

Standard Behind the Wheel Curriculum for North Dakota Class D Commercial Driving Schools –approved by NDDOT

Authority: North Dakota Century Code Chapter 39-25; North Dakota Administrative Rules Article 37-13

Resources: North Dakota Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum Playbook and information from existing North Dakota commercial driving school curriculum

Requirements: A minimum of 6 hours of actual behind the wheel driving. Lessons consisting of actual behind the wheel driving are not to exceed two continuous hours. A 30 minute break is required following every two continuous hours of training per day for an individual student but not to exceed a total of four hours per day. If the student is a minor, a minimum of one parent meeting to discuss the training and progress of the student is required.

Student Contract: If the student is a minor, the parent or legal guardian must sign the contract.

Preliminary Tasks: The student must be in possession of a valid, unexpired North Dakota Class D Permit. Ask to see it.

Lessons should be taught in the order provided; however due to variable traffic conditions and geographic area, the instructor has the liberty to change the order as needed. However, the student must be trained on all of the criteria.

North Dakota Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum Playbook: It is highly recommended that driver training instructors review the “Playbook” for more detailed information to enhance effectiveness of training. “Playbooks” are available from the NDDOT Safety Division. Contact Carol Thurn at cthurn@nd.gov or 701-328-4354.

Getting Ready to Drive

Approach with Awareness- Key in Hand

- For your safety, be aware of your surroundings. As you walk toward your vehicle, keep an eye on what is happening around you and your vehicle. Having your key in your hand allows you quick entry and can be used for self-defense.
- This is also an opportunity to check the surrounding area for objects or people near the vehicle or in the path of travel.
- Once in the vehicle, keep the doors locked and the windows up. Locked doors help them stay closed during a crash and keeps people from entering your vehicle. Windows up cuts down on outside noise and helps ensure hands, arms, you, and your passengers stay in the vehicle should there be a rollover or side impact crash. *Have student demonstrate all of the above.*

Seating, Mirrors, Seat Belts, and Controls

- **Seating:** Hips should be pushed all the way to the back of your seat. Adjust the seat with the ball of your right foot on the floor beneath the brake pedal. Your knees and elbows should be slightly bent. Then place the ball of your foot on the brake pedal and slide your foot down until it is firmly on the floor, so you can **pivot** on your heel from the brake to the gas pedal. Adjust the head restraint so it is at ear level. This helps protect you from whiplash injury in a rear-end crash. *Student demonstrate.*
- **Adjust the Mirrors:** The inside mirror should provide the widest view to the rear and the outside mirrors should overlap and widen that view. Use the proper seating position to adjust the left and right tilt of the inside mirror; sit up straight, your hips and back against the seat back. Your view will be straight out the rear window. Set the up and down tilt of all three mirrors so the horizon is visible across the center of each mirror. *Student demonstrate.*

- **Modified Mirror Settings:** To adjust the driver side mirror, lean your head slightly to the left and adjust the mirror out until you can see down the left side of the vehicle. To adjust the passenger side mirror, lean your head slightly to the right and adjust the mirror out until you can see down the right side of the vehicle. *Student demonstrate.*
- **Seat Belts:** The best way to reduce your chance of being injured or killed in a crash is to make sure that you and your passengers always wear your seat belts correctly. *Show the student the proper way to 'buckle up'.*
- **Vehicle Controls:** *Show the student* the various switches and buttons and how to operate them.
 - Accelerator
 - Brake pedal
 - Parking brake
 - Headlights-high and low beam
 - Emergency Flashers
 - Windshield wipers and wash
 - Turn signals
 - Heat, defroster, and air conditioning controls
 - Horn

Starting the Engine

1. Make sure the transmission is in "Park" and the parking brake is set.
2. Hold the brake pedal down before engaging the ignition.
3. Point out the various gauges: Speedometer, Fuel, Temperature, Oil Pressure
4. Turn on the accessories needed such as windshield wipers, defrost, heat or air conditioning, and the headlights. (Headlights can make your vehicle more visible to others from almost a mile away in all weather conditions).
5. Hold the brake pedal down with your right foot, shift to "Drive", and then release the parking brake. Make sure you see that your path is clear before moving. *Student demonstrate.*

