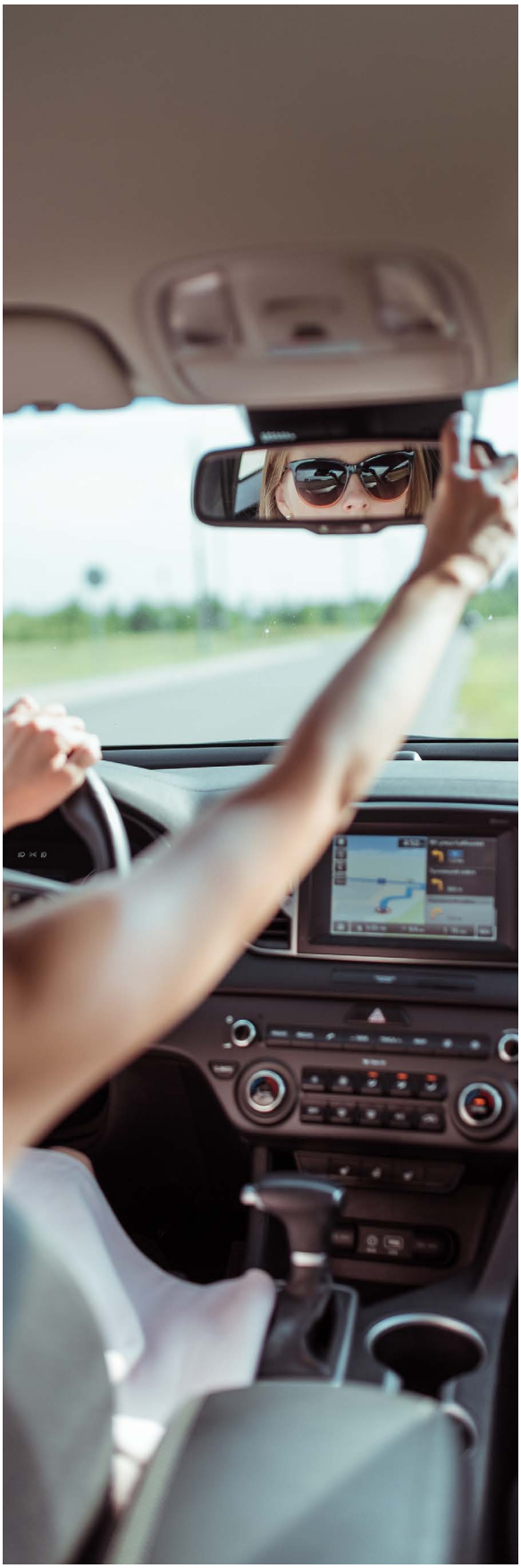


CHAPTER 3

PREPARING TO DRIVE

Getting where you're going safely and hassle free depends greatly on decisions and actions taken by you before ever starting your engine. Be sure both you and your vehicle are ready for the road ahead.

3.1 MAINTAINING YOUR VEHICLE

Properly maintaining your vehicle not only saves money, but gives you an advantage in an emergency situation. Follow the recommended maintenance schedule listed in the vehicle owner's manual.

BRAKING SYSTEM

Cars, trucks, and ATVs/UTVs need two separate braking systems, a foot brake and a parking brake. Motorcycles and mopeds need at least one. If your brakes do not seem to be working properly, are making a lot of noise, have an unusual odor, or the brake pedal goes to the floor, have a mechanic check them.

LIGHTS

- Ensure signals, brake lights, taillights, and headlights are operating properly by checking them from outside the vehicle.
- All cars, trucks, and ATVs/UTVs need two headlights on the front of the vehicle: one on the right and one on the left. You also need at least one red light on the back of the vehicle, and it should be visible for at least 500 feet. A white light to illuminate the rear license plate is also required.
- If a vehicle is equipped with turn signals, they must work. Turn signals are required for all cars, trucks, and trailers wider than 40 inches.
- A misaligned headlight can shine where it does not help you and may blind other drivers. If you are having trouble seeing at night, or other drivers are flashing their headlights at you constantly, have a mechanic check the headlights.
- Keep the headlights, backup, brake, and taillights clean. Dirt on the lenses can cut the light's effectiveness by 50 percent.

