



# Traffic Safety Merit

1. Obtain a handbook from your state’s Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) or equivalent driver licensing agency and define the following:
  - a. Personal attitude while driving
  - b. Traffic congestion and how it changes driving conditions
  - c. Tailgating
  - d. Defensive driving
  - e. Right-of-way laws
  - f. Seat belt laws
  - g. Vision while driving
  - h. Speed laws
  - i. Blind spot
  - j. Weather conditions and their effect on driving
  
2. Write a 250-word essay about how the driving considerations in Requirement 1 can be used to drive safely.
  
3. Complete the following using your state driving handbook as a reference.
  - a. Examine stopping distances, including reaction time, for various speeds and road conditions. Do this for an average passenger vehicle and a loaded tractor-trailer. Go beside a roadway (preferably in a residential area), and use a measuring tape to mark off these distances. Place some marker (a box, a stake, a cone, etc.) at the end of each distance. Draw a sketch of how you laid out your distances. Report additional allowances for bad weather. Explain how this information should affect driving tactics.
  - b. Site what the DMV reports as being the top concerns for drivers fifteen to nineteen years old. Include statistics of traffic violations and traffic deaths.
  
4. List at least six safety checks that should be performed on a vehicle regularly to reduce accidents.
  
5. Perform the vehicle safety checks on a vehicle with your commander that you listed in Requirement 4. Explain why these checks are important and how often they should be done.
  
6. Explain why proper tire pressure and tread depth is important for safe vehicle operation. Include the results of under- and overinflating tires.



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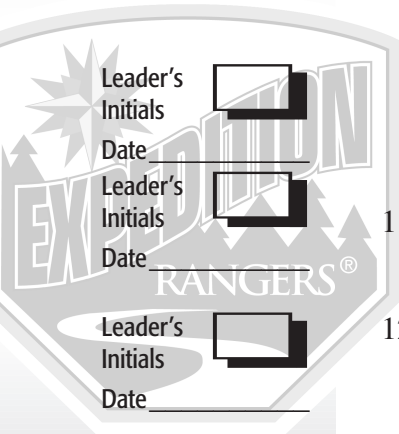
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7. Do ALL of the following:
  - a. Check the tire pressure on a vehicle with your commander. Include the spare tire. Increase or decrease pressure, if under- or overinflated.
  - b. Check the tread depth of the tires on a vehicle with your commander. List the minimum tread depth allowed in your state.
  - c. Check for uneven tire wear on a vehicle with your commander. List any uneven patterns in the wear.
  - d. Check for nails or cuts in the tires on a vehicle with your commander. List any nails or cuts that are found and what should be done about them.
  
8. Contact the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to find out what traffic safety issues are currently being dealt with. List these issues and report how much funding is allocated to traffic safety issues by the federal government.
  
9. Collect five newspaper articles on traffic accidents. List the following for each accident:
  - a. The cause of the accident. Follow-up articles may provide the information.
  - b. Any traffic violations that contributed to the accident.
  - c. Any fatalities and injuries.
  - d. Whether or not the person injured or killed in the accident was wearing a seat belt.
  - e. How each accident happened and whether it could have been prevented.
  
10. Complete the following items for bicycle safety:
  - a. Demonstrate at least four common bicycle safety road rules to your commander.
  - b. List the helmet laws for riding a bicycle in your state.
  - c. List any bicycle-related accidents that have occurred in your area.
  - d. Describe how to be visible on a bicycle during daylight and at nighttime.
  
11. Explain to your commander why combining drug and alcohol use with driving is a serious problem.
  
12. Obtain automobile crash test results and rollover statistics on at least ten makes of vehicles. List the vehicle that you believe would be the safest to own of those for which you have statistics.
  
13. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. Make a list of any dangerous intersections or traffic problems in your area where there have been a number of accidents. Include the number of accidents that have occurred at these intersections over a six-month period. List any injuries and fatalities that have occurred in these accidents. Describe why these intersections are dangerous and what corrections, if any, are planned to improve the safety situation.

- b. Perform a traffic study at a busy intersection in your area by doing the following:
  1. On the first day, record how many vehicles go through this intersection (all four directions) for three one-hour slots: during the morning rush hour, lunchtime, and evening rush hour. Include the type of vehicles (cars, SUVs, or trucks) that go through this intersection in your record.
  2. For the next three days, record the following for a two-hour period:
    - a. The number of vehicles that go through a red light
    - b. The number of vehicles that appear to be speeding
    - c. The number of aggressive drivers
    - d. Any near-accidents with other vehicles or pedestrians
    - e. Any unsafe lane changes
  3. List the traffic fines for going through a red light and speeding in your area.
- c. Participate in a “ride-along” program with your local police, if available in your area.
  1. Keep a log of all traffic violations. Record what the driver was stopped for and whether or not a ticket was issued.
  2. List any traffic accidents that were investigated. Record the cause of the accident, any injuries or fatalities, and any tickets issued.
  3. Interview the officer with whom you are riding, listing the officer’s likes and dislikes about the job.
  4. List any situation that the officer would like to see improved relative to traffic safety.
  5. Describe what you have learned about being a police officer after the ride-along session.
- d. Contact a local insurance agent in your area to obtain the following information:
  1. List the company’s efforts to improve traffic safety in your local area or state.
  2. List any recent rules or regulations adopted in your state that were influenced by the insurance industry.
  3. List two national agencies that have influenced traffic or motor vehicle safety laws. Describe each agency’s main focus.