Securing the Vehicle

- Hold the brake down firmly with your right foot, set the parking brake, and then shift to “Park”. Turn off all the accessories, turn off the engine, and remove the key before exiting and locking the doors. *Student demonstrate.*

Moving the Vehicle

- *Have student* start the vehicle again. (see *Starting the Engine* criteria)
- *Have student* check mirrors, over the shoulder, and in front of the vehicle to ensure it is safe to move the vehicle. This time have the student release the brake and press **gently** on the accelerator. Drive forward a distance of approximately one-half block. Then have the student safely stop the vehicle.

Stopping the Vehicle

- Check mirrors prior to stopping.
- Remove foot from the accelerator: the vehicle will start to slow down.
- Gently press the brake pedal well before the intended stopping point. Use more or less pressure depending on the stopping point. When you are ready to come to a complete stop, apply full pressure. *Have the student practice moving and stopping until both are smooth and controlled.*

Moving and Stopping Smoothly

- To develop pedal control, begin from a stopped position and practice moving at an *inching speed*. Keep your right foot on the brake, your heel on the floor, and decrease the brake pressure slightly. When you are close to other vehicles, move one inch at a time. To move at *idle speed*, release brake pressure and *cover the brake* in a ready-to-stop position.
- To accelerate smoothly, pivot on your heel to the gas pedal. Use *light pressure*, just enough to gradually increase your speed without pitching the vehicle backward. Then decelerate gradually to maintain vehicle balance.

- To stop smoothly, take several actions: first push to the *point of resistance* on the brake, then use steady even pressure, and finally *trail brake* the last two seconds of your stop to keep your vehicle in balance. *Trail braking is a slight decrease of braking pressure that does not change the speed but allows drivers to maintain control and balance when stopping or turning.*

Steering Control

- *Have the student practice a balanced 9 & 3 or 8 & 4 hand position for the best steering control and protection against airbag injury. Use push-pull for most turns and curves, hand-over-hand for very sharp, slow turns, and the one-handed method for backing. Show student each of these techniques.*

Straight Driving and Vision Control

- In a vacant parking lot or side street, *have the student practice driving straight ahead. Use Vision Control techniques to reach the intended targets.* In this case, a point (object) straight ahead or the end of the street. A *target* is a stationary object that's as far ahead as you can see, above the center of your intended lane. Your *path of travel* is the space you intend to drive through on the way to your target. **Aiming for targets helps you steer accurately**, find important information early, plan far ahead, and even correct a skid.

Steering with Accuracy

- *Explain to the student that you can use the target and the steering wheel to keep the vehicle **tracking** straight and on target. Align the top of the steering wheel with the target. Your *central vision* (ability to see detail) will help you focus on the target, then your lower or *fringe vision* will help you see the steering wheel align with the target, and your *peripheral* or side vision will help you see your path-of travel and other elements of the environment.*

Zone Control Space Management System

Zone Control

- Zone Control is a system that gives you the time, space, and techniques you need to **find**, **solve**, and **control** problems. It helps you look at the driving world and quickly decide which actions are best for any situation.
- Here are the basics of Zone Control:
Find Line-of-Sight or the Path-of-Travel Problems. Determine if these are Open (clear path), Closed (restricted or obstructed path), or Unstable Zone (a worsening closed zone or an added complication) conditions.
Solve before taking an action. Check related zone conditions so you can select the best position, speed, and communication options.
Control the 4-second danger zone. Reevaluate conditions and be ready to make adjustments before entering that space.

Reference Points and Blind Zones

- Reference points allow you to easily and accurately position your car on any roadway and all types of confined areas.
- A reference point is a place on the car that you see in relationship to a place on the ground.