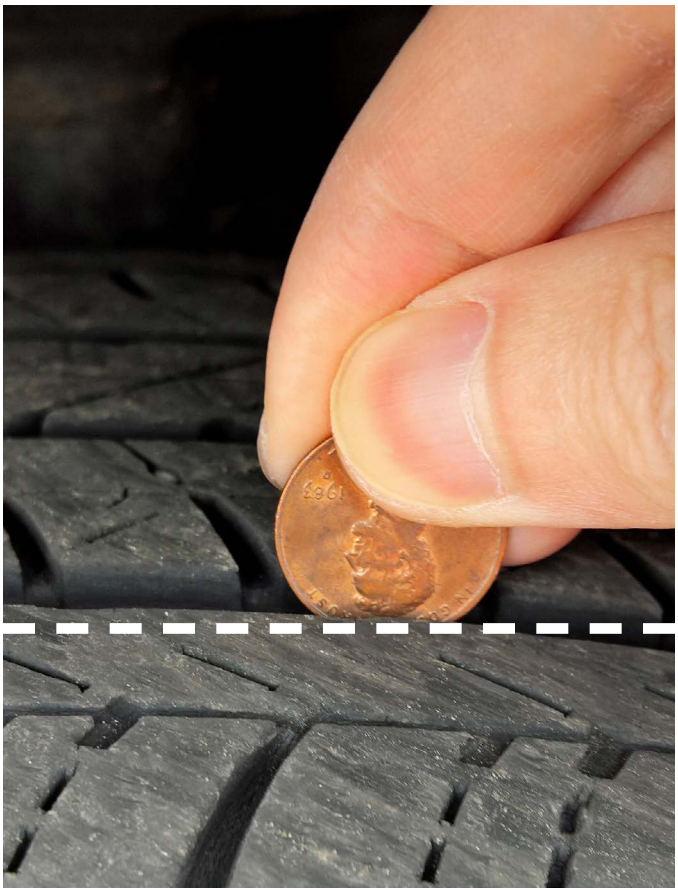


Figure 3.1: Check your tire tread with a penny

WINDSHIELD, WINDSHIELD WIPERS, AND GLASS SURFACES

Take the following steps to ensure you are able to see clearly while driving.

- Replace any windows that have been damaged or broken. Damaged glass can break more easily in a minor collision or when something hits the windshield. It can also obscure vision.
- Keep the windshield clean. Bright sun or headlights on a dirty windshield make it hard to see.
- Keep your windshield washer fluid full and use antifreeze wash when the temperature could fall below freezing.
- Clear snow, ice, or frost from **all windows**. Clean the front, side, and back windows before you drive.
- Ensure windshield wipers, which are required, are in good working condition. If wiper blades aren't keeping the windshield clean, replace them.
- Avoid over tinted windows. Iowa law requires tinted windshields and windows to the immediate right or left of the driver to allow at least 70 percent of the light through. Iowa does not have a medical exemption for tinted windows. For window tinting standards go to **www.iowadot.gov/mvd/resources/windowtintingstandards.pdf**.
- Keep your view unobstructed. Do not hang things from your rearview mirrors or clutter up the windshield with decals.

TIRES

Worn, bald, or unbalanced tires can increase your stopping distance, cause hydroplaning *(See page 60)*, cause faster tire wear, reduce fuel economy, and make the vehicle harder to steer and stop. If the vehicle bounces, the steering wheel shakes, or the vehicle pulls to one side, have a mechanic check it.

- Ensure your tires are properly inflated. Check tire air pressure with an air pressure gauge when the tires are cold. **The recommended tire pressure is commonly listed on a sticker inside the driver's door or in the vehicle owner's manual.**
- Check tire tread with a penny. Stick the penny into the tread "head" first. If the tread does not come at least to the top of Lincoln's head, the tire is unsafe and should be replaced. *(See figure 3.1)*

STEERING SYSTEM

If the vehicle is hard to turn or does not turn when the steering wheel is first turned, have the steering checked by a mechanic.

SUSPENSION SYSTEM

Your suspension helps you control your vehicle and provides a comfortable ride over varying road surfaces. If the vehicle bounces a lot, or keeps bouncing after a bump or after you stop, you may need new shocks or other suspension parts.

EXHAUST SYSTEM

The exhaust system helps remove toxic gases from the engine, helps reduce noise from the engine, and helps cool the hot gases coming from the engine. Fumes from a leaky exhaust can cause death in a very short time.

NEVER LEAVE YOUR ENGINE RUNNING IN THE GARAGE, OR SIT IN A RUNNING VEHICLE WITHOUT OPENING A WINDOW.

ENGINE

A poorly tuned engine may lose power that is needed for normal driving and emergencies, may not start, gets poor fuel economy, pollutes the air, and could stall on you when you are on the road causing a traffic problem. Follow the procedures recommended in the vehicle owner's manual for maintenance.

HORN

A horn may not seem like an important safety device, but as a warning, it could save your life. It should only be used as a warning to others.

MIRRORS

You must be able to see at least 200 feet behind you in your rearview mirror. If your view is blocked by a load, you must have an outside mirror. Vans or van-type vehicles must have both left and right outside mirrors.

3.2 ADJUSTING SEATS AND MIRRORS

The proper seat and mirror position are important to safely control the vehicle. Adjust the driver's seat and mirrors before driving to ensure they're set correctly for you.

SEAT POSITION

Sit with your back firmly against the seat. There should be at least 10 inches between the steering wheel and your chest, with the air bag pointing at your chest.

