tasks of driving. Beginning drivers often need to concentrate heavily on the physical skills of driving. After extended practice, these drivers acquire the ability to control their vehicle. They can then focus their attention on the social and mental aspects of driving.

Mental Skills

Safe, low-risk driving is primarily a mental task that involves decision making. Physical skills are minor when compared to the necessary decision-making skills.

The IPDE Process

The IPDE Process is a process of seeing, thinking, and responding. The four steps of this process are pictured on the opposite page.

- **Identify** important information in the ongoing driving scene.
- **Predict** when and where possible points of conflict will develop.
- **Decide** when, where, and how to communicate, adjust speed, and/or change position to avoid conflict.



Mental and visual skills are critical to your driving task.



Identify the oncoming car, turn signal, and driveway.



Predict that your path of travel and the oncoming vehicle's path of travel will conflict.



Decide to slow or stop.



Execute speed reduction decision by taking foot off accelerator and gently braking.

- **Execute** the right action(s) to prevent conflict.

Two other systems will help you use the IPDE Process. The **Smith System** is an organized method designed to help drivers develop good seeing habits. In addition, the **Zone Control System** is a method for managing the space around your vehicle. These systems will help you apply the IPDE Process for effective, low-risk driving.

Once you have mastered the IPDE Process, you will be able to drive in a way that reduces conflicts.

This ability, called **defensive driving**, lowers the risk of conflict by protecting you and others from dangerous driving situations.

Review It

1. How does the driving task require a blend of social, mental, and physical skills?
2. What are the four steps in the IPDE Process?

Objectives

1. Explain how your attitude will affect your driving.
2. List some examples of HTS break-downs.
3. Describe several major causes of collisions.
4. Explain how drivers can help protect our environment.

When you earn your first driver's license, the state you live in will extend you the privilege to drive. Driving is a privilege—not a right. The driving privilege is based on the assumption that you will be a responsible traffic citizen and obey all traffic laws. Driving also is a major responsibility. If you assume it and respect it, you will enjoy a lifelong adventure of safe, low-risk, low-stress driving. If you do not handle this responsibility, you have the power to ruin your life and the lives of others.

Attitude

Your attitude toward life and driving affects your willingness to learn and to effectively use safe-driving habits. For many, reckless driving is a way of getting attention. What they don't realize is that they are getting noticed in a negative way.

Road rage shows an extremely negative attitude toward driving. The

driver who is in a rage is likely to do anything. Your best defense is to put distance between yourself and the enraged driver. Don't challenge an enraged driver. Instead, give way. Be extremely cautious at intersections because some drivers simply refuse to obey red traffic lights. In extreme situations, alert police if possible.

Other drivers drive in a responsible low-risk way day after day, year after year. They know their low-risk driving eventually will gain them respect. Getting quick attention is easy. Earning respect over the long haul takes time and effort.

Your attitude will guide you as you manage your relationships with others. There will be times when others will try to get you to do things you normally would not do. They will push you to drive in a way you shouldn't. Saying no—especially to a friend as shown in the picture—isn't easy.

You Are the Driver!

How can you use these techniques to say “no”?

- Ask questions.
- State the problem.
- State the consequences.
- Suggest alternatives.
- Leave and encourage others to join you.



Breakdowns in the HTS

A breakdown in the HTS occurs when any part of the system does not work well. Traffic tie-ups and collisions are two examples of HTS breakdowns. Your ability to drive responsibly will be the major factor in helping you avoid being part of these breakdowns.

A **collision** occurs when a vehicle conflicts with and hits another object. Collisions are a major cause of injury and death.

Collision or Accident?

Collision is a more accurate term than *accident*. Why? Because *accident* implies that something just happens by chance. In reality, almost every collision is the product of a predictable cause. The drunk driver hit the pole. The speeding driver ran off the road. The careless driver didn't wear a safety belt or tuned a radio at the wrong time and hit a tree.

