



## ADDITIONAL DRIVING PRACTICE – Road Trip Exercise

### Learning Objective

This exercise integrates all of the concepts and skills learned in the teenSMART program. Remember the “Big Six”?

- Active Visual Search – Being aware of what’s going on around you
- Hazard Recognition – Identifying what is or might become hazardous and reacting appropriately
- Speed Adjustment – Fitting your speed to road and traffic conditions
- Space Management – Maintaining safe gaps between you and other vehicles
- Risk Perception and Analysis – Reducing risk levels
- Lifestyle Issues – Understanding how lifestyle issues impact safety

Make sure you have practiced and become comfortable with all of these concepts prior to setting out on any road trip. This exercise is designed to integrate all of the “Big 6” skills.

This exercise will provide you with a basic understanding of trip planning and safe driving in unfamiliar areas. It will give you a head start in what will become a more and more frequent driving activity.

### What’s the Game Plan?

Build upon what you learned in the teenSMART program. The point of this exercise is to choose the safest route, anticipate trouble so you are not in for any big surprises, and reduce your exposure to hazardous situations.

First you and your chosen adult will need to plan your trip. As you plan your trip you should:

- Talk about the trip you would like to take
- Use a map to plot the trip
- Check road conditions on the internet or on your state’s road conditions “hotline” or your onboard navigation system
- Plan locations to refuel, take a rest stop or get something to eat

Then you should:

- Make sure your vehicle is in good shape and free of mechanical problems
- Check the brakes and tires
- Clean the windows and mirrors
- Set your navigation system, radio, etc., before you begin your trip

The teen should drive at least half of the road trip as long as it is safe to do so. The adult should use the Observer Feedback Worksheet to jot down notes about how your teen is doing. You might want to let your teen observe you as well when you are driving.



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### Guidelines for Being the Driver

- Rule #1 is **drive safely**. If you get overloaded or stressed, discontinue the exercise and then find a safe opportunity to pull over and stop the car.
- After the trip is completed and you are listening to feedback from the observer, accept it with good grace, even if you may not agree. It's best to listen and try not to argue. Focus on what the observer is saying, and take away what you can use to improve your driving.

### Guidelines for Being the Observer

When you are the observer, you want to give feedback to the driver in a way that is helpful and constructive. To assist you, we have developed some Observer Feedback sheets you can use. These sheets are based on the following guidelines:

- **Wait until a given section of the road trip is completed before you begin giving feedback.** That way you can both concentrate safely on what's being said.
- **Begin by saying two or three positive things about what the driver did right.** We all like to hear something good up front. Try to make this a meaningful compliment.
- **Ask the driver for his/her own brief take on what went well and not so well.** By giving the driver the chance to express his/her own feelings first you'll reduce any sense of confrontation, and it will be easier to cover everything without repetition.
- **When you give corrective feedback, concentrate on just two or three things.** The more you criticize, the less the driver will hear or remember. So pick out two or three things that are really important.
- **Focus your feedback on driving skills or how you felt during the drive.** It's better to say, "You should check your side mirrors more often for traffic behind you," or "I was feeling a little scared when we got close to that red car, because there was a chance we might hit it," than to say, "You're driving carelessly. Don't you care if you hit someone?"
- **End on a positive note.** To wrap things up, remind the driver of some of the good things he/she did. You don't want things to end with too much emphasis on what went wrong. By returning to the positive feedback, you'll make sure the driver feels encouraged and responsive.

To repeat one last word: You may be getting the idea that the observer isn't supposed to talk while the car is in motion. In general, this is a good idea. You don't want to distract the driver or interrupt his/her comments. If you do see something dangerous or threatening, you should speak up! You'd hate to have an accident and then say, "Well, I saw the truck coming, but I didn't think I was supposed to say anything!"

### A Word About Follow-Up

Once you finish the Road Trip Exercise, fill out the Drive Time Matrix. Continue to practice those areas where you still need practice. This means concentrating on those areas the next few times you get behind the wheel. Tell your adult how you are improving. Use the completed Observer Feedback sheets as memory joggers about skills to keep working on.



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**OBSERVER FEEDBACK WORKSHEET**

Route you are driving \_\_\_\_\_

Driving Situation	What did the driver do well or what you would have done in addition or differently?
Driver Comments:	What did the driver do well or what you would have done in addition or differently?
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### OBSERVER SKILLS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Driving Skills	Did Well	Needs Improving	Notes/ Examples
Visual Search: Being aware of what is going on around the vehicle and avoiding blind spots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hazard Recognition: Identifying what is or might become hazardous and reacting appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Speed Adjustment: Adjusting speed to road conditions, visibility, and traffic flow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Space Management: Maintaining acceptable space cushions around the vehicle, and while changing lanes or merging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Perception and Analysis: Reducing overall risk by using the skills taught in teenSMART	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gap Analysis: Maintaining safe gaps while making left hand turns. 4 seconds from the left and 6 seconds from the right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

#### Overall Feeling:

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable/safe did you feel during the drive (circle one)?

1 = Scared to death / 2 = Uncomfortable / 3 = Mostly okay / 4 = Pretty comfortable / 5 = Completely safe and secure

When did you feel most comfortable? Why?

When did you feel least comfortable? Why?