

The Steer Clear Driver Education programme has been fully designed and produced in Ireland. It is a dynamic approach to road safety with training manuals, interactive DVDs, quizzes, exams and knowledge reviews. Students will receive the very best foundation possible under the guidance of a certified driving educator.

Steer Clear is divided into three parts, **Knowledge Development**, **In-car Skills Training** and finally, **Practical Application** through mentor supported driving. Part 1 is ideal for transition year or senior cycle students since it takes place in a classroom environment over a twenty hour period and covers all the vital prerequisites for safe driving.

The knowledge development portion of the Steer Clear programme is divided into 12 separate modules. The following curriculum summary lists the key topics covered throughout this section.

Module 1 - Motivation and attitude

Driving risk

- What are the risks associated with driving?
- What are the characteristics of a good driver?
- What is the most important factor that influences your risk management on the road?

Risk-Taking Behaviours

- What is 'risk tolerance'?
- What percentage of Irish road deaths result from human error?
- What typical behaviours would you associate with high-risk drivers?
- How may the forgiving nature of driving lead to a false sense of security?

Drink and Driving

- What percentage of road fatalities involve the use of alcohol?
- Why does even a single drink impair your ability to drive safely?
- Is it safe to drive after drinking if you are within the legal limit?
- How does alcohol affect your capabilities as a driver?
- What kind of driving behaviours indicate that a driver is under the influence of alcohol?
- What plan would you use to avoid driving after drinking?
- What is the bottom-line message regarding drinking, drugs and driving?

Drugs and Driving

- What kind of driving behaviours would you expect from a driver who is under the influence of drugs?
- What effect might a small amount of alcohol have when combined with medication or drugs?
- What kind of over-the-counter medications can impair your ability to drive safely?
- How can illegal drugs impair driving?
- What is the bottom-line message regarding drugs and driving?

Emotion

- What should you do if you find yourself in an emotionally charged situation or one that could become emotionally charged when you're driving?
- What effects can feelings of anger, sorrow, frustration, anxiety, fear and hate have on your driving if you do not control them?

Resisting Negative Learning

- How can the media cause or encourage reckless driving by glamorising it?
- How can peer pressure affect how you drive?
- How should you handle peer pressure when you are driving?
- In what ways can role modelling cause you to drive badly?
- In what ways can improved safety engineering encourage you to take inappropriate risks?

Module 2 - Understanding the road

Driver Co-operation

- In what two ways can you interact with other drivers?
- Why is it important for drivers to cooperate with each other?
- Why should you be willing to give way to other vehicles even when you have right of way?
- Why should you give way to pedestrians and other vulnerable road users?
- Why should you be especially cautious around children?

Your Limitations as a Novice Driver

- What is the dangerous period for novice drivers?
- What should you do to compensate during this period?
- According to research, how long does it take to reach average driving competence?
- What are the differences between experienced drivers and novice drivers?
- What are some of the possible limitations of other road users?

Physical Principles Governing Driving

- What is *inertia* and why is it important to driving?
- What are *friction* and *traction*?
- Why is traction important and what can affect it?
- Why do tyres have tread?
- What driving behaviours affect traction?
- How does gravity affect traction?
- What is *centrifugal force* and how does it affect a vehicle on a bend in the road?
- How does the tilt of the road affect your vehicle as it goes around a bend?

Momentum: Braking, Slowing, Stopping

- What is momentum and why is it important in driving?
- What counteracts the momentum of your vehicle when you brake?
- What transfers the momentum of a driver and passengers to the vehicle when you brake suddenly?
- What governs the amount of damage suffered by a vehicle and its occupants in an impact?
- What are the most dangerous types of collisions, and why?
- How does momentum affect traction on a bend?

Road Design

- What philosophy do road designers apply when designing and building roads?
- What are some examples of how road designers apply this philosophy?
- What are the possible consequences of violating the design speed of a road?
- What are the four main categories of roads in Ireland and how would you recognise them on Ordnance Survey maps?

