

Module 1

# PERSONAL ATTITUDE

## Module Objectives

By the end of this Module, you should:

- Be able to know the attitude and behavior of yourself and others.
- Be able to know your own limitations.
- Be able to know the limitations of your vehicle.
- Be able to manage the risks you take.
- Be able to understand road rules.
- Be able to make your vehicles safe.
- Be able to be ready for the unexpected.

## BEHAVIOUR

### Definition

- Behavior describes our observable action – How we conduct ourselves

## What makes a Good Driver?

- Some people think that having a license, being able to drive faster than others in heavy traffic or wet road, out-performing or out-maneuvering other drivers or the fact that they have not had an accident makes them a good driver. **So what makes you think that you are not an accident waiting to happen?**

## Being a good driver is about

- Understanding the attitude and behavior of yourself and others.
- Knowing your limitations.
- Knowing the limitations of your vehicles
- Managing the risks, you take
- Understanding road rules
- Making your vehicle safe
- Being ready for the unexpected

## **ATTITUDE**

### **Definition**

- Is a cluster of positive and negative feelings, beliefs, options, behavior and tendencies towards people, idea, objects or any other elements in a person's environment?

Attitude is the single most important factor to safe driving. Drivers with a good attitude have fewer accidents, regardless of their driving skills, because they do not place themselves or allow themselves to be caught in high-risk situations. No matter how good you are at controlling the vehicle, if you place yourself in a high-risk situation enough times, you will have an accident. The best way to minimize accidents are to avoid unnecessary risks. Foremost, a good attitude means avoiding unnecessary risks or putting safety first and focusing your attention on your driving. Someone with a good attitude also knows that no one, including himself or herself, is perfect and is constantly trying to improve their driving. We should all be doing the following:

### **Good Attitudes**

- Show concern for other road users
- Accepts that other road users will make mistakes
- Accepts that no job is so urgent that speeding can be tolerated
- Understands that driving is a skill that requires application of good techniques
- Knows that a safe driver requires an alert mind at all times
- Understands that a vehicle cannot be safe unless it is maintained properly
- Knows drugs, alcohol and driving do not mix.

### **Carry out a Pre-trip check**

- Leave distractions behind you
  - ✓ mental
  - ✓ physical
- Know your route
- Prepare to drive defensively

## **AWARENESS**

### **Definition**

- Having knowledge of something

A safe driver is one who thinks about his/her driving and looks for ways to improve it. The majority of motorists consider themselves good drivers, but the fact that driver error plays a part in 95% of accidents means that many people are kidding themselves.

An important aspect of driving safely is developing an awareness of your limitations and those of your vehicle. We all have limitations, though many of us fail to recognize them. When there is an accident or near miss, we automatically hold the other driver responsible rather than accepting our own portion of the blame.

All too often, when we take risks, we try to justify them instead of taking a critical look at our attitude and driving practices. That needs to change if you want to be a safe driver, because otherwise you will continue repeating those risks or narrowly avoiding them or having crashes.

## **MOTIVATION**

### **Definition**

- The internal desire to take actions thus creating an energy of strength to act.
- Motivation moves a person to act. It involves will and ability - the will to channel the psychological forces or energy in a particular direction and the ability to achieve particular ends or satisfy needs. Simply put a driver may be motivated to comply with speed restrictions if a speed camera is in the vicinity. However, drivers often face competing needs. Those who drive for their employment may be motivated to meet tight schedules, especially if there is an incentive for doing so, at the expense of safety standards.
- The skill of looking up ahead depends on your motivation to do so but if you lack awareness or perception of the risks or hazards ahead, then you may not be motivated to use the skill. The issue for those who attend driver training is the motivation to change driving behavior following the learning.

## **SKILLS**

- Skills are essential component of ability. Skills are crucial for safe or low risk driving behavior but safe driving skills involve more than vehicle control skills alone.