Over the years our national driving record has steadily improved. This is the result of an ongoing highway safety effort involving engineering, enforcement, and education. Still we should not be lulled into a false sense of security. Check the chart on this page and compare your chance of dying in a car crash versus other events.

Causes of Collisions Of all the possible causes of collisions, driver error is by far the most common. Frequent errors include breaking various laws, not slowing in adverse weather conditions, and operating a defective vehicle. Other serious driver errors are

- following another vehicle too closely

- driving too fast for conditions
- not wearing safety belts
- driving after drinking or using drugs
- driving while very tired

Like most complex events, traffic collisions usually have more than one cause. For example, a vehicle skids off a slippery turn and collides into a tree. The initial report might list the cause as driving too fast for conditions. But a close inspection might reveal that the road was abnormally slick and the tires on the vehicle were very smooth. The slick roadway and the smooth tires added to the problem. Even though the primary cause of the collision was driving too fast, you must know all the factors involved to really understand why the collision happened. If you had been the driver in this collision, what aspects could you have controlled?

Causes of Death The chart on the next page compares traffic collisions with other major causes of death for young people. Why is driving such a high-risk activity? Lack of experience is a major factor for this poor driving record. Other factors include increased exposure to night driving, increased risk taking, susceptibility to peer pressure, and mixing drinking and driving.

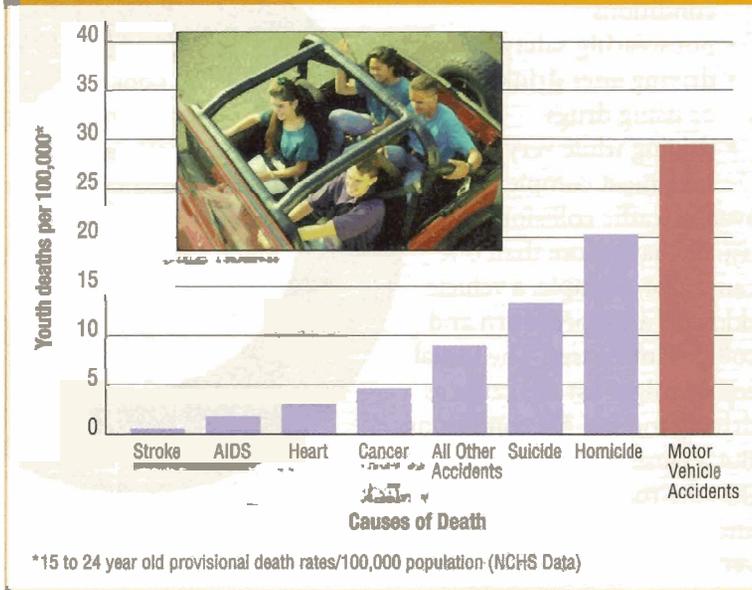
Does this mean all young drivers are bad? Absolutely not! All drivers can learn to apply the principles of responsible low-risk driving with good results.



Compare the Odds
You will be killed in an air crash  1 in 4,600,000
You will die in a fire  1 in 40,000
You will die in a car crash  1 in 125

Driving a car is still the most dangerous way to travel.

Death Rates for Youth



More young people die from vehicle collisions than from any other single cause.

Social and Economic Loss Collisions have tremendous social and economic effects. Traffic collisions cost our nation billions of dollars each year in property damage, time away from work and school, medical fees, and insurance premiums. The cost of mental anguish and physical suffering simply cannot be measured.

Other Responsibilities

In addition to driving, all drivers have additional responsibilities. These include financial and environmental responsibilities.

Financial Responsibility

As a driver, you are responsible for your share of driving-related costs. Vehicle-related costs include fuel as well as maintaining and insuring your car. You also are financially

responsible by law for any damage or injuries that you cause.