The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than your shoulders. Move the seat forward or backward so that your heel touches the floor and you can pivot quickly between the brake and accelerator. Shorter drivers may need a seat cushion or pedal extenders to sit safely 10 inches from the air bag. The head restraint should be at the center of the driver's head.

MIRRORS

The method below provides the best view of adjacent lanes, for maximum safety.

Inside mirror: Sit up straight in the driver's seat and adjust the inside mirror so that it frames the entire rear window. This is the main mirror for viewing what is behind the vehicle.

Left-side mirror: Lean your head toward the left-side window, and set the left mirror so you can barely see the side of the car. When sitting up straight, the car should no longer be visible in the mirror.

Right-side mirror: Lean to the right over the car's center console and set the right mirror so you can barely see the right side of the car.

3.3 ADVANCED DRIVER-ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS

Advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) are technological features that are designed to increase the safety of driving a vehicle. Features like automatic emergency braking, blind spot monitoring, and forward collision warning keep us all safer, but only if they're used correctly. It's important to understand how ADAS features work and their limitations.

During a driving test, you may be assisted by vehicle safety technologies such as back-up cameras but should not be assisted by vehicle convenience technologies like adaptive cruise control.

Figure 3.2: Vehicle technologies permitted and not permitted for testing

WARNING SYSTEMS	PERMITTED FOR TESTING
Back-up warning	**Yes**
Blind spot monitor and warning	**Yes**
Camera technologies (rear, sideview, surround view)	**Yes**
Curve speed warning	**Yes**
Detection technologies (bicycle, pedestrian, and obstacle detection)	**Yes**
Forward collision warning systems	**Yes**
High speed alert	**Yes**
Lane departure warning device	**Yes**
Parking sensors	**Yes**
Rear cross-traffic alert	**Yes**

ASSIST SYSTEMS	PERMITTED FOR TESTING
Automatic emergency braking systems or brake assist	**Yes**
Automatic reverse braking	**Yes**
Lane keeping assist	**Yes**
Left turn crash avoidance	**Yes**
Adaptive cruise control	No
Automatic parallel parking	No

Even though a vehicle has technological features, you must demonstrate the ability to operate the vehicle in case the technologies require the driver to disengage them manually, they become inoperable, or the driver operates another vehicle without the technology.

VEHICLE WARNING SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGIES

The primary purpose of these technologies is to provide warnings to the driver in specific circumstances. Vehicle warning systems technologies notify the driver with a warning, by sound, light, or vibration, that a crash is about to occur, or it provides an alert that there is a problem or malfunction. Most of these technologies are passive, meaning they warn the driver of a potential issue but do not automatically prevent a problem or crash. The driver may need to make changes to the operation of the vehicle to prevent a problem or crash.

Back-up Warning

Description: Uses rear sensors to scan for objects behind the vehicle and alerts you if an object is detected.

How it works: The back-up warning feature scans behind the vehicle when the driver shifts into reverse. It will let you know – through a sound, vibration, or a mix – if there is an object or car directly behind the driver.

You should demonstrate all necessary behaviors for safely monitoring and maneuvering your vehicle while backing. These include checking all the following:

- side mirrors
- rear-view mirror
- over the shoulders (head checks)
- other camera(s), if equipped

Blind Spot Monitor and Warning

Description: Warns you of other vehicles driving in your blind spots through display of a symbol, sound, or vibration. An additional warning may occur if a driver uses their turn signal when there are other vehicles in the lane.

How It Works: The blind spot monitor helps you be more aware of other traffic. The warnings provided by the blind spot monitor can be helpful when making a lane change, but the driver should not become complacent and dependent on blind spot monitors alone for changing lanes. These include frequently scanning:

- side mirrors
- rear-view mirror
- over the shoulders (head checks)
- blind spot monitor, if equipped

CAMERA TECHNOLOGIES

Rear Camera

Description: Helps see objects directly behind the vehicle by showing a wide view behind the vehicle while backing. Some cameras show a wider view than others.

How it works: When the driver shifts into reverse, the rear camera activates to show the area behind the vehicle. Depending on the vehicle, the display screen may be found on the center console, in the rearview mirror, in the sun visor, or in other locations.

Do not become dependent on rear cameras, and continue to check:

- side mirrors
- rear-view mirror
- over the shoulders (head checks)
- other camera(s), if equipped

Sideview Camera

Description: Shows an expanded view of a lane beside the vehicle when you use your turn signal or activate the feature manually. This feature shares similar uses to blind spot monitors.

How it works: This feature shows you a video view of what is next to or coming up alongside your vehicle. It may be used in conjunction with, or in place of, traditional mirrors. You can use the turn signal or activate the feature through a button usually located on the turn signal lever. This feature may not be available while backing up or may only turn on at low speeds.

