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ZONE[™]
VEHICLE

**TRANSPORTING
SCOUTS SAFELY**



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
RISK MANAGEMENT

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TRANSPORTING SCOUTS SAFELY

Learning Objective

By the end of the session, the Scouter will have a greater awareness of the risks of transporting Scouts in vehicles.

Materials Needed

- Guide to Safe Scouting
- Video: Scouting Safety ... Begins with Leadership, 19-201, or online at <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Video.aspx>
- (Optional) Local news stories compiled over the web about accidents involving distracted and/or drowsy driving

Opening Remarks

Driving is one the most dangerous forms of travel. Motor vehicle accidents can lead to costly property damage, serious injuries, and fatalities for not only the driver but to unsuspecting others.

So what motivates drivers to be concerned about their safe driving skills? (The facilitator can ask the audience to give answers. Examples are fear of accidents and financial loss caused by tickets, insurance rates, and even loss of a driver's license.)

What are some reasons to practice safe driving skills while we drive during Scouting activities? (Ask the audience to give answers. Examples are (1) parents expect their children to be transported safely; (2) a Scout is obedient and obeys traffic laws and Scouting guidelines regarding Scouting transportation; and (3) leaders and parents are role models.)

The vast majority of accidents are caused by poor decisions or indecisions. Today, many of the poor decisions that lead to accidents are caused by distracted driving or drowsy driving.

Motor vehicle accidents are among the most serious and costly accidents in the Boy Scouts of America.

This program will help point out ways to alert people to the signs that could lead someone to an accident and ways to prevent accidents. The focus of this presentation will concentrate on preventing distracted driving and drowsy driving. You don't want to get caught in "The Risk Zone"—that is, distracted and drowsy driving. Once the audience has completed the presentation they will be "Risk Ready."

Statistics

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16 people are killed and more than 1,300 people are injured each day by distracted drivers.
- The CDC reports the proportion of drivers reportedly distracted at the time of a fatal crash increase from 8 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2008. (As reported in 2011)
- 20 percent of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving (NHTSA).
- NHTSA estimates that 100,000 crashes are a direct result of driver fatigue each year.
- Each year more than 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses are caused by driver fatigue (NHTSA).



Exercise

Who are these “other” distracted and drowsy drivers?

(The facilitator asks each person to rate their driving skills on a scale from 1 to 10 and get their responses.) Now consider the skill level of other drivers. (The facilitator asks everyone in the audience to rate other drivers on a scale from 1 to 10.) Most drivers believe their driving skills are above average, and that “those other people on the road” are poor drivers.

Distracted Driving

Distraction is defined as “an interruption; an obstacle to concentration.”

Distracted driving can result in deadly consequences. Distractions while driving come in many forms. (The facilitator can ask everyone in the audience to name some distractions.)

Some examples that should be noted are:

- Fatigue
- Passenger disruptions inside the vehicle
- Traffic activity
- Surrounding landscape
- Eating
- Programming electronic devices (i.e. navigational systems)
- Mobile phone calls
- Texting
- Using smart phones

THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF DISTRACTION

Visual—taking your eyes off the road.

Manual—taking your hands off the wheel.

Cognitive—taking your mind off what you are doing.

Texting and smart phone use is extremely hazardous because it combines all three forms of distraction.

Mobile phone use creates hazards as well. The brain is focused on the phone conversation and not what the driver is seeing. Everyone has seen how the driving habits of a person on the phone are noticeably altered. The person on the phone is driving slower than the traffic flow; they veer into the other lane; missed the upcoming traffic light; or they make last minute driving changes because they were not focused on where they needed to turn, etc.

In-car technologies and hands-free equipment help limit the communication distractions.

They should not be completely relied upon, however, because they still distract the driver’s cognitive skills.

Allowing others to use phones at night can also create a hazardous situation for the driver. When passengers use their phones at night, the light from the screens/keypad can also cause a glare in the driver’s eye or on the windshield.

WHAT I CAN DO TO PREVENT DISTRACTED DRIVING?

- When you get behind the wheel put your cellphone/smart phone away, such as in your backpack or glove box.
- Turn the phone to “silent” or “off.”
- Only check your phone messages during rest stops or food breaks.
- If you must use the phone, pull the vehicle off the road and to a safe location.
- Do not call or send messages to others you know are driving.

The driver is the only person who decides not to do things that can cause distractions. They should set the example for others. When the driver sets the example they are telling other adults and the youth that they are choosing to drive safely and not put others at risk.