Environmental Responsibility

Our nation's demand for transportation has created many threats to our environment, including

- air pollution
- water pollution
- chemical spills
- land pollution through thoughtless disposal of vehicle-related products

How can transportation-related environmental problems be managed? All drivers should act responsibly by

- buying and maintaining fuel-efficient vehicles
- using fuel-efficient driving habits
- recycling used materials
- reducing driving through car pools and the use of public transportation when possible
- working for strong national, state, and local policies that encourage the use of energy-efficient driving

Review It

1. How do attitudes affect driving?
2. What are some examples of breakdowns in the HTS?
3. What are the three major causes of collisions?
4. What are some actions drivers can take to protect our environment?

1.4

Your Driver's License

Once you start driving, everyone will want you to become a safe driver. Your family will support you. Your friends will encourage you. Government and private industry will try to help you through licensing and education programs. Still, driving is one of the most dangerous activities you will ever do. For young people, the risk is even higher. Look at the graph on this page to see just how deadly driving can be.

Why is the highway death rate among teens higher than other age groups? Most of the time, young drivers simply make mistakes from inexperience. *Forty-one percent of the young people who were killed in these collisions died in single-car collisions.*

Licensing Process

The purpose of a comprehensive driver licensing program is to make sure only safe drivers are allowed on public roads. Most licensing programs require applicants to take written, physical, and driving exams.

Graduated Driver Licensing Program

Over the years, one thing about new drivers has become abundantly clear. Structured practice-driving time works. You may not realize it, but you already have picked up some good and bad driving habits as a result of riding with and watching others.

To help young drivers adjust to driving, many states are adopting

graduated driver licensing programs. A **graduated driver licensing program** requires young drivers to progress through a series of licensing stages. Throughout this licensing process, learners are subject to zero-tolerance laws for blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Typically these programs have three stages.

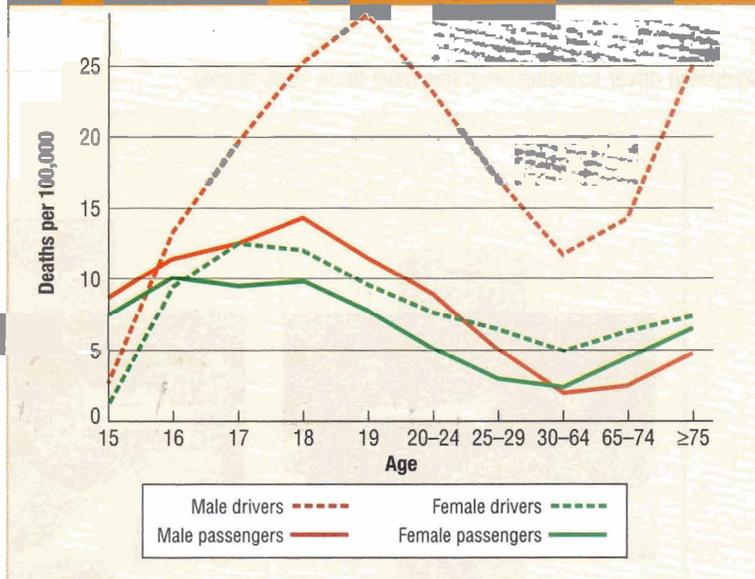
Learner's Permit Stage Supervised conditions allow the new driver to learn and practice at this stage:

- The learner (typically a 15 or 16 year old) receives a permit to drive when supervised by an adult, licensed driver.
- The permit must be held for a minimum period of violation-

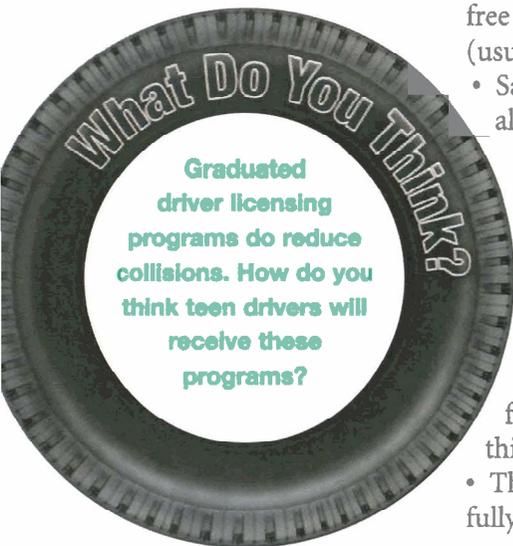
Objectives

1. Explain how a graduated driver licensing program can help you drive more safely.
2. List some of the main concepts stressed in a quality driver education program.

