

INTRODUCTION

The Smith System of Defensive Driving is designed to help prevent you from being involved in an accident that could cause you pain, suffering, and even loss of life. When you have finished this defensive driving course, you should be able to successfully avoid accidents, preserve customer and company property, and help make your job more secure.

Our Company has made every effort to make this course visible and easily accessible. It will only work if you make an even firmer commitment to work through the course and this workbook with your instructor, modify your habits and practice, practice, until the Smith System of Defensive Driving becomes your constant driving pattern.

**SMITH SYSTEM
OF
DEFENSIVE DRIVING
WORKBOOK**

The course is based on the Smith System of Defensive Driving developed by Harold J. Smith more than 25 years ago. It provides the member of the Smith System with the tools to make better driving decisions. These decisions will help you avoid accidents and extend your life.

**MAXIMUM SPACE FOR YOUR VEHICLE
MAXIMUM VISIBILITY FOR YOU**

The Smith System simply put is a series of driving techniques that allow you to obtain maximum space for your vehicle and maximum visibility for your driver. It is based on the keys to the Space Cushion Driving System which will greatly help all employees avoid traffic conflicts caused by poor driving habits.

1. AIM HIGH IN STEERING 2. GET THE BIG PICTURE 3. KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING 4. LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT 5. MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU

We sincerely hope you will adopt this system as your own and use it both on and off the job to make your driving experience more enjoyable, more relaxed, and most important, SAFE.

The following narrative is taken from the program audio tape. Read it carefully. It will give you most of the answers to help you complete the workbook.

INTRODUCTION

The Smith System of Defensive Driving is designed to help prevent you from being involved in an accident that could cause you pain, suffering, and even loss of life. When you have finished this defensive driving course, you should be able to successfully avoid accidents, preserve customer and company property, and help make your job more secure.

Our Company has made a firm commitment to make this course viable and easily accessible. However, the program will only work if you make an even firmer commitment to work through the course and this workbook with your instructor, modify your driving habits, and practice, practice, practice, until the Smith System of Defensive Driving becomes your constant driving pattern.

The course is based on the "Space Cushion System" of defensive driving developed by Harold L. Smith more than 25 years ago. It provides the maximum of traffic information on which to make proper driving decisions. These decisions will be on-time adjustments to traffic to help you avoid accidents, extend vehicle life, and avoid delays.

The Smith System, simply put, is a series of driving techniques that allows you to obtain maximum space for your vehicle and maximum visibility for you, the driver. It is based on five keys to the Space Cushion Driving System which will greatly help all employees avoid traffic conflicts caused by poor driving habits:

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2. GET THE BIG PICTURE
3. KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING
4. LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT
5. MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU

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THE SMITH SYSTEM OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Regardless of the size of vehicle you drive, your company wants you to know and use the ultimate system in defensive driving to keep you from being involved in accidents, and to make your driving experience enjoyable and safe. You, the professional driver, need never find yourself in an accident if you are willing to learn and use the ***Smith System of Defensive Driving***.

People drive vehicles in all directions . . . at all speeds . . . every hour of the day . . . and night. They drive blocks . . . and miles. Millions of licensed drivers, professional and non-professional, add up those miles on streets and highways. As a motorist, you must constantly see, think, and make decisions . . . decisions which must be right the first time . . . or there may not be a second time!

Never before has there been a greater need for proper defensive driving . . . the essential positive approach which protects you from the inconsistent and unsafe actions of other motorists. Success in defensive driving is not a matter of luck. It is a matter of learning the ***Smith System*** and the five important keys to Space Cushion Driving.

Space Cushion Driving is the ultimate in defensive driving. The Smith System of Space Cushion Driving is a positive approach which will help you discover a new driving experience . . . more alert, yet calm and relaxed as you operate your vehicle.

Driving is Merely a repetition of three basic actions: SEE . . . THINK . . . and DO. You must see trouble . . . you must predict what action is necessary . . . and you must perform such action, and perform it at the proper time. The Smith System teaches you when and where to look . . . what to look for . . . and how to choose your path wisely as you check the traffic picture.

The human eye is the key to safe driving. Yet, the eye itself does not see, it only detects images. These images are interpreted by the brain. The expert motorist develops selective seeing habits by concentrating on essential parts of the total traffic picture. The **FIVE KEYS** to Space Cushion Driving, when mastered to the point of becoming habit, will help you read the "total traffic picture" completely.

Space Cushion Driving, simply defined, means "providing space for the vehicle, and visibility for the driver." The five Space Cushion Driving keys open your eyes to conflicts you might not be aware of, buying you time and space to help you avoid trouble and adjust to traffic conditions which may pose problems.

AIM HIGH IN STEERING

Key number one is: **AIM HIGH IN STEERING**, so you can find a safe path for your vehicle to travel. Just as you do when you walk, throw a ball, or ride a bicycle, the important point is: **LOOK AHEAD**. You may not have analyzed it before, but when you walk, you usually look about 85 feet ahead. It's the natural thing to do. And yet some people don't look 85 feet ahead when they are traveling ten times that fast! **AIM HIGH IN STEERING** simply means that you don't aim low. You set your sights high, where your vehicle will be in the next 15 seconds. This is called "**EYE LEAD TIME**", and it allows you to see about a block ahead at city speeds, and about a quarter of a mile ahead at expressway or highway speeds. It is part of the "Six Second" rule of following that will be discussed later.

