

Behind the Wheel Training

A Competency Based Approach

Foreword:

The traffic safety industry in North America has successfully trained new drivers for generations. Research studies have not always been clear on the actual positive influence training has on long term driving behavior, but crash statistics consistently show trained drivers to get in fewer and less serious crashes in their first few years of licensure when compared to their untrained peers. It is a reasonable expectation that if more new drivers received training before licensure, these benefits would remain present and have a positive influence on traffic safety in general.

Scaling up traffic safety education to include a larger population segment creates a few challenges for the industry. This document identifies two challenges and provides a suggested system which can help to address them.

At the core of this document is a suggestion that standardized training models based on an expected hours completion is not fully preparing new drivers for independent practice or instructors for adequate delivery of training. Moving away from minimum training hours and prioritizing competency allows for individualized training that serves the needs of the driver and instructor directly and more efficiently.

The Challenges:

The first challenge identified and addressed in this document is new instructor development. Providing training to new drivers is a complex process. Each student passing through a course requires the one-on-one attention of a licensed instructor for several hours. To add more students, training schools must either add more instructors, gain access to students during times they are currently unavailable, or allow students who demonstrate sufficient competency to accelerate completion of the training course.

When hiring and training a new instructor candidate, the goal should be to ensure the new instructor is sufficiently competent to provide instruction before they conduct unsupervised training. Assessing the competency of a trainer is difficult to achieve without reliable measures to observe. By using this document to assess the competency of a driver, it allows instructors to be trained on how to observe, assess and improve the drivers' actions and behaviors from the perspective of the end goal of sufficient driver competency. If allowed by a training schools jurisdiction, training schools can personalize their instructor training programs to meet the individual needs of the new instructor. Standardized training based on hours can be replaced with training focused on competency.

The second challenge is a result of a conflict that exists between a training school's professional mandate and their customers' expectations. A training school's professional mandate is to train new drivers for a lifetime of safe driving behavior. The consumer expectation, however, is to obtain a driver's license. These two things are significantly different, but since training schools are ultimately service industry entities, there is constant pressure to train their customers to be prepared to take the jurisdiction's license skills exam. This document provides a system which allows a training school to still include training on all the components of their jurisdiction's license skills exam but maintains an emphasis on the more wholistic goal of safe driving behavior long term. By establishing a clear outcome expectation based on driver competency, a training school has the resources necessary to identify when a new driver is ready to be complete with training that does not rely on whether they will likely pass or fail a regulatory exam. If allowed by a training schools jurisdiction, training schools can personalize the training they deliver to each student based on their observed competency, replacing standardized hours-based training with a system based on observed competency in specific driving actions and behaviors.

Clarified Professional Expectations:

When discussing traffic safety education, the word “safe” or “safety” are often used without clear context of what is meant. The literal definition of “safe” is a condition absent of risk. That definition does not apply to the task of driving and cannot be used as an outcome expectation for a training school. It is more appropriate to use the term “safe enough” when referring to a task like driving.

Unfortunately, the term “safe enough” also does not provide training schools with a clear training outcome expectation. Without additional resources to define it, the term “safe enough” becomes subjective to the individual instructor and the driver actions or behaviors they observe.

Competency, by definition, is the observed demonstration of a person’s knowledge and skill. No one is ever “incompetent” or “fully competent”. A competency assessment is a snapshot of ability, and the outcome lies in a range somewhere between the two extremes. In other words, assessing competency is how an instructor can reasonably determine when a driver is “safe enough” to be complete with training. This document dissects the driving task into individual categories which can be observed, improved, assessed and scored. The scoring of each category allows the instructor to focus training lessons on the areas the driver needs the most assistance, with the eventual goal of getting all scores up to or above an accepted minimum competency level.

Competency-Based Driver Assessment:

This document describes a set of components which can be used to assess the competency level of a driver. There are three components to this assessment when being used by instructors during behind the wheel lessons.

- The first component is a scoring matrix used to assess driver decisions, actions, and behaviors by assigning a score for each of 10 independent assessment categories.
- The second component is a description of minimum driver actions which must be observed on each instructional lesson to apply the scoring matrix.
- The third component is a method of assessing the consistent and appropriate application of the scoring matrix by various instructors.

Desired Outcome:

A driving school utilizing all three components as described will be able to reasonably assess the competency of each student passing through their courses and will be able to reasonably ensure students are completing their courses with at least a minimum acceptable level of competency. Training schools will also be able to advise students regarding their progress towards competency and give them recommendations for beneficial independent practice.

This document may be used to assess a driver of any age, level of experience or degree of skill who is participating in an instructional lesson or assessment by a licensed driving instructor who has been trained and supervised in the application of this program.

History of this work:

This matrix and its associated components have been heavily influenced by the work of David Zaidel in a technical memorandum published in 1992. That memorandum, titled “Quality of Driving with Route Guidance Assistance”, was a result of collaboration between Mr. Zaidel, Sue MacNiel, and others researching and working in the traffic safety industry. A result of that collaboration was the formation of a private company named Driver Competency Assessment Protocols which operates

through various training facilities in Canada and the United States. The concept of assessing drivers based on their competency has been endorsed by the Driving School Association of the Americas (DSAA) and is similar in nature to assessment methods currently used in parts of Europe.

This matrix seeks to create a modern interpretation of past work involving driver competency. It also seeks to improve application of the matrix to facilitate use by training schools in various areas regardless of population density, road infrastructure or other variables. This matrix also includes details involving modern vehicle technology and a driver's social behavior in ways not included in the original work. As vehicle technology continues to develop, and the demands of the human occupants evolve, it is expected that this work will continue to adapt as it seeks to accurately define what constitutes a "competent" driver.

Uses of the Matrix:

Component one consists of a comprehensive scoring system for the purpose of assessing any driver. Examples of drivers this matrix has been prepared for include:

- New unlicensed drivers
- New unlicensed motorcycle riders
- Experienced drivers immigrating from other parts of the world
- Drivers who are recovering or rehabilitating from a physical or cognitive injury
- Drivers who require assessment due to significant crash or infraction history
- Drivers who exhibit signs of decline because of age or other factors
- Any Driver seeking professional assessment for the purpose of self-improvement

This matrix would require minimal adaptation to meet the unique needs of evaluating professional or commercial drivers. It could also be adapted for law enforcement use as a guideline for assessing driver competency by an observing officer. Bicycle safety trainers could reasonably adapt this matrix for the purpose of training cyclists who regularly ride on public roadways. Additional work would be required by subject matter experts and stakeholders in each of these fields, but this matrix creates a stable foundation for such work.

The fundamentals of this matrix consist of the core decisions and actions drivers perform every time they are behind the wheel. It would be highly appropriate for regulatory agencies to adapt this matrix into a test to determine a driver's eligibility to be licensed or to have a license renewed or re-instated.

Key terms:

Assessor / Instructor: A person trained in the application of the scoring matrix and legally authorized to do so, if a professional license is required in the jurisdiction services are being performed.

Driver / Student: A person operating the vehicle while an assessment or lesson is occurring.

Road user: Any driver, passenger, pedestrian, bicyclist or anyone occupying physical space on or adjacent to a public roadway. They may be in motion or stationary, but their access to independent and safe use of the roadway may be influenced by the driver being assessed.

Training School: A business or program which primarily seeks to improve traffic safety by providing education and instruction. This document takes no position on whether the training is conducted by a private entity, a program offered within a public school system, or any other designation.

Component 1 – The Matrix

Approximate scale values:

The following variables are scored on a scale of 5 with 1 being the least appropriate and 5 being the most appropriate. It is understood that a score of 3 is the average driving characteristic for that variable. Each of the following variables will be explained in more detail. The perspective that is taken for scoring is that of safety. When there is a conflict between a legal or safe option, higher scores will be given to the safe decision or action. While there is overlap between the variables, one tries to score each category as a separate entity. If a category was not observed enough to establish a score, the default score is 3.

Each of the 10 scoring categories independently represents necessary skills a competent driver must possess to operate a motor vehicle safely and responsibly on public roadways. The categories are not listed in any order of importance, nor is there any implied “weighting” to their value as an assessment component. There is some crossover among the categories whereas a low score in one category may necessitate a similarly low score in another category. Similarly, a high score in some categories will often indicate a likelihood for a high score in other categories.

The scoring should be viewed as cumulative over the entirety of an instructional lesson or assessment; to obtain a score of 5, drivers must exhibit none of the negative attributes of 1, 2 & 3, but all the positive attributes of 3, 4 & 5.

Assigning a score:

Each of the five scores in the matrix are individually described in their associated category with examples of driver actions that fit into each score. The examples are intended to help the assessor interpret observed actions and assign a consistent score. Assessors must use discretion when applying scores and must not allow pre-conceived notions or biases to influence their scoring. It should be understood that there is a range or performance built into each individual score. It may be possible to observe a progression of skill while still considering the overall performance to reside within one score value (ie, low 3 to high 3). Below is a general guidance on each of the five scores:

- **1-Lacking:** An action that causes harm to the driver, vehicle, passengers, other road users or private property. In addition, any action that would likely have caused harm if not for the action of the assessor or other party. A score of 1 is the only score that could be assigned after a single incident and should be assigned after any action by the driver resulting in the premature ending of the lesson / assessment.
- **2-Emerging:** Actions that lack the appropriate level of knowledge or skill to ensure the safety and protection of the driver, vehicle, passengers, other road users or private property. Some assistance may be required by the assessor at times. No incidents occur which require prematurely ending the lesson / assessment.
- **3-Average:** The driver is performing actions in a predictable manner compared to other road users. Minimal assistance provided by the assessor.
- **4-Exceeding:** The driver demonstrates a high level of knowledge and skill in the assessed category but may still make minor errors at times.
- **5-Optimal:** The driver demonstrates the highest level of competency possible in the assessed category over the entire lesson / assessment. A score of 5 is expected to be uncommon.