Death in Passenger Vehicles per 100,000 People, 1999



The death rate for drivers and passengers is much higher among teens than other age groups.



free and collision-free driving (usually six months).

- Safety belts must be worn by all occupants.

Other licensed drivers, such as family members, may be asked to provide a minimum number of hours of practice driving.

Intermediate License Stage

The learner drives under the following restrictions during this stage:

- The learner must have successfully completed the learner's permit stage and an approved driver education course.
- Supervised driving may be continued to meet the required hours.
- Safety belts must be worn by all occupants.
- Night driving, especially late night driving, is restricted.

- Passengers can be limited in age and/or number.
- The intermediate license must be held for six months or more of collision-free and violation-free driving. If the learner has a violation or collision, the intermediate license "clock" is set back to zero.
- Penalties for violations are increased. Many times violators are required to go to traffic school.

Full-Privilege License Stage

To graduate to this full unrestricted license stage, the learner must

- successfully complete the intermediate stage violation-free and collision-free
- in some states, complete an advanced driver education course

Do these graduated driver licensing programs work? Yes! In New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and

Graduated driver licensing programs have three basic stages.



more recently in the United States, they have demonstrated their worth.

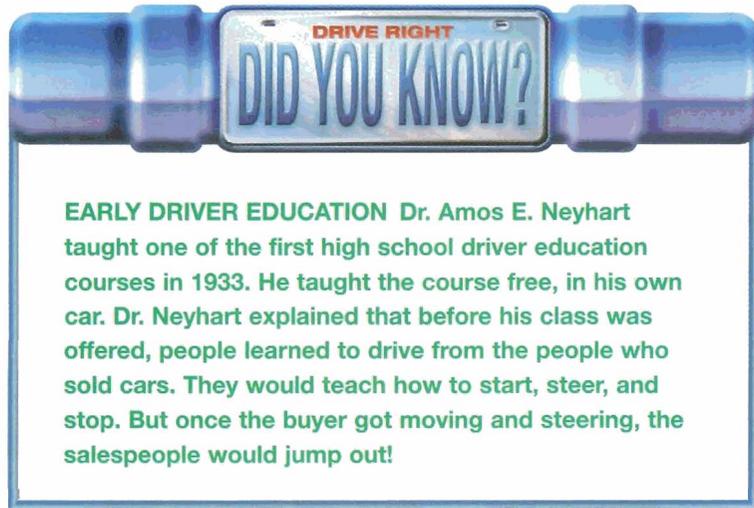
Even if your state does not have a formal program, you can follow the stages of these graduated licensing programs to obtain similar results. Just remember that good drivers never stop learning.

Organ Donor Program

You may indicate your desire to be an organ donor by filling out an organ donation declaration on your driver's license or by signing an organ donor card. Remember that the most important step in considering organ donation is informing your family and other loved ones of your decision. This will ensure that your wishes are carried out.