Sideview cameras should be used in conjunction with traditional mirrors and head checks (checking over the shoulders). Some newer vehicles may be equipped with sideview cameras in place of traditional mirrors.

Surround-View Monitor or Around-View Monitor System

Description: Assists drivers to park more easily by better understanding the vehicle's surroundings through a virtual bird's-eye view from above the vehicle. The around-view monitor helps you visually confirm the vehicle's position relative to the lines around parking spaces and adjacent objects.

How it works: The around-view monitor processes video from four cameras, displaying the composite footage on the screen as if there is a single birds-eye view camera right above the vehicle. The four wide-angle cameras on the front, back, left, and right are the foundations of the around-view mirror.

Surround-view monitor or around-view monitor systems should be used in conjunction with traditional mirrors and checking over the shoulders (head checks). Some newer vehicles may be equipped with surround-view monitor or around-view monitor systems in place of traditional mirrors.

DETECTION TECHNOLOGIES

Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Obstacle Detection

BICYCLE DETECTION

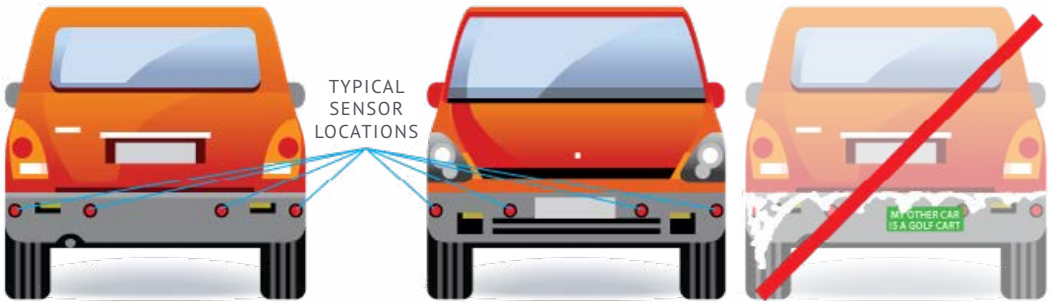
PEDESTRIAN DETECTION

OBSTACLE DETECTION

Description: Alerts you when a bicycle, pedestrian, slow-moving or stationary obstacle has been detected when driving at low speeds, generally around 25 mph. Some systems can only detect bicyclists, pedestrians, or obstacles when traveling directly in front of the vehicle and when moving in the same direction. Some versions of obstacle detection will apply the brakes automatically.

How it works: Sensors located in the front or rear (or both the front and rear) of the vehicle can detect how close the vehicle is to a bicycle, pedestrian, or obstacle in front or in rear. These typically are radar-based. Warnings can come in the form of sounds, visuals, vibrations, a quick brake pulse, or a mix of warnings. The beeps become faster as the vehicle moves closer to the bicycle, pedestrian, or obstacle. A crash is imminent when the beeps become continuous.

You should not depend on bicycle, pedestrian, or obstacle detection. Always remain aware of your surroundings and check for bicyclists, pedestrians, or obstacles regularly, especially in urban areas.



Sensors need to be kept clean in order for them to function properly.

Curve Speed Warning

Description: Warns you when approaching a curve or exit on the road too quickly.

How it works: Tracks the vehicle's speed and location via GPS and warns you to slow down when approaching curves and exits.

You should not become dependent on curve speed warnings and maintain a safe speed while driving and approaching curves or exits.

Forward Collision Warning Systems

Description: Alerts you of an impending collision with a slower moving or stationary vehicle or object in front of you so you can brake or swerve in time. The warning alone will not automatically brake for the driver. Forward collision warning scans the road ahead while driving.

How it works: Sensors located in the front of the vehicle can detect how close the vehicle is to other vehicles in front of you. These typically are camera or radar based. It is intended to warn you when you are getting dangerously close to the vehicle or object in front. Warnings can come in the form of sounds, visuals, vibrations, a quick brake pulse, or a mix of warnings. The forward collision warning system scans the traffic ahead 20 times per second up to 500 feet in front of your vehicle and then warns you to brake or steer if a hazard is in your path. As an example, here are three levels of alerts*:

SPEED	WARNING TIME BEFORE A COLLISION
15–18 mph	3 seconds
18–50 mph	4 seconds
50+ mph	5 seconds

You should always be cautious, check traffic regularly, and keep a safe following distance. If you do unintentionally get too close to another vehicle, the forward collision warning system will notify you so you may brake or steer quickly.

High Speed Alert

Description: Helps maintain a safe speed by sounding an alert if you are speeding.

How It Works: The GPS or car's infotainment center must be up to date to ensure the posted speed is known. If the posted speed is exceeded, the alert will activate as beeps or visual warnings such as color changes on the display or a flashing speed limit sign. If a warning sounds, you should carefully slow the car to the appropriate posted speed limit by releasing the accelerator or lightly braking. Don't slam the brakes to maintain a safe speed.