Norming:

For the competency level assessed during a lesson to be valuable to the student, their family and other instructors, there must be a reasonable level of consistency applied when determining a score for each category. Adequate training and supervision of the instructors is crucial to achieve reliable results.

To achieve a proper level of norming, this matrix provides examples of driver actions and behaviors that justify specific scores. When instructors observe activities not listed on the matrix, they must determine an equivalent action or behavior and apply the score accordingly. If the observed activity occurs regularly, schools are encouraged to add it to the matrix to ensure clarity across the instructor staff.

Individual instructor's personality or disposition will naturally have an effect on their scoring. Similarly, it is expected that a newly trained instructor may not be as consistent as someone more experienced with using the matrix. Following are some recommendations to ensure the desired outcomes:

- If an observed action or behavior is not specifically listed in the matrix, and it has similarities to examples resulting in different scores, consider how recurrent the behavior is during the lesson and let that influence the final score for the category.
- Instructors should be mindful that the goal is to get a student to an acceptable competency level in each category by the end of the final lesson. It is expected that students may perform lower during early lessons and improve over future lessons.
- It is expected to have students regress in their scores at times. The lesson requirements are progressively more complex. A student who scores high on early lessons may experience challenges with more difficult tasks and score lower on later lessons. This allows the instructor to focus on the areas the student needs more help.
- Each score inherently has a range contained within itself. For example, an inexperienced driver may justify a score of 3 even though they are not solidly there (-3). Similarly, an experienced driver may justify a score of 3 even though they are clearly capable of much better (3+). Both drivers are assessed to be performing within the range of a 3.
- Instructors must keep in mind that the average experienced driver on the road would probably score an average of 3 in each category. Level 4 and 5 actions and behaviors are better than average even for experienced drivers.

The Training or Assessment vehicle:

This document makes no recommendation of the vehicle being used to conduct an assessment. The vehicle in use may be subject to regulatory requirements by the jurisdiction where the assessment is occurring. No special equipment is required to be installed or used by the driver or assessor for the proper application of the matrix.

Communicating the results:

Instructors are encouraged to use scores as a method of communication with the driver, other responsible parties, and fellow instructors. This communication may include documenting scores showing a progression of skill over the course of the lesson. For example, if a driver begins the lesson demonstrating a skill of 3 on a category and they do not improve, then a final score of 3 is suitable. Similarly, if a driver begins the lesson demonstrating a 2 on a category, but by the end has improved to a 3, then documenting a 2/3 may be useful in communicating the progression of skill

observed during the lesson. If choosing to document multiple scores for a category, the higher score reflects the final score for the assessed category.

Another communication benefit could be the addition of a + or – to an assigned score. For example, a 3- could represent a score on the low end of the 3 scale (above 2), whereas a 3+ could represent a score on the high end of the 3 scale (almost 4). If choosing to add special characters like this, they would only serve as communication tools. The number assigned represents the actual assessed score. (2- or 2 or 2+ = 2)

It is the goal of this scoring matrix to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of each driver as they perform a lesson. The resulting scores from each lesson should be communicated to the driver for the purpose of guiding them toward independent practice to improve their driving skills and potentially prepare for future lessons. It is appropriate to share the contents of this matrix directly to the driver and other responsible parties. The more they understand the criteria used to establish competency, the more they can work independently to improve their driving skill. Nothing about this document should be considered confidential or for the use of the training school only.

Determination of acceptable outcome:

- **New / Novice drivers:** For new and novice drivers participating in a traffic safety education course, there are minimum competency standards necessary for completion of the course.
 - At the completion of the last lesson to be provided by a training school course, a new driver to be assessed as minimally competent **must**;
 - Not be assessed a **1 in any of the 10 categories** or be assessed a **2 in more than 5 of the 10 categories**.
 - New drivers being assessed as described above **must** take additional lessons until their competency has improved.
 - At the completion of the last lesson to be provided by a training school course, a new or novice driver who is assessed a **2 in any of the 10 categories** should be **encouraged** to take additional lessons to improve their competency.
 - At the completion of the last lesson to be provided by a training school course, a new or novice driver who is assessed a **3 or higher in all 10 categories** will be considered minimally competent to continue improving their competency without additional lessons provided by the training school as a part of the enrolled course.
- **Experienced or medically at-risk drivers:** It may be appropriate for this matrix to be used for the assessment of experienced drivers from time to time. It is recommended that experienced drivers be assessed following any instance of significant physical or cognitive decline. In such instances, a minimum score of 3 or higher in each of the 10 categories represents a minimal level of competency.
- **Professional & Commercial drivers:** When evaluating drivers who possess a professional or commercial license which requires periodic evaluation, training schools and/or fleet management companies are encouraged to apply a minimum individual score of 3 in each of the 10 categories and a minimum average score of 3.3 by totaling all scores and dividing by 10.

When assessed unacceptable:

When the assessment has concluded with an unacceptable outcome, the driver may perform additional assessments until they can demonstrate competency. This document provides no guidance on who provides ongoing assessments, where or how frequently they occur, except to say they should be performed by assessors who are similarly trained in the use of this matrix. The assessor should ensure the driver understands the decisions or actions which resulted in the low score(s) and should provide guidance on how to improve. The instructor or assessor should remain mindful that their professional obligation is to assist drivers to reach a competent level of driving performance. It is insufficient to simply treat this assessment as a pass or fail activity.

Professional responsibility:

It is the primary responsibility of a training school to help prepare their students or customers for beneficial independent practice. No course of any duration should be considered capable of fully developing a driver. It is the combination of professional instruction and independent practice which most predictably leads to a driver obtaining a competent level of skill.

There may be instances during instructional lessons when an instructor identifies the performance of the driver is not on a likely trajectory to be assessed as competent by the completion of the lessons provided in the course. A reasonable effort should be made to communicate the potential need for additional lessons and provide recommendations for independent practice which may accelerate their development. Instructors and schools should avoid to the extent possible surprising the customer with the requirement for more lessons and additional fees.

When additional lessons are required to obtain a completion status in a training course, the reasons for the additional lessons should be reflected in the scoring the student received. The justification for additional lessons and/or additional fees should never be unsupported by a low performance assessment of the driver. Any additional lessons performed should primarily focus on improving the drivers' performance in the categories that were assessed weak previously.

This document takes no position on the specific duration or frequency of additional lessons. It may be appropriate for some schools to offer short duration lessons focused on one or two categories identified as weak. It may also be appropriate for schools to offer typical duration lessons to assess the driver on all categories again.

Compatibility with State and Provincial skills exams:

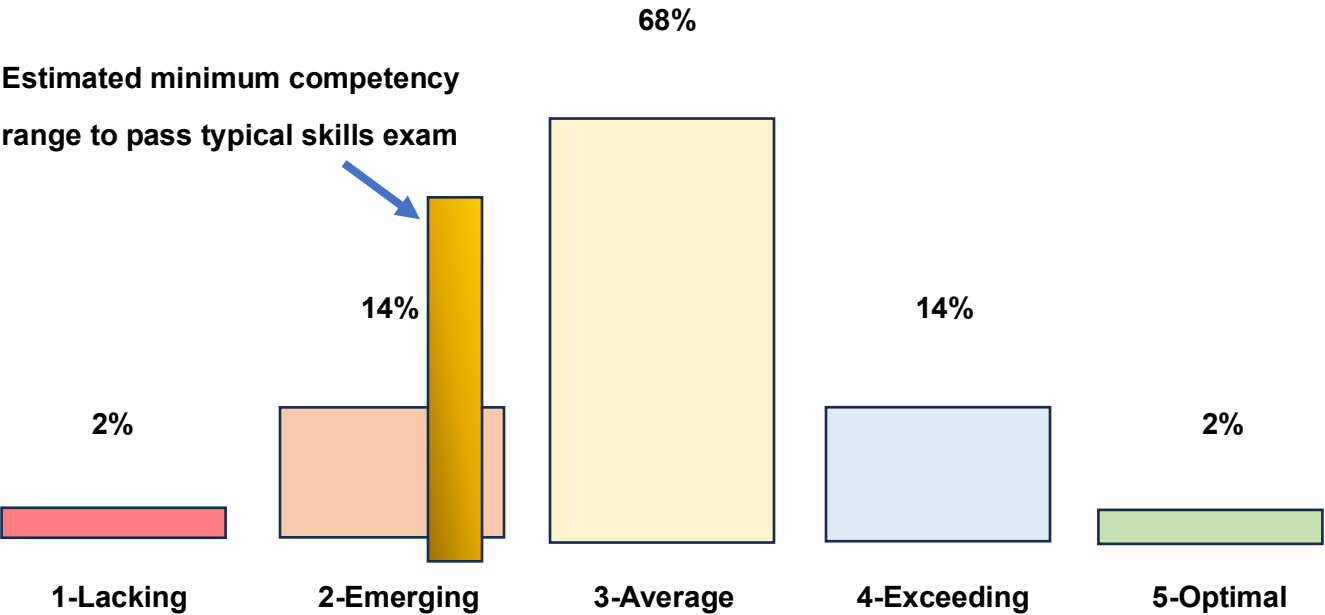
The skills exams conducted by state and provincial governments for the purpose of establishing minimum criteria for licensure were established at a time when the predominant opinion about driving was focused on mobility. The exams were created to observe a driver while they navigate specific traffic situations and perform specific precision maneuvers. Over time, mobility has remained the primary objective for licensure, however concerns for safety and personal responsibility have become important considerations for determining a person's readiness to obtain a license.

A competency-based system of assessing driver readiness is not intended to make it more difficult for a person to become a licensed driver. Instead, assessing a driver based on their demonstrated competency assists them to become a safe and responsible driver on their own timeline and it assists a training school to identify the best ways to help the driver gain skill where it is most beneficial.

Predicted Societal Norming:

The graph below depicts the predicted bell curve outcome of all drivers in North America if assessed for competency using this matrix. The narrow overlaid column represents the estimated minimum competency required to pass a skills exam performed by a North American Jurisdiction.