Exercise to determine reference points and blind zones:

1. While the student is sitting in the driver's seat with the engine off, get out of the vehicle and stand close to the front bumper facing the driver.
2. Begin taking steps backward and have the student tap the horn when he or she can see your feet. Place a cone or cup in that spot. The area from the vehicle to the cone or cup is the area that cannot be seen when looking out of the windshield (blind zone). Have the student take a mental note of a spot on the hood of the vehicle in relation to the cone or cup. This spot on the hood becomes the **reference point** for the driver in relation to the cone or cup. *Have the student* get out to see the actual distance from the bumper or front of the vehicle to the cone or cup.

3. Next, have the student use the inside mirror and look over their right shoulder. Begin taking steps backward and have the student tap the horn when he or she can see your feet. Place a cone or cup in that spot. Have the student take a mental note of a spot (reference point) on the vehicle in relation to the cone or cup. *Have the student* get out to see the actual distance from the bumper or rear of the vehicle to the cone or cup.
4. Repeat the process to locate reference points as you walk backwards from the passenger doors on both the left and right sides of the vehicle to establish reference points and blind zones off to sides of the vehicle.

Advantages of Reference Points

- They help you overcome the optical illusion caused by the body of the vehicle blocking your view of the ground.
- They show you exactly where the left and right side tires are tracking on the roadway and help you make reduced-risk lane position adjustments in any lane.
- They show you the precise position of the front and rear bumpers in relationship to intersections, crosswalks, and parking spaces.
- They allow you to confidently maneuver your vehicle in confined places and spaces.

Lines, Signs, and Signals

Point out and explain the meaning of these:

- **Roadway Markings**- All roads have lanes, but not all have lines. **Residential streets** typically have two or more lanes but no lines. Position your vehicle to the right of the center of this roadway. **Arterials** typically have lines and two or more lanes. Some lines are yellow and others are white. **Yellow lines** separate traffic moving in opposite directions. **White lines** separate traffic moving in the same directions. Always position your vehicle to the right of a yellow center line.

- **Traffic Signs**- point out and explain the various regulatory, warning, and guide signs.
- **Traffic Lights**- Some intersections are controlled by regulatory signs or traffic lights. Complex intersections have both. They are designed to manage traffic flow and assign yielding responsibilities. Explain the meaning of the Red, Yellow, Green, and Arrow indicators found on Traffic Lights. When you start driving with the student, reinforce by pointing out signage and traffic light variations.
- **Lines, signs, and lights** work together. *For example:* A stop sign tells you to stop and the stop line or crosswalk tells you **where** to stop. Where there are no lines but a sidewalk is present, stop before entering that *unmarked* crosswalk (basically prior to the sidewalk area). Where there are no sidewalks, you may stop at the curb line.

Entering, Crossing, and Exiting Traffic

Have the student practice entering traffic from the curb.

- Moving from the curb to a driving lane is a lateral move, basically a lane change to the left. Search to the front, rear, and side for anything that may block the space you plan to occupy. When there's traffic, look beyond it to locate a gap or hole. Signal for 5 seconds and check the left blind zone. When space is open, look to the target area, accelerate smoothly, and use push-pull steering to position the vehicle in the driving lane. Once in the lane, cancel your signal. Then start checking to the front and rear for potential new problems.

Have the student practice searching before crossing lanes of traffic.

- Before entering or crossing any intersection, search to the left, front, and right for traffic and pedestrians. You may be required to yield to them. If your view is blocked, slow down even more to be sure you have an open path. Always confirm the actions of others before moving into the intersection.

Have the student practice pulling over toward the curb.

- Moving from the driving lane into the parking lane on the right is a lane change to the right. Signal 5 seconds ahead, check your right blind zone, and apply the brake. Approach parallel to and 3 to 6 inches away from the curb, make a smooth stop, and secure your vehicle.