You should not rely on the high-speed alert and should always monitor your speed, maintain a safe speed, and obey the speed limit on the roadway.

Lane Departure Warning Device

Description: Alerts you when you are drifting out of your lane using visual, vibration, or sound warnings. This feature can help alert you to steer back to the center of your lane if you mistakenly drift, helping to prevent a crash.

How It Works: This feature relies on roadway markings to operate. It's designed to alert you if the car begins to drift out of a lane with one or more types of warnings.

Do not rely on lane departure warning devices to maintain correct lane position.

Parking Sensors

Description: Alert you to the position of objects around your vehicle as you park.

How it works: The vehicle may provide audible warnings that there are objects in front or behind it. The intervals between beeps may become shorter the closer the vehicle is to an object. A constant tone means the vehicle is close to an object.

Do not rely solely on parking sensors to detect all objects. They may not detect objects that are flat on the ground, below the bumper, too close to the vehicle, or too far from it. Remain aware of your surroundings through use of mirrors, head checks, and rear cameras while parking, including awareness of people or objects that may enter the parking path.

Rear Cross-Traffic Alert

Description: Warns you if one or more vehicles are about to enter the backing path. Can detect vehicles that might be crossing during backing.

How it works: Sensors around the rear of the vehicle detect other vehicles approaching from the left and right. You may be alerted by a warning tone or flashing lights on the mirrors or dashboard alerting you to stop.

Do not depend on the rear cross-traffic alert and remain aware of your surroundings through use of mirrors, head checks, and rear cameras, including awareness of people or objects that may enter the path near the rear of the vehicle.

DRIVER ASSISTANCE TECHNOLOGIES

The primary purpose of these technologies is to perform a component of the driving function in specific circumstances. Vehicle assistance systems technologies assist drivers in avoiding hazards and crashes. Some automatically make adjustments to the vehicle, and some assist the driver in making adjustments, such as braking or steering. The driver may still need to make changes to the operation of the vehicle to prevent a problem or crash, but the vehicle assists.

Automatic emergency braking systems or brake assist

Description: Can sense slow or stopped traffic or an object ahead and urgently applies the brakes if you fail to respond.

How it works: If you fail to brake or steer to avoid a hazard ahead, the vehicle will slow down rapidly or stop on its own to avoid a crash. You should continue to scan the road for hazards and maintain a safe following distance.

Automatic Reverse Braking

Description: Can apply the brakes if an obstacle is detected while reversing the vehicle. Helps you avoid a possible crash when the vehicle is moving in reverse.

How it works: While backing up, if an object is detected, you may hear a series of beeps or see visual indicators to alert you an object is to the rear. If you do not react, the reverse automatic brake activates, and the brakes are immediately applied to help avoid a potential crash.

Do not depend on the automatic reverse braking technology. Continue to check mirrors, check over the shoulder (head checks), and use rear cameras if equipped.

Lane Keeping Assist

Description: This feature can help return you to your lane if you drift out, potentially preventing a crash.

How it works: You may receive an alert via a sound, flashing light, or vibration if the vehicle drifts out of the lane. You should return to your lane; if you don't take action, this feature may gently steer the vehicle into its lane. It is easily cancelled by nudging the wheel. This feature will not work when lane lines are faint or covered with snow or dirt.

The driver should not depend on lane keeping assist and should always maintain control of the vehicle on the roadway and remain within the driving lane.

Left Turn Crash Avoidance

Description: This feature monitors traffic when you turn left across traffic at low speeds (such as at a traffic light). It activates warning sounds and dash lights and automatically applies the brake if you are turning left into the path of another vehicle.

How it works: The left turn assist system monitors oncoming traffic when you initiate a turn maneuver across the opposite driving lane at low speeds. If the gap in traffic is too small to permit a turn, the system prevents the vehicle from moving forward.

If a crash with an oncoming vehicle is imminent, the system will stop the turn in time by initiating an automatic emergency braking maneuver.

Do not depend on left turn crash avoidance. You should safely scan and monitor the driving environment ahead for hazards and determine when it is safe to turn in front of other traffic.

CONVENIENCE TECHNOLOGIES

The following technologies provide conveniences for the driver and do not require the applicant to demonstrate a required skill set. Convenience technologies are not permitted for use during the driving test process.

Adaptive Cruise Control

Description: Can increase or decrease the vehicle's speed to maintain a following distance set by the driver. Advanced versions can even slow and stop the vehicle in traffic jams and then accelerate automatically.