Future attempts to validate these predictions are welcome and encouraged. This method seeks to improve the overall culture regarding traffic safety in North America. When enhancements to this document are identified, they will be peer reviewed and incorporated when appropriate.



Endorsements: Trade associations, regulatory agencies, or any other group which endorses this method may do so at no cost but should provide contact information to provide support to training schools choosing to use this method. Any endorsement does not come with an expectation of adoption by its entire membership. Any version printed or posted electronically should include page numbers and a revision date to ensure participating schools have access to consistent current information and support.

Training schools or endorsing groups are discouraged from making significant changes to the matrix without consulting the initial endorsement provider. This is to ensure future efforts to validate this work is possible. Contact information is listed below along with information of any additional known endorsement providers.

Initial Endorsement provider:

- The Driving School Association of the Americas (DSAA.ORG)
 - Endorsed since 2024
 - Primary point of contact for this document: Lynn Rogers (lynn@dsaa.org)

Additional Endorsement providers:

- The Professional Driving School Association of Washington (PDSAW.ORG)
 - Endorsed since 2024
 - Primary point of contact for this document: Lynn Rogers (lynn@parksidedriving.com)

Speed Maintenance:

The extent that speed is within safe bounds, adaptive to traffic conditions, changes in a timely and smooth place, maintained in a consistent manner.

- A driver is considered too slow if they force another driver to pass and the other driver is not travelling inappropriately fast; loose gaps because of not accelerating enough to get into the line of traffic, etc.
- A driver is considered too fast if the traction conditions do not warrant the speed, they are pushing other drivers, they go over the speed limit while the flow of traffic goes slower, the car goes out of balance on curves and corners, or the vision is not sufficient to make decisions with the available amount of information.

Advice for Students:

Practice getting up to a safe speed and adjusting your speed for the situation. The speed limit is the fastest you can travel on any street, but you can improve your safety a lot by how you change your speed for the conditions around you.

Remember, you can change your speed several ways. When you press the brake, you slow down quickly. Simply removing your foot from the accelerator pedal makes you slow down gradually. When speeding up, pressing the accelerator pedal hard makes you speed up quickly. Pressing the accelerator pedal a little makes you speed up gradually.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests that the driver is either not familiar with the use of the pedals or not considerate of the influence speed has in relation to proximity with other hazards.

Practice how to press the pedals smoothly by pivoting the ankle with the heel of the foot resting on the floor. Work on how to press the accelerator to get the vehicle up to speed and then release some of the pressure in order to maintain the desired speed.

Regarding braking, practice identifying upcoming situations when slowing or stopping is going to be necessary and work on transitioning from the accelerator to the brake to help make that process smooth and intentional.

If following too close is a problem, consider identifying the gap in seconds of time rather than distance. 3-4 seconds of travelling time between vehicles is a minimum recommendation to ensure the driver has enough time to identify a problem and react to it appropriately.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests the driver has largely progressed beyond understanding how to use the pedals effectively but still has challenges managing vehicle speed in and around other traffic.

When entering traffic, practice getting up to speed to maintain a safe gap from vehicles ahead and behind. Work on maintaining confident control while accelerating from a stop. When slowing or stopping to turn or exit traffic, work on braking gradually and being observant of traffic approaching from the rear.

When approaching vulnerable roadway users, be sure to adjust speed to avoid creating a risky situation for them as you follow or pass.

3-Average:

A score of 3 in this category suggests the driver has been practicing and is adjusting speed reasonably well. Over time, driving at this level may expose the driver to some avoidable risks which could be improved with additional development.

Be especially mindful of weather or roadway conditions that require an adjustment of speed or increase of safe distance from other roadway users.

Work on making decisions about the appropriate speed to be travelling independent of the speed of other traffic. Drivers should be accelerating or braking based on maintaining safe margins with other traffic rather than reacting when others change speed.

4-Exceeding:

This score suggests that the driver is managing speed very well in common situations. They are identifying instances for speed adjustments independent from the actions of other traffic and are considerate of the needs of vulnerable roadway users as they approach and pass.

Continue to work on speed in unfamiliar areas or during situations when weather or other conditions may create challenges not regularly experienced.

5-Optimal:

A score of 5 in any category is special. Very few drivers can demonstrate this high level of competency and even fewer can maintain this level over a long period of time. Be mindful that speed is a leading cause of serious driving errors. A small miscalculation of speed can create an unsafe situation very difficult to overcome.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The Speed is:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
Very inconsistent (varying for no apparent reason)	Adjusted late to the point where the distance from obstacles has been significantly reduced	A speed expected for conditions (predictable)	Independent (not relying on the driver ahead)	Very consistent
Dangerously too fast		Adjusted purposefully, but not always as smoothly or timely as expected	Maintained suitable for the conditions	Always the best possible speed for conditions
Dangerously too slow (possibly requiring avoidance actions by others)	Adjusted poorly (too much or too little brake or accelerator pressure)	Adjusted due to the actions of the driver ahead (reactionary)	Appropriate when passing or crossing the path of vulnerable roadway users	Always adjusted very timely and smoothly
Not adjusted for traction, vision or road conditions	Adjusted very roughly (sudden application of brake or accelerator not due to an appropriate situation)	Within a reasonable margin of legal limits (unless conditions merit otherwise)		
Too fast combined with following distance too close				
Dangerous during acceleration into the flow of traffic (enters flow slowly and into a tight gap requiring the avoidance of others)	Acceleration into the flow of traffic impedes other drivers, but not dangerously (other drivers have sufficient time or space to avoid a collision)			
Dangerous when near vulnerable roadway users				

Distance Maintenance Front & Rear:

The extent that the following and being followed distance of the vehicle from other road users is safe. How effectively the driver is adapting to traffic conditions and allowing for good visibility.

Advice for Students:

Practice maintaining a safe distance from vehicles in front of you and anyone following you. Space to the front and rear create time for you to react to any issues that develop.

If you allow yourself to follow someone too closely, you are forced to trust that they will not make a mistake. If they do, you won't have much time to avoid hitting them.

When it comes to being followed by someone too closely, here are some tips:

- If you're already travelling the speed limit, speed up 1 or 2 mph and see if they back off.
- If you are on a road where you can pull over and stop, safely pull over and allow them to pass.
- If you are on a road with intersections, turn at the next available intersection and go around the block to get back on your route.
- If you are travelling on a multi-lane road, safely move into the right lane. The left lane is reserved for vehicles passing. Don't camp out in the left lane.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests the driver is unaware of the presence of other vehicles nearby or is not able to recognize that the gap between themselves and other vehicles is unsafe. This is often an indication that the driver is not visually scanning the roadway ahead, instead primarily focusing on the area immediately in front of the vehicle. This can also be influenced by inappropriate risk tolerance or a lack of consideration for the safety of other roadway users.

Practice recognizing the gap between vehicles in seconds of time rather than in distance. A following distance of 3-4 seconds is considered the minimum safe distance in normal driving conditions. Add more time for more difficult situations.

Work on visually scanning the roadway 10-15 seconds of travel time ahead of the vehicle. Remember that the area immediately in front of the car is rarely where a problem will be identified. Also work on checking the rear view mirror for situations where others may be close behind.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests that the driver is understanding the need for safe distances to the front and rear but is having trouble maintaining those gaps at times.

Practice imagining what you would have to do if the vehicle in front suddenly slowed or stopped. If you think you would have to steer to avoid crashing, you are too close and should increase your distance to the front.

Work on recognizing when you are being tailgated and create solutions to improve safety to the rear.

3-Average:

This score suggests you are managing space to the front and rear reasonably well, but keep in mind this is an area where average drivers get in trouble often. Being average in this category is just barely “good enough”.

Practice increasing your following distance so that you can make all your speed adjustment decisions independent from other traffic.

When stopped in traffic, make sure you leave enough space in front that you won’t get pushed into something if you get hit from behind.

When you find yourself getting “tailgated”, create solutions for yourself that improve your own safety as well as the safety of others nearby.

4-Exceeding:

This score indicates the driver is actively managing the space to the front and rear of the vehicle and making appropriate adjustments in normal driving situations. They may experience some challenges in unusual circumstances or when experiencing moments of distraction or emotional challenges.

Remember that space to the front and rear are your best defense against the mistakes other drivers might make nearby. Work on predicting how traffic around you will behave and work to maintain safe gaps in all circumstances.

5-Optimal:

A score of 5 in any category is special. Very few drivers can demonstrate this high level of competency and even fewer can maintain this level over a long period of time. Managing following distance may become more challenging for some drivers over time. Driving experience can lead to over-confidence which sometimes leads drivers to become comfortable too close to other traffic. Remain diligent and fight against the negative influences of over-confidence.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The following and being followed distance is:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
Far too close to the vehicle ahead while in motion	Following a little too closely without adjustment	Reacting to others to maintain space	Considerate of the space ahead when making decisions about following	Always allowing adequate space between forward and rear vehicles
Too close behind other road users when stopped	Aware of tight gaps to the rear, but unable to improve (being tailgated with no effort to improve)	Consistent in the amount of space they leave, but the space is not optimal	More than average in distance from others	Discouraging of being followed too closely from behind
Unaware of unsafe condition to the rear while in motion		Allowing the actions of others to influence safe space	Making most adjustments independent of others	Consistent and appropriate
Dangerous to the rear while slowing or stopping (unnecessary sudden braking with no awareness of hazards to the rear)			Not reliant on actions of others to initiate space adjustments	
Dangerous when following or stopping behind vulnerable roadway users			Appropriate when following vulnerable roadway users	

Lane Positioning:

The extent that placement of the vehicle within a lane and the choice of a lane are consistently appropriate, free of uncontrolled drifting and do not infringe on the path of other road users. Vehicle placement either when the vehicle is moving or stationary. It is imperative that the vehicle position align with other communication such as signaling. Position approaching and at intersections are considered important as well. Also considered in this category is the drivers process for changing lanes.