Lesson 3

(1 Hour)

Precision Turns, Right Turns, Uncontrolled Intersections, and Left Turns

Precision Turns

- **Before every turn**, aim to the target area to find the proper location to begin your turn. Signal at least 5 seconds ahead, apply the brake early, and check rear zone conditions. The correct approach position for a right turn is adjacent (less than 3 feet) to the right curb or edge of the roadway (Lane Position 3). The correct approach position for a left turn is usually next to the center of the roadway (Lane Position 2). But when oncoming traffic is present, stay in the center of your lane (Lane Position 1) to create a safety zone between you and the oncoming vehicles.
- **Stopped Right and Left Turns.** Where a stop is required, stop smoothly before any **pedestrian safety zone**. After stopping, if your view is blocked, creep to the curb line to get an open view. When it's clear, turn your head, aim across the front limit reference point at your new target or target area, and use light acceleration.
- **Moving Turns.** Where no stop is required, search the intersection as you approach it. To keep the vehicle balanced through the turn, decrease the brake pressure slightly before turning the wheel. As you start to align with your target, release the brake pressure, begin to straighten, and accelerate smoothly.

Right Turns

- Put right turn signal on approximately 100 feet or 5 seconds prior to the intersection. Slow down. Look over right shoulder prior to moving adjacent (less than 3 feet) to the right curb or edge of the roadway. Search to the left and ahead before entering the intersection to make the turn. Make a smooth turn into Lane Position 3. Be sure signal cancels. Then adjust lane position. *Practice right turns until student demonstrates proficiency.*

Uncontrolled Intersections

- Slow down. Search to the left, to the right, and to the left again prior to entering the intersection. Yield the right of way by following right of way rules for uncontrolled T intersections and yielding to the vehicle on the right. *Practice uncontrolled intersections until the student demonstrates proficiency.*

Left Turns

- Put left turn signal on approximately 100 feet or 5 seconds prior to the intersection. Slow down. Look over left shoulder prior to moving toward the center of the roadway (Lane Position 2). Search to the right and ahead before entering the intersection to make the turn. Make a smooth turn by pivoting around the center point of the intersection (Lane Position 2). Be sure not to cut the turn too sharp. Stay on your side of the roadway! Cancel signal. Then adjust lane position. Practice left turns until student demonstrates proficiency.

Figure Eight Practice Exercise

After the student successfully demonstrates proper right turns, uncontrolled intersections, and left turns help them “put it all together”. Find a four block residential area with uncontrolled intersections. Have the student go straight between blocks 1 and 2, then make a right turn followed by a left turn. Go straight between blocks 3 and 4, then make a left turn and another left turn. Go straight for two blocks again, make a left turn followed by a right turn. *Continue this pattern until the student demonstrates proficiency.*

Discuss Various Yielding Situations

T Intersections

- If the T intersection is uncontrolled, the vehicle on the terminating street must yield to all vehicles on the continuing street.

Uncontrolled Intersections

- If two vehicles reach the intersection at approximately the same time, the vehicle on the left must yield to the vehicle on the right. Basically, the vehicle on the left must yield to the vehicle on the right to avoid conflict.

Vehicle Turning Left

- Vehicles turning left **must** yield to all oncoming vehicles.

4-Way Stops

- Typically, the first vehicle to arrive is the first vehicle to go.

Pedestrians

- You must yield to pedestrians at all marked and unmarked crosswalks.

At Intersections

- Yield to any traffic that is already in the intersection.

To Prevent a Collision

- If someone doesn't yield to you when they should, yield to them and be courteous about it.

At a Roundabout

- You are required to yield to any traffic already in the roundabout, as well as pedestrians.

To Emergency Vehicles

- When you hear the siren of an approaching ambulance, fire truck, or police vehicle, prepare to pull over to the right edge of the roadway and allow them to pass. If you are stopped when they are approaching and you are unable to move, just stay put.