- Drivers need skills training to increase their ability to identify hazards using the techniques of scanning and looking up ahead – vision skills. They also need the skills to interpret and assess the hazards and risks they detect.
- Generally, these skills are only acquired through learning and ongoing practice.
- Considering the complexity and multi - tasking of driving and the minimum levels of training that most drivers receive, the high crash rate is understandable

For example, very few drivers have been taught or tested on open roads at higher speeds. Developing hazards perception and risk assessment skills required at 50 or 60 km/h is very different to skills required at 80km/h.

- The driving skills necessary to accurately assess risks are more important than skills used to attempt to control situations caused by driver error.

For example, calculating the crash avoidance space needed to avoid a nose to tail collision by using the two-second minimum following gap is more skillful than trying to implement emergency or panic break. The advice to “Look Up” and “Stay Back” underpins this skill set

- Additionally, drivers need the skills of objective self-assessment and reflection – insight skills. Crash free drivers usually have higher order driver skills that reflect all of the above as well as a willingness to continue learning.

## Vision Skills

- Effective use of vision is a learned skill and is therefore an important component of driving defensively.
- In driving, vision skills include the use of vision placement and scanning techniques to detect objects or situations that require a response.
- When the eye receives a visual stimulus the brain draws on information already in the memory to interpret it and create a picture. The accuracy of the picture will depend on the stored clues in the memory.

For example, if a driver's memory already contains information about hazardous situation, a visual stimulus containing similar information may be recognised as hazardous and the driver may choose to change his/her behaviour in order to avoid the hazard.

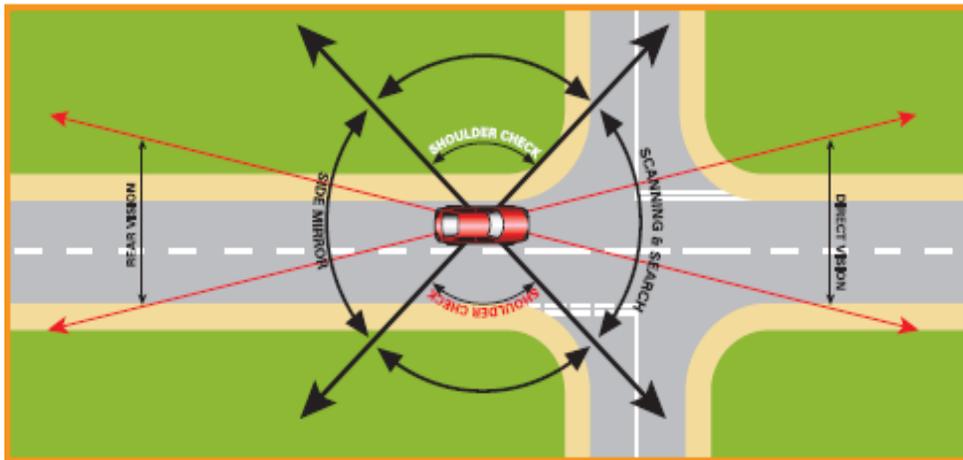
- When there is no recognition of the hazard no change in driving behavior occurs and an emergency situation may arise. This is a common problem for young and/or inexperienced drivers.

- There are particular problems relating to the use of vision when driving.

For example, vision fixation, the opposite of scanning, limits the opportunity to detect information necessary for the brain to determine if a hazard is present.

- In an emergency, driver often fixate on an object that they wish to avoid, such as the vehicle in front or a pole or tree with the consequence that they collide with it. The vision skill required here is to place the vision to where the driver wishes to steer. However, if the driver is following too closely or travelling too fast, a collision is probably inevitable.

### SEE THE WHOLE SCENE



### LOOK UP...STAY BACK

#### Module Summary

- Being a vigilant driver requires you to have the right attitude, skills and awareness of the surroundings.
- A driver requires good vision skills that would allow you to avoid unexpected distractions and prepares you physically and mentally to be a good defensive driver.