Advice for Students:

Practice placing your vehicle in the lane to create safe space between your vehicle and other hazards. Most of the time, traveling down the center of the lane is best, but sometimes it is safer to be to the left or right a bit. Remember, your lane position can also tell other drivers what you want to do next, like when you are about to turn.

When changing lanes, you must visually ensure your path is clear to the front and to the side you are planning to move. Always signal to communicate your intentions to change lanes and then check your mirrors and briefly turn your head to check the blind area immediately beside the rear of your vehicle. Only after making sure the path is clear, can you position your vehicle into another lane.

Always approach curves and hill crests by placing your vehicle in the best lane position for anything unexpected around the corner or over the hill. When you can't see hazards, your best option is to prepare as if they are there.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests the driver is lacking strong understanding of the layout and/or use of the roadway. The driver may not occupy the correct lane or confine their driving to any single lane.

Practice visually scanning the roadway ahead and identifying the portion of the roadway that is your intended path of travel. Try to identify a target ahead of you in the center of your lane that you can steer toward.

2-Emerging:

Being assigned this score suggests that the driver is maintaining control of the driving lane reasonably well when travelling on a straight lane but may still lack precision when making turns or navigating intersections.

When approaching a curve in the road, visually scan as far around the curve as you can see and position your vehicle to stay within your lane and away from any hazards visible or predictable.

As you approach an intersection where you plan to turn, be sure to identify the correct lane you must end up in and track safely into that lane. Be careful to watch for other roadway users to ensure your intended path does not interfere with their path.

When making lane changes, always check the blind area beside your vehicle before steering that way.

3-Average:

An average score in this category suggests the driver is competent enough to drive independently but may still expose the driver and their surroundings to significant risk.

Practice positioning your vehicle in the lane in a way that always creates safe space from any hazards. When approaching curves, predict where hazards may exist beyond the visible range and position the vehicle in anticipation of those potential risks.

When preparing to change lanes, ensure you have a safe space to move into and visually check to ensure you will not be blocking the path of a vehicle approaching quickly.

When passing a vehicle by occupying an oncoming lane, ensure you only occupy the oncoming lane long enough to complete the pass and maintain a safe space in front of the vehicle you have passed.

4-Exceeding:

This score suggests the driver is not only positioning the vehicle well in most situations but is also considerate of the needs of other roadway users as well.

To sharpen your skills in this category even further, imagine scenarios where you may encounter multiple hazards that make the safest vehicle position difficult to identify. Consider prioritizing position options based on potential risks and combine your position considerations along with adjustments in speed and/or direction.

5-Optimal:

This score suggests you are highly competent in this category. Be mindful that this is a skill which can be significantly affected by influences like distraction or the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Remaining at an optimal level in this category requires constant “what if” thinking and preparation.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

Lane positioning is:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
Wrong or dangerous and unaware (being on the wrong side of the road with vehicles approaching)	Allowed to drift within or slightly outside of their lane	A position reasonable for conditions	Consistent in placing vehicle on a safe path	Always the best position for hazards
Identified as wrong too late to adjust to existing hazards	Incorrect while navigating curves	Relatively consistent in position and lane choice	Adjusted early for upcoming changes	Accurately identifying of instances with multiple hazards and choosing the best position to address each
Making recurring large steering corrections to stay in lane (pingponging)	Incorrect at intersections (too far left or right for the desired turn)	Relatively smooth staying in the desired position	Consistently chosen to clear the way for other road users	
Never visually checking blind areas in any way before making a position change (no mirror check, no turn of head, no observance of vehicle assistance features)	Makes constant small steering corrections to stay in lane (micro steering)	Generally aware of things in blind areas, but may make position changes without considering the concerns of others	Consistently reasonable when near vulnerable roadway users (creates a safe distance without impeding other traffic)	
Dangerous when passing or near vulnerable roadway users (passing cyclists or pedestrians)	Sometimes making a position change without checking blind areas			
	Wrong for unseen risks around blind curves or hill crests			
	Unnecessarily distant when passing vulnerable roadway users (completely on wrong side of road passing a cyclist or pedestrian)			

Turning and Crossing:

The extent that drivers follow an appropriate sequence of visual checks, position and speed adjustments prior to and while crossing or turning onto a lane of travel. Also accounting for the margin of safety taken in gap acceptance and other conflict points.

Advice for Students:

Practice lots of intersections. Work on selecting a safe gap to enter traffic and how to make smooth turns into the correct lane. Remember to look where you want to go when making turns. Your hands follow your eyes.

If you're having trouble deciding when it is safe to pull out into traffic, here is a tip:

- Count in seconds how long it takes a car you see down the road to pass in front of you. You need about 5 seconds to enter a city street and get up to speed (Add more time for higher speed roads). You want that vehicle to get no closer to you than 3 seconds. That means a vehicle more than 8 seconds away is safe to pull out in front of. Once you can recognize what 8 seconds looks like, you will have more confidence to pull out into traffic.

Remember, when you are turning onto a multi-lane road, there is only one lane meant for you to enter. You always turn into the closest lane travelling in your direction.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests that the driver is not considering other roadway users or not able to control the path of the vehicle while turning. There are a few reasons this may occur.

- The driver may not have sufficient practice at intersections.
- The driver may lack confidence in their ability to safely navigate intersections.
- The driver may not be visually targeting the path the vehicle must travel through a turn.

In most cases, the most beneficial way to improve in this area is to work on proper visual awareness of their vehicles' path of travel and the proximity of other roadway users. Identifying safe gaps in traffic and measuring those gaps in seconds of time can also help improve confidence.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests that the driver is understanding the concepts required to perform turning and crossing maneuvers but lacks practical experience or is uncomfortable with the traffic density of some situations.

Practice navigating intersections progressively from simple to complex. Simple intersections will have good visibility in all directions and light vehicle, pedestrian, or bicycle flow. Typically, intersections controlled with stop signs are recommended. As the drivers' skill and confidence improve, move to intersections with lights and more complex traffic situations.

3-Average:

This score suggests the driver has decent knowledge about intersections and has sufficient practice to navigate through turning situations reasonably well. There may be some instances of minor errors involving yielding or right-of-way.

It is recommended that drivers at this level work on consistency in their visual checks of traffic and other roadway users. Pay special attention when travelling through unfamiliar intersections or when traffic density is heavy. Continue to work on being attentive of mistakes other drivers might make nearby.

4-Exceeding:

A score in this range suggests the driver is performing above average managing the risks of turning and navigating through intersections. They are generally aware of the presence of other traffic or roadway users and are prepared to react appropriately if a problem is identified.

While a score of 4 is considered very good, there is still an opportunity for improvement in certain circumstances. Work on predicting what may exist outside of the visual area and how something unexpected may require an adjustment. Also look for opportunities to assist other roadway users to improve their safety or access even if it delays your own progress.

5-Optimal:

A score of 5 in any category is special. Very few drivers can demonstrate this high level of competency and even fewer can maintain this level over a long period of time. Be mindful that even the most competent drivers can have moments when their skill can be challenged. Intersections and areas where traffic crosses the path of other traffic and vulnerable roadway users are always high risk situations. Stay alert and ready to adjust to whatever challenges arise.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

Turning and Crossing maneuvers are:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
<p>Failing to check for other vehicles or vulnerable roadway users</p> <p>Failing to recognize if intersections are controlled or uncontrolled (goes through a stop sign or stops where there is no sign)</p> <p>Dangerously not giving way to another legitimate road user (pedestrian in cross walk)</p> <p>Turning into or from an oncoming lane</p> <p>Travelling thru turns so quickly as to upset vehicle handling</p> <p>Stopping before every turning situation</p>	<p>Occasionally not checking for traffic at intersections before entering</p> <p>Not observant of driveways/other non-street connections</p> <p>Speed or motion not appropriate for the turn</p> <p>Cutting the turn significantly or travelling wide requiring correction</p> <p>Turning into or from the wrong lane potentially impeding the rightful flow of other road users (turning into the 2nd lane)</p> <p>Noses out into intersection too far (interfering with traffic flow)</p> <p>Stops at intersection too far back and does not initiate 2nd stop (insufficient visibility)</p> <p>Regularly makes initial stop in crosswalk or painted stop line with no vulnerable road users present</p>	<p>Performing basic visual checks before initiating movement</p> <p>Generally noticing and accepting of responsibility at intersections</p> <p>Understanding reasonably well various yielding responsibilities</p> <p>Not congesting intersections unnecessarily</p> <p>Not cutting the turn significantly</p> <p>Not turning wide without correction</p> <p>Considerate of external factors when selecting a gap to enter (weather, surface conditions, visual conditions, speed of cross traffic)</p> <p>Sometimes makes initial stop at intersection too late (beyond stop line or blocking crosswalk)</p>	<p>Consistently checking all intersections and potential conflict points</p> <p>Ready to cover the horn or brake early if a conflict may arise</p> <p>Using appropriate communication to warn other road users of potential conflict</p> <p>Maintaining reasonable vehicle balance</p> <p>Consistently choose correct lane to turn from and into</p> <p>Usually stops at appropriate locations to accommodate pedestrian and other roadway users</p>	<p>Considering areas of potential conflict that need to be assessed by adjusting speed or changing position if the information is not readily available</p> <p>Using the intersection in a way that enhances the safety of all road users (considering pedestrians, other road users' visual needs, yielding and right of way)</p>

Traffic Control Devices:

The extent that drivers correctly interpret the meaning of signs, signals, markings and other control devices. How the driver understands the positions, rights and intentions of other road users, and drives in accordance with the rights, restrictions, and opportunities afforded by the controls. All signs and signals as well as lane markings are included in this category. The degree of sophistication a driver demonstrates regarding how the system operates within the parameters of the traffic control devices is considered.

Advice for Students:

Practice noticing and following the lights, signs and paint markings on the roads. New drivers sometimes get tunnel vision. Work on widening your vision to see a bigger field of view. When you train yourself to notice more things, you will be better prepared to react safely.