Lesson 4

(1 Hour)

Traffic Lights, One-way Streets, Multiple Lanes, and Changing Lanes

Traffic Lights

- **Changing Red Lights to Green:** Timing a light is simply seeing the **closed zone** in your target area and reducing your speed to arrive at the intersection when the light is green. When you can time your approach to arrive at a green, there are fewer chances for conflict to the front and rear. Responding early keeps you and traffic behind you moving, decreases your chance of being rear-ended, and reduces the time you will wait for the light to change to green. *Practice timing traffic lights until the student is comfortable with doing this.*
- **Stale Green, Solid Yellow & Point of No Return:** You won't be able to time every light to arrive on a new green. A stale green light is an old, unstable light that's been green for a long time and will soon change to yellow. Be ready to stop as you approach. If it changes to yellow before you reach the point of no return, stop. If it's still green, maintain your speed, search, and proceed. The point of no return is where you can no longer stop without entering that space- two seconds away. *Practice timing this scenario.*
- **Red Lights, Green Lights & Flashing Yellow Arrows:** Every turn at a traffic light is a risky 4-second danger zone. The most dangerous is a left turn where you must stop to yield. When your light is a solid green ball or a flashing yellow arrow, the oncoming traffic has a green light too.

Stopping increases the chance of a rear-end collision. To minimize conflicts, try to arrive alone so you can complete your left turn without stopping. When you must stop, you have to know where to wait and what to watch for.

Practice this with the student.

One-Way and Multiple Lane Streets

- When there are two or more lanes going the same direction, you must turn into the lane nearest you. This applies to both right turns and left turns.
- You must safely move into the right lane if planning to turn right and safely move into the left lane if planning to turn left off of (from) the one-way or multiple lane street.

Practice turning onto and turning off of one-way and multiple lane streets.

Changing Lanes With Precision

- A lane change can be a risky maneuver, especially in heavy traffic or at highway speeds. Accurate perception is the key to managing those risks. A precision lane change is the process of moving your vehicle to the left or right (laterally) into or out of an adjacent lane.
- Use this sequence of behaviors to perform a precision lane change:
 1. Check front and rear zones for an open/stable gap.
 2. Use the turn signal and your lane position to communicate your intentions and request cooperation from others.
 3. Check your side mirror and look over your shoulder. (Right mirror, head check to right for right lane change. Left mirror, head check to left for left lane change).
 4. When clear, aim to the target area and keep a shallow angle as you move. Maintain your speed, do not slow unnecessarily.
 5. When you successfully complete the lane change, cancel your signal.

Be Alert for Common Dangers When Changing Lanes

- During the searching process, several situations can develop that will require you to abort a lane change. **Vehicles entering or exiting the roadway, changing lanes, or moving at a high rate of speed** can change a scene quickly. Those unstable conditions can take place in any of the zones around your vehicle.
- To prevent a close call or collision, you must first see a zone as unstable and then be willing to wait until conditions are open or stable before attempting to move to your desired lane.

Practice changing lanes until the student can do so smoothly and without compromising vehicle control.

Lesson 5

(1 Hour)

Backing, Parking, and Rural Driving

Backing is high risk! Your view around the vehicle is blocked. When you have a choice, move forward. If you have to back up, use these risk prevention behaviors.

See Clear Path Before You Back

- Before entering your car, check around it to be sure nothing is hidden from your view or blocking your path. Before moving the car, search 360 degrees to look for anything blocking your path or your view. Do not rely on your mirrors or a back-up camera to move a vehicle backwards; the view is too limited!

Backing Straight: Seating Position

- For the best control, hold the steering wheel at the 12 o'clock position with your left hand, and put your right hand on the back of the passenger seat. Control your speed with your brake. With your left foot on the floor, rise up in the seat for a better rear view. Decrease the brake pressure slightly to inch toward the target.

Target to the Rear

- Your seating position will allow you to twist your body and look over your right shoulder. To control your steering, you need to target straight out the rear window. Glance forward to check for any zone changes. Target to the rear until you've stopped moving.

Backing Turns

- When a backing turn is needed, turn the wheel from the top down in the same direction you want the back of the vehicle to go.
- To keep from getting right and left mixed up, remember that the passenger side of the vehicle is the right side and the driver side is the left side, even when you are twisted around in your seat.

Find a vacant parking lot or a quiet side street to practice backing. Practice both straight line and turning while backing until the student demonstrates proficiency.