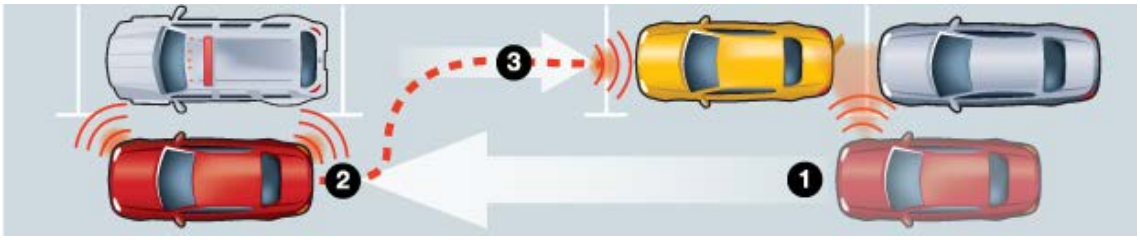
How it works: You accelerate to your set speed, and then turn on the adaptive cruise control (ACC). You can then tell the ACC how close you want your following distance gap to be (generally short, medium, or long distances).

Sensors on the vehicle read the road ahead for traffic, maintaining distance between you and the vehicle ahead, slowing your speed if necessary to maintain distance. However, the driver is required to remain aware of their surroundings. In bad weather and other unsafe driving conditions, it is advised not to use any cruise control, including ACC.

Automatic parallel parking

Description: Helps guide you into a parallel parking spot. You are still responsible for braking and monitoring the environment.

How it works: You can activate the vehicle's automatic parallel parking sensors when ready to park. The vehicle's automatic parallel parking system will inform you when it has found an appropriate spot to park. You should follow any prompts provided by the vehicle. These may include pulling in front of the space, shifting into reverse, and taking hands off the steering wheel. The driver is responsible for braking. After the vehicle is parked, you may need to do some slight adjustments to ensure the vehicle is in an optimal position.



Carefully review your vehicle owner's manual to read about any features that are new to you and make sure you know how they work. If you still have questions, reach out to the dealership so they can explain.

3.4 BEING AWARE OF BLIND SPOTS

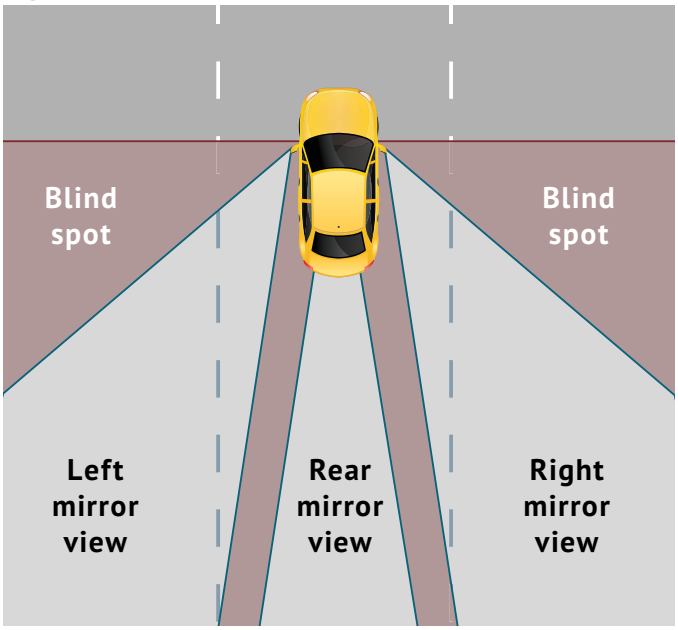
Blind spots are areas outside your vehicle that cannot be seen using mirrors. Blind spots can also be caused by obstructions in vision due to vehicle equipment (rearview mirrors, door posts, etc.) and your driving environment (trees, the sun, hedges, hills, and walls).

OTHER DRIVERS' BLIND SPOTS

(See figure 3.3)

- Do not drive in another driver's blind spot. Either speed up or slow down so the other driver can see your vehicle.
- When passing another vehicle, get through the other driver's blind spot as quickly as you can.
- Never stay alongside a large vehicle such as a truck or bus. These vehicles have large blind spots and it is hard for them to see you.

Figure 3.3: blind spots



YOUR BLIND SPOTS

- Be aware of the natural blind spots within your vehicle that impact your visibility outside your vehicle.
- Be cautious of blind spots when changing lanes and/or pulling into cross traffic *(see figure 3.3)*.
- Blind spots can be increased by weather conditions and daylight. The sun can create blind spots with reflections off any of your window surfaces. The front windshield is the most common place for glaring reflections and blind spots. Sunglasses or use of the visors in most cars help shield your eyes from those reflections that make it hard to see.