- Red lights always mean stop. If they are flashing red, treat it like a stop sign intersection.
- Yellow lights always mean caution. Always look before proceeding. If the yellow light is changing to red, stop if you can stop safely. Never speed up for a yellow.
- Never cross solid yellow or white paint unless turning off the road.
- Watch for signs along the road. The signs are only used to tell you important things.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests the driver is lacking basic understanding of the purpose and function of the various signs, lights and painted roadway markings. Alternately, this could indicate they lack enough driving confidence to be aware of their surroundings, so they do not notice the controls.

Practice scanning visually farther out in front of the vehicle. When a driver has their eyes actively scanning several travelling seconds ahead of the vehicle, they can see and react appropriately to the controls that are present. Until better visual scanning is achieved, it is recommended the driver limit their practice to areas like parking lots and other places with fewer hazards.

2-Emerging:

This score indicates that the driver understands the various traffic controls but may not always comply with them correctly.

When approaching intersections, first notice what controls exist for your lane of travel and then look to see what controls exist for the other traffic lanes. When you understand how all the traffic uses the intersection you will be more successful.

Remember that there are often controls to protect pedestrians and other vulnerable roadway users. Scan ahead visually for where your path of travel may cross the path of these roadway users and prepare to share the road as appropriate.

Intersections with stop signs or red lights require a full and complete stop at the correct location. Practice finding the location and making smooth controlled stops as you approach.

3-Average:

This score suggests the driver understands and follows the various traffic controls relatively well. When errors occur, they are generally not from lack of understanding, rather they are from lack of adherence to the controls in some way.

Practice checking the status of a traffic light several times as you approach. Never enter an intersection controlled by a light without making sure the light hasn't changed.

When turning from or onto a street with a shared center turn lane, use that lane to improve the safety for yourself and other traffic.

Make sure you always follow the right of way rules at all-way stop intersections. You should never feel the need to wave someone else to go. You should know when it is your time to go and be patient for others as you wait your turn.

4-Exceeding:

This score indicates that you are very competent at identifying and following the traffic controls you encounter. As you visit unfamiliar areas, always scan ahead for situations you are unfamiliar with and prepare to follow the controls as you identify them. Keep in mind that there are often controls for vulnerable roadway users that you may need to yield to as well.

5-Optimal:

This score suggests you are navigating the streets and intersections very well and constantly ensuring safe and efficient use of the roadway for yourself and any other roadway users nearby. Keep exploring new areas and watch for new situations. Be especially prepared for temporary controls, like those used in construction zones and other high congestion areas.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

Interaction with Traffic Control Devices are:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
Often incorrect causing a high risk situation (dangerous non-stops at signs or lights)	Not observant of cross street signs	Reacting to traffic controls as expected in most cases	Aware of how the traffic control devices affect all road users and actions are appropriate	Analyzing where traffic is most likely to be coming from and placing the vehicle in the best position (i.e. when making right turns at complex multi-lane intersections where there are designated lights)
Non-conforming (Placing vehicle in incorrect lane, position, or speed to execute a maneuver safely)	Lacking in appropriate timing and spacing for decisions about yellow lights Inappropriate for the rules for right of way	Lacking recognition of green traffic lights that have become stale, sometimes clearing intersection when red	Recognizing of fresh or stale green lights and is prepared for them	
Not considerate of pedestrians or other roadway users (blocking crossers using crosswalk right on red)	Misunderstanding of the active / inactive status of school zone speed controls	Observant of pedestrians and other road users, but may not yield appropriately	Observant of pedestrians and other road users and yields appropriately	Sequenced so the approach of lights maximizes the timing in their favor
Lacking communication (failing to signal approaching an intersection with a turn)	Occasionally incorrect in a risky way (nearly, but not completely stopped at signs or lights)	Does not always use center two-way left turn lane correctly to assist traffic flow	Consistently follows appropriate right-of-way procedures.	Identifying the needs of emergency vehicles and ensuring their path is not impeded
Failing to re-check condition of light after yielding to other road users	Incorrectly communicated (signaling the wrong way)	Using proper turn only lane, but may enter unnecessarily early	Consistently yields to vulnerable roadway users despite changing condition of controls	
Appearing unaware of emergency vehicles approaching	Lacking understanding of proper use of center two-way left turn lane.	Yielding to emergency vehicles, but sometimes late or not in best way		
Violating of appropriate right-of-way procedure in a dangerous way (enters when should have yielded)	Entering turn only lane too late	Recognizing of, but not always following correct right-of-way procedures (waves others on, or waits unnecessarily)		

Situation Awareness:

The degree to which drivers look ahead in time and space. How the driver uses secondary cues about the evolving traffic situation, placing themselves in a position to increase the time available to see, think, act, anticipate likely future positions of road users, and avoid getting into situations requiring conflict resolution. Inherent in situation awareness is the notion of judging motion and velocity, and the ability to time maneuvers to coincide in space.

Advice for Students:

Practice looking farther away from your vehicle and in all directions. Try to predict what the things you see will do before you get to them. This is a driving skill you will work on for the rest of your life. No one is ever perfect at this, but the safest drivers are the ones that pay attention.

New drivers tend to have a very narrow path of vision. They stare straight ahead of their car only about as wide as the driving lane. One of the most important skills drivers need to develop is using their eyes to search to the sides of the road ahead, down side streets, and to look in their mirrors more often. This skill does not develop quickly on its own. It takes deliberate practice.

1-Lacking:

This score could suggest low skill in a variety of ways. Each driving situation is different depending on countless factors. The driver must be able to identify the challenges they are approaching and plan appropriate reactions to them. This can take significant time for some new drivers and can require careful supervision by the person in the passenger seat to ensure the driver does not get into a dangerous situation unaware.

Practice visual scanning more than just the area in your immediate path of travel. The hazards you need to identify and prepare for often exist to the sides or behind the vehicle.

Don't forget to use the features the car has available to help you. Use the headlights, wipers, defrost, and other features when the situation calls for those aides.

Make sure you're doing a visual inspection of the vehicle before you get in and start to drive. Once you are in motion, a flaw can quickly become an emergency.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests the driver is reasonably aware of the driving scene when things are normal and expected, but they can easily get surprised by unexpected developments.

Visually scan far ahead of the vehicle and make sure you are prepared to stop in the visual distance if necessary. Also scan regularly to the sides and rear for potential risks.

Plan ahead for changes in your path of travel so you arrive smoothly and in full control. Assume vulnerable roadway users might do things unexpected that you must be prepared to react to.

3-Average:

This score means the driver is demonstrating minimal competence under normal driving situations. They can generally identify changing situations and react appropriately but can still get into situations more risky than preferred.

Practice measuring distance in seconds of travel time to make sure you always have time for any reactions you need to make.

Don't hesitate to drive slower or increase the distance between you and others when weather or road surface conditions are not ideal. More space provides you more time when a reaction is required.

4-Exceeding:

This score suggests the driver is very observant of changes in the driving scene and usually prepares for unexpected changes timely and appropriately.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the controls and features of every vehicle you drive. Take time to become familiar with the vehicle before you start driving so you will not have to figure things out while in motion.

5-Optimal:

This score suggests the driver is very strong in their identification and preparation for all types of driving situations. Even when faced with unexpected changes, the driver anticipates and reacts in ways that make the change unrecognizable to passengers or nearby roadway users.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The drivers situational awareness is:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
Assessing information too late and only the most immediate information	Only reading the road a few seconds ahead of the car or overdriving the headlights	Visually scanning approximately 10 seconds ahead but sometimes not properly utilizing the information	Using fairly consistent information (10-15 seconds ahead) and allowing time for things to work themselves out	Controlling of the vehicle in such a way as to assist other road users and minimize conflict (slowing early at a four way stop so that the stopping will clearly indicate to the other driver the right to go first)
Mis-judging the amount of time required to complete a maneuver (very short or overly long gap choice)	Constantly being caught off guard causing surprise	Sometimes lacking recognition of the relationship between space and time	Understanding of and using vehicle features beneficially in most cases (headlights, wipers, defrost, etc.)	Always fully preparing the vehicle for weather conditions before beginning to drive
Processing information out of sequence so the information cannot be used (checks the opposite blind spot while preparing for a turn)	Driving quickly up to a red light or a stopped vehicle and initiating braking late	Allowing some weather situations to diminish control without acting (does not lower visor to improve glare, does not use rear wiper to improve visibility)	Ensures vehicle is securely parked in a location not likely to be a hazard to others	Always ensuring all passengers and loose items are fully secured before vehicle movement
Backing vehicle while only looking forward	Backing vehicle without mostly looking in the direction of travel	Failing to set the parking brake when securing the vehicle	Ensures the safety of vulnerable roadway users in reasonable ways	
Operating the vehicle without using necessary features (headlights, wipers, defrost)	Operating the vehicle without using features that improve the situation (no headlights during low light situations, does not use wipers or cleaner to improve visibility, does not clear all glass surfaces for visibility)	Observant of vulnerable roadway users, but may not always yield or may get closer than ideal to them		
Attempting to drive with significant vehicle flaw (flat tire)	Not observant of vulnerable roadway users approaching the driver's path of travel			
Not noticing the presence or location of vulnerable roadway users dangerously close				

Vehicle Handling:

The extent that drivers use vehicle motion and balance controls appropriately and in a correct sequence. The apparent synchrony between driver, vehicle and the roadway that results in a consistently smooth ride.

Advice for Students:

Practice controlling the vehicle smoothly. The amount of pressure you use to press the pedals can help you control how the car moves. How quickly you turn the steering wheel has the same effect on turning. You want the car to be able to do what you ask it to. Being smooth and deliberate makes that happen.

