



MASON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

TITLE: ACCIDENT REVIEW BOARD

CHAPTER: 4000 NUMBER: 4010 DATE: 10-07-08

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This guide shall be used by the Safety Committee in determining if an accident was preventable or non-preventable.

- A. *What is a preventable accident?* A preventable accident is an accident in which the driver failed to do everything that reasonably could have been done to avoid it.
- B. *What is a non-preventable accident?* A non-preventable accident is an accident in which the driver did everything that reasonably could have been done to foresee the things that caused the accident and took appropriate action to guard against them.
- C. For each type of accident, a series of questions are asked. If the answer to any of the questions is “no”, then our driver was not practicing the best defensive driving.

It is often difficult to assess preventability and difficult to make drivers understand where they were at fault. Drivers must be shown very specifically the kinds of hazards they must anticipate and defend themselves against. Without a clear concept of what defensive driving is, it becomes a frustrating catchall in the minds of drivers.

Following is a definition of a defensive driver. The questions asked here will help to determine preventability and teach a driver what defensive driving means. During the fact-gathering process of an accident, consider the following questions to assess preventability.

A defensive driver is one who makes allowances for the lack of skill or knowledge on the part of the other driver. The defensive driver recognizes that he/she has no control over the unpredictable actions of other drivers and pedestrians, nor over weather or road conditions, and who, therefore, develops a defense against all of these hazards. The driver concedes the right-of-way and is defensively alert to avoid the accident traps and hazards created by weather, roads, pedestrians, and other drivers.

A. Intersection Accidents

- 1) Did our driver approach the intersection at a safe speed for the conditions?
- 2) Was our driver prepared to stop before entering the intersection?
- 3) At a blind corner, did our driver pull out slowly, ready to shift his (her) right foot to the brake pedal?
- 4) Did our driver make sure the other driver would stop for a traffic light or a stop sign?



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- 5) Did our driver obey all traffic signs and signals?
- 6) Did our driver signal well in advance of a change of direction?
- 7) Did our driver turn from the proper lane?
- 8) Was our driver alert to turns of other vehicles?
- 9) Did our driver avoid overtaking and passing in the intersection?
- 10) Did our driver refrain from jumping the green signal or riding through the caution light?

If the answer to any question is "no", our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

B. Collision with Vehicle Ahead

- 1) Was our driver maintaining a safe following distance?
- 2) Was our driver keeping his (her) eyes and attention on the vehicle ahead?
- 3) Did our driver approach the green traffic light cautiously, expecting the driver ahead to stop suddenly on the signal change?
- 4) Did our driver apply brakes in a manner to minimize skidding?

If the answer to any of the questions is "no", our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

C. Backing Accidents

- 1) Did our driver have to park so close to the vehicle ahead as to require backing to leave the parking space?
- 2) Was it necessary to drive into the narrow street, dead-end alley, or roadway from which our driver backed?
- 3) If our driver could not see where he (she) was backing:
 - a. Did our driver try to get someone to guide him (her)?
 - b. Did our driver look all around the vehicle before getting in?
 - c. Did our driver back immediately after looking?
 - d. Did our driver use the horn (3 beeps) while backing?



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- e. Did our driver look to the rear without depending on the review mirror?
- f. If the distance was long, did our driver stop, get out, and look around occasionally?
- 4) Did our driver back slowly?
- 5) Did our driver judge backing clearance accurately?

If the answer to any questions is "no", our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

D. Pedestrians

- 1) Did our driver drive through congested sections expecting that pedestrians might step in front of the vehicle?
- 2) Was our driver prepared to stop?
- 3) Did our driver keep as much clearance between the vehicle and parked cars as conditions permitted?
- 4) Did our driver refrain from passing a vehicle that had stopped to allow pedestrians to cross?
- 5) Did our driver refrain from jumping the green signal or riding through the yellow light?
- 6) Was our driver aware of groups of children and prepared to stop if one ran into the street?
- 7) Did our driver give all pedestrians the right-of-way?
- 8) Did our driver refrain from passing a school bus that was stopped with lights flashing and paddle displayed?

If the answer to any question is "no", our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

E. Pulling From the Curb

- 1) Did our driver look to the front and the rear for approaching traffic immediately before starting to pull out from the curb?
- 2) Did our driver look back rather than depend on the rearview mirror?
- 3) Did our driver signal before pulling from the curb?



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- 4) Did our driver start out only when his (her) action would not require traffic to change its speed or direction to avoid our driver?
- 5) Did our driver continue to glance back while pulling out?

If the answer to any question is “no”, our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

F. Skidding

- 1) Was our driver driving at a safe speed for the conditions of weather and road?
- 2) Was our driver keeping at least twice the safe following distance for dry pavement?
- 3) Were all of our driver’s actions gradual?
- 4) Was our driver expecting ice on bridges, in gutters, ruts, and near the curb?
- 5) Was our driver alert for melting snow, freezing in the shade, loose gravel, sand, ruts, slick pavement, etc.?
- 6) Did our driver keep out of vehicle tracks and cross them at wide angles?
- 7) What gear way our driver using?

If the answer to any question is “no”, our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.

G. Parked

- 1) Was our driver on the right side of the road?
- 2) Was it necessary to park near the intersection?
- 3) Did our driver have to park on a traveled part of a highway, on a curve, or on a hill?
- 4) Where required, did our driver warn traffic by flag or flare?
- 5) Did our driver park parallel to a curb?

If the answer to any question is “no”, our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.



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H. All Others

- 1) Could our driver have done anything to avoid the accident?
- 2) Was our driver's speed safe for conditions?
- 3) Did our driver obey all traffic signs and signals?
- 4) Was our driver's vehicle under control?
- 5) Did our driver call in for help when in doubt?
- 6) Did our driver report this accident as soon as he (she) returned?

If the answer to any question is "no", our driver was not driving defensively and the accident is considered preventable.