Module 2 - continued

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Vital Signs: Road Signs, Signals and Markings

- Why do we need a system of road signs, signals and markings?
- What are the five types of signs, and what is the purpose of each type?
- What must you do when you see a Regulatory Sign?
- Where can you find a full list of all Irish road signs?
- Why do we have traffic signals as well as signs?
- What are the meanings of the different lights and symbols on traffic signals?
- What are the meanings of the different road markings?

Law Enforcement

- What happens when drivers violate traffic laws?
- Why is law enforcement necessary?
- What is the purpose of the penalty points system?
- How many penalty points result in disqualification from driving?

Module 3 - Understanding the car

How Your Car Works: Parts, Systems and Functions

- What are the main parts and systems of your vehicle?
- What functions do they perform?
- Which systems are necessary for safe driving?

Routine Checks

- What five routine checks does your vehicle require?
- What does each of these checks include?
- Why is each of these checks important?

Basic Maintenance

- Why do you need to make sure your car stays roadworthy?
- How do you keep your car roadworthy?
- What problems can a poorly-maintained vehicle cause?
- How and why do you keep a service record?
- How do you:
 - fuel the vehicle?
 - open the bonnet?
 - change a light bulb?
 - change a windscreen wiper?
 - check or add oil or coolant?
 - check tyre pressure and tyre tread?
 - change a flat tyre?
- How can you best prepare for the NCT?

Vehicle Modifications

- What is a "vehicle modification"?
- Why might you modify your vehicle?
- What are examples of appearance, comfort, safety and performance modifications?

Appropriate and Inappropriate Modifications

- What are the potential problems of inappropriately modifying a vehicle?
- What kind of modifications are inappropriate for a vehicle?
- What is the best way to be sure modifications are appropriate and legal?
- What is an inappropriate driving attitude related to vehicle modifications?

Module 3 - continued

Breakdowns and Personal Safety

- What is always the first priority in the event of a breakdown or other problem on the road?
- What are your priorities if you're driving when a breakdown or other problem occurs on the roadway?
- What should you do after you stop with a breakdown on the side of the road?
- Which way should you turn the vehicle wheels when stopped for a breakdown? Why?
- What should you do if you break down on a motorway, on a secondary road or on a railway level crossing?

Managing Breakdowns

- What are the procedures for push-starting and jump-starting a car?
- What should you do if a warning light comes on?
- What should you do if you have a sudden flat tyre while driving?
- What should you do if your vehicle's engine catches fire?
- How do you re-enter traffic after sorting out a breakdown?

Module 4 - Attention

Alertness

- What does it mean to "be alert"?
- Why do you need to stay alert when driving?
- What kind of distractions affect your alertness when driving?
- What influences can have an adverse effect on alertness when driving?
- What can you do to remain alert despite these influences?

Information Filtration

- What is meant by "information overload"?
- What is meant by "information filtration"?
- Give examples of information that you should consciously filter as (a) relevant or (b) irrelevant while driving.

Attention Distribution

- What is meant by "attention distribution"?
- Why is it important for you to distribute your attention between information and different driving tasks?
- How do "control, choice and communication" relate to attention distribution?
- What gives you a safety margin? Why do you need to maintain it?
- How can you be in control of your car but still not be driving safely?
- Why should you give navigation a lower priority in your attention distribution?

Task Fixation and Switching Attention

- What is "task fixation" and what causes it?
- How do you avoid task fixation?

Tunnel Attention

- What is meant by "tunnel attention" and what are its symptoms?
- What causes tunnel attention?
- How do you avoid tunnel attention, or deal with it if it occurs?

Fatigue and Drowsiness

- What are the dangers of driver fatigue and drowsiness?
- What are the major causes of driver fatigue and drowsiness?
- What is the phenomenon of "motorway monotony"?
- How do you avoid fatigue and drowsiness?
- What should you do if you become fatigued and/or drowsy?

Module 5 – Hazard perception

Sensory Awareness

- What is meant by 'perceptual skills'?
- What is the primary sense you use when driving?
- What is a driving 'hazard'?
- Why do you need to develop good hazard-recognition skills?
- What senses, other than sight, do you use as a driver?