Implied Consent Programs

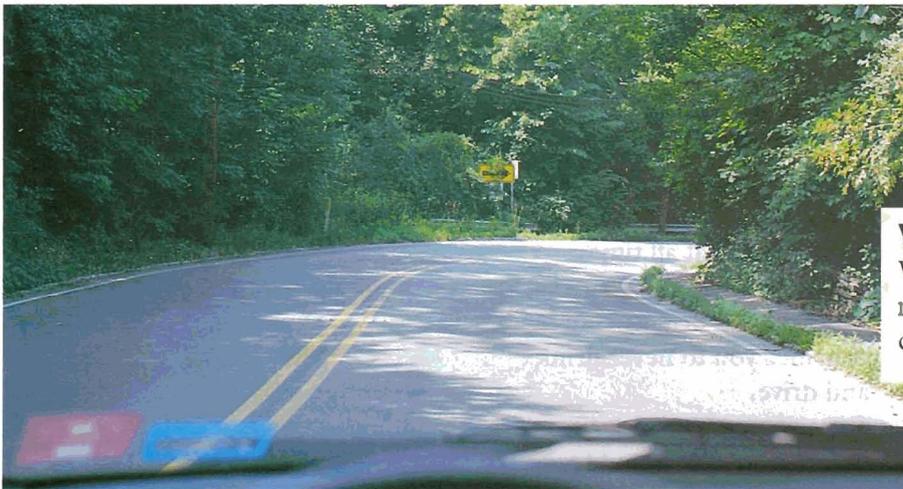
In most states you may be asked to sign a statement when you get your driver's license saying that you agree to take an alcohol test on request. If you refuse to take the test, you will lose your driver's license.



EARLY DRIVER EDUCATION Dr. Amos E. Neyhart taught one of the first high school driver education courses in 1933. He taught the course free, in his own car. Dr. Neyhart explained that before his class was offered, people learned to drive from the people who sold cars. They would teach how to start, steer, and stop. But once the buyer got moving and steering, the salespeople would jump out!

Driver Education and Your License

As you begin this course, you probably are thinking of the advantages of your new driver's license. You should be equally interested in learning the skills you need to become a responsible, low-risk driver. The driving situation shown here and on the next page is an example of a lesson to be learned.



You Are the Driver!

What would you predict might be around the curve?

You Are the Driver!
Would you be ready to
avoid these hikers?



SAFE DRIVING

Be sure to include night driving and bad weather in your supervised driving experiences.

You will have a wide range of classroom and on-road experiences in this course. Under the professional guidance of an instructor, you will learn the skills and develop the habits needed to become a low-risk driver.

Your Beginning

The *Drive Right* program is your start toward becoming a responsible low-risk driver. The course you are about to take is based in part on the following key concepts

- Driving is a mental decision-making process. In this program, you will learn how to use the IPDE Process to become a responsible low-risk driver.
- Your driving will be greatly influenced by your attitude.
- Safety belts and other restraints must be used at all times.
- The statistics arguing against drinking and driving should convince you to never drink and drive.

Once you pass your driver education program, you should take at

least one year to ease into full-time driving responsibilities. After you have driven well under a wide variety of road and traffic situations, you can start to think of yourself as an accomplished new driver.

A Continuous Process

This driver education course will help start you on your personal lifetime driving adventure. It cannot teach you about everything you will encounter when driving. As long as you drive, you will need to use and improve your skills in a systematic way. Good drivers never stop learning.

Review It

1. How can a graduated driver licensing program help you?
2. What are the key concepts in a quality driver education program?

Chapter 1 Review

Reviewing Chapter Objectives

1. You Are Part of the System

1. What are the three parts of the highway transportation system (HTS)? (4)
2. How is the HTS regulated? (5)

2. Your Driving Task

3. How do social, physical, and mental skills work together in your driving task? (6)
4. What are the four steps in the IPDE Process? (6–7)

3. Your Driving Responsibilities

5. How will your attitude affect your driving? (8)
6. What are some examples of HTS breakdowns? (9)
7. What are the major causes of collisions? (9)
8. How can drivers help protect our environment? (10)

4. Your Driver's License

9. How can a graduated driver licensing program help you drive more safely? (11–12)
10. What are some of the main concepts stressed in a quality driver education program? (13–14)

Projects

Individuals

Investigate Research to find more information about the National Highway Safety Act. When was this law passed? What are the major features of the law? Write a short report to summarize your findings. Discuss your findings with the class.