3.5 SEAT BELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS

SEAT BELTS

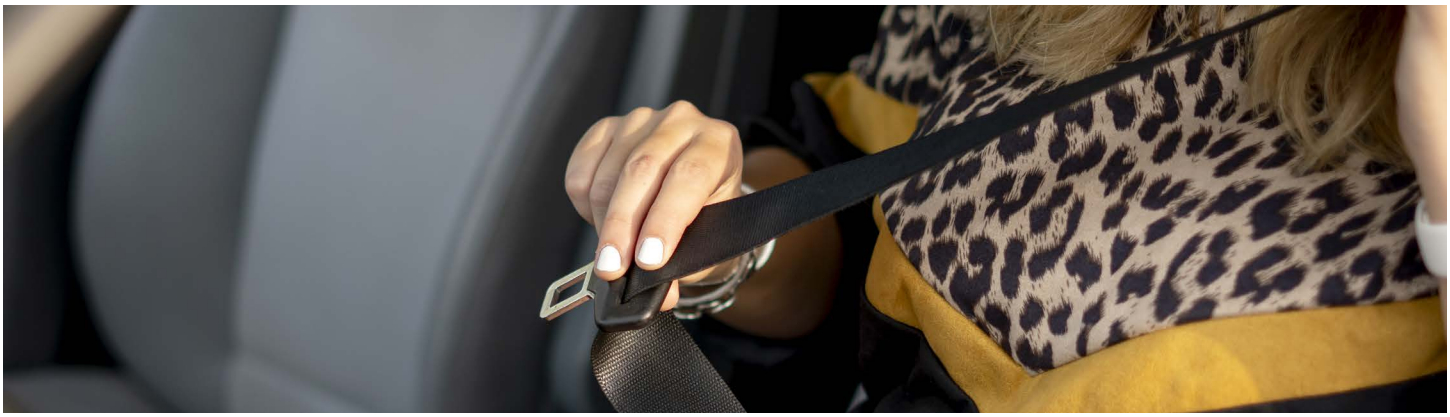
Before the vehicle ever moves, everyone should be properly buckled. Car crashes are the number one killer of teenagers. The easiest thing you can do to avoid being a statistic is buckling up.

Wear your lap belt snugly across your hips. If you are pregnant, you can safely wear the belt across the pelvis, as low under your abdomen as possible.

Not wearing a seat belt is considered a primary offense, meaning that you can be stopped for the sole purpose of non-compliance with the seat belt law. The violation of this law is punishable with up to a $50 fine per passenger and $100 per passenger under 18.

SEAT BELTS ARE THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREVENT DEATH AND INJURY IN A CRASH. ON TOP OF THAT, YOU'RE BREAKING IOWA LAW BY NOT WEARING ONE.

IOWA REQUIRES ALL PASSENGERS IN THE FRONT SEATS OF A VEHICLE TO WEAR SEAT BELTS. THE LAW ALSO APPLIES TO PASSENGERS IN THE BACKSEATS WHO ARE UNDER AGE 18.



SEAT BELTS AND IOWA LAW

- **A child under one year old and weighing less than 20 pounds** must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.
- **A child under six years old** must be secured in a child restraint system (a safety seat or booster seat, not a seat belt).
- **A child from the age of six up to the age of 18** must be secured in a child restraint system or by a seat belt, in all seating positions (front and back).
- **A child under the age of 18** cannot ride in the rear of a moving pickup truck.
- **Adults 18 and older** must wear a seat belt while riding in the front seats of a vehicle.

Exceptions for seat belt use can be found online at: **iowadot.gov/mvd/medical-exemptions-from-safety-belt-use**

SEAT BELT MYTHS

"Some people are thrown clear in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch"

Your chances of not being killed in a crash are much better if you stay inside the car. Seat belts can keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle into the path of another one.

"It's my choice to wear a seatbelt and I'm not affecting anyone but myself."

If you are improperly buckled during a crash, you risk becoming a projectile and injuring or killing others in the vehicle. Even when you're alone in the vehicle, if you aren't properly buckled, an unpredictable situation can cause you to swerve or brake suddenly, forcing you from the driver's seat which is likely to cause a crash.

"Seat belts are good on long trips, but I do not need them if I am driving around town."

Over half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Many occur on roads with speed limits of less than 45 mph.

"Seat belts can trap you inside a car."

It takes less than a second to undo a seat belt. This myth often references an incident where a car caught fire or sank in deep water. Crashes like this seldom happen. Even if they do, a seat belt may keep you from being knocked out. Your chance to escape will be better if you are conscious.

3.6 SECURING LOOSE OBJECTS

In addition to keeping yourself and your passengers secure, you should also make sure there are no loose objects in your vehicle that could injure someone in the event of a sudden stop or crash. At 60 miles per hour, a 20-pound object has the potential to exert well over 1,000 pounds of force in a sudden stop. Also, make sure there are no objects on the floor that could roll under the brake pedal making it difficult or impossible to apply the brakes.

3.7 ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS

There are three kinds of distractions:

Visual — doing something that requires the driver to look away from the driving task. (E.g., looking at a GPS).

Manual — doing something that requires the driver to take one or both hands off the wheel. (E.g., eating or putting on makeup).