You can readily identify improper, "low aim", seeing habits, e.g. a driver hugging one side of the traffic lane; or riding the shoulder of the road; a driver over-steering on turns, making wide, unnecessary turns; or first swinging to one side, before making a turn to the other. Using the High Aim Steering habit will give you a safe path on turns, allowing maximum space and visibility, while minimizing potential conflicts, and helping you find a safe path ahead. If you **AIM HIGH IN STEERING** at all times, you will get what we call the **BIG PICTURE**, which is Space Cushion Driving key number two.

THE BIG PICTURE

Every time you enter traffic, you enter a new situation, with new and different pictures, but it's still up to you to get the BIG PICTURE. The BIG PICTURE is the sum total of every conflict you can perceive, not just what you see, but what you should see. In the city, your picture is at least sidewalk to sidewalk wide, and a full city block ahead, allowing time to adjust to situations which may be a potential conflict. Most important, the BIG PICTURE contains people as they walk and drive motor vehicles in all four directions. Your BIG PICTURE also contains instructions, warnings, and traffic control devices. Traffic signs, of course, must be heeded, but equally important, they must be recognized as indications of what people are likely to do, giving you an early indication, and allowing you a space cushion safety margin. Only you, can eliminate the barriers which prevent you from getting the BIG PICTURE. First, establish proper following distance. Here's how to measure following distance when moving: When the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed reference point, count "One thousand one, one thousand two." If it took you six seconds to reach that point, you're at the minimum safe following distance. Double that to twelve seconds when possible. When visibility or traction is reduced by existing conditions, you must allow even more distance for safety. Use 15 to 30 seconds or more, if necessary. With the proper following distance you are able to take your eyes off the taillights of the vehicle ahead, allowing you to look far enough ahead to anticipate conflicts. Second, reduce your speed in dense traffic. This will allow proper following distance, and give you more time to devote to potential trouble tip-offs. Keeping the BIG PICTURE really means paying attention to your driving, closing your senses to all distractions and any temptation to turn away from the BIG PICTURE. It allows you to handle any problems which may suddenly confront you within the BIG PICTURE. This brings us to Space Cushion Driving key number three.

KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING

KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING is the key to getting and keeping the **BIG PICTURE**. When your vehicle is moving, your eyes should also move in an inquisitive way, searching, and discovering every part of your **BIG PICTURE**. This is a picture that moves because the traffic all around you moves, and changes quickly. You must be aware of these changes, especially those that can become a traffic conflict or distraction.

We are born with busy eyes: normally clear central vision that provides sharp, in-focus pictures; and fringe vision that signals attention. Unfortunately, our central vision is limited. For example, at 100 feet we see clearly in an area only 5 feet wide; at 1000 feet we see in an area only about 50 feet wide. The rest of our vision tends to blur or become indistinct or fuzzy. Our fringe vision allows us to detect objects over a wide area, much like the wide angle lens of a camera. It's an early warning system to detect trouble ahead or to the sides.

Beware of the fixed stare. Don't stare at any object for more than two seconds, and don't over-concentrate on any single traffic element for more than two seconds or it will become a **FIXED STARE** which prevents you from seeing the total traffic situation. The fixed stare often occurs in traffic, at intersections, when the driver begins to stare at the traffic light, hoping to be off the minute the signal changes.

That driver will be off all right, into a **COLLISION**, because the sight of a potential right angle conflict will be lost. Remember: to keep the **BIG PICTURE**, **KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING!** At intersections, check left, then right, then left again, before proceeding. **KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING**. Keep scanning, near, then far, then to each side, and to the rear at least every five to eight seconds.

LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT

LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT is key number four to Space Cushion Driving. You can Aim High, get the Big Picture, and Keep Your Eyes Moving, but there will still be times when you need a pre-determined way out. As you scan your **BIG PICTURE** for potential conflicts, keep in mind your position in traffic with respect to stopping, slowing, or turning space. Failure to leave yourself an out is often the result of driving too fast for conditions. Remember: don't let your wheels get ahead of your eyes. **LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT**, that's our lifesaving Space Cushion Driving key number four.

MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU

Key number five to Space Cushion Driving is: **MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU!** This key helps you communicate with any person who is in possible conflict with you. Almost everybody violates a traffic law, though few do it intentionally. When you see a driver or a pedestrian who is about to enter your path, you must make sure that person stays put until you've safely passed. A light tap of the horn done early enough will get the necessary eye contact. The expert driver signals early, while there is time and space to avoid conflict, should that person not respond. As Harold Smith says, "It is amazing that after over 70 years of motor vehicle experience in our sophisticated society you still hear statements like . . . 'I didn't see him' or 'I saw him, but I didn't think he would do what he did'." Key number five, **MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU** can help eliminate the reasons for these statements through proper use of your signals, horn, lights, and your eye contact!

Constant communication - beginning with the eye - is the foundation of Space Cushion Driving success. Your eyes are your most important means of communication, not only in front, but behind. The person entering your path must be alerted to your presence and to any moves you intend to make. Through your horn, hand signals, turn signals, or soft brake, you can gain that eye contact that is your margin of safety, allowing the other driver to know what you intend to do.

Preoccupied or momentarily distracted drivers or pedestrians can be totally unaware of your presence. It's up to you to see them, and **MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU.**

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

When mastered, the Smith System - Five Keys to Space Cushion Driving, will help you become an expert driver; but only through constant practice . . . practice until all the steps become habit.

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"ALL GOOD KIDS LOVE MILK"