Young drivers are especially at risk. Numerous studies have shown that young adults under the age of 20 are big users of smart phones and mobile applications. Many admit they use their smart phones while driving. Leaders should point out the hazards of the distractions posed by these electronics.

Many states have enacted laws regarding the use of phones and mobile devices while driving. The Governors Highway Safety Association is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit, which represents the state and territorial highway safety offices that implement programs to address behavioral highway safety issues. Check www.ghsa.org for the latest laws in your area.

Drowsy Driving

Drowsy is defined as “ready to fall asleep; inducing sleep.”

By the very definition, when you are drowsy you are going to fall asleep! Drivers are generally poor judges of their own level of fatigue and unable to predict when they are in danger of falling asleep at the wheel.

(Ask the audience if they can name some danger signals that indicate when someone could be dangerously close to falling asleep at the wheel.)

DANGER SIGNALS

- Your eyes are burning, feel strained, or are involuntarily going out of focus and closing.
- Your head nods or you can’t stop yawning.
- You have wandering thoughts and daydreams.
- You’re driving erratically or at abnormal speeds, drifting, tailgating, or missing traffic signs.
- You catch yourself about to nod off.
- You don’t remember the last several miles driven.
- You cross over the rumble strips on the side of the pavement.
- You have micro-sleeps, which are very brief sleep episodes.



These are serious danger signs, and anyone displaying them should not be driving!

What can be done to make someone “Risk Ready?” (The facilitator should present each bullet point and allow for discussions among the participants.)

- When planning a trip each person should “plan” for sleep. This is especially important for the return trip home.
- Start out well rested. Before a trip, the more sleep the better!
- Start your trip earlier in the day instead of later. Long-distance driving requires mental and physical alertness.
- The body craves sleep after dark, so try to do most of the driving during daylight hours.
- Share the driving. Before leaving designate licensed relief drivers.
- Engage in light conversation with a front seat passenger.
- Keep the temperatures cool and adjust the car temperature so that it’s not too comfortable.
- Stay involved with the driving; do not use cruise control.
- Take frequent breaks. Stop and get out of the car at least once every two hours.
- Avoid sedating medications such as cold tablets, antihistamines and/or antidepressants.
- Consume caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, and energy drinks. However, caffeinated drinks take up to 30 minutes to take effect and have limited effects on people who consume these drinks on a regular basis (such as every day).

Multi-passenger Vehicles

Passenger vans and SUVs continue to be a popular choice of transportation for Scouting activities. These vehicles can carry a large number of people and their gear. If you are not familiar with driving these types of vehicles, they present a unique set of driving characteristics. There are many different sizes and types of SUVs, but vans primarily come in two types— 12-passenger and 15-passenger vans. (The facilitator asks for a show of hands of the participants who have a van or SUV as their main form of transportation.)

Vans and SUVs are HIGHER—WIDER—HEAVIER—LONGER than passenger vehicles, and they handle differently. (The facilitator will have participants discuss how the physical characteristics of higher, wider, heavier, and longer can influence the following.)

THE DIFFERENCES OF THE VANS AND SUVS

- Braking (Stopping distance will be greater, especially when loaded. The greater weight will require anticipation for earlier braking, and appropriate following distance guidelines. For vans it is recommended that for every 150 pounds of gear you eliminate one passenger.)
- Accelerating (The weight of vans and SUVs will also cause acceleration to be slower.)
- Turning (Vans have a higher center of gravity and can cause them to tip more easily. Since the driver is sitting over the front wheels, perspective is different. The driver must be aware not to cut too sharply. Slowing down when turning and handling curves is necessary to prevent losing control.)



- Size and location of blind spots (Blind spots are larger than in passenger cars. Gear and supplies can also reduce the views out the sides and rear of the vehicle. Special care must be taken to identify other vehicles and objects that are not easily seen. Proper mirror adjustment will help.)
- Driving in the wind (High-profile vehicles such as vans and SUVs are more affected by wind than smaller vehicles. Gusts of wind can have a significant impact on handling and literally blow a vehicle off the road.)
- Parking (Vans and SUVs are more difficult to park than passenger cars. Overhead and side clearances are important factors to consider when operating these vehicles.)
- Owners should make sure drivers are fully trained and experienced in operating a 15-passenger van and are properly licensed. There are online resources for drivers to learn about the safe operations of these vehicles. (See www.safetyworksmaine.com/training/online_classes/15passvan.pdf.)
- 15-passenger vans are very sensitive to loading and should not be overloaded under any circumstances. Agency research has shown that overloading not only increases rollover risk but also makes the vehicle more unstable in any handling maneuvers.
- Owners should make sure that properly sized tires are being used on their vehicle.
- Before every trip, drivers should check the tires for proper inflation, and make sure there are no signs of wear. Correct tire size and inflation pressure information can be found in the owner's manual.
- If you are a passenger, make sure you buckle up for every trip.