Cognitive — doing something that causes the driver's mind to wander or focus elsewhere. (E.g., listening to music or having a conversation).

All types of distractions can be dangerous while driving, and many tasks that people commonly do behind the wheel can fit into more than one category.

MOBILE DEVICES AND TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

Iowa's distracted driving law prohibits the use of mobile phones and other hand-held electronic communication devices to write, send, or view an electronic message while driving. Before writing, sending, or reading a text message, email, or social media post, the vehicle must be brought to a complete stop off the traveled portion of the roadway.

Exceptions to this law include:

- Members of public safety agencies performing official duties.
- Healthcare professionals in the course of emergency situations.
- A person receiving safety-related information including emergency, traffic, and weather alerts.

TALKING ON THE PHONE

Drivers under the age of 18 with an instruction permit, intermediate license, or special minor restricted license are prohibited from making and receiving calls and talking on the phone while driving unless their vehicle is at a complete stop off the traveled portion of the roadway.

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

Distracted driving is considered a "primary" traffic offense—meaning an officer can pull you over for a violation. In addition to paying fines, a distracted driving conviction could also result in your license or permit being suspended or revoked.

If you drive distracted and cause the death of another person, you could face more than $1,000 in fines, have your license suspended, and depending on the circumstances, be charged with vehicular homicide.

IOWA'S HANDS-FREE LAW

New legislation prohibits drivers from using electronic communication devices while driving—unless the device is used hands-free.

Hands Free Means:

- You can't hold your phone in any way.
- You can't manually scroll, type, or interact with your phone in any way.
- You can't enter in an address to GPS while driving.
- You can't stream videos or make video calls, even with voice commands.
- You can't view texts, videos, or social media.
- You can't call, text, or dial unless using hands-free or voice activation.

What Counts as an "Electronic Device"?

3.8 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

One of the most enforced laws across the nation's roadways is driving under the influence. Iowa is no exception, with high penalties for drivers caught intoxicated from alcohol or under the influence of drugs.

OPERATING WHILE INTOXICATED (OWI)

The official name for the offense of drunk driving is "Operating While Intoxicated" and is defined as having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher or operating with any amount of controlled substance in your system. BAC is normally tested through a breathalyzer, urine sample, or blood test. Even if you are not convicted of an OWI offense in criminal court, your driving privileges will still be revoked for a minimum of 180 days if you operate while intoxicated. Repeat offenses for operating while intoxicated are increasingly severe, resulting in longer driver's license revocations and harsher criminal penalties.

IMPLIED CONSENT TO TESTING

As a holder of an Iowa driver's license, you are contractually agreeing to consent to a field sobriety test upon demand by law enforcement (Iowa Code §321J.6). This law also applies to any non-resident drivers traveling in the state.

TEST REFUSAL

Refusing a breathalyzer test does not guarantee that you won't be convicted of an OWI, and test refusal will still result in the revocation of your license. The consequences for refusing a breathalyzer test are more severe than failing a test, with an automatic one year revocation of your license and a minimum $1,250 fine.

If you are found guilty of refusing a test, the court may also order a mandatory substance use disorder class and evaluation or an ignition interlock device to be installed in your vehicle at your expense.

DRIVERS UNDER 21

The laws for driving under the influence are stricter if you're under the legal drinking age. An underage driver is considered to be operating while intoxicated with a BAC of .02 or more. An underage driver will have their driving privileges revoked for a minimum of 60 days and for a minimum of 180 days if the BAC is .08 or more. Offenders under age 18 are not eligible for a temporary restricted license while their license is revoked for OWI.

OPEN CONTAINER LAW

It is illegal to transport any open, unsealed container of alcohol by any person or passenger in a motor vehicle. Open containers of alcoholic beverages may be transported in the trunk of a vehicle. The violation of this law is punishable as a simple misdemeanor with up to a $200 fine for each driver and passenger in the vehicle.

3.9 DROWSY DRIVING

Drowsy driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving. Drowsy drivers have slow reaction times, often swerve in and out of lanes, veer off the road, and are more likely to cause a crash. **You should take a break, pull over to a safe spot, or switch drivers** if you notice any of the following:

- Daydreaming or wandering thoughts.
- Trouble remembering the last few miles driven.
- Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes.
- Trouble keeping your head up.
- Drifting from your lane, tailgating, or hitting a shoulder rumble strip.
- Feeling restless and irritable.

Being awake for 18 hours straight is as impairing as a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent, which is legally drunk and leaves you at equal risk for a crash.

3.10 PREPARING FOR THE ROAD AHEAD – IOWA 511

It's smart to plan ahead before you set out on any trip - whether it's a regular route or a longer drive. Stay informed of things that will impact your trip such as adverse weather, road construction, crashes, etc. Visit www.511ia.org or download the free mobile app to stay up to date on the latest travel conditions for Iowa highways and interstates.

Figure 3.4: Iowa 511