Visual Acuity

- What is 'visual acuity'?
- What is the law regarding vision for driving?
- When driving, from what distance should you be able to read a number plate
- At a minimum, how often should you have your vision checked?

Field of Vision

- What is 'field of vision'?
- What is the difference between central vision and peripheral vision?
- How frequently should you use your mirrors? In what particular situations will you use them?

Blind Spots

- What is a 'blind spot'?
- What are some common blind spots, and which one is generally the most dangerous?
- How should you check blind spots before carrying out a manoeuvre?
- What considerations should you have with regard to other drivers' blind spots?
- What external objects and conditions can obstruct your field of vision?
- What should you do if something restricts your view of the road?

Scanning

- What is 'scanning'?
- How does scanning contribute to safe and effective driving?
- How do you scan while driving?

Anticipating and managing driving hazards

- What are the four categories of driving hazards? What are some examples of each?
- What thought processes and skills do you apply when you anticipate and avoid a driving hazard?
- What is the difference between *perceiving* and *observing*?
- What are examples of common hazards that you will need to anticipate and address?
- What is the almost universal response to all hazards, and your best response when you're uncertain?

The SIDE Rule and multiple hazards

- What are the four parts of the SIDE rule?
- What should you do when you encounter more than one hazard at the same time?
- What priorities do you generally apply when you encounter more than one hazard at the same time?

Module 6 – Evaluation

Risk Assessment

- What driving factors should influence your evaluation of risk?
- What personal factors can influence your evaluation of risk?
- How can personal factors cause drivers to underestimate or overestimate risks?
- What are the 'safe gap' and 'safe-gap acceptance'?
- How do you evaluate whether or not you have a safe gap?
- What is the one and only factor that you can truly control when driving and why is controlling it the secret to safe, effective driving?

Module 6 - continued

What Other Road Users Expect of You

- Why do various road users perceive situations differently?
- How do other road users expect you to act?
- What are the possible consequences of acting contrary to other road users' expectations?
- What should you do if you realise you have failed to make your intentions clear?
- Why should you be courteous?

What You Should Expect of Other Road Users

- What expectations should you have of other road users?
- What is 'attribution bias'?
- How can attribution bias lead to bad driving decisions?
- What's wrong with blaming the road or other drivers for collisions, close calls and other unfortunate situations you experience while driving?

Module 7 – Making Decisions

Risk Acceptance

- What is 'risk acceptance'?
- Why is judging personal risk-acceptance level important to you as a driver? How do you judge your personal risk-acceptance level?
- What factors can raise risk acceptance while driving?
- What *illusory* benefits can influence risk acceptance?
- How can your risk acceptance be raised or lowered by your way of thinking?
- What situations justify deliberately taking risks?
- Why is your personal risk acceptance while driving *not* a choice you can freely make?

Benefit-to-Risk and Response Selection

- What is a 'benefit-to-risk assessment'?
- How do you use benefit-to-risk assessments to make appropriate decisions?
- How do you prepare yourself to choose the best response in an emergency?
- Why is indecision often worse than a bad decision?

Review, Retry and Abort

- Why is it a good idea to have a second option after you make a decision in driving and why is this not always possible?
- What does it mean to 'review and retry'?
- How do you prepare to review and retry in an emergency?
- How does it benefit you to think through other possibilities after you've dealt with a hazard?
- In what situations would abort options be particularly useful?

Module 8 – Motor Skills

Acceleration and Speed Control

- Why do you use the same foot to control the accelerator and the brake?
- What are the benefits of smooth acceleration and steady driving speeds?
- How do you accelerate smoothly?

Handling Characteristics

- What qualities give different vehicles different handling characteristics?
- What elements affect weight distribution and traction during a manoeuvre?

Controlling Deceleration

- What are the benefits of smooth, gradual deceleration?
- How do you decelerate and accelerate when going around a bend or making a turn?
- What causes rear-end collisions?
- How do you determine the safe stopping distance between you and the car you're following?
- How does your safe stopping distance change when the road is wet?
- When does 'wheel lock' occur and how can you avoid it? What is different about anti-lock braking systems?