Keep in mind, your hands and feet can't see for themselves. Your eyes look where you want the car to go, and your hands and feet follow where your eyes are looking. If you allow yourself to look away for too long, you will have trouble managing vehicle balance.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests the driver is not familiar with the vehicle controls that move the vehicle. They allow the car to move in jerky motions and sometimes fail to start or stop vehicle motion when appropriate. A driver at this skill level requires active supervision from a passenger ready to assist with verbal and physical directions to prevent collisions.

Practice using the pedals and steering the wheel without having the vehicle in motion. Feel how the pressure placed on each pedal makes the vehicle react. Feel how much resistance the steering system provides when turning the wheel. Once you are practicing with the vehicle in motion, pay attention to how small inputs of the pedals or steering can make the vehicle move significantly.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests the driver understands how the acceleration, braking and steering work, but they have not smoothly integrated the timing of their inputs. The driver may not think to use the brake to slow the vehicle before making a sharp turn, or they may accelerate or brake much more abruptly than necessary for the situation.

Regarding the pedals, practice pivoting your foot at the ankle while the heel of your foot is resting on the floor. Visualize pressing or releasing the pedal simply by curling your toes forward or back. Make every movement of your foot intentional and smooth.

For steering, always look where you want the vehicle to go. Your hands tend to steer where your eyes are looking, so make sure you are looking out in front of the vehicle and not staring at something you are afraid of hitting. Keep both hands on the steering wheel across from each other as near the 9 and 3 o'clock positions as possible.

3-Average:

This score suggests the driver is managing the transfer of vehicle weight reasonably well under normal conditions. They can maintain good lane position and can adjust speed reasonably smoothly.

Work on adjusting speed as you approach turns so that you are completely done braking before you do any turning of the wheel. If you enter a turn too slowly, accelerate gently to help the vehicle carve through the curve.

Resist forming habits of driving with only one arm. Drivers should always maintain 2 points of contact with the steering wheel to ensure any steering inputs are intentional and smooth.

4-Exceeding:

This score indicates the driver has become skilled at managing weight transfer and is able to adjust speed and direction smoothly in most cases.

Be sure to continue practicing being consistent and smooth, and work hard to prevent the formation of any driving habits that interfere with optimal weight transfer. Avoid distracting activities or anything that would require you to drive without both hands on the wheel. Make sure your left foot is solidly placed in such a way that optimal body stability is maintained at all times.

5-Optimal:

This score is extremely rare. Most highly skilled drivers can only demonstrate this level of vehicle balance control for short periods of time. Be constantly mindful of the actions and behaviors it takes to drive at this level and try to build positive habits that will allow you to remain at this skill level long term.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The driver is managing vehicle handling by:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
<p>Using the wrong control by mistake (uses the gas instead of the brake etc. in cases where risk may be elevated due to the error.)</p> <p>Allows vehicle to move significantly in the wrong direction (wrong gear)</p> <p>Using the correct control but very inappropriately (too much gas, brake, or steering)</p> <p>Approaching curves or turns at a dangerously inappropriate speed resulting in loss of lane position control</p> <p>Excessively spinning the tires or skidding (when road conditions are not a significant cause)</p> <p>Travelling completely inappropriately for road surface conditions (Too fast for gravel or wet surface)</p>	<p>Rough handling, not sensitive to the controls of the vehicle</p> <p>Signaling incorrectly or inappropriately</p> <p>Braking late or inappropriate in accelerating or steering (approaches turn too fast, but brakes late and maintains lane position control)</p> <p>Being awkward with the controls</p> <p>Consistently steering with one arm or making turns with hand inside the steering wheel (long periods of resting hand on gear selector or elbow on door sill)</p> <p>Attempting to maintain steering control with leg while using hands for another task</p> <p>Having difficulty backing in the desired direction (turns the wheel the wrong way)</p>	<p>Vehicle balance is managed intentionally</p> <p>Occasionally braking in the middle of a turn, but maintains lane position control throughout the turn</p> <p>Steering while both braking and/or accelerating, but not so much as to lose significant grip between the tires and the road surface</p> <p>Occasionally driving with only one arm on the wheel (short duration resting of arm on the gear selector, window sill, or elsewhere)</p> <p>Allowing steering wheel to straighten on its own after a turn</p> <p>Driving with hands too high on the steering wheel for optimal control (10 & 2)</p>	<p>Initiating braking smoothly and timely</p> <p>Completing braking by smoothly releasing pressure from the pedal</p> <p>Making corrections dealing with speed and direction appropriately (no squealing of tires during turns)</p> <p>Consistently maintains 2 points of contact on the steering wheel near the equator</p>	<p>Functioning and interacting with the controls of the car automatically</p> <p>Driving smoothly and in the correct sequence or timing for any driving task</p>

Space Management:

The degree to which a driver is aware of their surroundings, understands the implications of the time space relationship and optimizes the space to the best of their ability for themselves and other road users. Drivers' ability to maintain an optimum space independent of other road users is considered important as well as the ability to separate out hazards and deal with each as an isolated incident.

Advice for Students:

Practice creating space all around your vehicle. When you have space from things, you have time to react if something starts to get close to you.

Even a little extra space can make a huge difference in an emergency. Creating a little extra space is easy. Change your speed 1 or 2 mph to move away from other cars nearby. Park in a parking space leaving several empty spots in each direction. Choose your route to travel on roads that have wider lanes. You'll never know if those choices actually made you safer, but it's safe to assume they didn't hurt.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests the driver is either unaware or unable to keep the vehicle away from other vehicles or hazards. A driver at this level requires constant supervision from a passenger ready to give verbal and/or physical assistance to ensure a crash does not occur.

Practice the process of shifting the vehicle into and out of gear without moving. Practice transitioning the right foot between the accelerator and brake pedals without moving. Practice steering left and right without moving. Each of these exercises provides mental context for the driver to use when they are in motion.

Spend time finding visual targets for successful maneuvers near other hazards, like parking and backing. Work on visualizing things like how much the front of the vehicle swings left or right during slow tight turns.

2-Emerging:

This score suggests the driver understands how to manage space around the vehicle but has not yet become adept at this in practice. They are capable of significant mental errors which may lead to unexpected actions like signaling the wrong way, braking or accelerating roughly, or backing the vehicle with poor control.

Practice identifying gaps in moving traffic in seconds of time rather than distance.

Make sure you always know the spaces near your vehicle are clear of hazards before trying to place your vehicle in that space. Check your blind spots often and make sure you know what is in the areas directly in front and behind your vehicle at all times.

3-Average:

This score indicates that the driver can manage space around their vehicle reasonably well under normal situations, however errors can still occur from their lack of consideration for the movements of others nearby.

Work on placing your vehicle when parking in such a way that you are centered in the available space. Consider how your space might be affected if one of the nearby vehicles leaves and another vehicle arrives.

Learn to manage the space to the front and rear of the vehicle independent of the actions of other traffic. Avoid getting into situations where you must react to a change made by another.

4-Exceeding:

This score suggests that the driver is always very aware of the space around the vehicle and generally manages that space to benefit themselves and other present roadway users.

Work on thinking about ways you can manage space to benefit drivers who will arrive in the future. The location you park or the way you navigate tight spaces will often have an impact on future roadway users. Consider their needs along with your own.

5-Optimal:

This score indicates the driver is managing the space around their vehicle purposefully. They always place the vehicle in locations that benefit their needs while also attempting to benefit the needs of other roadways users present or arriving in the future.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The driver is managing space by:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
<p>Hitting objects</p> <p>Being exceptionally awkward when maneuvering the vehicle at slow speeds (needs multiple attempts to angle or perpendicular park the vehicle)</p> <p>Getting too close to objects including cars, barriers and curbs without good reason</p> <p>Getting dangerously close to vulnerable roadway users requiring avoidance by them</p>	<p>Lacking strong or consistent gap selection and is inappropriate with the choices of space needed to complete the maneuver (waits too long when making a right turn for the vehicle coming from the left)</p> <p>Failing to separate hazards and/or chooses inappropriate hazards to be close to</p> <p>Allowing their vehicle to remain in someone's blind spot too long</p> <p>Occupying more than one parking space when parked (not caused by the proximity of other vehicles or hazards)</p> <p>Having difficulty performing precision parking or backing maneuvers (requires multiple attempts to parallel park)</p>	<p>Keeping a reasonable amount of space to sides and rear</p> <p>Maintaining a reasonable following distance</p> <p>Being influenced by the car ahead, making the driver dependent of others actions</p> <p>Selecting parking spaces based on convenience over safety or property damage risk</p> <p>Entering intersection on green, sometimes without checking to the sides first</p>	<p>Consistently considering the presence of vehicles to the front, rear and sides</p> <p>Choosing following distance independent of the vehicle ahead. Increasing space when vision or traction are reduced</p> <p>Usually enters intersection on green after a delayed start</p> <p>Consistently creates a safe space around vulnerable roadway users</p>	<p>Placing the car in such a position as to maximize the amount of space surrounding their vehicle while minimizing any potential inconvenience for other road users.</p>

Driver Behavior:

The extent that a driver demonstrates an appropriate level of independent action representing their willingness to consider driving as an interactive social activity.

- The driver should be able to assess the driving environment in real time.
- They should be able to reasonably predict the actions of other drivers and adjust their driving to maintain an appropriate level of respect and interaction with all road users.
- When the driver observes other road users behaving in negative ways, they should react appropriately to the situation.

This category also looks at the driver's willingness to accept and follow instruction from the instructor or assessor. Lower scores will be assessed for drivers who disobey instruction and for students who are unwilling or unable to maintain a state of mind beneficial to the learning experience.

Advice for Students:

The way you drive is an expression of how you tolerate risk. Some people are naturally tolerant of risk and need to work on making less risky driving decisions. Some people let risk scare them too much and need to work on keeping calm and in control of the risks around them. Keep in mind, drivers often become more risk tolerant with experience which can lead to making bad decisions as a result.

1-Lacking:

This score typically represents a driver who is not managing the emotional pressure of learning to drive. When over-stressed, people make errors they might not otherwise make, and they often make bigger errors than they otherwise might make.