Interview Interview three drivers. Choose one driver who has been driving for less than two years, one driver who has been driving for between five and ten years, and one who has been driving for more than ten years. Ask these drivers if they feel they have developed any bad driving habits. After the interview, decide what the driver can do to overcome each bad habit mentioned. Discuss your findings with your classmates.

Groups

Brainstorm As a group, list all the possible factors you can think of that may lead to risks in driving. When your list is complete, categorize each risk according to whether or not the driver can control the risk. Then put the risks in order from most to least dangerous. Compare your results with those of the other groups in your class.

Observe Traffic As a group, observe the drivers in your school parking lot as they arrive at or leave school for the day. Rate the drivers on a scale of 1 to 5. Drivers rated as 1's show a low-risk, defensive attitude toward driving; 5's show a high-risk, negative attitude. List the reasons, based on the drivers' behaviors, for each score you assign. Discuss your group's findings with your class.

Chapter 1 Review

Chapter Test

Check Your Knowledge

Multiple Choice Copy the number of each sentence below on a sheet of paper. Choose the letter of the answer that best completes the statement or answers the question.

- Which of the following is part of the highway transportation system (HTS)?
(a) vehicles (c) people
(b) roadways (d) all of these
- Safe, low-risk driving is primarily a _____ task.
(a) physical (c) social
(b) mental (d) none of the above
- If you drive in a low-risk way, you will
(a) get the attention you want.
(b) gain others' respect.
(c) improve your ability to compete.
(d) be able to maneuver easily.
- Graduated driver licensing programs
(a) usually are completed in three licensing stages.
(b) are conducted worldwide.
(c) have resulted in fewer collisions among young drivers.
(d) all of the above

Completion Copy the number of each sentence below. After each number, write the word or words that complete the sentence correctly.

- The four steps of the IPDE Process are identify, predict, _____, and execute.
- Drive _____ by protecting yourself and others from dangerous and unexpected situations.
- When applied to driving, the term _____ means the possibility of having a conflict that results in a collision.
- The _____ is made up of people, vehicles, and roadways.

Review Vocabulary

Copy the number of each definition in list A. Match the definition in list A with the term it defines in list B.

List A

- federal and state laws that regulate the HTS
- contact between two or more objects, as when two vehicles hit each other
- organized method designed to help drivers develop good seeing habits
- method for managing the space around your vehicle
- program requiring young drivers to progress through a series of licensing stages
- all the skills—social, physical, and mental—required to drive

List B

- Zone Control System
- graduated driver licensing program
- Smith System
- vehicle code
- driving task
- collision

Think Critically

Write a paragraph to answer each question.

- What are your responsibilities as a participant in the highway transportation system (HTS)?
- Why do you think the death rate for drivers and passengers is higher among teens than other age groups?

Decision Making



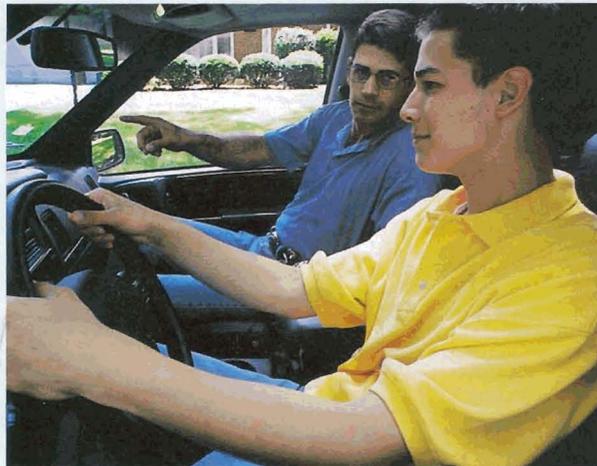
1. What part of the HTS is most important in keeping this a low-risk driving situation?



2. The IPDE Process is an ongoing process used to avoid conflicts. How can you apply it to this situation?



3. This car buyer is checking various new car fuel economy ratings. How does this decision help or hurt the environment?



4. This driver is receiving supervised instruction from his father. How can this instruction help him become a safer driver?