Module 8 - *continued*

Steering

- How should you sit and hold the wheel for steering?
- How do safety belts help *prevent* collisions?
- How do you hold the steering wheel as you drive?
- How does power steering affect steering characteristics?
- How do you prevent over-steering?
- How does steering differ in small, large and multi-wheeled vehicles and in vehicles towing trailers?

Lane Position

- What is the optimum lane position?
- What are the dangers of lane weaving?

Error Correction

- What is lost when you go into a skid?
- What causes a skid?
- What are the three main categories of skids?
- What can you do to recover from a skid?
- What is the danger of regaining traction too abruptly?
- What should you do after a skid?
- When is it appropriate to drive on the hard shoulder?

Module 9 – Safety Margin

Your Safety Margin

- What is the main reason you need to have a safety margin while driving?
- Who is responsible for your safety margin?
- Why do you need to constantly adjust your safety margin while driving?
- What can you do to increase your safety margin while driving?

Stopping Time and Stopping Distance

- How does speed generally affect your safety margin?
- What are the three components of total stopping time?
- What factors influence braking time?
- What is an example of how a higher speed can *increase* your safety margin?

Speed Limits

- What is the purpose of a speed limit?
- Why is a speed limit not a target?
- What percentage of collisions in Ireland can be attributed to excessive speed?
- How do you know if you're going too fast?
- Why is it important to stay under the speed limit even when it 'feels' slow?

Following Distance

- How close is too close when driving?
- When does the two-second rule apply?
- Why should you leave a space between you and the car ahead when stopped in traffic or at lights and junctions?
- How should you judge the size of that space?

Tailgating

- What are the two primary hazards of tailgating?
- What should you do when another vehicle tailgates you?

Lateral Space

- What is 'lateral space'?
- Why do you need to maintain a reasonable lateral space while driving?
- What methods can you use to maintain your lateral space during routine driving?
- Where should you position your vehicle when turning right?
- Where should you position your vehicle when turning left?

Maintaining your safety margin

- How can you use your headlights to increase your safety margin?
- What three factors should you constantly pay attention to and adjust to control an adequate safety margin?

Module 10 – Responsibility

Sharing the Road

- Who is entitled to use the road?
- What four categories of road users require extra consideration and patience?

Aggression and Driving

- When is it acceptable to drive in an aggressive manner?
- Why does driving have the potential to make people aggressive and hostile?
- What types of behaviours or thinking can trigger aggressive driving behaviour in yourself and/or other drivers?

Keeping Your Cool

- What can you do to prevent yourself from becoming aggressive behind the wheel?
- What should you do when you encounter an aggressive driver?

Considerate Road Use

- What driving practices help you avoid antagonising or irritating other road users?
- Why you should make these driving practices habits?

Communication

- Why is it important to signal correctly?
- What are the appropriate uses of your indicators?
- What are the appropriate uses of hazard warning lights?
- When should you flash your full headlights or sound your horn?
- What is 'passive' or 'unintended' communication? How does it benefit you as a road user?

Self-Monitoring

- What is the best way to ensure that you continue to improve as a driver?
- What aspects of your driving should you consider when assessing your driving ability and the effect your road use has on others?

Safety Belts and Restraints

- What are the benefits of safety belts in a vehicle?
- Who is responsible for the wearing of safety belts in a vehicle?
- What is the proper way to use and adjust safety belts?
- How do you restrain children who are too small to use an adult safety belt?
- What is the proper way to use and position rear-facing child safety seats?
- What is the function of a head restraint in a vehicle?
- What is the correct position for a head restraint?

The Cost of Road Traffic Incidents

- How does a death or serious injury affect the community?
- What effects do road incidents have on individuals, on society and on the economy?

Energy and the Environment

- How do cars affect the environment?
- What are the benefits and negative effects of different types of fuels?
- How can you reduce the emissions you produce and the amount of fuel you consume?
- What is the law regarding the disposal of vehicles and accessories?