Back-in Parking Maneuvers

Shared Elements

- These parking maneuvers have several elements in common. Each requires that you use:
 1. The same approach- signal, apply the brake, approach slowly, and use a side position 3 feet away
 2. An inching speed
 3. A 45 degree angle
 4. The rear pivot point
 5. A target in the center of your space

Back-in Angle Parking

1. Approach: What's the best speed?
2. Pull beyond the space, stop, shift to reverse, search, and yield.
3. Target the center of your space; when your pivot point aligns with the edge of your space, turn right. Straighten your wheels, stop smoothly, and secure your vehicle.

Back-in Perpendicular Parking

1. Approach: What's the appropriate communication?
2. Stop when your body is aligned with the space.
3. Target 45 degrees left and turn tires fully left to get on target.
4. Shift to reverse, target the center of your space, use the pivot point, and turn fully right. When perpendicular, turn wheel straight, inch to the rear limit, and secure vehicle.

Parallel Parking

1. Approach: Signal to indicate you will be moving to the right. What's the side position reference point?
2. Pull beyond the space, stop, shift to reverse, search, and yield.
3. When your pivot point aligns with the bumper of the vehicle you are parking behind, turn fully right toward the space, and back to a 45 degree angle.
4. Straighten your wheels to the left and continue backing straight, toward the target. Check for front clearance.
5. As your left pivot point aligns with the car behind you, turn fully left, toward the roadway.
6. Center your vehicle in the parking space and secure vehicle.

Safely Leaving a Parallel Parking Space

1. Look over the right shoulder and straight back 2 or 3 feet.
2. Turn on left signal.
3. Look over left shoulder to confirm the path is open.
4. Turn wheel to the left and move forward into the driving lane. As you do so, check the front corner of your vehicle to be sure it clears the parked vehicle in front.
5. Re-check the driving lane path as you continue to pull out.
6. Establish proper lane position and cancel left turn signal.

Have student perform back-in parking maneuvers where available. Practice parallel parking until student can successfully parallel park three times in a row.

Other Parking Maneuvers

Forward Angle Parking: Both 90 degree and 45 degree angle parking maneuvers are common everyday occurrences.

1. Use your turn signal to communicate your intention to park.
2. Determine where to position your vehicle before turning and where to aim the vehicle during the turn (target).
3. Stress the importance of controlling the speed of the vehicle; **go slowly**.

Backing Out of the Parking Spot:

1. **Before backing out** of the parking spot, check mirrors and look back over your shoulder. **While backing out** of the parking spot, continually check mirrors, turn and look back, and spot check the *front* of your vehicle to be sure it clears the parked vehicles on either side.

Rural Driving

Paved Two-Way Roads

- Generally, paved two-way roads located in rural areas are narrower than paved roads in higher traffic areas and may not be maintained as frequently. Driving on them requires focused attention and **searching** skills. There is little room for error!
- Slow down and be prepared for these special concerns: Farm equipment, Large farm trucks, Railroad crossings, Livestock, Wildlife especially deer, uncontrolled Railroad crossings, and oncoming vehicles attempting to pass.

Gravel Roads

- The majority of roads in rural areas are gravel. Vehicles are more unstable on gravel because the surface consists of loose rock and sand. Tire surface is less on gravel than on pavement. Controlled speed is critical!

- Because gravel roads tend to be narrower and typically do not have shoulders, drivers have a tendency to drive down the middle of them. Be especially mindful of this when approaching a hill; slow down and move to the right!
- Be prepared for these special concerns:
All of those listed for rural paved roads, gravel ridges consisting of loose gravel on the sides of the road, dust affecting your visibility, mud, and potholes.

Have the student practice driving on both paved and gravel rural roads while pointing out the special concerns and how to predict and deal with them.