15-PASSENGER VANS

Effective September 1, 2015, the use of 15-passenger vans manufactured before 2005 will no longer be allowed in connection with Scouting programs and activities. Any 2005 or later 15-passenger vans may be used if equipped with Electronic Stability Control and seat belts for all passengers as well as the driver. This applies to all vehicles, regardless of ownership, including but not limited to unit leaders and chartered organizations.

A consumer advisory from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provided the following safety tips for anyone planning a trip in 15-passenger vans:

- Make sure the vehicle is properly maintained (correct size tires, steering, brakes, ESC). The best practice is to complete an inspection checklist daily or before each use.

15-passenger vans have a higher center of gravity that makes them susceptible to roll-overs. Many accidents resulting in serious injuries and death involve tires with improper air pressure. Other causes include driving off the pavement on the shoulder and overcorrecting the steering, causing the vehicle to roll over. Many fatalities are caused by people being thrown out of the vehicle during a rollover because they were not wearing their safety belts.

Several insurance companies will not provide liability insurance on 15-passenger vans if they are used in the transportation of certain groups of passengers. Transporting youth can fall into one of these noninsurable groups.



Vehicle Safety Features

Vehicle manufacturers are making vehicles safer and safer. They are integrating automatic safety features into their vehicles. Many of the safety features have made driving vehicles easier, but they should not take the place of the drivers using good judgment and maintain focus on the driving. (Ask the audience if they can name some safety features integrated into vehicles today.)

Current safety features on new vehicles include:

- Front seat airbags and side airbag curtains
- Automatic headlights and daytime running lights
- Antilock brakes
- Reverse sensors
- Backup cameras
- Automatic crash notification systems
- Stability control systems

Use of Trailers

For many Scouting units, trailers are an indispensable part of camping trips. Anytime you plan to spend a night or two in the great outdoors, chances are plans include taking along a camping trailer to haul and store your gear. Even experienced trailer users need to remember to take the necessary time to ensure that their trailers are hitched and loaded correctly, and use safe towing techniques while pulling the trailer.

The three leading causes for trailer accidents are:

- Driver error
- Excessive speed
- Improper loading of the trailer

(The facilitator should list these reminders for trailer safety)

Before the trip, the vehicle driver should make sure the tow vehicle is capable of safely and properly towing the trailer. They should review the manufacturer's plate attached to the trailer that lists the maximum tongue weight. In addition to the trailer weight, the driver needs to make sure the hitch on both the vehicle and trailer are in good working order and are sized correctly. Items to check on the vehicle include the hitch pin that secures the ball mount to the receiver on the vehicle; and ensure that the hitch ball is the proper size for the hitch on the trailer. Additional items to check include ensuring the electrical connection is working properly and the safety chains of the trailer can be connected to the tow vehicle.

Anyone towing a trailer should be familiar with the driving characteristics. A large number of accidents occur while making turns. Many times the driver does not allow for added length of the vehicle and do not turn wide enough to include the trailer in turning diameter. Cutting the corner can cause a serious collision.

If someone is not familiar with towing trailers they should practice driving with the trailer. An ideal location to practice is a vacant parking lot. During the practice session, the driver should familiarize themselves with towing, turning left and right as well as backing the trailer.



LOADING

- Place the heaviest item over the axle(s). Load the remaining items in front of the trailer and around the heaviest item.
- Secure loose items in the trailer so the load won't shift and slide during transit.
- Never overload the trailer beyond its listed maximum gross weight.

HITCHING

- The hitch and hitch ball should always be tight and secure.
- Always use safety chains and be sure they are secure. Some manufacturers say to cross the chains to form an "X" when connected.
- Make sure electrical connections and lights are working properly.

TOWING

- Maintain a safe speed.
- Plan the route. Anticipate hills, downgrades, bad weather, areas subject to high crosswinds, etc.
- Anticipate stops and apply brakes firmly but gradually.
- With the added weight, braking distance is increased. So maintain longer distances between vehicles.
- Reduce speed on curves, wet roads, and downgrades.