Module 11 – Risk Management

Different Road Types and Challenges

- In terms of risks, what are the advantages and disadvantages of
 - motorway driving?
 - dual carriageway driving?
 - driving on rural roads ?
 - driving on urban roads?
- How do you manage the risks on the different types of roads?
 - Weather Conditions
 - Wind and Rain
 - What kinds of weather conditions can make driving more hazardous?
 - What steps can you take to manage all adverse weather conditions?
 - What kinds of hazards can strong winds cause?
 - What should you do to retain control when strong winds affect driving?
 - What are the four primary hazards caused by rainy conditions?
 - What should you do to manage the four primary hazards caused by rain?
 - What are the dangers of a light rain after a dry spell?
 - What is aquaplaning and how can you avoid it?
 - What should you do if you begin to aquaplane?
 - What should you do if you must cross a flooded area on the road?

Ice, Snow and Fog

- What are the primary hazards associated with driving in
 - icy conditions?
 - snow?
 - fog?
- When is it appropriate and inappropriate to use your fog lights?

Sunshine

- How can sunshine cause a driving hazard?
- How should you respond to problems associated with sunshine?

Night Driving

- What are the difficulties associated with night driving?
- Why do so many of Ireland's fatal car crashes happen at night?
- What should you do to reduce your exposure to risk when driving at night?
- What is the danger of driving at a speed that's too high for the limited visibility of night-time?
- When should you use full and dipped headlights?
- How can you avoid being blinded by oncoming traffic and how should you respond if you are?
- What should you keep in mind when overtaking at night?
- What do different reflective road markings indicate?

Loading and Towing

- Why should you load luggage securely inside your vehicle?
- How could an unrestrained pet be dangerous in your vehicle?
- Why is correct loading on top of or outside the vehicle so important?
- What are the risks associated with towing trailers and how do you manage them?

Driving in Unfamiliar Areas and internationally

- How should you prepare for driving in an unfamiliar area?
- What do you need to do to prepare for driving abroad?

Emergency Procedures

- When should you stop or not stop for a collision?
- How do you stop and park a car during an emergency situation?
- How do you alert the emergency services?
- How do you stop traffic in a safe way?
- Why should you avoid moving a person who has been injured in a collision? When would you do it anyway?
- Why should you complete a course in basic emergency first aid?
- What are the steps for basic immediate assistance?
- What items should you include in a first aid kit?

Module 12 – The Road Ahead

Learning for Life

- How should your driving skills and knowledge change over time?
- What will you learn in parts 2 and 3 of the Steer Clear programme?
- What personal, financial or career incentives would encourage you to take further driver training?

First Aid

- Where can you obtain first-aid training?
- In layman's terms, what is the 'Good Samaritan' law?
- What do the ABCD's of first aid stand for?
- What are the steps and techniques for basic life support?

Buying a vehicle

What are the most important thing when choosing a car?

- What financial considerations do you have when choosing a car?
- What are the legal requirements for purchasing or selling a car?
- What hidden charges might you come across when purchasing a car?
- What are the pros and cons of buying a new car versus buying a used car?
- How can you get an independent assessment of a used car?

Financial and legal obligations and regulations

- What are the fiscal responsibilities of car ownership?
- Why is it important to do regular maintenance checks on your car?
- How often should you have your car professionally serviced?
- What is the NCT and how does it benefit drivers?
- What checks are done during the NCT?
- How do you prepare your car for the NCT?
- What are the legal requirements regarding road tax and insurance of cars?
- What are the main differences between a provisional license and a full driving licence?

The driving tests

- How should you prepare for the Driver Theory Test?
- What steps do you take to get your provisional driving licence?
- How should you prepare for your driving test for a full driving licence?
- What steps do you take to get your full driving licence?
- What are the requirements for obtaining an international driving permit?
- What documentation do you need to drive in another country over an extended stay?

For further information on the complete Steer Clear programme of driver education, log on to www.steerclear.ie where you will find excerpts from the Student Manual together with video clips and animation from the training DVDs.

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