

How to survive on the road

Driving is an occupational hazard for many types of workers, from forklift operators to travelling sales staff.

A total 678 people were killed in 1988 in the line of duty according to the latest statistics. But this does not compare to the average daily death toll of 30 on our country's roads. Road safety is covered in the MBO system under the headings "motorised transport" and "off-the-job safety".

The impact on industry of road deaths is severe. The death of a single company executive is calculated to cost about R500 000 in lost manpower, re-selection and training as well as lost experience and expertise. This is why the Easter and Christmas traffic migration from the hinterlands to the coast should occupy the attention of the safety officer and enjoy a prime position on any company's safety training and awareness agenda.

Defensive driving techniques should be learnt by all drivers. The formula for effective defensive driving is S-I-P-D-E which stands for Search, Identify, Predict, Decide and Execute.

Awareness is certainly one of the most important driving survival tools. A constant awareness of every element that could have an effect on your vehicle is crucial which is why you should continually search or scan the road ahead for possible hazards.

Hazards can take many forms, from the more obvious (children playing with a ball next to the road) to more subtle threats (a bus offloading passengers). Anticipate these hazards by scouting — don't fix your eyes on any one spot for more than two seconds because there is a multitude of places to look.

Take the following into account:

- A change in road surface (from tar to dirt, from cement to tar) because there might be loose gravel at such places and the car will react differently on each different surface. Remember that road paint is very slippery, especially when wet, and that shadows on the road hold a special danger (under bridges especially) because one's eyes cannot adjust quickly enough to the change in light intensity, rendering that section of the road practically invisible.
- Be aware of all road signs. Your worst enemy is habit. Signs are often changed overnight and are ignored by people travelling the same route regularly. Take note of signs, understand their meaning, and react to them — on an unfamiliar road they can be lifesavers.
- It is also very important to know what is happening on your sides and behind you. Check your mirrors frequently, and make doubly sure that your blind spot is clear. In all cases take your eyes off the road for as short a time as possible.

The next process, which runs concurrently with searching or scanning is identifying. You must train yourself to identify hazards as soon as they appear. Anything that may cause you to change your speed or direction is a potential hazard, whether it is a mild bend in the road or a 20-ton truck on the wrong.

One of the best ways to train yourself to identify hazards is to pass a running commentary, while driving, on any hazards you identify: road signs, pedestrians, intersections, cyclists, road surfaces, irregular driving of other motorists, entrances, parks and play grounds, merging lanes — then identify possible escape routes for each hazard.

Oorlewingsgids vir die pad

Padveiligheid word deur die MBO program onder die opskrifte "gemotoriseerde vervoer" en "veiligheid buite werksverband" gedek. Bestuur is 'n beroepsgevaar vir verskeie tipes werknemers, van vurkkraanbestuurders tot reisende verkoops personeel. 'n Totaal van 678 mense is gedood tydens normale werksaktiwiteite volgens die nuutste beskikbare statistieke. Maar hierdie syfer is klein in vergelyking met die daaglikse dodetol van 30 op ons land se paaie.

Die gevolge vir nywerheid is ernstig. Die dood van 'n enkele maatskappy uitvoerende amptenaar word beraam op R500 000 in terme van verlore mannekrag, keuring en opleiding asook die verlore ondervinding en kundigheid. Om hierdie redes behoort die jaarlikse trek van die binneland na kusgebiede 'n prominente plek op enige maatskappy se veiligheidsopleiding en -bewustheid agendas in te neem.

Voorkomende bestuurtegnieke behoort deur alle ernstige motorbestuurders geleer te word. Die formule vir effektiewe defensiewe bestuur is S-I-P-D-E wat vir Skandeer, Identifiseer, Probeer, Doen en Eensklaps staan.

'n Deurentydse bewustheid van elke faktor wat 'n invloed op jou voertuig kan hê, is noodsaaklik en daarom behoort jy aanhoudend te soek of skandeer op die pad vorentoe vir moontlike gevare.

Gevare kan verskeie gedaantes aanneem, van die meer kennelike (kinders wat langs die pad met 'n bal speel) tot die meer subtiele gevare ('n bus wat passasiers aflaai). Voorspel hierdie gevare deur te verken — moenie jou oë op een plek vasgenael hou vir langer as twee sekondes nie want daar is 'n menigte plekke om dop te hou.

Neem die volgende in ag:

- 'n Verandering in padoppervlakte (van teer na stofpad, van sement na teer) omdat daar los klipplies op sulke plekke mag rondlê en omdat die kar verskillend reageer op elke verskillende oppervlak. Onthou dat padverf glibberig is veral as die pad nat is, en dat skaduwees op die pad (veral onder brûe) 'n spesifieke gevaar inhou aangesien jou oë nie vinnig genoeg by die verandering in ligintensiteit kan aanpas nie, en dus daardie gedeelte van die pad effektief onsigbaar maak.
- Wees bewus van alle padtekens. Jou ergste vyand is gewoonte. Tekens word partykeer oornag verander en word deur mense geïgnoreer wat dieselfde roete gereeld gebruik. Let op tekens, verstaan wat hulle beteken en reageer op die inligting — op 'n vreemde pad kan hulle ware lewensredders wees.
- Dit is ook baie belangrik om te weet wat langs jou en agter jou gebeur. Kyk dikwels in jou spieëls en maak baie seker dat jou blinde kol skoon is. In alle gevalle moet jou oë vir so kort tydperk moontlik van die pad afgeneem word.

Die volgende proses, wat gelyktydig met skandering werk, is identifisering. Jy moet jouself oplei om gevare te identifiseer so gou as wat hulle verskyn. Enigiets wat mag veroorsaak dat jy jou rigting of spoed moet verander, is 'n moontlike gevaar.

Een van die beste maniere om identifisering te oefen, is om 'n aanhoudende kommentaar oor enige moontlike gevare te lewer terwyl jy bestuur: padtekens, voetgangers, kruisings, fietsryers, padoppervlaktes, onreëlmatige bestuur deur ander motoriste, ingange, parke en speelgronde, invloeiende bane en identifiseer dan moontlike ontsnaproetes vir elke gevaar.