Lesson 6

(1 Hour)

Divided and Limited (Controlled) Access Highways, and Railroad Crossings

Divided Highways

- Divided highways have a median separating the traffic flow. Speed limits are typically higher than on rural roads. Because of the higher speeds, it is not necessary to move the steering wheel as much to make the vehicle move left or right.
- Be sure to maintain a safe driving distance from vehicles in front of you (3 to 4 second following distance). Because divided highways generally have two or more lanes travelling the same direction, be aware of your **lane position** and other vehicles that will be moving alongside of you.
- Be especially alert while changing lanes!
- Divided highways are designed with crossovers to allow intersecting rural roadways access to the divided highway. **Search ahead** and be ready to adjust speed or change lanes if needed.

Have student practice driving on a divided highway while pointing out searching, lane positioning, and speed control behaviors.

Limited (Controlled) Access Highways

- Limited or Controlled Access Highways allow drivers to travel faster without some of the conflicts found on other streets. However, these highways have unique characteristics and risks.
- **Don't Stress Out, Plan Your Route.** Freeways (the Interstate System), can be stressful and confusing, especially in rush-hour traffic or unfamiliar areas. And at higher speeds you have less time to process information. If you plan your route, even short trips will go more smoothly. Know where you are getting on and off the freeway. For longer trips, plan where you will stop for food, fuel, and restroom breaks. Use expressway guide signs and road markings to keep you on course near entrances, exits, and along every route.
- **Entering and Using the Freeway.** To prevent problems on freeway on-ramps, use a moderate speed, and pay attention to warning sign and traffic lights until reaching the acceleration area on the ramp. Most entrance ramps do not have these lights so you can start to **adjust** your speed to the flow of traffic earlier. Remember sudden changes in speed or steering can cause big problems very quickly so keep your actions smooth and precise. **Search** for an open gap in the traffic flow that will allow you to **merge safely**.
- **Exiting.** Identify your exit and move to the right lane early. Signal and maintain your speed until you are on the exit ramp. Some exits are short and others have sharp curves; both require you to apply the brake firmly. Be aware of slow moving traffic and close in gradually. Check your speedometer to counteract *velocitation* which is the illusion that you are traveling at a speed much higher or lower than your actual speed. It is usually experienced just after a drastic change in road speed.

Have student practice entering and exiting the Interstate.

Railroad Crossings

- **Stay Alert for Railroad Tracks.** Every crossing you encounter is a closed or unstable zone you must manage. Most drivers expect these intersections to have traffic lights, automated gates, and warning bells, but two-thirds of railroad crossings have no active controls. Train schedules can also be unpredictable so do not assume when you may or may not 'meet' a train.
- **Signs, Signals, and Markings.** A round yellow warning sign and a white regulatory crossbuck lets you know you are approaching a railroad crossing. Paved roads may have painted white crossbucks and stop lines. If there is more than one track, you may see a small sign displaying the number of tracks. Flashing red lights warn of an approaching train. After a train passes, if there is a gate, you must wait until the gate is completely up and the lights turn off.
- **Protect Yourself and Others.** All crossings are intersections that need to be controlled. Signals may malfunction and multiple tracks increase everyone's risk. Trains cannot stop quickly, they move faster than you think, and they are closer than they look! While slowing or stopped, check for traffic that is backed up and blocking your way across the tracks. Never stop on the tracks. **Search and listen** carefully for the sight and sound of a train or service vehicle before crossing.

Coach student through a railroad crossing.

Evaluation

At the completion of training, the student should be able to successfully demonstrate these driving behaviors:

- Starting and stopping the vehicle
- Proper driving posture
- Proper use of vehicle controls
- General observation skills and attention to the driving task
- Controlling the vehicle
- Speed Control
- Proper intersection speed
- Intersection observance
- Traffic lights, Stop Sign intersections, and Railroad crossings
- Adherence to other traffic signs
- Unsigned (uncontrolled) intersections
- Proper application of the right-of-way
- Proper lane positioning
- Safe lane changes
- Multi-lane and one-way streets
- Proper full stops
- Proper following distance
- Right turns and Left turns
- Proper signaling
- Backing, to include parallel parking without park assist technology
- Driving in residential, business, highway, and rural areas including gravel road surfaces