There are some techniques that can help a person remain calm. Some people benefit from a few deep breaths. Others may benefit from a short conversation with passengers before beginning to drive. Whatever helps the driver get themselves into a calm state will help them learn and retain information more easily.

If you find yourself becoming angry with other roadway users, find somewhere safe to pull over and park so you can calm down and maintain an appropriate emotional response to others.

2-Emerging:

This score typically suggests that the driver is not considering how their actions may negatively impact the efficient flow of traffic and may lead to frustration among other roadway users.

Practice measuring distance in seconds of time. As you learn to recognize how many seconds of time away other traffic is, you will start to make driving decisions more consistently and safer.

Pay attention to the advice the instructor provides during each lesson. If they say something you don't understand or something you don't agree with, ask them for clarification. Instructors are careful not to give you dangerous instructions, but if you misunderstand what they are saying, an unexpected problem can arise.

3-Average:

This score suggests that the driver is typically driving reasonably calm and considerate but may not make decisions that assist other roadway users. The driver may also struggle with pre-conceived ideas about good or correct driving behavior they have learned from others.

Emotional reactions while driving are most common when travelling in congested traffic situations. When possible, consider changing your route to travel on less busy streets or at less congested times of day.

4-Exceeding:

This score suggests the driver is managing the emotional challenges of driving reasonably well. They still may make technical driving errors at times, but they remain calm and take correction from the instructor or mentor well.

To improve from this level, focus your efforts on benefitting other roadway users whenever possible. Any situation where you must pick between you benefitting or someone else benefitting from a decision, choose the action that others benefit from first. The positive contribution you provide to the vehicles around you can have positive impacts far beyond what you witness.

5-Optimal:

This score indicates that you have really embraced the idea that driving is a social experience where the positive actions of one driver can have a ripple effect of positive influences far beyond the present moment. Driving experience challenges a person and can make it difficult to remain a strong positive influence but keep at it. The world needs a lot more drivers like you to help make our roads safer for everyone.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The driver is behaving by:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
<p>Making decisions with no regard for the reactions taken by other road users in the area (cuts off traffic while merging, fails to yield to pedestrians or bicyclists, stops blocking areas of traffic egress, backs into road with no regard for traffic)</p> <p>Willfully disobeying the instructor or repeatedly performing actions different than instructed (turns left instead of right, fails to adjust speed as directed)</p> <p>Reacting to the negative actions of other road users very emotionally, resulting in an aggressive dangerous reaction</p> <p>Consistently lacking confidence resulting in dangerous or unpredictable actions</p>	<p>Lacking consistent ability to drive in a way that does not impede the reasonable actions of other road users</p> <p>Lacking awareness of the negative perception their actions are portraying to other road users</p> <p>Letting pre-conceived notions about driving interfere with direction from instructors</p> <p>Having some difficulty following instructions, but never due to willful disobedience</p> <p>Letting the actions of other road users result in frustration that may distract from the driving task</p> <p>Never performing a driver action purely to assist other road users</p> <p>Often struggling with nervousness or low confidence about their driving, creating risky situations</p>	<p>Making most decisions and actions independently</p> <p>Letting the actions of other road users result in frustration but does not become distracted as a result</p> <p>Sometimes questioning or resisting directions from instructors if they do not align with pre-conceived notions</p> <p>Rarely performing a driver action purely to assist other road users</p> <p>Sometimes gets nervous and lacks confidence about their driving</p> <p>Sometimes acting from a position of over-confidence</p>	<p>Requiring few and infrequent corrective directions from the instructor; rarely makes decisions or actions which impede or frustrate other road users</p> <p>Not letting the actions of other road users result in emotional reactions</p> <p>Trying to always follow the instructor's direction</p> <p>Attempting to act in ways that assist other road users, but sometimes is too slow or too late to achieve the desired result</p> <p>Occasionally getting nervous, but maintaining a reasonable level of confidence</p>	<p>Consistently observing the actions of nearby road users and avoids actions which could frustrate or impede their actions</p> <p>Never reacting emotionally to the actions of other road users</p> <p>Requiring no corrective direction from the instructor and follows all instructions timely and correctly</p> <p>Always seeking actions which will assist other road users in a positive way</p> <p>Always driving with a calm, confident and even disposition</p>

Personal Responsibility:

The extent a driver can reasonably manage the wide array of information present while driving. The ability to utilize vehicle technology in beneficial ways while minimizing negative influences. The degree to which the driver maintains an appropriate level of concentration despite distracting or confusing influences inside and outside the vehicle.

This category will be assessed differently based on various factors. Vehicle technology varies, and some technologies may be enabled or disabled in the vehicle being driven. It is also assumed that drivers who are knowingly being assessed will consciously avoid performing some distracting, illegal or inappropriate activities they may otherwise perform privately. Low scores for this category should be limited to behaviors actually observed and behaviors clearly demonstrating a lack of understanding how to operate the vehicle in a safe and responsible manner.

Advice for Students:

Work on being a member of a larger driving community. The way you choose to drive affects all the other road users nearby. When you make a mistake, own it. When someone else makes a mistake, find a way to improve the safety of that situation.

Learn to use the technology in your vehicle as a way to make you a more responsible and safer driver. As you become more experienced, your natural tendency will be to let yourself become more distracted. Build strong habits now that you can rely on for the long term.

1-Lacking:

This score suggests that the driver is either over-reliant or under-reliant on the safety features present in the vehicle they are driving. This score can also be heavily influenced by negative behaviors involving distraction, impairment or sleep deprivation. Whatever the cause, the driver is letting the influences make them drive in a dangerous manner which needs immediate intervention to avoid a high risk for crash.

If distraction is a regular struggle for you, find ways to create countermeasures to the things that distract you. Reduce the number of passengers you allow in the vehicle. Put electronic devices in locations where you are not aware of them if they beep or flash. Turn off the infotainment system. Whatever the distracting thing is, find a way to make it less influential on your driving behavior.

2-Emerging:

The leading reason this score is given is for over-reliance on vehicle technology features used in a way that does not benefit safe and efficient travel on the roadway. Looking primary at a camera view while backing. Relying on a blind spot monitor when preparing to change lanes. Letting the lane keeping system of the adaptive cruise control make unsupervised decisions about lane position or following distance. These are all indications that the driver is not taking the responsibility of driving seriously enough and the risk of a crash is elevated as a result.

3-Average:

This score suggests the driver is accepting responsibility for the driving task under typical driving situations, but they are still capable of allowing risk to become a negative factor at times.

Challenge yourself to drive in such a way that any active safety features never alert you of a risk. Consider every time the vehicle warns you of something as an instance where you missed something that could have been dangerous. The more you insist you own the responsibility of the driving task, the less risk you will expose yourself and other roadway users to.

4-Exceeding:

This score is an indication that you consider the driving task to be a serious responsibility and that a small mistake can have a large negative outcome.

To improve from here, focus on using the available technology in the vehicle only when there is a safety or efficiency benefit to both you and other roadway users. Remain determined to prioritize the driving task over all other distracting activities even when it seems safe enough to add the risk.

5-Optimal:

This score is among the most difficult to achieve and even harder to maintain. The modern vehicle is packed with more and more features that can make driving a more enjoyable experience, but when used inappropriately can insert significant risk as well. You are doing well now. Stay strong. Don't shy away from new vehicle technology as it becomes available, but only use it after taking the time to learn about it fully and considering any unintended consequences of its use.

Following is a graph describing how we determine your score for this category. The examples listed are some of the common decisions or actions typically performed by a person driving at each level. By the end of your last lesson in the course, your goal should be to achieve a 3 or higher. Practice at home between lessons is the best way to ensure you get there.

The driver is demonstrating personal responsibility by:				
1-Lacking	2-Emerging	3-Average	4-Exceeding	5-Optimal
<p>Relying completely on vehicle technology with no regard for operator responsibility (lets autonomous features operate without supervision, changes lanes based solely on vehicle warning features)</p> <p>Using personal electronic devices or infotainment systems in a manner leading to long periods of time not physically or mentally focused on the driving task</p> <p>Entering deep conversations with other passengers causing significant distraction</p> <p>Attempting to drive obviously under the influence of a substance that impairs safe operation</p> <p>Attempting to drive dangerously sleep deprived</p> <p>Drives without seatbelt properly engaged.</p> <p>Operating a vehicle carrying unstable cargo likely to fall off during travel</p> <p>Driving with loose items moving freely about the cabin</p>	<p>Using autonomous features without sufficient knowledge about how to supervise and resume control</p> <p>Using assistance features unsafely or inappropriately (backs while only using the rear camera)</p> <p>Allowing personal electronic devices or infotainment systems to create instances of significant distraction</p> <p>Participating in non-electronic distracting activities (checks hair or makeup, reads printed materials, eats food)</p> <p>Allowing conversations among passengers to become briefly distracting</p> <p>Driving while mildly impaired by a legal substance or sleep deprivation</p> <p>Drives without ensuring passengers have seatbelts engaged</p>	<p>Using autonomous features with basic knowledge of how to supervise and resume control, but not prepared for emergencies</p> <p>Trying to be aware of traffic and obstacles, but occasionally is alerted unaware by driver assistance features</p> <p>Allowing the use of personal electronic devices and infotainment systems to become distracting for brief periods of time with no negative outcome on themselves or other road users</p> <p>Having conversations with passengers, but always maintaining a reasonable level of attention</p> <p>Driving when it is possible they may still be impaired by a substance or drowsiness, but no knowledge or obvious sign of such condition</p>	<p>Using autonomous features with an appropriate knowledge of how to supervise and resume control, even in emergency situations</p> <p>Relying primarily on their vision and awareness of traffic and hazards</p> <p>Relying on driver assistance features to be secondary</p> <p>Avoids using personal electronic devices in distracting ways</p> <p>Limiting interactions with the infotainment system to brief moments when emergencies are unlikely</p> <p>Maintaining consistent cognitive focus on the driving task even with passengers</p> <p>Never driving under the influence of a known impairing substance, but may drive under mild influence of medications or drowsiness</p>	<p>Only enabling autonomous features after becoming fully aware of their functions and limitations, including full understanding of how to disable the feature and resume full control in any situation</p> <p>Operating the vehicle in such a way that assistance features never activate</p> <p>Avoiding all interaction with personal electronic devices while the vehicle is moving</p> <p>Avoiding all interaction with the infotainment system while the vehicle is moving</p> <p>Avoiding all non-electronic distractions including conversations</p> <p>Never driving after consuming any impairing substance until all effects have fully passed</p> <p>Never driving in a drowsy condition</p>

Component 2 – Lesson Components

Lesson Structure: Novice Drivers

For the scoring to accurately reflect overall driver competency, each lesson must navigate on various roads any varying levels of traffic density and practice progressively difficult driving tasks. It is assumed the experience level of the driver is lowest when appearing for the first lesson at a school and will improve with each lesson they attend. The following guidance defines how to structure a series of lessons for optimal application of the scoring matrix.