BACKING

- If possible, use another person as a spotter to assist the driver with backing.
- Do not rely solely on the rearview mirrors. Turn your head and look at the trailer.
- The trailer will go to the right if you turn the wheels to the left. Keep the reverse action in your mind when backing.
- Look occasionally to the front of the vehicle to prevent the vehicle from swinging out and striking something.
- Avoid "jackknifing" the trailer. Do not back the trailer any further than 90 degrees to the tow vehicle.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Never allow passengers to ride in the trailer or the back of pickups.
- Obey all traffic laws, including DOT laws regarding Commercial Motor Vehicles/Trailers/Towing.
- The driver and all the passengers will use the seatbelts.
- Be well rested and never drive when fatigued.
- Never pass on hills or curves.
- Stop frequently to check hitch, chains and cargo.
- If you have an emergency and must stop, park your vehicle/trailer in a safe place completely off the highway.

SECURING YOUR TRAILER FROM THEFT

Many Scouting units have limited amount of storage space for their equipment, and many of their chartered organizations cannot provide ample storage space for all the gear. Many Scout units end up keeping their equipment in the trailers that are used to transport it. Unfortunately keeping the equipment in the trailer could be a prime target for thieves. If the trailer is stolen, so does the equipment. To help protect the equipment and the trailer against theft, the adult leaders need to do everything they can to keep trailer and equipment safe and secured.

Ways to secure the trailer include:

- Wheel clamps or boot; this also provides for a visible deterrent.
- Tongue lock or coupler lock.
- “Discus shaped” padlock with a closed shackle or a padlock with a fully shrouded shackle.

Questions about Insurance

COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

This coverage provides primary general liability coverage for registered volunteer Scouters with respect to claims arising out of an official Scouting activity with the exception that the coverage is excess over any insurance that may be available to the volunteer for loss arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle or watercraft. This insurance is available only while the vehicle or watercraft is in the actual use of a Scouting unit and being used for a Scouting purpose.

What this means is in the event of a motor vehicle accident is that the BSA insurance is excess beyond the driver’s insurance.

AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE

All vehicles **MUST** be covered by a liability insurance policy. The amount of this coverage must meet or exceed the insurance requirement of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. (It is recommended, however, that coverage limits are at least \$100,000 combined single limit.) Any vehicle carrying 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of \$500,000 single limit. In the case of rented vehicles, coverage limit requirements can be met by combining the limits of personal coverage carried by the driver with coverage carried by the owner of the rented vehicle. All vehicles used in travel outside the United States must carry a liability insurance policy that complies with or exceeds the requirements of that country.

PROPERTY INSURANCE

The BSA does not provide insurance coverage for property. This means there is no coverage for the trailers and equipment or contents in the trailer.

Conclusion

Leadership takes form in many ways. The driver is the only person that can make the decision to get enough rest before a trip and put away the distractions while driving. Every parent expects their child to travel to and from an event safely. Every driver needs to make the decision to arrive safely and to follow the rules to be a good STAFF leader!



RISK ZONE DRIVER'S PLEDGE

- ▶ **I will not** text or talk on my phone while I am driving. Texting and talking take my eyes off the road, hands off the steering wheel, and my mind off what I am doing.
- ▶ **I will** put my phone in my backpack or in the glove box before I get behind the wheel. I will only check it when I have safely parked the vehicle.
- ▶ **I will not** become distracted by things going on inside and outside the vehicle. I will concentrate on my driving and my travel plans.
- ▶ **I will not** drive when I feel fatigued. I realize that when I am fatigued, I process information more slowly and less accurately and this impairs my ability to react in time to avoid accidents.
- ▶ **I will** arrange my schedule so that several days before a Boy Scout "driving trip," I will get a good night's sleep every night to avoid the cumulative effect of not getting enough sleep.
- ▶ **I will** make trip preparations far enough in advance so that last-minute preparations don't interfere with my rest.
- ▶ **I will** make travel plans and drive only during the part of the day when I know I will be alert.
- ▶ **I will** be smart about engaging in physical activities during Scouting outings and will make sure that I will be ready to drive alertly.

I am the only person who can make these decisions for me. **I will:**

- 1. Follow this Driver's Pledge;**
- 2. Be Risk Ready; and**
- 3. DO ALL THAT I CAN TO KEEP SCOUTS SAFE.**

**TROOP 202 DRIVERS
RECORD DRIVER PLEDGE
COMMITMENT BY CLICKING
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