For this component, it is assumed that the school will be providing 6 lessons of 1 hour each. For schools providing a different total number of lessons, the school may adapt the lesson structure as needed. Regardless of the number of lessons, the goal is to assess a novice driver as minimally competent before considering them complete with the course.

Each lesson is designed to be progressively more technically challenging than the previous. During each lesson the matrix assists the instructor to compare the driver's behavior to experienced drivers performing the exact same lesson. If the novice has been practicing sufficiently between lessons, the scores given during each lesson assessment would reflect that. For example, the novice performs at a level 3 in most categories during lesson 1. They practice several hours before lesson 2. They perform at a level 3 in most categories during lesson 2. Alternately, if they do not practice sufficiently between lessons, it is expected that they may perform at a lower level as the difficulty of the lessons increases. For a fair and accurate assessment to occur during the final lesson, it is recommended that the driver not be presented with any situations in the final lesson that they were not previously presented with on previous lessons. Rather than presenting the driver with new situations to assess, the final lesson should base assessment on the degree of instruction necessary to assist the driver in performing the lesson tasks.

This guidance takes no position on school policy regarding instructors following pre-determined lesson routes. The guidance establishes a list of minimum actions to be performed during each lesson. Instructors should refer to previous lesson scores and provide remedial instruction on areas receiving a score of 2 or below. Instructors are encouraged to add actions based on the observed ability of the driver, but the actions listed for each lesson should still be performed and scored.

Remedial Situations:

There may be instances where the novice driver is not developing at a pace sufficient to progress with the increased challenge of the lesson they are scheduled to complete. In these instances, it is important for the lesson to be adjusted to meet the learning needs of the novice driver. In cases where the driver is significantly unable to perform the lesson requirements, they should be advised that they are likely to need additional lessons to complete the course of instruction. If possible, they should be given specific guidance on weaknesses to improve via independent practice to "catch up" before the next lesson. They should also be advised on how soon they should schedule their next instructional lesson.

In cases where the lesson was significantly adjusted to suit the driver's ability, their scores should reflect this. It would be appropriate to lower all scores by 1 level to reflect this adjustment. (IE, a 3 becomes a 2, etc.).

Lesson Structure: Experienced Drivers

When using this assessment matrix for the purpose of assessing experienced, medically-at-risk, or professional drivers, the driving skills and behavior observed should be modified to mimic the driving environment typical for that driver. The lesson structure below is suitable for new or novice drivers in common driving environments but may not be suitable for drivers in large vehicles, vehicles pulling trailers, or drivers primarily operating in significantly rural areas. Training schools may use the structure below as a template for the creation of a structure that meets the individual characteristics of other drivers' needs.

Lesson Structure: Challenge Assessments

It may be appropriate, if approved by the training school jurisdiction, to offer a challenge assessment option which would allow the driver to demonstrate competency without participating in lessons which would otherwise be required. In this case, great care must be taken to ensure the assessment is robust enough to reasonably demonstrate competency. Minimum criteria to make a challenge option reasonable would include:

- Driver performance on at least two previous lessons suggests the driver may be competent enough to successfully challenge the rest of the course.
- The lesson requirements for a challenge option would be at least as technically demanding as the final lesson designed for the entire course.
- The driver should be able to demonstrate a level of competency slightly higher than the minimum course requirements with minimal assistance from the instructor. It is recommended a successful challenger receive a total average score of 3.3 or higher with no individual scores below 3.
- Low skill drivers should be discouraged from trying to “shortcut” training before they can demonstrate they have the necessary skill.
- A Challenge should only be available to a student once. A below competency outcome should result in a requirement to complete the remainder of the course as designed.

Sample Assessment Form: Novice Drivers

The included form serves as a template for documenting the progression of a driver through a 6 hour behind the wheel course assessing each of the 10 categories. It can be adapted as needed by a training school for the purpose of communicating competency progression to the driver, parents / guardians, employers / responsible parties, or regulatory agencies.

Component 3 – Training & Evaluating the assessor:

The efficacy of any scoring matrix relies on its equal application by multiple assessors. If the matrix is not similarly used by all the assessors, the individual outcome will lack credibility and the communicative benefits of the scores will be diminished. To ensure all assessors are performing the assessment correctly, there must be sufficient initial training followed by periodic evaluations of the assessor by a licensed trainer of trainers.

Initial training: Each of the 10 categories in the matrix describes various driver actions, decisions and behaviors to be observed by the assessor to determine a score. Following is some advice for becoming a consistent and appropriate assessor.

- Understand that as an assessor, the way in which you drive on a daily basis has some inherent flaws that can be improved. No driver of any experience or skill level is expected to always score optimally competent. Avoid letting your own personal driving habits influence how you assess the competency of the student.
- When initially studying the matrix, it can be overwhelming to fully learn the scoring criteria in each section. Consider prioritizing the behaviors that warrant a score of 2 first. When you become confident you will recognize level 2 behavior when you see it, you will also gain recognition of behavior worse than 2 (level 1) or better than 2 (level 3). From there, recognition of level 4 and 5 behavior gets easier.
- Avoid blanket scoring. New assessors not fully versed in the scoring criteria often demonstrate a willingness to apply the same score over several categories. For example, they might say “That driver is just horrible, so I gave them 1’s in everything.” This is an indication that the assessor has not sufficiently studied the matrix and does not yet understand the individual nature of each of the 10 categories.
- Don’t use scoring as a reward or punishment. There may be a desire at times to try to build up the confidence of the driver by giving them a higher score than they deserve. Similarly, there could be instances where an assessor might be inclined to score lower than deserved to counter over-confidence or another perceived negative behavior. This is strongly discouraged. For the scoring to accurately communicate to the driver where they are strong or weak, it must be consistent and accurate. Consider using the + or – qualifiers to address confidence issues. For example, someone performing at a 2 and demonstrating low confidence might benefit from “You’re getting better! You’re a 2+ in this category. That’s almost a 3!”
- Collaborate with your peers. There is no way for the matrix to list every driver behavior you may observe. When something happens that you cannot confidently score, discuss it with others, if possible.
- Remember that the score you assign is a wholistic assessment of the entire lesson you performed. One single negative incident may or may not significantly influence the score depending on how the driver performed over the remainder of the lesson. Don’t score unnecessarily harshly for a significant, unrepeated error, but also don’t overlook minor errors that suggest a deeper flaw or weakness is present.
- For training schools with multiple instructors, it can be beneficial to hold periodic staff meetings where instructors can collaborate on the matrix and create tighter consistency with each other. One instructor assessing differently than the rest of the team can have significant influences on successful driver development.

Evaluation methods: There are several ways that an assessor can be evaluated. Trainers can use the method they feel best produces the typical performance of the individual assessor. Below are some common examples of evaluation methods, but trainers should be encouraged to adapt their own methods as well. There is no recommendation for how long an evaluation must take to complete. Availability of suitable locations for activities will vary from school to school. The evaluation must take the time it takes to meet the evaluative objectives.

- **Observational method:** A trainer may ride along during a live lesson and observe the instructor perform the lesson. The trainer may choose to score the lesson as if they were the instructor and then compare scores after the conclusion of the lesson. Trainers choosing this method should be mindful that any interaction they have with the instructor or student during the lesson may influence the evaluation.
- **Electronic method:** A trainer may view audio / video recordings of a lesson or segments of several lessons. This method may be particularly useful if working with an instructor on a specific skill set. Trainers should be mindful that the video may not be as representative of situations as they were for the driver and instructor in real time.
- **Route based method:** Trainer of trainers may create a route used to conduct the evaluation which includes the actions that are being evaluated. It is not required that a route be used consistently for all assessments, but care should be taken to ensure any route used is not inherently more or less difficult for the assessor or evaluator. The route should be conducted on roads and areas familiar to the assessor to ensure they are able to focus on application of the scoring matrix.

Evaluation frequency: Each assessor should be evaluated periodically for their application of the matrix. For instructors new to this matrix, it is recommended they be evaluated after conducting approximately 100 lessons. Experienced assessors should be evaluated at least once per professional license cycle, or at any time a trainer of trainers becomes aware of scoring discrepancies among assessor staff.

Corrective action: In the event an assessor is found to lack knowledge, skill, or consistent application of the scoring matrix, they should be provided training in the specific areas they were found to be lacking. Training may be provided at the discretion of the trainer of trainers. When the assessor completes the necessary training, It is recommended they be assessed after completion of approximately 100 lessons to ensure long term appropriate application of the matrix.

Jurisdictional note: There may be training schools who do not have a licensed trainer of trainers on their staff. This may be due to a lack of that license designation existing within the jurisdiction in which they operate. The lack of a trainer of trainers on a staff is not intended to exclude a school from using this competency-based method. It is recommended in these cases that someone on the school staff be established as the lead assessor and be the point of contact within the school to maintain the system as described. Trainers and lead assessors are encouraged to seek resources outside their own companies which will assist them in the appropriate use of this method.